

The Wound of Beauty (pink)

2016

The Wound of Beauty (pink) serves as a microcosm of pain, the healing process that follows, and the indelible marks that are left behind. Who, in life, has not experienced and is not shaped by past and present wounds? Yet, as much as the process hurts, we subsist. Despite the pain, there is growth, as seen in the various mends of the tears. There is a renewed life. The Wound of Beauty (pink) serves as a testament to the resilience of humans. Yet as one examines the piece further, it becomes clear that every tear, mend and even the initial choice of fabric is deliberate. The Wound of Beauty (pink) thus hints at the presence of a Creator. Could every pain, every healing be carefully designed such that we are made beautiful?

The Wound of Beauty (pink) essentially depicts that Beauty is emanated from our wounds. It is emanated from our healing. Beauty is emanated from the brokenness of Man.

The Wound of Beauty

Background

During my time at San Art, I came across an interesting article by Gregory Wolfe. It was a defence of beauty. According to Wolfe, of the three Transcendentals—goodness, truth and beauty—beauty had played the role of Cinderella and it was time to return her the glass slipper. When people start to get theological or philosophical, the focus is often on goodness and truth while beauty gets neglected. In fact, beauty is seen as a distractor from our quest for morals and truth. Inspired by the twentieth-century theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Wolfe argued that beauty, being least tainted by our fallen nature and carrying with it no agenda, can go undetected as we contest over what is good and true. With its beatific vision, it pierces our hearts, “wounding us with the transcendental glory of God.”

That beauty is overlooked, prompted me to reflect on my past projects. Had I treated beauty as a mere aesthetic product of the process of creating? That beauty wounds us, prompted me to reflect on my past encounters with it. As I stood atop Poon Hill, overlooking the Annapurna mountain region in Nepal some years ago, as much as I had marveled at the scenic view, did I also not feel an ache in my heart? The oversight of beauty and its pains inspired me to explore it and the current work is a diary of my pursuit of Beauty.

As the perfect piece of material is ripped, its beauty seemed to be revealed. As the torn piece of material is mended, it is once again made beautiful. Beauty is observed in the pain. Beauty is observed in the healing. It is my hope that as the audience views this work, they may be able to reflect on their personal pain and healing, and find comfort in Beauty. I hope the Beauty they experience will give meaning to their pain and healing.