

# THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

## SHEN SHAOMIN

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney

Exhibition dates: 15 November - 10 December 2011

The Day After Tomorrow is the first solo exhibition in Sydney in over a decade by renowned Chinese-Australian artist Shen Shaomin. Shen Shaomin is one of a group of Chinese artists who made Sydney their home during the 1990s and 2000s. This group of artists which include Guan Wei, Guo Jian and Ah Xian, had a significant impact on Australian culture throughout this period, as Australia sought to redefine and align itself in the context of its immediate geography and its historic relationships within the Asia-Pacific Region.

Born in Acheng City in Heilongjiang Province, China, Shen Shaomin arrived in Sydney in 1989. As a poor migrant, he has described these ten years as being some of his most difficult, in part due to his struggle with Australian culture and language, and being an outsider within the local art scene.

Without formal artistic training, Shen developed his practice through the production of visual culture and propaganda for the Cultural Revolution, making posters and screening films. Eventually in the 1980s, through programs of art education for the masses, Shen enrolled in classes for traditional woodcut printing.

Shen Shaomin is now based in Beijing, but retains strong connections to Australia. Over the last 20 years Shen Shaomin has forged an important international career with an emphasis on conceptual experimentation. He is one of the key Australian artists who is working within a global network of biennales, museums and commercial galleries. The work in this exhibition presents a shift away from the overt political expressions of the 1990s which still underpins what non-Chinese audiences expect of contemporary art from China. Like many of his generation, Shen Shaomin is interested in articulating the human, cultural, technological and social shifts occurring around the world. The exhibition includes three new bodies of work that expand upon a number of the artists ongoing concerns. In particular, the poetic and philosophic implications of progress, where ideas of death, spirituality, consumerism and history reinforce the precarious relationship between an instinctive human experience and a cultured human knowledge. How knowledge and progress both expand and restrain human freedom, has been a constant concern of the artist for over a decade. The work in The Day After Tomorrow takes a critical approach to human society and articulates a world in flux, dramatising the impact of human evolution and culture, and the damage inflicted upon the natural world in the pursuit of human freedom and progress.

Shen Shaomin has exhibited across the US, Europe, China and Australia including at the Museum of Art and Design, New York; Biennale of Sydney; Today Art Museum, Beijing; Tang Contemporary, Beijing; Platform China, Beijing; Urs Meile Gallery, Switzerland; Osage Kwun Tung, Hong Kong; Shanghai Zentai Moma, Liverpool Biennial, Groniger Museum, Holland; ZKM Museum Karlsruhe and the Millennium Park, Chicago.

# LIST OF WORKS

## GROUND FLOOR

### Shen Shaomin

*I heard the sound of distance (2011)*

wood, steel, aluminium, plastic, stone, ceramic

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

## LEVEL 1

### Shen Shaomin

*I want to know what infinity is (2011)*

silica gel simulation, wooden deck chair

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

### Shen Shaomin

*I sleep on top of myself (2011)*

silica gel simulation

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

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



The Day After Tomorrow has been supported by The Gordon Darling Foundation



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