

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Slate

Where the Rich, Famous, and Beautiful Go for a Swim

Jordan G. Teicher



Fireworks, 2013. Copyright Jean Pigozzi / Courtesy Gagosian Gallery

If you've been invited to a pool party at Johnny Pigozzi's house, Villa Dorane, during the Cannes Film Festival, it means you're doing pretty well in life. That's because Pigozzi, a businessman, art collector, and photographer, likes to fill his guest lists with the rich, the famous, and the beautiful.

For decades, gatherings at his family's Cap d'Antibes home in the south of France—which his father, Simca founder Henri Pigozzi, built in 1953—have welcomed a who's who of actors, artists, musicians, politicians, and other elites. The proof is in the thousands of photos Pigozzi has taken over the years of his well-to-do friends relaxed and happy in the summer sun. Some of the images are now leaving his vast personal archive and seeing the light of day in an exhibition at New York's Gagosian Gallery until May 28 and a book, *Pool Party*, published by Rizzoli.

"I have taken tens of thousands of photographs over the last 50 years. I decided to put the photographs in the book where the subject was interesting and the picture was amusing," Johnny Pigozzi said.

Pigozzi has been making photos since he was a child. Dyslexia made his handwriting incomprehensible, so he turned to image-making to record his life. He doesn't think of his candid, carefree photos as works of art, but rather as a sort of visual diary—he appears in many whose entries sometimes merit a sustained look. The same unassuming attitude applies to his parties, which he is careful to keep relatively modest and, most of all, fun.

"I am not interested in stiff and pretentious parties," he said.