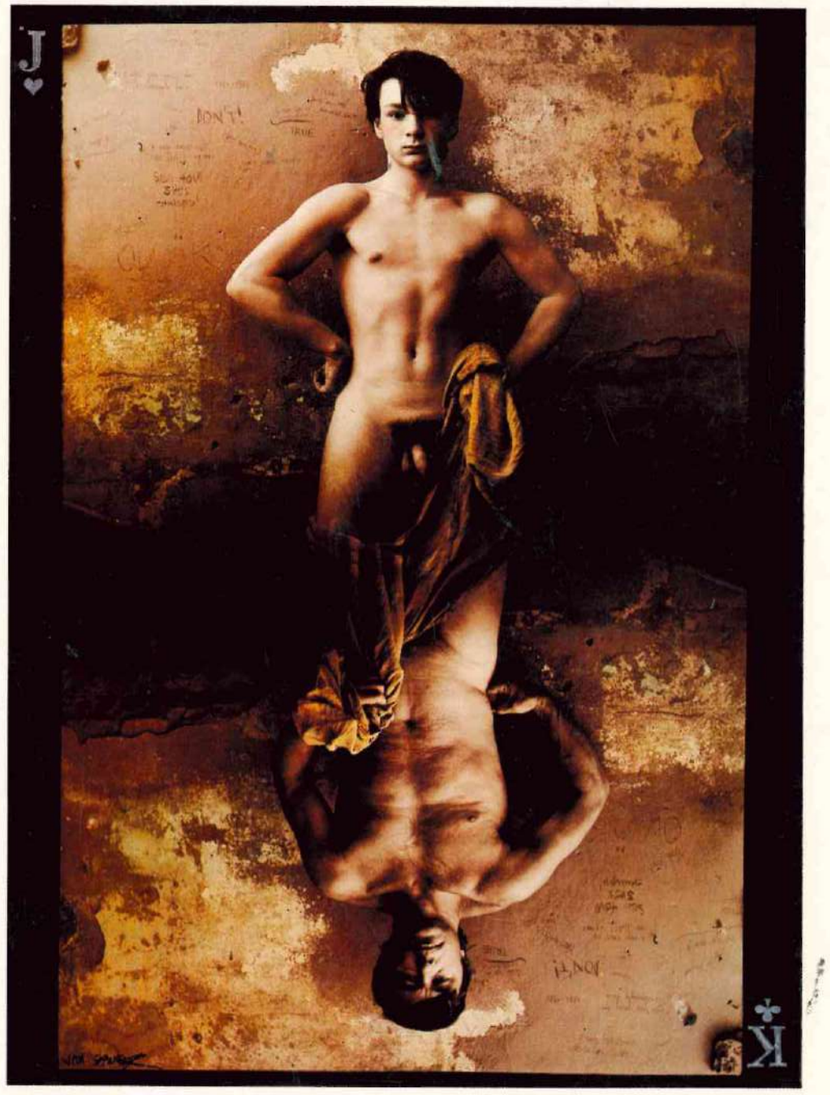
# BEHOLD·THE·MAN

## THE MALE NUDE IN PHOTOGRAPHY




**Alasdair Foster**
With an essay by Roberta McGrath

*Behold the Man: The Male Nude in Photography*
7th May – 22nd June 1988

**Stills**

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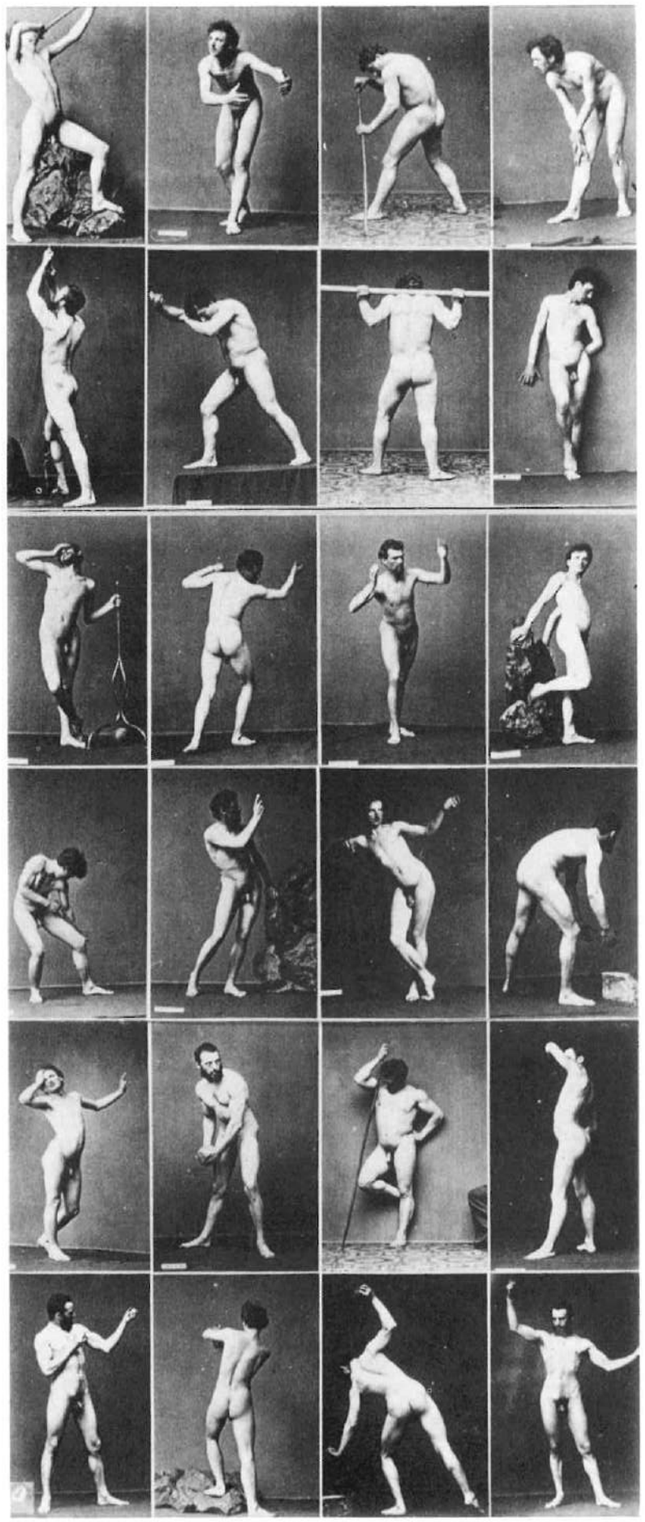

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Published by Calavas
*Studies for artists, c1900*
Collection Jo Brunenberg, Weert



# INTRODUCTION

*Behold The Man* takes as its subject the photographic male nude, and it contains an extraordinary array of images ranging from the first decades of photography to the present day. It thus presents an unusual opportunity to both examine the representation of a particularly significant subject over a period of almost 150 years, and at the same time to examine the complex nature of the medium of photography itself.

In addressing this task, *Behold The Man* takes two basic assumptions as read: firstly, that an understanding of photography requires an exploration of the medium's multifaceted role in society; secondly, that an understanding of the male nude in photography necessitates a perception of our society as a patriarchal system. Within these assumptions, there remain possibilities for a wide range of interpretations. This project's aim is to lay out, in a public and possibly more comprehensive way than ever before, the territory of the male nude in photography, and thereby to extend discussion and debate.

Our breadth of approach has not just been dictated by choice but by necessity. For, reflecting the nature of the medium that has carried it, male nude imagery has been widely spread, manifesting itself at one time or another in most of the major areas of photographic production — science, reportage, advertising, art. In so doing, it has transported and multiplied both calculated and unconscious meanings, lending the unique power and persuasiveness of photography to the ideas and conceptions of various groups and interests in Western society.

To begin to explore these disseminated meanings, it seemed important not to assume too narrow a definition of what constitutes 'the nude'. Neither literal nakedness nor the Nude of fine art terminology has been used as a criterion for inclusion. To have concentrated on the Art genre would have removed the wider cultural context which alone can help us make real sense of the photographic male nude — including much of the work of contemporary artist-photographers. And, as much and sometimes more than those of complete nakedness, images of partial exposure have played an important role in constructing, reinforcing — and sometimes challenging — dominant notions of masculinity and indeed other social values . . . eroticism, identity, imperialism, beauty.

Likewise, it was felt that any attempt to mount a purely chronological account of the photographic male nude would obscure certain continuities and remove the potential for contrast and comparison, both across lengths of time and across various modes of production. Thus *Behold The Man* is divided into sections, each of which deals with a particular theme and, to a greater or lesser extent, draws on imagery from various periods and sources.

In Western culture of course, the male body is not simply a subject on a par with any other. It has a special status which inevitably connects it both to issues of morality and to issues of power. Over the past century or so — and especially since print technology made photography a true medium of mass production and therefore of mass consumption — the photographic male nude can even be seen as a kind of measure of social *mores*, the extent of its availability suggesting the extent of its acceptability at any given period. This is the complex, delicate, but discernible thread which Alasdair Foster traces, by way of a general introduction, in Section One.

In a patriarchal society, though, morality and the interests of male power go hand in glove. In her essay, Roberta McGrath argues that the representation of the male body, like that of the female body, continues to be a battleground precisely because, within it, patriarchal power is at stake.

Power threatened is power which represses. Certainly all of us involved in *Behold The Man* have felt its exploration of both mass cultural and individual artistic images of the male nude to be important and timely. Today, arguably, male nude imagery is abroad as never before — in magazines, in shops, on hoardings. Behind this apparent public proliferation, however, there persists what Alasdair Foster has described as a 'tenacious double standard' which, combined with palpable signs of a newly-revived and reactionary moralism, has continued to place the subject beyond the pale of serious exploration and assessment. Although it has not been possible, in a project of this limited scale, to deal with every aspect or issue, *Behold The Man* represents an attempt, albeit a modest one, to place the subject more centrally on the cultural agenda.

**Rob Powell**
*Director, Stills Gallery*

Fig 3:
Hippolyte Bayard
*Self-portrait as a drowned man, 1840*
Societe Francais de Photographie, Paris





# 1. ACCEPTABLE MEN

"Men act and women appear" — thus John Berger sums up one of the fundamental assumptions on which the representation of the nude in European painting is founded [1]. We are conditioned by a system of patriarchy in which men are cast in the role of creator, owner and viewer, and in which women are represented as the object to be owned and looked at. To make the image of a male nude is, in some way, to go against the grain.

When photography made its appearance in 1839, the new medium took on many of the traditions and expectations of the existing visual arts. However, the 'realism' of photography only served to accentuate the discomfort which already surrounded images of the male nude. A painting is, after all, a construction. It lacks the indiscriminate detail of a photograph. It perfects, or where it does not, it always leaves open the question as to whether the peculiarity so rendered is a true record of the man, or simply a figment of the artist's whim.

But while in painting a final veil of doubt hangs between viewer and viewed, a photograph is believed to reveal all. It is undeniable. For a male nude photograph to exist a man must have stripped and revealed himself to the camera (and to the photographer). In a painting a man's body may be nude, in a photograph we suspect he is just plain naked, for we see him as he is and not as he "ought" to be. The reality of his body is open to scrutiny, vulnerable.

A female nude, however, is fulfilling her accepted role of viewed object. Not only this, she carries with her the considerable weight of a tradition of fine art representation. Any photograph of a naked woman, no matter how high minded, or how crude, carries with it some vestigial memory of all those canvases, watercolours, sketches and etchings of the female body which have littered the pages of art history since the Renaissance.

What precedents for the male nude there are in the same period tend to centre around the somewhat unpromising area of re-presentation of the martyr, and most specifically the crucifix. Such roles do, of course, modify the inherent vulnerability by enobling it as a form of sacrifice. Through them the male nude gains both dignity and a very real kind of power, without disturbing the status quo. What is represented here is not weakness, but self-sacrifice for the greater good — a concept with which those in the "Christian" countries of the West are naturally familiar.

However, by far the most common artistic tradition to be evoked in order to bolster up the photographic male nude is that of classical antiquity. Here reference is made to a tradition, not of private possession, but civic celebration. The statues of ancient Greece depict gods, heroes and triumphant athletes. To look upon the statue was not to take control of it — on the contrary the statue, by its very civic and religious presence, dictated that the power-relationship be quite the reverse. The statue, and by direct implication the man or deity represented, was there to be venerated, aspired to, worshipped. Despite the difficulty of making a convincing transition from the volume and scale of classical sculpture to the two dimensional world of the photographic image, reference to antique statuary is one of the most enduring ways of justifying photographic male nudity and modifying its meaning.

The increasing number of images of the male body currently available in popular photographic forms such as advertising, postcards, posters and magazines, and the apparently problematic

Fig 4:
Guglielmo Pluschow
*Draped youth seated on column, c1902*
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

nature of this form of representation, might lead one to assume that a new, radical mode of representation had been invented. In truth it is neither radical nor new. Images of the male body have been produced almost from the moment that the first stable photographic processes were invented.

In 1840, only weeks after Daguerre had launched his new photographic process on the world, the pioneer photographer Hippolyte Bayard made an image of himself, bare chested and slumped in a corner (Fig 3). Bayard intended this photograph, which purported to show his corpse following a suicide by drowning, as an ironic form of protest at the public disregard of his newly devised process for the production of a direct paper positive, of which this was an example. Unwittingly, perhaps, he also became the first (albeit partial) male nude to appear in a photograph.

Since then there has been a continuous stream of male nude images. Sometimes a trickle, sometimes in spate; openly a part of the artistic scene at one time, disappearing underground at another, this stream has continued to flow until it spills out into the flood of images available today. But though continuous, the way in which the male body is represented has constantly shifted and adapted.

This modification in representation operates on both the *mise en scene* of the image and on the very form of the body itself. Its effect is to remove anything which might conflict with the prevailing notions of masculinity, and so call into question the basis on which patriarchy is built. It is therefore possible, by tracing these shifts in re-presentation, to map out the changing moral and political climates in which the images were originally produced. Viewed in retrospect, popular images of the male body act as a social litmus; an historical indicator.

Fig 5:
Anon.
*Boy kissing girl, c1880*
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

This changing public profile of the male nude is somewhat difficult to discern in the very earliest photographs, which were produced to be seen, at best, by a limited group of people, often with specialist interest. Studies for artists, scientific experiments, medical records, erotic imagery — all addressed themselves to like-minded afic-ionados.

Even so, it is interesting to see that very soon references to classical art turned up in even the most clinical types of photography. A classical drape, a column, a painted studio backdrop depicting ancient Greece — all found their way into these pictures. It was as if, however hard they tried, the photographers could not dissociate the idea of the male nude from the trappings of the antique world.

The invention of photo-engraving towards the end of the last century meant that, for the first time, photographic images could be faithfully reproduced in books and periodicals where previously hand-made copy-etchings had had to suffice. Around the same time, Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, a Prussian living in Sicily, began making photographs of the local youths, naked or lightly draped, set against the Mediterranean landscape. The photographs certainly looked back to an earlier age, but these youths did not portray the heroes and gods of Homeric legend, so much as the fauns and shepherd boys of Virgil's Eclogues. These scenes were essentially Arcadian.

Von Gloeden's photographs became extremely popular. Wealthy travellers on the Grand Tour bought prints and took them home to Northern Europe, to Britain and America. The more decorous of the images were then exhibited or published, using the new photo-engraving processes, in the art and photographic press. Von Gloeden had many imitators, Vincenzo Galdi, D'Agata, his cousin Guglielmo Pluschow, and others, who worked all around the Mediterranean from





Fig 6:
Wilhelm von Gloeden
*Two draped youths, c1900*
Collection Jo Brunenberg, Weert

Italy to the North African coast. Some, like Galdi and Pluschow, while following von Gloeden's lead, in time developed their own distinctive style.

The American photographer Fred Holland Day was, at about the same time, making images on a similarly Arcadian theme, but using a much more Pictorialist approach. The Pictorialists believed that in order for photography to be artistic it had to mimic as far as possible the composition and visual effects of fine art. Using a specially uncorrected Pinkham and Smith lens and setting his models in the sylvan glades of New England, Day created soft, luminous images of pagan mythology. Stylistically they were far removed from the sharp "realism" of the Mediterranean group, but they shared a similar vogue, finding their way into many of the most respected salons of the day, and onto the pages of the best photographic journals.

The success of both these approaches lay in the way that they did nothing to threaten the patriarchal status quo. Whereas the classical approach sought to place the image of an unclothed man at the top of a hierarchical pecking order — associating nudity with deification or heroism in order to dispel the more immediate associations with passivity and possession — Arcadianism populated its work with youths who, while no longer children, had not yet taken on the mantle of adult responsibility. They were what the early Greeks called Ephebes — between boy and man. These Ephebes inhabitated a world of non-hierarchical stasis — a pastoral paradise, far removed from the reality of Victorian colonialism, which may well have seen itself more clearly mirrored in a mythology of conquering heroes and fickle gods.

Fig 7:
Fred Holland Day
*Youth with Lyre, c1915*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

To modern eyes these images have a clearly homoerotic quality. And while, in private, it was this very quality of sexual idyll which made them so potent, in public they appeared chaste in a way a female nude might not. Within the conventions of the time, a man photographing a youth carried no overt suggestion of impropriety; whereas the sort of woman who would take her clothes off to be photographed, was not the kind of person with whom a "gentleman" could afford to be associated.

In the period from 1890 up to World War One the photographic male nude actually became more popular and more acceptable than

the female. When *The Photographic Art Journal* referred to "Life Studies" or *The Studio* published an article entitled "The Nude In Photography" they illustrated their articles exclusively with images of the male body.

Although the exotic settings and darker skins of the Mediterranean models had had the effect of further removing these images from the "real" (i.e. Northern European and American) world, writers in time began to question why Anglo Saxon lads could not prove just as pleasing in the pastoral landscapes of rural Britain. And, as James A. Rooth pointed out *The Photogram*, English models could have their advantages: "I once used two Italian professional models, but I cannot say they were satisfactory; they were extortionately dear . . ." [2].
World War One shattered forever the comfortable hypocrisies of the Edwardian era. The modern age rose from the ashes of the old world intent on making a fresh start. It had little time for what it saw as the backward-looking kitsch of von Gloeden and his followers. Furthermore, the popularization of Freud's theories made inescapable the homoerotic qualities inherent in these and similar images.

