

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY
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PRESS RELEASE



Amir Zaki “Recent Works 2018-2023”

January 6 to February 17, 2024

Gallery Hours: Wed to Sat 11:30-5:30PM and by appointment

Reception: January 6, 5-7PM

Left:

Amir Zaki

“Louise” 2023

Ultrachrome Archival Photograph, Edition of 2+2AP

60” x 48”

Additional images available by request

James Harris Gallery is pleased to announce our seventh exhibition of Los Angeles photographer Amir Zaki. This will be his first solo exhibition at our new gallery in Dallas. The show is comprised of two bodies of work. Our main exhibition space will focus on his most current series “Nothing to Say (2022)” images of signs and trees. “Empty Vessel (2018)” photographs of skateboard parks will be on display in our second gallery. Together, these images open a discussion of the history and future of not only photography, but also duplicitous version of truth in the modern world. Zaki strives to disrupt common notions of authenticity, monumentality, and documentation through a hybridization of digital techniques. Although all three subjects in Zaki’s photographs appear disparate, they are connected through real and fictive space illuminating the truth between the natural and the ideal; an underlying theme that has persisted throughout his twenty-five-year career.

Zaki has always been interested in the linguistics of photography, how image often becomes the definition of an object or subject. Now with the constant barrage of cellphone images, photographs desensitize us to the poetic and transformative element of its artistic medium. “Nothing to Say” consists of images of tree and signs located in the urban sprawl of Southern California. A solitary tree is isolated in a daytime sky reflecting the subtle shifts of time and weather. The signs also stand alone, but devoid of all text and symbols from their original content. Zaki has deliberately erased and stripped all language from the original content. Like the trees, they become markers in a landscape drained of human activity.

In our second room photographs from the series “Empty Vessel,” depict skateboard parks. These biomorphic structures, cut into the ground, for recreational use are presented empty of activity. Zaki purposely shot the images in the morning or at night when the parks were closed to emphasize the structures as containers. The images communicate absence as if they were abandoned monuments. The resulting photographs intensifies the duality of form and function, a continuing theme in the artist’s oeuvre.

Seen together, all three types images open a discussion of the history and future of not only photography, but also truth in the modern world. In a sense, they are truly America pictures because they disrupt common notions of authenticity and documentation. The current struggle to sift through information and cypher through images to uncover what is real and what is fake is a constant factor in our world today. Zaki’s images illuminate and evaluate contemporary American culture, reminding us that there still is poetry, humor and beauty in the natural and manmade.