

## Shuling Guo: 5–6 PM

Dominique Musorrafti | September 3, 2020 | China Magazine, China Views, Contemporary art in China, Featured

**Shuling Guo is an artist and illustrator based in Philadelphia that creates many of her artworks painting all by herself on a sailboat.**



*Featured image: Shuling Guo: “5—6 pm” installation view. Photograph by Serko Artinian ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

**Fou Gallery has launched its first exhibition since the long pause due to the pandemic which broke out in New York. The title of the first Shuling Guo’s solo exhibition: “5-6 pm”, refers to the artist’s series of oil paintings, which is presented together with her “Skin” series.**

Shuling is a freelance painter who lives part-time in Philadelphia and every year, completely alone on a sailboat, paints her artworks in which she mainly explores lights and colors. The “5-6 pm” series immerses viewers in the works created by her contemplation and observation during this time span, in the winter evening, in the Northern Hemisphere, when the sun descends towards the horizon, and the light of the day gradually decreases. Shuling Guo’s series portrays this phenomenon in the sky and displays a palette of shades and reflections that subtly change in light, color, and intensity. In Japanese Shintoism, dusk, when night alternates with day, is the appropriate chance for the appearance of non-human spirits. Atomagatoki is the time to encounter with demons. But it’s not a moment of fear or painful emptiness because the melancholy portrayed in its own simplicity shows to viewers only beauty.

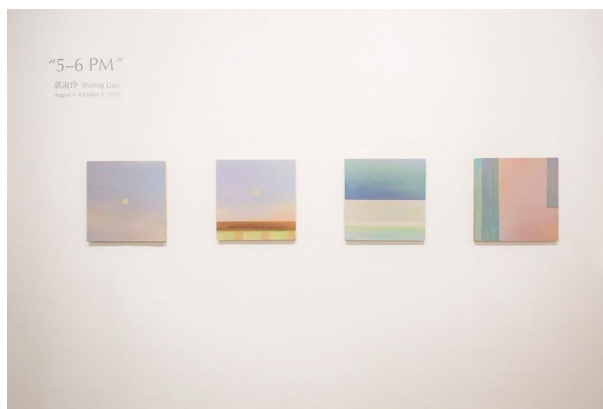


Shuling Guo, “5–6pm” -3, 2020. Oil on board, 10 x 10 inches. Photograph by Yun Kai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery. (left)

Shuling Guo, “Skin” -4, 2020. Oil on board, 12 x 12 inches. Photograph by Yun Kai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery. (right)

According to curator Lynn Hai, Guo’s use and intuition of colors bring a breath of fresh air. The gradients and shades of her paintings, inspired by her dedicated study to the artist and educator of color theory Josef Albers, find their essence in light, offering subjective and variable perceptions.

The light reveals to each one different things that others couldn’t see immediately, as it assists the flow and emergence of deep emotions, increasing attention, and inner focus, to allow the perception of the subjective essential. The role of light is fundamental as it attributes significant vibrant qualities in the delicate minute shades of color and in small variations. As the instants of time that create the changes are infinitely small, in the arc of her observation of the phenomenon, in the same way, those apparently tiny and minimalist details create a uniform and unrepeatable meaningful unity, since although the phenomenon is cyclical at each dusk times, circumstances make it such, that it’s never the same.



Shuling Guo: “5—6 pm” installation view. Photograph by Lynn Hai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.

In her artwork time exists, it's portrayed in its moment, but evenly, time is not found, as it flows and dissolves in color, is split down, reassembled, and recomposed. Looking at her works, despite most of the scenes featuring empty frames, viewers are immersed in a myriad of transitions of tones and shades created solely thanks to the analysis of light and color. The series "5-6 pm" describes the vivid evenings present in her memory and what she paints is able to make people relive past reminiscences lost over time, not that exact moment, but certain absolute feelings that turn into ubiquitous details shaped by our reality, of personal experience.



