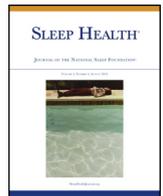




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# Sleep Health

Journal of the National Sleep Foundation

journal homepage: [sleephealthjournal.org](http://sleephealthjournal.org)

Cover Art

## Sleep and splash



Cover art by David Hockney. "Yves-Marie Asleep, May 1974" from "Twenty Photographic Pictures by David Hockney" 1976. Chromogenic print. Edition of 80. 10 ½ x 8" © David Hockney. Credit for the journal cover image and the image above: David Hockney, Inc.

David Hockney does not have lifeguards at his swimming pools. Instead, he fills them with beauty and intimacy. In *Yves-Marie Asleep*, Hockney's former lover, Yves-Marie Hervé, dozes on the edge of the placid green-blue water with his hands and feet comfortably crossed. Why photograph a sleeping subject? For many, sleep only occurs under certain conditions: the right temperature; comfortable surroundings; and, most importantly, a relaxed state of mind. Hervé asleep in this photograph represents both external and internal peace. His body position feels natural, and his presence next to the pool suggests the soothing effects of outside physical space. His undisturbed facial expression shows that the lens does not disturb his slumber, suggesting a stable interior relationship between Hervé and the artist.

Although Hervé rests in a peaceful position, the composition of the photograph suggests the focus is just as much on the figure as it is on the serene water beside him. Pool water spans three-quarters of the photograph, capturing the complex interplay of light and

shadow on a reflective surface. Light bounces off the bottom of the pool, whereas a darker shadow adds depth to the water. The vertical gradient of colors from dark to light seamlessly flows down the print, adding to the visual harmony of the photograph. Neatly laid tiles that border the pool juxtapose the organic ripples in the water. The pool appears as if it consists of a layer of liquid glass, ready for someone to twirl their toe.

Hockney is one of the most celebrated living artists. Although he is English, his most recognizable work features scenes from California, specifically life in Los Angeles in the 1960s. His paintings capture the essence of Palm Springs leisure: pale pink walls, skinny palm trees, and midcentury chairs. Pools became a signature feature in many of Hockney's works. In one of his well-known paintings, *A Bigger Splash* (1967), Hockney breaks the flat landscape of a Palm Springs backyard by adding a splash in the pool. He uses small strokes to emulate how droplets of water move when someone hops into the pool.<sup>1</sup> To paint the splash, he referenced a photograph. Originally, Hockney considered photographs tools for capturing instantaneous moments, which could then be expressed through painting.<sup>2</sup> However, in the early 1970s, he began to take photography more seriously as his interest in the medium grew.

In 1972, Hockney moved to Europe and painted *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*. Like for *A Bigger Splash*, he also modeled this painting after several photographs of pools.<sup>3</sup> *Portrait of an Artist* represents a pool that has evolved significantly. The bright painting, filled with vivid blues and reds, depicts a scene in southern France. The pool in *Portrait of an Artist* is not a flat surface but contains texture and light, which makes the canvas feel as if it were wet. The painting does not shy from revealing intimacy; the relationship of the 2 figures within the frame suggests a complex and unknowable connection. An openly gay artist, Hockney drew inspiration from his relationship with Peter Schlesinger, an American art student, when Hockney painted the work.<sup>4</sup> Widely appreciated, the painting sold for \$90.3 million in 2018, setting an auction record for a living artist.<sup>5</sup>

Around 2 years after creating *Portrait of an Artist*, Hockney took the photograph *Yves-Marie Asleep*, which contains numerous visual similarities to the painting. *Yves-Marie Asleep* was taken as a study of color, perspective, and pools. The water looks almost identical in both works in terms of shadow and light. Bright sunshine suggests a sunny and lazy day in the French countryside. Hockney took the photograph vertically; the angle of the camera distinguishes the elevated sides of the pool and the relatively flat water, which appears to seep past the edges of the photograph. The photograph shows the same pool in southern France as the one in *Portrait of an Artist* but with a different lover. In January of 1974, Hockney wrote to a friend that he had met Hervé, a French art student, in Paris.<sup>6</sup> Like in his

previous relationship with Schlesinger, Hockney played the part of teacher, and Hervé was the pupil and muse. Hockney enlisted Hervé on many trips, eager to show him around museums and exhibitions. During this period, Hervé posed for many of Hockney's drawings and photographs.<sup>7</sup>

The simplicity in *Yves-Marie Asleep* contrasts the complexity in *Portrait of an Artist*. Although the 2 works both depict lovers, Hockney's relationship with Hervé feels gentle and easy, largely because Hervé is asleep. In the photograph, Hockney acts as a voyeur, observing his lover and capturing a photograph that celebrates their relationship as well as the beauty of the landscape. The photograph describes the intimacy of their relationship and suggests its stability. Sleep in this photograph acts as a display of mutual trust and understanding between 2 lovers.

After *Yves-Marie Asleep*, Hockney continued to pursue photography. In 1976, Hockney published a portfolio titled "Twenty Photographic Pictures," and it originally sold for \$300 or \$400 each, which he considered too high.<sup>8</sup> But, after the experience, he expanded his photographic work into collages, producing a developed body of work decades later. Although Hockney is recognized for his paintings, photographs, like *Yves-Marie Asleep*, shed valuable insight into his creative process and demonstrate his ability to express powerful emotions through landscapes.

#### Disclosures

The authors have declared that they have nothing to disclose.

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