ALMINE RECH

'Alex Israel: Freeway'

Nov 11, 2021 — Feb 15, 2022 | Shanghai Fosun Foundation

Shanghai Fosun Foundation will present the first museum-scale exhibition in China of American artist Alex Israel from November 11, 2021, to February 15, 2022, with multiple series covering such mediums as video, painting, sculpture, interviews and installations, including the China debut of the famous series “Self-Portrait” and “Sky Backdrop.” The exhibition will present the uniquely Los Angeles artistic spectacle as seen through the highly region-specific elements of sunshine, waves and the sky, as well as the artist's unique perspective on mass media and popular culture through the lens of his multiple identities.

As part of the most globally influential generation of artists, Alex Israel is famed for abstracted neon gradient spray paintings, his iconic Self-Portraits, and for his bold use of new mediums and materials. His works are marked by fresh forms and beautiful palettes. They multiply across a range of mediums including painting, sculpture and video, much of which is fabricated within the Hollywood system, specifically on the Warner Brothers Studio backlot. Israel’s works are heavily imbued with markings of time and place, allowing viewers in Shanghai to take in the unique scenery and multicultural landscape of Southern California: a color-fade backdrop, the enchanting sky over Los Angeles, a brilliant California sunset, movie props, the sun-scorched beach, surfe culture, and its endless variety of waves.

Alex Israel was born in Los Angeles, the largest economic center of the Western US, and a key center for entertainment and culture, home to Hollywood. The city’s unique regional setting and urban culture have had a profound influence on Israel's work. His works often draw inspiration from 80s and 90s fashion, Hollywood films and media culture, using neon colors, waves, sunglasses, surfboards and other elements of the city’s culture to salute a bygone era, with a touch of satirical deconstruction.

- The “As It Lays” series, which he has been filming since 2011, is performance art for the Internet Age, examining the real life beneath the glamorous surface of celebrity worship through conversations with dozens of famous Los Angelenos from all walks of life.
- The first art film on Netflix: In 2017, he drew from his insights into pop culture and developments in Internet art to create his debut film, SPF-18, about young surfers. The cast features 90s stars Keanu Reeves, Pamela Anderson, and rising young star Noah Centineo. The first art film to be aired on Netflix employs representative elements to present California’s past (pop culture) and future (Internet culture).
- Creator of the Freeway Eyewear sunglasses brand, which he expanded into the important “Lens” artwork series.
- Artistic collaborations with such fashion brands as Louis Vuitton and Rimowa.

Alex Israel has many different identities. He is a famous contemporary artist working in painting, sculpture, installation and performance art, while also engaging in multifaceted explorations of art, branding, culture and business through his identities as film director, author, entrepreneur and fashion designer. The ideas that arise in the process of this exploration are then folded back into his creations, deeply analyzing the pop culture of the times, the evolution of mass media, and the way we see individual identity.