

## **To Sleep and To Dance. Art, Commitment and Responsibility**

Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.

Virginia Woolf

Commitment and responsibility are some of the values that define the Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo Foundation. Pamen Pereira's *Games of Alchemy* show staged at our exhibition hall in Alicante obeys the firm intention to preserve and disseminate our artistic heritage. Pereira is one of the first artists represented in the Contemporary Art Collection of the Caja Mediterráneo Foundation with her works *Bed of Stone*, *Zafu I* and *Zafu II*, a suggestive threesome in a forceful and dynamic collection of 213 works by significant Spanish artists from the time of the country's transition to democracy to the present; a collection that eagerly unfolds between what is known and what is still to come.

*Bed of Stone* was produced in 2001 by Centro Galego de Arte Contemporáneo for the exhibition entitled *Studio or, Encounter with the Shadow*, and the two zafus were first presented at La Gallera hall in the framework of the project entitled *A Single Flavour* in 2002. The bed is an essential item we use every day, for it provides us with physical rest and also lulls us into reverie. The zafu (Japanese meditation cushion) represents contemplation as an exercise in spiritual transcendence. Dreams and meditation open doors to other dimensions. These objects, apparently soft and delicate, are represented by the artist in granite, an

extremely hard material. Today the Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo Foundation simultaneously unveils these three works in two exhibitions held in different cities: *Bed of Stone* in the *Games of Alchemy* show in Alicante, and *Zafu I* and *Zafu II* in *Origins*, at Almuđí Palace in Murcia.

*Games of Alchemy* assembles fifteen categorical works that reveal the artist's creative maturity along with other unexpected pieces like *Icarus*. This is the first solo exhibition by Pamen Pereira to be held in Alicante, and one of the most important of those organised by our exhibition hall in recent years. The show in its entirety revolves around *Bed of Stone*, a granite sculpture and a bold example of the artist's unique poetics on display for the first time in our city. Expressly produced for this occasion and related to *Bed of Stone* is another bed, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, made of bread in the shape of bones and suspended in the air by nylon threads.

Every exhibition of works by Pamen Pereira is, at once, an aesthetic experience and a vital turning point. As each piece emerges from its packaging and inspires the air of the gallery, it seems to have been created for the very first time. These works of extraordinary beauty, rhythm and evocativeness coexist in perfect harmony in an established space and time, defined by the gaze of the viewer and highlighted by the artist's emphasis.

Nature is an endless source of inspiration and knowledge. Devoted to her work and experimenting continuously, Pamen Pereira handles symbolically charged materials and objects related to profound concepts of mysticism and spirituality. Through her artistic language she suggests confronting dual concepts in order to try and reconcile opposites in a narrative thread. Humble objects and actions soar

above reality, elevating the commonplace to the essential material of her oeuvre. The transcendence of the artistic fact lies in the process that generates it, always pervaded by tremendous creative intuition.

Her oeuvre invites us to live our daily lives intensely and in a state of conscious awareness. She manages to shed light on the extraordinariness of life, offering us the possibility of perceiving innocence in a child's heart of gold and freedom in the inspiring flight of birds.

A defender of the social role of art, her work also has ties to female empowerment, as exemplified by the presence of ancestral concepts linked to Mother Earth and by her focus on current issues such as gender integration and human rights. She is currently working on the importance of art and creative values in the field of education.

Carmen Velasco Lillo

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