

SHEN WEI, TOTAL DANCE ARTIST, PERFORMING AT THE COLLEZIONE MARAMOTTI AND THE TEATRO VALLI REGGIO EMILIA

Re-Turn. Artistic Vision of Shen Wei. 20th – 23rd October 2011. Collezione Maramotti and Teatro Valli of Reggio Emilia.

The appearance in Reggio Emilia of the choreographer, director, dancer, painter and designer Shen Wei, miraculously poised between East and West, will be a return (re-turn) to the city that hosted him during the Fondazione I Teatri's 2009 season with the diptych *Re- (Part I)* and *Map*.

The project, which is part of the Aperto Festival 2011 programme (7th October – 6th November 2011) devoted to contemporary productions, sees the Fondazione I Teatri alongside the Collezione Maramotti and Max Mara hosting a site-specific dance performance in the galleries of the Collezione Maramotti (21st and 23rd October), the European premieres of *Near the Terrace*, and of *O-11* at the Teatro Valli (22nd October) and a conversation between the artist himself and the journalist from *la Repubblica* Leonetta Bentivoglio (20th October).

"Through many years of experimentation, I have developed an iconic, deeply personalized mode of pure movement. My aesthetics have been grounded in the principles of basic movement structures.

Lately, I have become focused on energies that affect movement structures: from the way energy organically makes our world move, to the ways in which internal human energies – breath, weight, center, balance – are interconnected. I am fascinated by the affect these energies have on the body and mind, providing access into new dimensions of thought. I see this new framework, both spiritual and physical, as an ideal space for introducing aspects of cultural shifts brought by the digital revolution, integrating new technologies and unfamiliar electronic sounds – all of which will create a new way for audiences to experience live performance."

– Shen Wei

Still Moving is the very recent work commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the museum's Charles Engelhard Court (6th and 13th June 2011): a site-specific creation performed by Shen Wei's company (Shen Wei Dance Arts), in which he experimented with contrasting the beauty of the stationary body and the beauty of the moving body, creating a dialogue between the dancers and the marble and bronze sculptures produced by renowned twentieth-century American artists.

In his new work, created specifically for the **Collezione Maramotti**, Shen Wei shifts his focus from the past glories of the sculptures at the Metropolitan Museum to the contemporary artworks exhibited at the Collezione Maramotti.

During his first visit to the Collection in 2009, Shen Wei was inspired by the strong and daring aesthetic impact of the Collection, whose "works look the future fearlessly in the eye, and at other times show anxiety and perplexity for the unknown" – alluding to the uncertainty and sense of inquiry aroused by contemporary art. The Collection is also an ideal venue, capable of stimulating a potential and new artistic milieu for Shen Wei.

In this new production, Shen Wei will shift the spectators' vision from the perspective typical of the visitor, and make them witness and participate in a dialogue that thrives on the exchange of energies between the dancers and the artworks.

Proceeding in this way, Shen Wei intends to reveal a new frame of reference, a new setting in which visitors can consider the works of contemporary art from a new and personal perspective.

The Collezione Maramotti is thus confirming its vocation to explore new expressive languages, having already hosted in 2009 the production *Early Works* by Trisha Brown, another representative figure of contemporary dance.

At the **Teatro Valli**, the Chinese-born artist Shen Wei will be presenting the European premiere of *Near the Terrace*. As the artist explains:

"Near the Terrace, Part I was created in 2000 during a period when I was questioning everyday movements and exploring their connection to different sensibilities of dance technique and performance. I began detailed work on simple center-controlled movements in relationship to spatial, temporal, and visual elements. My research of this concept first led to the creation of *Folding* (2000). Several months later, I continued to examine the movement concepts I began in *Folding*, while also studying the work of surrealist Belgian painter Paul Delvaux. His paintings became the inspiration for *Near the Terrace, Part I*. On many levels, I feel his paintings connect to the sensibilities I was in search of in my art during this period".

