

POSTMASTERS

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For immediate release:

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FEDERICO SOLMI

"Chinese Democracy and the Last Day on Earth"

opening Saturday February 16, 6-8 pm



Postmasters Gallery is pleased to announce our first exhibition with a NY based Italian artist Federico Solmi. The show will center around his most recent animated video *Chinese Democracy and the Last Day on Earth*, its prequel *A Song of Tyranny*, and a group of heavily textured video-paintings and objects.

Solmi reinvents the visual world of animation by creating and sequencing images using behind-the-scenes technology that he borrowed and adapted from film and gaming. For the visually saturated videos on view at Postmasters, Solmi has created hundreds of drawings and paintings as skins for a 3D game environment. The process involves real time performance recorded inside that environment through motion capture technology. Solmi himself enacts all the main characters in his films and provides the voiceovers, becoming, in effect, a one-man film studio.

Several paintings in the exhibition incorporate screens with animated sequences that expand on the videos' characters and storyline and literally enliven the stillness of a painted image. Other paintings re-represent the skins used for the animation resulting in images of toy-like objects and figures taken apart and flattened.

To execute the videos Solmi works in collaboration with Russell Lowe, an innovator in creative use of 3D game engines.

Through satirical commentary on authoritarian power structures Federico Solmi's videos aim to lampoon the contemporary societies and the self-destructive nature of mankind. In contrast with their playful faux-naïve aesthetics the videos indict a male dominated, hierarchal world controlled by corrupt, arrogant dictators, politicians, business and religious leaders as forces behind the disintegration of ethical and moral values. Solmi has envisioned *Chinese Democracy and the Last Day on Earth* as the central component in a trilogy. The first part, or prelude, *A Song of Tyranny*, introduces the Chinese protagonist being interviewed by an American journalist about his rise to power: a leader becoming a dictator - idolized, invincible and hell-bent on the invasion of America. In *Chinese Democracy and the Last Day on Earth*, the tale begins idyllically in the Garden of Eden and ends in a bloody takeover of the Times Square.

In Whitehot Magazine Megan Abrams writes about Solmi's works:

A satirical tale, two years in the making, "Chinese Democracy and the Last Day on Earth," is a fictional portrayal of a ruthless Chinese ruler who leads a surge of goose-stepping soldiers in an invasion of Times Square, the last phase of his total world domination. In the triumphant finale, the larger-than-life dictator floats balloon-like in the parade above a cheering crowd. It's ironic that while the conquering army demolishes Times Square, an image of a billboard for "The Hunger Games" emerges in the background -- a sort of tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of another fictional commentary on the collapse of Western civilization and culture.

Solmi's paintings -- frozen action scenes like film stills, but with much more intensity and richness, are composed with staggering and sometimes lurid detail. The artist's vivid palette, predominated by blood red, bright green and neon yellow -- is topped off with lavish gold leaf embellishment. Spin-offs and/or precursors of the videos, the paintings offer close-up views into the artist's imagined world.

Solmi's imagery is childlike -- but paradoxically not with the accompanying naivete of a child's point of view. It's clear he is having fun ridiculing the values of our misguided society -- corruption, greed, power and excess. A kind of visionary who proffers a cautionary tale in words and pictures, Solmi may be pulling our leg and warning us at the same time. His vision is all once playful, imaginative, gruesome, amusing, violent and shocking. Brilliant, yes. We can only hope it is not prophetic.

Whitehot Magazine November 2012

Solmi's earlier videos have featured a selfish and greedy Wall Street executive, *Douche Bag City* (2010), presented in *The Dissolve*—2010 SITE Santa Fe Biennial, and a fictional online porn-addicted Pope, *The Evil Empire* (2007), which has been at the center of several high-profile censorship cases in Europe, the most recent in 2011.

A self-taught artist, Federico Solmi was born in 1973 in Bologna. In 2009 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship Grant in Video category.

Solmi's work has been internationally exhibited in numerous museums and festivals including: Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, Paris; The Drawing Center, New York; SITE Santa Fe, NM; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Kasseler Kunstverein, and the Kassel Documentary Film and Video Festival, Kassel; National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow; CA2M Centro de Arte de Mayo, Madrid; Australian Center of Moving Images, Melbourne; Victoria Memorial Museum, Calcutta; Contemporary Art Center of Rouboix; Palazzo Delle Arti, Naples; Palazzo Delle Esposizioni, Rome; and Impakt Film and Video Festival, Utrecht.

Solmi's 2013 upcoming exhibitions and screenings include: Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Arts, Israel; Paris; Italian Cultural Institute of Madrid, Spain; and Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennial in China.

Solmi's work has received critical reviews and been featured in publications such as Artforum, Art in America, Flash Art, Tema Celeste, ArtNet.com, Artinfo.com, Artfacts.net, Art Actuelle, Contemporary, Marie Claire, Glamour, L'Espresso, and newspapers such as The New York Times, Le Figaro, New York Daily News, El Mundo, El Pais, il Giornale, Il Mattino, il Corriere della Sera, and La Repubblica. In 2007, SKY TV, an Italian digital satellite television platform, aired a one-hour feature presentation about his videos on their culture channel, Leonardo.

Postmasters Gallery located at 459 West 19th Street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6
Please contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with questions and image requests postmasters@thing.net www.postmastersart.com