

USC US-China Institute

南加州大学美中学院



Shen Wei at Crow Collection of Asian Art

In this exhibition presented by the Crow Collection of Asian Art, Shen Wei narrows his focus to a study of the grisaille palette and the expressive textures of oil paint. Meditations on landscape, the subtly beautiful, and the strange have long been the domain of literati artists in China. Shen Wei, with this new series, takes these meditations to new heights and profound depths.

06/19/2014 - 09/28/2014

Crow Collection of Asian Art

Address: 2010 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201

Cost: Free

Phone: (214) 979-6430

Website: crowcollection.org/ai1ec_event/shen-wei/?instance_id=

The artist Shen Wei defies classification. He is a renowned choreographer and dancer who has also designed sets, video projections, costumes, and makeup for his company's dance performances. The result is always *agesamtkunstwerk*, a synthesis of the arts where creativity moves freely between mediums. Instead of conforming to a recognizable style, Shen Wei's creations are unified by his sensitivity to the expressive possibilities of gesture, color, and shape. Shen has been internationally recognized for his many artistic accomplishments, including "Scroll," a stunning section of the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing in which dancers moved across a large rectangular cloth, their hands and feet dipped in paint, leaving behind the traces of their movement in ribbonlike lines. The mesmerizing synthesis of choreography and drawing came together at the end of the piece, when the dancers departed and the horizontal scroll was lifted into the air, revealing a landscape in the tradition of

Chinese *shan shui*, mountains and water.

Shen Wei is one of the select few to have received a MacArthur Foundation “Genius” Fellowship, and his breadth of creative artistic accomplishment reflects the diversity of his training and inspiration. From his early training in the art of Chinese opera and calligraphy to his later interest in the painting of Cézanne, Degas, and Lucien Freud, these sources inform his practice and provide a launching pad for bold new directions. During the mid-1980s, Shen branched out from his childhood studies of traditional Chinese visual and performing arts to explore oil painting and modern dance, some of the “Western” arts closely identified with China’s significant period of artistic experimentation: the ’85 Art New Wave. Since 1995, Shen Wei has lived and worked in New York, where he immersed himself in the vibrant cultural life of the city. His artistry as a dancer and choreographer has continued to relate to his keen interest in the visual arts on view in the city’s many galleries and museums, as well as his own painting. As a result, he is a truly international artist whose work owes as much of a debt to the avant-garde and alternative art scenes of lower Manhattan as it does to classical Chinese arts.

In the significant recent series of paintings featured in this exhibition, Shen Wei narrows his focus to a study of the grisaille palette and the expressive textures of oil paint. These compositions in black, white, and gray are shrouded in an aura of mystery. The shapes and textures can, in places, appear to resemble elements of a sublime and awesome landscape—jagged rocks, rushing water, imposing clouds, and elusive figures and animals. These same works, in places, recede into shadow, abstraction, and above all the materiality of a heavy impasto and thick textured paint on canvas. They have a dreamlike quality reminiscent of surrealist explorations of the unconscious that melds, unexpectedly, with visible brushstrokes and the traces of swift, decisive action. Meditations on landscape, the subtly beautiful, and the strange have long been the domain of literati artists in China. Shen Wei, with this new series, takes these meditations to new heights and profound depths.