

HAGEDORN
FOUNDATION GALLERY

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Vanagons at Dusk and Dawn, Dawn and Dusk, 2009 Ultrachrome Archival Photograph 58" x 96"

AMIR ZAKI
"Finished"

October 28 – November 30, 2010

Opening Reception Thursday, October 28, 5 – 8 PM

ATLANTA – Hagedorn Foundation Gallery is proud to announce the opening of Los Angelino photographer Amir Zaki's first exhibition in Atlanta, "*Finished*". Nine of the large color ultrachromes are from Zaki's recent exhibition in New York, reviewed in October's *Art in America*, where they were called "seamless and quite beautiful." These intensely hued, digitally altered pieces present a survey of Southern California lifeguard towers in a fresh approach to the new topography genre that Zaki has already explored in his "*Spring Through Winter*" series on Richard Neutra's cantilevered houses and on postwar vernacular architecture.

The suite of images examines the architecture of the beach towers with considerable mystery and ambiguity. Parts of the structures have been omitted and some have been otherwise modified. Skies have been altered. There is no grounding horizon line. Depending on the viewer's consciousness, and Zaki's fabrications, these sunny perches can be read as surveillance towers or birdhouses, even quirky portraits. The viewer is entranced and mystified. Zaki's point is to play with the idea of authenticity, as it is associated with photography as an indexical media, and thus the concept of veracity.

Zaki is himself a surfer and he adds two more high impact, uniquely conceived pieces to this West Coast exhibition: A "billboard" sized (4.5 x 8') diptych, "*Vanagons at Dusk and Dawn, Dawn and Dusk*," and a 4' octagonal altered photograph of the same two minivans that mimics the Buddhist sand paintings of its name, "*Mandala*". Both of these works deal with the essential boarding accessory: the cherry VW bus. In these pieces the vans, like the lifeguard towers, are manipulated and reduced to their platonic ideal. The shape and color of the vehicle in profile is all we get, no details, no handles, no headlights, no markings of time or place. Just the basics. So reduced from functionality are the cars, as to be a toy that sits facing its opposite toy-shaped object, one in the "day" light, one in the "moon" light, both in the same place at the same time. The work is magical. In the "*Mandala*," piece, the vans have achieved their namesake's definition. Spun and reconfigured, merging with each other, they become no subject, pure abstraction, a microcosm of the universe representing the surfer cosmos metaphysically and symbolically. The entire exhibition is a joy ride in which the viewer enters an arena with no spacio-temporal anchor and must find his or her position vis-a-vis this indeterminate world.

Zaki's work has been included in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the California Biennial: 2006 at Orange County Museum of Art, Andreas Grimm Gallery in Munich, Germany, Harris Lieberman Gallery in New York, Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago, the California Museum of Photography, and the San Jose Museum of Art. Zaki's work is part of numerous public and private collections across the country including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, Washington, the Orange County Museum of Art, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. He has been included in the Phaidon Press anthology of contemporary photography, Vitamin Ph, and contributed to LACMA's Words Without Pictures. Zaki recently completed his second monograph, a large format, limited edition fold-out book entitled Eleven Minus One, which was co-published by LAXART and Eighth Veil on the occasion of a solo exhibition at LAXART.

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