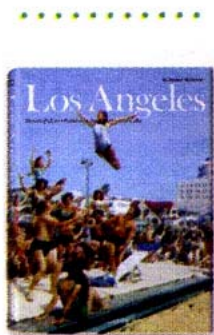




A CITY IN CONSTANT MOTION



Jim Heimann
& Kevin Starr
*Los Angeles:
Portrait of a City*
(Taschen)

Taschen America executive editor Jim Heimann spoke to FYA about his new book, a visual history of Los Angeles.

What is it about L.A. as a place and idea that inspires you? Los Angeles has always seemed to offer endless possibilities, whether it be art, architecture, food, ethnic enclaves, cars, and on and on. It's all about working the town and discovering its hidden parts. The visual aspect of L.A. is also endless. I have always said that L.A. is a tough nut to crack, and you really have to work it to extract the best it has to offer. Unlike New York, it is not just outside your door.

How has your idea of L.A. changed over the years? Change is the basis of L.A. It is the one force that is fulfilling as well as frustrating. Fulfilling in that the constant movement creates a vibrancy that makes you want to continually seek out all that is new. Frustrating in that familiar places and things can evaporate at any moment, and all you are left with is a memory. Some great buildings, icons of Los Angeles, have disappeared, and the density of the city is converting it from horizontal to vertical.

What are some of your favorite memories of seeing art in L.A.? I keenly remember the Bauhaus show in 1970 at the Pasadena Art Museum. It was the first time I had seen that particular movement expressed in one place. *Los Four* at LACMA in 1974 was an eye-opener. This showcase of Chicano art, with so many aspects of Los Angeles expressed by these four local artists, really made an impression. I also enjoyed the Barnsdall Park shows in the eighties and have followed David Hockney's continual presence at L.A. Louver. Nicholas Wilder and James Corcoran's gallery shows were always special. Billy Shire's "La Luz" shows on Melrose Avenue were habitually high-octane inspiration, predating the *Juxtapoz* movement.

What is your favorite L.A. book (besides this one!)? Kevin Starr's series on California is a wonder, so I would have one say any one of them is a favorite. That said, I can read Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* over and over again.