At the same time female emancipation led an increasing number of women to take up the camera and even on occasion to point it at the male body. Most famous of these was Imogen Cunningham who made a series of photographs of her first husband, Roi Partridge, romping around Mount Rainier, causing quite a stir when she published a number of these pictures in the Seattle *Town Crier*.

No such scandal followed the publication, in the British annual *Photograms of the Year* for 1915, of the photograph "Bacio Della Luna" by Williamina Parrish (Fig. 8). While this may indicate that Europe was somewhat more progressive than America at the time, it most probably simply demonstrates that acceptability depends on context. Cunningham's photographs were in a newspaper, Parrish's in a (photographic) art book.

Nevertheless, the popularity of the male nude in the photographic press began to wane. When the male body did appear it was often associated with the world of dance, especially when the photographer was a woman. Perhaps the very theatricality of a male dancer sufficiently removed him from the day to day world, not to threaten masculine self-confidence — his effeminacy, automatically assumed and clearly signalled, excusing him from the rules which held for "real" men, while making him a suitably feminine subject for a woman to photograph. In many cases these images appeared in books and periodicals in which the majority of nudes were female, added almost as an afterthought, or in a supporting role.

Outside the arena of art-photography, however, two interwoven movements were fast gaining ground, both inextricably bound up with representations of the male body. The first was *Physical Culture* (body-building): exercise, usually with weights, to increase the musculature in a way which is aesthetically imposing, rather than simply strong. The other, rejoicing in a variety of names such as *Nacktkulture* or *Gymnosophy*, was to become what we know today as nudism.

Body-building as a visual phenomenon began with two men: the strongman Eugene Sandow and his agent Florenz Seigfeld. Seigfeld launched Sandow at the World's Columbian Exhibition, held in Chicago in 1893, promoting him, not as the "strongest man", but the "*perfect man*". Attention was focused on the way he looked, not on his albeit prodigious strength. While there had been photographs of other strongmen, they were no more than souvenirs of a performance. The photographs of Sandow showed exactly what it was that made him

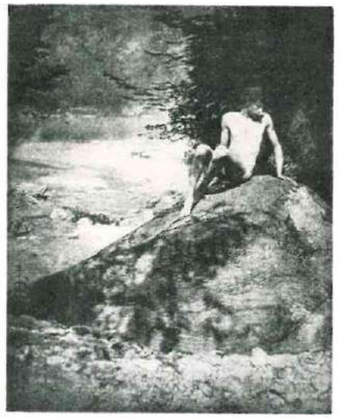


Fig 8:
Williamina Parrish
*"Bacio Della Luna" reproduction in "Photograms of the Year" 1915*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Fig 9:
Yvonne Gregory
*"Rhythm" c1923*
Camera Club, London





Fig 10:
Gerhard Riebicke
*Leaping man, c1930*
Collection Peter Webb, London

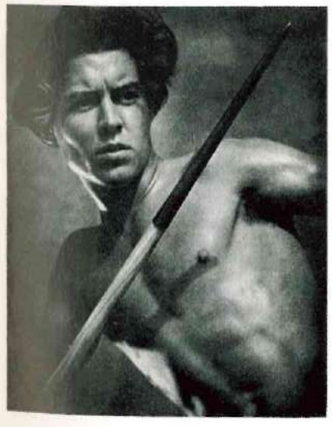


Fig 11:
Leni Riefenstahl
*Book "Schonheit im Olympischen Kampf", 1937*
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

famous — his body. This appeared in *cartes de visite*, in books and magazines, on cigarette cards and even in advertisements: images which became icons, to be bought and looked at by those who had never seen the man himself. It was not long before other young men began to pay Sandow the ultimate compliment of emulation. The physique industry had been born.

The early nudist movement was quite different in that it was about participation rather than hero-worship. A phenomenon of the twentieth century, it became popular in Germany after World War One, where it was a welcome escape from the memory of recent defeat, and from the drudgery and smog of industrialized cities. It was, by all accounts, a spartan affair involving vigorous group callisthenics and icy river swims, by non-smoking, non-drinking vegetarians. A vast amount of material was published between the Wars to promote the movement — magazines and books all packed with photographs which graphically illustrated its liberating effects. The subjects are seen engaged in exercises which are as aesthetically pleasing as they are physically stimulating. In many they quite literally jump for joy. Gender differences are played down, men and women are often seen together, bound to the group by their youthful vigour rather than separated by their sexual differences. The leaping figures with their emphasis on line, have an obvious resonance with the slim, prancing figures of Art Deco. While the simplified design achieved by shooting against the sky shows the influence of Modernism.

In 1933 Hitler closed the nudist parks; the movement was banned. It was not the nudity so much as the free-thinking attitudes of the nudists which failed to conform with the ideology of the emerging fascist state. Ironically, only too aware of what a powerful symbol the naked body could be, the Nazis appropriated much of the imagery of nudism and used it to promote the Third Reich. Hitler himself spoke ecstatically on the subject: "Never was humanity in its appearance and its feeling closer to classical antiquity than today. Competitive sports and combat games are hardening millions of youthful bodies, and they show them rising up in a form and condition that have not been seen, perhaps not been thought of, in possibly a thousand years" [3].

When, in 1936, the propagandist film-maker and photographer Leni Riefenstahl was commissioned by Joseph Goebbels to record the Berlin Olympics, she opened both the film and the book of photographs with an evocation of classical Greece which borrowed equally from the imagery of nudism and from classical art (Fig. 11). But whereas the ideology of nudism had been for everyone, held in common by all those who wished to tread the path of physical fitness, Riefenstahl's naked bodies were a reflection of the state. Thus, as Susan Sontag has pointed out, "sexuality [is] converted into the magnetism of leaders and the joy of followers. The fascist ideal is to transform sexual energy into a "spiritual" force . . ." [4].

Following World War Two the centre of nudism moved, via Denmark, to America where the pre-war elements of healthy exercise and youth bonding, gave way to family based recreation and relaxation, and the imagery became less potent. Body-building, on the other hand, took off in a big way, and magazines like *Body Sculpture, Modern Adonis, Physique Artistry* and *Superman* began to appear on news-stands across Europe and America.

It seems ironic that physique photography should reach its zenith in America in the Fifties, a time when the moral panic of the McCarthyist witch-hunt was in full swing. Similarly, in the cinema, where the strictures of the Hays Office Production Code forbade almost any

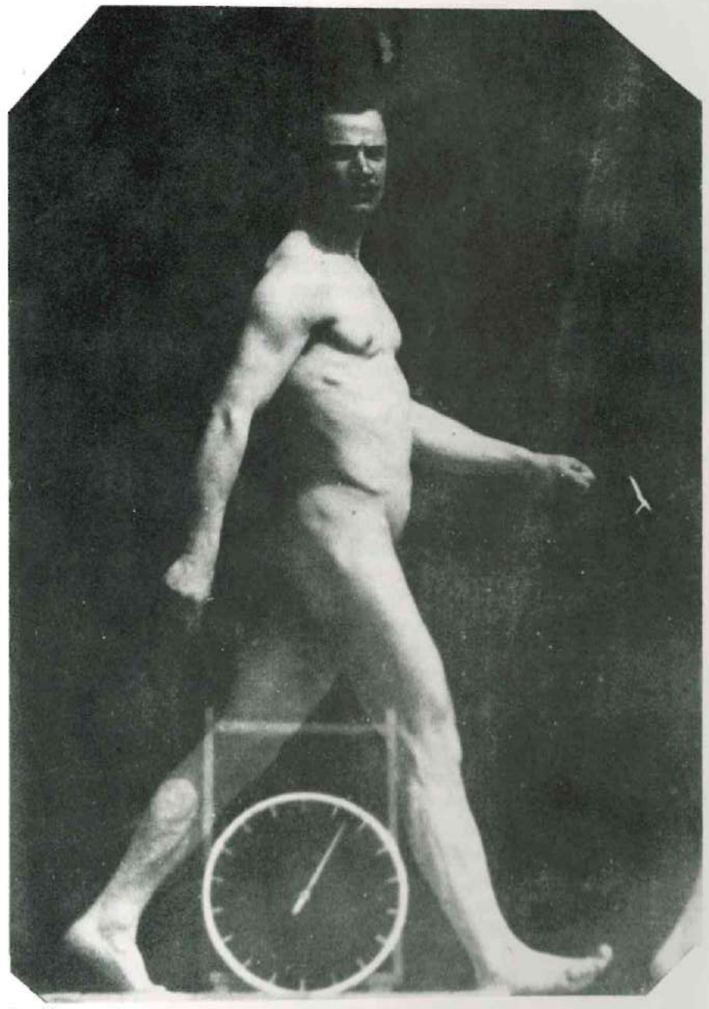


Fig 16:
Etienne-Jules Marey
*Man walking, c1890*
Musee de Beaune





# 2. MEN OF SCIENCE

Photography can record a seemingly infinite amount of information. This quality, which led early critics to damn it as too indiscriminate to be of true artistic merit, made it attractive to those with more scientific aspirations. For them a photograph could map out the body in an instant. It could capture a moment in time and open it up to prolonged scrutiny.

It was the great confidence of mid-nineteenth century rationalism that man was within sight of knowing all that was to be known about the world. Many believed that if enough measurements were taken and enough people, places and events recorded, the underlying pattern of nature would be revealed. The recording of human anatomy — the difference between the body at one moment in time and another, or between the body of one man and another, or between one race and another — led 19th century photographers to make many thousands of images.

The specialist nature of much medical and forensic photography tends to generate a freak-show quality if the imagery is viewed out of context by those unused to seeing beyond the immediate spectacle of abnormality. For that reason the material in *Behold The Man* is limited to scientific photographs taken to record and measure the body, letting these stand for the larger whole.

Around the 1880s a number of pioneers were attempting, through the use of serial photography, to understand the true nature of human and animal locomotion. In America, Eadweard Muybridge undertook an exhaustive series of experiments to record the human body in every conceivable form of activity (Fig. 18). (He also recorded the motion of animals and birds). The French physiologist Etienne-Jules Marey, inspired by Muybridge, devised an alternative system which allowed a number of sequential images to be recorded on a single plate. Muybridge helped the American realist painter Thomas Eakins to put together a camera which, like that of Marey, recorded serial motion

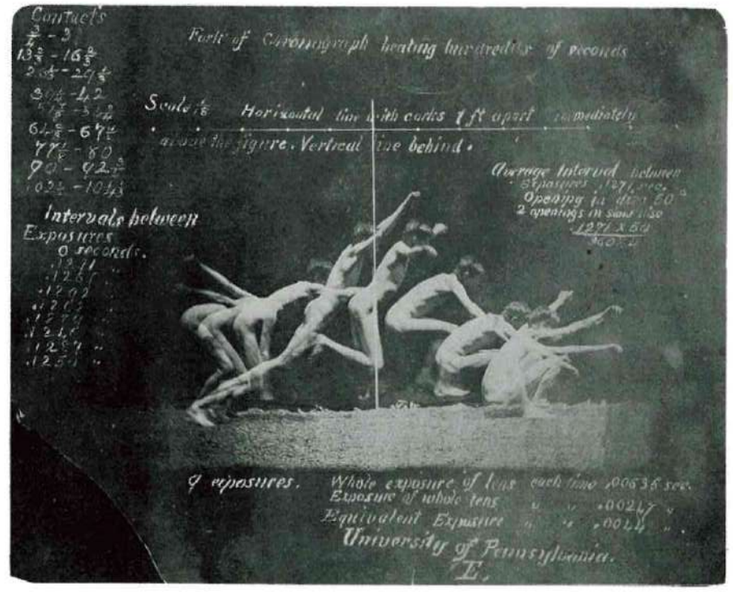



Fig. 17:
Thomas Eakins
*Man jumping, with photographer's notations, 1885*
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

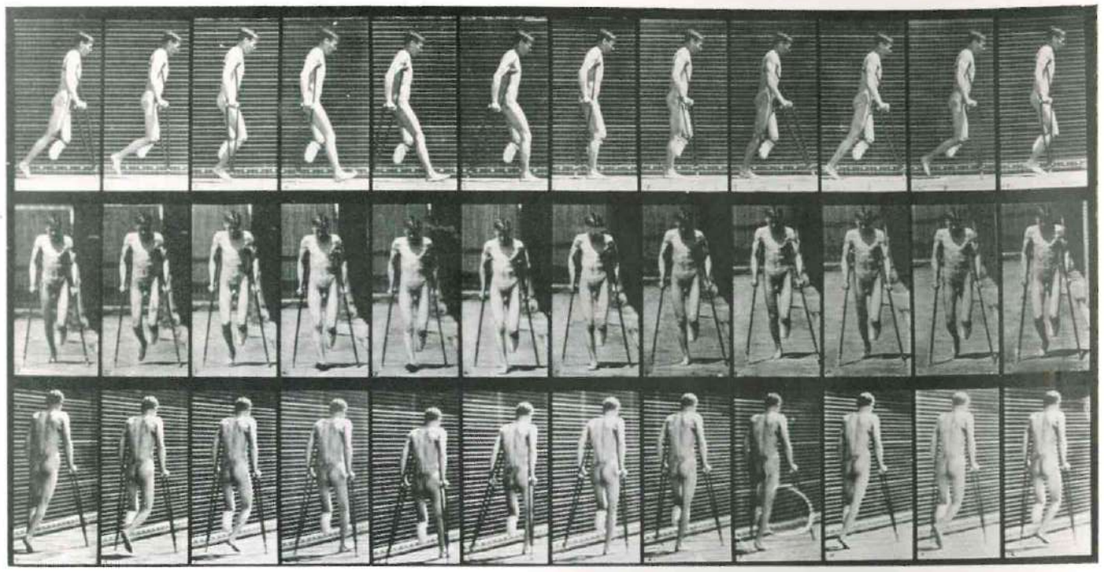


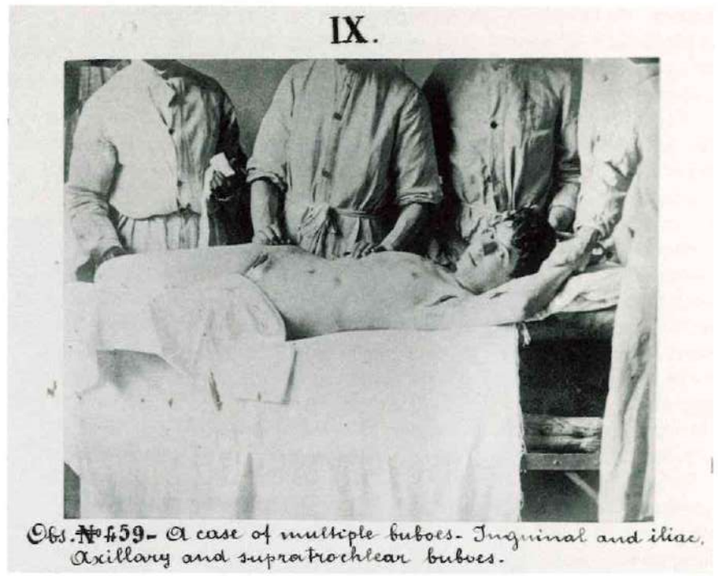
Fig 18:
Eadweard Muybridge
*Photogravure from "Animal Locomotion", Amputee, c1887*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Fig 19:
(L. Haase & Co.)
*Medical study, 1864*
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London





Fig 20:
Pr. Dr. Camillio Terni
*Study in [Bubonic] Plague, Rio de Janeiro, ND*
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London




on a single plate (Fig. 17). Using this equipment Eakins undertook his own set of experiments in order to learn how better to represent movement in his paintings. At the Hospital of Salpetriere in France Albert Londe photographed healthy men and those sick of body or mind in the hope that what was so revealed would cast some light on the nature of pathological disorder.

Despite the analytical nature of this kind of approach it is clear how ingrained the photographers' concepts of gender really were. Muybridge published over 450 photo-sequences of nude or lightly draped men and women. Yet the activities so recorded differ markedly depending on the sex of the subject. Men are seen running, jumping and fighting; women are shown fetching and carrying, or blowing a kiss. Men are shown in occupations such as bricklaying, swinging a pick or aiming a rifle; women pursue the more domestic activities of sweeping, pouring water and even, somewhat bizarrely, spanking an unfortunate child.

One of the sequences by Muybridge shown here is of an amputee (Fig. 18). The use of photography to record the physical manifestations of disability and disease are long established. The photographs credited to L. Haase and Co. of Berlin were taken around the middle of the last century to demonstrate skeletal abnormalities and the wasting effects of untreated diabetes (Fig. 19). The now established distinctions between scientific and artistic representation had not then been clearly delineated. In some cases the photographer attempts to aestheticize in a way which would be considered inappropriate today. For example, in two of these images a sweep of fabric (reminiscent of classical drapery) has been used to cover the heavy metal stands necessary to steady the subject during the prolonged exposure times required by the less sensitive photographic materials of the time.

A further example of this lack of distinction can be seen in the photographs of plague victims, (Fig. 20) where the subject turns to engage the viewer with direct eye contact. Today a patient would almost certainly be asked to look away — keeping his face to the front, dissociating himself from the viewer (and the act of being

viewed). Yet here, in a photograph which so clearly shows the subject's lack of control over what is being done to his body, it is the eye contact, direct and unflinching, which at least partially redresses the imbalance of power between doer and done-to.

These photographs record the body qualitatively. The 19th century also saw the rise of Anthropometry (literally the measuring of mankind) which involved making quantitative records of the body. This branch of Victorian science sought to catalogue humanity by painstakingly documenting its every measurement. Thus reduced to a collection of numbers, it was believed that underlying patterns would reveal themselves. It became obvious that this laborious work could be recorded with much greater ease using a camera. And since such records were often made by travellers, not themselves involved in analyzing the data they were collecting, it had the added advantage of not requiring prior knowledge of the exact nature of the information required. Furthermore copies could be circulated to any number of scientists working on any number of different projects — each took from the photograph only those measurements which were necessary.

For this form of measurement to work accurately, some calibrating system was required, from which the relative proportions could be calculated. In 1868 J.H. Lamprey, the Librarian at the Royal Geographical Society, published details of a system which employed numerous vertical and horizontal threads stretched at right angles to each other to form a grid of two inch squares (Fig. 21). When photographed up against this screen, no part of the subject's body was ever far from scale of measurement [1].

A similar method involved the use of a measuring rod painted with alternating light and dark bands. The subject stood beside this rule, often required to hold his right arm out at shoulder height. From the horizontal arm, a measuring tape was suspended (Fig. 22).

