



NOTE TO MEDIA: IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

## **Palm Springs Art Museum to Offer Photography Exhibition Depicting Southern California Swimming Pool Photography**

*Exhibition features compelling images from range of important photographers including Slim Aarons, David Hockney, Herb Ritts, Edward Ruscha, and Julius Shulman*

### ***Backyard Oasis: The Swimming Pool in Southern California Photography, 1945-1982*** January 21-May 27, 2012



Michael Childers, *The Hockney Swimmer*, 1978, C-print, © Michael Childers



Leland Y. Lee, *Silvertop – Hollywood Dawn*, 1972, modern print from original Ektachrome transparency, Courtesy of the artist and Michael H. Lord Gallery © Leland Y. Lee

November 29, 2011 (Palm Springs, CA) - The Palm Springs Art Museum is participating in the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945-1982 regional initiative with Backyard Oasis, an examination of swimming pools in photographs from 1945 to 1982 as representations of the ideals and expectations associated with Southern California. The exhibition will contain approximately 140 framed works of archival photography and significant exhibition prints along with selected ephemera and film clips presented through DVDs on flat-screen monitors. Organized by Senior Curator Daniell Cornell, Backyard Oasis will trace the development of art and cultural history within the following thematic groups: California Architecture and Design, Hollywood and Celebrity Culture, Suburban Life, Bodies of Desire, and Conceptual Interventions.

Images of individual water-based environs in the arid landscape are an integral part of Southern California's identity, a microcosm of the hopes and disillusion of the country's post-World War II ethos. As a private setting, the backyard pool became a stage for everything from sub-culture rituals to clandestine desires. As a medium, photography became the primary vehicle for embodying the polar emotions of consumer optimism and Cold War fears.

Crossing the boundaries of popular and high culture, commercial merchandising, journalistic reporting, and vernacular memorabilia, photography conveyed the developing ideologies of the period. Its visual language formed a network of topics that opened onto each other, offering a rich study of physical and cultural geography. For the first time, this exhibition, its catalogue, and

accompanying programs trace the integrated histories of photography and the iconography of the swimming pool, bringing new light to aspects of this complex interaction.

Topics explored by the exhibition's five-member team include:

- ***Exposed Desires: Poolside Reflections on Celebrity***  
Daniell Cornell, Senior Curator and Deputy Director for Art, Palm Springs Art Museum
- ***Dystopia and the Swimming Pool***  
Dick Hebdige, Professor of Art, University of California, Santa Barbara
- ***From Beefcake to Skatecake: Subcultures and Masculinity***  
Tyler Stallings, Director, Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside
- ***Designing Nature: The Pool in the Garden***  
Robert Stearns, Independent Curator and Project Coordinator, Palm Springs
- ***Swimming Alone: The Backyard Pool in Cold War California***  
Jennifer Watts, Curator of Photographs, Huntington Library, San Marino

**Photographers and artists whose works are included in the exhibition:**

Slim Aarons	Jim French	Julius Shulman
Peter Alexander	Anthony Friedkin	Larry Silver
Bill Anderson	David Hockney	Evans Slater
Diane Arbus	Christopher James	Craig Stecyk
Loretta Ayeroff	Harold Jones	Larry Sultan
John Baldessari	Sant Khalsa	George Tate
Lewis Baltz	Leland Lee	Edmund Teske
Bruce Bellas	Bob Mizer	Garry Winogrand
Bruno Bernard	Kenda North	Max Yavno
Ruth Bernhard	Jane O'Neal	Lloyd Ziff
Debra Bloomfield	Bill Owens	
Michael Childers	Maynard Parker	
Eileen Cowin	Rondal Partridge	
Robert Cumming	Herb Ritts	
Joe Deal	Mel Roberts	
Roy Dean	Ed Ruscha	
John Divola	Lawrence Schiller	

**Exhibition Catalogue**

The exhibition's accompanying publication will contain an introductory essay providing an overview of the development of the swimming pool and its attendant aesthetic and social culture. Authored by the exhibition's organizing curator and its contributing research team members, the catalogue's five chapters are: *Exposed Desires: Poolside Reflections on Celebrity*, Daniell Cornell, Senior Curator and Deputy Director for Art, Palm Springs Art Museum; *Swimming Alone: The Backyard Pool in Cold War California*, Jennifer Watts, Curator of Photographs, Huntington Library, San Marino; *Designing Nature: The Pool in the Garden*, Robert Stearns, Independent Curator and Project Coordinator, Palm Springs; *From Beefcake to Skatecake: Subcultures and Masculinity*, Tyler Stallings, Director, Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside; *Dystopia and the Swimming Pool*, Dick Hebdige, Professor of Art, University of California, Santa Barbara.

The catalogue extends the exhibition's content with additional images drawn from print and other media. It contains approximately 250 pages and includes more than 200 images in color and black and white. It is co-published by DelMonico Book-Prestel with a print run of 10,000. To order a review copy of the catalog, contact Samantha Waller of Prestel Publishing at 212-995-2720, ext. 25.

*Backyard Oasis: The Swimming Pool in Southern California Photography, 1945-1982* is organized by the Palm Springs Art Museum. The exhibition and catalogue are funded through a lead grant from The Getty Foundation, with additional support provided by David Knaus, the James Irvine Foundation, the Architecture and Design Council, the Photography Collection Council, and Yvonne and Steve Maloney.

#### **About the Palm Springs Art Museum**

The Palm Springs Art Museum's main facility is located in downtown Palm Springs in a 150,000 square foot architecturally-significant building and features compelling exhibitions and a robust permanent collection of modern, contemporary, Western and Native American, Mesoamerican and glass art in 28 spacious galleries and in its two outdoor sculpture gardens. The museum will open a new facility in Palm Desert in Spring, 2012 and an architecture and design center in Palm Springs in Spring, 2103. For more information, call 760-322.4800 or visit [www.psmuseum.org](http://www.psmuseum.org).

#### **Pacific Standard Time**

Pacific Standard Time is a joint initiative of the Getty Foundation and the Getty Research Institute that aims to document the history of art in Southern California in the post World War II decades, and to bring it to a wider audience. The project is an unprecedented collaboration of more 60 cultural institutions across Southern California that are presenting thematically linked exhibitions and programs, all designed to celebrate the region's vibrant post WWII art scene. Previewed by a film festival and two symposia in late 2010 and early 2011, *Pacific Standard Time* exhibitions and events will open in October 2011 and continue for six months.

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**PACIFIC STANDARD TIME:**  
ART IN L.A. 1945-1980

An initiative of the Getty with arts institutions across Southern California.

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