

TEMPLON



CHIHARU SHIOTA

FORBES, July 19, 2021

Web-Spinning Artist Chiharu Shiota Creates Moving And Haunting Installations Out Of Wool



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Arts

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For the past two decades, [Chiharu Shiota](#) has created entire universes woven from pieces of string, which has become her signature medium in the making of deeply moving, haunting and poetic large-scale environments interspersed with found objects like shoes, dresses, book pages, suitcases, bed frames, windows and doors. Encountering the Berlin-based Japanese artist's somewhat autobiographical work is like entering another dimension: we can imagine ourselves inside a monumental spider's web, under a giant sail, in a cave or under ocean waves. Manifestations of her feelings and interior battles, her works are physical and emotional experiences that are at once personal and collective, spaces of truth and memory. A storyteller sharing the important moments of her life, she turns her most intimate thoughts, experiences and fears into art, investing her body and soul in her interventions. "My art is very personal," she discloses. "All my art begins with an experience or emotion, and then I expand this feeling into something universal. However, not everyone can see this when they visit my installations. Some might feel connected and recognize the feeling that the work expresses, but others don't. Even though we are connected, these feelings are very individual. Art is for the individual, and during this time of social distancing, people are more alone and in their individual homes. I don't think art needs to be this special connection, but art is for the individual person."

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Uncertain Journey, 2019, metal frame and red wool installation, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan PHOTO SUNHI MANG. COURTESY OF MORI ART MUSEUM, TOKYO © VG BILD-KUNST, BONN, 2020, AND THE ARTIST

In 2017, Shiota became profoundly aware of her mortality, subsequent to learning that her cancer had returned after 12 years in remission, making her realize how intimately connected life and death were. She recognized that her strength stemmed from this confrontation with death, and transformed the suffering that life entails into something new that gives hope. The creative process is far from being therapeutic for her though; she needs her fear to continue to make art. Creating using her emotion, her goal is to connect her inner universe with the outer universe. Her art helps her to understand herself and her emotions and to connect with others, including strangers. Take for example her takeover of the Japanese Pavilion at the 2015 [Venice Biennale](#), where she stretched dense, zigzagging geometries of red thread, in which were imprisoned rusty keys, above worn-out boats. Speaking of contemporary migrations and crossing a sea of emotions to reach an unknown destination, she incorporated everyday objects, each containing their own histories, because they carried the trace of human life. One felt the existence of these travelers, although their bodies weren't there physically. Through the energy of dreams and memories, there was a presence in the absence.

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The Key in the Hand, 2015, old keys, old wooden boats and red wool installation, Japan Pavilion at ... [+]
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