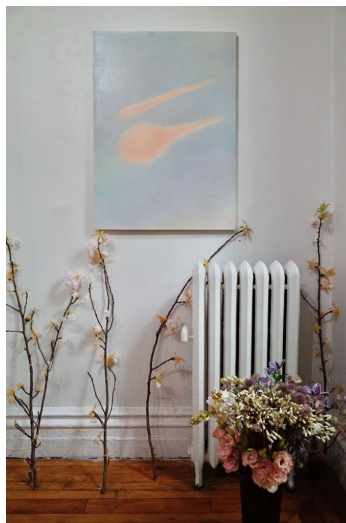
*Shuling Guo, "Skin" -2, 2020. Oil on board, 12 x 12 inches. Photograph by Yun Kai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

The Skin series sees Guo's attentive gaze linger on the impressions of refracted light as it penetrates through the petals and leaves, some little details apparently less important, as soon as enlarged and amplified, are converted into delicate visually abstract images, where the focus of the particular is almost as if it were an out of focus, in which it's easy to move between the antipodes; between a near and far point and soft shades between warm and cold colors. As curator Hai suggested, Guo's choice of this creative and artistic practice is also influenced by the works of Mark Rothko, where exquisitely blurred complementary contrasting colors swing and jingle. In this fluctuation of apparently abstract tones, Guo observes from different perspectives and reveals her connection with light through her animated color notes. By capturing the light, she gets in touch with it, showing its face that gives balance, because the light itself captures all of us, getting in contact with the light make it part of us. The essence of light, captured by color takes shape, is transformed into a cycle of sensations and therefore into a window into the mind, in which portraits of light and emotions are transformed into a collection of tiny memories and fragments, and moments of infinity.



*Shuling Guo: "5—6 pm" installation view. Photograph by Lynn Hai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

Shuling Guo is an artist who is part of the new generation that grew up in the era of globalization and therefore she benefited from the cultural and artistic openness in China. I learned from Hai's statement that among her many interests is the "Wabi-Sabi" aesthetic derived from Zen Buddhism which values austerity and humility, and considers ephemeral, impermanence, and imperfection inevitable in the beauty of all substances. In fact, in the chromatic choice of her artworks, we find a direct, immediate, and spiritual language. That peaceful glow and stillness help to ignite the memory that magically comes out of the shadows to improve mental health and emotional well-being.



*Shuling Guo: "5—6 pm" installation view of Ikebana Workshop. Photograph by Echo He ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

Shuling Guo gives color to the wind, opens up horizons that shape glimpses in time, where a thin line is created, a perceptual rift in which a feeling of well-being and inner peace is perceived. She transports us to a place between dreaming and awakening, where there are memories, desires, expectations, what has been positive and what we would like to relive or

relish, what we don't yet have, and which we wish and would like to reach. The light of her works appears as the passage between a before and an after. While and during, that moment of that little fragment of eternal life that we would like to be repeated continuously and for which we yearn and sigh. This always seems to us so far and so close and due to its delicacy, it reassures us and fills us with the strength to make us overcome limits and deep anxieties, thanks to its fluidity and completeness.



*Shuling Guo, "5-6pm" -16, 2020. Oil on board, 12 x 12 inches. Photograph by Yun Kai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

In her works, we find the feeling of potential, the creative processing of all the small emotions that in some moments are not always able to emerge with words and in everyday contexts. Going beyond and beyond, removing blocks or barriers, because the vital force doesn't stop: it creates moments and transitory nuances capable of arousing unexpected and surprising inner landscapes.



