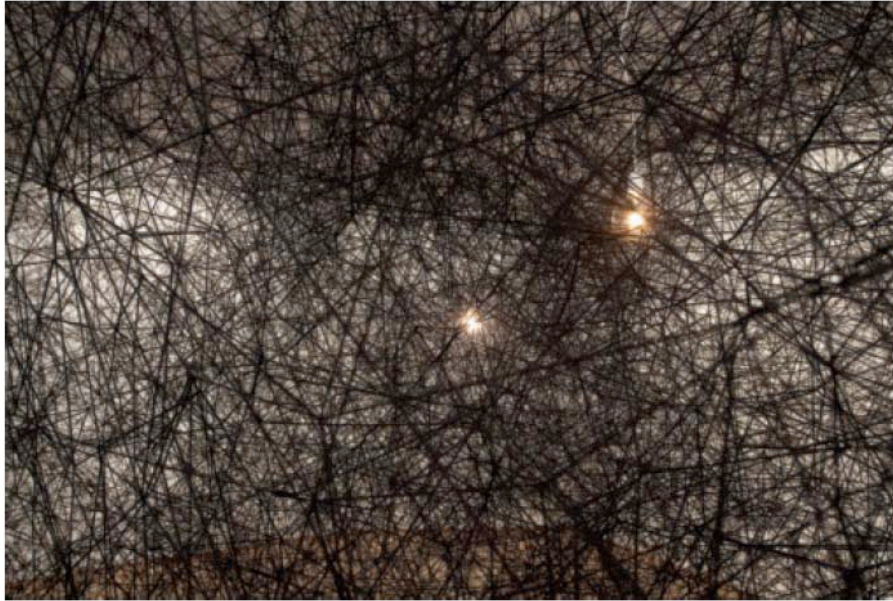


# Galerie Daniel Templon

Paris

## CHIHARU SHIOTA WHITEWALL, Summer 2012



Left:  
Chiharu Shiota  
*Infinity*  
2011  
Detail of installation at Galerie  
Daniel Templon  
Photo by R. Hunt/Lum  
Courtesy of Galerie Daniel Templon

This page, bottom  
and opposite page, bottom:  
Chiharu Shiota  
*Infinity*  
2011  
Installation view at Galerie  
Daniel Templon  
Photo by R. Hunt/Lum  
Courtesy of Galerie Daniel Templon

Opposite page, top:  
Chiharu Shiota  
*After the dream*  
2011  
Installation view at Maison  
Rouge, Paris  
Photo by Sanki Manoj  
© Chiharu Shiota

### TO WATCH

## CHIHARU SHIOTA

BY ANNA SANSOM

Chiharu Shiota has an innate understanding of absence and presence, dreams and memories, home and away. When she was nine years old, she became haunted by the smell of a burning piano when her neighbors' house was set alight by arsonists. Broken instruments — not just pianos, but violins, too — have become trapped in the spiderwebs of her black-threaded installations, criss-crossing from the floor to the ceiling, as have white suspended dresses or women dozing in hospital beds.

Born in Osaka in 1972 and based in Berlin for the last 15 years, Shiota trained under Marina Abramović — an experience that influenced her formative installations using her body. The idea of cultural isolation or geographical dislocation is another recurring theme, along with fear and emptiness.

*Whitewall* met Shiota at the opening of her show "Infinity" at Galerie Daniel Templon in Paris in January.

**WHITEWALL:** *What was your upbringing in Japan like, and how did it stimulate your desire to become an artist?*

**CHIHARU SHIOTA:** My father was managing a book-making factory. So I grew up seeing this factory making books and seeing a lot of people working on machines. I was thinking of a different kind of world, and I was quite young, around nine years old, when I decided that I wanted to be an

artist.

**WW:** *In 1994, for one of your early performances, Becoming a Painting, you wore a sheet of canvas and stood in front of a blank canvas. Red paint was thrown onto you and the canvas. What prompted*



*the idea for this performance?*

**CS:** When I was painting, I had a dream that I was inside a canvas. And I was thinking, "How can I move? If I move, will the painting become better or not?" And I couldn't breathe because I was inside the paint.

**WW:** *Your exhibition at Galerie Daniel Templon is also inspired by a desire to breathe, symbolized by a single light bulb enmeshed in black threads.*

**CS:** It's like a human's heartbeat. It's about a human being breathing in their environment. But human life is not about infinity. It ends. There's always something about human existence inside my installations. At Maison Rouge last year, my installation *After the Dream* was also about human existence and breathing. The five suspended dresses were like a second skin. I bought them from a second-hand shop and made them longer.

**WW:** *How many people assisted you to make your Infinity piece at Galerie Daniel Templon?*

**CS:** There were just two of us — me and one assistant — and it took four days. I started behind the counter and just continued weaving. At the end of an exhibition, the threads are taken down so they can be used again.

**WW:** *In your monograph, you write, "I like to keep busy. Because when I have nothing to do, I am gripped by fear. I have the impression that my body is abandoning me." Do you feel that making art is a necessity for you to escape this feeling?*



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## CHIHARU SHIOTA WHITEWALL, Summer 2012



**CS:** If I have fear, I feel confident to be able to make something. If I have no fear, maybe I cannot make any artwork and feel more fear. In a way, having fear is a necessity to create. I also turn a negative feeling into a positive one. I cannot make something out of happiness. A tiny change of feeling pushes me to make an artwork. But it's not about it being a form of therapy. I really need to make artworks.

**WW:** Do you do drawings of how you'd like your installations to be? Do you know instinctively what kind of installation you'd like to make when you visit a space?

**CS:** I don't do any drawings. And when I see the space, it's quite clear what I want to do. I have some ideas in advance about what I might do, and when I see the space my ideas just come.

**WW:** In 2010 you made a few installations where tubes of red liquid replaced the black threads and were attached to suspended white dresses. What did using a blood-colored liquid mean to you?

**CS:** Blood is about everything — nationality, religion, and family relationships — and blood is your proof of that. Sometimes I feel I can't move. There is too much information inside me, and I can't move any more. I have the universe

inside my body, and the universe is outside of me. They're connected together, and that's what I wanted to show in my art piece.

**WW:** A few years ago, you made installations with women lying in hospital beds, entangled by



black threads. What thoughts were in your mind?

**CS:** I'm dreaming in my sleep and when I wake up, I'm still dreaming. Many people are born and die in a bed, which is why I used this as a material. The installation pieces with hospital beds are a finished work for me now, but if a museum wants me to show this again, I will.

**WW:** Memories associated with objects and places are key to several of your works, such as your installations of recuperated windows that you found at construction sites in East Berlin. What thoughts were occurring to you when you picked them up?

**CS:** The windows are always from the east side of a house. I see that each window has a lot of memory for each person in a family. And when I see the window, I can see the story of each person.

**WW:** You've been living in Berlin for 15 years. How do you feel about the city?

**CS:** Berlin is an artist's city at the moment. There are so many artists living there, and it's very easy to move around to have exhibitions in Europe. And I feel freedom there. I wouldn't say that I'm part of an artists' community, although there are some artists that I like. But I need to believe in myself more.