

Yifan Jiang:

Zero-sum game

15 April–21 May, 2022

I moved to New Mexico a few months back and began living by myself in the desert. I didn't know how to drive and was secluded in the vast landscape. A few days in, I realized I was trapped by space itself. The weather rarely changes, and the same goes for everything else. Each hour fuses with the next. Days are rendered indistinguishable from one another by a consistent sun. In a month, my tongue forgot how to speak and my senses began to drift with space and time. They became detached as time stretched, so much so that it began to go unnoticed. Sensorial experiences, reveries, and hallucinations began to appear across a string of associations.

In my backyard, I saw an insect curled up to drink a liquid that was coming out of its own wound. Mesmerized, I tried to picture the incident in reverse. In that image, the animal was expelling parts of itself to patch up its wound. Reminiscing about the city that sat far away on the horizon, I imagined the same thing was happening to our own civilization organism.

A zero-sum game describes a situation that involves two sides, where one side's advantage will always equate to the other's loss. The theory offers a satiating explanation for all instances of animosity but is too coarse to articulate the complexity of individual lives. However, it offers an alternative way to consider our present circumstances and future conditions of being. In virtual spaces, we will be able to move freely on the axis of time, events can be sliced up and reorganized, and actions can be undone and redone. Perhaps these old dichotomies aren't as finite as they used to be, and instead, we need to take seriously futures that are fundamentally divorced from our present epistemological reality.

Yifan Jiang (b. 1994, Tianjin, China) is a Chinese-Canadian artist based between New York and Roswell, New Mexico. She holds an MFA from Columbia University, New York, and a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver. Recent solo exhibitions include *Medium-Sized Dry goods*, Meliksetian | Briggs, Los Angeles (2021); *Names for airy nothings*, Meliksetian | Briggs, Los Angeles (2021). Recent group exhibitions include *The Jewish Museum*, New York (2021); *London International Animation Festival*, London (2020); *New York Public Art Fund*, New York (2020); *Mileksetian | Briggs*, Los Angeles (2020); *Media Art Festival*, University of Chicago, Chicago (2020). The artist has upcoming exhibitions at Roswell Museum, New Mexico, and Today Art Museum, Beijing.