

Shen Jiawei *Zai-jian Revolution*

September 27 – 17 October 2002



Shen Jiawei
1966 Beijing Jipu #2 (2002)
oil on canvas
213x213 cm

Media kit

gallery4a

Shen Jiawei

Artist Statement

What was the Cultural Revolution?

It was the best of times, because we were young;

It was the worst of times, because we were all mad;

It was the age of wisdom, we tried to know everything;

It was the age of foolishness, we were forbidden to read any book but Mao's;

It was the epoch of belief, we were all communists, truly;

It was the epoch of incredulity, we doubted everything, privately;

It was the season of Light, when I was allowed to paint on canvas;

It was the season of Darkness, political punishments everywhere;

It was the spring of hope, we were just the age to fall in love;

It was the winter of despair, especially for the intelligentsia;

We had everything before us, young life means everything;

We had nothing before us, no books, no education, not enough food, no
freedom...

We were all going direct to Heaven, to the Communist Heaven;

We were all going direct to the other way ...

To the Death of the whole nation.

Shen Jiawei, after Charles Dickens

Shen Jiawei

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Shen Jiawei, after Charles Dickens



Shen Jiawei

The Time Machine (2004)

Artist Biography & CV



Shen Jiawei was born in Shanghai in 1948. Largely self-taught he became widely recognized in the mid-1970s as a history painter whose achievements have been widely recognized in China. He is a member of the Chinese Artists' Association and in China was a professional artist of the Liaoning Art Academy. Shen won five prizes at National Art Exhibitions including a first prize and his works are in the collection of the China Art Gallery and Museum of the Chinese Revolution, both in Beijing. He came to Australia in January 1989 and now lives in Sydney. His work is little known outside of China, though his work was exhibited in *China: 5000 Years* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York and in Bilbao. He has exhibited extensively in China, and was included in *Federation 1901-2001* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Shen Jiawei

1948	Born in Shanghai, China.
1968	Became a practicing artist.
1981-1988	Professional artist of the Liaoning Art Academy of China
1982-1984	Postgraduate studies in the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China.
1982	Obtained membership of the Chinese Artists Association.
1989	Migrated to Australia, lives and works in Sydney

Exhibitions

Solo-exhibitions

1984	Liaoning Art Gallery, Shenyang, China.
1987	Liaoning Art Gallery, Shenyang, China.
1995	Hui Yi Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia.
1996	Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney, Australia.
1997	Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

Selected Group Exhibitions

1972	Heilongjiang Art Gallery, Harbin, China.
1973	<i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1977	<i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1979	<i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.

1984	<i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1985	<i>National Illustration Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1986	<i>Asia International Art Exhibition III</i> , Dhaka, Bangladesh.
1987	<i>Contemporary Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Tokyo, Japan.
1987	<i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1988	<i>National Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Shanghai, China.
1989	<i>Contemporary Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Hangzhou, China.
1988	<i>Invited Illustration Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1991	<i>Twelve Contemporary China Artists Exhibition</i> , University of Sydney, Australia.
1991	<i>Sydney Royal Art Show</i> , Sydney, Australia.
1993-1999	<i>Archibald Prize</i> , AGNSW, Sydney, Australia
1994	<i>Doug Moran National Portrait Prize</i> , Tour Exhibitions, Australia.
1995	<i>Mary Mackillop, A Tribute</i> , Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia.
1995	<i>Memorial art exhibition for the Second World War</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
1996	<i>Doug Moran National Portrait Prize</i> , Tour Exhibitions, Australia
1996-1999	<i>Sun Yat-sen and Overseas Chinese International Art Exhibition</i> , China, U.S.A., U.K., Canada, Japan, France, Malaysia, Singapore, etc.
1997	<i>Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Art Beatus, Edinburgh Place, Hong Kong.
1998	<i>Beyond China</i> , Campbelltown City Art Gallery, NSW, Australia
1998	<i>Home Thoughts from Abroad, Sixty Years of Australian Artists Born Overseas</i> , Fairfield Regional Heritage Centre, NSW
1998	<i>China: 5000 Years</i> , Guggenheim Museum, New York, U.S.A., Bilbao, Spain
1999	<i>Guess Who's Coming To Dinner</i> , Wollongong City Gallery & Project Centre for Contemporary Art; Gallery 4A, Hazelhurst Regional gallery, NSW
1999	<i>The Artful Cello</i> , Victoria Arts Centre, Melbourne
2000	<i>Federation 1901-2001</i> , National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
2000	<i>Chinese Oil Panting in the Twentieth Century</i> , China National Art Gallery, Beijing, China
2001	<i>Portraits 2001: An Australian Odyssey</i> , Tweed River Regional Gallery, NSW
2002	<i>Something Like China Pop</i> , Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

