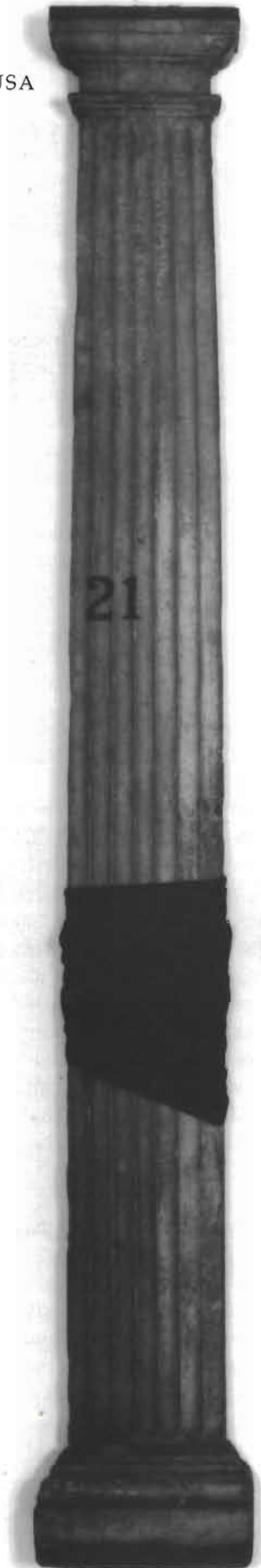


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# LISA SETTE GALLERY NEWSLETTER

Winter 1995

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## A CONVERSATION WITH MAURIZIO PELLEGRIN

Venice, Italy, December 25, 1994

Lisa Sette: Your work is quiet, yet striking, and I wondered how you came to work with these vintage objects in a contemporary manner?

Maurizio Pellegrin: The contemporaneity that pervades my work is the spirit of the development of an understanding that results from preceding cultural, spiritual and social experiences; in different contexts, of the work of humanity filtered through my subjective and personal vision. Contemporaneity means perception of one's own spatial dimensions and consciousness of one's own existence in the universe that is contained there and that we contain—from the microcosm of our entity to the macrocosm of the universe.

The vintage objects I use are a pretext for the communicative ends in my work, by which, once decontextualized and charged with new energy and functions, serve to weave new relationships. These old objects come thus, manipulated by me, to exploit the energy of their previous function and memory, like the atomic composition of our body that even when very old produces change and endeavors to evolve. Contemporaneous then is the vision of the world at a certain moment according to several historians, but the elements that strive toward those ends can have distant and ancient origins.

LS: Collecting is obviously an important part of your process. Do you have any rules or passions when you come across these forgotten objects?

MP: I have often reflected on whether it is I who collects objects or whether it is they themselves that have, from time to time, met up with my sensibility—a kind of parallel destiny that establishes itself between me and the things that surround me.

Still, the objects I choose for my work change substantially in relationship to the place where I happen to find them. In Europe they come more often from distant historic times and space. They show signs of the culture of the place, of diverse customs and usages. In the United States, I am primarily attracted by objects that come from the various ethnic elements which make up the American population and objects tied to the daily life of recent American history, tied to the power and the determination of new generations straining to create a new identity for themselves. From the Orient, on the other hand, I draw the seduction of elements tied to the subtle, mystical spirit of those populations and a world vision almost opposed to the western culture that is always stretched toward more material concepts and the affirmation of a state of power.

The only rules I use are instinct and perception, and every time I learn about the existence of something that goes beyond what my eyes are able to see or my other senses are able to perceive. Moreover, it is important that I venture to find a resonance with the things I encounter in such a way that I can recognize the signals they send me. All our existence turns around the task of recognizing the signals that the harmony of the universe transmits. Even if often we neglect that task, it must be the foundation of the principle of evolution, our real spiritual objective.

LS: Many of your works have a suggestion of a narrative and I read somewhere that your installations were like "essays." How do you view them?