Athropometry was inextricably linked with the developing theories of manipulated heredity enshrined in Eugenics. Once Anthropometry had established a clear way of "diagnosing" a certain 'undesirable predisposition', Eugenic manipulation could, it was suggested, be employed to eradicate it.

In the conclusion to their book *The Family and the Nation — A study in Natural Inheritance and Social Responsibility*, published in 1909, William and Catherine Whetham state:

> "By legislative reform we may segregate the worst types of the feeble-minded, the habitual criminal, and the hopeless pauper, and thus weed out of our race the contaminating strains of worthless blood." [2]

Looking at these images it becomes clear that they were made by men who considered themselves in some way superior to their subjects. Be they colonized natives, diseased patients, soldiers or prisoners, these people had little choice in the matter of being measured. The act of measuring was an attempt to gain knowledge, and therefore power, over them: photography was harnessed as an instrument of control. **AG**

1. J.H. Lamprey "On a Method of Measuring the Human Form, for the use of Students in Ethnology" appearing in "The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London" Vol. 1 (1868-9)
2. William Cecil Dampier Whetham and Catherine Durning Whetham "The Family and the Nation: A Study in Natural Inheritance and Social Responsibility" 1909

Fig 21:
Anon.
*Anthropometric photograph of Oriental man using the Lamprey system, c1868*
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Fig 22:
Anon.
*Anthropometric photograph "S. Africa, Bushmen", ND*
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford





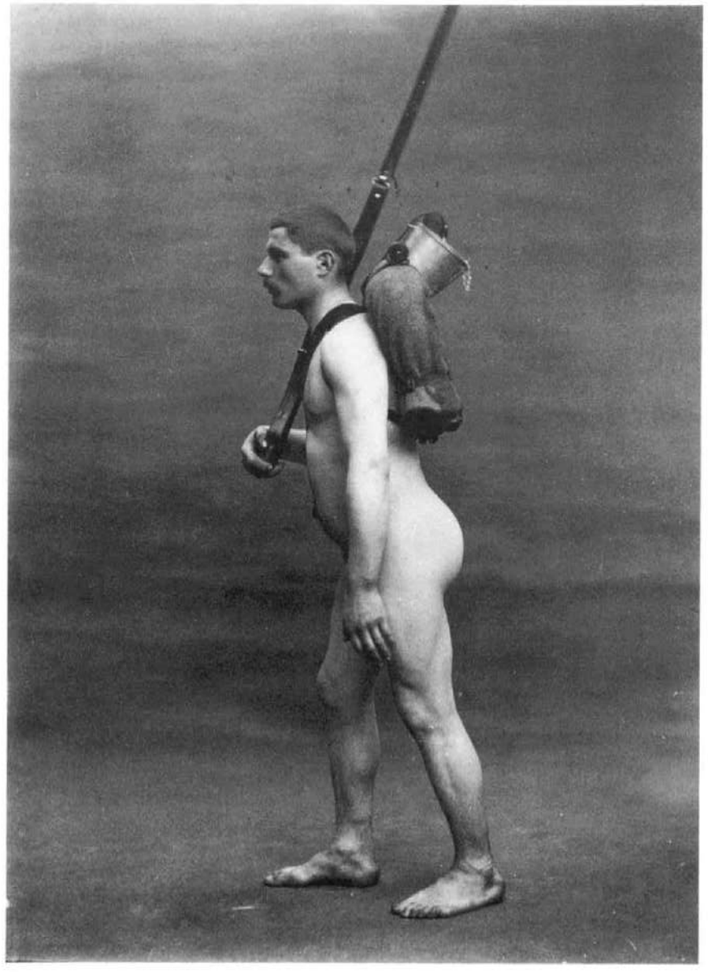
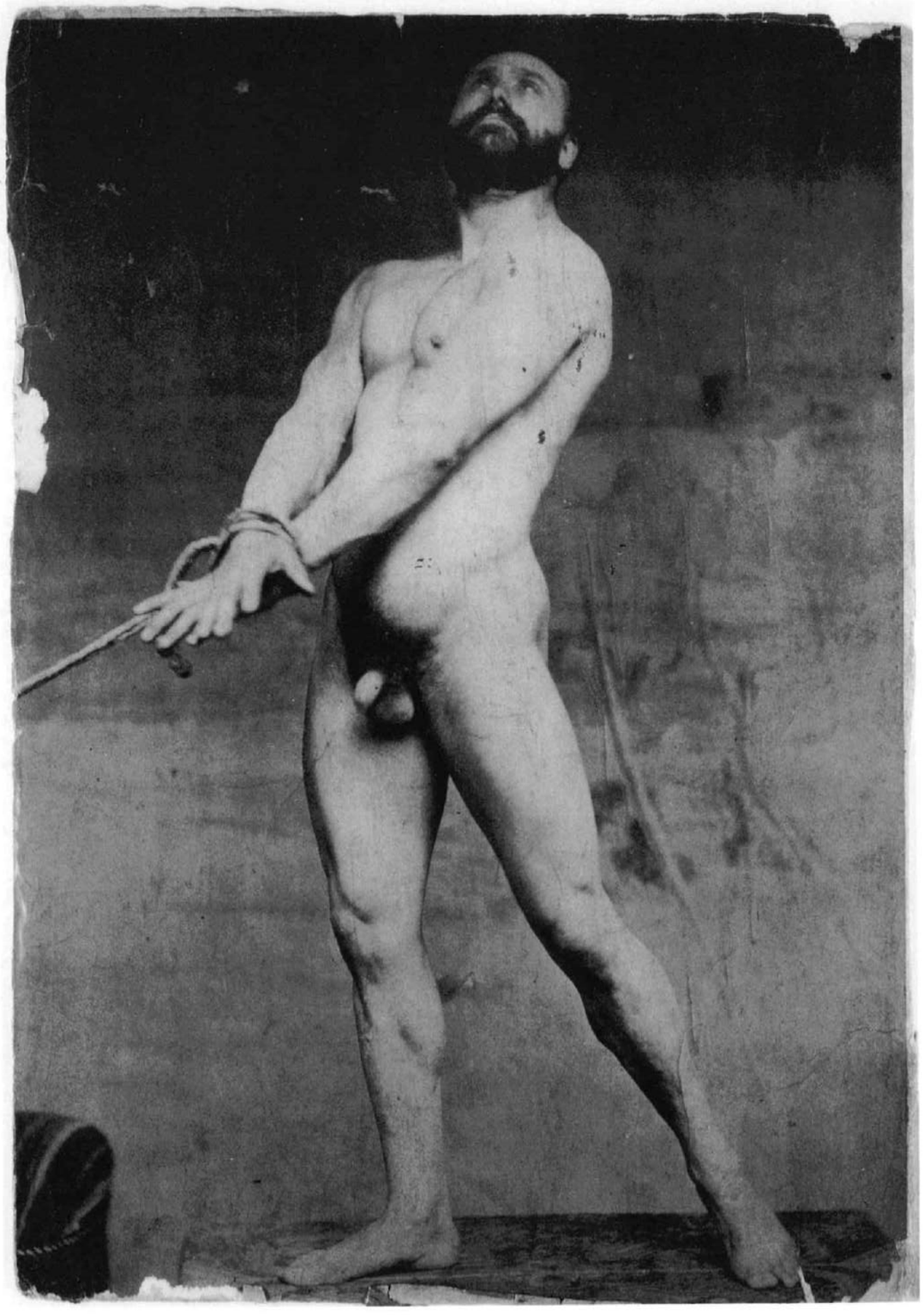


Fig 23:
Anon.
*Study for the French Army, c1900*
Collection Bourgeron, Paris







# 3. FOR ART'S SAKE

Fig 24:
Guglielmo Marconi
*Study — possibly after "The Triumph of Alexander", 1865-70*
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Fig 25:
Eugene Durieu with Eugene Delacroix
*Male nude study, 1855*
Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

Fig 26:
Eadweard Muybridge
*Man in set of standard poses, 1887*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

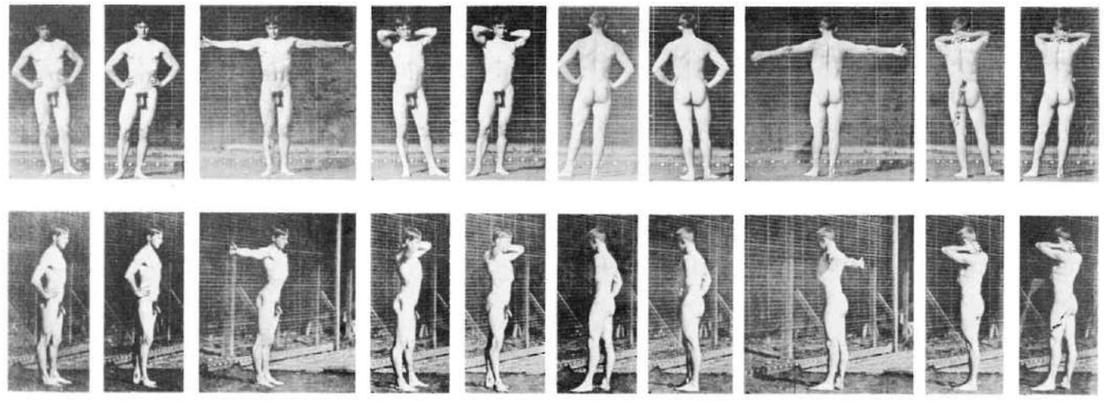
The relationship between the representation of the male nude in fine art and that in photography has always been a two-way affair. As was seen in Part One, reference to the fine art nude, especially that of classical Greek statuary, was a very common way of legitimising photographic male nudity and injecting artistic integrity into what was considered dubious subject-matter. But if art helped photography become legitimate, photography, in turn, helped art become accurate.

The ability of photography to record a figure in great detail, which had made it so attractive as a form of scientific record, made it similarly attractive to the student of art. A photograph could act like an infinitely detailed sketch. The advantages were numerous: it was cheaper than paying a model by the hour; it did not move, or fidget, or grumble; it presented the figure in two dimensions, so that representational problems, such as foreshortening, were already resolved. Finally it allowed artists of a fastidious nature to paint the nude without the necessity of coming into contact with those they considered to be of a lower social (and moral) class, who earned their living as "life" models.

However, these studies were more than just a cheap alternative to live models and a short cut to two dimensional representation. In a very real way they enabled painters to discover the difference between the actual and apparent nature of bodily appearance. The painter Eugene Delacroix collaborated with the photographer Eugene Durieu on a series of photographs of male and female nudes, from which he concluded that much of what was praised in fine art was, in reality, mannered and unnatural.

Clearly there is a similarity here with the scientific records described earlier, and indeed these images form part of the same continuum. The experimentation of Muybridge and Eakins had at least as much to do with advancing artistic representation as they did with scientific knowledge, and both men produced, in addition to their serial photographs of motion, studies of models executing a pre-determined set of standardized poses, through which they hoped to learn what elements were common to the pose and which were peculiar to the model.

While it is true that many made legitimate use of these photographs, the term "study for artists" soon became a



euphemism for any kind of commercially produced erotic imagery. In some cases it is obvious which were aimed at artists and which at voyeurs, but such a differentiation is often blurred, the same images operating in both markets.

By the turn of the century a number of publishers were offering "studies for artists" on a commercial scale. One producer (thought to be called Calavas) sold photographs of men and women in every conceivable variety of pose, (Fig. 2) while Emile Bayard published a monthly portfolio entitled *Le Nu Esthetique* which always contained at least one sheet of male nudes (Back Cover). Even though these images were intended for what was (which ever way they are viewed) a specialist audience, elements of both censorship and gender stereotyping are clearly evident. Artificial fig leaves were often used to cover the genitals (an affectation borrowed from neo-classical statuary) though at times the mode of securing these items can appear more bizarre than the nudity from which they seek to protect the viewer. Later, careful retouching of the negative allowed the genitals to be removed from the picture altogether, leaving the model with an amorphous bump like a shop-window dummy. However, looking at F.R. Yerbury's plate "decorative study of brothers at play" (Fig. 27) it becomes clear that this form of representational castration was apparently only deemed necessary for adults.

As in the serial photographs of Muybridge, many of these studies reveal ingrained attitudes about the male and female roles. In the comparative photograph from Arthur Thomson's *A Handbook of Anatomy for Art Students*, we see a male and a female model executing what are supposed to be identical poses (Fig. 28). But while the man holds an iron weight, and creates the pose in a neutral, academic way, it appears necessary to make the female model more decorative: she holds a pitcher (itself a domestic object), and she wears a fillet in her hair. He is photographed standing on a platform with the camera at the level of his knees, thus the viewer looks up at him and he appears impressive. She is photographed from a much higher camera angle (about level with her eyes), so that the viewer looks down at her and she appears more submissive.

The way in which photography borrows from the conventions of fine art history has already been mentioned. The most obvious cases are those which refer to the crucifix and the martyr in European oil-

Fig 27:
F.R. Yerbury
*"Two brothers at play" from "Studies of the Human Form", 1918*
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Fig 28:
A. Thomson
*Comparative study of man and woman lifting weight from "Handbook of Anatomy for Artists", 1915*
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Fig 29:
Vincenzo Galdi
*Draped man with dagger, c1900*
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris





Fig 30:
Anon.
*Detail from a stereo-daguerreotype of man with column, c1855*
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris


Fig 31:
*Cover of "Mr. Universe", 1954*
*(original in colour)*
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

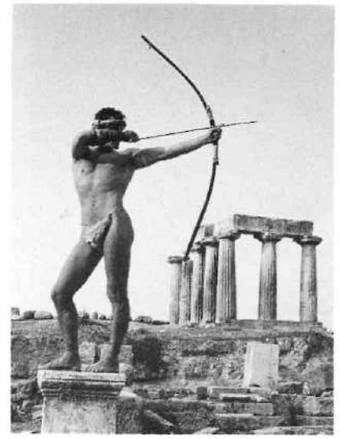


Fig 32:
Bertram Bahner
*calendar "Olympia — A Tribute to the Ancient Games", 1987*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy of the model:
Andre Fiset, PO Box 1721, JAF Building, New York, NY 10116

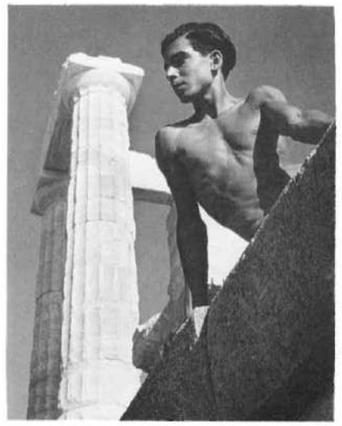


Fig 33:
Herbert List
*"Athen", 1938*
Succession Herbert List/Max Scheler
Courtesy of PPS-Galerie FC Gundlach, Hamburg

painting and the statuary of Greco-Roman antiquity. Sometimes the photographer simply borrows the *mise-en-scene* of the fine art images he seeks to evoke. Props and elements of costume suggest ancient Greece, and so create a setting in which the unclothed male body appears at home. A small column is used in both the anonymous stereo-daguerreotype which dates from the 1850's, (Fig. 30) and in the cover of *Mr. Universe*, a physique magazine printed a century later (Fig. 31). And today these traditions are still apparent. The pin-up calendar *Olympia*, (Fig. 32) which shows the Canadian model Andre Fiset posing against a variety of archaelogical sites in Greece, was deemed a legitimate enough project to find sponsorship from The Greek National Tourist Organization.

Many of the photographs of the *fin de siecle* Mediterranean group (such as von Gloeden, Pluschow and Vincenzo Galdi) make use of togas, fillets and thonged sandals, to generate an atmosphere of the ancient world. In America around the same time, the Pictorialist photographer Fred Holland Day made a series of photographs of a young man playing a lyre which are thought to represent the god Apollo. However, art-effect is taken a stage further in the case of Gordon Antony's "Adonis 1951". (Fig. 101) Here special metallic make-up has been applied to the body in order to recreate the actual effect of bronze, and so literally turn the man into a statue.

Classical references in a male nude photograph could go beyond a simple desire to establish artistic integrity. In the 1930's Herbert List, like many German intellectuals of the time, turned his back on the impending catastrophes looming in Northern Europe, to "rediscover" the unspoilt lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. It was believed that here it was still possible to capture a "magic" elsewhere lost under the veneer of civilization. In his photograph "Athen", (Fig. 33) the construction and design are clearly modern, while the theme blends the currently fashionable cult for beautiful young men, with a romantic backward glance to a more "natural" Golden Age.

Fig 34:
Fred Holland Day
*Crucifixion, 1898*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Fig 35:
c Joel-Peter Witkin
*"Penitente", 1982*
Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York
and Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

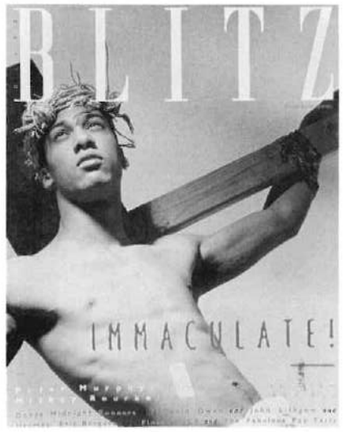



Fig 36:
Peter Ashworth
*Cover of "Blitz" magazine, 1986*
*(original in colour)*
Private Collection

The image of the crucifix and that of the martyr St. Sebastian have also proved fertile ground. Day went to enormous lengths, including starvation, in order to play out the crucifixion for the camera, with himself in the leading role (Fig. 34). Recently Joel-Peter Witkin made a more grotesquely sardonic reconstruction of Calvary, (Fig. 35) while the magazine *Blitz* reduced it to the level of camp trendiness (Fig. 36).

The sado-masochism of such images becomes more overt in those depicting the death of St. Sebastian, who, as legend has it, was tied to a tree and shot by archers. The elements of bondage, masochism and (symbolic) sexual penetration imbue the subject with a heavy eroticism. This fact has not been lost on photographers wishing to explore such areas while remaining safely within the demarcations of fine art. In the case of Evergon's "Sebastione", (Fig. 40) however, a certain homely humour creeps in, as we note that the arrows are represented by rows of darning needles taped to the perspex sheet which stands in front of the tableau.

