

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY MORNING

Mauro Perucchetti stays in with his soul mate

BY JAVIER ESPINOZA

The Italian artist talks to *The Wall Street Journal Europe* about how he starts his weekend.

Mauro Perucchetti may be a late bloomer (he only became an artist a little over a decade ago), but he has wasted little time since discovering his true calling. The 61-year-old's latest exhibition at the Halcyon Gallery in London includes 20 new works of art. "I was always taken by the art in churches, so I wanted to do something a bit more classical but with a contemporary concept and, of course, [the superheroes] lend themselves to that particular project," he says of "Modern Heroes." The marble sculpture of Batman and Superman (£495,000) was inspired by the Sistine Chapel. It was also announced earlier this month that his jelly baby sculptures will soon grace London's Marble Arch. With such a busy work schedule, Mr. Perucchetti's weekends are more about quality than quantity.

How does your weekend start?

The start of my weekend has definitely nothing to do with me. My weekend starts when the last of the people I am doing business with becomes unavailable. At that point, I feel like everybody around me has thrown the towel in and, frustrated, I decide with my wife Lorena where to spend the night. We normally prefer to go back to my studio in the country. We both have reached a stage in life where we don't enjoy being very social. It's definitely quality over quantity.

Peer pressure

It takes a really close friend to convince us to go out when we stay in London. Even then, we prefer dinner arrangements to a good restaurant or a friend's home, where one can laugh, talk and soak up the energy of a few special people. [If we go out,] Nozomi [in Knightsbridge] is a good choice because I live next door and I can go there and let my hair down, as my wife says. If I just go around the corner, I feel like I can have a glass of wine in the evening and it is really lovely and I can relax. Also on Fridays, I invite friends to Ziani [an Italian restaurant] in Chelsea. I have been going there for 20 years and I take friends there. It's much more casual and relaxed than Nozomi. They have really excellent Italian food and everybody likes it.

How to avoid nightclubs

I rarely go out to nightclubs unless they drag me. ... I purposely wear jeans when I go out so when I get there, they say "Sorry, you can't come in." I don't actually mind staying at home with my lovely wife; I finally found my soul mate.

Therapeutic cooking

I stay a lot at home and I just cook on a Friday with my wife if we don't go out. I cook lovely dinners for her, which I find highly therapeutic. I bring out my collection of Japanese knives. She had to admit that I was a better cook. It is always a healthy meal. Last time I cooked, we smuggled a bag of truffles which we got very inexpensively in the hills of Umbria in Italy and I don't think anybody had as

many truffles as we did that night. I made a risotto with Italian organic, short-grain, brown rice.

How do you spend your Saturdays?

On Saturday morning in London, I love going for breakfast, as a treat, to a handful of cafés around town. These very humble establishments have to pass a very strict criteria: the quality of the coffee and the ambiance being the most important. Two of my favorite ones that ooze character and good karma are Flat White Café in Soho and Monmouth Café in Borough Market. Saturday is also when Lorena and I make the most to catch up with the museums and a good movie.

Riding in the countryside

I have a workshop in Amersham, where I develop my concepts and do my drawings before I go into production. If I am not working, we try to go to the gym together. We also go to Shardeloes Farm with lovely grounds and lovely horses. ... We go there and go for a little ride on a Saturday. It's absolutely wonderful.

What do you wish you could do more of on the weekends?

I have three grown-up daughters who live all over the world: one in the Philippines, since she got married; one in Italy; and one in Los Angeles. I didn't really spend too much time with them when they were young. It would be nice to have a bit more of a relationship with them now.

—Mr. Perucchetti was speaking with Javier Espinoza.



