



Press Release – Prague, 15 October 2024

Chiharu Shiota's landmark exhibition at Kunsthalle Praha in Czechia showcases her powerful thread installations

Kunsthalle Praha presents *The Unsettled Soul*, the first exhibition in the Czech Republic by internationally renowned Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota. Running from 28 November to 28 April, the exhibition invites visitors to embark on a journey into the human condition, exploring themes of life, death and memory. Shiota's immersive installations have captivated audiences around the world. Her signature large-scale thread artworks symbolise various types of bonds and relationships. They will now transform two large gallery spaces at Kunsthalle Praha, with one of the artist's inspirations being the Vltava (*German: Moldau*), Czechia's largest river. Flowing into other major European rivers, it represents the city's global connections.



Chiharu Shiota: The Unsettled Soul
28 November 2024 – 28 April 2025
Galleries 1 & 2, 900 m²
Curated by Christelle Havranek

„Chiharu Shiota crafts dreamlike installations that engage viewers emotionally and intellectually, creating experiences so powerful that they remain etched in memory,“ says Christelle Havranek, chief curator at Kunsthalle Praha.

Shiota has gained global recognition for her artworks, which weave together personal history and collective memory through intricate networks of threads. Her work has been exhibited at leading institutions worldwide, including the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Gropius Bau in Berlin, and

Kunsthalle Praha

the National Museum of Art in Osaka. The artist also participated in the Venice Biennale, where she represented Japan in 2015. Now, for the first time, the audience in Prague will experience her signature artistic approach, which merges sculpture, performance, and installation.

In *The Unsettled Soul*, Shiota presents four major installations that invite reflection on life, death, and the invisible bonds between people and places. These works—some created especially for Kunsthalle Praha—intertwine the material and the spiritual, offering visitors a space to meditate on their own experiences and perceptions.

The use of thread as an essential material serves as a metaphor for the delicate yet powerful connections between individuals, cultures, and histories. One of the installations was inspired by Prague's Vltava River, which Shiota encountered on her first visit to the city. She saw the river as a symbol of time's passage, not only connecting Prague to other countries, but also connecting people and their shared stories.

Another work emanates the sense of home, a theme that runs throughout much of Shiota's work. Having spent years living between Japan and Germany, Shiota explores the idea of home as both a physical space and an emotional state. Red threads are woven through metal structures shaped like houses, representing the bonds of family, culture, and belonging. These threads, often associated with blood ties, reflect not only the artist's personal sense of being "in-between" places, but also a more universal human longing for connection.

Further exploring personal identities, the artist also uses the subject of a dress as a symbol of a "second skin," reflecting the boundary between the inner self and the outside world. The installation features seven rotating dresses and eight suspended objects, moving gently as if breathing, creating a haunting, organic presence in the dim light. These garments evoke the traces of human existence, embodying Shiota's exploration of the physical presence of an absence.

The exhibition also includes a powerful installation centered around a burnt piano—an image rooted in one of Shiota's childhood memories. After witnessing a neighbor's house burn down, the sight of a piano reduced to ashes left a lasting impression on the artist. This installation captures the haunting absence of sound and the lingering memories that remain even when physical objects are lost. It resonates with Shiota's ongoing interest in the ways absence and loss shape our understanding of the world.

Furthermore, the exhibition offers an examination of Shiota's artistic development. From her early works in the 1990s, when she invented the visual language that would become her trademark, to her more recent pieces. Films, archives, and a chronology of her career are also featured, allowing visitors to trace the evolution of her unique artistic vision.

Chiharu Shiota: The Unsettled Soul runs from 28 November 2024 to 28 April 2025. Along with the exhibition, Kunsthalle Praha is set to release in February 2025 an illustrated catalogue with international distribution by prestigious Berlin publishing house DCV. In addition to extensive photographic documentation of the exhibition, the uniquely designed publication with hand-stitched Japanese fukurotoji binding includes curatorial texts: Curator and writer Jason Waite discusses Chiharu Shiota's early works and material realities of Japan that shaped her practice in his essay, and exhibition curator and catalogue editor Christelle Havranek is in conversation with the artist about the main themes of her installations and the creation of the current exhibition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a rich programme, including talks, screenings, workshops, as well as lectures and special events in the TransformArt series, which focuses on contemporary art and its intersections with other fields.

Visitors under the age of 26 are eligible for complimentary membership, allowing access to all Kunsthalle Praha exhibitions for free.

Kunsthalle Praha extends its thanks to its partners (The Pudil Family Foundation, BMW, Dentons).

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Press Photos

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Chiharu Shiota

Chiharu Shiota was born in Osaka, Japan (1972), lives and works in Berlin. In 2008, she was awarded with ‘the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists, Japan’. Her work has been displayed at international institutions worldwide including the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2023); Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art (QAGoMA), Brisbane (2022); ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe (2021); Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (2020); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2019); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2019); Art Gallery of South Australia (2018); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK (2018); Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2017); K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2015); Smithsonian Institution Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC (2014); the Museum of Art, Kochi (2013); and the National Museum of Art, Osaka (2008) among others. She has also participated in numerous international exhibitions such as the Aichi Triennale (2022); Oku-Noto International Art Festival (2017); Sydney Biennale (2016); Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (2009) and Yokohama Triennale (2001). In 2015, Shiota was selected to represent Japan at the 56th Venice Biennale.



[instagram.com/chiharushiota/](https://www.instagram.com/chiharushiota/)
chiharu-shiota.com/

Kunsthalle Praha

Kunsthalle Praha is a space for art on Prague’s vibrant cultural scene. It hosts temporary art exhibitions, innovative educational programmes and cultural events in three large galleries. The Kunsthalle building won the National Architecture Award for 2022. It also offers a design shop and a café with a historic terrace overlooking Petrin Hill and Prague Castle.

Kunsthalle Praha’s mission is to connect the Czech and international art scenes, present innovative perspectives on the art and culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, and engage with a wide audience, offering insights into art through a dynamic programme. Kunsthalle also has its own art collection focused on modern, post-war, and contemporary art. Kunsthalle Praha was founded a non-governmental, non-profit platform by The Pudil Family Foundation of Pavlina Pudil and Petr Pudil.



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kunsthallepraha.org

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