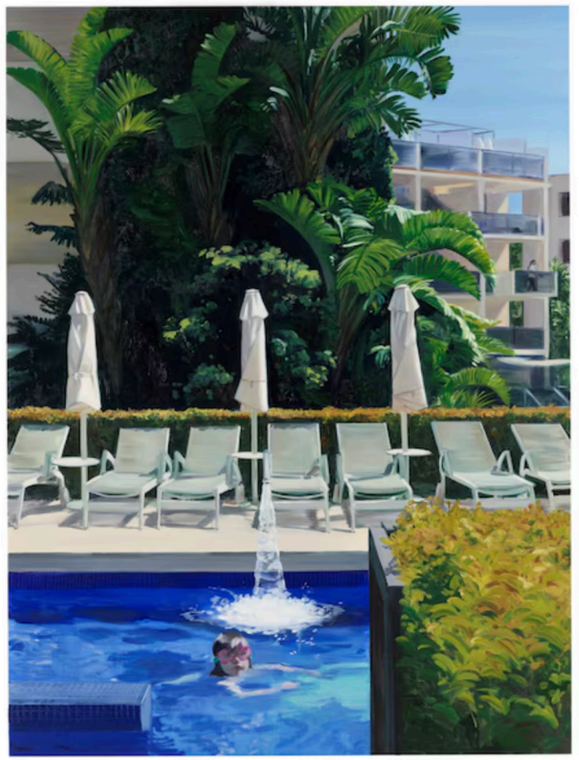
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Artist Caroline Walker on Swimming Practise



Swimming Practise, 2026
© Caroline Walker. Courtesy the artist; GRIMM, Amsterdam/New York/ London; and Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh. Photo: Isla Macer Law

As the new group show, For One Solid Time, Wet: The Swimming Pool in the Imagination opens at Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle, artist Caroline Walker looks at her painting Swimming Practise, one of the exhibition's evocative works

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Text Jemima Skala

"This is my daughter Daphne swimming in the pool at an all-inclusive holiday we went on to Mallorca. I've always been interested in those holiday resorts because they're like a little world in miniature. I never got to go on holidays like that when I was a kid; my parents weren't interested in going abroad. They were a fantasy space for me, and now I can actually go to one of these as an adult and take my children. I used swimming pools periodically in my work throughout the years. I see them as a staged symbol of luxury and of a certain quality of life that seems aspirational and distant. In my earlier work, I thought of that as symbolising something potentially threatening or sinister in the narratives that I was creating, whereas it becomes something different for me in this painting. It's much more this symbol of leisure and joy. It's a symbol of my children's childhood. But in the background, there's a figure on one of the balconies. There were several housekeeping staff working very visibly during the day at the resort, so I wanted to try and capture that as well."



Study for Fishing, 2017
© Caroline Walker. Courtesy of the artist; GRIMM, Amsterdam/New York/ London; and Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh. Photography by Peter Mallet

Caroline Walker is a Scottish figurative painter; she will have three paintings in a new exhibition opening this autumn, For One Solid Time, Wet: The Swimming Pool in the Imagination at Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle in Switzerland. One is Swimming Practise (lead image), a new work that "ties into a lot" of Walker's work concerning women at work. The painting is sunsoaked in a tangible nostalgia reminiscent of Charlotte Wells' film Aftersun; the juxtaposition between the young girl's big pink goggles, the row of empty sunloungers and the distant figure of a cleaner on a balcony suggests fingers clasped around a time that is already slipping away. From nail bars to nurseries, Caroline's paintings portray women in moments of labour, making the invisible not only visible but beautiful. Her family has started to feature more in her work over the last seven or so years "with a series of paintings I made of my mum doing housework and cooking and laundry in our family home." When Caroline's daughter Daphne was born, that opened up a world of women's work surrounding women becoming new mothers and those supporting early years of childhood.



Study for Canyon, 2018
© Caroline Walker. Courtesy of the artist; GRIMM, Amsterdam/New York/ London; and Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh. Photography by Peter Mallet

"My children started to become part of that," she explains, "partly out of necessity, because I was being given access to subjects because of them, whether that was women working in the nursery or the health visitor." In Swimming Practise, though a joyful scene celebrating her daughter's holiday, the painting is aware of leisure being "quite visibly facilitated by all these people. There was an omnipresence of people working there, which heightens your awareness of the fact that your leisure is being facilitated by somebody else."

For One Solid Time, Wet: The Swimming Pool in the Imagination is on at Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle until 21 February 2027