



BARAK ZEMER

Transit

January 20 – March 3, 2018

Night Gallery is pleased to present *Transit*, a solo exhibition by Barak Zemer. The exhibition will be his first with the gallery, and will be on view from January 20th through March 3rd, 2017. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, January 20th.

As its title suggests, *Transit* brings to mind the vast systems that facilitate the movement of people and goods across borders, states, and oceans. We are reminded of the prehistoric nature of passage, a building block of civilization, and of the era when humans followed flocks, migrating with the seasons. Contemporary use has the concept wrapped up in elaborate bus and train lines, crowded airplanes, the solitude of a car commute along congested sprawling highways. For Zemer, transit includes the subjective individual experience of being shuttled around seemingly interchangeable architectures—into and through offices, zoos, hospital rooms. Always in movement, yet always waiting. Passage is not without toll.

Taken from roughly 2014 through 2016 on a handheld camera, Zemer takes images of the world around him with minimal interference and a convincing objectivity. This exhibition shows a dystopian panorama, broken up by space and time. Each photograph reveals a corner of a maze, each one a small moment in a segmented landscape of blunt realism. The frame stays tight, nearly claustrophobic. The looming density of the world outside the lens pushes its way into the frame; rich black shapes compress the view. A feeling of entrapment dominates. The movement implied by the term transit takes an ironic turn, as these scenes depict an absolute stillness; there is no blur, no suggestion of motion. The movement is that of a slow entanglement, of internal processing: children become adults, creativity becomes struggle, animals become meat, love becomes servitude.

Like a set of Russian dolls, everything here nests inside of something, then something else again, framed and reframed. An apple suspended in an upside-down glass sits on the dashboard of a car in highway traffic. A model plane on a tripod is stanchioned off in an airport at the gate. We see hands and body parts; faces appear only in fragment: the jaw of a woman in a parking lot, her face twice obscured by car doors; the nose and mouth of a man in flight down the row in coach, the rest of his face and body in dark shadow. Only a dog makes eye contact, but the dog is harnessed, leashed, tagged, and locked in its owner's arms. There is no home here, no domestic space, nor does Zemer own the things he photographs. The framework for this exhibition is not morality per se, but the weight of knowledge and red tape that constitutes the mundane interconnectedness of life. This is a search for freedom in places and things owned by others, in the grip of time and bureaucracy.

Barak Zemer (b. 1979, Jerusalem, Israel) received his M.F.A from USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2013, and his B.F.A. at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. He has shown in venues such as in Altman Siegel (San Francisco, CA); CEPA Gallery (Buffalo, NY); The International Photography Festival (Tel Aviv, Israel); Ballroom Marfa (Marfa, TX); Fusedspace (San Francisco, CA); Joan Gallery (Los Angeles, CA); ltd los angeles (Los Angeles, CA); and the Haifa Museum of Art (Haifa, Israel). Zemer's work has been written about in numerous publications including LA Weekly, The Los Angeles Review of Books, Contemporary Art Los Angeles (Carla), and The New&Bad Magazine. Zemer is currently a senior lecturer at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles and at the University of California, Riverside. He lives and works in Los Angeles.