

4A CENTRE FOR
CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART
PRESENTS

SHEN SHAOMIN 沈少民
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW 后天

4A



15 November - 10 December 2011

Opening Event: 6-8 pm, Thursday 17 November

Venue: 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

181-187 Hay St Sydney (Opposite the Capitol Theatre)

(Please note that the exhibition opening date has changed due to freight delays)

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art is proud to present *The Day After Tomorrow* the first solo exhibition in Sydney in over a decade by renowned Chinese-Australian artist, Shen Shaomin.

The Day After Tomorrow takes a critical approach to human society and articulates a world in flux, dramatising the impact of evolution, human culture, and the damage inflicted upon the natural world in the pursuit of human freedom and progress. The exhibition features new works created specifically for this exhibition. Included are hyper-realistic sculptures of animals presented in mounds of salt and a life-like figure of an elderly lady.

The major work, *I sleep on top of myself*, suggests an otherworldly environment – within mounds of salt lie the nests of hyper-realistic silicon animals – a rabbit, a cat, dog, goose, sheep, piglets and chicken. Through the process of evolution and the necessity to adapt to this stark almost alien landscape, these animals have created nests for themselves, lined in their own fur. These apocalyptic sculptures appear to breathe, through a robotic process, as if waiting in a state of hibernation in an attempt at self-preservation.

The other key work in the exhibition, *I want to know what is infinity* is a lifesize figure of a vulnerable and frail elderly lady sitting in a beach chair on a bed of sand. Made from silicone with robotic movement, the figure appears asleep and barely breathing. Her true to life physicality not only confronts us with issues of ageing and loneliness in society but explores more deeply the cycle of life and death. Beyond land, as Shen explains, “the ocean, as written in Chinese can also mean ‘infinity’ and ‘forever’ – human life is fragile in comparison.”

Shen Shaomin is one of a handful of Australian-Chinese artists including Guan Wei and Ah Xian who moved to Sydney post-1989. During the 1990s, this group of artists had a significant impact on Australian culture and its representation of diversity within the Australian community. Shen Shaomin now travels back and forth between Sydney and Beijing where he has set up his own artist studio.

Originally trained as a woodblock printer during the Cultural Revolution, over the last 20 years Shen Shaomin has

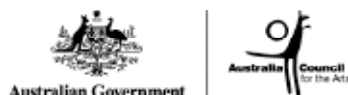
forged an important international career as a contemporary artist concerned with conceptual and philosophical experimentation. Earlier work presented at 4A in 2004 included fantastical animal hybrids, made from the ground-up bones of animals.

Aaron Seeto, Director of 4A and curator of this exhibition, says "Shen's work is not well known to Australian audiences. Like many migrant artists arriving in Australia, his early entry into the Australian contemporary art world was difficult. As a newly arrived migrant, he didn't have the means to support his practice or the language to access support, so his work was not necessarily understood. *The Day After Tomorrow*, is a timely exhibition which reappraises the work of one of the few Australian artists who is working in a truly global context."

Since returning to Beijing, Shaomin's experience abroad has been the impetus in his shifts in thinking towards experimental and audacious art installations which he has presented across the US, Europe, China and Australia. He has presented major solo projects in China including at the Today Art Museum, Beijing; Tang Contemporary, Beijing; Platform China, Beijing; Urs Meile Gallery, Switzerland; Osage Kwun Tung, Hong Kong, as well as group exhibitions including Shanghai Zengdi Moma, Liverpool Biennial, Groninger Museum, Holland; ZKM Museum Karlsruhe, Millennium Park, Chicago. In Australia he has exhibited at the *17th Biennale of Sydney* (2010).

The artist will be in Sydney prior to the exhibition and is available for interviews.

For media enquiries please contact Hannah Skrzynski on 0412 825 586 or hannah@creativeasia.com.au



The Day After Tomorrow forms part of 4A's Project Experimental Field, and has been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



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IMAGE:
Shen Shaomin, I sleep on top of
myself, 2011, (detail of production
image), silica gel simulation,
dimensions variable. Courtesy the
artist

