

Marko Kostić

AN OTHER CIRCLE

As in the previous exhibition *A-PART-NESS*, Natalija Simeonović continues to interpret the history of alchemic symbolism through visual arts. Characteristic of the alchemic procedure, the framework of the exhibition *AN OTHER TWO* is thematically contextualised by the synthesis of two academic fields: science and art.

Alchemic experiments characteristic of the late Middle Ages in Christian Europe were carried out at a time when concepts like rational and spiritual, linguistic and numerical, magical and technical, creative and investigative were not treated as separate systems of human culture. Alchemic operations which were combinatory and synthetic resemble the what we today call the multimedial structure of a work of art. Thus Natalija Simeonović grading the four phases of the alchemic cycle uses the visual technique not only for aesthetic reasons but for a storytelling narrative and mathematical calculations as well. Using the grading system, from black to red, from image to text, from singular to plural, from mixture to solution, from anima to animus, Natalija Simeonović puts this exhibition together as if it was an illustrated book bound by gallery space.

Since science and art are today separate categories, the fact that alchemy is not recognized as a scientific discipline (not even by the sciences that evolved from it) does not stop artists from reflecting this mystic chapter of our scientific past. As science has abandoned its magical substance after alchemy so does art find in alchemy its scientific legitimacy and psychological function. Thus this exhibition on one hand materializes the artistic inspiration of the artist on the other hand authorizes her inspiration with the very nature of the artistic material.

The subject matter of these paintings and the techniques used are not just means for transferring expression but they depict the aim of a transcendental ritual which invokes the spirit of the times when elements of the creative act did not only operate through the meaning they conveyed but also through the physical and chemical characteristics used in a process that does not symbolize the incarnation of the divine state into the human body (From Father to Son) but the redirection of the human body into divine state (Ascension of Virgin Mary). Representing the archetypical path of the feminine creative principle, these images of feminization want to transform the gaze of the observer from the viewer towards the reader, from the pupil to the master, from Mars to Venus, from man to woman, further in Circle.