

SHEN WEI

BETWEEN BLOSSOMS

March 2 - April 22, 2017

Opening Reception
Thursday March 2, 6 - 8pm

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"Between Blossoms is inspired by my dreams of the unknown and by the mysteries that fascinate me. I find these fantasies hinted at in the reality that surrounds me; a touch of melodrama here, a hint of seduction there, which enhances the everyday with an elusive, enchanting beauty."

- Shen Wei

In his new photographic series *Between Blossoms*, New York-based Chinese photographer Shen Wei has taken a meditative journey across continents, from the United States to Europe and Asia. His seductive photographs capture a unifying sense of other-worldliness within the changing landscape, generating an abstracted sensation of place that he describes as *"deeply connected to my inner melancholy, a dream-like state of mind."*



Peach Tree, 2016, Chromogenic Print, 13 3/8 x 20 in, Edition of 5

The images in *Between Blossoms* possess an inner stillness and tranquility, binding the influence of traditional themes of Chinese art, drawn from the natural environment, with the ancient Chinese philosophy of Qi - a powerful unseen life force within all natural phenomena. Shen Wei's attention to the interactions of darkness and light, and negative or void spaces gives these hidden forces tangible form, drawing from the philosophical treatment of emptiness as solid space often found in Chinese painting. This can be seen in the near pitch-black void within *Peach Tree*, from which a lush, flower-studded tree emerges, and the dynamic energy within the central light-filled cavity in *Monkey*. The interplay of positive and negative elements also articulates oppositional emotional states of fear, attraction, joy, loneliness and absence.

Shen Wei's immersion in the landscape during his travels has led to a focus on vegetal subject matter, with trees acting as a thread interwoven throughout the series. In Chinese culture, each tree has a symbolic meaning (Shen Wei notes that the peach tree represents seduction and love), corresponding with Wei's own instinctive evocation of feeling in nature, which he has characterized as *"both specific and spontaneous"*. Shen Wei's method of image-making involves extended periods of waiting for the perfect light or sense of movement (for instance the glowing morning light in *House Frame*), the meditative process itself becoming a crucial component of the work.

The nude self-portraits in *Between Blossoms* add a reflexive dimension, evoking inner moods or sentiments, with less emphasis on the physical body than in the past. While previous series' (such as *I Miss You Already*) have explored notions of intimacy, desire, and identity through the human form, recent images such as *Searching* reflect on the subconscious relationship between the body and its environment, with harmoniously balanced compositions that both cloak and reveal the figure, invoking a mystical state or ghost-like presence.

ABOUT SHEN WEI

Born and raised in Shanghai, China, Shen Wei is a visual artist based in New York City. He also works in video, mixed media drawing, and performance. His work has been exhibited internationally, with venues including the Museum of the City of New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Power Station of Art in Shanghai, La Triennale di Milano, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. Shen Wei's work is included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Library of Congress, the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Museum of Chinese in America, and the Ringling Museum of Art, among others. Shen Wei is a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Arts Residency, the Asian Cultural Council Arts & Religion Fellowship, the New York Foundation for the Arts Photography Fellowship, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Arts Grant. He holds an MFA in photography, video, and related media from the School of Visual Arts, New York; and a BFA in photography from Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

Image Credits: *All images (c) Shen Wei, courtesy of Flowers Gallery, London and New York*

For further information and images please contact Allegra Favila, allegra@flowersgallery.com or +1 212 439 1700.



Searching, 2016, Chromogenic Print, 13 3/8 x 20 in, Edition of 5



Monkey, 2016, Chromogenic Print, 30 x 45 in, Edition of 5



House Frame, 2016, Chromogenic Print, 30 x 45 in, Edition of 5



Palm Tree, 2016, Chromogenic Print, 13 3/8 x 20 in, Edition of 5