

If you only have 15 minutes ...

With smart phones, we all have become photographers in one way or another. Look at your recent photos. What do you take pictures of? Make a list of the subjects you've shot—e.g., your cat, your friend and you, something funny you saw on the way to school. Notice what all these photos have in common: they look like something you saw. In other words, they show a bit of the world as it is, presenting a level of *verisimilitude*.¹

But there are other ways to think about photography. Some photographers don't try to take photos of things as they look in their functional roles. Amir Zaki, for example, takes pictures of skateparks. But they're not what you might expect. Rather than showing daredevil skateboarders in the parks, his photos “transform everyday landscape objects [in this case skateboard parks] into carefully observed, often austere, graphic compositions.”

Consider this photograph:

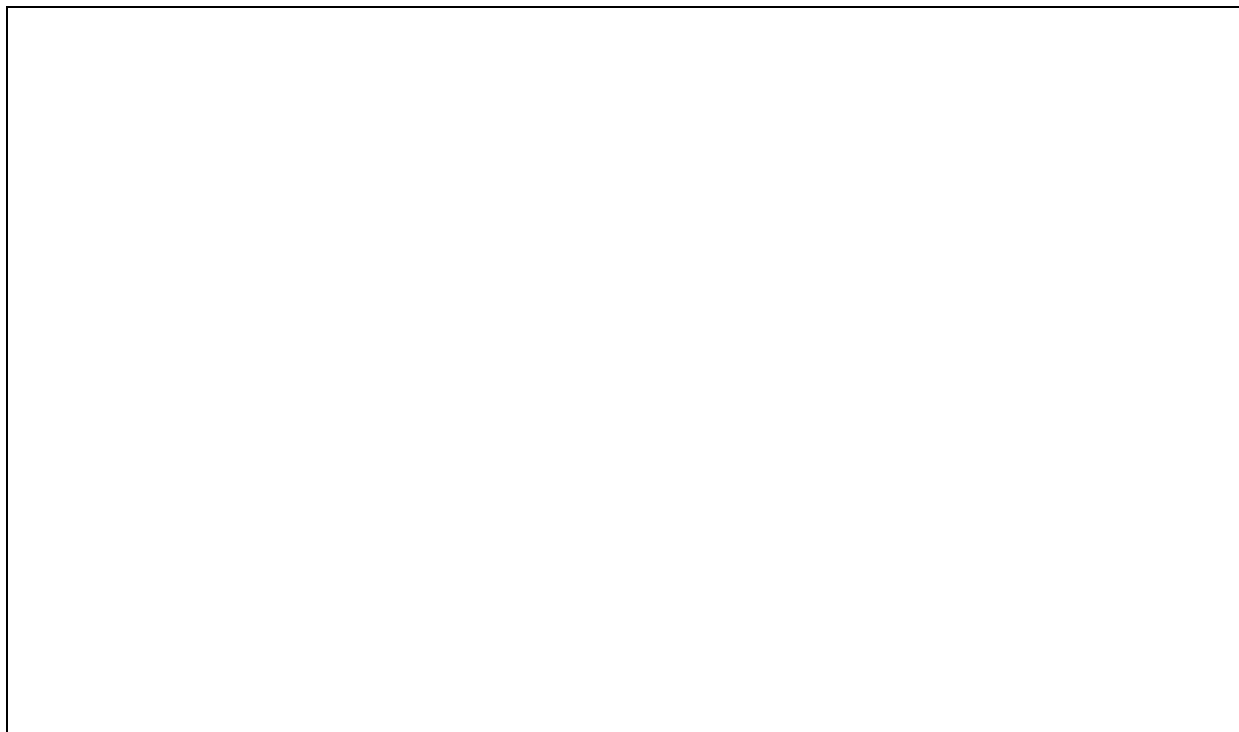


Write a description of it. In your description, be sure to include the colors, shapes and

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[Skate Parks in the Abstract Analyzing the Alternative World of Abstract Photography](#)

textures you see. Go online and find one of the more typical photos of a skateboarder in a skatepark. Write a paragraph that compares the two photographs. Which do you like better? Why?²



Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

1. Reflect on the meaning of the term *verisimilitude*: the appearance of being true or real. Ex: “Most movies aim for verisimilitude, so that characters seem real to us, and we care about them.”

2. Sample answer: This photo: A grayish blue, mountain-like shape against a lighter blue-and-white backdrop. Below the mountain-like shape, a horizontal line, composed of many little squares of colors, cuts across the frame, and a tiny box-like shape sits at the right end of the line. Below the horizontal line is more of the grayish blue, in a rectangular-like shape that is interrupted by another shape that looks like a cut-out where a tube might fit.

Compare with action photo: Description of the abstract photo can compare shapes and colors to shapes and colors that exist in real life, but a viewer can't say for sure what the image is. Action photo seems more familiar to a viewer, who can recognize a person in the middle of action, like skateboarding.