

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****JOYCE PENSATO*****Batman Returns*****January 12 – February 25, 2012****Opening reception:****Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce “Batman Returns,” the third exhibition of new work by the New York-based artist Joyce Pensato. An illustrated catalogue, published by 38th Street Publishers with an accompanying essay by Ira G. Wool, will be available on the occasion of the exhibition. The book commemorates the 32 years that the artist worked in her Olive Street studio in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn, before re-locating to a new space in the spring of 2011.

For this exhibition, Joyce Pensato uses Batman as the predominant subject and inspiration for her paintings. “Batman” is a motif that first appeared in Pensato’s drawings as early as the mid-1970’s and has been used by the artist only periodically since, the last Batman painting, as singular work, having been executed in 1996. Pensato’s resurrection of this iconic image sixteen years later marks an additional shift in her practice as it will be the first time that she has added various colors to what until now has been a strictly black, white and silver painting palette. Pastel color has played a role in Pensato’s drawings over the years, but color in the paintings is new, and as with her drawings, the color element marks a layer within, simultaneously erased and darkened by the profuse and continual saturation of black and white enamel.

Alongside Pensato’s Batman motif will be paintings and drawings incorporating her familiar cartoon imagery of clowns, Homer Simpson, Groucho Marx, Mickey Mouse, and a character the artist refers to as “The Juicer.” Furthermore, she will present assemblages of toys, ephemera, and stuffed animals throughout the gallery and will show as well approximately fifteen to twenty photographs of striking tableaux of the aforementioned elements taken by the artist at various times of day and night in her former studio. Through these old and new mediums, Pensato continues her baleful transmutation of American cartoon culture - employing her fast, assured, and gestural hand to shed light on the arguable darkness lurking within our familiar Pop iconography. What lay beneath Batman’s mask was, perhaps only for a moment, Bruce Wayne.

Joyce Pensato lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited widely, including in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; the St. Louis Art Museum; The Speed Museum of Art, Louisville; and The Cleveland Museum of Art. Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; The Dallas Museum of Art; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the FRAC des Pays de la Loire, France, among others. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and the Anonymous Was A Woman Award. She attended The New York Studio School.

The exhibition will be open to the public beginning Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, and will remain on view through Saturday, February 25, 2012. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 537 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street New York, NY 10011. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. For further information, please contact the gallery at (212) 680 – 9467. For press inquiries, please contact Marcella Heemsen at [Marcella@petzel.com](mailto:Marcella@petzel.com).