

# SHEN WEI

## SELF

Flowers Gallery Hong Kong  
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28 November 2020 - 27 February 2021  
Private View: 28 November, 11am -7pm

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to announce *Self*, a solo exhibition by Shen Wei in Hong Kong. The exhibition brings together selected works from several series from 2009 to the present day, incorporating photography and video work. Shen Wei's diverse body of work explores notions of identity, memory and sexuality.

On view will be photographs from his latest series *Broken Sleeve*, which was inspired by a legendary story of an ancient Chinese emperor whose lover fell asleep on his sleeve. Rather than wake him, the emperor cut off his own sleeve. The series is more than a love story; it explores how power and submission, harmony and danger co-exist in the same space; how myth, magic and romance become intertwined and blur together in the real world.

The notion of desire and control is explored in Shen's nude self-portraits from his earlier series *I Miss You Already*. *Self-portrait (Bent)* portrays the body stretched to create a taut arch within the contained space of a cave, while *Self-portrait (Syracuse)* examines the seductive but also submissive/dominant interaction of two figures.

Two works from *Between Blossoms*, a series of landscapes created across continents, from the United States to Europe and Asia will be exhibited. These photographs capture a unifying sense of other-worldliness within the changing landscape that Shen describes as "deeply connected to my inner melancholy, a dream-like state of mind." Shen finds the unfamiliar and desire hidden in the nature and our unseen surroundings. The interplay of darkness and light, positive and negative elements also articulates oppositional emotional states of fear, attraction, joy, loneliness and absence. This can be seen in the near pitch-black void within *Peach Tree* from which a lush, flower-studded tree emerges.

Also on display will be examples of Shen's video work, *Bubble* (2013) and *Dusk of the Harmonious Garden* (2016). Performing for the camera in *Bubble*, Shen explores the intense effects of bodily experience, drawing out a provocatively extended gesture of blowing a bubble until reaching a state of exhaustion. In contrast, *Dusk of Harmonious Garden* is a meditative journey of time and fantasy.



*Stage*, 2017, Archival Pigment Print; *Self Portrait (Bent)*, 2009, Archival Pigment Print



*Peach Tree*, 2014, Archival Pigment Print (detail)

## **SHEN WEI (b.1977)**

Born and raised in Shanghai, Shen Wei is based in New York City. He is known for his intimate portraits of himself and others, as well as his poetic landscapes and still-life photography. 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, China, the Hasselblad Foundation in Göteborg, Sweden, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, CNN, *Aperture*, *ARTnews*, *Paris Review*, *Financial Times*, *Le Figaro*, and *American Photo*.

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, CAFA Art Museum, 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 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**

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Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 7pm or by appointment.

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