

“Why Joyce Pensato Is Having the Last Laugh,” *HENI News*, August 21, 2024.



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Joyce Pensato in her studio in Brooklyn in 2018. Photo by Elizabeth Ferry. Courtesy Joyce Pensato Foundation.

Joyce Pensato is on the HENI News radar as collectors snap up her messed up, "lobotomized" cartoon characters.

Joyce Pensato's HENI Score—a unique artist sentiment index—has jumped by an impressive 121% in the past three months due to strong sales of the late artist's bold, exuberant paintings that riff on cartoon characters and popular culture without a hint of saccharine. Pensato, who was known as "Fizz" and died in 2019 aged 77, has been described as an "artists' artist". Her friend Christopher Wool, is a board member of the Joyce Pensato Foundation.

Pensato's expressive works are being snapped up by collectors at auction. Her sales have totaled \$666,900 over the past two years, reflecting her growing posthumous profile, which builds on late-career success.

Notable recent sales include her *Golden Groucho* (2014), which sold for \$189,000 at Sotheby's, Pensato's highest sale in the past three years. *Blinky's Brother* (2007), sold at Christie's, New York, for \$131,200—more than two and a half times its high estimate. However, *Donald* (1997), a riff on

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Donald Duck which had a low estimate of \$102,300, did not find a buyer at Sotheby's, Hong Kong, in April 2024.

Her paintings, often mainly painted in black and white enamel paint first suggested by Wool, also feature occasional splashes of color, such as gold and silver. They have been presented at major art fairs, such as Art Basel in Hong Kong, by her dealers. Large-scale works have been offered for \$250,000 to \$350,000 over the past two years.

Her works have been presented by Petzel Gallery, Lisson Gallery and Venus Over Manhattan. Pensato's late, large-scale painting *The Original Mickey* (2018) was among the eye-catching works chosen by the curator Robert Storr for the group exhibition “Retinal Hysteria” at Venus Over Manhattan in 2024.

The most recent solo show of Pensato's work was organized by Petzel Gallery in New York in 2021. Titled “Fuggetabout It (Redux),” the two-venue exhibition referred back to her first “Fuggetabout it” show in 2012, which included signature paintings and charcoal drawings along with the artist's collection of toys, knickknacks and props from the Brooklyn studio, a former dance hall, that she had just been forced to vacate.

To keep up to speed with Joyce Pensato's sales and shows, see the artist's HENI News Dashboard.

“I like being messy and I love throwing paint around fucking it all up. But I also like the structure drawing provides.”

- Art Review

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