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Another European premiere is the solo *0-11* taken from *Limited States*, the artist's latest work, presented in July 2011 at the American Dance Festival and created for Sara Procopio, one of the dancers in the company, to celebrate her 11 years with Shen Wei Dance Arts.

Re- (Part III), the third piece of choreography to be performed at Teatro Municipale Valli, was inspired by a reflection on China: "In the summer of 2007, I traveled for 40 days on China's Silk Road-from Beijing to Xi'an, west to Dunhuang into Xinjiang, as far as Turpan and Kashgar, ancient oases kingdoms along the edge of the Taklamakan Desert. Some months later, I returned to a transformed Beijing to work on the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony. The experience of this modern city drew into conversation my experience of living in New York City for these last 14 years. While the cities share certain apparent "modern" elements, they are also still quite different. I began to observe a powerful contrast between an Asian concept of social unity, dependence, and sharing, and the dominance of individuality in the West-two notes on a spectrum on endless reconstructions of our human society".

For Shen Wei this is part of a vortex of creativity: on Thursday 20th October at 7 pm at the Maramotti Collection, Leonetta Bentivoglio, critic and journalist for *la Repubblica*, will meet this artist with an all-round vision of art, who combines painting and dance, choreography and calligraphy, East and West, as a result of his broad training that is the driving force of his relationship with live creation - on stage, on canvas and in life.

Shen Wei grew up in China and his childhood was devoted to learning calligraphy and the secrets of Chinese opera. In 1995 he moved to New York and in 2000 he founded Shen Wei Dance Arts, one of the most interesting groups on the international dance scene.

www.shenwei.it

collezione maramotti

A venue conceived as an open space of research and knowledge: this is the philosophy of the **Collezione Maramotti**, a project developed on the initiative of the entrepreneur, founder of Max Mara and passionate art collector Achille Maramotti.

Opened in late 2007 in the premises of the old company headquarters in Reggio Emilia, the permanent collection consists of over two hundred works – produced from 1950 to the present day by a hundred or so internationally renowned artists, including Vito Acconci, Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Alberto Burri, Francesco Clemente, Tony Cragg, Tano Festa, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Mario Merz, Luigi Ontani, Mimmo Paladino, Tom Sachs, Mario Schifano, Julian Schnabel and Bill Viola – and can be visited by advanced reservation.

In parallel with the permanent collection, temporary exhibitions are organized with projects developed by young national and international artists specifically for the Collezione Maramotti.

www.collezionemaramotti.org

MaxMara

The **Max Mara Group**, founded in 1951 by Achille Maramotti and now run by his children, is one of the leading women's prêt-à-porter clothing companies, with 2258 stores and 22 different collections sold in over 100 countries worldwide.

www.maxmara.com

I TEATRI

The activity of Fondazione I Teatri of Reggio Emilia involves almost every branch of performance live. To stage works ranging from dance to prose, concerts, opera, theatre for children, musical, operetta, it takes advantage of a unique system in Italy: three theatres, all standing around a square in the city heart, each of them characterized not only by its architecture, but also by the type of performances scheduled.

www.iteatri.re.it

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Re-Turn. Artistic Vision of Shen Wei

in association with the Collezione Maramotti and Max Mara

Thursday 20th October, 7 pm (Aperto Festival 2011)

Collezione Maramotti

Meet the artist talk

Shen Wei in conversation with Leonetta Bentivoglio

free entrance while seats last, please contact Collezione Maramotti for reservations

Friday 21st October, 4.30 pm and 8.30 pm (Aperto Festival 2011)

Sunday 23rd October, 3 pm and 8.30 pm (Aperto Festival 2011)

Collezione Maramotti

Site specific performance artworks

Shen Wei Dance Arts

concept and choreography: Shen Wei

Saturday 22nd October, 8.30 pm (as part of the season and also at the Aperto Festival)

Teatro Valli

Near the Terrace/European premiere

0-11 / European premiere

Re- (Part III)

Shen Wei Dance Arts

Concept and choreography by Shen Wei

artistic director Shen Wei *executive director* David Persky *director of production* Matthew F. Lewandowski II *associate artist* Sara Procopio *rehearsal director* Kathleen Jewett *wardrobe supervisor* Brandon Whited *make up supervisor* Sarah Lisette Chiesa

Near the Terrace, (2000) *concept and choreography by* Shen Wei *music by* Arvo Pärt, "Für Alina" and "Spiegel Im Spiegel" *costume, set and make-up design by* Shen Wei *lighting* David Ferri

Near the Terrace received its premiere at the *American Dance Festival* in 2000 followed by its New York City premiere at the *Lincoln Center Festival* in 2005.

