



Backyard Oasis: The Swimming Pool in Southern California Photography, 1945-1982

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Southern California's pool culture is the subject of this unique and luscious collection of photographs that explore the parallel evolution of an iconic symbol and an artistic genre. Since the end of World War II, Southern California's backyard pools—those blue-green oases in an otherwise often arid landscape—have symbolized any number of American ideals: optimism, wealth, consumerism, escape, physical beauty, and the triumph of man over nature. Simultaneously, the field of photography developed as a transformative method for recording the human condition. This exhibition catalog celebrates the nexus of these two phenomena in a one-of-a-kind collection that features more than two hundred works by more than forty postwar artists and photographers. It presents works by photographers and artists including Bill Anderson, John Baldessari, Ruth Bernhard, David Hockney, Herb Ritts, Ed Ruscha, Julius Shulman, and Larry Sultan. Thematically grouped into topics ranging from the rise of celebrity culture, suburbia and dystopia, avant-garde architectural landscape design, and the cult of the body, these images offer a rich study of the cultural connotations of the swimming pool. Six insightful essays provide a comprehensive overview of the development of the swimming pool and its attendant aesthetic and social culture.

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