

**Amir Zaki: On Being Here**

June 4, 2022 – July 16, 2022

Opening Reception for the Artist: Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 8:00 pm

“Ultimately, I use digital technology as a means to an end. I am trying to make photographs that manifest the world I desire.”

Diane Rosenstein Gallery presents *On Being Here*, a solo exhibition of photographs by Egyptian-American artist Amir Zaki. Zaki will present twenty-five color photographs that depict piers off the coast of California. This is the artist’s first solo show with the gallery.

Amir Zaki’s photographs exist as a digitally rendered space that is neither ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ — yet the intense visual clarity dispels any allegations of neutrality. The color images in *On Being Here* were created on location at California’s many piers, often in the early morning hours.

The artist writes:

“What does it mean to be here? Too late. Already gone. Photographs are always of somewhere. Over *there*. Never *here*...

Come back here. Nearly always during the minutes that precede the dawn, I walk to the very end of a pier and photograph from that vantage point. I make sure the viewer of my work is left alone and undisturbed in the space. There are birds, though. There are always birds.

Where are you now? Why piers?

During a time when there has been a jonesing to get out and get away, but nowhere to safely go (and no people to safely see), traveling alone to these dozens of piers over the last eighteen months has felt necessary, if only as temporary relief. Ultimately, the only place to go is here. Always.

*Built in 1904. Damaged in 1935, 1983. 1992, 1994, 2014, 2016. Restored in 1939, 1985, 1996, 2018.*

These long titles intentionally omit specific locations, yet convey an ongoing history of persistence, impermanence, and instability, not a particular place on a map. They are both documents and not-documents. These places are part of something larger that is in flux.

## DIANE ROSENSTEIN GALLERY

They are part of a history that is still unfolding. They are not nouns. They are verbs. They are being.

These piers are cared for and rebuilt after recurring natural and human-made disasters. It's endearing. "Built in the year so and so, damaged in years so and so, renovated in years so and so, photographed in the year so and so." Who knows the future fate of these resilient structures? Right now, they are all standing strong and enduring relentless erosion.

Undoubtedly, the sun is rising, the moon is setting, the pier is swaying, the wood is rotting, the waves are pulsating. The camera is capturing light, the body is breathing, and the heart is pumping. Here." (2021-2022)

Events: The gallery will host an artist talk with Amir Zaki and Corrina Peipon and a book signing of *Building + Becoming* on Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. Please RSVP [info@dianeroseinstein.com](mailto:info@dianeroseinstein.com)

**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 from the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, ACME, and Edward Cella Gallery, all in Los Angeles; and James Harris Gallery in 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 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.

For press inquiries or more information about the artist and works in this exhibition, please contact [jjahao@dianeroseinstein.com](mailto:jjahao@dianeroseinstein.com).