In other examples where the photographic male nude makes reference to Art, the pose itself is borrowed from a specific work: the discobolos, Rodin's "Le Penseur", the Pieta, the Adam of the Sistine Chapel. It is not always the case that these reconstructions are simply ploys to iegitimize the subject matter. There is an obvious irony intended in Alvin Langdon Coburn's photograph of George Bernard Shaw pretending to be Rodin's "Le penseur" (Fig. 37), an irony which is variously reworked in the publicity shot of Rudolph Valentino and the colour supplement cover for telephone services. In the case of the pin-up poster of the American model Scott Madsen, interpreting the "dicobolos" in terms of a garage mechanic (with overtones of the gay pin-up), the layers of pretence, irony and sheer camp seem as numerous as those of an onion.

More seriously, the self-portrait by Hans van Manen, (Fig. 41) recreates, with a calculated inaccuracy, the Pieta of St. Peters in Rome. It is the space between these two representations, the points at which they differ, in which the meaning is to be found. The gender reversal is obvious. In the photograph the pose is unstable, as though at any moment, the naked man may slip from van Manen's grasp. Michelangelo's Madonna is composed, resigned, tenderly casting her eyes down at the body of Christ in her arms; the photographer stares anxiously at the camera/viewer. The Madonna is ageless; the photographer is aging. The self-contained pathos of the sculpture contrasts with the atmosphere of quiet desperation which invests the photograph. **AG**

Fig 37:
Alvin Langdon Coburn
*George Bernard Shaw in the attitude of Rodin's "Le Penseur", 1906*
George Eastman House, Rochester





Fig 38:
Fred Holland Day
*St. Sebastian, 1906*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Fig 39:
Jean Reutlinger
*Self-portrait as St. Sebastian, 1913*
Collection Bourgeron, Paris

Fig. 40:
Evergon
*"Sebastione", 1984*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy Centro di Cultura Ausoni

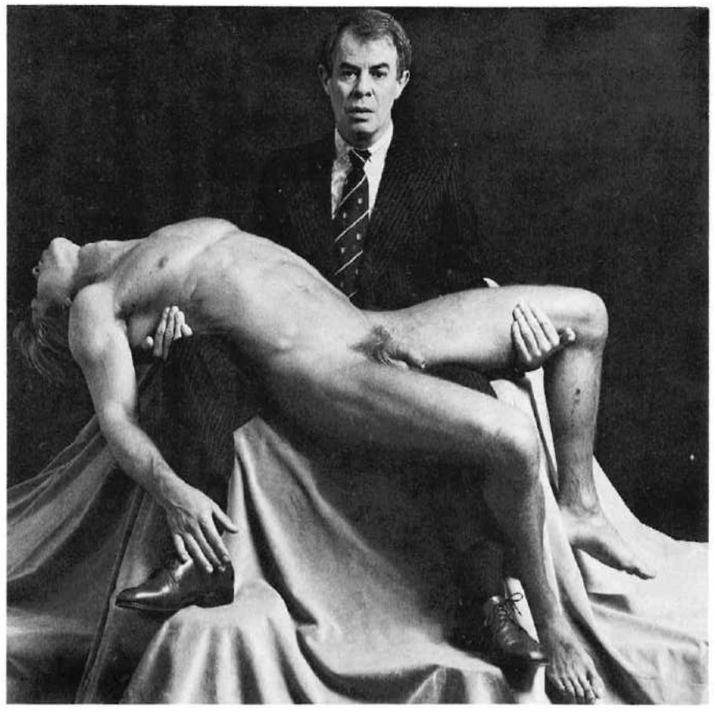
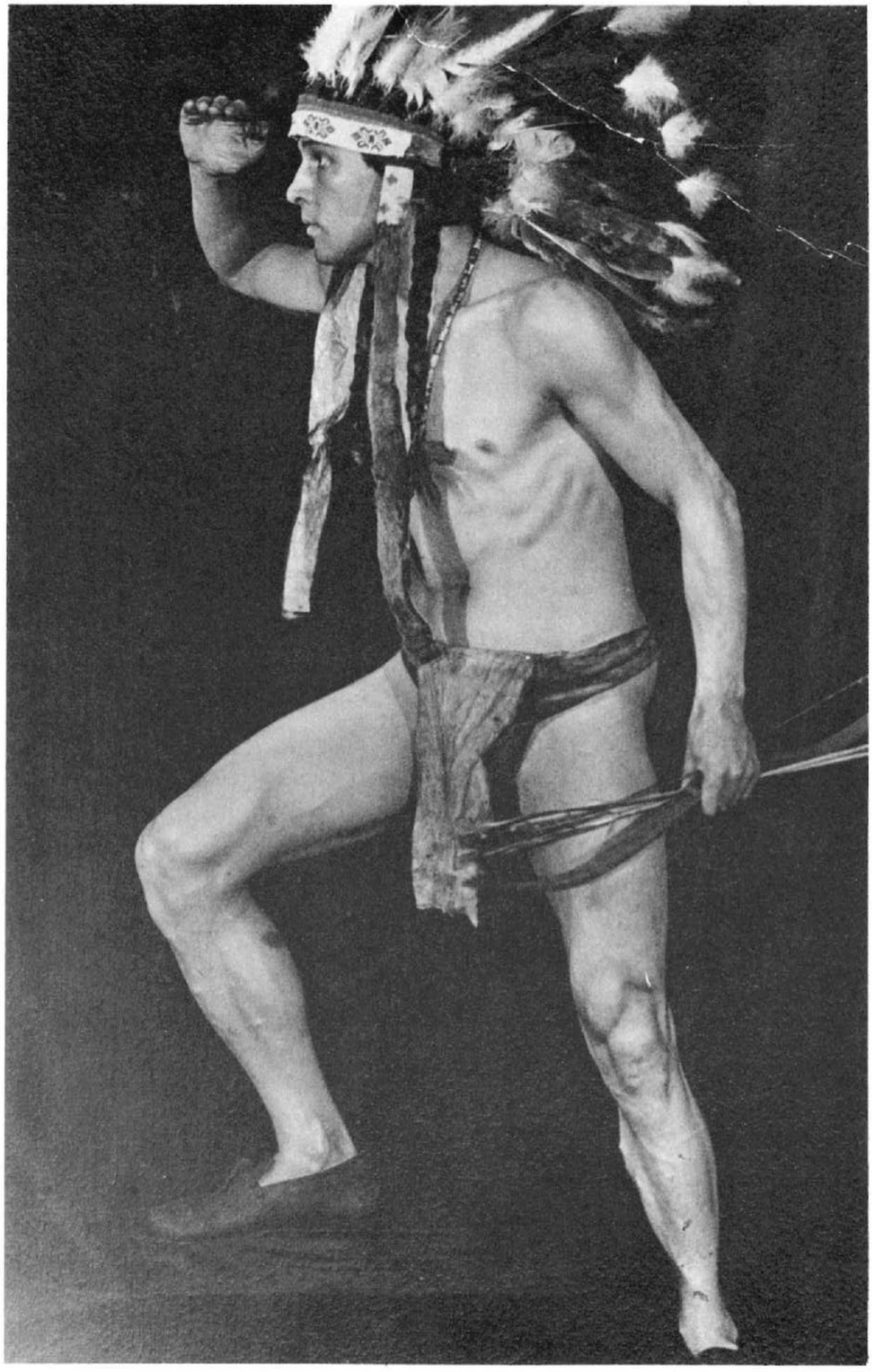


Fig 41:
Hans van Manen
*"Pieta: self-portrait with Thijs Westerbeek van Eerten", 1984*
Courtesy of the photographer







# 4. HEROES FOR SALE

Fig 42:
Anon.
*Rudolph Valentino dressed as a Red Indian, c1920*
Kobal Collection, London

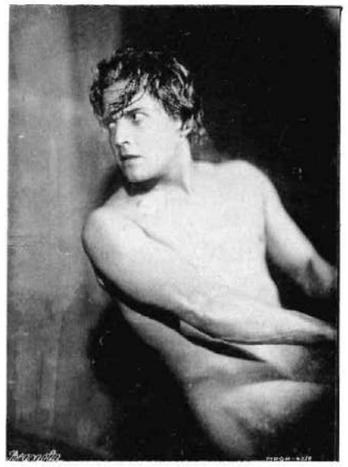


Fig 43:
Bragaglia
*Ramon Novarro, c1925*
Kobal Collection, London

The most commonly available images of the male body in this century have been those which are commercially produced and which are, in one way or another, trying to sell something: movies, pop records, the paraphernalia of bodybuilding, and latterly anything from macho jeans to lingerie, from expensive mineral water to cheap sherry.

Even back in the days of the Silents, the movie industry realised that a star was just as likely to be born through his publicity pictures as through his films. And the more rugged the physique he could uncover the better the chances of success. Star of the Silents Ramon Novarro was promoted with a photograph which showed him completely naked (though carefully posed) wild-eyed and straining against some unseen force: (Fig. 43) an heroic figure, and perhaps a little dangerous. Like Valentino, he was promoted as a "latin lover", though he never reached the same level of fame. Valentino himself posed many times in various nude and semi-nude publicity shots. From Red Indian chief, (Fig. 42) through varsity oarsman to fluteplaying faun, all the images had one thing in common, they allowed him to reveal a great deal of flesh.

The increasing popularity of body-building and the wide circulation of muscle magazines in the middle of the 1940's and 50's created a specific ideal for manly beauty. Actors such as George "The Chest" O'Brien; Larry "Buster" Crabbe and Johnny Weissmuller (who for many years played Tarzan) all came from sporting backgrounds. Their athletic physiques, perhaps as much as their acting, guaranteed success. However, the heroic effect of their publicity shots was due in fair measure to the way in which they were staged, lit and photographed.

When Cecil Beaton came to photograph Weissmuller, for instance, he shot him using photographic conventions normally associated with female subjects (Fig. 44). The high camera-angle, languid pose and passive expression constitute a very different image from that normally associated with the "Lord of the Apes".

Fig 44:
Cecil Beaton
*Johnny Weissmuller, c1930*
Courtesy Sotheby's, London

Beaton's photograph is the exception, however. Elsewhere the aesthetic of the muscle magazine prevailed. It dictated that the male body should be powerful, hard and smooth. Both body builder and actor shaved their chest and abdomen removing one of the more obvious secondary sexual characteristics, sanitizing the body of its more overt aspects of hormonal maleness while inferring a quality of genital maleness (body as super-phallus) and underscoring the fine art associations (flesh as marble).

Muscle magazines had three main approaches: firstly, the "health" magazine, nominally aimed at those who actually followed the sport of bodybuilding, where the photographs acted as both explanation to, and proof of efficacy of, the various routines, apparatus and pills on offer; secondly, the "art" magazine in which the male body is presented as "living sculpture" to be appreciated as an aesthetic object; and, thirdly, as the Fifties progressed, the increasingly overt homophile publications which offered figures of erotic fantasy for gay men.

The "art" magazines relied heavily on reference to classical Greece or on poses which copied those of recognized works of art. The homophile magazines, such at Bob Mizer's *Physique Pictorial* were perhaps the most progressive in that, in addition to the gymnasium shots (ancient and modern) they also promoted new, up-to-date fantasy figures such as the military man and the sailor (many young gay men discovered their sexuality while on national service). These magazines also experimented with photographs of musclemen set in more domestic surroundings, engaged in activities such as washing up, vacuuming or taking a shower. Partly an attempt to move the figure of fantasy into the real-world (an attempt which was perhaps less than effective since the men themselves were so unlikely), the very campness of the juxtaposition was, in itself, a signal of intent. Whereas today the fantasy figures of the gay pin-up revolve around "straight-looking" types, the images of the Fifties appeared in magazines which could not openly proclaim their orientation. The semiology of Camp was an indication of gayness.

The Sixties brought with them a whole new set of values. The rock star was a revolutionary, an anti-hero. Where the muscular bulk of the bodybuilder had symbolized maleness, maturity and an elitist power to which all should aspire but which few could achieve, the slim, everyday bodies of these singers represented a youthful energy shared by a whole generation. Later, in the Hippy era, when the naked body became a symbol of peaceful protest and innocence regained, undertones of martyrdom reappeared in the representation of the male body. It is no accident that one of the most famous images of the singer Jim Morrison shows him in the pose of the crucifix (Fig. 46).

Fig 45:
Muscle Magazines (from left):
*"La Culture Physique", 1914*
*"Superman", 1935*
*"Your Physique", 1950*
*"Men and Art", 1960*
*"Physique Artistry", 1956*




Fig 46:
Joel Brodsky
*Photograph of Jim Morrison (c1969) on sleeve of "The Best of the Doors"*
©WEA Records Ltd, 1985


In the wider field of mainstream advertising, photographs of the female body have dominated, associating products aimed at men with sexual success, and promoting an image of desirability (as a good mother, housewife, lover, whore) to women. However images of the male body have periodically also been employed to sell products.

Even as early as the turn of the century, Sandow's famous physique was being used to promote a brand of beer. Later, "health" oriented physique magazines used images of the male body to sell barbells and dumbells, chest expanders and exercise benches, food supplements and pills. The method is simple, create a hero to be aspired to and suggest that through using that product the viewer can become like him. This remains the basic *modus operandi* of commercialism when it is exploiting the male body. The very real desire of men to have social, political and financial power, a desire on which the patriarchal system depends, is translated into the desire for a powerful body, which is, in this technological world, of little real benefit.

Fig 47:
Advertisements in Muscle Magazines:
*Shredded Wheat, 1933*
*Phosferine Nerve Tonic, 1933*
*Charles Atlas, 1935*
*Maxalding, 1934*

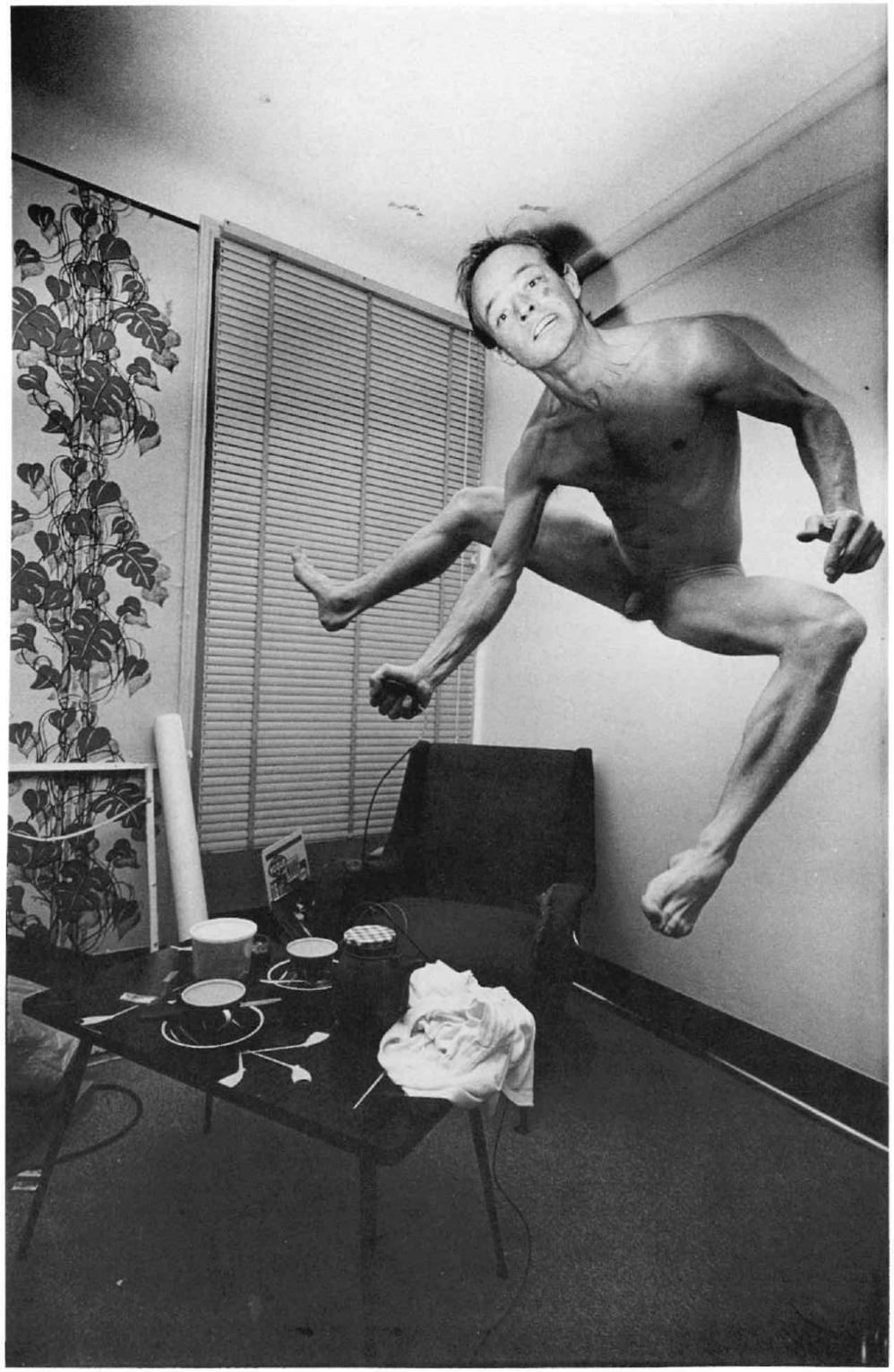


Fig 51:
Arnaud Baumann
*Self-portrait from "Carnet D'Adresses", 1979*
Courtesy of the photographer





# 5. IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Fig 52:
Peter Berlin
*From the 'Doppelganger' Series, c1980*
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

Portraits most often depict the face, the part of the body with which we perform the majority of our conscious interpersonal communication and which we are most skilled at "reading". Mode of dress may also help us 'place' the person in social, economic and stylistic terms, but the body itself remains hidden.

Making a portrait of someone who is unclothed changes things. Removing the symbols of social status does not have the happy effect of making all subjects equal, but it does give us a new set of information with which to work. Information which we are less well adapted to decode, and which makes us look at the portrait in a different way.

Within male nude photography, portraiture has been and continues to be a prolific presence, ranging from the self portrait, through portraits of others, to social documentary portraits of groups.

