

# Anton Kern Gallery

## Alessandro Pessoli

For Immediate Release

October 12 – November 11, 2017

Opening reception: October 12 from 6–8pm

In his sixth solo exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery, Italian-born and Los Angeles-based artist Alessandro Pessoli presents *Against Me*: new paintings, ceramics, and sculptural installations that include self-portraits, references to traditions of Italian painting, and even handmade bows and arrows. In addition to the main exhibition, the artist will create his own version of an Italian trattoria—*Sandrino*—on the gallery's third floor, complete with an espresso bar.

In 2016, Pessoli found himself unable to create new work. For the artist, the sense of urgency to make a painting or sculpture had disappeared, and, never one to go through the motions of working in the studio simply out of habit, he found himself confronting a void and lack of purpose in his daily life. However, he found joy in practicing archery and crafting bows, arrows, and targets in his backyard. The daily ritual of molding wood and bone nocks, filling, cutting, and straightening bamboo, became akin to his daily artistic rituals, but with a different purpose. Balancing an arrow was similar to creating a sculpture. Painting the bows used the same creative impulses as laying paint on a canvas. But he spent the evenings wondering what he was doing, and why, and felt a sense of guilt for not making work in the studio.



This difficult time period became the fuel for *Against Me*, a way to push back against himself and turn 2016, this year of inactivity, into a flourish of creativity. Vibrant self-portraits feature various elements of his everyday life: wine bottles, the lizards that live in his backyard, his shoes, various tools, and text such as “Fuck You Alessandro.” The bright colors of Los Angeles (the city he has most recently called home) mix with his Italian past: in one painting, the artist takes Scipione’s *Uomini che si voltano* (1930), one of the first paintings from childhood that he remembers seeing in a book, and transforms it into a neon-imbued landscape where his own image is found in the two men who turn around. And yet, for all of these self-reflections, each work is instilled with a sense of the universal, and contains a shared kinship of the human experience.

Pessoli also makes himself a literal target in a large-scale installation featuring silk-screened self-portraits at which the artist shoots his own hand-crafted bows. His archery tools feature prominently in another sculptural display, where the bows and arrows are placed on a wooden pedestal alongside an unglazed ceramic face and a bright red neon sign proclaiming 2016 an empty year. The delicately-made bows are splashed with brilliant painted colors and handwritten text.

On the third floor, visitors are invited to sit, relax, and spend some time immersed in *Sandrino*, Pessoli’s re-creation of a trattoria. Above painted brick wainscoting hangs a group of what he calls “Italian restaurant paintings” from 2015. These paintings are inspired by the typically bucolic and benign scenes of still lifes, fish, and sail boats one would usually find in these trattorias. In Pessoli’s versions, fish stare out with giant eyes and expressive mouths, still lifes exist in radical orange rooms, and a menacing skull figure is the one sailing the boat. On the simple wooden table stands another new unglazed ceramic to hold salt and

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pepper, bringing the material of clay and its origins to the forefront. The unglazed faces throughout the exhibition also reference Etruscan funerary sculptures, reflecting on a time, as the artist says, “where the end coincides with the new beginning.”

Alessandro Pessoli (born 1963 in Cervia, Italy) is an Italian artist who lives and works in Los Angeles. Beginning his career as an artist in the late 1980’s, Pessoli has exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions held at the MAN Museo d’art della Provincia di Nuo, Sardinia (2016); Palazzo della Triennale of Milano, Milan (2015-16); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012); the Nottingham Contemporary (2010); and the MACRO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rome (2009) among others.

Recent group shows include *Hope and Hazard: A Comedy of Eros*, Hall Art Collection, Reading, VT (2017); *After Morandi: 1945-2015*, Palazzo Fava Genus Bononiae, Bologna, Italy; *Almanach 16*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France; *Ceramix - Ceramics and art from Rodin to Schütte*, La Maison Rouge, Paris and Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, Netherlands; *Cité de la Céramique*, Sèvres, France (all 2016); *Le Stanze di Aragona #3*, Villino Favalaro, Palermo, Italy; and *Beyond Borders*, Beaufort Triennale, Raversyde, Beaufort (all 2015). Pessoli’s work was prominently featured in *Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution, 1968-2008* at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2008) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2009). A set of 30 drawings was included in the Venice Biennale as part of the *Making Worlds* section curated by Daniel Birnbaum (2009).

## **Press Inquiries**

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## **General Inquiries**

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## **Gallery Hours**

Tuesday through Saturday, 10am – 6pm