

If we study the oeuvre of artist Pamen Pereira, which has interested me for over two decades, we see that the process she follows in all her works begins with new uses and reinterpretations of objects that are also shown to us. Metaphors that become a Zen exercise and a continuous quest for happiness in the broadest sense of the term. This is why the artist experiments in all disciplines, choosing the most appropriate for each specific work – drawing, photography, sculpture, video and installations – thereby 'applying poetry to any form of expression', in her own words. She even goes so far as to compare her practice to that of a shaman who provides 'spiritual food', as stated in a recent interview: 'I believe that art is a practice that moves energy and I'm very much aware of how a small gesture can bring matter to life and how an emotion can even change a genetic code.'

All this process reminds me of alchemy, the 'science' that aspired to discover the philosopher's stone capable of transforming base metals into gold. The doctrine was born in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD and studied chemical phenomena in order to discover the elements that shaped the universe, the transmutation of metals, the elixir of life and other mysteries. It was an essentially symbolic process that strove to produce gold as a sign of enlightenment and salvation; a proto-scientific practice and a philosophical discipline that combined elements of chemistry, metallurgy, physics, medicine, astrology, semiotics, mysticism, spiritualism and art. Moreover, alchemy is as a paradigm of work in general, revealing that virtues are exercised, spirits are tempered and living beings evolve even in the humblest of tasks. Central to Pamen's oeuvre are her attempts to transmute objects that begin to flutter, objects that cease to be material to

become poetry that flies in search of other world where everything is possible, where we may perhaps find solutions and peace of mind.

Hence visitors to this exhibition will detect a passionate alchemical game that finds its *raison d'être* when the artist suggests we create a space of our own within the illusory physical space. Upon entering the hall, the energy latent in all her works will elevate and move different elements, making them turn and combining them in an atmosphere that will only become meaningful insofar as it is surrounded by another atmosphere — a space inside a space. Any variation would generate a new space, *ad infinitum*, so that the final work is only produced during its actual installation. Immersed in the exhibition hall, the result of the global work thus created will only be seen when people interact with it, because we ourselves form a part of the space, its atmosphere and energy.

Her way of working, living and feeling has much in common with that of a flying being, not understood as an escape but as an elevation. Starting from *Lecho de piedra* (Bed of Stone), the work by Pamen Pereira in the CAM Collection, the exhibition as a whole acquires further meaning as its main purpose becomes eliminating its excess weight. A chair, a table, a chest, a top hat ... all sorts of belongings! Even an item as heavy as a bed of stone will levitate, despite remaining fixed to the floor.

These works from the CAM Collection are complemented by a number of installations characterised by the presence of commonplace, almost rudimentary elements that may move into another dimension, fly or be transformed to fulfil other purposes, those in which the artist herself is reflected, inviting viewers to create their own stories. Time and space, light and night, heaven and earth, everything is transformed. The ideas of regeneration, growth, change and elevation, along with time, are those that originate

these works created instantaneously and *in situ*, as the exhibition space is dominated by its contents. Light, volume, height — everything has a voice. Elevation designed to trigger generation, not sublimation.

Theatricality is clearly present in the artist's oeuvre, particularly in the stage designs it creates, not as a form of representation but rather as the configuration of a new world with its desires, dreams and awaitings. This isn't a theatrical show but the genesis of a better world. As in Gregorian chant, in which several different voices are raised in unison, here several different works dance in space and together produce a musical tone that is at once a monochord melody that follows the rhythm of the conductor, the artist.

We shall invite viewers to *fly*, to let themselves be swept along by their imagination, welcoming them through a door to the world of fantasy, a world created by the artist to encourage people to conceive spaces of their very own.

The works in this exhibition shall now be described individually, yet we should think of them as a single entity, an alchemical game in which each of us make our own combinations of symbols, spaces, genesis and life.

Alicia Ventura

Curator