

The Swimmer

Curated by Jonathan Rider

The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY

Exhibition dates: June 6-August 9, 2024 (Opening June 6, 6-8 PM)

The FLAG Art Foundation is pleased to present *The Swimmer*, an expansive group exhibition inspired by John Cheever's 1964 short story of the same name. Artists include **Henni Alftan, Harold Ancart, Leonard Baby, Conrad Bakker, Burt Barr, Dike Blair, Martin Boyce, Katherine Bradford, Vija Celmins, Zoe Crosher, Nancy Diamond, Elmgreen & Dragset, Tony Feher, Elizabeth Glaessner, Robert Gober, Wayne Gonzales, Jim Hodges, Reggie Burrows Hodges, Roni Horn, Ludovic Nkoth, Amy Park, Jack Pierson, Alessandro Raho, Calida Rawles, Ed Ruscha, Melanie Schiff, Cindy Sherman, Cynthia Talmadge, Deanna Templeton, Paul Thek, and Stephen Truax.**

Published in *The New Yorker* in the wake of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Cheever's *The Swimmer* is emblematic of mid-century America's changing perception of its own relationship to class, idealism, and failure, evergreen issues as relevant today as sixty years ago. Cheever's protagonist, Neddy Merrill—who "might have been compared to a summer's day"—embarks on the novel adventure to swim home by way of his affluent neighbors' swimming pools. What begins as a carefree, gimlet-eyed midsummer Sunday devolves into something altogether different and nefarious. Neddy's life and his grip on reality disappear, pool by pool, the closer he comes to finishing his journey and returning home...whether that's the same day or perhaps many years later.

FLAG's exhibition similarly confuses time and unfolds through a series of disappearances in bodies of water—in pools, lakes, and oceans—through serial works that concern loss and losing oneself. Navigating themes inherent in *The Swimmer* and Cheever's broader oeuvre, including alcoholism, grandiosity, loss of innocence, selective memory, privilege, sexuality, etc., the exhibition trains an eye to the crumbling of an American dream, set against the glittering backdrop of a string of swimming pools.

About:

Jonathan Rider is an artist, writer, and director of The FLAG Art Foundation, where he has worked since 2014. Rider has organized solo presentations by artists Tarek Atoui, Ashley Bickerton, Cynthia Daignault, Nicole Eisenman, Elmgreen & Dragset, Sam Gilliam, among others, and thematic group exhibitions, including *Friends & Lovers* (2024), *In Search of the Miraculous* (2022), and *I will wear you in my heart of heart* (2021), *Dime-Store Alchemy* (2018), and *The Times* (2017). His writing has appeared in *Art in America*.

The FLAG Art Foundation is a nonprofit exhibition space that encourages the appreciation of contemporary art among diverse audiences. Founded in 2008 by art patron and philanthropist Glenn Fuhrman, FLAG presents rotating exhibitions that include artworks borrowed from a variety of sources. FLAG invites a broad range of creative individuals to curate thematic group shows and works in-depth with artists to provide curatorial support and a platform to realize solo exhibitions. FLAG fosters dialogue around contemporary art by producing artist talks, artist-led workshops, and exhibition tours for school and museum groups. Based in Manhattan's Chelsea art district, FLAG and all of its related programs are free and open to the public. FLAG also facilitates loans of contemporary artworks to museums and galleries and maintains an extensive database of artworks available to curators.

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FLAG would like to acknowledge the participating artists, artist estates, galleries, and private lenders for their generous loans of artworks to this exhibition.

#TheSwimmer