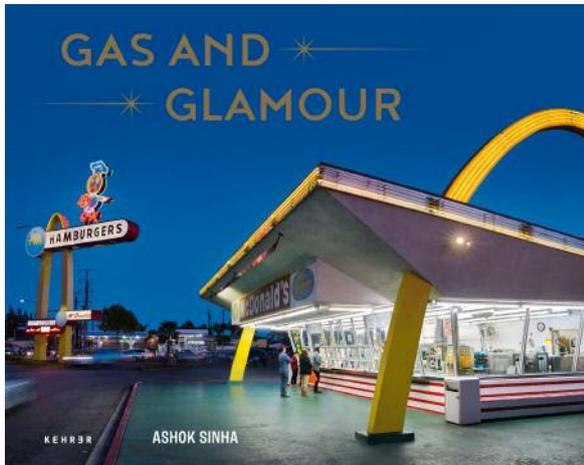


NEW RELEASE



Ashok Sinha
Gas and Glamour
 Roadside Architecture in Los Angeles

Texts by Jack Esterson, Craig Kellogg, Sherri Littlefield, Ashok Sinha

Designed by Kehrer Design (July Mollik)

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Car culture and architectural advertising in Los Angeles during America's golden age of the automobile

Gas and Glamour is a tribute to America's golden age of the automobile, a time when cars themselves were objects of beauty and the act of driving was celebrated. Those cars are no longer on the streets today, but the celebratory roadside vernacular architecture from that era remains.

As an architectural photographer, Ashok Sinha wanted to connect with that lost design history and capture LA's car-culture-induced optimism and ambition reflected in polychromatic, star-spangled coffee shops, gas stations, car washes, and other structures that once lured the gaze of passing motorists.

I will never forget, driving, driving, in my father's 1964 metallic turquoise Ford Mustang. It was the model's first year and everywhere we went we caused a sensation. Especially when we pulled into our local hamburger joint, a glowing box of pink and green Lucite, and got the 40-cent combo meal. Fond memories of a time of innocence that never really existed, so stirred up for me by Ashok Sinha's transcendent and alluring photography of the fast disappearing hot spots of Los Angeles. Conjured up during the Eisenhower and Kennedy years and filtered through the seduction of space-age optimism, this wonderful roadside architecture reflected a faith in the future, and now, through Sinha's affectionate work, we look back to a future imagined—of jet travel, unlimited expansion, and, most importantly, mobility for all. Without that mobility, in the capital of car culture, this architecture couldn't have existed, this eye-catching imagery, the orbs and starbursts and boomerangs and swoops in imitation neon colors, beckoning, "come in, come buy me," before you sped by too fast. (...)

Sinha's book is not to be confused as another coffee-table ornament, but is a document to be treasured—not as nostalgia, no—but as an archival reminder, after his subjects are gone, of how we saw ourselves in the American empire—fast, orbiting into a future with no end, and then we remember.

– Jack Esterson, Architect

There is a timeless beauty that can be found in the City of Angels. Los Angeles preserves traces of a time when the American dream thrived. Home-cooked meals, job security, a strong middle class, and vacations taken with the family automobile. The speed of travel brought about a new kind of roadside architecture that made the quick identification of a pop image, or brand, imperative. As Americans increasingly began to see the world through the windshield of their cars, buildings had to be recognizable to passing drivers and architects began to push the boundaries. There was a new sense of optimism in the design of car washes and gas stations, futuristic glass-clad façades of coffee shops such as Norms and Pann's, a sense of gathering in the Bowlum and Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakery as well as an injection of humor in the architecture of The Donut Hole and Fleetwood Center. – Sherri Littlefield, Curator

Ashok Sinha is an architectural and fine art photographer whose large-scale photographs capture a sense of place tied to both natural landscapes and built environments. His photographs have been published by editorial outlets such as The New York Times, Architectural Digest, Interior Design, and exhibited at The Museum of the City of New York, the International Center of Photography, and The Royal Photographic Society.

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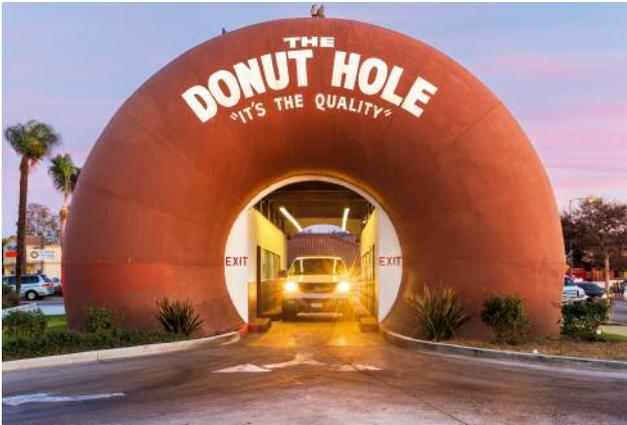
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