

RESIDENT New York

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ON THE TOWN

NEW YORK RESIDENT GUIDE TO ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

AMIR ZAKI'S POWERFUL PHOTOS ADORN CHELSEA

In his first solo show in New York, artist Amir Zaki presents a suite of photographs of architecture in his native Southern California. In "Spring Through Winter," at the Perry Rubenstein Gallery (527 W. 23rd St. at Tenth Avenue, 212-627-8000, www.perryrubenstein.com) through April 23, Zaki constructs a view of suburban architecture as isolative and obsolete.

His work's composition incorporates the abstraction of architectural forms by using impossible angles and unconventional lighting. His subject for this series, a group of cantilevered homes designed by Richard Neutra, is particularly suited to this method.

Viewers see the houses from below, emerging from the horizon, seemingly on the brink of sliding

down a hill to crush whatever is in their path. Other photos show swimming pools in a state of disuse, taken from overhead. The depth of the shadows competes with the flatness of the bright, natural light in a ceaseless visual conflict.

Zaki has included a series of interior shots that show equally disconcerting views of solid, bricked-over fireplaces. There is no trace of a human being in any of these works; these homes are desolate. The viewer is left to engage in the structures entirely alone, increasing the sense of isolation.

The photos pack a lot of punch. Zaki is able to create a compelling and original body of work by employing the somewhat overused technique of photographing scenes from oblique views pioneered by Russian Constructivist Aleksandr



'Untitled (OH_04) X': Perspective by Zaki

Rodchenko (1891-1956). Rodchenko intended this technique to allow people fresh views of mundane things as a source of inspiration. Zaki's work encourages the same but to opposite effect, revealing an emptiness in the conventions of Modernism. —Jude Valentin ■