

The Quantum link

À propos “Gold Water: Apocalyptic Black Mirrors II”, an exhibition of Maria Veronica Leon V. at Macro Museum, Roma.

A major shift in global conscience: that's how we can describe the event that occurred when Ecuador became the first country to officially acknowledge and recognize the imprescriptible right of Nature and its ecosystems to exist and flourish, and consequently the right for the Nature to be cured or restored in case of aggression. It's an unprecedented legal, political and spiritual event which took place in 2008 when the new constitution was adopted and Nature was defined as a subject of right. This « vision » or conception of the world unifies two trends of thought, one related to late development of environmentalism, incarnated by militants like Hugo Echeverría, a famous lawyer working in Ecuador; the other is related to the natives of Ecuador who firmly believe in the concept of « Pacha Mama » or Mother Earth.

Maria Veronica Leon V, a famous native Ecuadorian artist who currently lives and works in Dubai, perpetuating and transcending in her very own way this rich heritage. Through her life, her commitment and her art, she invites us to renew, reinvent and rebuild the core relation we have with Nature, with ourselves and with the essence of the reality. Why are we here? What are we supposed to do? What is the nature of our dreams and visions? Why are we embodied in a visceral habitat that binds us to a cosmic dimension? It is indeed a deep questioning, but following Maria Veronica on her path of creation, we feel that the answers are all bound to our innate creativity.

Regarding the personal level, we can say that Maria Veronica has also merged and revisited the spiritual legacy of her parents. Her mother was a painter and her father a politician, an intellectual and a humanist figure in Ecuador. Herself, as a young child started to express herself vividly, first through drawings and paintings, and later on while studying art, expanding her research to various medium, like videos or performances that she practiced in New York, Cuba, Paris and Venice among many other places before living in Dubai. Social and spiritual conscience, travels, borders crossing (and/or limits), various cultures and traditions blending, the mixing of verbal and non verbal approaches (like dance or guttural singing)... These are some of the different aspects of her art and life today.

In that sense, the artistic and philosophical approach of Maria Veronica Leon V — visceral and technological, intuitive and conceptual —, is unique in its essence. Following the great success of the Ecuadorian pavillon that held during the last Venice Biennale, the artist reactivates and reformulates, for the Macro Museum in Rome, the art-environment that she had previously conceived in Venice. As a woman and as an artist, she felt a great sense of responsibility when she was officially commissioned to conceive the national pavillon. Fully aware of the syndrome of « artistic provincialism », Maria Veronica still wanted to be able to talk about Ecuador as a whole (*id est*, speaking-out loud for Quito and Sierra but also for the coast region), but she also felt the urge and the need to carry a universal topic; in that case: Gold and Water.

After several conversations with the artist, I understood how bright and pertinent was her choice. It's not about the « lieux communs » or « clichés » concerning human greed, the capitalistic system or environmental problems — even though it's a substantial part of what Maria Veronica is dealing with. First, it binds us to the long story of the South-American continent and her ancestors, the great Incas and the pre-Colombian societies. And as the artist progresses in her work, she transforms herself physically, slowly turning into an extra-terrestrial or mythical figure: secret and sacred rituals, masks, screams and dreams... It is as we are travelling in time, going back to a mysterious past which is also the key to our future.

As her native country, the « Pacha Mama » (Mother Earth) and her ancestors are all intrinsic and constitutive part of herself, so is the water. And that simple truth resonates in many fields like quantum physics, cosmology, biology and psychology. Among many texts, here is what Maria Veronica writes about it: « We feel the churning power of the oceans and seas, interconnected in an energetic therapy, building barriers to resist industry's atrocities; generating a second dimension of existence, where universal cosmic energy gives birth to a centric universal nucleus, from where an explosion of new fountains irrigates old affected waters and a new cosmic galaxy emerge. Waters' new energy is stronger than industry ».

White light, blue water, dark stars, green dollars, gold and oven are like various aspects of our body-mind-spirit connection and therefore part of an « œuvre d'art total », mixing video, etching, photography and performance, producing what the artists define as « techno-theater », or « techno-opera », blending new philosophical and sociological approach with esoteric and hermetic tradition. That's how Maria Veronica embarks us on a physical and spiritual journey, a quest for meaning and self-reflection exploring a metaphoric Eldorado where Gold and Water reveal themselves as our ultimate fate, the alpha & omega of our human destiny.

The exhibition unfolds and spreads in various parts of the museum, inviting the visitors to discover in a progressive manner the various works exhibited. Defining her own territory, the artist uses the existing exhibition structures but she also creates new ones by bringing industrial container in the space of the museum. It's like a womb, a mine settlement or an *athanor* (the oven of the alchemist). Visually, the various works displayed at Macro Museum oscillate between kaleidoscopic and hypnotic geometry and oversized expressive self-portraits.

Primary matters, Nature and the body of the artist turn into vectors of artistic expression: it's an integrative process where concepts, thoughts and emotions blend and resonate in various ways, reaching a point of incandescence where a new state of mind is created, reborn and purified.

David Rosenberg

Paris, mars 2016