Awards

Chinese National Art Exhibition Prize: Second Place, 1979
 Chinese National Illustration Exhibition Prize: Best Drawing, 1983
 Chinese National Illustration Exhibition Prize: Best Cover Design, 1983
 Chinese National Art Exhibition Prize: Bronze Medal, 1984
 Chinese National Art Exhibition Prize: the Outstanding Work, 1987
 Sydney Royal Art Show Award: the Third Portrait Prize, 1993
 Sydney Royal Art Show Award: the Third Portrait Prize, 1994
 Sydney Royal Art Show Award: the Second Still-life Prize, 1995
 Australian Mary Mackillop Art Award: the First Place, 1995

Collections

China Art Gallery, Beijing, China.
 The Museum of the Chinese Revolution, Beijing, China.
 The National Military Museum of China.
 Liaoning Art Gallery, Shenyang, China.
 Firestation Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia.
 Hui-Yi Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia.
 Tweed River Regional Art Gallery, NSW, Australia.
 Art Beatus, Hong Kong.
 Ipoh Limited, Sydney, Australia.
 Arthur Robinson & Hedderwicks, Melbourne, Australia.

Selected Bibliography

"A National Treasure in the Making" in *Australian Artist*, February, 1995, p. 15.
 "Shen Jiawei Paints the Artist Couple" in *TAASA Review*, Vol. 4 No. 3, September, 1995, p. 22.
 "Pope at Museum" *AAP News Report*, 19th January, 1995.
 "La Vita di Mary Mackillop al Powerhouse Museum" *La Fiamma*, 26th January, 1995.
 Giles Auty, "Beyond the Cringe" in *The Weekend Australian*, 25th-26th April, 1998.
 Peter Cochrane, "Race is on for Portrait Prize" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1st March, 1995.
 Gabrielle Dalton "Brushing East with West" in *Craft Arts Magazine* November 1998

Benjamin Genocchio, "Home and Away" in *SMH Metro*, 27th March, 1998.
Sasha Grishin , "Unfettered Creativity a Boon" in *The Canberra Times*, 30th March, 1998.
Bruce James, "Competing Visions of Our Mary" in *The Age*, 18th January, 1995.
Nicholas Jose, " My Search for a Shaman Art In and Out of China" in *Art Asia Pacific*, No. 2, 1994, p. 78-83.
Lu Jie, "Guggenheim Museum, China: 5000 Years" in report from *New York, Artist Magazine*, May, 1998, Taiwan, p. 368-371.
John Macdonald, "Yes, We Have No Bananas" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29th March, 1997.
John Macdonald , "Framing the Odds" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11th March, 1998.
John Macdonald , " The Winner, By a Head" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21st March, 1998.
Joanna Mendelssohn, " Wine Inspiration" in *The Bulletin*, 7th February, 1995.
John Macdonald, "After the Party" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2nd May, 1998.
Catherine Taylor , "The Common Touch Wins Out " in *The Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 19th January, 1995.
Matthew Westwood, "Prize Winner Believes in Religion of Art" in *The Australian*, 19th January, 1995.
Zhu Da-ke , "Australian Adventure of the Chinese Artists" in *Yazhou Zhoukan (Asian Weekly)*, 29th June – 5th July, 1998, Hong Kong, p. 60-61.

This media kit should contain the following:

Media Release
Background
CV & Bio
Catalogue
Invitation
Images with titles

Artist Biography & CV

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| 1968 | Became a practicing artist. |
| 1981-1988 | Professional artist of the Liaoning Art Academy of China |
| 1982-1984 | Postgraduate studies in the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China. |
| 1982 | Obtained membership of the Chinese Artists Association. |
| 1989 | Migrated to Australia, lives and works in Sydney |

Exhibitions

Solo-exhibitions

- | | |
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| Shen Jiawei
<i>The Third World</i> (2001)
Oil on canvas
220x360cm | 1984 Liaoning Art Gallery, Shenyang, China. |
| 1987 | Liaoning Art Gallery, Shenyang, China. |
| 1995 | Hui Yi Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia. |
| 1996 | Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney, Australia. |
| 1997 | Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney, Australia. |

