

Chiharu Shiota

Me Somewhere Else

28 November 2018 — 19 January 2019
Blain|Southern London

Private View:
Tuesday 27 November 2018, 6-8pm

Blain|Southern London is delighted to announce *Me Somewhere Else*, an exhibition of new works by Chiharu Shiota. The artist's first exhibition at the London gallery, *Me Somewhere Else* will include one of Shiota's site-specific installations, sculpture and works on canvas.



Chiharu Shiota, *Me Somewhere Else* (Detail), 2018
Courtesy the artist and Blain|Southern
Photo: Sunhi Mang

Based in Berlin, Shiota (b. 1972, Osaka, Japan) is best known for her immersive installations, such as *The Key in the Hand*, with which she represented Japan at the Venice Biennale in 2015. Using thread to 'draw' in three dimensions, she weaves intricate networks of yarn into and across spaces. Personal experiences are the starting points for her works, which explore the relationships between the body, memory, life and death.

The titular installation *Me Somewhere Else* continues Shiota's exploration of thread as a medium but here she utilises the material in a markedly different way, using her fingers to knot red yarn into a vast net. Suspended from the gallery ceiling, the net is a billowing mass which rises from a pair of bronze feet that rest on the floor below. Cast from the artist's own feet, the solidity and permanence of the bronzes contrasts with the usually ephemeral nature of her installations. The colour of blood, the red yarn is laden with symbolism, for the artist it alludes to our connectedness to each other, the interior of the body and the complex network of neural connections in the brain.

Complex questions arise around the relationship between the body and the mind; neurons firing and causing the body to react before a conscious decision been taken has implications for cognisance. With *Me Somewhere Else* Shiota seeks to examine the idea that human consciousness could exist independently of the body, somewhere beyond – somewhere else. *'I feel that my body is connected to the universe but is my consciousness as well? When my feet touch the earth, I feel connected to the world, to the universe that is spread like a net of human connections, but if I don't feel my body anymore where do I go? Where do I go when my body is gone? When my feet do not touch the ground anymore.'*

Elsewhere in the exhibition the geometry of new rhomboid sculptures echoes that found within her web installations, where seemingly haphazardly interlaced strands are in fact a network of triangles. Two dimensional canvas works further explore the artist's use of thread as a medium. Shiota studied painting early in her education but restricted by the use of canvas and paint, she began using her own body in performance pieces, and later began to use thread as a mode for formal and conceptual expression. It allowed her to remove her physical presence yet still address the ideas that are central to her practice. Her canvases can be viewed as this journey coming full circle.

Notes to Editors**About the artist**

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1972, Chiharu Shiota has been living and working in Berlin since 1996. Shiota's museum exhibitions include: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, AU (2018), Kode Art Museum, Bergen, NO (2017), Kunsthalle Rostock, DE (2017) Kunstsammlung Düsseldorf, K21, Düsseldorf, DE (2015), Freer and Sackler Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., US (2014); The Museum of Art, Kōchi, JP (2013); La Maison Rouge, Paris, FR (2011); National Museum of Art, Osaka, JP (2008); and MoMA PS1, New York, US (2003).

Shiota has represented Japan at the Venice Biennale, 2015; and was also selected for Aichi Triennale, 2010; Gwangju Biennale, 2006 and Yokohama Triennale 2001, amongst others.

About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an expanding roster of international artists and is the exclusive representative of the estates of Lynn Chadwick and Avigdor Arikha. Recent exhibitions include Sean Scully, Ali Banisadr, Moshekwa Langa, Edward Kienholz, Frank Thiel, Liliane Tomasko, Wim Wenders and Marius Bercea.

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