*Shuling Guo: "5-6 pm" installation view. Photograph by Lynn Hai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

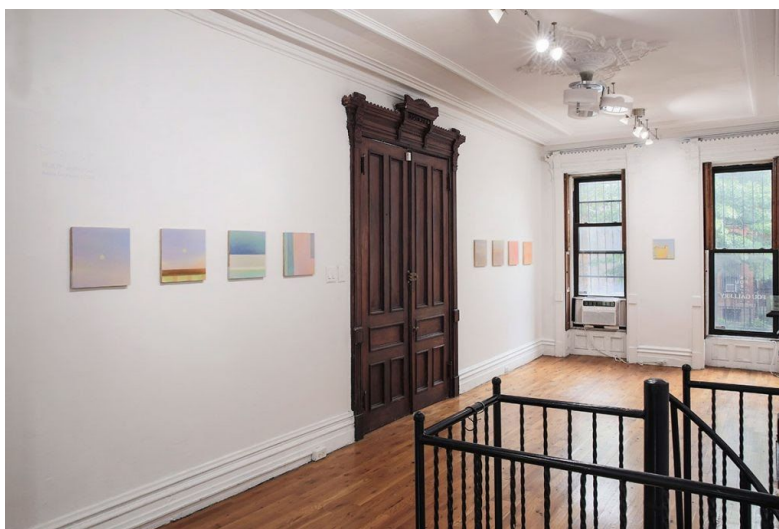


As we are still in a state of constant alert worldwide, organize a physical event shows a lot of courage. Thanks to the collective effort of many volunteers from the staff of Fou Gallery, the curator Liang Hai and the artist Shuling Guo, it's once again possible with full attention and respect for social distance, to benefit from the intoxicating power of art as a vehicle of emotions, through an exhibition capable of offering a unique, calming, and relaxing deep experience.



*Shuling Guo, "5-6pm" -19, 2020. Oil on board, 12 x 12 inches. Photograph by Yun Kai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

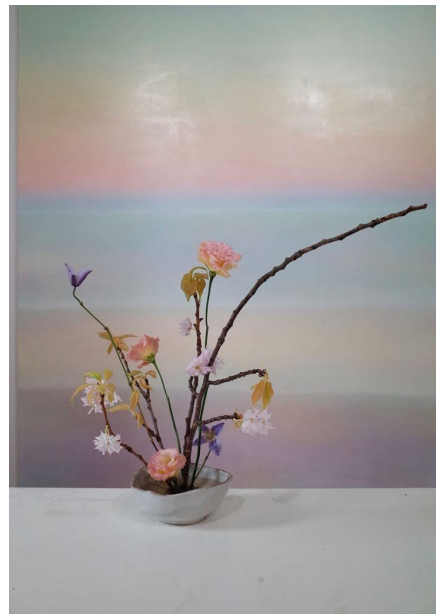
Colors influence the ways of being and convey part of the feelings managing to penetrate an intimate and spiritual sphere. They are highly significant in life and have a strong evocative value, which allows them to see that beauty, which sometimes due to certain circumstances or experiences you are unable to perceive.



*Shuling Guo: "5-6 pm" installation view. Photograph by Lynn Hai ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

This event is the perfect opportunity to take some time to enjoy art, make a melancholy convert and transform it into a vital harmony, to look at a unique, completely personal world in which curious and never tired eyes travel in the universe portrayed by Shuling Guo who brings a caress, freshness and to the heart of each one's own dimension of a dreamer to reconnect with the personal self.

Fou Gallery is planning to host a Meditation and Pranayam workshop in September to evoke a dialogue between art and science. The workshop will be led by a doctor/neuroscientist/meditation educator Nitin Ron, and his father, Pralhad Ron, who is an atomic scientist and yoga teacher.



*Shuling Guo: "5—6 pm" installation view of Ikebana Workshop. Photograph by Echo He ©Shuling Guo, courtesy Fou Gallery.*

Guo's artworks have healing power and are like regenerative oxygen for the mind and body. Breath is the main vehicle of exchange between the external environment and ourselves, so through the emotional immersion in colors, we can find and perceive a starting point to relax, breathe and channel thoughts and feel the energy, motivation, and the desire to start over. Color is light, it is freedom because it allows us to see beauty, it lets us dream, hope to spur us to improve and it is what makes us alive, just the sensation necessary to overcome the sense of stress due to the particular moment that the world is experiencing and facing.

Photo courtesy of **Fou Gallery**

Art: © **Shuling Guo**

Photographers: **Lynn Hai, Yun Kai, Echo He, Serko Artinian**