



Forcing Nature: Tree in Los Angeles

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When most people think of Los Angeles, a sprawling city steeped in diversity and multi-culturalism, trees are rarely the first things to spring to mind. But the city landscape is virtually defined by its trees--all 150 officially approved varieties. Although Angelinos take pride in their trees, they also can take them for granted. Not so for George Haas. If passers-by notice a Date Palm through the corner of their eyes, Haas is more apt to focus on it and redefine the world by shifting attention from the activity of human beings to the activity of trees. Not merely content to capture images through his lens, however, Haas as artist and philosopher bends, stretches, and blurs reality into what we perceive it to be, transforming the raw data of the world into his personal point of view. In the 80 images throughout this book, Haas has forced Nature to do his bidding. Still, Haas's trees are portraits of Los Angeles in all its complexity and quiriness, and his views of individual trees reveal much about their surroundings and the humans with whom they share their habitat. For Haas, L.A.--like the entire world--is a Garden of Eden, replete with bountiful flora and fauna and, of course, danger. Living in an environment molded by and for humans, each tree precariously presides in a fearful symmetry among the highways, telephone poles, and nondescript buildings. *Forcing Nature* is a testament to Haas as a photographer, but also as an architect, visionary, prankster, ecologist, and, in his method of reproduction, something of an alchemist. The reader will surely come away looking at the familiar and not merely seeing it. George Haas studied film, photography, and sculpture at Columbia College and The Art Institute of Chicago before moving to New York. His photographs have appeared in numerous exhibitions, including The School of Art Institute of Chicago, The Bergman Gallery, The Soho Photo Gallery and Club 57. His photographic and written work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Seventeen*, *Detour*, *NME*, and *Spy Magazine*. His stage work has been performed in New York, Boston and Chicago, including *No Entiendes* and *Doris and Inez Speak the Truth*. He wrote and directed the feature film *Friends and Lovers*, starring Robert Downey, Jr., Stephen Baldwin and Claudia Schiffer, distributed by Lion's Gate Films. Photographs from this series have been added to the permanent collection of American Photographers at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C and to The Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Mr. Haas currently lives in the Historic Filipinotown district of Los Angeles.

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