



#### SPECIFICATIONS

Photographer: David Maisel

Subject: Urban sprawl, Los Angeles

#### One Picture

**Accentuate the Negative** There's a hot controversy brewing about whether America's cities and counties should be held accountable for greenhouse-gas emissions caused by poorly planned suburban sprawl. California's attorney general has sued rapidly growing San Bernardino County, the nation's largest in total land area, for failing to account for carbon and other pollutants in a 25-year growth plan called the "Inland Empire." In Massachusetts developers face an environmental review of their projects' contributions to global warming. Several other states, including New York and Washington, also have laws that combat climate change. And as *USA Today's* John Ritter reported, if the California lawsuit succeeds, communities there and elsewhere could be forced to limit sprawl, promote compact development, require builders to design energy-efficient houses, and encourage more mass transit.

Sprawl in the Los Angeles megalopolis is the subject of the 15 large plates in *Oblivion* (Nazraeli Press), a slender book by noted San Francisco Bay-area photographer David Maisel. His aerial images, printed in negative form, present a disquieting and almost unrecognizable view of an alien landscape he calls "Shadowlands." Maisel writes, "This amorphous skein of strip malls and gated developments, highway entrance and exit ramps, lays unfurled over the landscape like a sheet over a cadaver. Surely the earth is dead beneath the sheer weight and breadth of this built form." And he asks, "For those making their homes in the urban galaxy of Los Angeles—an entity with neither limit nor center—does any space remain that can serve as a psychological refuge or sanctuary?"—*Les Line*