Selected Group Exhibitions

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| 1977 | <i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1979 | <i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1980 | <i>National Youth Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1981 | <i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1982 | <i>Salon du Printemps</i> , Paris, France. |
| 1984 | <i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1985 | <i>National Illustration Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1986 | <i>Asia International Art Exhibition III</i> , Dhaka, Bangladesh. |
| 1987 | <i>Contemporary Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Tokyo, Japan. |
| 1987 | <i>National Art Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
| 1988 | <i>National Oil Painting Exhibition</i> , Shanghai, China. |
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| 1988 | <i>Invited Illustration Exhibition</i> , China Art Gallery, Beijing, China. |
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 1997 *Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition*, Art Beatus, Edinburgh Place, Hong Kong.
 1998 *Beyond China*, Campbelltown City Art Gallery, NSW, Australia
 1998 *Home Thoughts from Abroad, Sixty Years of Australian Artists Born Overseas*,
 Fairfield Regional Heritage Centre, NSW
 1998 *China: 5000 Years*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, U.S.A., Bilbao, Spain
 1999 *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner*, Wollongong City Gallery & Project Centre for Contemporary Art; Gallery
 4A, Hazelhurst Regional gallery, NSW
 1999 *The Artful Cello*, Victoria Arts Centre, Melbourne
 2000 *Federation 1901-2001*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
 2000 *Chinese Oil Panting in the Twentieth Century*, China National Art Gallery, Beijing, China
 2001 *Portraits 2001: An Australian Odyssey*, Tweed River Regional Gallery, NSW
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 Art Beatus, Hong Kong.
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 Giles Auty, "Beyond the Cringe" in *The Weekend Australian*, 25th-26th April, 1998.
 Peter Cochrane, "Race is on for Portrait Prize" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1st March, 1995.
 Gabrielle Dalton, "Brushing East with West" in *Craft Arts Magazine*, November, 1998.
 Duan Lian "When This Year, Where the People", *Artist Magazine (Taiwan)*, April, 1998, Taiwan, p. 236-242
 Felicity Fenner, "Flirting with the West" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4th April, 1995.
 Benjamin Genocchio, "Home and Away" in *SMH Metro*, 27th March, 1998.
 Sasha Grishin, "Unfettered Creativity a Boon" in *The Canberra Times*, 30th March, 1998.
 Bruce James, "Competing Visions of Our Mary" in *The Age*, 18th January, 1995.
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Matthew

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"Prize Winner Believes in Religion of Art" in *The Australian*, 19th January, 1995.

Zhu Da-ke, "Australian Adventure of the Chinese Artists" in *Yazhou Zhoukan (Asian Weekly)*, 29th June – 5th July, 1998, Hong Kong, p. 60-61.

KUL-TOUR PRODUCER'S RATIONALE:

Shen Jiawei is one of China's leading history painters. The importance of his work is under recognised in Australia because it does not conform or include usual signifiers of cultural exchange.

Not only is Shen Jiawei under-recognised as an artist in Australia, his recognition is mainly limited to his participation within portraiture prizes such as the Archibald prize. This exhibition presents important new paintings that explore the politics of this history painting tradition.

The basis of this exhibition is to present these two important bodies of work to explore some of the conceptual shifts in Shen Jiawei's practice and the influence of both revolution and migration on these shifts. By examining these changes, we can gain a sense of one artist's struggle with artistic as well as social change. Shen's works have not received critical attention in the same way that some of his peers who arrived in Australia after 1989 have. To some extent his focus on portraits and more traditional forms of representation may account for this. This exhibition of Shen's paintings, which were famous in China, would account for a significant re-appraisal of his work.

One of the most significant contributions this exhibition has in influencing the perception of Australian art is the presentation of work by an artist who is well known and highly respected in his country of birth, yet relatively unknown in Australia. The opportunity of showcasing the work of Shen Jiawei also allows for work never seen together in Australia to be presented in an important exhibition. It is intended that such an important exhibition will raise the general awareness of Asian-Australian artists, in particular one of such high calibre as Shen Jiawei. This exhibition will help reinforce 4A's vision and build on its experience in delivering projects for a culturally diverse audience.



Media Release

Shen Jiawei *Zai-jian Revolution*

September 27 – 17 October 2002

Gallery 4A will present an exhibition of one of China's most respected history painters, Shen Jiawei *Zai-jian Revolution*. This exhibition features artwork created in the last 30 years in China and recent work painted in Sydney. The exhibition will be opened on Friday 27 September by Mr. Edmund Capon AM, Director, AGNSW at Gallery 4A, and runs until Saturday 19 October.

Zai-jian Revolution is Shen Jiawei's first major solo exhibition since arriving in Australia in 1989. The title of the exhibition in Mandarin means "Goodbye Revolution", but also "see you again". The exhibition features nine major works including *Standing Guard for our Great Motherland* (1974) and *Tasting Snow on the Wanda Mountains* (1972), painted at the height of the Cultural Revolution.

Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland (1974) is perhaps the most famous painting of Shen Jiawei's during this period that survives. After approval by Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong's wife, the main cultural policy maker within the Revolution, and after slight modification to the portraits to conform to party policy, this painting was reproduced in the millions and distributed throughout China.

Shen Jiawei is largely a self-taught artist who, like the other youth of his generation was sent to Northern China as labourers and border guards physically working for and protecting a cause. In Northern Manchuria in the 1970's within a corps of other Army artists, Shen worked the land and developed artistic skills within the structure of the People's Liberation Army. It was during this time that paintings such as *Tasting Snow* and *Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland* were painted.

The exhibition features new paintings such as *Beijing Jipu #2* (2002) and *Autobiography* (2002), which reference the tradition of socialist realist history painting and self-portraiture to illustrate a sense of humour and irony within the troubled history of revolution. "Having been a participant in the Cultural Revolution, these new history paintings in *Zai-jian Revolution* have been a means for Shen Jiawei to better understanding the upheavals in history, politics, ideology and geography that have occurred around him," says Aaron Seeto, the curator of the exhibition.

His works are in significant international collections including the China Art Gallery and Museum of the Chinese Revolution, both in Beijing. His work is little known outside of China, though he was included in *China: 5000 years* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York and in Bilbao. Born in Shanghai in 1948, he migrated to Australia in January 1989 and now lives in Sydney. In Australia Shen has established a reputation for accomplished realistic portraits that have featured in the Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW, Doug Moran Portrait Prize, and Mary McKillop Art Prize. Most recently his work featured in the *Federation 1901-2001* exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Shen Jiawei *Zai-jian Revolution* has been made possible with the assistance of the New South Wales Government through the Ministry for the Arts and Carnivale

Preview: Friday, 27 September 2002, officially opened by Mr Edmund Capon, Director, AGNSW, 6-8pm

Exhibition Dates: Friday 27 September – Saturday 17 October 2002

Venue: Gallery 4A
Asia-Australia Arts Centre
181-187 Hay St
Sydney NSW 2000

Gallery Hours: Open Tuesday-Saturday, 11-6pm

Admission: Free

Contact: Aaron Seeto, Curator



ZAI-JIAN REVOLUTION SHEN JAIWEI

27 September -19 October 2002

Shen Jiawei is a Sydney-based artist who was born in China. He has lived in Australia for over ten years, migrating in 1989 as a language student. In China, Shen is highly regarded as one of China's most respected history painters, with work in major national collections such as The National Military Museum of China, China Art Gallery, Beijing and The Museum of the Chinese Revolution. In Australia, Shen has established a reputation for accomplished realistic portraits that have featured in the Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Doug Moran Portrait Prize and Mary McKillop Art Prize. Most recently his work was featured in the federation exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia.

Zai-jian Revolution is a curated exhibition that aims to re-contextualise the work of Shen Jiawei within the context of his experiences of Revolution and the social, cultural and geographic upheavals that have occurred around him. Shen describes his paintings as *New History* painting, which acknowledges its relationship to the history painting of the socialist realist tradition. Aaron Seeto, the curator of the exhibition, suggests that "Shen's continuing interest with the representation of history and the appearance of historical moments within the paintings in *Zai-jian Revolution*, have been a way in which Shen Jiawei has been able to work through these quite complex experiences of social, cultural, political and geographic change." The title of the exhibition, in Mandarin means "Goodbye Revolution", but also "see you again". The exhibition addresses two bodies of work within Shen's artistic output, including recent work produced in Australia and important work produced in China. Two internationally regarded works: *Standing Guard for the Great Motherland*(1974) and *Tasting Snow on The Wanda Mountains* (1972), are recognised as representing the pinnacle of social realist painting in China. *Standing Guard for our Great Motherland* has a fascinating history, as although it was praised publicly by Madam Mao and collected by the National Art Gallery of China it was not considered truly nationalistic; its two central figures were repainted by academy painters, because they were considered too thin. After the Cultural Revolution, this work was de-accessioned to a regional museum, where Shen found it and had the work restored to its original condition. This work was exhibited as part of the *China: 5000 years* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York and in Bilbao.

Zai-jian Revolution presents these two important bodies of work to explore some of the conceptual shifts in Shen Jiawei's practice and the influence of both revolution and migration on these shifts. By examining these changes, we can gain a sense of one artist's struggle with artistic as well as social change. Shen's works have not received critical attention in the same way that some of his peers who arrived in Australia after 1989 have. This exhibition of Shen's work, which were famous

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