

Ptolemy

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Amiko Li

near

October 17–November 9, 2025

Opening Reception: October 17, 2025, 6:00–8:00 PM

Glendale, NY, 10/17/25: I initially got to know Amiko in Chicago when he was showing some photographs at a small gallery where my wife, Jen, was working. I was immediately drawn to his photos, whose arresting qualities seemed equally derived from the familiarity of the scenes and subjects and the apparent technical and compositional quality of the prints and images. It turned out that we were also attending the same school, and a friendship was born between the three of us that I'm glad has persisted to this day.

In the twelve years that have passed since then, Amiko has gone on to establish a practice that has often remained grounded in photographs and lens-based images, but the work has grown to include performance, writing, animation, and installation. He has described the throughline of this growing body of work as an interest in photographs' capacity for storytelling, which is enhanced by close listening (I am paraphrasing).

The images in *near*, which were made over the past five years, were selected by the artist due to the closeness with which they recall the particular moments that they depict. Rejecting the urge to utilize the photograph as a vehicle for spectacle, Amiko instead engages with the challenge of photographing something "as it is." In his words:

"They felt equally close to the actual experience despite the thin surface of representation. I can feel how near I am to the location, even to the self depicted or behind the camera, if I choose, yet equally distant at the same time."

All eight of the photographs in *near* depict light shining through glass: expressive sunrays shine through windows; a snake coils within an enclosure; workers remain in their well-lit offices all night; Kai gazes through the lenses of his glasses. It is work that is about looking, discovering details, remembering; sometimes trying to remember. Sometimes the gaze mismatches its nearby context or drifts in an unexpected direction.

Amiko described the final installation of the work as resembling stars in the sky. I like this comparison. Each photograph is its own self-contained universe. We can view them individually from afar and observe the ways that they relate to one another, as well as our own worlds and experiences. Together, they form a constellation.

Pat Reynolds

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Amiko Li (b. 1993, Shanghai) is an interdisciplinary artist who translates everyday stories and encounters into film, installation, and photography, to explore and contextualize the underlying complexities and themes, such as intimacy, waiting, and value. Li's recent Exhibition and performance include Center for Art, Research, and Alliance, New York; The Shed, New York; Asia Art Archive, New York; Ulster Museum, Ireland; Haus der Elektronischen Künste, Switzerland; UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, China; Power Station of Art, China. Li's work has been supported through fellowships and residencies at Delfina Foundation, London; Triangle Arts Association, New York; and Künstlerhaus Dortmund, Germany.