

A Smithsonian Series
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Sunset Park

Photographs by Thomas Roma

Thomas Roma's work describes unprepossessing places and people beautifully, in the manner of Walker Evans and Lee Friedlander. With a heightened sense of light, atmosphere, and place, he photographs the everyday scenes of his Brooklyn neighborhood—dogs, fences, front yards, passengers on elevated trains. "They're simply the things I've known about all my life," says Roma, who approaches his subjects without a trace of condescension or irony.

In *Sunset Park*, Roma brings together a selection of pictures of Brooklyn teenagers at a huge community swimming pool, his subtle, sensual images expressing the edgy lassitude of adolescent summers. Part of a series begun in 1991, the compositions give texture to the details of hot afternoons at the pool, from wet towels and waterstained cement to shadowlike bodies superimposed against the water's glare. Although each racial and ethnic group has staked out a separate section of the pool, Roma crosses the territorial lines with apparent ease, emphasizing in his work the minor human dramas being played out at the water's edge.



Thomas Roma received a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1982 and again in 1991. Exhibited widely, his work is represented in such collections as the Museum of Modern Art, New York City and the Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal.

Photography

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