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A Bigger Splash – David Hockney (1967; Tate)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hockney-a-bigger-splash-t03254>





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- What kind of place is this? **A swimming pool.**
- Do you think this place is where we are, the UK? Why not? **The palm trees make it look like it's somewhere more exotic – and the fact that it is an outdoors pool.**
- Are there any people in the painting? If so, where? **There must be someone in the water because we can see a splash.** Are they still there? **Yes – splashes do not last long so if the splash is there then the person is too.**
- How did they get into the pool? **Probably from the diving board.**
- Can we hear anything? **Paintings do not make noise... but that is one of the great things about looking at them. We have to imagine the sound in our heads.** So, after “three,” make the noise and action of a big splash.
- What is the weather like? How do we know? **It must be sunny and hot. Even though we cannot see the sun we can see that the sky is clear and blue, there are palm trees and there is a shadow under the chair. And of course most people who swim outside do it on a hot day!**
- Hold up your pretend paintbrushes and show everyone how you think the artist painted the splash. Was it fast or slow? Messy or neat? **Every artist paints in a different way. This one thought it would be funny to take a lot of time painting the splash – more time than it took him to paint the rest of the painting in fact – because a splash only lasts a few seconds in real life.**

Follow on ideas

- Recreate this painting as a collage, using different pieces of coloured paper. What shapes will you need?
- Paint your own version of the painting but changing the weather. How would it be different on a stormy day? A snowy day? A foggy day?
- Have a discussion with your friends or family about what you would have chosen to paint if you were this artist? Would you paint the swimmer before they jumped in? During the dive? As they splash into the water? After they came out? Or something completely different?
- Imagine you were the person who had dived into the water. When you come out describe how it felt to dive in to this pool. Were you scared beforehand or confident? Was the water cold or warm? Would you want to do it again?
- Life in Lockdown discussion: Lots of people are missing activities such as swimming at the moment. What activity do you miss most?



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Topic Links

- Colours
- Shapes
- Science: Water/Forces/Movement
- Geography: Weather/USA
- Art and Design: David Hockney/Pop Art