

Les silences de la nuit de Ma Sibò

[mars 2020](#) [Alexia Green](#) [Art contemporain](#)

Gowen Contemporary presents the Chinese artist's Swiss premiere in Geneva



MA SIBO *Left Object* 2019 Oil on canvas 125 x 125 cm © Ma Sibò © Gowen Contemporary

« My method can be regarded as the use of space and objects to structure light and shadow. »

Ma Sibò

Gowen Contemporary presents the first exhibition in Switzerland of Beijing-based artist Ma Sibò. A selection from fourteen new works is available for viewing in the show which opened last month in Geneva. The Chinese artist's ethereal compositions evoke contemporary existential states, interpreted through light and shadow to structure the space they create. Drawing on figurative elements from quotidian references or pursuing independent abstract form and colour, the artist responds to present-day social and environmental phenomenon.

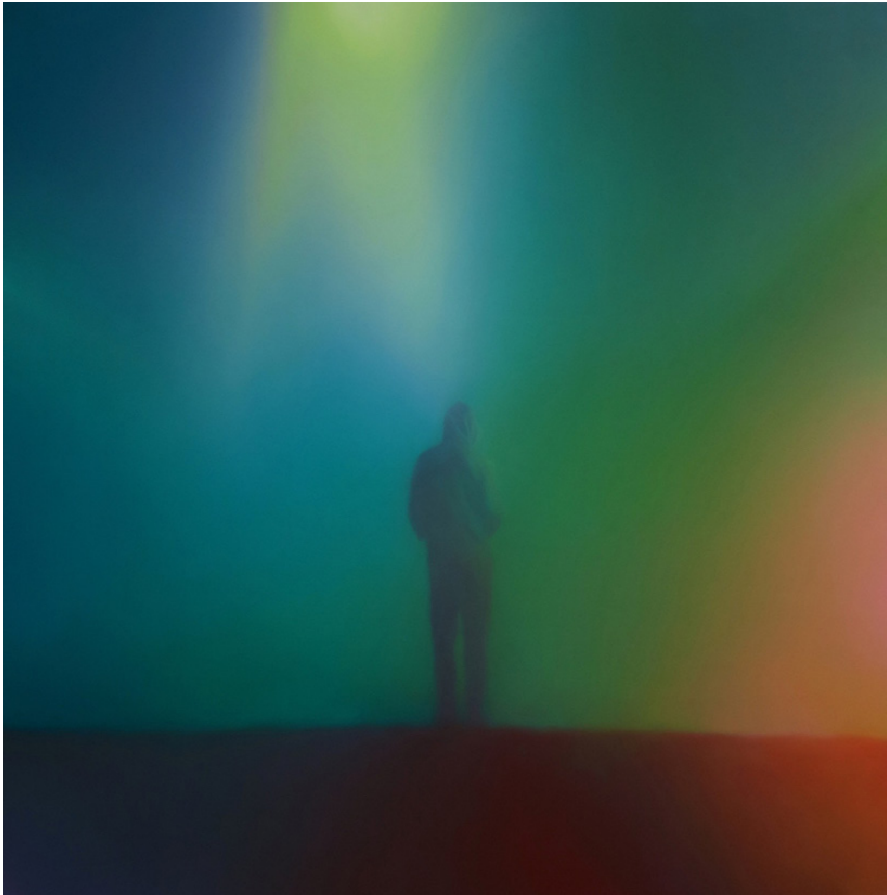
Ma Sibò graduated from the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in 2001 before training in France at the Ecole supérieur d'art et de design in Toulon and at the Ecole supérieur des beaux-arts in Nîmes. His accomplished brushwork blends full chroma hues with muted luminosity to express shifting, oneiric realms, informed either by reality or enticed from the imagination. Specifically, his work explores

the artificiality of night-time light found in the urban and industrial landscapes of Beijing.

"Light.... is constantly changing and merging, demonstrating loneliness, calmness, emptiness, a state of sleep or mystery. The flowing, atomized light releases the weight and volume of matter at any time, leaving the space in a virtual focused state" explains the artist.

With a body of work influenced by the Dutch masters *"whose language of light and shadow is rooted in (his) heart"*, Ma Sibó's own interpretation simultaneously evokes post-war abstract expressionism found in works by Rothko or James Turrell.

"Many artists are inspired by light and aspire to make it their own, like Vermeer, or Rembrandt or the unique light of Caravaggio" emphasizes the gallery's founder Laura Gowen. In this context, Ma Sibó puts forward his own elucidation of the nature of synthetic light and the filter it generates across the natural world. Applying layer after layer of paint, it is this unique, visual language that takes precedence throughout the artist's oeuvre.



MA SIBO *Night* 2019 Oil on canvas 125 x 125 cm © Ma Sibó © Gowen Contemporary

The aesthetic quality of his compositions is not, says the artist *"about beauty in the classical sense. It is silence, an invisible and unspeakable silence, which is the destination of (his) work"*.