Truthful self-portraiture must be one of the most gruelling of photographic undertakings. It leaves, after all, no place to hide from one's own penetrating gaze. It is not surprising, then, that so many nude self-portraits use nakedness, not in order to strip away pretence, but as a form of self-dramatizing disguise: a dressing up box of Emperor's New Clothes in which to play out a fantasy existence. The

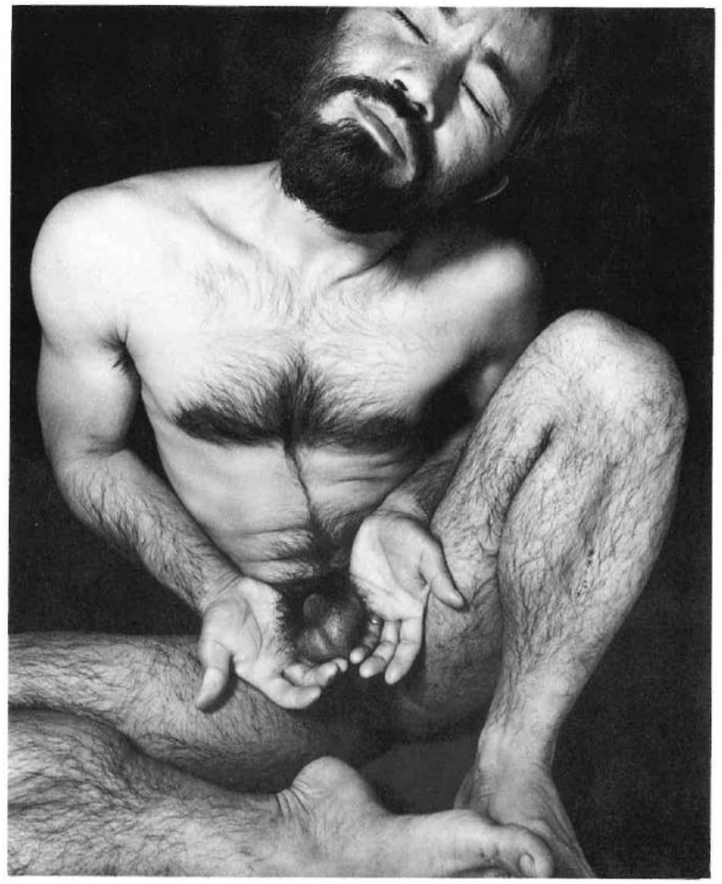


Fig 53:
Hiro Sato
*Self-portrait, 1987*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 54:
Vincenzo Galdi
*Two youths, c1900*
Collection Jo Brunenberg, Weert

very first photographic self-portrait by Hippolyte Bayard (Fig. 3) stages that most perennial of threats "How will you feel about me once I am dead?". Pierre Molinier and Peter Berlin both experiment with sexual fantasies: Molinier giving substance to transvestite (and indeed transexual) desires by photographing them; Berlin by constructing images of a sexual encounter in which he is both seducer and seduced.

Self-portraiture can also, of course, be a way of coming to terms with the physical self. Both Paul Blanca and Hiro Sato have photographed themselves over a sustained period. Many of Blanca's images involve pushing himself to extremes; in "Paul and Benno," however, we see him in gentler mood, experimenting with the role of Father. Sato's work is a long and sometimes agonized exploration of the relationship between self and body; self and gender; self and elemental nature (Fig. 53).

Lea Andrews and Erwin Olaf place themselves in terms of a personal relationship. Both use a direct, almost confrontational approach, yet both contain a great deal of warmth and a sense of belonging — be it the familial relationship of son to parents, or the sexual/romantic one of lovers.

The preconception that portraiture is about the face, and in the case of nude portraiture, the face and the body, is challenged by John Coplans, who consciously excludes the face from his self-portraits, selecting different areas of his body to represent himself — for instance, his hand. After all, the hand is, if anything, more specific to an individual than the face — finger-prints being one of the most accurate forms of identification.

In other areas of portraiture, the photographer records someone other than the self, usually with the intention of revealing something of the subject's identity. Although in many of the photographs taken at the turn of the century, classical props were used to create an

Fig 55:
Gypsy P. Ray
*"Rusty", 1976*
Courtesy of the photographer





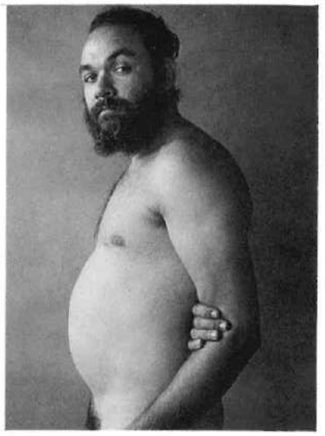


Fig 56:
Minnette Lehmann
*"Paul D.", 1979*
Courtesy of the photographer

Arcadian atmosphere, the intention was not to stifle the individuality of the people photographed. In certain cases, especially that of the Vincenzo Galdi, the photographs reveal a very real sensitivity to the qualities which made each young man (and woman) unique, and each relationship different.

Nudity is perhaps more a question of effect in Lewis Morley's photograph of David Frost, seated cowboy-style astride the fashionable Sixties chair a suitably provocative image for the Angry Young Man of the satirical television show "That Was The Week That Was". This has not so much to do with revealing a personal identity as with promoting a media image.

Among the increasing number of photographers making male nude portraits today, Robert Mapplethorpe must surely be the most celebrated. His images of naked black men, like that of Bob Love, are strongly composed and heavily sexual. But they are less about the specific identity of the men they represent than the myth of black men as well built, well hung, studs. Bob Love certainly has a physical presence in this photograph, but his vacant eyes and lugubrious expression lead one to suspect that the photographer has made no real contact.

In contrast, the work of George Dureau, while bearing a superficial similarity to that of Mapplethorpe, reveals a greater sensitivity of approach. His photographs have a subtlety and empathy lacking in those of Mapplethorpe. It is the great strength of Dureau's portrait of Wilbert Hines (Fig. 57) that one sees the man first, and the disability second.

Women often find it easier to break out of the rigid conventions of masculine representation. In Gypsy Ray's portrait of Rusty, (Fig. 55) the man is seen as soft, passive, gentle, without appearing weak or vulnerable — 'feminine' without becoming effeminate. Minnette Lehmann's "Paul D" (Fig. 56) is from a series of nude portraits which encompass

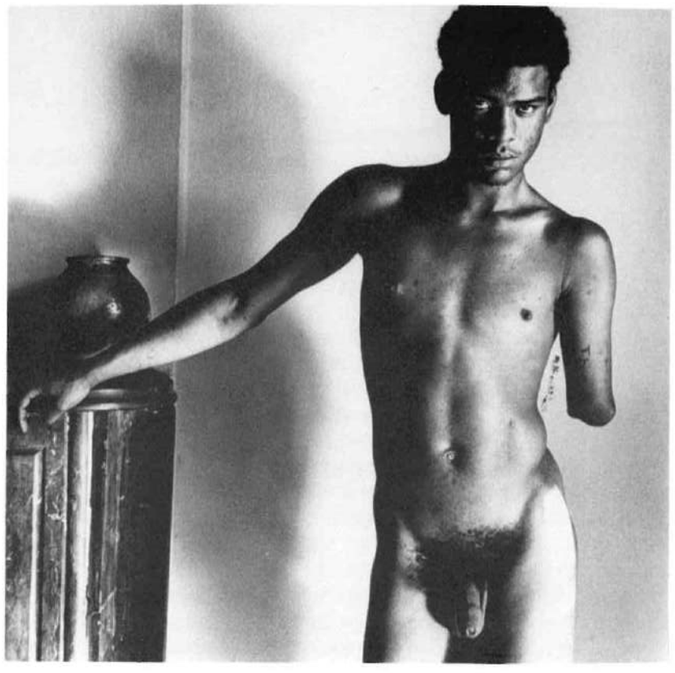


Fig 57:
George Dureau
*Wilbert Hines, 1977*
Galerie Urbi et Orbi, Paris

a much wider range of body types than those normally selected by photographers. The diversity of physical attributes with which this work presents the viewer, and the recognition that these are bodies from the real world rather than idealizations, leads one to attempt to decode the semiology of their flesh, to read it the way one does a form of dress — as an indication of occupation, social status, personal style.

A number of the portraits in this section show two people together. Through the relationship of man to woman, man to man, or man to child, they present us with a sum of information greater than would have existed had the two people been photographed alone. What is gained is the sense of identity which each subject finds reflected in the other. So in Jean-Francois Bauret's portrait of Klaus Kinsky and Nanoi (Fig. 58), the aging processes clearly at work in the actor are made more poignant by comparison with the child, but also more meaningful — he becomes not simply a man but a father.

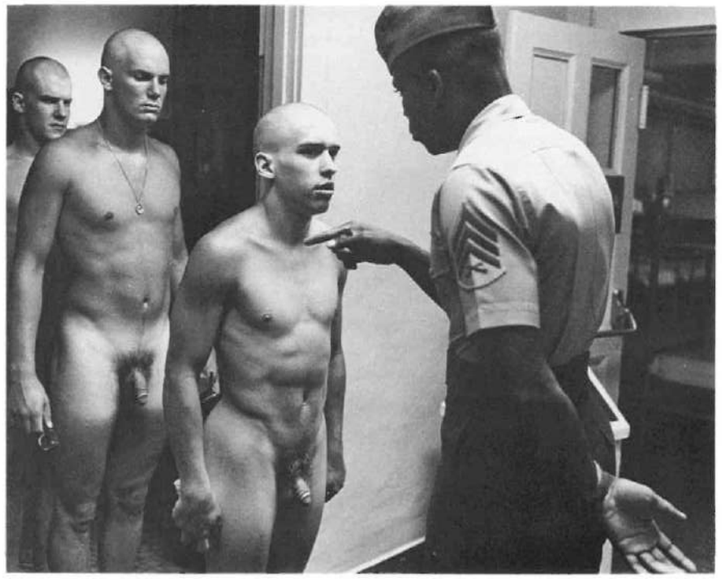


Fig 58:
Jean-Francois Bauret
*Klaus Kinsky and Nanoi, 1979*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 59:
Volker Corell
*US Marines Boot Camp, San Diego, California, 1981*
Courtesy of the photographer

There is a third kind of photograph which can rightly be thought of as a portrait. It is the documentary image which presents an individual (or a group of individuals) not in terms of their specific and peculiar identity, but as members of a group. Thus the men in the showers are "coal miners" or "a gas worker", the young man with the mirror is "a Latuko youth"; and the men in the river are "Austrian prisoners".

It is a common criticism of this kind of photography, and especially when it is ethnographic in nature, that it misrepresents because it does not recognize the complexity of the groups, societies and cultures it portrays, preferring excitement, drama and exoticism to the reality of social structure and interdependence.

This is certainly true of some of the images in this section. With the image of the Latuko youth, for instance, the subject is presented not in terms of his place within his own social structure, but in terms of what is seen as a primitive naivety about the objects of our own civilisation. However, in the case of George Rodger's Masai photographs and those by Laurence Salzmann of a Jewish bath in Romania, a very real sensitivity to subject is apparent.

In photographing an initiate at the Masai circumcision ceremony

Fig 60:
Anon.
*Austrian prisoners in stream, c1916*
Imperial War Museum, London





Fig 61:
George Rodger
*"Initiate at a Masai circumcision ceremony, Kenya", 1978*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 62:
Larry Clark
*Runaway, California, ND*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 63:
Laurence Salzmann
*Jewish bath, Romania, c1975*
Courtesy of the photographer

(Fig. 61) Rodger does not choose to record a moment of high drama, or to isolate the youth to make him appear either heroic or vulnerable. The youth waits impassively, the women around him concerned and supportive. What is emphasised are not the points of difference, but the elements of a shared experience.

Salzmann's work shows us what was left (in 1978) of traditional Jewish life in communist Romania seen through the microcosm of the communal baths (Fig. 63). A place to meet, to talk and, in the long cold winters, to get warm. The pictures are a gentle evocation of a way of life fast disappearing.

Larry Clark is unusual in that he documents as a participant, rather than as a detached observer. In his books *Tulsa* and *Teenage Lust* he presents the worlds of drug addiction and teenage sexuality in a searing and unsentimental combination of personal diary and documentary record (Fig. 62). **Ag**





# 6. THE NUDE AS FORM

Fig 65:
Donald Herbert
*Two men with rope, 1938*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Like 'Still Life' and 'Landscape', 'the Nude' is one of the great traditional subjects in Art. In this context, the body becomes an object. It is a surface, a shape, a volume. Form takes precedence over personality. Who and what is inside is of little importance, for images of the Nude are less concerned with the specific identity of the body's owner than with its innate corporeal qualities. The Nude is also a closed shell which, as far as possible, denies the reality of blood and bile which course beneath the skin.

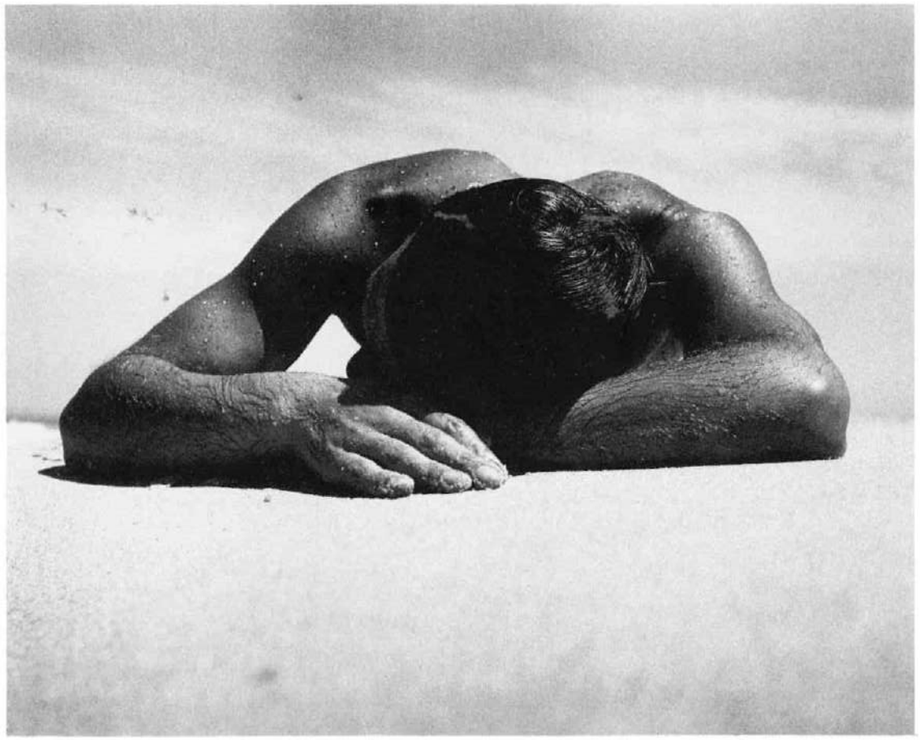
The photographs in this section are Nudes in this specific sense. More properly, one should say that they exhibit qualities which one associates with the genre of the Nude, since a photographic image is seldom purely one thing or another, but a matrix of influences and ideas. These images are different from those described in Section Three, because they do not rely on a direct reference to paintings or sculpture. They are not reconstructions of Fine Art Nudes, but photographic Nudes in their own right.

This idea of a purely photographic nude emerged only slowly in the history of the medium. In the mid-19th century O.G. Rejlander became famous for his complex combination prints which created sentimental, painterly images. However, many of the individual studies which were shot with the intention of combining them in these larger constructions, do exhibit qualities of a more purely photographic nudity (Fig. 65). At the turn of the century, von Gloeden, too, in his less self-consciously Arcadian moments, produced images which display a clearly photographic rendering of the youthful male body.

In the second decade of this century Imogen Cunningham, following a period when she had been highly influenced by the pre-Raphaelites, produced some splendid examples of male nude photography when she photographed her first husband, Roi Partridge, on Mount Rainier and the Dipsea Trail (Fig. 64).

Fig 66:
O.G. Rejlander
*Seated youth, c1857*
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Fig 64:
Imogen Cunningham
*"Roi on the Dipsea Trail 5", 1918*
©The Imogen Cunningham Trust, Berkeley



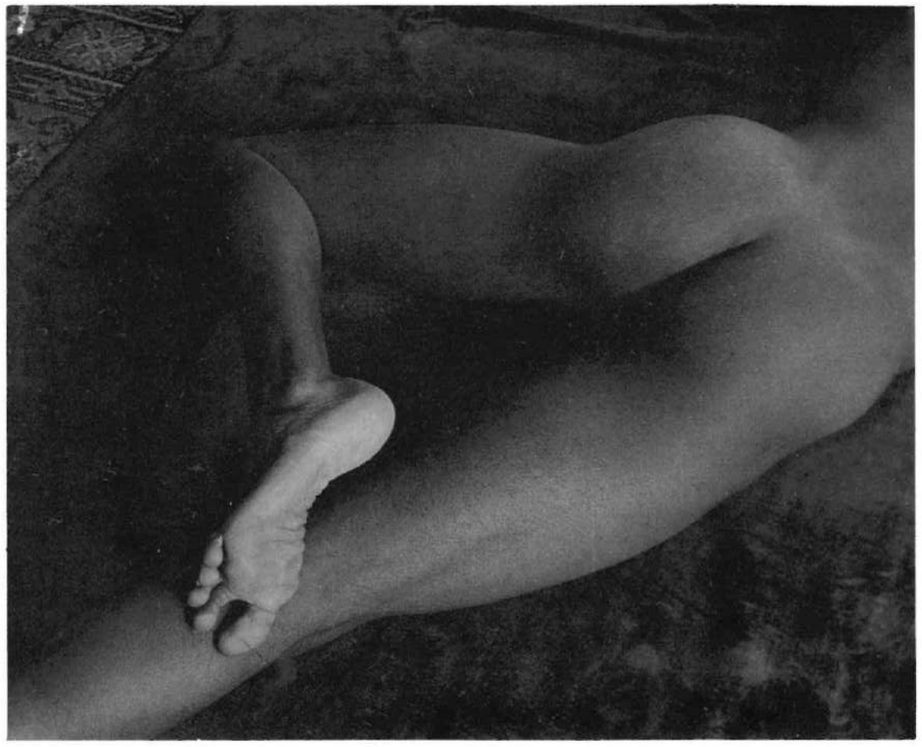






Fig 69:
Herlinde Koelbl
*Michael Ratajczak, c1983*
Courtesy of the photographer

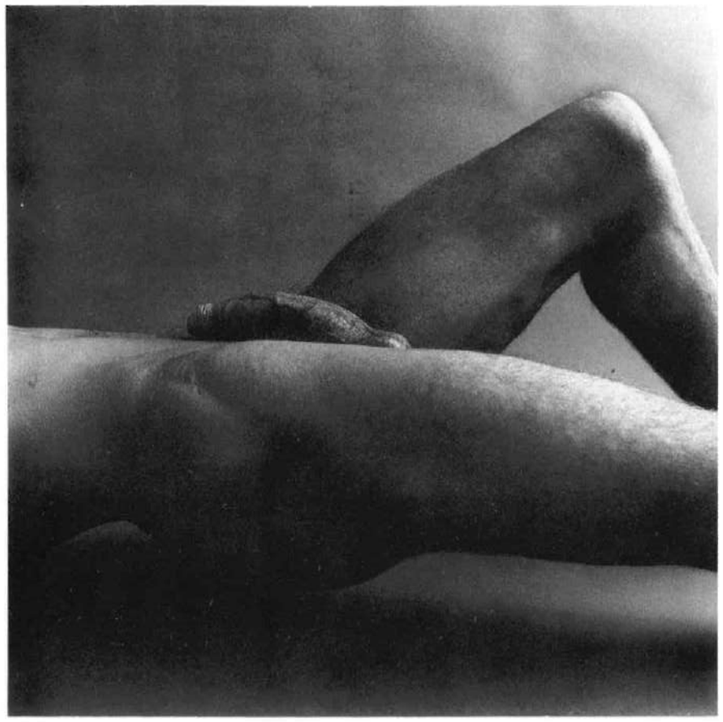


Fig 67:
Max Dupain
*"Sunbaker", 1937*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 68:
Minor White
*"Nude Foot", 1947*
The Art Museum, Princeton University,
The Minor White Archive

Fig 70:
Eikoh Hosoe
*"A Man on the Rock, Yosemite", 1975*
Courtesy of the photographer

The modern era which followed World War One found many photographers portraying the nude in terms of form alone — recording it, in part or as a whole, as a series of shapes and volumes rather than as an archetypal representation of the human body. Imogen Cunningham's "Spiral Back", like many of her photographs of plants made around the same time, reduces a complex morphology to a simple abstracted form.