MP: My work is composed of fragments that tend toward unity, just as our body is composed of millions of cells that tend toward unity and as the universe is composed of planets and other things tending toward unity.

Sometimes the fragments from which I compose my work pair up like the chapters or parts of a novel, a story, an essay, that have individual value but that, when seen as a unit, give a different sense, useful to the comprehension of the final message that I intend to convey in the current work.

My works are the transformation into physical, visual and spiritual form of the only thing that art underlies, and that is thought. Therefore the artist moves in the realm of thought and philosophy. Consequently, because at the end of this millennium very many complicated facts must be kept in mind in order to effect a change in the thought of our epoch, my works strive to sum up all those elements like great essays. Without therefore losing in poetic meaning and narrative development (all that which speaks and proceeds from the narrative word of this world), my work underlies this philosophical, scientific and spiritual engagement.

LS: You often incorporate photography and numbers into your work. Both measure time and space and bring a certain energy to the work. Can you tell me more about this?

MP: From Plato to Pythagoras, from the ancient Cabbala comes the wisdom of the consideration of what important elements the numbers will be in the story and movement of the universe.

The numbers have a symbolic value and, at the same time, are the quantification of the energies that derive from the forms and all the beings—dynamic energies from memory, occult vibrations that permeate the whole. This is the reason why I apply numerical values to the objects that compose my work. There exist then individual energy values for individual objects and general energy values that proceed from the addition of all the factors in order to arrive at a key number that I usually affix to the principal object and often to the photographs contained within the work.

The photos have a function that is often regulatory and mysterious in my compositions. Because I sometimes also use old photos, these same things are filled with energy and distant memories.

However, the energies of the earlier functions of the objects added to the energies of memory, obtain a new function and a new sense of energy and global harmony.

LS: You once stated that “Italy is a culture full of memories.” Does your country continue to inspire you?

MP: Certainly the place of my culture is still very important to the maintenance of my poetry and identity. I think, however, and personally I have tried to test this, that at the end of this millennium it will be impossible to think of producing thought without the opportunity of total contact with the world. Especially today, when rapid technology lets us think that we are only able to advance through information, instead the direct grasp of reality is irreplaceable, especially when one speaks of spirit and not only of matter. Besides, the thought of an artist must consider a totality that includes other races, cultures, religions, histories, events, because our plan must be the plan for the world, the teaching of peace and spiritual evolution—where art becomes the vehicle for the development of self knowledge with which every human being would have to try to be both participant and protagonist in the harmony of this, our universe.

(Translated from Italian by Karen Hodges)

Cover Image: Maurizio Pellegrin, *Conosco le tue Parole (I Know What You are Saying)*, mixed media, 95 x 56 x 10”

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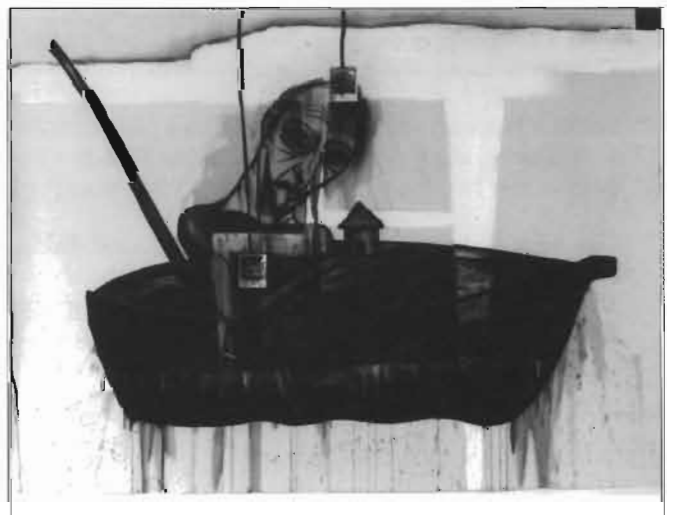
## WINTER EXHIBITIONS

