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SUSTAINING SYMMETRY

Using a variety of birdseeds, a mandala will be constructed on the floor of a given space. This space will also serve as a temporary environment for a hundred birds.

The process of creating the mandala alludes to the sand-painting practices typical to different cultures. The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, for example, construct a sand-painting of a mandala when someone from the tribe gets ill. In Tibetan Buddhism, the sand mandalas are created as part of the initiation rites for monks. Upon the mandala's completion, it is ritualistically dismantled as an exercise of non-attachment, recognizing both the impermanence and the transitory nature of all aspects of life.

The environment created could be likened to an arena where the clash between my belief and non-belief would take place. On one hand, it reveals my tendency to cling on to the concepts of the divine. The idea of impermanence, complemented by concepts of rebirth and reincarnation, are relieving affirmations of the continuation of life. On the other hand, there is also a part of me that finds it hard to believe in these concepts, as everything seems to be too distant from the realm of logic and reason. Creating the mandala allows me to re-experience whatever spiritual and meditative properties the many before me claim to have experienced from this ritual. Upon its completion, my need to believe has been in a way, satisfied. The birds, being unconscious of the structure, would indiscriminately consume the seeds as food. Therefore, the act of dismantling would also be a form of sustenance. This allows me to find purpose and logic in what I have gone through, which in turn helps me attain a certain balance within myself.