

## Sandbox

**Artist: Shi Zheng**

**Exhibition Duration: June 26th - July 24th, 2021**

AIKE is delighted to announce Shi Zheng's first solo exhibition at the gallery, "Sandbox", featuring a series of video works authenticated by NFT that the artist created in the past two years. This exhibition is the first art collection co-presented by AIKE and the NFT platform blank and will be shown simultaneously online at *blank.art* and offline in the gallery space from June 26th to July 24th, 2021.

The exhibition title, "Sandbox", refers to the programming language as computer security that provides a tightly controlled set of resources for guest programs to run in, thus often used to test unverified programs. The more commonly known Sandbox Games are associated with the concept of open-world, where, as its name would suggest, children can build whatever they want out of sand—players are given the freedom to act and create in the game world at will, realising their imagined prospects using the existing elements in the game software.

This exhibition embraces a similar attitude of modifiability, virtuality, non-linearity and decentralisation as sandboxes, further demonstrating the artist's ongoing interest in simulation and "machine vision". In a departure from his previous work, Shi directly uses the coded game as a carrier to nestle metaphors of the virtual world and creative space in the idea of the sandbox. Specifically, he appropriated the satellite imagery of particular locations that he chose on Google Earth and reconstructed the corresponding virtual scenes in *Cities: Skylines*.

A large grid matrix comprises 24 video works from the series "Hovering at the Convergence of Entrances and Exits" that takes up the gallery's central space. Each grid focuses on an architectural scene simulated by the artist, primarily overpasses and highways, indicating variant examples of a single type of industrial infrastructure. The video installation is shown as a monument and a giant surveillance station for the viewer's scrutiny. Vehicles serve as the only motion variable, forming an orderly organised sequence of moving horizons through the path predetermined by the artist. Removing the narrativity from work, the self-referential serial structure of "Sandbox" indulges the audience in voyaging in "latent time".

Unlike the photographic typologies led by Bernd & Hilla Becher in the 1960s, Shi aspires to new objectivity that goes beyond the Bechers' "Deadpan" with the help of the machine's eye. How the machine replaces the human eye to capture, track and measure the target; and how to translate the image in different media and achieve layers of "viewing" perspectives are all subjects that the artist constantly examines in the creative process. In this progressive logical sequence—objects, maps, games, simulations, screens, and then viewers—Shi reveals the "remote presence" of the architecture while at the same time completing the gradual abstraction of the viewed object.

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## About the Artist

Shi Zheng was born in 1990 in Jiangsu, China and now lives and works in Shanghai and New York. He graduated from China Academy of Art in 2014 and acquired MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2019. As a media artist, Shi's artistic creations range from audio-visual installations, digital music and live performance, demonstrating the artist's ongoing interest in simulation and "machine vision". Shi further embodies his reflection on the philosophy of technology, digital voyage and "latent time" by extending the audience's visual and audio experience.

Apart from individual creation, Shi Zheng also collaborates with other outstanding artists in various fields. In 2013, artistic ground RMBit was founded by Shi Zheng in conjunction with Nenghuo, Wang Zhipeng and Weng Wei with the focus on current context of social media. Both Shi and Nenghuo are the members of an audio-visual performance group OSC (Open Super Control).

Shi Zheng's individual and cooperated works have been presented in a wide range of museums, art institutions and media art festivals home and abroad, including TANK Shanghai, MOCA Yinchuan, Sound Art China, FILE Electronic Language International Festival, Ars Electronica, Institute of Contemporary Arts London, Castello di Rivara, The Lumen Prize, Shanghai 21st Century Minsheng Art Museum and OCT Contemporary Art Terminal Shenzhen.