### JANUARY

### LUIS CRUZ AZACETA

#### *FRAGILE CROSSING*

Luis Cruz Azaceta, a Cuban born emigrant, has developed a boldly personal expressionistic painting style that documents his lived experience of urban America since coming here in the 60s. Using his own image, the artist represents the urban dweller as a vulnerable and often isolated figure threatened by both his environment and the people who share it. The artist stands as a witness of the times, reflecting that which he sees before him—disturbing or not. A recurring theme used by Azaceta is that of the displaced individual. Marked by his own exile from Cuba, the artist realizes that home is something he carries with him from place to place. Through his piercing expressionism, Azaceta depicts the frailty of human existence amidst a world full of social anarchy, historically mandated violence and natural chaos.



*Balscro: La Casita, 1994, acrylic & mixed media, 60-1/2 x 82-1/2”*

## THROUGH THE ARCH

### DOCUMENTS & MONUMENTS:

### BOTANICAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY

## KARL BLOSSFELDT (1865-1932)

Karl Blossfeldt was a late nineteenth century German photographer who traveled to Italy, Greece and North Africa between 1890-1896, compiling a collection of photographs of natural forms for the purpose of instruction in the study of art. After 1898, Blossfeldt assembled these images into an archive of plant photographs that have influenced twentieth century and contemporary artists such as Edward Weston, Joan Fontcuberta and Robert Mapplethorpe. Blossfeldt's importance resonates through the last century not only in photography, but also painting, sculpture and architecture.



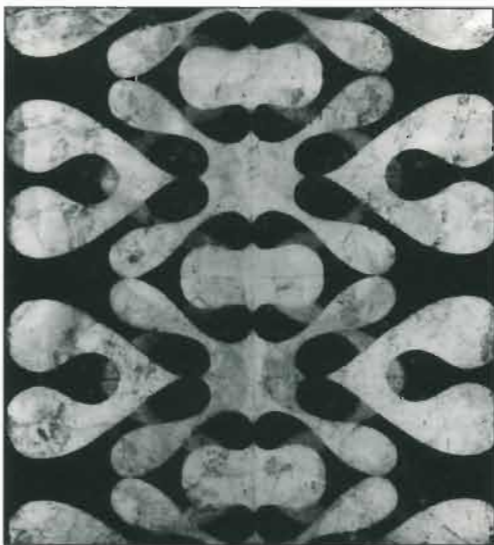
*Abutilon*, gelatin silver print, 10 x 8"

Both exhibitions will open Thursday, January 5, with a reception from 7-9 pm and will continue through Saturday, January 28.

## FEBRUARY

### KEN KELLY

### NEW PAINTINGS AND MONOTYPES



Seattle based artist Ken Kelly's abstract paintings echo various naturally occurring striations such as the undersides of leaves, tiger stripes and shells. The artist skillfully reminds us that patterns and repetitions are both natural and meaningful. Kelly has developed an organic abstraction with forms that undulate across the surface, as if in motion. His simple repeated arcs begin to resonate. The visual patterning looks like sound. Particular images vibrate with greater or lesser frequency as they glide through the eroded, cracked and splattered spaces. Textures emerge from beneath the surface. Close examination reveals the contradiction of control versus physicality. Unified by their all over patterns and graceful markings, Kelly's paintings hint at a focused investigation of minutiae.

*Swing*, 1994, oil & acrylic on canvas, 44 x 40"

THROUGH THE ARCH  
MAYME KRATZ  
*ROOTS & WINGS*

Mayme Kratz incorporates into her work plant and animal materials from the desert near her home in Phoenix. Working in both painting and sculpture, she creates intimate and complex statements reflecting the forces of nature and its relationship to man. Kratz's paintings are somber in palette, employing deep browns, sepia tones and lush earthy colors. Richly textured, her paintings of trees, mysterious figures, and floating objects are surrounded by integrated mixed media frames of bark, leaves and feathers. In Kratz's delicate and poetic sculptural works, she encases these collected materials in resin forms which glow with an ethereal, mystical quality.



