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Amir Zaki

Author: Martha Schwendener
04.07.05

03.08.05-04.23.05 Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York

Amir Zaki's photographs of Los Angeles domestic architecture could easily be mistaken for documents of an earthwork or performative intervention, circa 1975. But, though they mimic the kind of documentary photography through which most of us have come to know the works of artists like Robert Smithson, Walter De Maria, and Gordon Matta-Clark, Zaki's photos actually center on one of the most fetishized forms in the modernist lexicon: the Richard Neutra house—specifically, those that were “disowned” by the firm after being refitted in the '60s and '70s to weather earthquakes, mudslides, and other disasters. Photographed from impossible angles, Zaki transforms cantilevers into dangerous overhangs, structures that are both breathtaking and apocalyptic. Ironically, the images themselves borrow heavily from the modern photographic vocabulary in their use of aerial points of view and extreme angles. Graphic and abstract, with meaning hovering at the edge of the frame, they read like metonyms for Los Angeles itself.

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