

Mark Yang

Shadowscape

MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce the solo show of the Korean-born artist Mark Yang. Titled *Shadowscape*, the exhibition presents a compelling series of large-scale canvases where Yang's entwined figures, bathed in a nocturnal atmosphere, claim the spotlight.

The nighttime weaves a common thread throughout the exhibition, linking all the paintings. Within some of Yang's works, the moon takes centre stage. What captures the artist's interest, however, is not the moon's symbolism but its circular form. Yang openly admits to his penchant for incorporating circles into his art, subtly concealing them — a nipple here, a rounded finger there. Yet, in *Shadowscape*, Yang abandons subtlety, boldly sketching striking moons in red or white. In this series, the lunar presence creates a dynamic interplay with the entwined figures that populate the canvases. The moons become not just celestial bodies but integral components, casting their unique influence on the landscape that Yang meticulously constructs.

The figures, this amalgamation of bodies, are, according to Yang “not my subject matter”. The artist expresses concern that fixating

solely on the figures risks eclipsing the true essence of his paintings. His creations teeter on the edge of abstraction, challenging the conventional allure of figurative art. Yang's bodies cease to be mere subjects; they metamorphose into intricate patterns, living landscapes. Instead of portraying conventional elements like hills and trees, the artist draws “a body with the shape of a mountain”. Faceless and limb-formed, these figures forge Yang's artistic vernacular, transcending the figurative to embrace a powerful realm of abstraction.

Although uninterested in conventional subject matters and figurativism, Yang found inspiration in Italian compositions, drawn to their drama, inventiveness, chiaroscuro and mannerism. His transformative encounter with Tintoretto's masterpieces during his last visit to Venice in 2022 left an indelible mark on him. Since that pivotal moment, Yang has delved deeper into the world of the old Italian masters. The piece titled *Miracle* overtly reflects this inspiration, referencing Tintoretto's *Miracle of St. Mark*, a composition adorned with vibrant hues and statuesque figures in dramatic poses. Yang explains, “I drew heavily from

Tintoretto's compositional expertise; instead of zooming out on bodies, I chose to zoom in.” This intentional shift in perspective exemplifies the ongoing dialogue between the artist and the classical Italian masters.

The artist adeptly divides the masses of bodies into vibrant areas of pinks, oranges, blues, and greens. Purposefully drawing darker or intensely bright outlines, Yang creates a visual delineation, as if light or darkness were pushing from behind, highlighting the intricacies of limbs. Colors, for Yang, are instinctive elements in his artistic practice. While the approach maintains a certain uniformity, it diverges significantly from one painting to another.

In this nuanced interplay of hues and contrasts, Yang's *Shadowscape* unfolds, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in the mysterious allure of the nocturnal world.