Arvo Pärt's "Für Alina" and "Spiegel im Spiegel" used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors LLC, U.S. and Canadian agent for Universal Edition Vienna, publisher and copyright owner.

Inspired by the work of surrealist Belgian painter Paul Delvaux.

0-11 (taken from Limited States) *concept and choreography by* Shen Wei *music* "Crossing Now Bridges Intact" by Illusions of Safety *performer* Sara Procopio

Re- (Part III) *choreography* Shen Wei *lighting* Jennifer Tipton *scenery and costumes* Shen Wei *music* David Lang *violin* Todd Reynolds. *Sounds and images recorded on the Silk Road (China)* by Shen Wei *projection design* Shen Wei and Daniel Hartnett

Re- (Part III) was commissioned by the Lincoln Center Festival 2009 and by the American Dance Festival with the support of the SHS Foundation and Shen Wei Dance Arts Council of Ten members Silas and Celia Chou, Edward and Caroline Hyman, Younghee Kim-Wait, and William and Helen Little, and with the support of the Edinburgh International Festival Commission, UK. Music by David Lang was commissioned by Shen Wei Dance Arts, with the support of The O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation. Music published by Red Poppy Music, Ltd., distributed exclusively worldwide and used in agreement with G. Schirmer, Inc., copyright holders.

Shen Wei

Shen Wei, born in Hunan, China, is a choreographer, dancer, painter and designer. He started to study Chinese opera at the age of nine. From 1984 to 1989 he worked for the Hunan State Xian Opera Company. From 1991 to 1994 – as a dancer and choreographer – he was one of the first members of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the first modern dance company in China, with which he performed in various festivals in Korea, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and India. On being awarded a scholarship by the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab, Shen Wei moved to New York City in 1995.

Prior to founding Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000, his choreographies were presented at the American Dance Festival (1995), the National Theater in Taiwan (1996), the Palace Theatre in London (1997), the Asia Society

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in New York (1997), the Stockholm Dance House (1999), the Brighton Arts Festival (2000), the Edinburgh Festival Theatre (2000) and the Germany Millennium Moves Festival (2000).

Shen Wei has received many awards. In 2007 he was awarded the MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship. In China, he won the first prize as best choreographer and best performer at the 1994 Inaugural National Modern Dance Competition. In the United States he received a scholarship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2000 and the American Dance Festival's Ben Sommer Fellowship in that same year. He was also awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001, the Nijinsky Award as "Emerging Choreographer" in 2004, Australia's Helpmann Award for "Best Ballet or Dance Work" in 2005, and the 2006 "Les Etoiles de Ballet" award, Palais des Festivals in Cannes.

Shen Wei received twelve commissions for the American Dance Festival (1995, 2000–2006, 2008–2011) and others from Het Muziektheater (2004 and 2007), New York City Opera (2005), Lincoln Center Festival (2005, 2009), Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2007), the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater II, Dances We Dance Company of Hawaii, the Margrit Mondavi Center for Performing Arts at the University of California, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company and the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal (2007). In 2008 Shen Wei created the choreography for the opening ceremony at the Beijing Olympics. In 2010 he received a commission from Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo and from the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, where he created the choreography for "Mosè in Egitto" by Rossini, conducted by Maestro Riccardo Muti.

