

For Immediate Release

Zihao Zheng: *Nowhere Island*

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64A Bayard Street,

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LATITUDE Gallery is delighted to present "*Nowhere Island*", the inaugural solo exhibition by Beijing-based artist Zihao Zheng. This show is collaborated with Ader Wu Advisory.

The exhibition meditates on digital utopias and the ethereal landscapes of the mind. Zheng's art navigates the conceptual terrains of fictional, metaphorical places that have long captivated philosophical discourse, presenting them as mysterious and adventurous spaces, thus mirroring the allure of uncharted territories within virtual realms.

Growing up immersed in Generation Z culture, Zheng Zihao's fascination with simulation dressing, 3D world roaming, and multiplayer environment in video games informs his artistic vision. His classical painting education in Rome, Italy, under the influence of masters like Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Gerhard Richter, merges seamlessly with his contemporary insight, bridging the gap between traditional oil painting representation and the visual language of digital gaming.

The reimagining of "*Nowhere Island*" into "Now-Here-Is-Land" symbolizes a utopian realm, where religious myths and urban narratives transcendently intertwine. Zheng strategically diverges from airbrush techniques in favor of traditional oil painting methods, crafting imagery that merges the tactile with the visually digital to evoke screen-like imagery. The juxtaposition of the virtual with the tangible is accentuated through his use of flat surfaces, sharp edges, and collage. Echoing Jean Baudrillard's notion of "simulacra," Zheng projects imagined landscapes and characters that resonate with our desire and hope which have been altered by technology. His work "Evolution", a narrative that links apes, humans, and virtual beings in a speculative arc concerning the future of human evolution vis-à-vis digital immortality.

Zheng's inquiry extends to the contemporary psyche, addressing the disillusionment and the craving for escapism that pervades society. Through "*Nowhere Island*," Zheng invites us to question the diminishing and relocated subjectivity in our digital selves, challenging the significance of the NPC

(Non-Player Character) as a foil to human complexity and underscoring a perpetual reconstitution of meaning within his fantastical sceneries.

"Venus" and "Pink Sweetheart" articulate a yearning to transcend physical limitations, showcasing the transformative potential of digitalization. His reflections on historical painting traditions, as seen through the pixelation, invent a thematic intertextuality that connects epochs and ideologies. Inspired by Sandro Botticelli's "Pallas and the Centaur," Zheng's "Staff vs. Arrow" symbolizes the triumph of digital consciousness over traditional paradigms, heralding a new mythology written in the code of the digital era. This cyclical narrative of engagement with technology—encompassing desire, disillusionment, and renewal—underscores Zheng's thematic focus.

"Nowhere Island" invites viewers on Zheng's journey, prompting reflection on our digital lives. In today's millennial era, his canvases critically examine the intersections of reality, technology, and the march towards the future, offering a profound commentary on our evolving digital existence.

Zheng Zihao (b. 1992 Dalian) is a graduate of the Oil Painting Department at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, having earned a bachelor's degree in 2015. He lived and worked in Rome, Italy from 2015 to 2017, where he also studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma. He currently works and resides in Beijing. Recent solo exhibition includes *Blending Theory: Pop Montage Daily Miracle*, Mou Art, Beijing (2022) ; *Branch Task*, You Art, Beijing (2021) Art Fair presentation include NADA Miami, LATITUDE Gallery, Miami, USA (2023); Foundation by Artsy, LATITUDE Gallery, New York (2023); *Shine, Shine*, Guangzhou Contemporary Art Expo, Guangzhou (2022) ; Art021 Shanghai Art Fair, Shanghai (2021) Selected group exhibitions *Fractal Resonance*, Epoch Art Museum, Shanghai(2023) ; *SIMULATION*, Huzhou Art Museum, Huzhou, China(2023); *SWAB Barcelona*, Li Gallery, Barcelona, Spain(2023); *A Grand Memory*, Tang Contemporary Art Center, Shanghai (2022); *Lord World 2: Friends and Enemies Conference*, Yesong Gallery, Guangzhou (2022); *New Green*, You Art, Beijing (2022); *Luode World: Sailing*, Haihan Art Space, Shenzhen (2021); *Mobile Republic*, Hongmei Cultural and Creative Park, Shenyang (2021); *Jumping out of the Three Realms and Not in the Five Elements*, Chijin Art Museum, China (2021); Spring Festival Art Exhibition, Platform China Contemporary Art Institute, Beijing (2021); *Workbook: Anna is with you*, Yue Art Museum, Beijing (2021); *Ju Yuanqi*, Shizhuzhai Art Center, Beijing (2020); *A Glimpse of Origin: The Endless Summer*, Hive Contemporary Art Center, Beijing (2019); Qingjin Plan, Zhengguan Art Museum, Beijing (2018).

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