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THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Across

- 1 Azerbaijan's capital
- 5 Gray area? Abbr.
- 9 Ideologies
- 13 Horn of Africa people
- 19 They could use some refinement
- 20 Precipitate
- 21 Monopoly token choice
- 22 Six-time role for Ustinov
- 23 Dessert akin to boo meringue?
- 25 Distinctions awarded at Crone College?
- 27 Bake, but not in the shell
- 28 It's paid before you get the bills
- 30 ___ kwon do
- 31 May race, informally
- 32 Onetime owner of Sheraton Hotels
- 34 Eon subdivisions
- 35 Copy sneakily
- 37 CEO of Specters Inc.?
- 42 Karate's birthplace
- 45 Cutting rooms? Abbr.
- 46 Stood, fancifully
- 47 Hag's transportation that passes Mach 1?
- 50 Roadie's load
- 51 Yanks' enemies

Boo Who? / by Gabriel Stone

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- 52 Drawer scenters
- 54 It may have a nap on the floor
- 55 Kia sedans
- 57 Work period
- 58 Baseball All-Stars Glaus and Tulowitzki
- 59 Cords, e.g.
- 61 Flaky fellows?
- 63 Polar bear holder
- 64 Malibu or Milan
- 65 Place for ghostly gondolas?
- 69 Group of hags from The Hague?
- 74 Afg. neighbor
- 75 Ready for publication
- 77 Captive's plea
- 78 Gave the twice-over
- 81 Carried on
- 83 Apple Store buy
- 84 Ship protected by Hera
- 85 "Entourage" agent
- 86 Less meek
- 88 Nettles
- 90 Grafton's ___ for Malice"
- 91 Reaction to sparring with spirits?
- 94 Choose nonparticipation
- 96 End for elephant or serpent
- 97 Time and a half, for example
- 98 Source of the Owl Creek?
- 100 Soldier's station
- 101 Halloween time
- 102 Error acknowledgment
- 103 Tender
- 106 Put in stitches
- 108 Not take "no" for an answer
- 111 Fun
- 115 Hybrid creature added to the cauldron?
- 118 One who can be patched together from the letters added to the theme answers
- 120 Point the finger at
- 121 Tedious sort
- 122 Crook's cousin
- 123 Moon goddess
- 124 Sounded croaky
- 125 Cheer competition
- 126 Pitch-black
- 127 This might be final

Down

- 1 Big kahuna
- 2 Vault feature
- 3 Russell of "Running Wilde"
- 4 It's often an email address
- 5 Usher's offering
- 6 Small recipe amount
- 6 Vintners' valley
- 7 "Be that ___ may..."
- 8 1986 World Series champs
- 9 "Honest!"
- 10 Starts with fear
- 11 Dictionary entry
- 12 Little faith?
- 13 Branch of non-Euclidean geometry
- 14 Tic-tac-toe win
- 15 Source of pricey peanuts
- 16 "East of Eden" brother
- 17 Man with manors
- 18 Wee
- 24 He worked knights
- 26 Cope, in slang
- 29 Least restrained
- 33 Stereo component
- 36 Dvorak's Cello Concerto ___ Minor
- 37 Husky
- 38 White fur
- 39 Comparison to a church mouse
- 40 Champaign's neighbor
- 41 Prone to prying
- 42 Quick tennis contest
- 43 Frayed, say

- 44 Month after juillet
- 47 Harpy
- 48 "What a kiddier!"
- 49 Booker T's backers
- 53 Sandy sound
- 56 Take the wrong way?
- 59 Accord
- 60 Balkys come-on
- 62 Honey drink
- 64 Clinic offerings
- 66 Music for meditation
- 67 Small recipe amount
- 68 Airy
- 70 Mild cigars
- 71 Creepy creatures
- 72 Vandal's Halloween activity
- 73 Gallows sights
- 76 Driving aid
- 78 Big ape
- 79 Hold spellbound
- 80 Sister of Maggie and Bart
- 82 Slobbers
- 83 Catching aid
- 86 Furniture mentioned in "Lay, Lady, Lay"
- 87 Jason of "The Event"
- 89 Perfect pitch
- 92 Transcribes, say
- 93 Pendulum direction
- 95 Major for civic-minded frosh
- 98 Dagger part
- 99 Eaves dropper
- 101 Pumpkin patch, e.g.
- 103 Feature of Frankenstein's monster
- 104 Marine killer
- 105 Giant birds of prey
- 107 Turned on the waterworks
- 109 Check prices, in a way
- 110 Fall completely
- 112 Main point
- 113 Hawaiian coffee variety
- 114 Came crawling back?
- 116 SFO-to-LAX heading
- 117 What to play Monster Hunter Tri on
- 119 Wearer of la corona

Last Week's Solution

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