

the collectors show

Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections



CHIMERA

Patricia Eustaquio

Psychogenic Fugue | 2008

Crochet lace and epoxy | 108 x 212 x 104 cm

Collection of Marcel Crespo



My concern as an artist lies at the intersection of opposites: life and death, that which is celebrated and lamented, which, ultimately, we discriminate as beautiful or grotesque. Of course, the paradox lies in that the more we live, the closer we are to dying. All the while a kind of sentimentality or nostalgia somehow grips us in the process. Perhaps it is this chord that I would like to touch within the viewer of my works. Moreover, I have always been interested in processes relegated to craft: sewing, knitting, lace-making, acts that subsisted in the old world and were deemed as decorative arts. Decoration is often dismissed as mere surface and yet the processes involved in decorating are all painstaking ones. Within the context of art, I feel that the intersections such as that of life and death or celebration and lament are aptly reflected in how art-making processes are categorized. Painting, itself, I have always regarded as a process of decorating, and the tedious process of applying paint on canvas with a tiny brush, grid by grid, reminds me of embroidery. It is with this in mind that I paint, while carefully choosing an image in the beautiful, grotesque arch, in an attempt to skew the balance, or perhaps display the tension of opposing ideas.

My attempt is to make twelve works that each seem to preface a longer narrative and yet is already the work itself. Each work is a prelude without an opera, and I have made it so to pattern the first twelve preludes and fugues in Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

Why Bach? Why Music? If I were to talk above my head and expound about music I realize I would be a monkey at a typewriter. And yet that is what I have set out to do in this collection of works. The works in a way are an homage to music, though perhaps it is with slight mockery that I do this: an act justified only by my absolute ignorance of it. Music, Schopenhauer argues, is the highest form of art simply because it does not imitate nature. Music is the manifestation of the will, of Idea itself; it is created from its own language, and if it were language, would be untranslatable. Music is the only art form that touches on the sublime and is thus essence while all other arts are imitations of Idea. Bach, on the other hand, is the first musician to compose a body of work that uses all twenty-four keys of the piano, or clavier, indiscriminate of major and minor keys. *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, because of this, has become the primary book used in piano schools so that music students are able to practice playing the entire range of their instrument.

And so my works are simple imitations: hollow odes and vacuous praises. In one sense, I am composing a tribute to Music, a symphony of abstract things beyond me, but which I understand as a listener of music to be beautiful. My tribute, therefore, is shallow but pretty to bits. In that sense, my tribute is mere skin and decoration. A sculpture replaces its object with an exquisite carcass of its former self or with a half-sized, leather-bound mute edition.

In a completely different sense, however, I am paying homage to "all other arts". Death to the Major, Viva Minor. In the contemporary world, music lives in iTunes, whereas the visual arts are revered in galleries and museums. Beethoven is replaced by Britney, and the world is aghast yet captivated. Hierarchies are inevitable and they change with time; this is what I was reminded of in my process of investigating music and the sublime. To pin weight on one over the other is common but not necessary. Still life pictures and landscapes revered in past centuries are now called "low art", while lace-making and ceramics just never made the cut. My works, therefore, are about the materials as much as the processes involved in creating them, as well as the subjects they portray: a cross between craft, art and design.

Death To The Major, Viva Minor