

Alessandro Pessoli

Like A Free Life

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Press Release

The fourth exhibition by Italian born, Los Angeles-based artist Alessandro Pessoli at Xavier Hufkens is titled *Like A Free Life*. As the title suggests, in his first exhibition dedicated entirely to painting, Pessoli allows himself the freedom of inventing images, unconcerned about their coherence.

Pessoli's work offers a fusion of sense and nonsense, blending private and public. Fed by references to popular culture, cinema and theatre, religious imagery merges with allusions to art history, from the Italian Renaissance to American Pop Art. Typical of Pessoli are his investigations of how personal histories intertwine with larger historical narratives. With this new body of work Pessoli continues to explore both his interior life and the physical reality of our world, and how they subsequently interact on the canvas.

As the paintings show, this approach results in human figures and animals being transfixed by a precipitate of anatomical parts such as eyes, mouths, penises and objects like guns, fruit, ice cream and emoji. Even minutely copied drawings of his children find their way on to the paintings. In one painting, a crowned chicken carries a slice of pizza on its back, its neck pierced by a banana, while the artist's portrait and a popsicle appear among its feathers. This abundant diversity is exemplified by the techniques used: oil paint, silkscreen, stencils and spray paint intermingle to describe details in a realistic manner or to dissolve them into abstraction.

Los Angeles and Frank Zappa, both his music and the artist, were a major influence for this exhibition. Pessoli: "Los Angeles is a source of images for me. From the solitude of my studio, LA remains an outpost of a frontier, where I can break the framework acquired in my paintings. My old infatuation with the American Pop Art of the 1960s and 1970s from when I was a teenager has emerged again." Like Zappa, whom Pessoli listened to while working, his paintings present compositions full of variations, twists, breakages and unexpected tunes, mirroring the compositional nature of these works. "I found in his music the same nature that feeds my paintings, the attempt to balance the instinctive and rapid way of painting with the necessity of composing and controlling." Just as the acclaimed musician used tapes and experimented with unconventional methods, Pessoli's paintings also marry classical form and anarchic processes.

These collages show the truest sense of contemporary post-truth fashion as Pessoli freely assembles images and topics, without taking their sources or provenance into account. All bits and pieces become equal two-dimensional parts of the composition of the paintings. Through his painterly translations Pessoli creates new renderings which can be considered as conceptions of an open imagination of whatever occurred, or 'could-have-happened' in both fiction and reality.

Alessandro Pessoli (b. 1963, Cervia, Italy) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibition include *The Neighbors*, MAN, Nuoro (2016); *Alessandro Pessoli - Project Room*, Villa Paloma, NMNM, Monaco (2015-2016) and *New Work: Alessandro Pessoli* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012).

Xavier Hufkens

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