

## ***Shen Wei Dance Arts in Ludwigsburg***

### **Image, Magic of Bodies, Movement and Light |**

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Members of Shen Wei Company in Action *Photo: conference venue*

### **The New York Company Shen Wei Dance Arts Mesmerized Audiences in Ludwigsburg**

[Ludwigsburg](#) - Dance and art are inextricably linked for the Chinese choreographer, dancer, painter and designer Shen Wei. The very name of the company he founded in New York in 2000 (Shen Wei Dance Arts) reveals this. His ideas live as a kind of art show, in which the Oeuvre d'art, the Far Eastern and Western cultural lines are created before the public's eyes. He has demonstrated that he is a great performer who can also seduce TV audiences around the world with the power of the visual, as he did with his choreography from the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. In the Ludwigsburger Forum am Schlosspark, he presented two very different works last Wednesday. The younger, "Map", developed in 2005, is a kind of space and body measurement with the means of the dance. At the beginning, five large balloons, used to simulate building heights, mark the stage. After they have risen, twelve dancers occupy the ground. They do this lying, sitting, standing, running, in ensembles or in solos, but above all, by rotating, rotating, rotating, rotating around their own axis and in space.

At first, they appear to move with precise, geometric extensions of their limbs, then letting the movement flow through them in a wavy manner. With their cheery-rousing movement to Steve Reich's driving "Desert Music", with its ceaseless pulsing, they cover the room, map it, imprison it. However, Shen Wei strongly relies on repetition, and soon "Map" threatens to drift into the monotone.

**The human features disappear**

The aesthetic pull of the following dance "Folding" is a hypnotic, far more evocative work of art: surreal sculpture, inspired by folding paper. Created in 2000 by Shen Wei, a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the twelve dancers lose their human appearances in the choreography. In order to become a piece of art, Shen Wei transformed them into sexless beings. He leaves their hair in an ovoid cocoon; he puts them in velvet-red and black cloth-skirts, laced at the waist; the breasts of women are tied by bands.

These aliens flit across the stage at first, fleeing, sinking into a gleaming white surface, in front of a backdrop inspired by the Chinese artist Ba Dan San Ren. Then they perform to the celestial sounds of John Tavener, which are interspersed by the acoustic rebellion of Buddhist monk chants, bizarre, minimalist movements at slow speed; for a short while, they fall into a frenzy. Hidden under the other's black skirt, two dancer grown into a hermaphroditic entity that bends, curves, unfolds. What a ghostly duet! In the end, the mysterious sea-dwellers rise into a black nirvana. It is pure pictorial magic, composed of bodies, movement, color, light, space.

The captivating work of art, to be eternally watched, transcends the stage concept. After the curtain reopened for applause, the dancers simply kept their peculiar meditative gestures when bowing: art knows no boundaries.