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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bertozzi & Casoni

New Sculpture
1-30 April 2005

Sperone Westwater is pleased to announce an exhibition of sculpture by the Italian artistic team of Bertozzi & Casoni. The exhibition consists of works in their highly detailed and realistic signature style, crafted by hand in ceramic. At once playful and dark, the sculptures offer an impressive and contemporary spin on an age-old art form. While their medium is traditional and their technical skills remarkable, what distinguishes their sculpture most is their brash and irreverent view of past arts and contemporary culture.

Their intricate realistic trays of cracked eggs, half-drunk espresso cups, cigarette butts, and soiled newspapers suggest the aftermath of modern human consumption. In many sculptures, such scenes of the detritus of human civilization are presided over by animals—parrots, gorillas, snails, etc.—that sit atop oil barrels and peer out of medicine cabinets, the innocent inheritors of our waste products. Bertozzi & Casoni are fascinated by the concept of decay, stating they “always start with the idea of decay, because it is a very intense vision of the world...the true essence of things can be found in decay, in everything that has been rejected, in junk, in rubbish. It is in decay where you can perceive true life, where you can see a human being’s essence, not in the glossy image which is simply a wonderful and deceptive coating.”

In their dynamic sculptures of assemblages of found objects recast in ceramic, Bertozzi & Casoni pay homage to several great historic artists: Manzoni, in the form of cans of *Merda d’artista*, and Warhol, in the recurring motif of the Brillo box and the cameo appearance of Warhol’s dog Archie. While the political nature and satirical content of their sculptures is far removed from the traditional della Robbia style of Italian ceramics, Bertozzi & Casoni maintain an emphasis on craft and handiwork in their creations. Thus, the artists position their work in the liminal space between fine art and craft, artwork and product, ornament and object. According to Edward Lucie-Smith, “At a time when virtuosity in handling physical materials is still suspect, [the work of Bertozzi & Casoni] has the courage to embrace the idea of skill.”

Giampaolo Bertozzi, born in Bologna in 1957, and Stefano Dal Monte Casoni, born in Ravenna in 1961, met while studying at the Ceramic Art College of Faenza, Italy. In 1980, they founded a ceramics production company called “Bertozzi & Casoni s.n.c.,” thereby inserting themselves into the long tradition of craftsmen’s studios. In 2001, their work was featured in an exhibition at the Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Bologna. Most recently, their sculpture was included in a group exhibition at Tate Liverpool entitled “A Secret History of Clay: From Gauguin to Gormley” (28 May – 30 August 2004). Bertozzi & Casoni currently live and work in Imola near Bologna, Italy. This is their first solo exhibition in New York.

There will be an opening reception, with the artists in attendance, on 1 April from 6-8 pm. A catalogue with color reproductions and an interview with the artists accompanies the exhibition. For more information as well as photographic images, please contact Molly Epstein at Sperone Westwater at (212) 999-7337, or info@speronewestwater.com. Also, please find further documentation on our website: www.speronewestwater.com.