



Elena Kervinen. Wings. 2019. Gold tip and pencil on marble

VISUAL ARTS / EXHIBITIONS

# Elena Kervinen. The fragmentation of the spirit

Ramon Casalé Soler Dec. 20, 2021

*The first time I got to know Elena Kervinen's work was twenty years ago on the occasion of an exhibition that she held in the now closed María José Castellví Gallery entitled "Tesoros", where she showed a large number of small-sized oils on wood, copper and silver. In fact, I was surprised that they were so small, since it seemed that the purpose of it was to carry them in the pocket and then deposit them in any space in our home or on the work table. It was not necessary, therefore, to hang them on the wall, as happens with paintings. She herself affirmed that a "treasure is something small, containing memories and feelings that I want to keep".*

**Elena Kervinen. Immortal**  
El quadern Robot gallery  
Còrsega, 267, main floor 2a B. Barcelona  
Until February 12, 2022

They were boxes, books and frames that could be folded and covered. The works dealt with sensitive and emotional subjects that gave a feeling of calm and placidity, such as landscapes and portraits of young children. The landscape made reference to what was its closest environment, specifically in the region of La Selva. The circumstance of being in the middle of nature caused him very different visions of the landscape such as light, color, shadows ... Everything fades until a mysterious and dream-evocative atmosphere originates. The childhood characters that appeared were part of her childhood memories. The realism of these works had something dreamlike, although far from the surrealist ideology.

Elena Kervinen (Finland, 1970) has studied at the Vapaa Taidekoulu, the Helsinki School of Art, the Massana School in Barcelona, the Winchester School of Art in the United Kingdom and the École Beaux Arts de Saint-Étienne. She has been living in Catalonia for approximately thirty years. Currently, she lives and works in the town of Viladrau in the Osona region. She directed the art gallery La Galeria de Barcelona together with Josep Mastuset, where they mainly exhibited Nordic artists. In 1999 she won the prize for the best young artist awarded by the Artexpo fair, which was endowed with 350,000 pesetas and which was the first time it had been awarded. She was presented by the María José Castellví Gallery, a space where she exhibited for the first time individually in 2000. Since 2016 she has been exhibiting at the El quadern robot gallery.



Elena Kervinen. Immortal. 2021. Triptych. Oil on granite

## Immortal

"Immortal" is the title of the exhibition that she now presents in El quadern robot, through a dozen oil paintings and drawings on marble and granite made during the period 2019-2021, which follow the trail of the three works that she showed some months in the same space on the occasion of the collective *La maleta eqr*. It is divided into two parts; one with fragments of white marble, and the other with fragments of black granite. The fact of working with marble started in 2006; however, the use of granite is more recent. She found it by chance, since "one day, while she was looking for material for her works (...) she discovered a fragment of granite that attracted her attention above all others". The fragment came from a tombstone that had the N letter engraved on it, a letter that coincides with the three of the artist's last name. Both the letter N and the circumstance that comes from a tombstone as a synonym for death, from the past, she decided that the title of the exhibition would be that of "Immortal", since "immortality is an old wish of humanity. Eternal life has been the promise of many religions and a theme present in philosophy, from Plato to Saint Thomas Aquinas".

The first work that receives the public is *Wings* (2019), made with a gold tip and pencils on marble. There are five fragments of different formats in which wings are faintly appreciated. The idea of fragmenting marble is recent, specifically from 2018. The next piece is *Post* (2021) also created with the same materials as the previous one. In this case it is about two joined fragments that, if we look closely, do not fit. On the left side there is a little bird, which, when I saw it from a distance, looked like lips to me, but the artist warned me of my mistake, by approaching to the work, I would actually see what it was about. In any case, they are works that allow various interpretations. *The life of the dragonfly II* (2019) and *Feathers 4* (2021), were also in the previous exhibition in El quadern robot. Both the insect and the feathers convey the idea of lightness, or what is the same, of freedom.

The rest of the works are oil paintings on granite with the background of the white walls of the gallery that, together with the lighting, create a special atmosphere, since shadows appear that broaden them, as if they had a continuation. Even if it is to see them frontally, these small sculptures-paintings-installations must also be observed from their sides, since for the artist they have the same importance, despite the irregularities.



