

## Shen Wei and the Art of Dance at Art Basel Miami Beach

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Image Courtesy of Artist

Shen Wei. No. 1, Oil, Acrylic, House Paint on Canvas, 79" x 216", 2013

"Shen Wei -- In Black, White and Gray" marks the first major public exhibition of his paintings, and the accompanying dance work leans heavily on the personal nature of his painting.

"I felt this is a time for me to really show my recent [visual art] work to the public. Usually I don't do much exhibition, because I feel the paintings are so personal. They are not like the way I do my dance, with a lot of people around to discover and to work with," he explains, noting that the development of this project started almost a decade ago and has come to life in phases. "You are going to see my painting's influence on my movement and dance. I think it is interesting to bring that to Miami -- to allow people an understanding of my experience as an artist who works both on canvas and with human bodies."

It's clear on speaking with Wei that there is no clear delineation between his choreographic and dance work and painting. To him, each informs the other. "These are my two passions. If you see my painting, you'll see some of those strokes have to come out of somebody who understands the body, connects to the body so well to make that happen. There is so much movement, there are not many painters who can make that happen, because it requires a physical ability to making that kind of outcome. The moves, the strokes, the outcome of the paint, it requires big movements by your physical body to make that happen."

His company of 12 dancers are also working in a slightly new, deeper process with him on this performance: "Sometimes I make a dance and it's about the dance, it's the inspiration, or it's about the music or concept, it is about that performance."

"But the inspiration now is all about my personal journey with my painting. It's a little bit of a different shift for all my dancers. During rehearsals I lay out a print of my painting in the studio, describe each, try to tell them everything I tried to express in the painting, so the dancers can understand the painting. They have to study the painting, study the brush strokes, study that every day. They look at the details of the brush stroke, look at the detail of the space and the texture and try to express that into physical movement."

*The world premiere of "Shen Wei - In Black, White and Gray," presented by MOAD & MDC Live Arts: exhibition and performances Friday through Sunday, with matinee at 1 p.m., evening at 8 p.m. (Friday & Saturday only); limited seating available at [www.mdclivearts.org](http://www.mdclivearts.org). The painting exhibition runs from December 10 through February 1, 2015 at MDC Museum of Art + Design, The Freedom Tower at MDC, 600 Biscayne Blvd., Downtown Miami; 305-237-7710 or [museum@mdc.edu](mailto:museum@mdc.edu).*

*-- Rebekah Lanae Lengel, [artburstmiami.com](http://artburstmiami.com)*

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