

## SPOTLIGHT

## KAREN WILBERDING DIEFENBACH

*The Pecore: Recent Sculpture*

November 1- December 14, 2012

Opening reception: Thursday, November 1, 6-8 pm

## ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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415-788-7142 [www.karenwilberdingdiefenbach.com](http://www.karenwilberdingdiefenbach.com)[http://www.iicsanfrancisco.esteri.it/IIC\\_SanFrancisco/Menu/Gli\\_Eventi/Calendario/mon-fri 11-5](http://www.iicsanfrancisco.esteri.it/IIC_SanFrancisco/Menu/Gli_Eventi/Calendario/mon-fri 11-5) or by appt

The work of San Francisco artist Karen Wilberding Diefenbach, on view this month at the Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco, brings an old-world appreciation for tradition, ritual and endurance to contemporary American sculpture.

Diefenbach's focus in life-size and miniature bronze sculptures, and mixed media works on paper, is the Pecore

Massese sheep, an endangered old-world species which grazes near her home and studio near Lucca, Italy.

The animals, their shepherd, and the harsh beauty of their home in the Tuscan hills serve Diefenbach as both muse and metaphor. With long necks, spindly legs, anvil-shaped heads and black mantles, the Massese are at once vulnerable and enduring, sentinels of an ancient time grazing in the present-day. Says Diefenbach, "The Pecore display both modesty and strength; they have a quality of survival about them; they are guardians of their environment."

Diefenbach's bronzes retain the pentimenti and warmth of clay, with a unique patina applied to each piece. A new series of large pastel paintings and 'portraits' of the Pecore become meditations on color and form punctuated by the hypnotic gaze of their subjects.

Diefenbach received her MFA from the S.F. Art Institute and studied there with Manuel Neri. She has shown extensively in the U.S. and internationally. Her 2010 solo exhibition at the ARIA Gallery in Florence, Italy, was featured in *Vogue Italia* and *The Huffington Post*. In 2013, a 'flock' of Wilberding's life-size Pecore will grace the *Piazza Grande* of Arrezzo, Italy.



KAREN WILBERDING DIEFENBACH "Anima," 2012, bronze #1/3, with unique patina, 34 x 47 x 15 inches