

In-Between Things, Captured by the Reflection of Pearl Teeth

A text by Giada Olivotto for Lisa Lurati

*An old giant appears, looking like a statue. He has silver hair, turquoise eyes embedded with charcoals, golden lips, pearl teeth, the rest of his body a sparkling ruby. Then the old person lifts up the one who is dreaming, making him cross all of the skies, one after the other.*¹ We have seen this old person already, whose body is a precious jewel made of fine stones and botanical elements. This being guides the dreaming subjects through time and space. An ancestral figure, the fruit of a chemical marriage, an interweaving of earth and celestial bodies, of moon and sun, born as an androgyne running among the stars.

Holding hands, dazzled by the pearly reflection of their teeth, we are guided into a world ***in-between things***. Lisa Lurati's forms inhabit this world. Depictions from different geological time frames are knitted together in this uncanny space, where shapes coexist serenely. Shapes we can find transferred from one surface to another, through the techniques of cyanotype or printing. Lisa Lurati dances through her world, and with different techniques begins to build a collection that evokes Androvaldi's tablets². The dance transforms itself into a grand performance of nature's theater, through various scenes, calling various protagonists to the stage.

The play opens on a small bedroom. A plastic shelter welcomes extras in a small bed: a fossilized shark tooth, a dried mushroom, pieces of canvas, a few dried plant elements. They are resting on a blanket reflecting the firmament. *Stella concreta per letto sbilenco* is a domestic scene reminiscent of other compositions in Lisa Lurati's production. These arrangements evoke a personal atmosphere related to the artist and into which we are sucked. A tiny environment where we can spy on desires and memories. We find ourselves in a dream-like space, a condition ***in-between things***. We do not understand whether there is a wall behind the white curtain or a door to the next scene.

Swirling, *Untitled Series* invade the proscenium. The scratchy eddies of the prints remind us that we have been given access to this world ***in-between things***. A tumult of tractable natural appearances follow one another, offering us insight into an uncertain choreography. This uncertainty is mirrored in the figures that evoke what is known in our universe. Are plants and animals fleeing a world of oppression and

¹ "(...) appare un grande Veglio che sembra una statua. Ha i capelli d'argent, gli occhi di pietra turchina, con dei carboncini incastonati nel mezzo, le labbra d'oro, i denti di perla e il resto del corpo di un rubino scintillante. Poi il vecchio solleva colui che sta sognando facendogli attraversare tutti i cieli, uno dietro l'altro." Original text in Italian from the book by Francesca Serra, *La morte ci fa belle*, Bollati Boringhieri editore, Torino, 2013, pag. 31. The quote speaks directly to *Sogno verde (Green Dream)*, a fifteenth-century work by the classical alchemist known as Bernardo Trevisan.

² The 18 volumes of plates of plants, flowers, fruit and animals, by Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), constitute perhaps the richest late Renaissance picture gallery of the natural world ever assembled. Consisting of more than 2900 paintings, this collection was to provide an accurate visualization of the nature that the Bolognese naturalist had observed for more than five decades.

domestication by attempting to enter this new one? Dark and silent, they carve out among the scratches a chance to prepare an escape.

A large cyanotype *sotto/sopra/sotto/sopra* appears between the wings. Plants move forward on the scene. The cosmology of the living presents itself to us in its most impressive forms. Although Lisa's works are placed in a celestial space, facing and stretching toward the sun, the technique of cyanotype allows the artist to help us understand the plant's agency in our reality. In Lisa's production, there is a hidden form of communication through which natural elements take the floor without being anthropomorphized. Floating in space, these large leaves occupy the scene, screaming their invisibility.

The scene is observed from afar by small beings. Hanging in the corners, where noise lurks. They laugh at us and listen with their shell ears, with their twiggy legs. Their mother-of-pearl teeth are hidden in the reflections of the light. Their dog-eaten wooden knees try to climb up. Like secret lovers, they talk to each other from one corner of the room to the other, where the organized accumulation of energy stagnates before disappearing. An acoustic slime that hears, spits, and seeks comfort³. In this theater, born in this space *in-between things*, a silent balance prevails.

Sitting far away, the androgynous figure timidly applauds the show, waiting for the right moment to take us out again. We close our eyes and forget the brightness of the jewel shine that swept over us and dragged us here in the first place. Back home, we may find a pearl tooth in our pocket.

³ This communication technique was pioneered in medieval architecture, it is said, to give people with leprosy the opportunity to go to confession with priests.