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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bertozzi & Casoni

Intervallo

8 January – 20 March 2010

Sperone Westwater is pleased to announce an exhibition of recent sculpture by the Italian team Bertozzi & Casoni. The artists' second solo show at the gallery, it consists of ceramic works in their remarkably realistic signature style. Bertozzi & Casoni reveal their brash and irreverent view of past arts and contemporary culture in their work.

While the political nature and satirical content of their sculptures is far removed from the traditional style of classic Italian ceramics, Bertozzi & Casoni maintain an emphasis on a continuous updating of themes and topics as well as the application of technological innovations, resulting from research on both products and the production process. The artists position their work in the liminal space between fine art and high-class handicraft, artwork and product, ornament and object. Their precision of technique and composition make the works hover between the real and surreal.

In their dynamic assemblages of found objects rendered in ceramic, Bertozzi & Casoni are fascinated by the concept of decay:

[We] believe that the true essence of things can be found in decay, in everything that has been rejected, in junk, in rubbish. It's from there that you can find resources to start again. In a post-atomic age, you could reconstruct everything, paradoxically.

Bertozzi & Casoni create scenes that depict the aftermath of modern human consumption and the fragility and transience of life, such as a tray of cracked eggs and a gorilla head on a platter. In *Composizione n. 12 (Cicogne)* (2008), two storks stand in a nest atop oil barrels and crates. They feed on the refuse of the world—empty soup and beer cans, a severed foot, Euros, and US dollar bills. The objects are carefully placed as in a vanitas still life. The birds become the innocent inheritors of our waste products.

In *Composizione-Scomposizione* (2007), the artists continue to comment on contemporary culture. In five large ceramic panels, pipes with valves and taps are installed; they are a part of an imaginary plumbing system that includes a lamp post, grenades, and empty detergent bottles. The pipes cover up cultural objects, such as religious and astrological imagery, advertisements, and newspaper pages. The plumbing can be interpreted as that which carries the refuse of the human body as well as the circularity or disorganization of the artistic process.

Composizione n. 13 (2008) is an installation of over 100 first aid kits mounted on the wall. The remnants of life—beehives, religious relics, gas mask, and other objects—exist in the cabinets, which represent the path to healing. In Bertozzi & Casoni's sculptures, everyday objects are emptied of their functions and reach a higher aesthetic level yet with a casualness that allows the public to freely interpret the work. The artists push the meaning of the work, as they do the medium of ceramic.

Giampaolo Bertozzi, born in Borgo Tossignano in 1957, and Stefano Dal Monte Casoni, born in Lugo di Romagna in 1961, met while studying at the Gaetano Ballardini Ceramic Art Institute of Faenza, Italy. In 1980, they founded a ceramics production company called "Bertozzi & Casoni s.n.c.," thereby inserting themselves into the tradition of workshops. With an accompanying publication, their last survey exhibition took place at Castello Sforzesco and Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza from 2008 to 2009. Most recently, their work was included in the Italian Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale. Bertozzi & Casoni currently live and work in Imola near Bologna, Italy.

There will be an opening reception for the artists on 8 January from 6-8 pm. For more information as well as photographic images, please contact Maryse Brand at Sperone Westwater at maryse@speronewestwater.com or (212) 999-7337. Please find further documentation on our website: www.speronewestwater.com.