



The Springboard in the Pond: An Intimate History of the Swimming Pool (Graham Foundation / MIT Press Series in Contemporary Architectural Discourse)

Thomas A. P. van van Leeuwen

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Although others have written eloquently on the relationship of water to built form, until now no one has investigated the swimming pool as a quintessentially modern and American space, reflecting America's infatuation with hygiene, skin, and recreation. In *The Springboard in the Pond*, Thomas van Leeuwen looks at a familiar hole--the domestic swimming pool--and discovers an icon indispensable to the reading of twentieth-century modernism. At one level, the book is a rereading of modern architecture that will leave that story permanently altered. At another level, it is the story of the origin and evolution of the private swimming pool as a building type and cultural artifact. And at still another level, it is a material philosophy of water. Van Leeuwen explores the human relationship to water from a variety of viewpoints: social, religious, artistic, sexual, psychological, technical, and above all architectural. Throughout the book, he weaves a series of analogies to three emblematic animals--frog, swan, and penguin--that represent the three prevailing human attitudes toward water: hydrophilia, hydrophobia, and ambivalence. The book's many illustrations--drawings, plans, and photographs--come from an unusual variety of sources, creating what is surely the most provocative visual archive of the swimming pool ever assembled. This book is the second in a planned tetralogy by the author, with each volume centered on the relationship of architecture to one of the four classical elements: sky, water, fire, and earth. The first volume was *The Skyward Trend of Thought: The Metaphysics of the American Skyscraper* (MIT Press, 1988). The third volume, *Columns of Fire: Architecture and Destruction*, is currently in preparation.

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