

Joyce Pensato FORGETTABOUT IT

19 May – 24 June 2017
67 Lisson Street, London

‘FORGETTABOUT IT’, Joyce Pensato’s second exhibition with Lisson Gallery, features an entirely new body of work, encompassing large-scale paintings, drawings and a site-specific wallpaper installation. The exhibition sees the return of Pensato’s familiar cast of cartoon characters while marking important new developments in the artist’s practice in terms of movement, colour and scale.

An alumna of the New York Studio School in the 1970s, where she was mentored by influential artists including Mercedes Matter and Joan Mitchell, Pensato challenged the school’s strict figurative life drawing practice and painted directly from cardboard cut-outs, dolls and photographs as a replacement for the traditional fruit of still lifes. Her humorous, innovative and critical translation of comic-book imagery, combined with a ferocious application of paint, positions Pensato between the illustrative figuration of Pop Art and the gestural physicality of Abstract Expressionism.

While cartoons and cultural ephemera still provide her with subject matter, the works on display at Lisson Gallery speak more of Pensato’s ongoing experimentation with technique, as well as the positioning and fragmentation of figures. The exhibition features a series of four golden Donald Ducks, seemingly rocking and rolling in motion across the wall, which will be installed next to an over-three-metre-wide painting of Batman’s eyeless cowl, which stares out through the dripped, splashed surface of Pensato’s frenzied and sustained assault on the canvas. Further damage is done to another mask, this time through an obsessive peeling away of successive layers of the industrial-grade enamel paint. This act, which she says represents “an itch you cannot scratch”, mirrors the self-destructive nature of her drawings and suggests the origin of one of Pensato’s own alter-egos, ‘The Eraser’ (she also goes by ‘The Fizz’ and ‘The Godmother’, all the while channelling the spirit and energy of Gena Rowlands as ‘Gloria’).

Three large-scale drawings in the front space of the gallery continue Pensato’s experimentation with rupture and repair and are also notable for their use of coloured pastels, marking a departure from her characteristic charcoals (with occasional leaps to silver and gold). Drawings are further explored as part of her wallpaper installation, beginning at the bottom of the staircase and exploding across the entire first-floor exhibition space.

The site-specific installation itself provides insight into Pensato’s ways of working and her studio environment in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Before painting, Pensato often pins up photographs that she amasses, perhaps out of personal interest (often featuring the likes of Robert De Niro, to whom the exhibition title nods) or of those found at local flea markets or on Ebay, which are subsequently splattered with paint. These collages are then photographed again, or, as in this case, transformed into wallpaper. With small drawings tacked on top, overlaying more portraits of Hollywood stars splashed with enamel, the installation, seemingly raw and spontaneous yet carefully configured, aims to engulf and overwhelm the viewer, thus drawing visitors not only into the idiosyncratic world of the artist but also the confusion and chaos of contemporary society.

LONDON
27 Bell Street
NW1 5BU UK
67 Lisson Street
NW1 5DA UK
+44 (0)20 7724 2739

NEW YORK
504 West 24th Street
NY 10011 USA
138 Tenth Avenue
NY 10011 USA
+1 212 505 6431

MILAN
Via Zenale, 3
20123, Italy
+39 02 89050608

lissongallery.com

About Joyce Pensato

Born in Brooklyn, New York, where she continues to live and work, Joyce Pensato paints exuberant and explosive large-scale likenesses of cartoon characters and comic-book heroes. Her seemingly frenzied technique – actually involving the deliberate accretion of successive layers of bold linear gestures, rapid spattering and frequent erasures – results in alternately humorous and sinister imagery. While her prima facie subject matter ranges from cartoon characters like Batman or Homer Simpson to Hollywood stars such as Gena Rowlands and Elvis Presley, her artistic her artistic progenitors include Alberto Giacometti, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline and Philip Guston.

Solo exhibitions include ‘Felix and Lincoln’ at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago, IL, USA (2016); Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria (2016); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX, USA (2015); Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, USA (2015); High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, USA (2014); Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA, USA (2013); and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, USA (2013). Recent group exhibitions include ‘Fast Forward: Painting from the 1980s’ at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2017); ‘Riot Grrrls’, curated by Michael Darling, at MCA, Chicago, IL, USA (2016–2017); ‘Empire State’, curated by Alex Gartenfeld and Sir Norman Rosenthal, at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2013); ‘Interior Visions: Selections from the Collection by Alex Katz’ at the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville (2012); ‘A Painting Show’ at The Speed Museum of Art, Louisville (2011) and ‘The Darker Side of Playland: Childhood Imagery from the Logan Collection’ at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2000). Pensato’s work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; SFMoMA, San Francisco; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Dallas Museum of Art; St Louis Art Museum and the FRAC des Pays de la Loire. She has won numerous awards including the Robert de Niro, Sr. Prize (2013), the Award of Merit Medal for Painting, given by the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2012), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award (1997) and the Guggenheim Fellowship (1996).

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Established 50 years ago in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade it introduced significant British artists, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Today it continues to support international practitioners including Ai Weiwei and Marina Abramović, alongside a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza and many more. Across two exhibition spaces in London, two in New York and one in Milan, the gallery supports and develops the work of 52 artists.

For press enquiries, please contact

Victoria Mitchell, Sutton PR
+44 (0)20 7183 3577
victoria@suttonpr.com

Allison Thorpe, Lisson Gallery
+44 (0)207 724 2739
allison@lissongallery.com