"Simplicity and directness" are the watchwords of Max Dupain, whose "Sunbaker" (Fig. 67) represents a prone male body with the same strong geometry apparent in his architectural images. However, it is not always the case that such "shape" photographs are about simple and direct ideas. Minor White's meticulously executed prints of natural objects are intended to function, not as straight-forward representations, but as metaphors for inner spiritual experience. His beautiful, esoteric images of young men hover strangely between abstraction, mysticism and desire.

Christian Vogt and Arno Rafael Minkkinen both create pictures in which the shape confounds expectation to such an extent that it borders on the surreal. In Vogt's photograph of Sai Kijima (Fig. 71) the extremely fast shutter speed and the perfect poise of the dancer create an effect in which the body appears suspended like a question-mark over the paper beneath. Minkkinen's polaroid image (a self-portrait) departs so far from the way in which we normally expect to see the body that we feel in some way it must be "wrong". The eye roams the image to see where the trickery is to be found. Disturbingly, there is none.

The photographs of Gormezano and Minot are studies on which more complex, multi-media works are based. The two men collaborate as a single entity: Minot acting as the physical presence, blindly

Fig 71:
Christian Vogt
*Sai Kijima (commissioned by Hasselblad).*
*1987*
Courtesy of the photographer





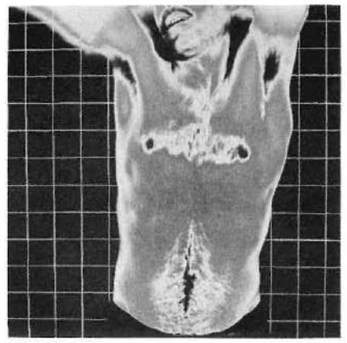


Fig 72:
Jeff Gates
*"Breast Plates: Fig. 8", 1979*
Courtesy of the photographer

exploring the environment through touch; Gormezano as the seeing and recording eye. Together they investigate an intimate conjunction of man with nature: a physical adventure with a metaphysical intent.

There is an unwritten rule that male nudes should be smooth. This quality promotes continued associations with marble, and indeed with many painted nudes regardless of gender; the body seen in terms of form and volume alone. Recently, certain photographers have broken with the tradition to include those elements of surface which are specifically masculine. The secondary sexual characteristics of sinewy, bony protrusions and body hair.

In Herlinde Koelbl's photograph, the hairs on Marcello Gina's back appear as little ticks of light. Bleached by the same sun which has tanned his skin so dark, they become the focus of attention because the expected relationship of dark and light has been reversed. In Eva Rubinstein's "Body and Bark" (Fig. 73) the rough surface of the tree in the background serves to emphasise the pattern of hair distributed over the model's abdomen, pubis and thighs.

When Jeff Gates made his series of "Breast Plates" (Fig. 72) he admitted that, despite working as a medical photographer and also as a printer for a muscle magazine, he felt uneasy photographing the male body outside those particular conventions. The sabattier technique (also known as solarisation) functioned as a veil, but it had the added effect of highlighting the distribution of body hair, converting it to a flickering flamelike pattern which contrasts with the depilous bodies of musclemen and the rigidly formal grid in the background of the photograph (itself a reminder of those early Lamprey Screens).

Dianora Niccolini's ultra-close-up reduces maleness to a series of dots and lines — a surface of tiny goose-bumps on which lie, with precise symmetry, the two discs of the nipples and the occasional random hair. **Ag**

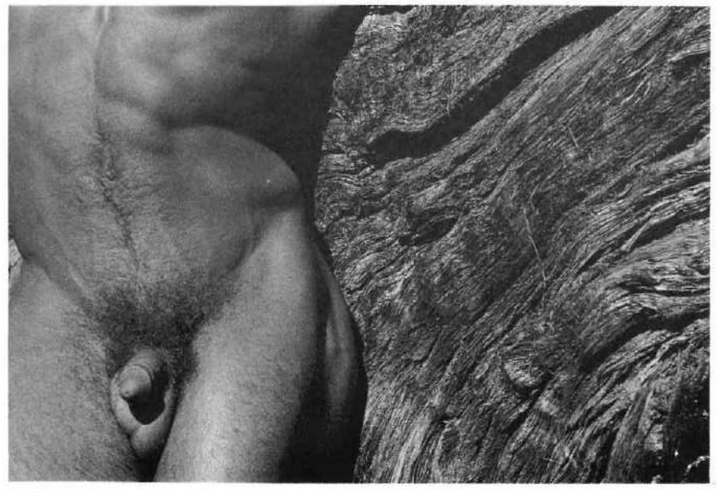


Fig 73:
Eva Rubinstein
*Body and bark, 1974*
Courtesy of the photographer

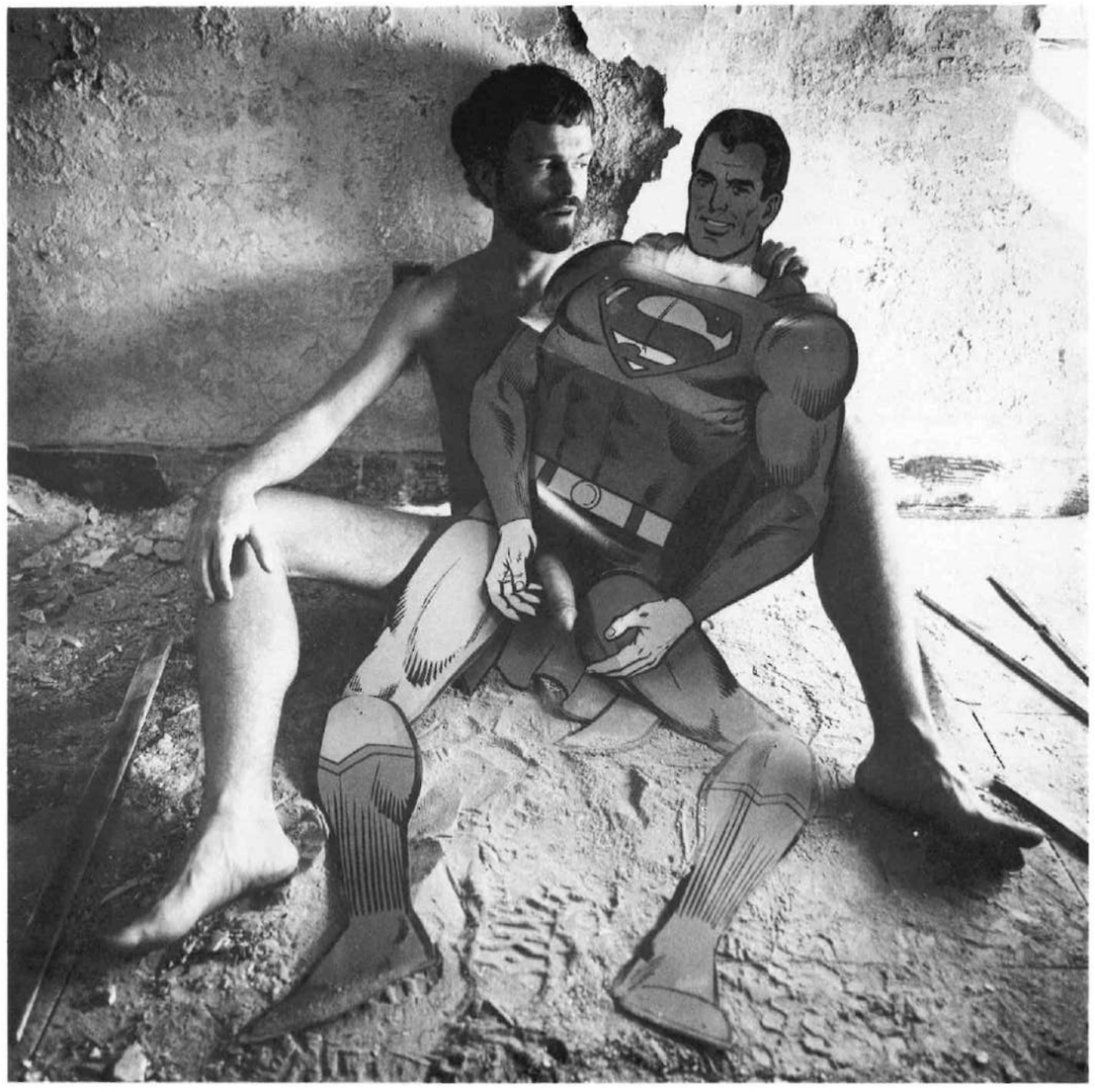


Fig 74:
Arthur Tress
*"Superman Fantasy", 1978*
Courtesy of the photographer





# 7. JESTING WITH GENDER

There is not a great deal of humour to be found in popular representations of the male nude. As Roberta McGrath suggests in her essay, patriarchy is too fearful of cracks appearing in the monumental edifice of heterosexual masculinity to allow even the most gentle ripples of laughter to lap at its walls.

The one exception is the kind of foolishness that arises from the seemingly inappropriate nature of male nudity. It is laughable in the way a dancing poodle is laughable, because it is "unnatural". Such images are particularly common in British cinema farce, where the sight of a man with his trousers down is automatically deemed amusing. These representations do not undermine patriarchy simply because the man concerned has, as it were, been removed from the set "male" into the set "fool" — he has been cast out of the citadel.

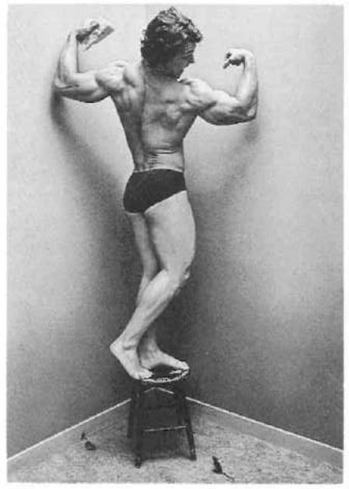


Fig 75:
Jan Bengtsson
*"Help!", 1978*
*(original in colour)*
©Upside, Stockholm

Fig 76:
Pierre and Gilles
*"Victor", c1982*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy of the photographers

Fig 77:
Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty
*from a "Pin-Down" calendar (Photosession), 1985*
Courtesy of the photographer

Jan Bengtsson's postcard image entitled "Help" (Fig. 75) illustrates an even more complex piece of double-think. Superficially the photograph pokes fun at the excesses of body-building (of the man as super-phallus). It tells us that *looking* masculine is not necessarily a sign of *being* masculine (i.e. brave, free from irrational fear, unlike a woman). However, this picture does not affirm the foolishness of phallic aspiration, but merely assures us that having big muscles does not necessarily make you tough.

Women and gay men find themselves outsiders, and, unconstrained by the sanctimonious conventions of patriarchy, they feel free to lampoon its most cherished icons. The images by Naomi Stanley and by the French duo, Pierre and Gilles, both debunk that perennial symbol of American manhood, the cowboy. In Naomi Stanley's version he is, stripped of his Levis, a bit of a wimp; in Pierre and Gilles' image he becomes a curvaceous, pouting, dandy, complete with lame gloves and co-ordinating holster and boots. A spiral of stars and stripes draws the eye inwards to the artfully covered penis, and to the unlikely-looking toy gun which is its substitute.

Reversing the sexual roles and juggling around with the accepted conventions of gender-typing can also prove an illuminating undertaking. In Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty's photosession (Fig. 77) the

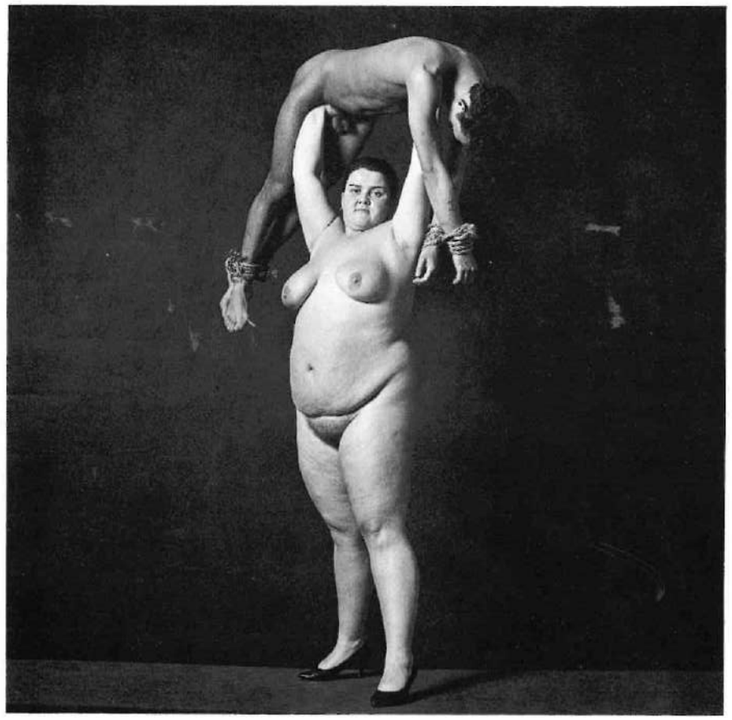


Fig 78:
Erwin Olaf
*"Powerlifting", 1985*
Courtesy of the photographer

traditional roles of glamour photographer and model have been reversed — a situation, it appears, more easily adjusted to by the woman! In Erwin Olaf's picture (Fig. 78) a role reversal is also taking place, but, as with so many of Olaf's images, the humour is complicated by a very real eroticism. It is a game, but one laced with a submissive pleasure.

Gay men often use the most overt trappings of phallicism — motor bikes, black leather-jackets, heavy boots, distressed clothing — as a semi-ironic form of fancy dress. Fantasy dress. Herbert Tobias makes a little joke by photographing his butch, be-jacketed model bent over in a pose of camp come-on, acknowledging the complexity and plurality of homoerotic response. Grace Lau's photograph (Fig. 79) smiles at the tall muscular man whose developed body, torn tee-shirt and shiny boots constitute a carefully co-ordinated wardrobe of designer phallicism, completely undermined by the half pint beer mug he holds in his hand. It is at once incongruous (with the role he is playing) and predictable (he is at a disco).

More gentle is the humour of Barabara DeGenevieve's "Four Graces" (Fig. 81). Affectionate irony is at work here, as the photographer takes a sideways look at the tradition of classical reference by choosing a feminine prototype. Everything is slightly off the mark: there are now four, not three, graces and they are somehow too gangling to properly fit the frame. Yet they are without any shred of masculine braggadocio. Perhaps here they share one attribute in common with the original Beauty, Charm and Grace in that their nudity symbolizes lack of deceit.

If satire is a commentary on pretentious folly, there can be no more fruitful ground for satire than the relationship between the penis and the phallus. For never can that most mutable of organs measure up to the panoply of phallic aspiration behind which it lurks. Patriarchy,

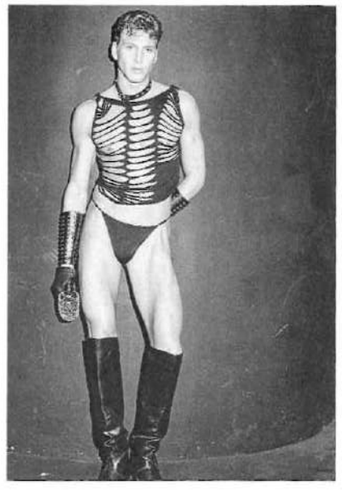


Fig 79:
Grace Lau
*Man at Heaven, 1986*
Courtesy of the photographer





Fig 80:
Collaborative work by
Jo Spence and David Roberts
*"Omnimpotence" (from*
*"Things My Father Never Taught Me")*
*work in progress, 1987/8*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy of the artists

wary of this contradiction, reacts by making the representation of the penis in general, and the erection in particular, taboo.

Superman is, himself, phallic (hard, encased in a second skin, able to penetrate). To represent him, as Arthur Tress does (Fig. 74), with an anatomical penis, is to break the spell. It is cock, and not Kryptonite, which robs this superhero of his power.

In the photograph by Jo Spence and David Roberts from "Things My Father Never Taught Me" (Fig:80), photographer and subject have worked together creating an image which suggests that it is the multinational (symbolized by the balloon filled with hot air) that supports the phallic illusion. The title, "Omnimpotence", is a portmanteau word which blends omnipotence with impotence, and as such sums up neatly the compounded power and terror at the root of phallic aspiration.