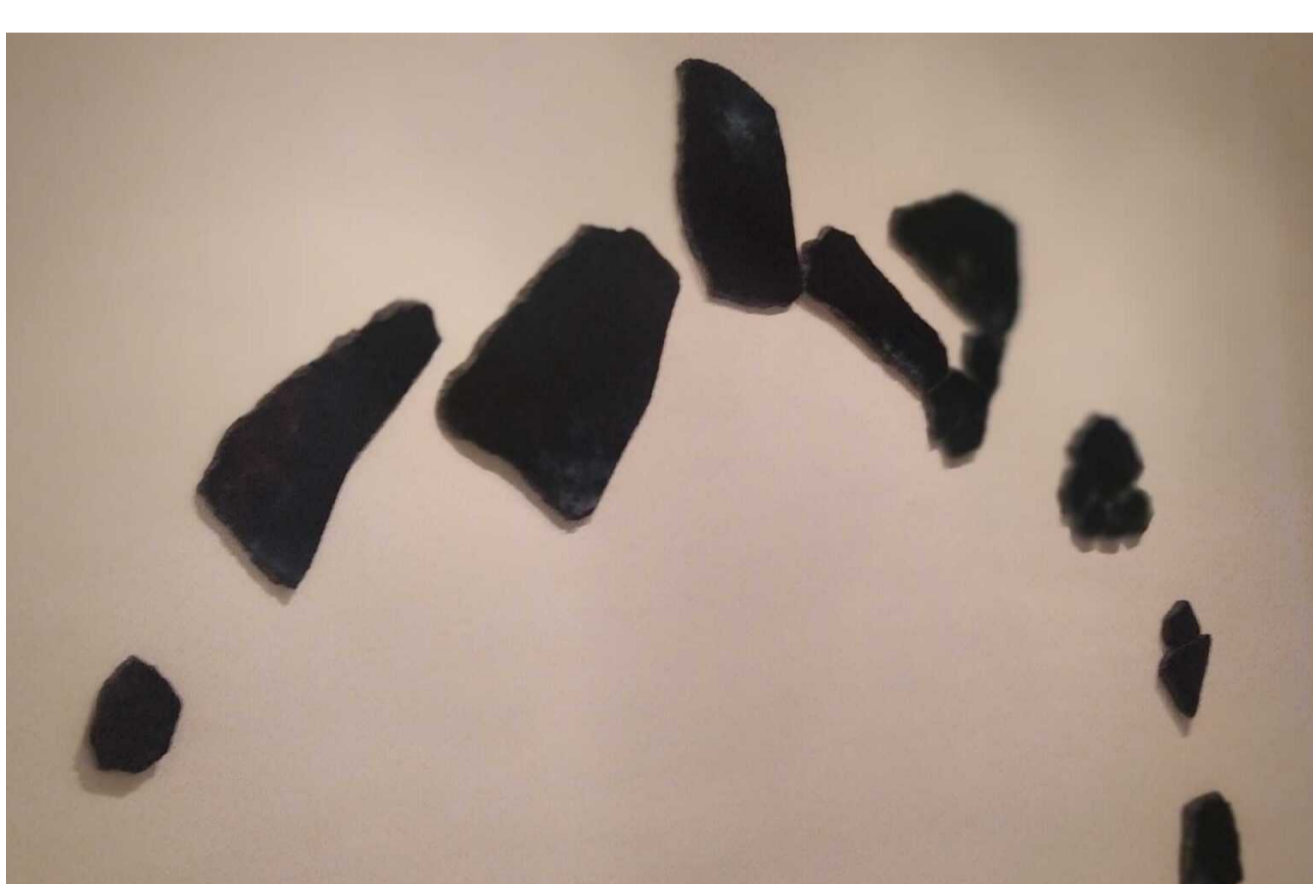
Elena Kervinen. The life of the dragonfly II. 2019. Diptych. Pencils, crayons, gold tip and oil on marble



Elena Kervinen. Save the light. 2020. Oil on granite

They are works where the universe appears, traveling through "the earthly to the cosmic or spiritual, along a path of introspection and study", such as *Fragments of the universe* (2019) and *Orion* (2021), in which a large number of fragments of different proportions seem to move along the white walls. In the first case, Kervinen comments that there is "no reference to a rectangular shape, which we are used to in paintings". She herself wonders if the universe is infinite. In the second case, the constellation of Orion is the protagonist. A constellation that the artist contemplates from her home, where light pollution is not present. Winter is the best season to see it, at least in the Northern Hemisphere. It is believed that the origin of the word Orion comes from the Akkadian "Uru-anna", which means "the light of heaven" and that it will later appear in Greek mythology.

The piece that gives its name to the exhibition is *Immortal*. It is a vertically installed triptych. In the middle fragment there is the letter N which, as we mentioned before, comes from a granite tombstone. The letter N could be confused with the Roman numeral IV, since the upper part of the letter is missing. Next to it, another letter is guessed, but we cannot identify it. Immortality, that is, living forever, has been the dream of many human beings. Immortality is believed to be the path that leads to death according to some religions. For the artist, this idea of immortality, of the infinite, "beats in all of her recent works (...). The greatness of infinity cannot be understood without everyday life, without the small details that surround us, without the simple things in our environment that she observes in detail".



