



## Shen Xin

### ས་གནི་ཚོན་པོ་འགྱུར། (*The Earth Turned Green*)

May 4 – August 28, 2022

ས་གནི་ཚོན་པོ་འགྱུར། (*The Earth Turned Green*) is a solo exhibition by Shen Xin featuring a newly commissioned installation that centers restorative practices drawn from the Tibetan language through performance, land and family histories. Shen's work as a moving image artist often explores potential relations outside of nationalistic belonging. Their recent research focuses on multitudes of the self and the other, as well as the interrelationship between culture and ecology.

Positioned in the center of the gallery, ས་གནི་ཚོན་པོ་འགྱུར། (*The Earth Turned Green*) is a three-channel video and sound installation consisting of a film with subtitles in Tibetan and English. A projected image is visible on both sides of a floor-to-ceiling screen, dividing the room into two viewing spaces, with text projected on the ground of each side. Using stage lighting in a theater, the film depicts a day's passing in winter, spring, summer and fall. The audio track and corresponding subtitles are reflections on the recorded imagery by Shen Xin together with their Tibetan language teacher, རྒྱུད་དར་འཛོམས། (Ji Ta Zong), who verbalize the movement of light and color through conversations in the process of teaching and learning Tibetan.

The installation was formed collaboratively through a series of scripts. To begin, Shen wrote directions for lighting technician Kyle Gavell to develop a performance for stage lights that would represent a day within each of the four seasons. Next, Shen transcribed in Mandarin what they saw in the recording of the lights on the stage. Ji then translated that description into Tibetan, which served as the materials and learning tools for their conversations in Mandarin and Tibetan over twelve lessons. In addition to reading the Tibetan text together, Shen poses questions in response to their learning such as: "Why is the night motherly?" or "If finished actions contain a form of returning, is it a return to the soil?" The conversations were recorded, edited and compiled, and the audio was then translated into English and Tibetan.

Shen began studying Tibetan language in August 2021 following a discovery about their family history. Throughout his lifetime, Shen's father, Shen Daohong, made Chinese ink paintings of Tibetan and Indian figures, a practice Shen was critical of as their father had no formal relationship to either culture. Following his passing in 2018, Shen's family explored their ancestry with genetic testing, a theme examined in their work *Provocation of the Nightingale* (2017-2018). As a result, they discovered that their father was part-Tibetan and Indian, a connection that he did not know while living. This new information gave Shen a window to reflect on their judgment of his practice, space to imagine that he was subconsciously seeking a kinship which he could not articulate. This awakened a desire for Shen to connect with their father through studying the ecological culture of Tibetan language and further grounds their commitment to relate to places as land, though they might also be named as countries.

The exhibition's title encompasses a witnessing of time passing and what happens in that transformation, a marking of seasonal space. In Tibetan, when referring to the color of earth, the word for "green" is the same as the word for the color blue. Blue is partly composed of the word ལྷན་ meaning "before," alluding to what came prior and what has been: the sky and the earth.

This exhibition is made possible in part through the generous support of the Shen Xin Exhibition Circle and through production support from MadeIn Gallery. Shen Xin wishes to thank Zhang Hanlu and Times Museum Guangdong, The Sister Dennis Frandrup Artists in Residence Program Minnesota and MadeIn Gallery.

This exhibition is organized by Alison Coplan, Senior Curator.

## About Shen Xin

Shen Xin (b. 1990, Chengdu) graduated from Slade School of Fine Art, London, with an MFA in Fine Art Media in 2014. Shen Xin creates moving image installations and performances that empower alternative histories, relations and potentials between individuals and nation-states. They seek to create affirmative spaces of belonging that embrace polyphonic narratives and identities. Shen Xin's most recent work, *Brine Lake (A New Body)*, was included in *Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning*, Gwangju Biennale (2021), and in their first US museum solo exhibition at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2021). Recent solo exhibitions, performances and screenings include *Double Feature* at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (2019), *Synthetic Types* at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2019), *Warm Spell* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2018), *half-sung, half-spoken* at the Serpentine Galleries, London (2017), and *At Home* at Surplus Space, Wuhan (2016). Their group exhibitions include *Language is a River* at MUMA, Melbourne (2021), *An Impulse to Turn* at the Inside Out Museum, Beijing (2020), *Sigg Prize* at M+ Museum, Hong Kong (2019), and *Songs for Sabotage, New Museum Triennial* at the New Museum, New York (2018). Shen Xin has held education posts at numerous institutions including University of Minnesota, MCAD Minneapolis, Slade School of Fine Art, Goldsmith's University London, University of Connecticut, and Newcastle University. They received the BALTIC Artists 'Award (2017) and held the Rijksakademie residency in Amsterdam (2018-19).

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