

Paris
Press Release

¡ VIVA LA VIDA !

Curator : David Cruz

Opening: 6 pm, Thursday 7 June
Exhibition: 7 June – 28 July 2018



Centre table by Arturo Pani. 1950s. Iron, brass and glass.

On the occasion of “La Dolce Vita”, the Carré Rive Gauche spring event, Carole Decombe gallery will present “¡ Viva La Vida !”, an exhibition celebrating Mexico, its modern spirit and its love of exuberance and imagination. To curate it, Carole Decombe turned to David Cruz, asking him to assemble pieces that take these themes as inspiration. An exceptional curator who grew up in Mexico, David Cruz now lives in Los Angeles. Over 20 years ago, he and Adam Blackman founded Blackman Cruz, one of the city’s most prestigious decorative art galleries. The selection will be modelled after the curator himself in its cutting-edge originality, spanning pieces such as contemporary creations, an Aztec relief, torch lamps and table by Arturo Pani, and a basalt jaguar by Fernando Galvez from the 1920s.

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It has been two years since Carole Decombe opened her second design and decorative arts gallery in Los Angeles. In California, as in Paris, she has continued her quest for one-of-a-kind objects, often leading her to Blackman Cruz, one of the city's indispensable galleries.



Pair of brass and patinated iron torch lamps by Arturo Pani, from the Reforma Hotel in Mexico,

Created by two uncompromising collectors, David Cruz and Adam Blackman, Blackman Cruz collects surprising pieces from all historical eras. The two men scour the world for their collection, with a certain preference for Mexican pieces from the 20th century. Born and raised in Mexico, David Cruz often returns to the country, where he finds extraordinary pieces, such as works by designer Arturo Pani, a major figure of the Mexican modernist movement beginning in the late 1930s.

In honour of the Carré Rive Gauche spring event, Carole Decombe asked David Cruz to curate an exhibition in her Paris gallery on the theme of Mexican modernism. Very enthusiastic about the project, David relied on his exacting taste and sound judgement to put together a remarkable collection of modernist pieces, such as an Arturo Pani lamp and table from the 1950s and a basalt jaguar sculpted by Fernando Galvez in the 1920s, combining them with an ancient Aztec carving. These works will be complemented by contemporary pieces by Blackman Cruz. Since they opened their first gallery, David and Adam have also designed and produced their own creations.



Basalt Jaguar by Fernando Galvez, 1920's.

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The exhibition – eclectic, extravagant and cheerful – will mirror some of the finest qualities of Blackman Cruz and the country of Mexico. Joyously entitled “¡ Viva la Vida !”, the event will also be a nod in the direction of Frida Kahlo, a major Mexican artist who will be glimpsed through a series of photographs of her clothing taken by the famous Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide for her book “El Ropero de Frida”.



Aztec relief, basalt, 14th-16th



Untitled, Casa de Frida Kahlo, Coyoacan, Mexico. Graciela Iturbide. 2005.



David Cruz

I was raised in Northern Mexico so in my youth I looked North to the US. Specifically CA with its burgeoning counter culture movement and its music. Along with the power and the wealth.

Eventually my focus shifted back to Mexico and it's opposite concept of time, traditions, contrasting colors and thorny history.

That together with a brief stint in Europe informs my aesthetics. I have experienced 'the wall' and the link between the two cultures.

My professional life developed quite organically. After a mis-step into advertising and illustration, I started foraging the LA flea markets. And thus began the genesis of Blackman Cruz.

The Blackman Cruz gallery is a study in opposites. With my partner Adam Blackman, we have created a multicultural environment where the criteria of our choices are an alternative to the mass produced world we live in.