

## DIANE ROSENSTEIN GALLERY

Amir Zaki: No Dust to Settle

April 4 - May 9, 2026

Diane Rosenstein is pleased to announce *No Dust to Settle*, a solo exhibition of new photographs by artist Amir Zaki (USA, b. 1974). Zaki will present fifteen black and white photographs from his recent body of work: an alternative archive of the postwar architectural history of modernist libraries in Southern California. This is Zaki's third solo exhibition with our gallery, and it inaugurates our new space in West Hollywood.

"The conceptual territory here connects closely to questions of literacy, public space, cultural memory, and the indexical nature of the photographic medium."

For the past twenty-seven years, Zaki has developed a photographic language which seeks to elevate the formal qualities of California's architecture and landscape. Here, he has photographed the interiors and exteriors of post-WWII public libraries in Orange County, including buildings by Richard Neutra and William Pereira, while again removing all legible text, a difficult technical and conceptual constraint when dealing with a space whose purpose is to house language. These libraries have shifted dramatically in meaning and function within the artist's lifetime, and the resulting images explore that evolution through reflection, architecture, and absence. 'Of all my projects,' he writes, 'this one is perhaps the most overtly tied to research, local history, and the shifting sociocultural narratives of Southern California, work that aligns closely with my longstanding investment in the Inland Empire and surrounding region.'

Many of the images in this series use reflections and visual obstructions in ways that echo the inventive strategies of Eugène Atget and the dry, often humorous self-portraits of Lee Friedlander. Yet, unlike Friedlander, Zaki's body never appears in the images, and unlike Atget, whose empty Paris was full of legible signage, he has removed nearly every trace of written language. The fifteen prints in this exhibition are selected from a larger body of work, *No Dust to Settle*, which is documented separately in a limited edition, 100-page artist book.

While editing the photographs, he across a beautiful and resonant passage by Ruth Ozeki from *The Book of Form and Emptiness*, which speaks directly to the cultural and symbolic status of books, and to libraries as living civic institutions:

"Within this social hierarchy of matter, we books lived on top. We were the ecclesiastical caste, the High Priests of the Made, and in the beginning you even worshipped us. As objects, books were sacred, and you built temples for us, and later, libraries in whose hushed and hallowed halls we resided as mirrors of your mind, keepers of your past, evidence of your boundless imaginations, and testimony to the infinitude of your dreams and desires. Why did you revere us so? Because you thought we had the power

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to save you from meaninglessness, from oblivion and even from death, and for a while, we books believed we could save you, too. Of course we did. We were flattered. We prided ourselves on being semi-living, breathed into life by the animating power of your words. We thought we were so special. What folly.”

Amir Zaki (USA, b. 1974) makes photographs of California landscapes and architecture, and he re-envision the world before him, creating a tension between the functional and the dysfunctional. “My own work has focused mainly on both the built and natural landscape of California. I am among a generation of photographers who truly embraced digital technology as a way to make photographs that could not be made using only traditional means.”

Born and raised in Beaumont, California, Zaki received his BA from UC Riverside (1996) and MFA from UCLA (1999). He has received solo exhibitions with Diane Rosenstein Gallery; and from the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, ACME, and Edward Cella Gallery, all in Los Angeles; de Boer in Antwerp; and James Harris Gallery in Dallas and Seattle. Amir Zaki’s photographs were included in *The New City: Sub/urbia in Recent Photography* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY (2006); *Golden Hour: California Photography from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art*, Vincent Price Art Museum (2022), *Something About A Tree* (curated by Linda Yablonsky), *Flag Art Foundation*, NY (2013); and the *2006 California Biennial*, Orange County Museum of Art, in Newport Beach, CA. His work is in the permanent collection of The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Orange County Museum of Art, and the Henry Art Gallery at University of Washington in Seattle; among others. He is a full professor of art at UC Riverside. Amir Zaki lives and works in Huntington Beach.

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