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Swinging City: A Cultural Geography of London 1950-1974 (Re-materialising Cultural Geography)

Simon Rycroft

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This book works with two contrasting imaginings of 1960s London: the one of the excess and comic vacuousness of Swinging London, the other of the radical and experimental cultural politics generated by the city's counterculture. The connections between these two scenes are mapped looking firstly at the spectacular events that shaped post-war London, then at the modernist physical and social reconstruction of the city alongside artistic experiments such as Pop and Op Art. Making extensive use of London's underground press the book then explores the replacement of this seemingly materialistic image with the counterculture of underground London from the mid-1960s. Swinging City develops the argument that these disparate threads cohere around a shared cosmology associated with a new understanding of nature which differently positioned humanity and technology. The book tracks a moment in the historical geography of London during which the city asserts itself as a post-imperial global city. Swinging London it argues, emerged as the product of this recapitalisation, by absorbing avant-garde developments from the provinces and a range of transnational, mainly transatlantic, influences.

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