

Amir Zaki

By Wednesday, Jan 13 2010

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Los Angeles photographer Amir Zaki shoots lifeguard towers in his "Relics" series, only there are no lifeguards or swimmers in need of rescue anywhere to be seen. He frames each bright, monochromatic tower against the sky; you can't even see the water. They could just as well be standing sentinel in the desert. Often made of cast fiberglass, they're built to a purpose largely unknown out of SoCal. And the light--or is it Photoshop?--is just as unique, with that coastal clarity that seems to compress distances and soften contours. These humble lookout shacks become almost romantic in the sunset's glow. And nostalgia is at work, too, when Zaki frames a pair of old 1980s VW Vanagons in a diptych lit by sun and moon. Summer may be endless, but only in memory. (Also on view: small, colorful coral-shaped blobs by Ron Nagle, looking like they belong in your dentist's waiting-room aquarium.) BRIAN MILLER



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