

MALCOLM COCHRAN > REQUIEM

Requiem, 2018

(16) circa 1960 refrigerators (carpeting, upholstery, pigmented wax, interior lighting, rubber hose, audio speakers), fluorescent lighting, perimeter benches, (11) solo, a capella vocalises pre-recorded and performed live on March 18, 2018

Requiem is a memorial to deaths from genocide, massacres, warfare, and human suffering from social and economic injustices and exploitation. It merges the mundane and discarded—used refrigerators repurposed as coffin-like sculptures—with live and recorded performance of four vocalises commissioned for the project and seven ancient, classical, and contemporary compositions adapted for solo, a cappella female voice. This is the first time I have incorporated musical performance in a work, and as such the installation is an experimental dovetailing of visual and aural elements. It is my hope that it is at once startling, destabilizing, and moving.

Informed by photos of hundreds of coffins arranged in rows in a large warehouse holding bodies exhumed from the Srebrenica massacre in Serbia in 1995, the installation consists of sixteen apartment-sized refrigerators (gutted of their mechanics) laid on their backs in orderly rows.

Requiem—the self-evident title for this project—references traditional musical compositions in honor of the dead. To accommodate the performance component of the installation, eight of the refrigerators are outfitted for singers to sit in with their heads protruding through circular openings cut in the upper part of the doors. Openings in the remaining eight have speakers through which recorded performances of the vocalises are played.

Benches designed and custom-built for the installation wrap the gallery perimeter, inviting viewers to spend time with the vocal performances and to accommodate the audience during the live performance on March 18, 2018.

Malcolm Cochran