

TEMPLON



Press release
13 April 2020

CHIHARU SHIOTA

Inner Universe

30 May - 25 July 2020

Opening: Saturday 30 May, 12.00 to 8.00 pm



Chiharu Shiota, State of Being (Anatomy Book), 2020 (detail)

This summer, Galerie Templon will be filled with the spectacular woven work of Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota. Two in-situ installations and a series of new sculptures explore the “Inner Universe” that some may see as the mind, others as consciousness, and which transcends the body, connecting beings to each other.

Famous for her monumental site-specific installations and skilful weaving of thread that spreads through space, Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota has spent years questioning the notion of surface and the traditional boundaries of painting. With *Inner Universe*, she invites us on a poetic journey examining the secret ties between the finiteness of existence and eternity.

Inner Universe opens with a series of her signature sculptures of red, white and black threads. The mysterious boxes deconstruct our conception of the body: levitating clothes, anatomy books, personal belongings. As if crystallized in these tight weavings, they bear witness to everyday life while raising universal, metaphysical questions. As the artist explains: “the thread separates us from this physical presence within the object, but at the same time, this structure allows me to create a new space. Piling up layer after layer of cut, tangled and knotted thread creates the entirety of the universe bound to this frame.”

This palpable detachment from earthly life is countered by a new set of sculptures made of imperishable materials. Blown-glass *Cells* suggest almost abstract forms of cells and organs bursting with life, while the *In the Hand* bronzes, moulds of her own hands, seem to bring the material alive. On the walls, her woven *Skin* canvases cover the space with skin that is both microscopic and cosmic.

The highlight of the exhibition comes in the form of a fabulous installation of sheets of paper spiralling up to the top of the glass roof. Akin to a whirlwind of vital energy, the work presents death as a stage in the cycle of life, the accession to a larger dimension. In the eye of the vortex, bronze sculptures representing parts of the artist's and her family's bodies are placed on the floor and connected by interlacing threads. "I want to scatter pieces of my body on the ground; my absence is thus embodied, and each of these parts evokes much more than my entire body could ever do." By giving visible form to the "red lines invisible to the human eye", Chiharu Shiota thus seeks to give us a glimpse of the complex relationships between beings and the potentially eternal interdependence of consciousnesses.

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1972, Chiharu Shiota has been living and working in Berlin since 1999. After a degree in painting at Seika university in Kyoto, Chiharu Shiota turned to performance and pursued her artistic studies in Berlin. Chiharu Shiota is an internationally renowned artist whose work has been exhibited for twenty years. She represented Japan at the 2015 Venice Biennale. Her work has been the subject of numerous museum solo exhibitions including: in 2017, *Infinity Lines*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (USA), *Under the Skin*, Kunsthalle Rostock, Rostock (Germany) and *Direction*, KODE-Art Museums of Bergen, Bergen (Norway); in 2018, *The Butterfly Dream*, Museum of Kyoto (Japan), *The Distance*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, Gothenburg (Sweden), *Embodied*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (Australia) and *Where are we going?*, Le Bon Marché, Paris (France), and in 2019, *Beyond Memory*, Gropius Bau, Berlin (Germany) and *The Soul Trembles*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (Japan). From 29 April to 20 September 2020, her work is being exhibited at the group show *Push The Limits*, Fondazione Merz, Turin (Italy). Current exhibitions include *The Dark Side – Chi ha paura del buio?*, Musja, Rome, Italy (until 28th June) and *Counting Memories*, Silesian Museum, Katowice (Poland) (until 4 October 2020). The artist's work is also the subject of a travelling retrospective: at the Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art in Australia (27 June - 5 October 2020) and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (Museum MACAN) in Indonesia (21 November 2020 - 21 February 2021).