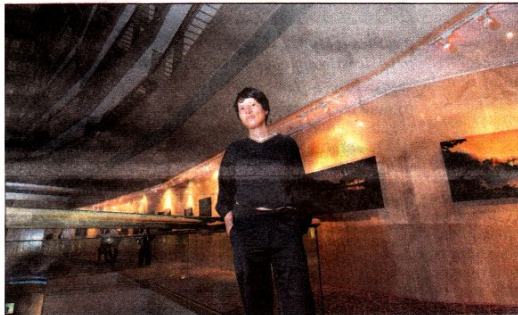


Artist Features: Lin Bao Ling (Taiwan, Singapore-based)
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Striking images:
 Lin's exhibition, called *Nocturne IV*, is on display at the Marina Mandarin until end-Aug

Things that blend in the night

By **CLARISSA TAN**

LIN Bao Ling's work, much like the artist himself, gives the impression of longing to disappear into the ether.

His latest series of paintings is of landscapes at night, that time when hills, trees, buildings and rocks are almost completely hidden by darkness. These hills and buildings are often blended into a kind of misty glow, so they become virtually indistinguishable from each other.

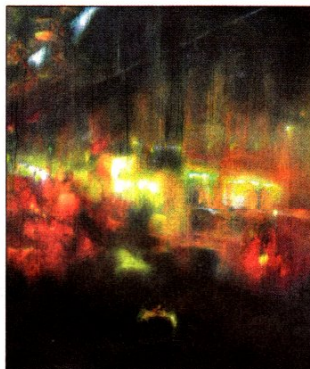
Lin's exhibition, called *Nocturne IV*, is on display at the Marina Mandarin until the end of August. It consists of 27 paintings, all done in a mixture of oil and acrylic, produced during the six months that Lin was artist-in-residence at the hotel. Many of them are scenes of Singapore's Little Guilin area.

"It's an emotional thing," said Lin, who lives in Bukit Gombak and visits Little Guilin a few times a week to seek tranquillity. "Just like I try to find a peaceful place outside to calm my mind, I also try to find a peaceful place within my paintings."

Perhaps not surprisingly, Lin said that one of his artistic influences is American-born James McNeill Whistler. "I like the mysterious, poetic quality of Whistler's paintings," he revealed. "Whistler also said that a painting must be like music, which I agree with."

In terms of style, Lin's current series of works also recalls the impressionistic, swirling studies of light and darkness of Englishman J M W Turner. Lin's paintings are most effective when they veer towards the abstract, such as in *Little Guilin Night #1* or *Was Raining*. When the objects of a landscape are more clearly delineated – such as with the buildings and condominiums depicted in *Little Guilin Night #7* and *#8*, the effect is slightly jarring, as though modern life has intruded on an Arcadian setting. And there is no doubt that the painter's sensibilities are romantic, from his eagerness to seek beauty in nature (transforming Little Guilin, which is basically a quarry, into a meditative haze, for example), to giving his exhibition a title that recalls Frederic Chopin.

Even in appearance, Lin reminds one of the melancholy student – tall, pale, lanky with a shock of black hair over the brow. This image does not seem calculated, for Lin appears to be genuinely shy and on the less-talkative side. Only 27, Lin has already had three solo exhibitions under his belt. Born in Taiwan, he moved to Singapore when he was 13 and received his BA



Beauty in nature: Lin's works are most effective when they veer towards the abstract, such as *Was Raining* (above)

(Hons) in Fine Arts from La Salle-SIA College of the Arts in 2006. That same year, Lin won the UOB Painting of the Year competition, after clinching the Della Butcher overall award in 2005.

At *Nocturne IV*, Lin's paintings are priced in the \$2,500 to \$4,500 range. His paintings are actively collected by corporate and private collectors.

Lin is the third painter to come under the Marina Mandarin's artist-in-residence programme. The programme, launched in 2006, provides studio space for emerging Asian artists where they can work several days a week. The studio is situated on the fourth floor of the hotel. Rae Tang, marketing communications manager of the Marina Mandarin, said the programme shows the hotel's commitment to the value of creativity and art. She estimates that each six-month artist-in-residence season costs the hotel about \$21,000 in terms of rental foregone, opening cocktail reception and the cost of other publicity collaterals.

The sensitive Lin said that working in the studio, where visitors can peek through a viewing pane, took some getting used to and was at times "a bit distracting". But he felt the experience was a unique and helpful one, especially as the viewers – some tourists at the hotel – were from all over the world. "People from South Africa, the UK, America, Malaysia and Australia – they all showed a great interest," he added.