

## Artist Resources – Matthew Wong (Canadian, 1984-2019)

### [Wong at KARMA Gallery, New York](#)

“At the center of my practice is exploring the materiality of paint and struggling to yield a surface that gives a sense of space and structure, however contradictory, that reaches a state of form I can live with,” [explained Wong in 2013](#) as he planned his first solo show in an artist compound near his studio Zhongshan, China. “One mark responds to another, colors start piling up, getting scraped away, and built up again, and so on and so forth, and somewhere along the line I always reach a certain point where I can intuitively sense the general shape and structure of the image I need to work towards.”

“I am a bit of an omnivore for sights, sounds and ideas and am always on the lookout for perspectives I had not considered before,” Wong reflected in a thoughtful [2018 interview](#) about his entry into painting, inspirations, and process. “The making of my work has come to a rhythm where most of the work is done in idle moments...going by intuition and my emotions I will then head to the studio and set out to elaborate in paint these vague glimpses I get.”

KARMA worked with Wong on his [first solo exhibition, in 2018](#). The self-titled show displayed Wong’s reverence for color and talent with texture, gesture, and space in visualizing physical and emotional landscapes in both oil paint and watercolor.

In 2019, Wong received his first solo exhibition in Hong Kong, with [Massimo De Carlo](#), showcasing a new series of eight large-scale oil paintings in which Wong paired day and night views of four imagined landscapes.

Twenty works on paper were displayed at [ARCH Athens in 2020](#), honoring the summer residency in Greece Wong was planning before he passed. In gouache and watercolor, Wong’s *Postcards* pay homage to the real landscapes through which he traveled in North America and China, and the fantasy landscapes he traveled during moments of internal reflection.

[Friends](#) and [fellow artists and critics](#) remember Wong and grieve the loss of his peaceful fantasies and soulful creativity after [his passing in October 2019](#).

\*To honor the [press request of Wong’s father and mother, Raymond and Monita](#), to limit use of photographs of Matthew under estate copyright, this guide does not include images\*



Matthew Wong (Canadian, 1984-2019)

**Catharsis.** 2018

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:10.1

*On view March 31 – July 4, 2021*



Matthew Wong (Canadian, 1984-2019)

**The Little Prince**, 2017

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:13.4

Born in Toronto and raised in both Canada and Hong Kong, Matthew Wong began teaching himself how to paint in 2012 while pursuing a graduate degree in photography at the City University of Hong Kong. Wong was a quick study, developing an expressive style blending romantic and surreal landscapes through gestural brushwork and a reverential attention to color. Solitary figures and dwellings occasionally populate the artist's fantastic forest, farmland, and lakeside visions, watched over by starry skies. The intimacy and mystery evoked through works like **The Little Prince**—which in title and composition evokes the beloved 1943 illustrated novella of exploration, love, and loss by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry—demonstrates the appeal which promoted Wong to international fame just a few years into his practice. Social media platforms also played a substantial role, enabling the painter to introduce himself on his own terms to an extensive community. Wong's anticipated stunning career was cut short in 2019, when the artist took his own life after struggling with the impact of autism, Tourette's syndrome, and depression since childhood. His work continues to be highly sought after and adorn gallery walls in posthumous exhibitions.

*On view March 17 – June 20, 2021*