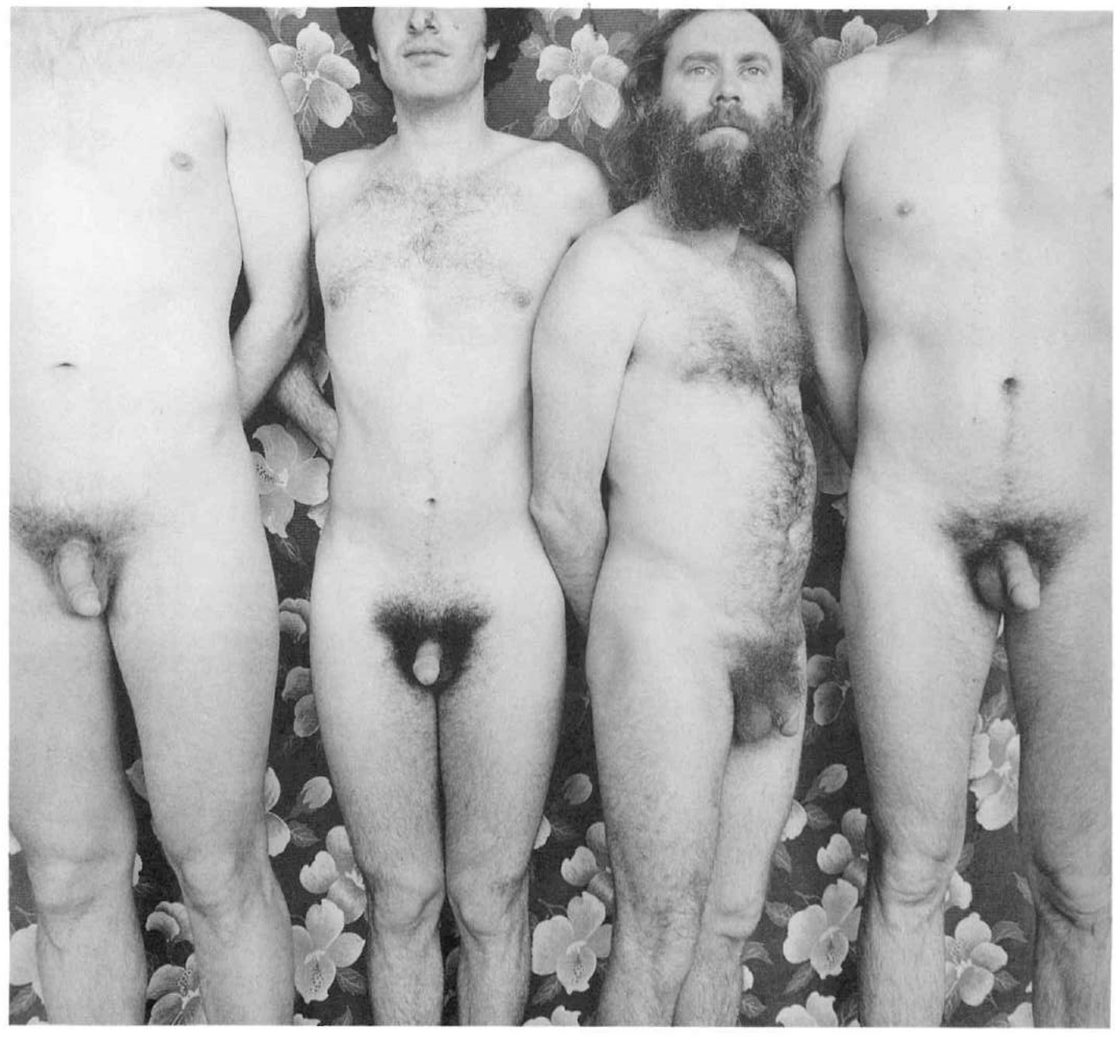


Fig 81:
Barbara DeGenevieve
*"Four Graces", 1979*
Courtesy of the photographer

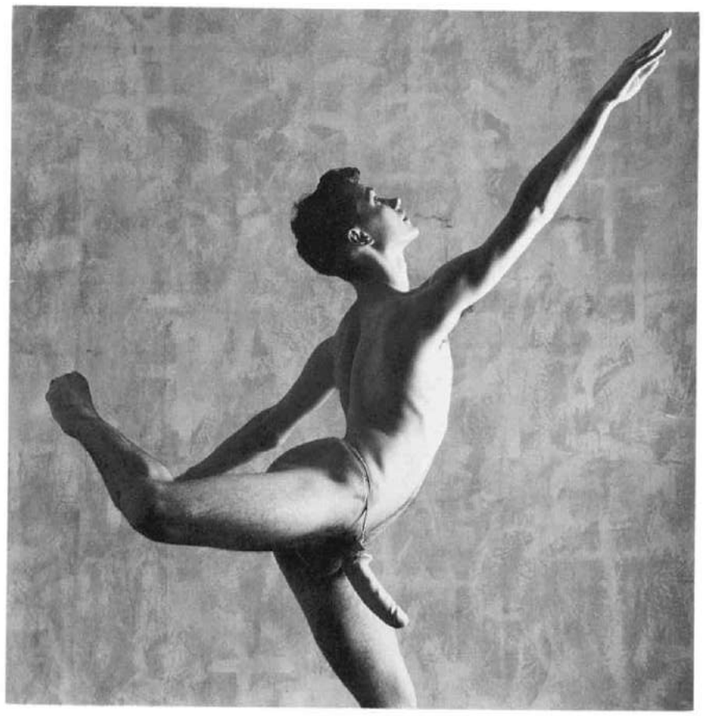


Fig 84:
Lea Andrews
*"Form and Content", 1986*
Courtesy of the photographer

Fig 82:
Davies and Starr
*Michael Clark 1984*
Courtesy of the photographers

When the *enfant terrible* of modern dance, Michael Clark, posed for the camera of Davies and Staff (Fig. 82), he brought with him a large, strap-on dildo which was to form part of the costume for a new piece he was choreographing. The dancer's cherubic face and graceful pose serve only to heighten the demonic nature of the pink plastic prosthesis jutting out in everlasting erection — a wicked reminder of the twin pathologies of priapism and impotence.

A more subtle dig at the conventions of masculine representation is Lea Andrews' "Form and Content" (Fig. 84), a self-portrait of the photographer holding a reproduction of the hip section of Michelangelo's "David". The commercial distributor blocked out the genital region before displaying the poster. It is doubtful if a photograph of the full statue would have been treated in this way, and one must therefore assume that the presence of a real flesh and blood man somehow undermined the art representation and rendered the marble genitalia offensive. **Ag**

Fig 83:
Erwin Olaf
*"Joy", 1986*
Courtesy of the photographer





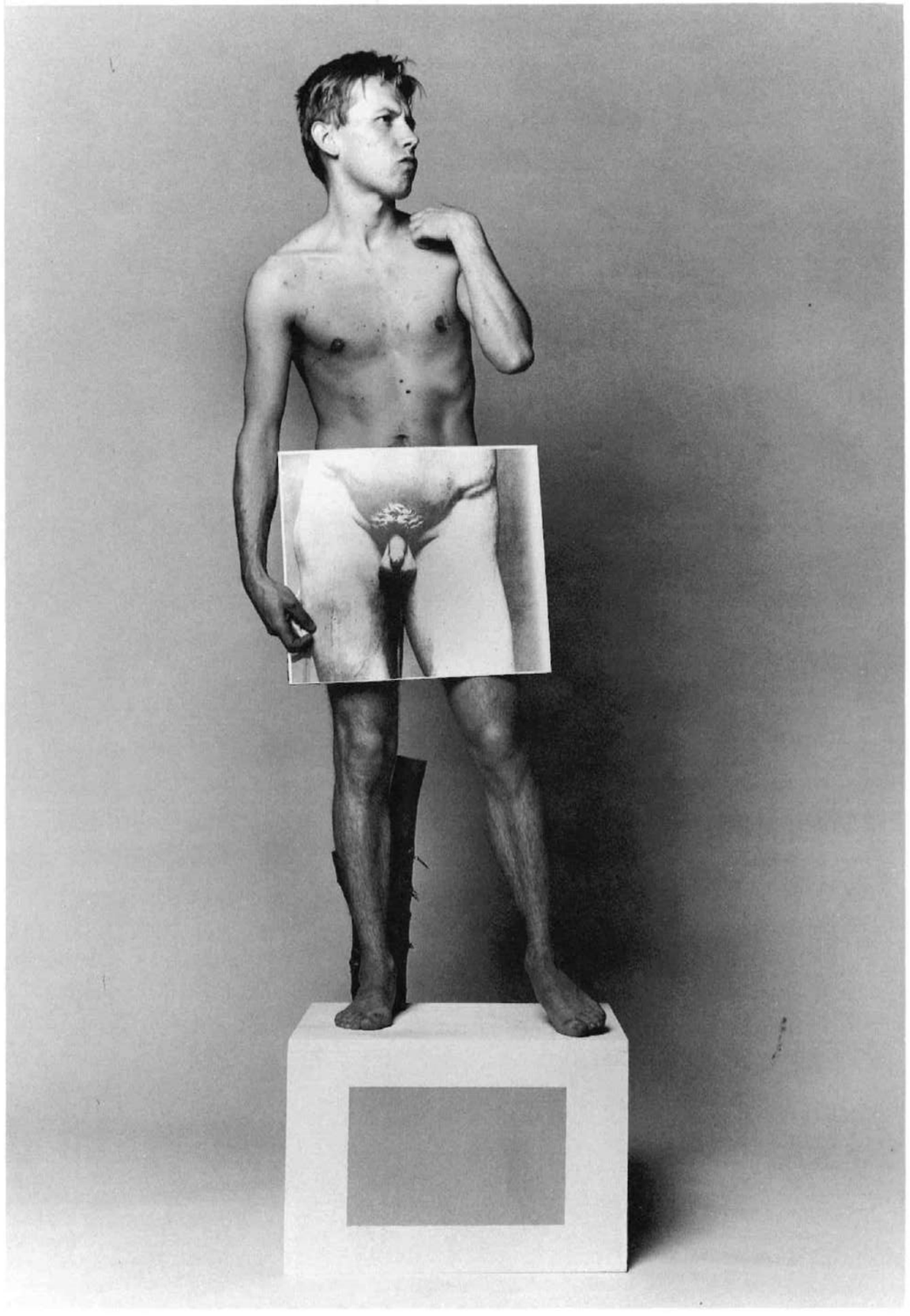


Fig 85:
George Platt Lynes
*"Narcissus", DN*
Robert Miller Gallery, New York





# 8. THE THEATRE OF THE MIND

Photography is a fiction which purports to tell the truth, an arrangement of particles in two dimensions representing the real world of four dimensions. A photograph is an instant flattened, pressed like a flower between the pages of a book, preserved, entombed.

A complex set of rules govern the accepted relationship between photographer and subject and viewer. It is assumed that the subject is recorded as it is (it may be "arranged" but not tampered with); the photographic processes are carefully controlled to create an "accurate' representation. To break these conventions can create the illusion of a new world, a new reality of visions, dreams and fictions. Arthur Tress has dubbed this "The Theatre of the Mind"

A.D. Coleman suggests that these fictions can be subdivided into "Created Realities" (tableaux photographed in a more or less conventional manner), and "Unrealities" (in which the fantasy world is created within the optical and chemical processes of the medium) [1].

Evergon, Calum Colvin, Sebastian Holzhuber, Arthur Tress, Christian Vogt, Myriam and Gilles Arnould, have all staged their images and simply recorded the result with a camera (though in the case of Colvin and Vogt, the preselected, and very specific point of viewing, is crucial to the finished result).

Bernis von zur Muehlen, Man Ray, Angus McBean, David Newman and Joel-Peter Witkin, on the other hand, use the photographic processes to create images which never had an existence in reality. Bernis von zur Muehlen uses the simple expedient of infra-red film to render her husband's body soft, luminous, transcendent. Man Ray uses the Sabattier effect (a second exposure to light made

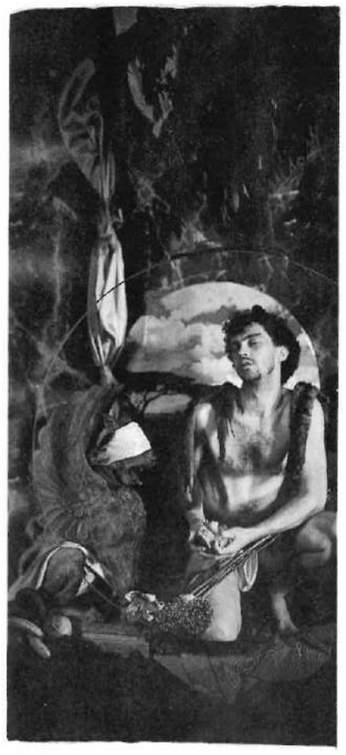


Fig 86:
Evergon
*"Satyr", 1984*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy of Gallery Ton Peek, Amsterdam

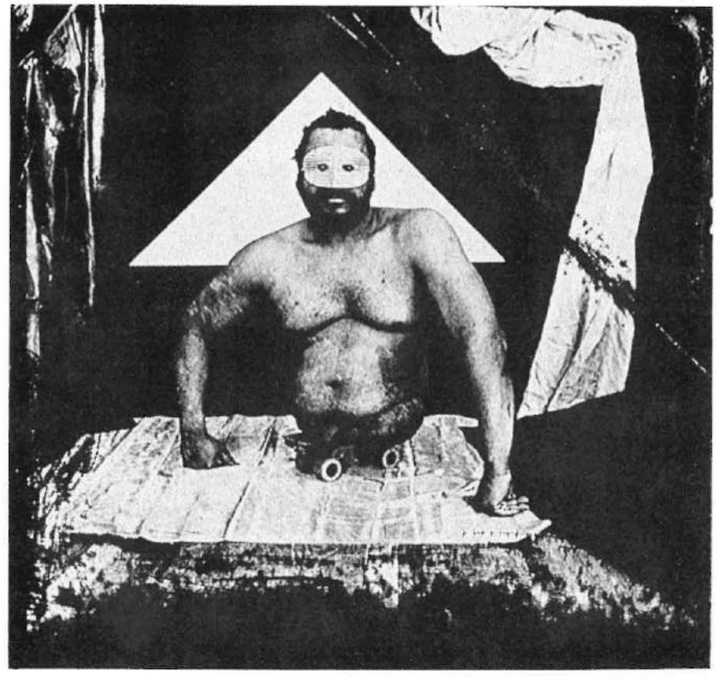


Fig 87:
©Joel-Peter Witkin
*"Man Without Legs", 1984*
Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, and
Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Fig 88:
Angus McBean
*Christmas card: Self-portrait as Neptune, 1939*
Courtesy of the photographer

during development) to create a semi-graphic surrealism. Angus McBean pastes together a photocollage (Fig. 88), re-photographing it to give a surface continuity which implies a photographic integrity at odds with our experience. David Newman and Joel-Peter Witkin employ a number of techniques: Newman blending multiple exposure with work on the surface of the print using (or by conventional standards "mis-using") photographic chemicals; while Witkin (Fig. 87) starts with subject matter which is in itself abnormal, freakish, deviant; overlaying it with photographic techniques which, if anything, act as an aesthetic palliative.

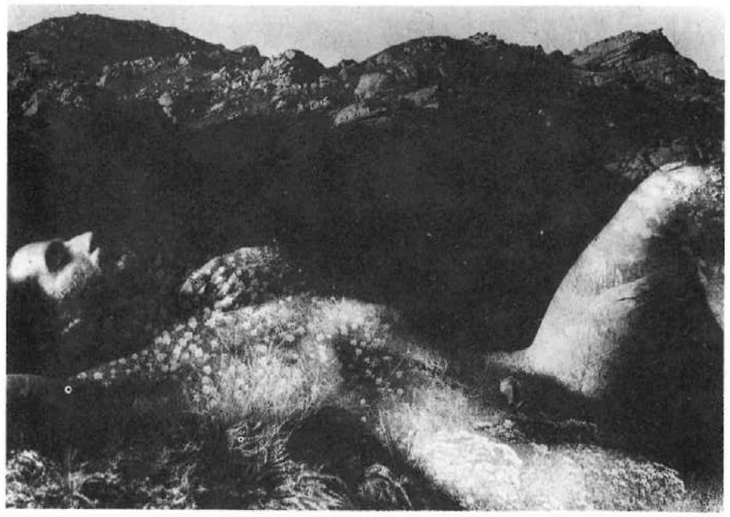
In the Theatre of the Mind the man becomes a player: his nudity may be shocking, funny, erotic, or a form of generalizing costume setting him in the role of an Everyman. He may even represent the metaphysical. Edmund Teske is fascinated by the Vedantic myth of Shiva and Shakhti. Shiva is the male principle of the Hindu universe, passive, self-contained, closer to God than to humanity. Shakhti, his consort, is female and active. She represents desire, movement, change. The technique he employs in his photographic representation of this myth (Fig. 90) is that of multiple negatives printed simultaneously (sometimes known as "sandwiches"). In the series of

Fig 89:
Arthur Tress
*"Electrocution Fantasy", 1977*
Courtesy of the photographer





Fig 90:
Edmund Teske
*Jeff Harris in the role of Shiva, Box Canyon, ND*
Courtesy of the photographer



photographs, of which this is an example, the photograph of a reclining man representing Shiva, is always the same. Over this image a series of scenes are shown, representing Shakhti — a demolition site, a bridge, a postage stamp and, in this case, the landscape of Box Canyon.

The photographs of Lenni van Dinther present an image of the male body which is opposed to the usual stereotype. These delicate colour prints capture the fleeting shapes of a young man's body reflected in the dented and corroding surface of a sheet of polished metal — an inconstant mirror which translates the figure into a diffuse, abstracted androgyny.

Such an approach allows for complexity, ambivalence, doubt. In the works by Tana Kalaya, David Buckland, Sebastian Holzhuber, two men touch, but are they fighting, or dancing, or making love? Indeed, are they simultaneously involved in all three? For Sebastian Holzhuber this "contrast of vulnerability and strength" . . . "the ambivalence of being

Fig 91:
Sebastian Holzhuber
*"Appeasement of Warriors", 1982*
Courtesy of the photographer

caught up between hurt and passion" is of central importance[2].

