

Light through the tunnel brings tears and spikes, uncontrived

Why have I never watched A Symphony of Lights? The light monument across Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong was officially launched in 2004. It was the year after the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in the city. Citizens in Hong Kong are well aware of the light monument and its function. Yet, we never pay enough attention to the performance. It is always within sight but out of mind. In a city where light pollution is ubiquitous, I'd rather look for stars in the sky and a moment of peace and quiet. Light emitted is highly visible yet intangible, both monumental and anti-monumental. These conceptual contradictions further my thinking that seeing light signifies both distance and proximity. This sounds serendipitous in 2022 between Hong Kong and Geneva.

Why did I watch A Symphony of Lights? It is an impulse - not knowing ignites curiosity. We are here in Hong Kong working with Alan Bogana, who is based in Geneva, for a remote and virtual artist residency. We look for light, a particular kind of penetration into the evening sky. Startlingly, and in a true a priori manner, the closer the lights they locate, the less we can see; the farther the lights, the more we see. What can Alan see 9,517 kilometers away in real time through a webcam? A landscape? A spectacle? Or a vision to awaken our visual inertia to see Hong Kong while in Hong Kong?

Alan Bogana has never seen *A Symphony of Lights* or visited Hong Kong because of the pandemic. Intriguingly, he has been with the light monument in Hong Kong for the past six months in the most intimate manner. At 2 pm every day (Central European Time), he looks at the light performance at 8 pm (Hong Kong Time) through a webcam. The panoramic view through the webcam cannot be experienced in real life *in situ*. The mediated visual experience directs him to focus sharply on a visual representation of the experience (bear in mind that in the webcam capture, there is no sound, no heat, no rain, no chaos of a city. . . nothing but a panorama that operates like a surveillance camera; also, imagine what Alan would have endured from such deadpan seeing). The academic discourse on the advocacy of screen culture and its meditative power over the past decade has become outdated because of the global pandemic and needs to be rewritten, perhaps by a body of artwork in front of you.

The new works presented in this exhibition encapsulate the quietness that results from Alan's virtual residency. The video titled "Raindrops Symphony" is a condition-specific work employing weather as a lens through which to see light in Hong Kong in the most poetic way. Three 3D printings generated by a volumetric representation of light, titled "Relics of Lights, Clouds and Raindrops (Hong Kong)", are results of the study of lights of *A Symphony of Lights* during the virtual residency. These miniatures could be read as landscapes, almost forensic, or *karesansui* (Japanese zen/sand garden) of their visual appeal.

The new works of oppositional forces, styles, and aesthetics entangle a seeing that reminds me of being a Hong Kong citizen and how I saw, see, and will see my city. I could not help reminisce moments when my city was torn apart and when I needed a new vision to overcome my inertia of being at home for too long and perhaps projecting what the city, and every city on earth, would soon become. The transformative power of Alan Bogana's new works authorizes the light at the end of the tunnel of hope that is uncontrived, unconventional, and uplifting.

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25 June 2022