

Sifang Art Museum is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by American artist Sayre Gomez (b. 1982, Chicago, USA), featuring painting, sculptures, and video. This comprehensive presentation explores the major themes in his oeuvre and introduces several new trajectories, while also showcasing the breadth of his innovative practice. From epic technicolour vistas and dazzling natural phenomena to degraded advertising signs and street furniture, *Enterprise* explores the contemporary city as a tangled mesh of conflicting realities.

The location is Los Angeles, a place that is as beautiful as it is brutal. A mythical city of opulent landscapes and seductive sunsets, the home of Hollywood, glamorous people, fast cars, and immense wealth. The flip side is unending sprawl: a diffuse terrain in which the only real landmarks are strip malls, signage, and infrastructure. A city riddled with neglect and social inequity; this dichotomy lies at the heart of the exhibition. Borrowing its name from the painting *Enterprise 2* (2022), the titular work, with its barely discernible letters, replicates the logo of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, one of America's biggest national car hire companies. The dark tenor of the painting sits at odds with the corporate moniker which boasts its allegiance to one of the fundamental pillars of American style capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit; while also recognizing the central role of the automobile as an extension of Western individualism and identity.

Cars become a throughline within the exhibition. From status symbols, expressions of identity, and modes of transportation to makeshift shelters for the homeless, and essential lifelines in vast cities with scarce public transportation. *Roadrun(ing)* (2021), *Altima* (2022) and *Inferno* (2022) communicate different aspects of this theme, capturing an urban network of multi-layered concrete highways, pollution, congestion, circulatory flows, and a view of the world that is forever mediated by the automobile. The video work *Studio Visit* explores this in greater depth, which can be viewed from custom made MOMO racing seat sculptures made for the exhibition by Gomez's long time friend and artist, JPW3.

When viewing Sayre Gomez's large-scale paintings, such as *Milk, Bread, Soda, Cigarettes* (2022), *Altima* (2022) and *Sunrise over Sunset* (2020), it is important to remember that these are constructed realities. The paintings are based on photographs taken at various locations, and are subsequently stitched together to create new compositions. The resulting images are thus a conflation, at the same time both 'real' and imaginary. Gomez employs a wealth of techniques to translate these photographic montages into sleek, hyperrealistic paintings with immaculate surfaces: traditional fine art methods, industrial film and set-making processes, commercial sign making and digital technology. The inability to distinguish between actual and simulated spaces mimics the alienating effect of the contemporary urban experience, while the hybrid technical process reflects its constantly fluctuating, decentralised and endlessly negotiable atmosphere.

The exhibition also includes a new series of paintings featuring trompe l'oeil stickers on reflective black backgrounds. Executed in acrylic paint on automotive enamel, the works have glistening mirror-like surfaces that reference tinted windows: reflective and impenetrable. This idea of protection and safety is not just underscored by the stickers themselves, which immortalise the logos of private security companies, but also by a series of recent sculptures. The latter are based on the casings for electric gate mechanisms. These typically overlooked boxes control the barriers that draw the notional lines between public and private space. Building on the theme of security are the paintings entitled *8,760,000* (nos. 1-4, 2022), which introduces the helicopter as a new motif in Gomez's oeuvre. These reference the Los Angeles Police Department's airborne law enforcement program, a division that began with one helicopter in 1956 and is now the world's largest overhead surveillance unit. With a minimum of two helicopters in the sky for at least twenty hours per day, the cost to taxpayers is immense, the titles reflect an approximate annual figure for each aircraft.

The exhibition is organized by Sifang Art Museum. Special thanks to the artist, Xavier Hufkens, Nanjing Pukou Culture & Tourism Development Group, Jiangsu Sifang Cultural Group and all partners who have helped and supported this exhibition.

About Artist

Sayre Gomez

Sayre Gomez (b. Chicago, 1982) lives and works in Los Angeles. He holds an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; François Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin. Gomez's works are held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.; The Broad, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; mumok - Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; ICA, Miami; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Aïshti Foundation, Beirut; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Arsenal Contemporary, Montreal; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Oketa Collection, Tokyo; Maki Collection, Tokyo; Albright Knox collection, New York; and Rubell Museum, Miami.

Gomez has risen to prominence in recent years with his semi-fictionalised and photorealistic paintings known as X-scapes. Executed in a wide range of techniques, including trompe l'oeil, airbrushing, stencilling and those used to paint Hollywood sets, his work is inspired by the urban landscape of Los Angeles. Many of his paintings feature the housing, road signs, billboards and landmarks that form the backdrop to long car rides around the city. His paintings can simultaneously touch on the beauty of nature (vivid sunsets, sumptuous palms), the passage of time, urban decay and commercial nostalgia (signs, colours and lettering often evoke bygone days) and contemporary life (graffiti, cell phone masts). Gomez's works on canvas reflect his commitment to a new form of realism mediated by technology—a realism that embraces artifice. The artist takes digital snapshots while driving across the city of Los Angeles. His frames are blurred, captured imperfectly on a cell phone from inside a moving vehicle. Gomez synthesises his observations into hyperreal images that challenge our ability to differentiate between authenticity and simulation: a cityscape that feels true-to-life might just as easily be an artificial construction. In this way, he explores the increasingly tenuous link between our everyday surroundings and a digital culture that is relentlessly driven by enhanced and manipulated images. Gomez also explores these themes through other mediums, including sculpture, installation and video.