

# 空白空间 WHITE SPACE

## CHEN Zhe | *As Precise As Fever*

WHITE SPACE (Shunyi)

8.26-10.7, 2023

White Space presents at its Shunyi location *As Precise As Fever*, Chen Zhe's first solo exhibition with the gallery, showcasing recent sculptures, photographs, and a large-scale video installation with immersive sound elements. The exhibition opens on August 26, 2023 and is on view through October 7.

Handling visceral experiences as puzzles to be solved, Chen Zhe explores connections between the body, the mind and the spirit through processes of introspection and ex-trospection, evoking in the viewer universal and transcendental experiences.

Chen Zhe first started contemplating the experience of mysticism in *Towards Evenings: Six Chapters* (2012-ongoing), a long-term researched-based project that questions the uneven time of dusk. She has expanded her research in recent years by looking into deep times: times of ancestral memories; traces of one's corporeality in this life; prophecies regarding the future and destiny; and an *I* that rendezvous in dreams.

The title of the current exhibition *As Precise As Fever* comes from Jorge Luis Borges' poem *Insomnia: The universe of this night is as vast as oblivion, as precise as fever*. It responds to the dialectics between remembering and forgetting tackled in the exhibition *A Slow Remembering of A Long Forgetting* in 2020, positioning celestial-human relations in the conceptual space between totality and individuality, two distinct entities that relate to one another as an unity of opposites. Chen Zhe and Anita Pan, collaborating artist in *You Are a Circle, Expanding*: "Fever is an infinity, all-encompassing; precision is an infinite number of individuality, multiple and countless." Totality—endless, colossal and incomprehensible—is to be described as a fever; individuality, on the other hand, manifests as parts and components that integrate and constitute totality in an orderly, organised manner.

Concerned with addressing the macrocosmic and the microcosmic, Chen Zhe has in recent years created new bodies of work including the *Celestial-cranial Instrument* series of sculptures; the *Eternal Ephemera* series of photographs, and the video installation *You Are a Circle, Expanding*. Encompassing the astral (astrology), the nether (body), the internal (spirit), the external (nature), the retentional (past) and the protentional (future), *As Precise As Fever* commences celestial questions by inscribing celestial texts.

Wisdom or sagacity was once measured in terms of being well versed in "celestial texts and earthly laws." The human body is the point on which the celestial and the earthly meet. Our ancestors tell time by making innovative use of the body, observing the length of one's shadow under the sun. In pursuit of temporal precision, future generations make further developments by inventing, upon distinct civilisational foundations, a variety of astronomical instruments. Chen Zhe takes the history of astronomical instruments as a point of departure, dealing with the two maps each individual is born with: a map of one's cranial formation, and a chart of one's

celestial alignments. One may observe the stars above, infinitely remote; one may not, however, examine the constellation of cranial sutures, as natural and intimate as they are. By cross-referencing heavenly and earthly inscriptions, the *Celestial-cranial Instrument* series aims to reflect *worldly laws* with *celestial texts*, and to measure *fever* with *precision*, pondering enigmatic fates.

In *Eternal Ephemera* series of photographs, Chen Zhe surveys the arcane yet omnipresent association between celestial bodies and worldly beings: a majestic mountain by the sea, whose body resembles a poised mother goddess at rest; an arachnid under the moon, occupied with constructing an ambitious web that is disproportionately large and is as delicate as a piece of advanced technology; a cave of ancient stalactites, exposing a giant's organs, as bright as the shining stars.

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The ultra-slow motion video component of *You Are a Circle, Expanding*, along with the four-channel soundscape sprawling across the exhibition space returns the audience to the origin of life, nurturing an experience of being immersed within a colossal cavity. Under a misty blood moon, finger tips slowly dip and irritate ripples that proliferate and disappear, resonating at the present moment with fetal movements, breathes, whirs, whispers, and dream words. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*:

*With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's knead,  
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:  
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.*