*Sphere #2, 1994, resin & root, 9-1/2" dia.*

Both exhibitions will open with a reception for the artists on Thursday, February 2, from 7-9 pm, and will continue through Saturday, February 25.

MARCH

MAURIZIO PELLEGRIN

*I KNOW YOUR WORDS*

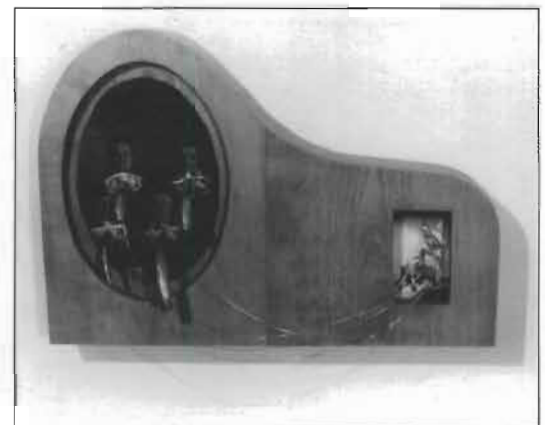
An omnivorous collector, Maurizio Pellegrin arranges constellations of objects which resonate with fertile associations. Through a process of cataloguing, compartmentalizing and juxtaposing diverse elements within a geometric framework, Pellegrin imbues the materials he has gathered in his wide-ranging travels with a host of secreted meanings. His vintage objects project a collective identity, one suffused with an intuitive understanding of the value of memory and perception. Born in Venice, Italy, the shadows of time and memory, which are rooted in this highly cultured city of water and light, inform Pellegrin's work. His art is about dreams and possibilities told through utilitarian, even common objects which are very much representative of a certain time and place. Removed from this context, they are reexamined and redefined by contemporary associations. Pellegrin's materials nurture his belief that representative imagery or linear modes of communication cannot describe or define the ambiguities of interior experience.

THROUGH THE ARCH

LIZ BIRKHOLZ

*HULL LINKAGE*

*Hull Linkage*, a new selection of works by Seattle artist Liz Birkholz, weaves together the artist's family history and her present reflections on living. Birkholz creates hollow wood structures in which found objects and photographs are elegantly placed. These works speak to the metaphor of a hull (the bottom of a boat or the outer covering of a tree) and reflect upon our human experience of carrying memory and reflection inside us as our bodies move through everyday existence. These inner spaces make for a personal buoyancy which contributes to defining identity.

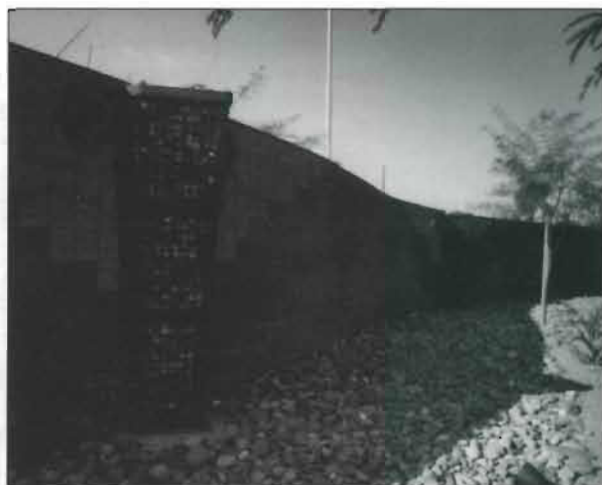


*Manifest, 1994, photo transparency, gelatin silver print & mixed media, 13 x 19 x 5-1/4"*

Both exhibitions will open with a reception for the artists on Thursday, March 2, from 7-9 pm and will continue through Saturday, April 1.

