

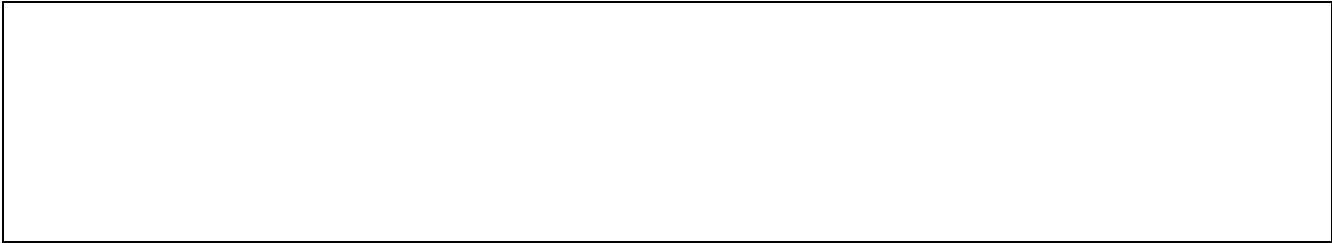
If you only have 30 minutes ...

Focus on a few key points articulated by Amir Zaki and Tyler Stallings in the video [Empty Vessel](#). Watch the video. Then read the three ideas (below). Watch the video again, paying particular attention to these three ideas. If you are working with other students, answer the questions in a discussion. If you are working alone, write your answers.



1. Stallings notes that in his photography, Zaki makes what's familiar seem unfamiliar. He says Zaki's photos of skate parks can make them seem like they're big sculptures, or some weird utopian community. When you look at Zaki's photographs, how do you think he has been able to make something familiar into something unfamiliar?¹

2. Zaki's exhibition, *Concrete Vessels, Empty Vessels*, juxtaposes photos of empty skateparks with photos of broken ceramics. Why does Zaki include these two different types of images? What connection does he see between them?²



3. In the video, Zaki notes that sometimes a bird happens to fly into the area he is photographing. In the article “Amir Zaki’s Sculpture of Skateparks,” he says that he adds birds into the photos if they don’t happen to enter the scene. In *Empty Vessel*, he explains that traditional photography encourages artists to “settle” for an image of the world as it is. He prefers to use modern technology to create images that “manifest the world I desire.” Do you agree with Zaki about using photography to create something better than the world as it is? Why or why not?³



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.

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1. Possible answers may vary. Some photos show only a portion of a skate park rather than the whole thing. The photos do not include anyone skateboarding, so the scenes become “unfamiliar” because they are not being shown in use.
 2. Answers may describe Zaki’s process of identifying skate parks as “empty vessels,” and how he then broke empty vessels to explore them more deeply. Juxtaposing them in the exhibit invites viewers to think about the skate parks as abstractions, and as they are related to smaller-scale vessels.
 3. Some will agree that photography need not be limited to representing objective reality. Others

may think that adding in the birds is inappropriately altering “real life,” and photography should focus on representing reality.