

Serenity Diptychs (2015)

For violin, tape and still images

When I first encountered photographic diptychs of Philip Van Keuren, I was struck by the “endless pairs of things” and the unexpected dialogues appearing between the images. According to the artist “often the more “distance” between the sheer physicality of the paired images, light-dark, near-far, etc. results in a stronger emotive resonance, creating the “conversation” between images. The diptychs pair seemingly ordinary but disparate visual, cultural, and historical entities in order to illuminate and amplify their equivalent fictive, numinous, poetic, and emotional qualities. Two realities are placed side by side that would never be adjacent in the real world”.

The idea of pairing became a focal point in “Serenity Diptychs”. The piece itself takes a form of an enlarged diptych consisting of two distinctly different adjacent musical worlds – one of a dynamic nature and another of transcendence, stillness and reflection. First part with its continuous forward motion resembles a hike up the high mountain. Endless and tireless repetitive patterns are swirling ceaselessly and accumulating energy until the very top of the mountain is reached. There everything suddenly becomes still. One just stands in awe, mesmerized by the breathtakingly spacious vistas and mountain ranges overlapping each other in a far distance. Thus the second part reflects this state of heightened sensitivity where stasis bears a somewhat ecstatic quality.

The relationship between music and images can be perceived as a diptych as well. Each of them is governed by unique shaping principles – sounds are following a linear logic of time, whereas images display multidimensional nature of space in a non-linear fashion. Images are changing as flashbacks of memories, randomly appearing in the mind without any emotional involvement or attachment, with no particular narrative. Music is independently creating a coherent flow and revealing its own story line.

Another pairing is formed between solo violin and tape part where real acoustic sound is merged with imaginary voices.