

## JOYCE PENSATO

### *The Eraser*

December 19, 2007 - February 2, 2008

Opening reception: Wednesday, December 19th from 6 - 8 PM

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce "The Eraser," an exhibition of new work by Joyce Pensato. An illustrated catalogue with an essay by Gregory Volk, printed on the occasion of this exhibition, is available at the gallery.

For many years Joyce Pensato has mined the field of cartoon imagery for both the inspiration and subject matter of her predominantly black and white paintings and drawings. In particular, the artist has repeatedly returned to the iconic images created by Walt Disney in the early 20th century, most notably Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. These characters inhabit the world of Pop, but in Pensato's hands, they have been altered, arguably mutilated and deformed, to such an extent that these works have almost nothing to do with a Warholian Pop lineage and everything to do with the energy and intention of the Abstract Expressionists. Hers is a visceral- not clinical- approach, as evidenced by her rapid-fire yet incisively controlled use of the brush, which leaves smears, splatters and drips of paint so onerous that it forces the viewer to hope simply and perhaps only that these characters- be they Mickey, Donald, Felix, Homer or South Park Stan- be relieved of their situations as soon as possible. As Volk writes of Pensato's 2007 painting "Don't Go Donald" in his catalogue essay:

*This wide-eyed Donald is particularly nervous, almost unhinged, and the black ground is ominous, a bit like toxic smoke or an oil spill. At first glance the painting looks casual, perhaps dashed off in a few minutes, but that casual look was patiently achieved, and the complex behavior of paint is key to the work. Gradations of thickness, splatters, tangential mini-streaks that jet at odd angles, and borders that fray into particles and gaps all make this Donald Duck at once intact and precarious. He's a jaunty guy buffeted by powerful worries and you get the feeling he doesn't know where he belongs, or whether he should escape or remain.*

Pensato is not interested in sparing the already implicated- viewer or subject. She confronts us with a world in which the familiar cartoon becomes the embodiment and reflection of a profoundly flawed and marginalized existence, where the sanitized is smeared off to reveal our own particularly American dystopia.

Joyce Pensato was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited widely, including exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the St. Louis Art Museum (with Mike Kelley and Raymond Pettibon). Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York and FRAC des Pays de la Loire, France, among others. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

The exhibition will be open to the public beginning Thursday, December 20th and will remain on view through Saturday, February 2, 2008. There will be an opening reception on Wednesday, December 19th from 6 - 8 PM. Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 537 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011. For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-680-9467 or [info@petzel.com](mailto:info@petzel.com).