## ARTIST NEWS ➤ ARTIST NEWS ➤ ARTIST NEWS ➤ ARTIST NEWS

- Phoenix sculptor **Kevin Berry** recently completed a public art project along the west couplet of Goldwater Boulevard, south of Indian School Road in Scottsdale, Arizona. The work includes wall and landscape elements derivative of the environment here in the upper Sonoran desert. The undulating wall is built of stone faced blocks in a palette of earthy tones; the resulting pattern echoes the silhouette of Camelback mountain which is visible from the site, indeed from much of the area. The wall is accentuated at regular intervals with gridded steel columns featuring a wing design at the top of each. These are filled with river rocks from the Salt River, another significant feature of the local landscape. Native ocotillo plants grow behind the wall and seem to sprout from the tops of the columns. Landscape elements along the sidewalk include tree grates and guards that incorporate sun and root patterns and a motif based on the leaf of the mesquite tree, which they surround. A bus shelter and additional elements along the east couplet will be added later in 1995. The piece was commissioned through the Public Art Program for the City of Scottsdale.



Detail of West Couplet, Goldwater Boulevard, Scottsdale, Arizona

- Chilean photographer **Alexandra Edwards** proudly announces the birth of her son Pascual at Mt Sinai Hospital in New York on May 4, 1994, weighing 8.5 pounds and measuring 21 inches long. Now at 7-1/2 months, she describes his three strongest qualities: "He is always laughing, he has big ears and practically no hair! I think he will be a comedian when he grows up!" Alexandra eagerly anticipates her return to the studio within the next couple of months. Congratulations!
- Photographer **David Levinthal** of New York recently joined the group of artists represented by Lisa Sette Gallery. The 1994 exhibition catalogue *Dark Light* describes his work: "His photographs are intricate tableaux, richly coloured, in which scenes that draw heavily on the language of film and Hollywood's images of a mythic America, are re-enacted with toy figures.... In his work the world becomes a game, a rich but statuesque fiction that the artist has developed into a strange, haunting blend of childhood reverie and adult nightmare."  
David recently has been featured in solo exhibitions in such venues as the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona, and The Friends of Photography, Ansel Adams Center, San Francisco, California. His work is currently on view through February at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York City in an exhibition of photographs from the museum's permanent collection. This year will see the exhibition of his series *Mein Kampf* at the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna and the Berkeley Museum of Art, California, as well as the publication of a new book *Small Wonder: Worlds in a Box* by the Smithsonian Institute as part of its American Scene Series. In a November 25, 1994 review of David's new work, the *New York Times* says, "What distinguishes Mr. Levinthal's work is his interest in emotionally charged historical material. But the real force of his images comes not from his choice of subjects but from the way he tells their stories."
- The gallery sadly announces the death of **Frank Martin**. Born in 1942 in New Orleans, Frank found his way to Houston Texas, where he lived and made photographs. Frank was found in his darkroom on December 22, an apparent heart attack the cause of death. Critic Richard Nilsen wrote of Frank's work, "Dark, enigmatic...blunt and primitive they are infected with the colors of chemical contamination.... But the decomposition of the pictures is under the control of an artist. The work also speaks of mortality; death as a process and not an event, a verb, not a noun. Yet there is also a vitality in them. They are burning...dying but alive." We will miss you Frank.
- **William Wegman** and **Christine Burgin** are pleased to announce the birth of their son Atlas George Wegman on November 6, 1994, weighing 6 pounds and measuring 17 inches long. The new family is doing well, although Christine admits that Atlas is now running the show at home. What must Faye and Battina think? Congratulations to the new family!
- **Lisa Sette Gallery** will participate for the fourth year in **The Photography Show 1995** sponsored by the Association of International Photography Art Dealers, February 17-19 at the New York Hilton Hotel, 53rd Street and 6th Avenue, New York City. The exhibition will feature work by gallery artists Liz Birkholz, Karl Blossfeldt, David Levinthal, Marie Navarre, Luis Gonzalez Palma and William Wegman. Please visit us at booth #215 from noon to 8 pm on Friday and Saturday, and 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday.