

The Zen of Painter/Choreographer Shen Wei

In Black, White and Gray A Multi-Dimensional Feast

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Monday, December 1, 2014

Irene Sperber



Miami Dade College Museum of Art and Design ([MOAD](#)) along with [MDC Live Arts](#) is presenting world heavy performance and art events underlining the Art Basel season in Miami. Though we are spoiled for choice at this time of year for cultural distractions, Shen Wei stands out for a number of reasons.

For his second exhibition in Miami ([Rite of Spring 2003](#)), Chinese born artist and choreographer Shen Wei presents a disquisition on dance and painting called *In Black, White and Gray*. This multi-dimensional artist communicates his proclivity for the art of movement by juxtaposing his [Shen Wei Dance Arts](#) group with an exhibition of his Brobdingnagian paintings; a swirling, whirling expression of gesture and emotion grasped from the air and captured on canvas in muted shades of black, white and gray.

This work is premiering on our soil along with five public dance performances from Dec. 5 through 7 in Miami's Freedom Tower. I should probably mention here that performances as well as the exhibition of paintings (through February 1) are free of charge.



Shen Wei won the Nijinsky Award for Emerging Choreography and was selected for a MacArthur Fellow in 2007. His parents were Chinese Opera professionals; he learned Chinese opera performance early on, interacting with the Hunan State Xian Opera Company. He was a founding member of the first modern dance company in China, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company. His successful dance company has been performing for fourteen years. Not stopping with dance, Shen Wei went on to study traditional Chinese ink painting, calligraphy and western art.

I had the opportunity to pose a few questions to the artist that floated up as I perused his work.

IS: The pieces have a sumptuous fluidity, with an ominous current running throughout. From where does your style emanate? Has your work always had this quality?

SW: "Since 2003, I have been experimenting with the energy through both my physical and mental expressions and experiences. My studies flow naturally as well as controlled in a structural way through balances, contrasts, rhythms, and textures all within the state of my meditative state and sensitivities."

IS: You utilize many aspects of the visual arts in your work. When you create a dance, do you see all elements coming together at once, or is there a layered quality? Do you see the dance, then the music, then the visual ambience?

SW: "Each of my works have such different focal points. It really depends on which piece of work I am working on. In some works, I begin with it already entirely envisioned; but other times, I will focus on specific aspects to further develop. In the end, I'll want my work to always touch and communicate through all human sensitivities."



IS: What facets of your pieces are the most difficult to achieve?

SW: “How to be totally free as a human being and an artist, without limiting myself by my own knowledge and experiences.”

IS: How did you chose what to show South Floridians? What was it about the Miami audience that dictated your direction?

SW: “The 11 paintings and choreography that I will be showing are my most recent works, and illustrate the moment of my journey as an artist.”

Shen Wei will be presenting eleven new paintings. His broad scope is a mind-boggling amalgam of choreographer, director, dancer, painter, and designer. If you caught his opening ceremony piece at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, you are aware of the capabilities of his choreography.

Black, White & Gray

Freedom Tower 600 Biscayne Blvd.

Miami, 33132

Performances: Dec. 5 through 7

Be sure to make a reservation. Seats are limited:

<http://mdclivearts.org/events/the-art-of-shen-wei/>

Exhibition and performance

For tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/901573>

Matinee 1 p.m. and 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday only

Exhibition only Dec. 10 through Feb. 1

Wednesday through Sunday, Noon -to 5 p.m.

Previews are Dec. 4, 8 p.m., VIP performance

Artists talks:

December 5, 4 p.m.

Shen Wei in conversation with Karin Oen, Charles Reinhart and Wing Ling VIP cardholders

Viceroy Miami

485 Brickell Ave

Miami

Dec. 6, 6 to 7 p.m.

Salon Talk series with Shen Wei, Jeremy Mikolajczak and Weng Ling

in the Convention Center, Art Basel Miami Beach