For each ballet or dance work created for his own company, Shen Wei also designs the stage sets, costumes and make-up. As independent visual artist, he is both a painter and designer. His paintings have been exhibited in New York and Hong Kong; his creative exploration of *The Rite of Spring* inspired him to produce a series of paintings first exhibited as part of the company's New York debut at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2003. In October 2006 the paintings toured with the company in Hong Kong for the New Vision Festival and in July 2007 they returned to New York, featuring alongside the company's performance of *Second Visit to the Empress* at the Lincoln Center Festival.

Shen Wei Dance Arts

Hailed by *The New York Times* as "startlingly imaginative", Shen Wei Dance Arts seeks a novel approach to movement and the body for both performer and audience. Each work develops an original physical vocabulary based on the exploration of movement. The choreography, at once realistic and abstract, combines Eastern and Western aesthetic forms and powerful scenic elements designed to create a pictorial and hybrid mise-en-scène. The result is a "fascinating fantasy in movement".

In just seven years since its debut at the American Dance Festival in 2000, the Company has achieved top-ranking status among dance companies of worldwide renown. In addition to its repeated engagements with the American Dance Festival, Lincoln Center Festival and Venice Biennale, the Shen Wei Dance Arts Company has appeared in some of the best known festivals around the world, from Spoleto to Massachusetts, from Dublin to Rome, from Montpellier to Hong Kong and Sydney. The company received the 2005 Helpmann Award in Australia for "Best Ballet or Dance Work", on the occasion of its debut at the Sydney Festival in association with the Sydney Opera House. In September 2006 the company performed the premiere of *Re- (Part I)* at the Joyce Theater in New York. In May 2007 it started a five-year residency at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and in July it staged three performances of Shen Wei's highly acclaimed *Second Visit to the Empress*, inspired by the tradition of Chinese opera, at the New York State Theater as part of the Lincoln Center Festival.

In 2008 Shen Wei and his Company contributed to the organization of the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympic Games.

A selection of his engagements includes: American Dance Festival (2000–2007), Lincoln Center Festival, New York (2003–2005, 2007); Jacob's Pillow, Becket-Massachusetts (2004 and 2006); Kennedy Center, Washington D.C. (2001, 2005, 2007–2011); Disney Hall at the Los Angeles Music Center (2007); Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Los Angeles Music Center (2004); Zellerbach Hall/CalPerformances, Berkeley (2004 and 2007); Dance Umbrella & Sadler's Wells, London (2004); The Barbican, London (2007); the Venice Biennale (2004 and 2005); Israel Festival (2004); Het Muziektheater, Amsterdam (2003 and 2005); Sydney Festival (2005); Singapore Esplanade (2005); Movimentos Festival, Wolfsburg-Germany (2005); Montpellier Festival, France (2005); Melbourne International Arts Festival (2005); Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal (2006); MODAFE in Seoul (2006); Joyce Theater, New York (2006); Hong Kong New Vision Festival (2006).

The company's repertoire includes: "Folding" (2000), "Near the Terrace – Part I" (2000), "Behind Resonance" (2001), "Near the Terrace – Part II" (2001), "Rite of Spring" (2003), "Connect Transfer" (2004), "Second Visit to the Empress" (2005), "Map" (2005), "Re- Part I" (2006), "Re- Part II" (2007) and "Re- Part III" (2009). The last three creations culminated in the programme "Re- (I, II, III)".

As well as choreographic activity for his company, Shen Wei is famous for his site-specific creations, including

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choreography for the art installation by Ernesto Neto at Park Avenue Armory's Drill Hall (2007) and "Connect Transfer II," an installation at the Judson Memorial Church, New York (2008). His most recent creations for the company include a site-specific performance at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (6th and 13th June 2011) and his most recent choreography "Limited States" presented at the American Dance Festival (14th -16th July). Shen Wei is currently involved in the "Artist-in-Residence" project at the Park Avenue Armory (2010-2011). This residency will lead to a new creation, commissioned by the Park Armory, and to a new staging of two of Shen Wei's works ("Folding" and "Rite of Spring"). These two creations will be presented in a single programme in the vast Park Armory Drill Hall for the start of the company's next New York season (29th November-4th December 2011).

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