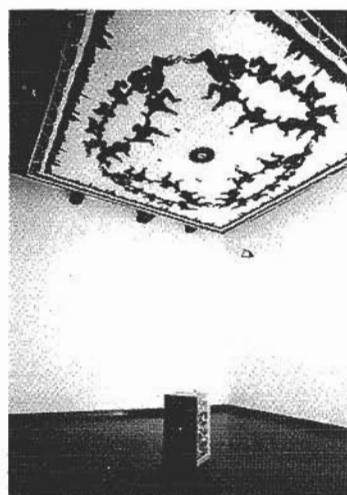


Roberto Pellegriuzzi, *Le Naufrage (The shipwreck)*, 1988, mixed media: photograph, ca. 70 x 95", table, ca. 35 x 44 x 30".



Felice Levini, *Angeli (Angels)*, 1990. Installation view.

latter become a sort of public diary of inner thoughts that refer to the outer social skin of the narrative visual story being depicted. By placing two supposedly different styles of painting in tandem, Meigs heightens the implied tension between two alternate states of being—one physical and immediate, the other mental and dissociative. The heroes and heroines of Meigs' installation act out their emotions through a beguiling admixture of verbal and visual cues. They suggest, through a play on words and gestures, that the physical form of all social exchanges is instigated by a myriad of coded, unconscious signals.

—John K. Grande

TORONTO

ROBERTO PELLEGRINUZZI

YYZ

Roberto Pellegriuzzi deconstructs photography into sculptural theater. He combines objects—photo-sculptures, really—with large, conventionally presented photographs. His work exhibits a high degree of formal self-consciousness. Pellegriuzzi links this formal self-absorption to a statement about photography's ultimate solipsism, its unreliability as a record of reality.

Much recent photographic practice is predicated on such a negative reading. Photography's illusion of transparency, its false immediacy, its spurious representational authority become working assets in the context of post-Modern art. It is *the* medium of debased consciousness, a sort of real world analogue for unrooted subjectivity. And while this negative reading is perhaps overstressed, a romance of theory in search of another

obstacle, the notion is pervasive. Photography exists in contemporary art as a negative sign; it is conceived of as an oppositional space. Pellegriuzzi's exhibition is about this sense of opposition. The work explores photography's invasiveness, the way it inhabits reality. His pictures—whether *Le Passage* (The passage), *La Chute* (The waterfall), or *Le Naufrage* (The shipwreck), all 1988—literally come down off the wall into the gallery. Real space and photographic space are jumbled. The photographs pretend to the semblance of real things; they pose problems of recognition, problems of knowing.

The polemic edge, however, is aestheticized. The work is deft in the way it indicates diminishment that separate the photographic from the real. In *Le Naufrage*, for instance, the wall image portion of the work shows a view through a window to a beach and water beyond. The vista, however, is not the primary subject. Pellegriuzzi double-exposes the window frame and shifts natural visual emphasis from the view through the window to a "purely" photographic space in front. This complication is preemptive; it abridges the view, leaving it stranded in favor of a representational commitment that is inward and self-reflexive. On the floor, two desks—one sitting on top of the other in front of the photograph—duplicate the shifting image planes of the double-exposure. That they are desks reinforces the notion of photography as a representational mechanism, a "writing" practice, rather than a tool of vision. In fact, all of the sculptural objects here clown with our perception of them. From a distance they look reliably solid; up close they dissolve into shapes covered with a photographic veneer.

Disappointment and secrecy figure into this work. Things are less than we expect them to be and are vaguely inscrutable, too.

There is the suggestion of something beyond the surface in the desks, drawers, and cabinets, which, as objects, act as a counterpoint to the photographs. They are enclosures, containers, things with limited insides—precise volumes that raise the sculptural ante by implying a small dark space hidden behind the picture surface. This space is a camera metaphor but also a refusal of bright, transparent visual ease. Photography—not just the camera—is a box, a trap. Pellegriuzzi's imagery is usually connected with water—the beach of *Le Naufrage*, the canoe trip in *Le Passage*, the cascade in *La Chute*—and it constitutes a dream of fluidity in the face of the claustrophobia of photography. This is a poignant and paradoxical compensation: a desire for flight compounding level-headed rebellion.

—Richard Rhodes

ROME

FELICE LEVINI GALLERIA PIO MONTI

Where do angels live? Above our heads, in the skies of our cities. With an installation that recalls Wim Wenders' Berlin angels, Felice Levini has imagined them suspended in the sky above Rome, sketching them in black on white at the center of a cloth outlined by the skyline of the Eternal City, and then stretching the cloth across the ceiling. One might say that those wingless shapes flying above the city are not angels, but really humans, the outlines of acrobatic parachutists, fixed and stopped in a timeless space that Levini creates with an ambiguity that refers as much to the craziness of science as to the power of the imagination and the