



In Search of Lyricism

Kiyomi

Gallery Chemould

7 to 30 April, 2005

Intonations, Whispers and Quarter-tones

To give structure to the immediacy of feeling is a long-drawn out dialogue with the self. Kiyomi, continues to drive her thoughts towards those star-points of sensation, bringing into being, limpid sanctuaries that are experienced quietly, softly, as we would, our hour-glasses, in those moments of listless, existential doubt.

Following the directions of her earlier work, of delving into reverie, into the fine balance of lyricism in song and the rapture of listening, Kiyomi proportions the single form and object discreetly, pushing into play a rejuvenescence of abstraction. She activates a level of volume, both auditory and dimensional; moves the texture of paint and its circulation as a mist sometimes, stretches line and amasses translucence, steering one towards the evergreen magic of deciphering a work of art, subjectively, romantically; we need not be obstructed by the calcified mountains of formal theories – Freudian, Structural, or linguist, to tune in as sophisticated spectators of this work.

Clean and calm with the hint of tempestuous 'inquiries', the solid paint areas allude to an internal life force under the canvas or paper. The suggestion of the gossamer sensations of melody, of multiple resonating chords rise to the surface like far-away, yet interminable conflagrations, sporting in the forests of nerves and veins. She is brooding on dual perceptions and striking synchronous movements with her ink and brush; patterning closeness and intensity and a cavernous embedded restlessness.

Ardour is energy in lyrical expression. But Kiyomi's method of placing it on her canvas without a sticky sentimentalism is to bracket it as a mood behind a curtain, as a consciousness that rivets towards wood, rock, minerals, plants, light and water. Layers of pigment are deployed to accomplish and complete these animations. She has the eye of a biologist, a chemist, and abandons herself to the cadence of poetry. The spread, the halt and gait of brush could be called *A Bout De Souffle*, or Breathless (the Godard film, about chasing unknown ecstasies). Most of these emotive strokes are realized through colour syncopations – accenting, shortening, and flowing into adjacent tones. The aura of a slow alchemy opens the works to unfixing meaning so that they are divested of cultural specificity. The compositions, if seen as what you sense, and what you map with your mind's eye, can become your own – a cognitive device and a passageway to eternity.

The exhibition, on the whole is subdued, akin to leaves of an album, or prologues to an immanent performance. The attention to material that is read, stored and referred to over one's life span, the sense of pouring over music scores or historical classificatory



Awake, 2005, acrylic on paper, 14½" x 14½"
Facing page: What was left unspoken (detail)

works is seen in this oeuvre. The sonority, of looking backwards, into the past is palpable; for, lexicons and printed book covers with rococo embellishments, texts with patinated hues are aesthetic and philosophical concerns and curiosities. Every painting is executed with a grid in mind so that a construction of the emotion over it, its persistence and width, its duration in time catches the truth behind the oracular presence of signs as leaf, container, bridge and strings of a musical instrument, or curvature in a design.

Dry, highly textured acrylic paints applied as though they were meant to be glass panes, sometimes, swathes of textile, give an impression that Kiyomi is following photographic genres, when thinking of the symmetries of mind and material. Moreover, the reticence of approach, the stealth of statements that issue forth, are communiqés in whispered disclosures. More than real life tales, her images reflect mimetic conversations of all that haunts her pleasurably. The thrum of deliberations is in the air; each recognizable motif and form appears to have floated into place; there is hardly a rise in pitch to proclaim a loud presence. The expectations however, of a séance for sound and music instruction, about to take place, imminently, with a change in the airflow and the arrival of footfalls, are indicated as momentous events.

We are drawn into modes and moments of musical intimism here. That is why the warm haze in which quotidian forms and objects stand still and silent, as talismans in her almanac of remembrances, serves as protective tissue, the wrap to fold in memories for revisitations. The pictures, conjured from photographs and sketches hold in a resonance, garnering myriad dulcet themes, unraveling the heave and wave of breathing colours.

Kiyomi has a predilection to return to singular forms like containers, drapes, shadows, and books. Now, she considers herself partner to the acoustic guitar. The magnificent instrument is an extension of her limbs. She has imbued it with a mahogany animism, a surface that transports the sensibility to the romance of a "life is elsewhere" space, referring of course, to her own music making on the guitar.

Indeed, this show is honed on the haptic joy of being intensely close to tonal material – the instrument, the song and the pigment. Wood, bed to brass strings, tensed for the touch, the pluck, the strum; Kiyomi's paintings could be equivalences for the chord struck and the sound eased out from voice or line strings and note-patch. Hers is a classical engagement in the redactive process, where the condition of painting aspires towards music and equally to the reverse process as well. It is the demand of her art to aspire the extraordinary, and to reveal the epiphanies that happen in music, in painting and the unities that bind artistic grammar and indeed, performance.

Roshan Shahani
March, 2005



Symphony in amber, 2005, acrylic on paper, 40" x 28"
Facing page: Symphony in amber (detail)