

KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS

31 March - 17 June 2023

SHEN XIN

ས་གནི་ཕྱོད་པོ་འགྱུར། (The Earth Turned Green)

ས་གནི་ཕྱོད་པོ་འགྱུར། (*The Earth Turned Green*) is a solo exhibition by artist Shen Xin featuring a newly commissioned installation that centers restorative practices drawn from the Tibetan language through performance, land and family histories. Xin'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་ཕྱོད་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, སྤྱིད་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, Xin 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, Xin 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, Xin 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.

Xin began studying Tibetan language in August 2021 following a discovery about their family history. Throughout his lifetime, the artist's father, Shen Daohong, made Chinese ink paintings of Tibetan and Indian figures, a practice Xin was critical of as their father had no formal relationship to either culture. Following his passing in 2018, the artist'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 the artist 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 Xin to connect with their father through studying the ecological values of Tibetan language, and grounds their commitment to relate to places as land, though they might also be named as countries.

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Shen Xin wishes to thank Zhang Hanlu and Times Museum Guangdong, The Sister Dennis Frandrup Artists in Residence Program Minnesota and MadeIn Gallery.

List of works

མ་གཞི་ཕྱོད་པོ་འགྲུལ། (*The Earth Turned Green*), 2022

3 channel video and sound installation, 38:39

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 practices empowering alternative histories, relations, and potentials between individuals and nation-states. Their interests lie in understanding culture on its own terms. Seeing it as an active commitment to the learning, teaching and engaging with relating to places as land, it opens up to inhabiting the multitudes of the selves through the lens of time. Engaged with moving image, video installation, public event and collective process, Shen Xin imagines and creates affirmative spaces of belonging that embrace polyphonic narratives and identities. Their solo exhibitions, performances and screenings include མ་གཞི་ཕྱོད་པོ་འགྲུལ། (*The Earth Turned Green*) (Swiss Institute, New York, 2022), Brine Lake (A New Body) (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2021), Double Feature (Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2019), Synthetic Types (Stedelijk Museum, 2019), To Satiat (MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2019), Warm Spell (ICA, London, 2018), and half-sung, half-spoken (Serpentine Galleries, London, 2017). Their group exhibitions include Language is a River (MUMA, Melbourne, 2021), Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning (Gwangju Biennale, 2021), Sigg Prize (M+ Museum, Hong Kong, 2019), Afterimage (Lisson Gallery, London, 2019), and Songs for Sabotage (New Museum Triennial, New York, 2018). They received the BALTIC Artists' Award (2017) and held the Rijksakademie residency in Amsterdam (2018–19). Shen Xin practices on Mini Sóta Makhóche, the land of the Dakhóta Oyáte, as well as on Lénapehòkink (New York City), the land of the Lenape peoples.