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CHIHARU SHIOTA

WIDEWALLS.CH, 17 July 2019

Experience Shiota Chiharu's Soul
Trembling at Mori Art Museum



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A delicate, sophisticated and beautifully done immersive installation of a boat positioned underneath a huge red surface made of rope and keys was one of the landmarks of the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. That was the work made by the prolific Berlin-based Japanese artist **Shiota Chiharu** aimed to question the notion of memory, as well as to articulate the subject of contemporary migrations. The artist is known for her multimedia practice, and especially large-scale installations devoted to the investigations of anxiety, dreams, memories, and silence.

Currently on display at **Mori Art Museum** is the greatest ever survey of Chiharu's work titled *The Soul Trembles* that encompasses the mentioned installations, sculptural interventions, video footage of performances, photographs, drawings, archival documentation.

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Shiota Chiharu – Where Are We Going?, 2017. White wool, wire, rope. Installation view: Where Are We Going?, Le Bon Marché, Paris, 2017. Photo: Gabriel de la Chapelle

The Retrospective Format

The exhibition is based on the prevailing theme *presence in absence*. Namely, throughout her work, Shiota Chiharu **strives to shape the auras and energies of visions that possess no physical presence** which can be found only in memories and dreams. She underlines the inseparableness of her soma and her works as a leading factor, as well as the lack of her physical presence the fact with the exception of a few early videos. The title is also affiliated with **Chiharu's personal struggle** – she was informed last year that her cancer returned and started dominating the process of hospital treatment, which forced the artist to wonder about the location of the soul. She states:

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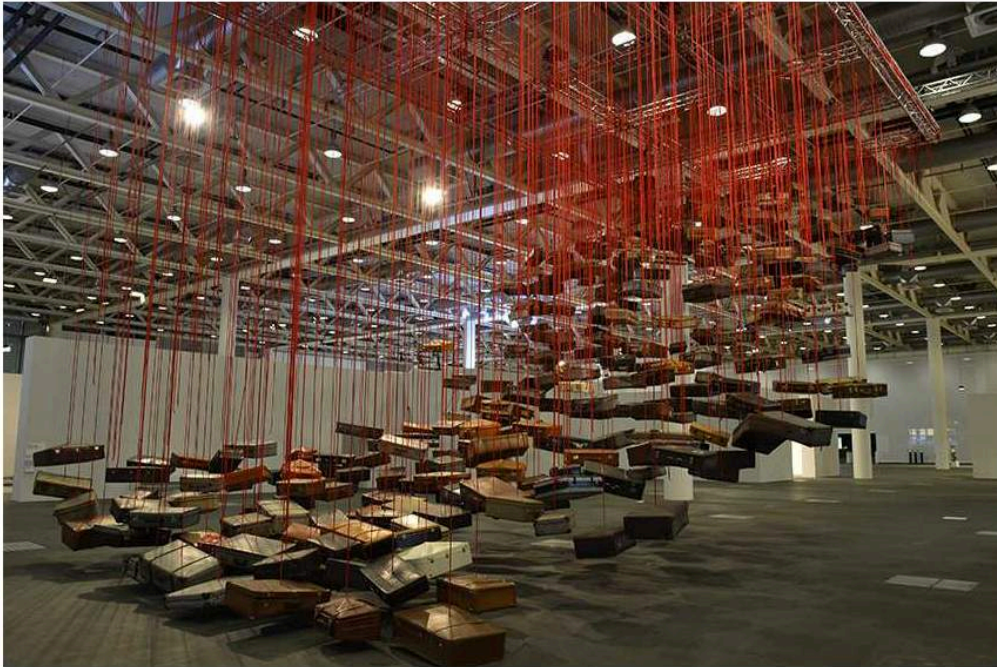
I have always been creating works out of my passion and love for exhibitions, and it was the only thing that I could live for. Helpless conflicts of minds, uncommunicable emotions, and my inexplicable existence; these feelings give all my works form and shape. The year before last, I was diagnosed with cancer again after twelve years, but it struck me that perhaps the painful treatment along with the confrontation with death is a tribulation to create honest works. This exhibition will present works from the past that perhaps the painful treatment along with the confrontation with death is a tribulation to create honest works. This exhibition will present works from the past twenty-five years. It is a dialogue with my unveiled, naked soul.

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Shiota Chiharu – Accumulation – Searching for the Destination, 2016. Suitcase, motor, red rope. Installation view: Art Unlimited, Art Basel, Switzerland, 2016. Courtesy: Galerie Templon, Paris/Brussels. Photo: Atelier Chiharu Shiota



Shiota Chiharu – Reflection of Space and Time, 2018. White dress, mirror, metal frame, Alcantara black thread. Commissioned by Alcantara S.p.A. Installation view: Nine Journeys through Time, Palazzo Reale Milano, Milan, 2018. Photo: Sunhi Mang

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The Installment

On display are her **early works of the 1990s, along with documentation of her performances, as well as major installations and the recent projects.** As it was already mentioned, Chiharu gained critical acclaim and popularity for her signature immersive installations that cover entire space is with **thread**, usually red or black. The artist stated that the black thread can be interpreted as the night sky or cosmos, and the red as blood or as a "red thread of fate" which according to the East Asian belief keeps people together.

Archive plays an important role in the sense of interpretation since it provides the audience a chance to follow the development and consistency of Shiota's practice, from early drawings to installations and performances, and stage design for numerous dance and opera productions.