Elena Kervinen. Orion. 2021. Oil on granite

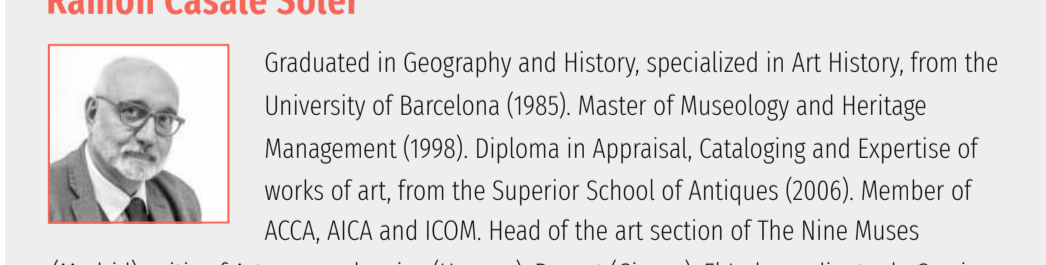
I believe that after more than four decades dedicated to the world of art, she has found in these materials the essence and spirit that nests in her ideology, especially because of the nobility and naturalness that accompany it. Regarding nature, it is a subject that she has always been interested in, either through the landscape or the living beings that inhabit it. The point is that each of the pieces transmit calm and tranquility. We must contemplate them calmly, observing every nuance, every detail, that is, we must analyze them thoroughly to discover the spiritual and conceptual thesis that the artist proposes. That is why these fragments "are fascinating. The broken stone expresses fragility and strength (...) In essence, the fragment is mysterious, nostalgic and has a melancholic beauty in its imperfection". It is precisely this imperfection that makes her work more captivating and attractive.



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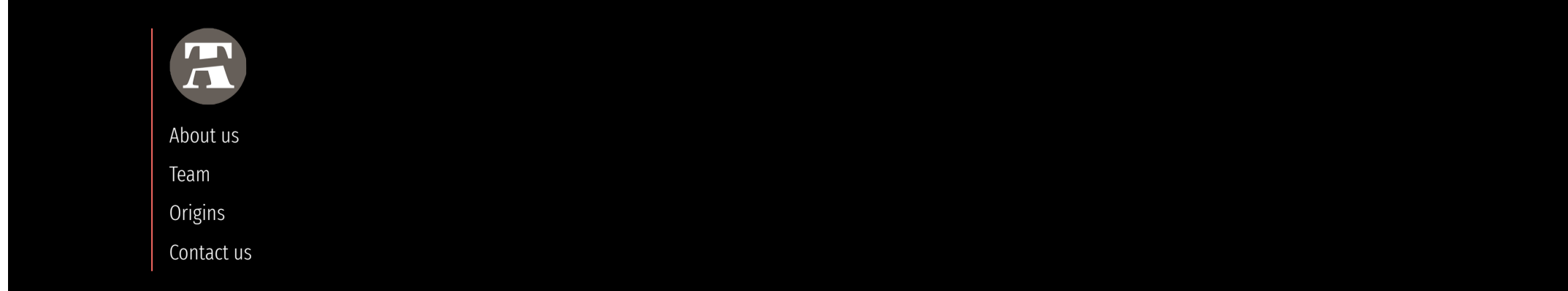


Graduated in Geography and History, specialized in Art History, from the University of Barcelona (1985). Master of Museology and Heritage Management (1998). Diploma in Appraisal, Cataloging and Expertise of works of art, from the Superior School of Antiques (2006). Member of ACCA, AICA and ICOM. Head of the art section of The Nine Muses (Madrid), critic of *Arteporexcelencias* (Havana), *Bonart* (Girona), *El Independiente de Gracia* (Barcelona), *Soc. Cat. De Archeology Bulletin* (Barcelona) and *El tiempo de las artes* (Valencia).

- Elena Kervinen
- Galeria El Quadern Robot
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Gaudi, always

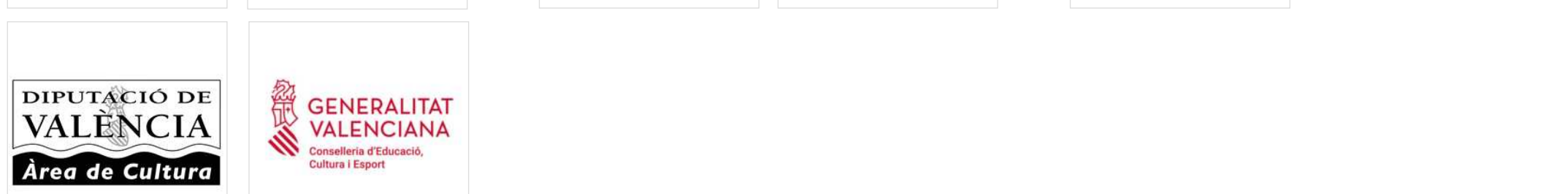


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