

# GAO

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Unit 7, 88 Mile End Rd  
London, E1 4UN

Ma Jianfeng 麻剑锋  
*Treasure Island* 金银岛  
5 June - 13 July 2019

GAO is proud to present the first UK solo show by the Beijing-based artist, Ma Jianfeng. With *Treasure Island*, Ma continues his work in the intersection between painting and installation, repurposing inexpensive materials to create theatrical spaces that celebrate the vitality of the built environment.

Opening reception:  
6-8 pm, Wednesday 5 June  
2019

For any enquiries please  
contact the gallery at  
info@gao.gallery

In Chinese, the exhibition's title translates as Gold | Silver | Island, which Ma chose after experiencing London for the first time. Ma was first trained in the mural department of China Academy of Art and later in Fakultät Bildende Kunst of Universität der Künste Berlin. These experiences mean Ma always situates his painterly practice in relation to space, combined with an approach of expressionist and dynamic mark-making. The most abundant material in this exhibition, cardboard, is cheap, available, and can be readily transported with ease. *Treasure Island* is a reminder that to live in (or near) an economically advanced city today is to live within a maelstrom of change. In London, the aberrant geometry of the skyline seems to shift with the seasons, and people soon learn to see impermanence as a permanent state. This has informed Ma's improvisational logic of the show as a whole. Few are as committed to actively changing up their practice to respond to their surroundings, and the show represents a specific engagement with the immediate context provided by the city and the gallery space. The works in *Treasure Island* is full of immediacy.

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In the first space, everything is height and verticality. Busy, saturated forms of colour adorn the many cardboard surfaces. Fragments from the urban canopy - architecture, trees, railings, shrine, port, traces of human - of man and nature's creation, greet the viewers as they manoeuvre through this forest of painted placards. With a more outspread horizontality, vivacity plunges in the second space with the use of metallic and heavier colours, creating a mysterious, contemplative and slightly oppressive atmosphere. Being inspired by Ma's daily route on the futuristic Jubilee Line during his two-month stay in London, it is the first time Ma has employed the abundant use of metallic colours in his works. The highly reflective nature of metallic and pearly paint brings in the 80's Sci-fi psychedelic effects. These repeated motifs extend to the cylindrical paintings, light and colour bounce back and forth between the wall panels and other elements, creating a space in flux and of constant exchange between different dimensions.

Ma Jianfeng 麻剑锋  
(b. 1983, China) currently lives and works in Beijing, CN. Solo exhibitions include *The U-Cloister*, Institute for Provocation, Beijing, CN (2018); *MA*, Ying Space, Beijing, CN (2016); *Wall*, Don Gallery, Beijing, CN (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *Guangzhou Airport Biennale*, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, CN (2019); *Gwangju AAC International Residency*, AAC, Gwangju KOR (2018); *The New Normal: China, Art and 2017*, UCCA, Beijing, CN (2017).