

Alessandro Pessoli

TESTA CRISTIANA

curated by Eva Fabbris

Cloisters of Sant'Eustorgio

Milan

15 September – 28 November, 2021

At the invitation of the **Cloisters of Sant'Eustorgio**, Alessandro Pessoli has conceived *Testa Cristiana* (Christian Head), an exhibition of fifteen works that brings together some previously created pieces and others made specifically for this new context. The show is expressly conceived to engage in meaningful conversation with architectural and decorative elements in the cloisters.

The exhibition begins in the **Chapter house** of the Museum of the Basilica of Sant'Eustorgio, with a selection of paintings produced between 2008 and 2019. The **Sacristy** and the spaces opposite the **Portinari Chapel** house site-specific works. In the **Early Christian Cemetery**, a majolica piece from 2008 introduces the theme of the body presented in pieces, reflecting on the reliquaries and tombs among which it is exhibited. This investigation is followed by a work recently created by the artist for the site: in the section of the **Carlo Maria Martini Diocesan Museum** dedicated to goldsmithing and liturgical furnishings, the precious museum exhibits dialogue with Pessoli's series of sculptural heads, including one inspired by a tenth-century tondo in polychromatic stucco depicting Saint Ambrose giving a blessing. The section displayed at the Carlo Maria Martini Diocesan Museum is curated by Giuseppe Frangi.

The exhibition takes place in an environment that is important to Christian history and culture and the history of art; at the same time, this space is still dedicated in part to liturgical activities. This enables Pessoli to conceive a show that reflects and describes his conception of the sacred as confronted with contemporary life, which demands that we coexist with pain and uncertainty: "I charge the image with tension, because I want it to be expressive, because for me it is not peaceful. It is reality that is difficult, even violent. I would like to create a serene work, with no drama, but I love to excite the images, to get a response. . . . I utilize subjects from the tradition of Catholic iconography precisely because I found them difficult, able to put up resistance, and the attempt to find an equilibrium became interesting." [Alessandro Pessoli in conversation with Barbara Casavecchia]

Pessoli's practice is typically multimedia in nature, focusing on painting and sculpture, and also favoring ceramic. The exhibition at Sant'Eustorgio will display the variety of materials and techniques for which the artist is well known, for instance his consistent fascination with the human form. Through these representations, Pessoli deals with existential themes. Historical figures, classical art historical iconography, and everyday images intermingle in a reconstruction of reality

that is dreamlike, painful, and sometimes grotesque, but never lacking instinctive emotion. Pessoli's iconography, particularly from the late 2000s on, has included religious elements, especially themes and images from the life of Christ. He participated in the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) with a series of drawings depicting religious themes. His 2011 solo show at the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia centered on a trilogy of large canvases evoking stories from the New Testament. Even when the references to the sacred are less direct, representations of the emotional and psychological life of the individual always have center stage.

During the course of the exhibition, a book with photographs of the exhibition will be published by **Lenz** (Milan), containing texts by Eva Fabbris, Giuseppe Frangi, Alexis Vaillant and a conversation between the artists Pier Paolo Campanini and Alessandro Pessoli.

Alessandro Pessoli (b. 1963, Cervia, Italy) lives and works in Los Angeles. He works in drawing, painting, and sculpture, often representing figures that are expressive and seemingly melancholy, occupying isolated or indeterminate spaces. Themes include politics, religion, history, culture, and identity. Recent solo shows have taken place at Palazzo Vizzani, Bologna (2021); 17th Art Quadrennial, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2021); Anton Kern Gallery, New York (2017 and 2021); Greengrassi, London (2014 and 2020); Nino Mier, Los Angeles (2019 and 2020); Xavier Hufkens, Brussels (2014 and 2018); Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); ZERO..., Milan (2014 and 2015); MAN, Nuoro, Italy (2016); Palazzo della Triennale di Milano, Milan (2015–16); Villa Paloma, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monte Carlo (2015); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2011); and Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2010). Pessoli has been included in numerous group shows, at such venues as Fondazione Stelline, Milan (2017); DESTE Foundation, Centre for Contemporary Art, Athens (2013); and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2009). A series of religious-themed drawings were included in the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009), curated by Daniel Birnbaum.

www.museosanteustorgio.it

www.chiostrisanteustorgio.it

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Information

Open Hours

(Museum of Sant'Eustorgio, Portinari Chapel, and Carlo Maria Martini Diocesan Museum)

Tuesday–Sunday: 10am–6pm

Monday: closed



Ticket office closes at 5.30pm
Entrance from Piazza Sant'Eustorgio 3

Tickets

Standard: € 10,00

Reduced and groups: € 8,00

Schools and oratories: € 6,00

Reductions and free entry
please refer to
www.museosanteustorgio.it
www.chiostrisanteustorgio.it

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