

A coincidental nocturne

By Joakim Borda



Per Platou. Photo: Kurant/Anton Koslov

Despite the winter darkness outside, it still feels like stepping into a cave when I penetrate through the heavy draperies that block the entrance to the artist-run gallery Kurant. Inside it is completely darkened, except for a small spotlight that illuminates an object at the back of the room and, in a way pulls me inward against itself, like a beacon on a hardly navigable part of a coastal strip. The object, it turns out, is an animal skull.

Although I am at first literally groping in the dark, I am led around the room by a faint melody which seems to shift location, echoes of distant voices, mixed with subtle chords. The feeling is similar to visiting the crypt of a cathedral, solemn, sacred but also uncanny. Some of the sounds, I later learn, come from the street outside, where special live microphones are mounted. Conversations, waves from the dock and the chattering from high heels on the cobbles of Tromsø's small historic district Skansen, fuse with Platou's own samples into a kind of perpetual nocturne.

The use of background noise, everyday sounds and harsh engine noise characterizes the noise music scene, such as Japanese Merzbow. Per Platou however, seems to emphasize harmony and composition, with a remarkably musical result.

His background as a set designer is evident through his sense of the space as an actor. Despite the fact that the gallery showroom is virtually empty, the darkness interact with the sounds to stage a choreography where visitors circle around the room in strange patterns: Along the safety of the walls, or zigzaging across the floor, carefully avoiding bumping into each other. Like in a dance.

It happens from time to time that I complain about the lack of content when writing about exhibitions. But in *Nothing is nothing*, Per Platou actually succeeds with the feat to fill the room with sensual experiences rather than objects.