

Journal

ELSA PERETTI AND THE SEA

“Elsa admiring the Mediterranean Sea from Torre Avvoltore in Porto Ercole, Tuscany. “My relationship with the sea is total. As a little girl, I searched for beautiful shells on the beach. At that time, beaches were more generous, no plastic, just polished glasses and small shells. What instilled my profound respect for the ocean was to dive deep into it, to feel myself inside it and at the same time under it. Like an intruder, conscious of every movement of my breathing as the oxygen from the tanks filled my lungs, I watched my friends fishing, fascinated by the things I saw. The fleeting, short-lived miracle never ceased to amaze me. And now I pay homage to those hours beneath the waves by recording some of them in my small portraits.”

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti, *Fifteen of my Fifty* with Tiffany & Co exhibition catalogue, F.I.T., New York 1990.

The Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation which has always been deeply committed to environmental issues and wildlife conservation, supported in the years many non-profit organizations to protect the marine ecosystem. Marevivo Onlus is one of them, the organization protects the sea and its resources from over 35 years, focusing on biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, enhancement and promotion of marine protected areas, pollution and illegal fishing, in addition to promoting educational programs in schools and universities. Marevivo's activities aim to increase the attention and the involvement of public opinion and media towards the preservation of that common precious good that is our sea. The organization has built its philosophy on a fair balance between environmen-

tal protection and economic and social development, and is characterized by a proactive approach in line with its mission. The NaEPF has supported Marevivo since 2007 in carrying out its activities in Italy and abroad.

Currently the respect for the sea and its environment has driven the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation to partner once again with Flora and Fauna International. Since 2001, the NaEPF has worked with Flora & Fauna on several projects, and in 2023 the NaEPF renewed its support for the organization with a grant of over EUR 3 million that fund six projects to preserve the environment and biodiversity worldwide. In particular, two projects focus on the marine ecosystem: Building marine resilience in Honduras' Atlántida Seascape and Strengthening small-scale fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas in Aceh, Indonesia. The efforts in Honduras are centered to preserve the local marine biodiversity in addition to enhance collaborative governance networks of relevant stakeholders.

The Atlántida Seascape initiative is a national model for marine governance and equity, where empowered, thriving communities with high-capacity support from government and civil society protect and nurture the resilience of coastal and subtidal ecosystems, and enable the recovery of vulnerable marine and coastal species and reef fisheries. In Indonesia, West Coast of Aceh province, Flora & Fauna International is promoting and increasing participation in community-led fisheries management practices, strengthening and maintaining adequate community-led patrol, surveillance, and conducting training for the implementation of community-based fish catch monitoring. The project will contribute to establishing a system of participatory biodiversity conservation, prioritising community engagement and traditional fisheries institutions so that local stakeholders can take the leading role in sustainable marine resource co-management in the marine protected areas.

ELSA PERETTI AND JAPAN

“The impact I felt on my first trip to Japan in 1969 was the speed and technology of a train from Tokyo to Kyoto and the exquisite craftsmanship of the things I saw.

With Yasuyoshi Morimoto’s help and patience, like a capricious child I managed to persuade the best craftsmen to manufacture some of my forms.”

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti, *Fifteen of my Fifty with Tiffany & Co*
exhibition catalogue, F.I.T., New York 1990.

For Elsa Peretti, travel was important for the mind; it awakened her innate curiosity, nourished her soul, and inspired her creations. In 1969, she visited Japan for the first time: “The beauty of the country, the way they do things, even the way they serve food... Yes, Japan is inspiring,” she later told to *Palmer Beach Magazine*. In Japan, Elsa Peretti lived in the spirit of the moment, “ichigo ichie” as the Japanese culture and tea masters describe it, treasuring every single thing she saw and experienced, from the moon reflected in a sake cup to the speed and technology of the train that took her from Tokyo to Kyoto.

In June 1974, just a few months before her first collection for Tiffany and Co. launched and sold out (that same day), Elsa Peretti traveled to Japan with then-Design Director Mr. George O’Brien and then-Chairman Mr. Henry B. Platt, finally free to “turn these feelings into reality.” With the help of her friend, the master in Asian arts David Kidd, and Yasuyoshi Morimoto’s unparalleled knowledge of the finest traditional artisans, Elsa Peretti began to bring her forms to life in lacquer, bamboo and silk:

“Sometimes a group of craftsmen, who worked in different and distant towns, all contributed to the same piece of work. The object traveled throughout the wonderful geography of Japan, over a road of perfection, led by the wisdom of my friends, among them David Kidd, a writer. I have a deep feeling for all of these artisans, and

it delights me to sit in Kyoto drinking tea, watching a vague idea come beautifully through, while the children play in the back.”

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti, *Fifteen of my Fifty with Tiffany & Co*
exhibition catalogue, F.I.T., New York 1990.

Letter by Mr. Shimofuri to Elsa Peretti, 1990

“Madame Peretti, A golden carp, swam against the muddy torrent a thousand miles upstream, met the barrier of a waterfall, struggled, and suddenly leap clear, transformed into a shining dragon to fly free into the translucent air.”

Mr. Shimofuri

Japan Emergency: support for the victims of the Japan earthquake, 2011

Elsa Peretti’s deep affection for Japan prompted her to help during the 2011 natural disaster through the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation. On March 11, 2011, Japan was hit by a massive 8.9-magnitude earthquake, the most powerful in the nation’s recorded history. The seismic event triggered devastating tsunamis, unleashing 30-foot waves that obliterated rice fields, wiped out towns, and wreaked havoc on the landscape, tossing cars and boats as if they were mere toys.

In the wake of this calamity, the international community rallied to offer support, among them the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, willing to secure a prompt action to address the emergency. Collaborating with the UNHCR, the Foundation facilitated the provision of 1,794 solar lamps to the Japanese government, ensuring they were distributed within two days to those most impacted by the quake. These solar lanterns, developed and vetted by UNHCR, are designed not only to enhance the protection of refugees by introducing new technologies but also serve dual purposes in refugee camps: bolstering security and mitigating environmental impacts.

Furthering its humanitarian efforts, the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation also partnered with Malteser International to extend immediate assistance to a children's home in Ichinoseki, a small city within Iwate prefecture, situated roughly 100 kilometers north of Sendai's coastal area—devastated by the tsunami—and 150 kilometers from the compromised Fukushima nuclear power plant. Malteser International's team was on the ground to offer crucial psycho-social support to the children, aiding in their emotional recovery from the disaster's impacts.