

An exhibition of Pamen Pereira, whether it is intended or not, always ends up with the attractive air of a “cabinet of wonders” like those created by the old collectors in past centuries. But unlike the cabinets, Pereira’s exhibition does not aim to display the systematic accumulation of rare examples of natural beauty but the poetic grouping of the “miracles” created by the artist, her inspired ways of making the extraordinary and the ineffable visible through works of striking material and formal variety, with an inexhaustible capacity for evocation and suggestion.

In *The Stone Woman Gets Up to Dance*, Pamen Pereira has grouped a large part of her works from her period of creative maturity, forged slowly along the production path of experience, study, and work. With her accumulated knowledge, she has constructed her own language with which she tackles eternal subjects of art, playing the game of paradoxes with masterful subtlety and making the static co-exist with the vibrant in a rapid equilibrium.

So far, Pamen Pereira has been rightly or wrongly placed inside the protean concept of *arte povera*, a typecasting perhaps justified by her radical attempt to make the everyday and the strictly personal essential subjects of her work. After this “double exhibition” in León and Logroño, the classification may become more complex: humble objects, without losing this quality, take flight above the world of material reality. Everything levitates and vibrates, and a successful blend of mystical breath and baroque materiality makes old objects (surrounded by an aura of the imposing, magnetic presence of Byzantine icons) co-exist with transcendental pieces that are reminiscent of altarpieces. All this amalgamates into something like an overflowing theatrical installation of mystery and wonder, without a defined path, a ritual space without ceremony in which large mirrors multiply the creations and insert the public into the far end of the space.

Juan Ramón Jiménez said that “in different editions books say different things,” and this truth by an attentive bibliophile is perfectly applicable to the relationship of the works of art to the places where they are shown: Aside from the unique gaze of each spectator, a work is defined by the space from which it is contemplated, where it gains dimension, significant wealth, and importance. And this exhibition, featuring practically the same content, has been turned into two by the different qualities of the spaces that have hosted it: both MUSAC, specifically conceived to show contemporary art in the best possible conditions, and the Sala Amós Salvador, conceived more than one hundred years ago for industrial manufacturing, were adapted to Pereira’s works and thus reinvented, each displaying its full potential for versatility.

It is necessary to acknowledge the passionate devotion of Pamen Pereira, who agreed to take the exhibition to Logroño (where she is remembered and loved because of her presence on other battlegrounds of contemporary artistic expression in the

province of La Rioja: Lomos de Orios, Sajazarra, and Santa Lucía de Ocón), the generosity of Manuel Olveira (the director of MUSAC), who has made this possible, and the enthusiasm of Kristine Guzmán (curator of the exhibition), who has been tireless in her efforts to create order in this beautiful project. I also thank the collectors and owners of the works, who were willing to part with these unique pieces—which must be very dear to their hearts—for such a long time and share them with us. That is also reflective of the love of art.

The result of so much hard work, reflected in this beautiful book, shows that the effort has been worthwhile. This book contains that which will remain in the memory of the exhibition visitors for years to come: the tense serenity of Pamen Pereira's singular work, exciting and amazing in its beauty. I thank all (many, thankfully) who have made this possible.

Francisco Gestal Tofé

Director, Sala Amós Salvador