These painted states of quietude urge the viewer to observe, recollect and contemplate. In *Night* (2019), a lone figure stands suspended in the centre of the canvas, a barely-there shadow of a former self perhaps. It's implication resonates hauntingly with the prevailing discourse and introspection within our global society.

By introducing recognisable motifs into his settings, Ma Sibó lulls the viewer into semi-familiar territories. A rocking-horse perceived through streamed artificial light in *Left Object* (2019) draws attention to its unambiguous physicality. If the title implies abandonment, the visual is, in contrast, a marker of memory which connects to a childhood world that no longer exists.

In works such as *Deerhunter* and *Showcase*, the artist refers to the natural kingdom. Does the symbolic outline of a deer, painted somewhere between figuration and abstraction point to a world becoming lost, or remind us that nature always wins?

Other pieces address journey and movement, represented by a rowing boat or spacecraft, and infer transition from familiar to unfamiliar territories. Captured in *Colony* and *Nirvana*, these vessels pass tentatively into in-between worlds where solitude and passage into the unknown dominate.



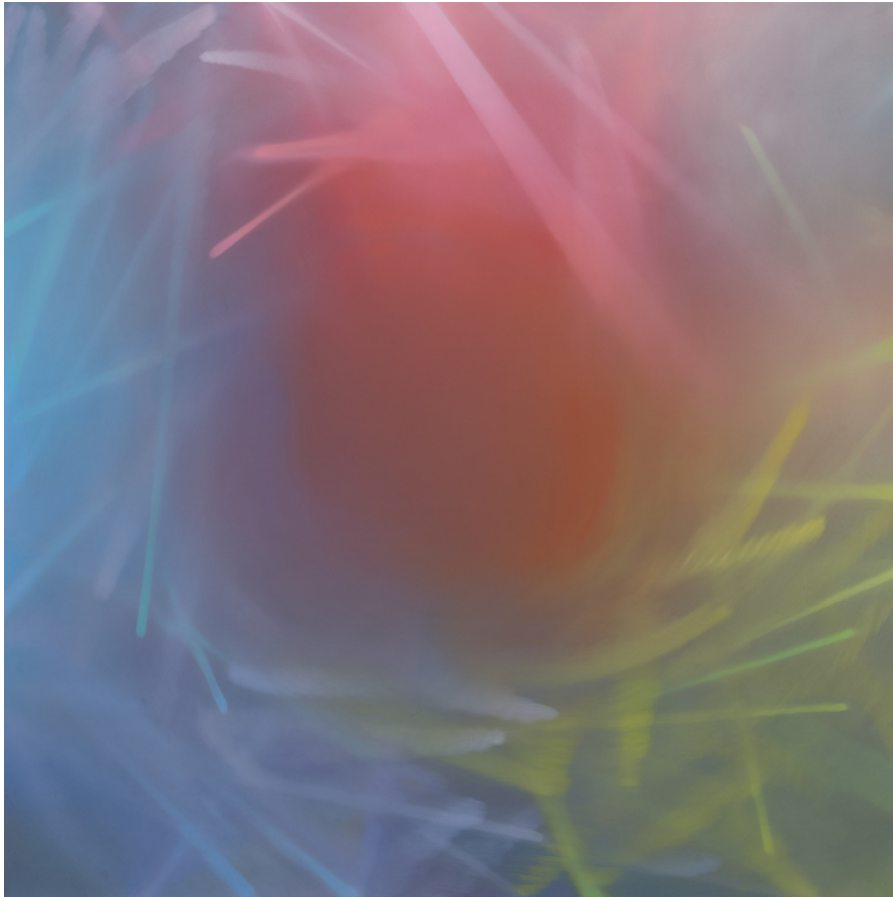
MA SIBO *Companion* 2019 Oil on canvas 52 x 58 cm © Ma Sibo © Gowen Contemporary

Several non-figurative works are presented in the exhibition which capture the artificial light omnipresent in the polluted, downtown environments of the artist's home city. *Signal* is an aqueous landscape in blue where the light source penetrates the stillness. *Attack* and *Companion* are two smaller studies concerned with the singular purity of light.

Through the urbanite windows of his mind, Ma Sibo achieves a magical spirituality to produce soulful scenes which question past, present and the uncertainty of the future.



MA SIBO *Signal* 2019 Oil on canvas 125 x 125 cm © Ma Sibo © Gowen Contemporary



MA SIBO *Hole* 2019 Oil on canvas 125 x 125 cm © Ma Sibo © Gowen Contemporary

Ma Sibo. Stand in Silence (Solo Show)

Gowen Contemporary, Geneva

Until end of May 2020

*** Please note that due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the gallery is temporarily closed. To visit the exhibition, you can book an appointment. The gallery team is available via email and phone.***

For further information go to www.gowencontemporary.com



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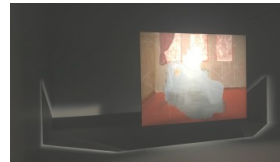
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