

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY
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PRESS RELEASE



Amir Zaki *"Empty Vessel"*

May 19 to July 7, 2021

Virtual Online exhibition

Additional images are available upon request

Left : Amir Zaki "Concrete Vessel #55" 2019,
Archival Pigment Photograph, 60" x 75"
Edition of 2+2AP

Right : Amir Zaki "Broken Vessel #96" 2019,
Archival Pigment Photograph, 36" x 45"
Edition of 2+2AP

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our seventh exhibition by California artist Amir Zaki. Comprised of two bodies of work, collectively entitled, "Empty Vessel," the series features striking colorful photographs of both skateboard parks and broken ceramic vases. Together, these images open a discussion of the history and future of photography and duplicitous version of truth in the modern world. In his work, Zaki strives to disrupt common notions of authenticity, monumentality, and documentation through a hybridization of techniques. The two disparate series are connected through real and fictive space illuminating the truth between the everyday and the ideal. The gallery will mount virtual exhibitions until the next location of our physical space is announced in the fall of 2021.

Through a combination of unconventional vantage points, compositional isolation, and invisible yet significant digital alternations, Zaki depicts skate parks devoid of human presence. Titled "Concrete Vessel" the photographs are imbued with an atmosphere of abandonment. Created through excavation, these bowl-like structures are cut into the earth turning the landscape into a monumental biomorphic unnatural site. The skate parks are photographed during hours when they are closed; thus, they communicate absence as if they were relics of a lost society. Paired with these images of concrete structures are photographs of shards from ceramic vases. Titled "Broken Vessels" these photographs depict jagged fragments of everyday objects. They too communicate the notion of dereliction. A solitary broken fragment is transformed into an archeological remnant yet its newness ties it back to the present. It is through Zaki's compositional direction that links the images in these two series begins to unveil connections between them.

A selection of the "Concrete Vessels" photographs were installed as billboards in Bali, Indonesian in 2020. Titled "Flow Through Space," this site-specific project consisted of 20 photographs on 10 double sided billboards along the famous Canggu Shortcut Road in Canggu, Bali. You can see images of this project on our website.

A monograph titled "California Concrete" published by Merrell illustrates Zaki's images of skateboard parks and contains essays by Tony Hawks and Peter Zellner.

Amir Zaki lives and works in Southern California. He received his MFA from UCLA in 1999 and has been exhibiting nationally and internationally since graduating. His work is included in many museum collections including the Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Orange County Museum of Art, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.