

ARCHITECTURE | 13 HOURS AGO | BY [LUKE HALLS](#)

Navigating California's concrete skateparks through the lens of Amir Zaki



‘There was concrete everywhere. There was so much terrain,’ describes Tony Hawk of Oasis, a skatepark in San Diego that the world-renowned skateboarder navigated during his youth. ‘That’s when everything clicked for me because I saw the potential and the possibilities.’

Hawk and American-Australian designer Peter Zellner preface a new photographic tome by American artist Amir Zaki, *California Concrete: A Landscape of Skateparks*. The book documents 12 of the state’s most symbolic skating hotspots from San Diego to Sacramento, which came to be adopted by the modern Californian skating community from the 1970s onwards.



Lake Cunningham Regional Skatepark, San Jose. *Photography: Amir Zaki*

Zaki’s raw, hyper-detailed photography is taken from the perspective of the skater, from decks to bowls, half- and quarter-pipes, encapsulating the sculptural fluidity and liberation presented by these free-flowing Brutalist terrains. Shots of the Linda Vista Skatepark in San Diego and Fillmore Skatepark capture the years of wear that the concrete has endured, highlighting the historic importance of these spaces to contemporary sport and culture.

Zaki, who grew up skating in the Californian city of Beaumont, shot each skatepark in the series at daybreak: a time when they were both deserted and flooded with crisp morning sunlight. ‘Each photograph in this series of skateparks is a composite,’ explains the photographer. ‘I use a high-end digital SLR camera mounted on a GigaPan motorised tripod head. This allows me to take anywhere between about a dozen to several dozen individual images of a scene and then stitch them together later in my studio using software.’



The resulting collection of images is an honest, unabashed and detailed homage to the sport: a stylisation that Zellner describes as laboriously, expertly composed. 'Zaki's digital facsimiles of facsimiles recognise and honour the powerful naturalisation and socialisation of these spaces, while revealing a hybrid artistic practice.'

In an age where skating has arguably lost touch with its counter-culture roots, Zaki's photographic exploration is a testimonial callback to its origins – a reminder of the importance of space to the nurturing of worldwide phenomena. ✨



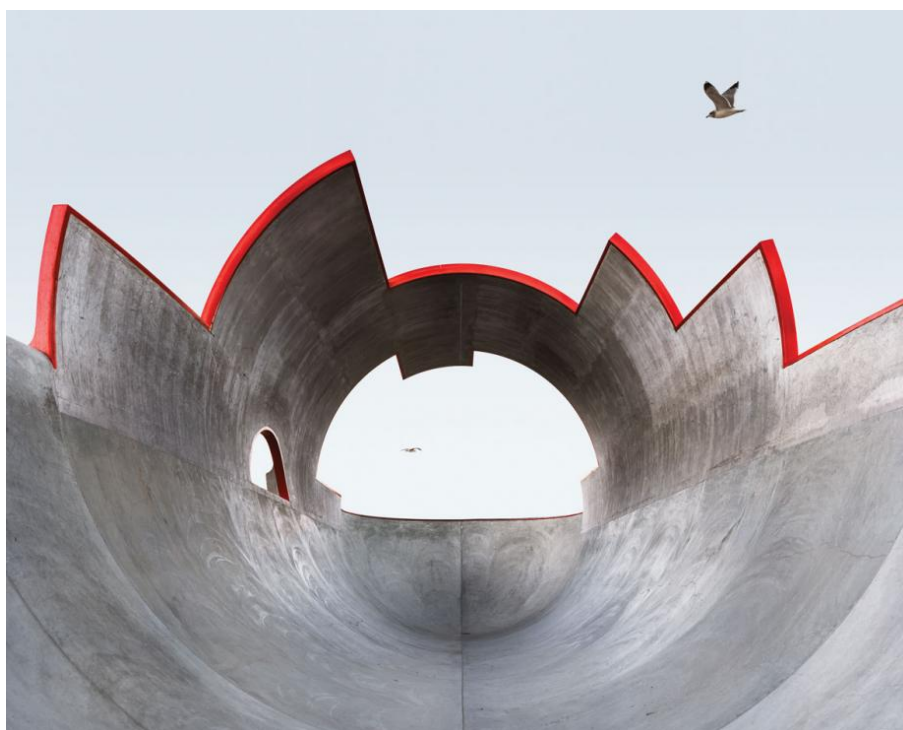
Linda Vista Skatepark, San Diego. *Photography: Amir Zaki*



Lake Cunningham Regional Skatepark, San Jose. *Photography: Amir Zaki*



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INFORMATION

California Concrete: A Landscape of Skateparks, by Amir Zaki, £35, published by [Merrell](#)

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