



WEAVING AND SPELLS

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One of the greatest secrets of artistic creation is that which we meet without looking for it in the words of Picasso. A discovery can exist in the distance of time and also in space. Can this sometimes happen when we evoke something without any real intention of invocation? These are strange and unknown links, unforeseen recallings of the spirit, livelihood and lastly of passion. And this is exigent and not overcome except by its own volition. It is the same with art as with love. One is involved as much with danger, as with pleasure and one lives in a state of anxiety and desire which can only be appeased through its satisfaction. So there are rules, or rather conditions, and they are the same either to create the most humble work or one of genius. However, the artist obeys the tensions, stimulations and various motivations rather than his own dictates of behaviour. What is essential is the effort required to achieve the objective of those tensions, stimulations and motivations. All of which come together and finally concentrate themselves into a form. If in this there is much of what he was searching for, then these will be still more, much more than which he found. It is in this way I see the works of Teresa Segurado Pavao, some of them, mostly the recent ones are so perfect, so different from anything else and so enigmatic. I therefore see them not only because of their deftness, completeness and force. To meet is only to meet, like a conclusion, like an apparition almost mythologically understood. Something which occurs and surprises because it is beyond the intended and already began search.

It is something which from a special moment leads on by itself as though it had its own life, intension and *spirit*. And no one bills his own *spirit* except symbolically which is to give them another life in a false body. But wait, spirits have different clothes and we are not in these works of which I am speaking in front of an art which is within easy reach or one which can be clearly explained in dramatic terms. This does not exclude that in the next step (which I ask myself, in some of her work she has not already taken) her approach will not only be dramatic but terrifying. Meanwhile these works, on view, are placed so that they appear to obey a strict aesthetic conviction. The exhibits display a skin, close attention to taste and are at the same time exotic. I believe that one would be right, absolutely right to see all those as qualities of Teresa Pavao. If she had not had over her some vigilant spirit which she certainly had, but instead models which she certainly did not have, she could not have been more right. Spirits and models are of two different worlds. The first we find or rather they find us. The second look for us or we look for them which is a big mistake. What I think is that the artist had by chance the opportunity to hand and as we know chance cannot be planned. She put together two things, the, palm tree and her love of tapestry. Perhaps this is strange, perhaps not. Not exactly the tree itself but its rough outer aspect and its leaf. So we have the palm on one side and on the other that which is not exactly tapestry, the traditional object which is flat, coloured and hung on walls but something else. Something with volume which weaving today allows and is constructed in another textural and expressive dimension.

Thus there is a confrontation between the natural which is a condition of nature and art which is a condition of the artist. This results in a certain tension and mutual stimulus.

These amazing objects are firstly a union of two worlds which communicate together and transform each other. Each of these objects is a proof of the unity achieved and each is different from the other. However they are alike. What we have here is not a series of almost identical objects which would be an aesthetic phenomena of our time but a ritual which is timeless. And it is in the way these works are ritualized or demand ritual contemplation, that we can see in them the sacredness of African art. It is not because they are similar to other religious or para-religious objects. Neither are they cultural insignia of power nor fulminations of some primitive court. Rather they inspire the same fascination; the same risk of awakening the powers which pleasure and danger provoke. They accumulate in their presence something which is rare, beautiful and disturbing. It is not because they model themselves on African art out by their action that they find an aesthetic and emotional cultural relationship in space and time which is



of profound interest today. This also happened at the beginning of the century, within living memory. Clearly, Teresa Segurado Pavao has been accumulating materials weaving them together in a complex texture. Also she has simplified her choice of materials in such a way as to obtain a similarity one with the other with which she structures and develop the form of the objects. The ceramics associated with the bark of the palm tree smooths and gives it a more enduring form, almost as tangible as a musical instrument, which it could be but is, in fact, not. The musicality, however, remains and resonates in those bulges, the colour of polished clay. They are as elegant as lutes or leaves or ritual spoons satisfying a lengthy and pure thirst. To enumerate, on the other hand, the materials used, is mysterious and has multiple associations. With them the artist could make magic but not the spells which she in fact makes. She ties, she sews, she superimposes, embroiders and hangs in an assemblage which is at the same time both precious and unsophisticated. There are bambus, stones, shells, bones, rafia, linen, silks, coconut threads, iron, African hemp seeds and may others. There are capricious wooden splinters of wreckage washed by time which the oceans have guarded. We have still to tell of other strange things whose names disturb us: horn, feathers, prickles of hedgehog and lions' teeth. We are certainly not confronting a gratuitous use of materials. We are not witnessing the use of these just to adorn and decorate an object. The variety of choice, so rich in itself, so immediately suggestive, has a symbolic use. The Portuguese memory does not easily forget the perfume of the spices or the poetry of their names. All this subtly evokes, without having to think, a familiar symbolism of adventure and tenacity. It seems to me, however, that these assemblages of so many different things are part of that memory. That sentimental register and Portuguese vision. They associate ideas sensations and imagery. They tie together, with the rope of a boat, the palm tree of the oasis, the iron from the mine and stone from the road. All this becomes tapestry, an object which is also sculpture which stands or reclines in a apparition of symbols. Once more the seduction of Africa comes to the surface and with it another time from the orient, possibly much rarer. Some of the erect sculptures are long and frightening as spears and so they are called Spears. They remind one of palace guards of lost civilizations their vigilant ranks an enigma. Part of their body is vegetable but much of their aspect is anthropomorphic and constituted from uncountable elements and lengthy work. Each one suggests a mystery, a power and a thousand conflicting forces. None of these pieces beautiful as swords and distant as jungle Gods is unaware of its erotic power or its totemic jenealogy. Indeed at times they are satanic. There are other pieces wherethe artist has presented that energy of play, that energy of concentration and of mythic appeal. She is attracted by the simulation of the sacred as if she were practicing exorcism or offering an image of an earth God. In some spears the erotic aspect is often sexual like a person re-dressed (dressed?) in symbols one can recognizer. And there are also those which touch spectacularly on the origins. They are androjenons, so provoking and so innocent in their double symbolism. They are as much erotic as sacred and sublimate and confound themselves. in the night and in the secret of being. Everything for Teresa Segurado Pavao began in a garden. A kind of Eden and a repository of forms erected by her with an almost childlike desire to construct a forest. It is a fascination for the unknown like Alice in Wonderland. Her desire is measureless. This we can see in her tapestries and in her sculptures. She transforms reality into something else, and from this in each finished piece she creates a new place where the colour is the earth; united and virgin. An earth of desire, of poetry and above all magic.

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