

# Chiharu Shiota: Me Somewhere Else review

Art

4 out of 5 stars



Chiharu Shiota, Me Somewhere Else, 2018, Installation view, Courtesy the artist and BlainSouthern, Photo Peter Mallet (5)

## TIME OUT SAYS

This makes me question if her work is just an Instagram worthy piece and not really understood by her audience as a contemporary piece of art. This teaches me communication to understand that as a practicing artist I need to blur the line between contemporary art and what is just in "insta worthy."

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When the internet first became popular, people sometimes referred to it as the 'world wide web'. The 'www' bit emphasised how this technology linked together companies and communication across the globe, creating a lacy doily of virtual threads.

For her latest exhibition, 'Me Somewhere Else', artist Chiharu Shiota has created the human, non-digitised version of that early utopian world wide web, a complex and beautiful series of artworks based on our connections to each other and to all the

pre-internet parts of this planet: the **land**, the **air** and the **strange matter making up our bodies**.

Trained by **Marina Abramovic**, Shiota is best known for her work with thread. This show is **no different**, made up of a **large-scale installation** using a cast of the artist's feet as the base for a massive, **multi-layered maze** of **red rope**. Shown alongside this are smaller watercolours, sculptures and wall-based works.

The simplified, **graphic novel-ish paintings** convey the feeling of being a **tiny, person-shaped dot** in an ever-expanding universe. **Little figures** are **dwarfed** by black holes and tornadoes while, in another, a **spindly tree grasps** the soil with its **roots** to stop itself blowing away.

But the main attraction here is the **installation**. The scarlet storm cloud **bellows up** to the ceiling, and drips down again in **different length threads**.

Used to explore different **connections** perhaps with people. With the individuals, mind and body. This **may** vary depending on what **chemical genetic** makeup the person is made up. Long or short strands **of X or Y chromosomes**.

What I like about this is she is **touching on scientific advancements**. She explores the idea of the **human consciousness** could **exist** without the body, with the way technology is advancing we could explore the **80 percent** of our **brains** and be able to **separate** our thoughts from our **body**.

There's a **'femaleness'** to **Shiota's work**, both in its use of weaving (a traditionally **feminine practice**) and because this installation resembles a **giant bloody womb**, with the endless knots standing in for menstrual clots.

**Bondage? Attachment to ones body**. If **our bodies, minds and souls** are **connected to function** together then why break the connection and make the **subconsciousness** depend on **itself**. Surely, this may not work because they function together. If the bond is **broken** they may not **function** because there is a **dependency** on one another. I think with this notion she is exploring the idea of life and **death** but this view is **dependent** on what **YOU** believe.

Yet despite that **gooey interpretation** (you're welcome!), you're not put off the **work**; quite the opposite. The other way that 'Me Somewhere Else' joins the dots between people is by dragging them in off the **street**. **Passers-by** stop outside Blain Southern, gaze entranced through the window and, after a pause, come inside for a closer look. That's what **broadband** providers call **'connectivity'**.

**Building communication** as she invites the **outside** with the **inside**. Her work traps (net does **not trap** them **physically** but **visually**) the **gaze** of the audience due to the **mass and space**.

From this trapping notion I feel like her installation is a network of capillaries interlinked together which were once linked to the body but has passed away from the body. The capillaries being the vessel that cling onto the wall for life. Hence, the change in colour from red to white, as if the blood from the plaster feet have been drained leaving the feet deoxygenated, pale and needy for a life source to breed from. Needing power internally to function eternally. This allows the capillaries to roam together as a unit without dependency on the body. The capillaries at first I thought had to be a link to the body but this could be a net of subconscious thoughts which clump together in order to be dependent on not the body but of the same type, being itself. Therefore, having no need for the body. Also, using primarily net in this piece is vital I think, it gives the piece motion, the piece sways, it is restless, looking for a site to harbour on and depend on but it just has itself. Further to this point, the net being connected to the ceiling may be the release of the human subconsciousness allowing it to be dependent of its own and maybe the net of capillaries with the knots is the blockage (like when doctors try and clip a vein because it is pumping too much blood in one direction) of fluency. Of thoughts before they are being escaped to another life time or realm- an afterlife perhaps heaven or hell dependent on your fantasy but my best bet being heaven and as a Christian I obviously believe in the soul being independent with the body and essentially living forever.