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**2020 SAMUEL H. SCRIPPS/AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL AWARD
TO BE PRESENTED TO SHEN WEI**

Durham, NC, December 3, 2019—The American Dance Festival (ADF) will present the **2020 Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award** for lifetime achievement to acclaimed choreographer **Shen Wei**. Established in 1981 by Samuel H. Scripps, the annual award honors choreographers who have dedicated their lives and talent to the creation of modern dance. **Shen Wei will be in residence at ADF during the 2020 season working on his latest ADF commission set on ADF students.** ADF Director Emeritus Charles L. Reinhart will present the \$50,000 award in a brief ceremony on **Thursday, July 23rd at 8:00pm**, prior to the Footprints performance in Reynolds Industries Theater.

“Shen Wei is one of the most innovative choreographers of the 21st century. His original movement fusing eastern and western traditions combined with his exquisite costume and set designs create life-size visual feasts that transport and thrill audiences. We are so pleased to present him with this award and to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of his company at ADF, Shen Wei Dance Arts,” stated ADF Executive Director Jodee Nimerichter.

Hailed as “one of the most expansive, creative minds in the arts” (*The New York Sun*) choreographer, director, and painter Shen Wei is internationally renowned for the breadth and scope of his artistic vision. Admiration for his talent has earned Shen Wei numerous awards, including a 2007 MacArthur “Genius” Award, the US Artists Fellow award, and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Other accolades include Australia’s Helpmann Award, the Nijinsky Emerging Choreographer Award, the Algur H. Meadows Prize, Les Étoiles de Ballet Award, Audi-China 2012 Artist of the Year Award, GQ-China 2013 Artist of the Year Award, and the 2013 Chinese Innovator Award from *The Wall Street Journal-China*. Most recently, he was honored with the Asian Cultural Council’s 2017 John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award.

Born in China’s Hunan province in 1968, the son of Chinese opera professionals, Shen Wei was trained from youth in the rigorous practice of Chinese opera performance and traditional Chinese ink painting and calligraphy and was a performer with the Hunan State Xian Opera Company from 1984 to 1989. During his student years, he studied western visual art, which propelled an interest in modern dance. **In 1989, he began modern dance training at the American Dance Festival’s program at the Guangdong Dance Academy in China.** In 1991 he became a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the first such company in China. Upon receipt of a fellowship, he moved to New York City in 1995 to study with the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab and, in the same year, was invited to create work on ADF students at the American Dance Festival. **In July 2000, he founded Shen Wei Dance Arts (SWDA) with his ADF students and his company quickly entered the international touring circuit.**

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Shen Wei has received 23 commissions from major presenting institutions to support his creative work, including **fourteen commissions from the American Dance Festival** and commissions from Het Muziektheater, Lincoln Center Festival, and the Kennedy Center, as well as from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Park Avenue Armory, Hong Kong's New Vision Arts Festival, Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, Edinburgh International Festival, and, most recently, BAM and the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College. The lead choreographer for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Shen Wei has also created dances for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal and Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, and choreographed the Rome Opera's production of Rossini's *Moïse et Pharaon*, conducted by Ricardo Muti. In 2013, Shen Wei was commissioned to create a new work for the Dutch National Ballet in Amsterdam, a new version of *Rite of Spring* with live orchestra performance, and he choreographed, directed, and designed a new production of *Carmina Burana* for the chorus, orchestra, and ballet of Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Italy, with his company performing in leading roles.

Recently, his work as a visual artist and choreographer has entered into a new dialogue in a series of performative installations and site-specific works that have been presented at a number of museums and galleries including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, North Carolina Museum of Art, Collezione Maramotti in Italy, the Forum at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Rockbund Museum of Art in Shanghai, MDC Museum of Art + Design in Miami, Guggenheim Museum, Asia Society Hong Kong Center, and the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum. As a painter, Shen Wei has had solo exhibitions in leading galleries and museums: Chambers Fine Art Gallery (New York), Crow Collection of Asian Art (Dallas), Hong Kong Cultural Center, and Tucson Museum of Art. In the fall of 2015, he participated in a group show at London's Fine Art Society: Performance & Remnant. Shen Wei's recent large-scale painting series have received significant acclaim in the art world. *Shen Wei: In Black, White and Gray*, a solo exhibition featuring 11 of his paintings, was shown at the MDC Museum of Art + Design during Art Basel/Miami Beach (December 2014). *Shen Wei: Dance Strokes*, an exhibition of Shen's paintings with site-specific performances, opened at Asia Society Hong Kong Center during Art Basel/Hong Kong (March 2016), a large scale solo exhibition *Shen Wei: Exploring The Unknown* on all his creations in painting, film/video, dance, costume and set designs presented in Shanghai at the Power Station of Art, China's first contemporary art museum (Sept.-Nov. 2019). Recently he is preparing a solo exhibition on his paintings, films, and dance works for the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum in Boston for the fall of 2020.

Previously the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award has been presented to Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Hanya Holm, Alwin Nikolais, Katherine Dunham, Alvin Ailey, Erick Hawkins, Twyla Tharp, Anna Sokolow, Donald McKayle, Talley Beatty, Trisha Brown, Meredith Monk, Anna Halprin, Fayard and Harold Nicholas, Pina Bausch, Pilobolus, Garth Fagan, Maguy Marin, Eiko and Koma, Bill T. Jones, Murray Louis, Mark Morris, Laura Dean, Ohad Naharin, Martha Clarke, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, William Forsythe, Lin Hwai-min, Anjelin Preljocaj, Lar Lubovitch, Lucinda Childs, Ronald K. Brown and posthumously in honor of Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, José Limón, Pearl Primus, and Helen Tamiris.

Performances during ADF's 87th season will be presented June 18-July 25, 2020 in venues in and around the Raleigh-Durham area.

PHOTOGRAPHY AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

About ADF:

Throughout its 87-year history, ADF has been a nationally recognized leader in our indigenous art form of modern dance. Generations of dancers and choreographers have come to ADF as students, taught as faculty, and created and performed work as professional artists. Each summer, ADF has been the beating heart of the dance world. The best companies in the world premiere work on ADF's stage, much of it commissioned by the festival. Other festivals and season programs are measured against ADF. Over 25,000 people see performances by more than 20 companies each season. The festival has commissioned 442 works and premiered over 700 pieces including dances by Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and Paul Taylor. Each summer at ADF, more than 400 students from some 28 countries and 38 states study with ADF's 70 faculty members. They come as kids in leotards with as many doubts as dreams. They leave as dancers and artists—and sometimes even new members of companies. Lives change in those 5½ sweaty weeks. Beyond the summer, ADF maintains year-round dance studios offering movement classes to over 650 participants, provides over 180 free classes to almost 4,000 local dancers, and offers choreographic residences providing artists with the necessary space and time to create.

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