

## **Male Shibari**

April 25 – June 7, 2025

Opening: Thursday, April 24, 7 pm

Performances: April 24 and Friday, May 2, ea. 9 pm (No photos and video allowed!)

### **A captivating image creation**

Shackling, also known as bondage, originated in Japan, where it is called shibari (縛り). For an internationally active artist from Europe who focuses on tying up men, the artist name "Male Shibari" is only logical.

There is no getting around Male Shibari if you are interested in this cultural technique. Men from all over the world come to his studio to be tied up and photographed by this shibari master.

Male Shibari always works alone, without additional assistance, in order to create the best possible intimate atmosphere and authenticity. The people shown here are all tied up by him and photographed by him.

Shibari (縛り) is a Japanese art form of erotic and aesthetic bondage with ropes. The term literally means "to tie" or "to bind" and originates from the traditional Japanese bondage technique hojojutsu, which was used by the samurai to capture opponents. Shibari is also often called kinbaku (緊縛), a sensual and artistic form of binding that is more about the journey than the finished image. Semenawa literally means "torture with ropes" and is a very intense form of kinbaku.

All these techniques always take place within a framework of deep mutual trust between the shibari master and the person to be bound. A detailed discussion before a session regarding the physical/mental and emotional condition is the prerequisite for the journey, which can have a deep physical/mental impact. They follow the mutual consent that has been precisely defined beforehand.

This information is particularly important for viewers who have not yet had any contact with such images so that they are not misunderstood.

It is easy to see that Male Shibari knows his trade and has a legendary reputation as a master. Everything is a testament to perfection, the result of his many years of experience. Every grip has to be right, every rope in its place has its significance in order to bring the bound person into the right position, to make them float, both physically and mentally. The experience of being tied up is often a borderline experience for the body and soul. The impact ropes trigger emotions and can open the door to the subconscious. A session is therefore more than just the finished picture, it is essentially about triggering emotions and states of consciousness. The focus is always on

aesthetics, but it is not an end in itself.

Male Shibari's lighting technique is carefully planned. He breaks away from the lighting used in classic shibari photography, as is common in Japan (including by the best-known photographer, Nobuyoshi Araki, who only works with female protagonists), and uses only one light source, as in the Baroque painting that inspired him. Caravaggio and Rembrandt are his sources of inspiration here because of the chiaroscuro (chiaroscuro) and their interpretation of skin tones. The chiaroscuro directs the eye from the darkness to the central event, thus setting the stage.

The incarnate nature of the objects depicted in sharp focus, the skin of the protagonists and its deformation, the falling of the hair, the materiality of the ropes and the bamboo pole or wooden cross (hashira) evoke a tense calm in combination with the dark blackness of the night. The impact of the ropes, which can be seen in the partial discoloration of extremities and the deformation of tissue, is deliberately shown to give an indication of the intensity of the bondage.

It is the highly concentrated calm in the picture that is reminiscent of even earlier epochs of painting. The realism of photography finds its counterpart in the Baroque, but we find the tense calm in the medieval panel paintings, brought about by the formulaic and at the same time enigmatic nature of their pictorial language.

Male Shibari's art is perfect in its well-pondered (image and body!) tension: highest concentration and balanced calm. In the shibari action itself and in the visual arts.  
Here two worlds meet and become one.

Semjon H. N. Semjon  
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