



David Hockney: Paper Pools (1980)

The artwork you provided is a commentary on David Hockney's innovative print series, Paper Pools. This series represents one of the most unique and joyful experiments of Hockney's career.

Key Facts & Context:

- Subject: Swimming pools, a subject Hockney had been obsessed with since his first visit to Los Angeles in the early 1960s.
- Timeframe: The series was created during six intense weeks, beginning in the summer of 1978. The resulting works were documented in a book published in 1980.
- Location/Collaboration: Created at Tyler Graphics Ltd., near Mount Kisco, New York, with master printer Kenneth Tyler.
- Output: Hockney produced 29 separate images, ranging from single sheets to massive multi-panel works, such as "A Large Diver," which stretched over 14 feet wide.

Technical Innovation:

The series was made possible by Hockney's discovery of a new colored paper pulp technique.

- The Process: Instead of printing *on* paper, the artist created images *within* the paper itself by pouring and manipulating pigmented pulp into molds.

- Tools: Hockney used turkey basters to squirt the colored pulp into cookie-cutter molds to form the shapes of diving boards, pool steps, and rippling water.
- Effect: This method embedded the color directly into the paper's fibers. This created an intensity and luminosity ideal for capturing water's transparent, constantly moving nature, which had always been the ultimate challenge for him. The medium itself possessed a liquid quality that was perfect for depicting water's surface, depth, and the play of light and shadow.

Significance:

- The series showcases Hockney's fundamental excitement for new mediums, as each new technique forced him to see his subject differently and to be bold.
- The Paper Pools marked an important turning point in his career. It was the first time he'd committed to a new medium for an intense, focused burst of creativity, a pattern he would repeat later with his photo collages and iPad drawings.
- Though pools symbolized California leisure and privilege, through the handmade, craft-like quality of the paper pulp medium, Hockney transformed them into essential studies in light, form, and the human pleasure of being in water.