Breaching the interface between what we assume to be real and what we know to be fiction can be a traumatic experience. Joel-Peter Witkin's "Man Without Legs" (Fig. 87) and Arthur Tress' "Electrocution Fantasy" (Fig. 89) are both disturbing, if for different reasons. The frisson we get from Witkin's photograph comes with the awareness that, beneath all that surface technique, the mutilation is real, not illusory. Tress' torture/execution is, from the start, clearly a piece of sado-masochistic make-believe, it is the knowledge that, at other times and in other places, a similar scene has and does actually take place which gives the image its underlying terror. However, unease can be modified by subtlety. In Jean-Marc Prouveur's photograph from his "Burial Series" (Fig. 92) the corpse has a peculiar sensuality — the wound at the nipple which trickles blood is fetishistic rather than mortal.

Not far below the surface of many of these images, there is a violence which points to death. We have seen it before: in the crucifixion images by Fred Day (Fig. 34); in all those St. Sebastians; and, indeed in that very first photograph of the male body by Hippolyte Bayard (Fig. 3). But it is a death tinged with eroticism — narcissistic, masturbatory, masochistic, orgasmic.

The photograph by Bill Henson is taken from an untitled sequence of a young man masturbating (Fig. 94). The images show only moments which are not in themselves specifically sexual. They are interstitial instants, a limbo from which we construct meaning. But the additional quality of a heavy (photographic) softness renders the figure hollow-eyed and cadaverous. The taboo that we transgress is two-fold: looking at sex and looking at the dead.

Georges Bataille argues that there is an intimate relationship between sex and death: between the momentary loss of self during orgasm and the permanent loss of self in oblivion; between the desire for individual identity and the desire to be part of the continuum[3]. The taboos around sex and around death are strong and universal. In patriarchy sex is about power, and the ultimate expression of power is death. These photographs dare to address themselves to this subject — to explore the possible meanings, and even, in the case of Andrew Wiener's "Sex Scene 3", (Fig. 93) to satirize them.

1. A. D. Coleman "The Grotesque in Photography" 1977.
2. from a personal statement by Sebastian Holzhuber.
3. Georges Bataille "Death and Sensuality: A Study in Eroticism and Taboo" 1962.

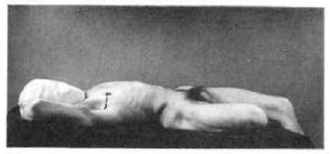


Fig 92:
Jean-Marc Prouveur
*from "Burial Series", 1979*
Edward Totah Gallery, London

Fig 93:
Andrew Wiener
*"Sex Scenes No:3", 1987*
*(original in colour)*
Courtesy of the photographer
and Scottish Photographic Works,
Edinburgh





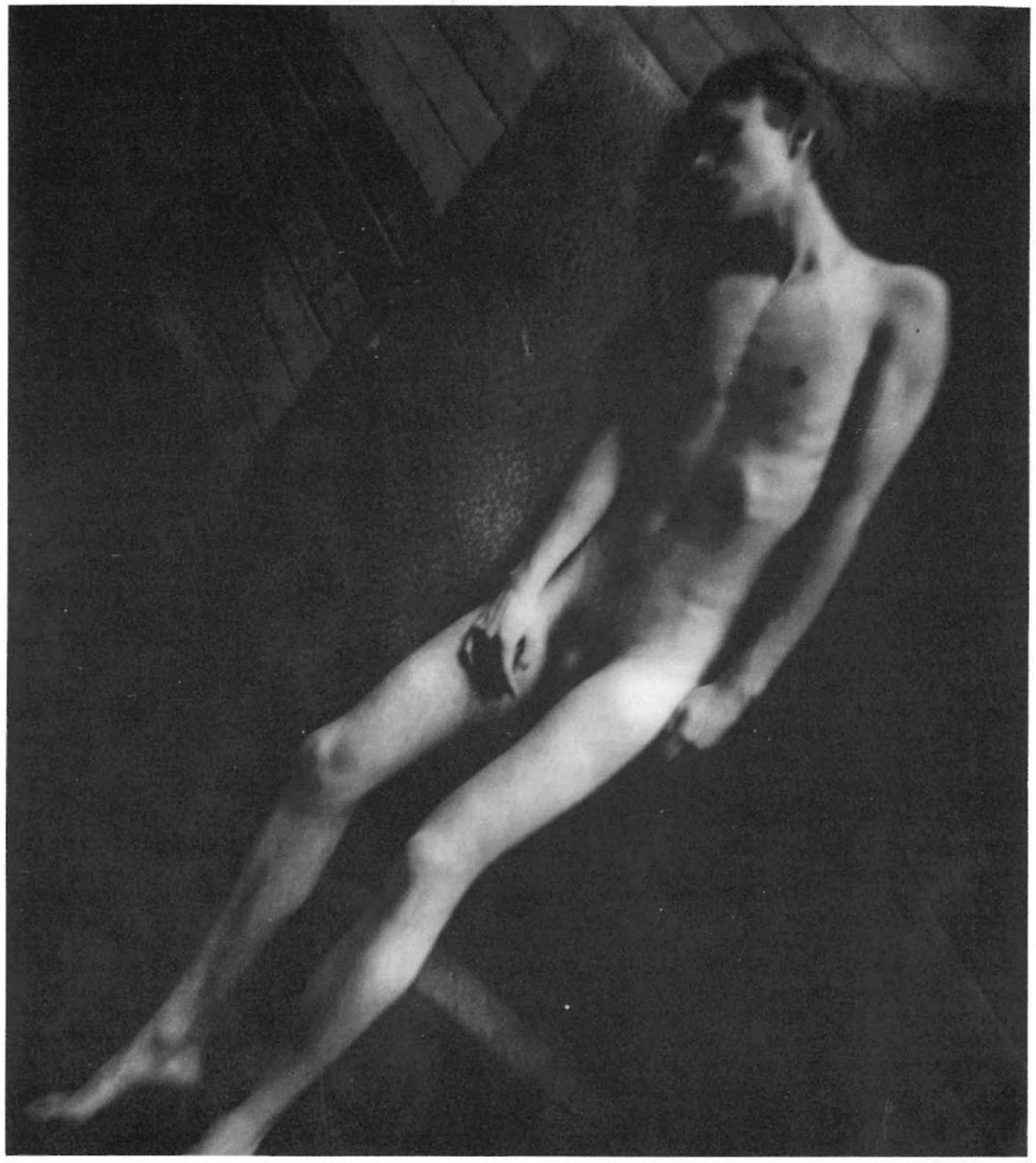


Fig 94:
Bill Henson
*Image No:9 from an untitled series, 1977*
Courtesy of Realities Gallery, Melbourne

# LOOKING HARD
## THE MALE BODY UNDER PATRIARCHY

**By Roberta McGrath**

Within our society patriarchal power, like the male body itself, remains unseen: immortal, invisible, hid from our eyes. Knowledge of what it means to be 'male' is assumed. Hence it is precisely representations of heterosexual masculinity that are rarely discussed [1].

In contradistinction to this, both women and homosexual men are seen as a problem which must be endlessly explored [2]. For patriarchy, fear of otherness (women) and fear of sameness (men) turns out to be one and the same: an abhorrence of disordering grounded in anxiety that one will become the same as the other; all that is masculine will become feminine; all that is hard will become soft. The feminine is castrating, the ruin of all representation. And feminism is threatening (to both heterosexual men and those women who aspire to phallic power) because, in breaking what is a gentlemen's agreement by speaking of patriarchy in less than worshipful terms, it exposes the shaky foundations on which patriarchal power rests.

Patriarchy therefore views anything unsettling or disordering as dangerous. And as we know disorder in the field of the body has a habit of being rapidly constructed as disease. The nineteenth century legacy of the pathologising of both homosexuality and women remains with us.

Hence also the more recent myth of homosexual gynophobia which not only shows the connection between homophobia and misogyny but conveniently combines them [3]. Fear of the same sex and hatred of women are mapped onto each other and then displaced onto a narcissistic love of the male heterosexual self: a god-like imperative which fashions the world of representation in his own image as a mirror of his heterosexual self (Fig. 28). This system is one which is only fully comprehensible within the context of patriarchy and, hardly

Fig 95:
Anon.
*from "Freude am Korper", 1931*
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

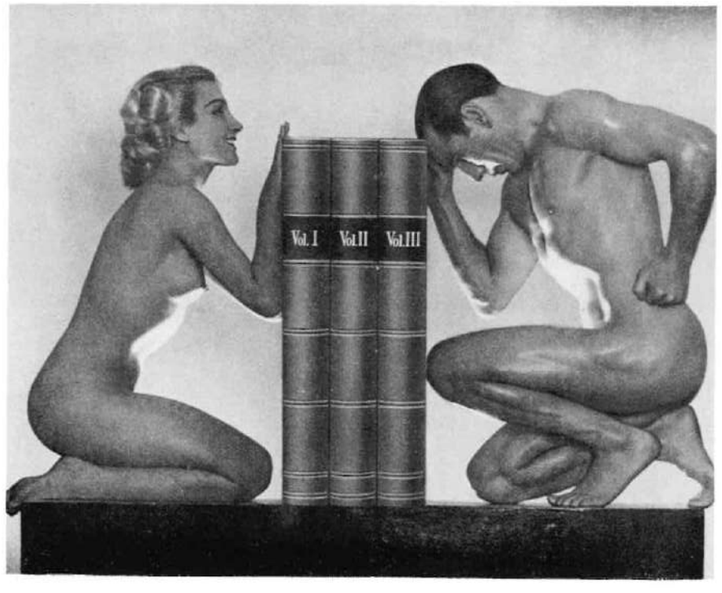



Fig 96:
Walter Bird, William Davis and E. Townsend
*"Beauty in the Human Form" photographs of Gaston and Andree, 1930s*
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh





Fig 97:
Roye
*"Dance of Desire", c1940*
*(original in colour)*
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

surprisingly, has little to offer either women or gay men, for it is a hidebound system rigidly divided between male and female, between active and passive.

Within the world of visual representation this is mirrored as a split between those who look and those who are to be looked at. The woman's *body* is constructed as the object of male heterosexual desire and fantasy as a remote territory to be charted and colonised. She remains unknowing and unknowable. For within patriarchy it is woman who is the enigma, the she who must be displayed, who must bear the heterosexual man's burden of an over-representation of 'body' as evidence of all that is most foreign to him: those natural and raw materials which only he can transform. She reproduces perishable bodies. He is promised eternal life through the production of lasting cultural works [4].

As a consequence of this constraining system one of the primary tasks of both feminism and gay liberation has been the decolonisation of our bodies; a reclamation of the right to define our identities, our sexualities, for and by ourselves. Discussions of the body in relation to gender, sexuality and representation have been important in challenging dominant ideologies of sexual identity as natural and fixed: anatomically determined, biologically given. Anatomy both is and isn't always destiny.

Psychoanalysis has been particularly useful in foregrounding the importance of the unconscious; subjects are formed through the development of sexual identity. Freud's theories of infant sexuality as bisexuality have been crucial in showing the complex and ambivalent nature of adult sexual identity. Babies are, according to Freud, 'polymorphously perverse', small bundles whose sexuality is boundary-less, anarchic, not genitally fixed. At this pre-Oedipal stage, far from being an individual (an entity with an identity), the infant still feels part of a continuum with the mother's body. It has little sense of separateness or coherence, even less a sense of being male or female. As yet, the symbolic forms of differentiation (masculinity and femininity) do not exist.

It is only gradually that the child begins to learn of itself as 'she' or 'he' a separate individual with an identity. This sense of identity is largely dependent on the ability to represent her-/or him-self in the world. The corporeal body, the lived body, that which we know most intimately and which may seem to us the most natural locus of our sexuality, is not just constructed socially and culturally but also psychically. The unconscious provides evidence of a subject fundamentally split, contradictory; and this struggle exists not simply between various groups but within the body itself.

Far from being a starting point, a source of recognition, the body is the effect, the result: a construction that is produced through subjection to the structures which precede our entry into this world. We have no direct access to the 'natural' body even at the simplest level. We can never know what it is, for "it is always a body mediated by representation, by body-image"[5]. It is a body saturated in representation, and 'body-images' have the power to model the body into the gendered subject, that unsatisfactory and incomplete she or he that we must become.

Ideology, then, presents masculinity and femininity as inevitable rather than as precarious and incompletely achieved concepts of what we should be. While representation, language, may allow us to speak it can also condemn us to silence, unable to articulate our needs, our desires, our fears.

Moreover, as the array of images in *Behold The Man* shows, the body (mediated in this case through photographs which have always enjoyed a privileged relationship to reality) is not any one thing. Here we are presented with bodies, erotic, sacred, medical, anthropological; discourses that are aesthetic and scientific, public and private. Through institutional discourse photographs are put to work on a variety of representational tasks which mark even the naked body with specific meanings.

While the old humanist ideology maintains that underneath we're all the same, stripping the body (whether of clothes or meaning) still doesn't enable us to get to the heart of the matter. Ideologies of masculinity or femininity cannot simply be peeled back like a mask to reveal the 'naked truth' of the body. The whole point is that underneath there is quite simply nothing; no central core of identity or meaning. The idea of the body as natural and uncoded, while persistent, is a romantic and impossible fiction; and just as there are preferred meanings there are also preferred sexual identities. We're all marked: men or women[6].

Of course we all know that apart from beauty being skin-deep, it is also in the eye of the beholder: an unstable 'I', complexly caught between identification and objectification. Photographs are rather like one-way mirrors onto which we can project our fantasies. While we can scrutinise the subject of the photograph, she or he cannot do the same to us. As preconditioned viewers we are not simply passive receivers but active constructors of meaning.

No single meaning lies latent waiting to be excavated by the discerning viewer. We literally *make* sense as we look at these images. We draw upon our reserve of knowledges, regimes of rules and codes which lie beyond this room, and these codes are not timeless truths above the interests of dominant groups. For example, in the nineteenth century racism was constructed as a scientific truth, whereas now we understand it as a political ideology. This knowledge may change how we view images such as the one in Fig. 98.

Fig 98:
Anon.
*Anthropometric photograph of Negro youth using the Lamprey system, c1868*
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

So, while we 'read' photographs, we do not do so under conditions of our own choosing. As viewers we owe it not only to ourselves but to others to become aware of our collusion in this process. Just as there is no universal viewer, there isn't any such thing as 'just having a look'. The sense we make of the male nude in photography is not impartial, but will depend not only upon how we use various knowledges but also upon our gender, race, class, age.

In a world ordered around imbalance we are not encouraged to think about the inequalities on which our own power is based. In the realm of photographic representation this means a lack of understanding of the relation between those who get to have a look and those who are looked at. Pleasure and power are intimately linked, and the power of photography is not only to give us daily pleasure but simultaneously to dominate and control our lives by trapping us in narrow definitions of what it means to be female/male, black/white.

The contribution of psychoanalysis and the concept of difference as a gap, a space between two polarities (nature/culture, woman/man, etc.) is to offer us a route out of crude binarisms by opening up a range of possibilities. While it has been important, especially within feminism, to show how the male gaze dominates and objectifies women, more recent debates have turned attention to exploring how as women we derive pleasure from looking. In the light of such discussions simplistic and monolithic notions of the sexual division of labour and looking






Fig 99:
*Cover of "Vigour" magazine, 1949*
Private Collection

have been rejected. It would seem that the active/passive split which is then grafted onto male/female is not as simple as it seems at first sight[7]

The pleasures that photography can offer us, far from being rigidly fixed in one direction, would seem to be multiple and fluid.[8] As L. Mulvey has shown, for women especially transexual identity can easily become second nature.[9] If as women we have learned to see ourselves in terms of another's (the man's) desire for us, then we have also learned, in both senses of the phrase, to 'look like men'. However this is different from looking at men. While women may appropriate the male gaze, while they may return the look, it is less clear whether or not they have the power to act upon it.[10] Obviously no simple reversal of roles is possible. A woman looking at the body of a man is not the same as a man looking at the body of a woman.

It is this which may account for a sneaking doubt that as women 'looking back' we are viewing an exhibition of the male nude which does not address us so much as it addresses men, yet again. (After all, most photographs are made by and for men.) Yet I also want to suggest that it may be the heterosexual male rather than women or gay men who may feel threatened by this work. If, as I suggested at the beginning, phallic power is veiled, covert; and if it rests precisely on witholding the male body from scrutiny, then we have to ask ourselves what is at stake in exhibiting not only the naked body of the male, but particularly that visible marker of difference, the penis, on which so much power rests?

For within the myth that upholds male power (and since it is a myth it must be kept secret) the anatomical penis can never live up to the great expectations of symbolic phallic power[11]. In short, this power rests on very little. Moreover, for the heterosexual male viewer gazing upon his like can arouse not only the fear that he is looking at another man with the repressed eye of desire but that he himself may be being looked at with that same eye. This latter aspect can arouse a fear of being objectified, of being passive, of being less than male, and consequently like a woman: powerless.

This accounts for the wild extravagances, the 'hysterical quality' as R. Dyer calls it, to which so many representations (hetero and homosexual) must go[12]. In this imagery the muscle-bound body becomes the phallus. These are literally 'hard men': turgid, erect, impenetrable (Fig. 31). Or alternatively, a tool-kit of weapons and instruments, hats, boots, leathers is supplied. In such photographs symbolic power is represented through exaggerated physical power or displaced onto objects which come to stand in for the impossible representational demands made upon the penis; and like all good fetishes such projections are much less likely to let the male down.

This indicates that the need for the fetish is not confined to the body of the woman. Men, too are incomplete: lacking. And in trying to cover up this lack, such images use excessive display. Where one fetish would do, we are offered a whole gamut (Fig. 76). This suggests that to exhibit the nude body of the adult male is to venture into that zone of representation normally reserved for women. Within this territory the badge of masculinity must be worn as a shield, a protective armour against all that is castrating; against all that is considered to be most feminine.

It is this femininity, of course, that the small boy has had to give up in order to become a man. This is never fully resolved for in later life any residue of femininity must be concealed from other men in order to be accepted as 'one of them'. Given this, it is hardly surprising that women are deemed to be closer to their bodies, while

men are traditionally seen as being out of touch with their bodies and hence their feelings. Men see and know. It is women who touch and feel.

The vested interests of patriarchy, indeed its very survival, depends on keeping things just as they are, in fixing sexual identity. Patriarchy is not just capitalist, but bourgeois; and not just male but heterosexual. It quite literally cannot afford to let us be really diverse.

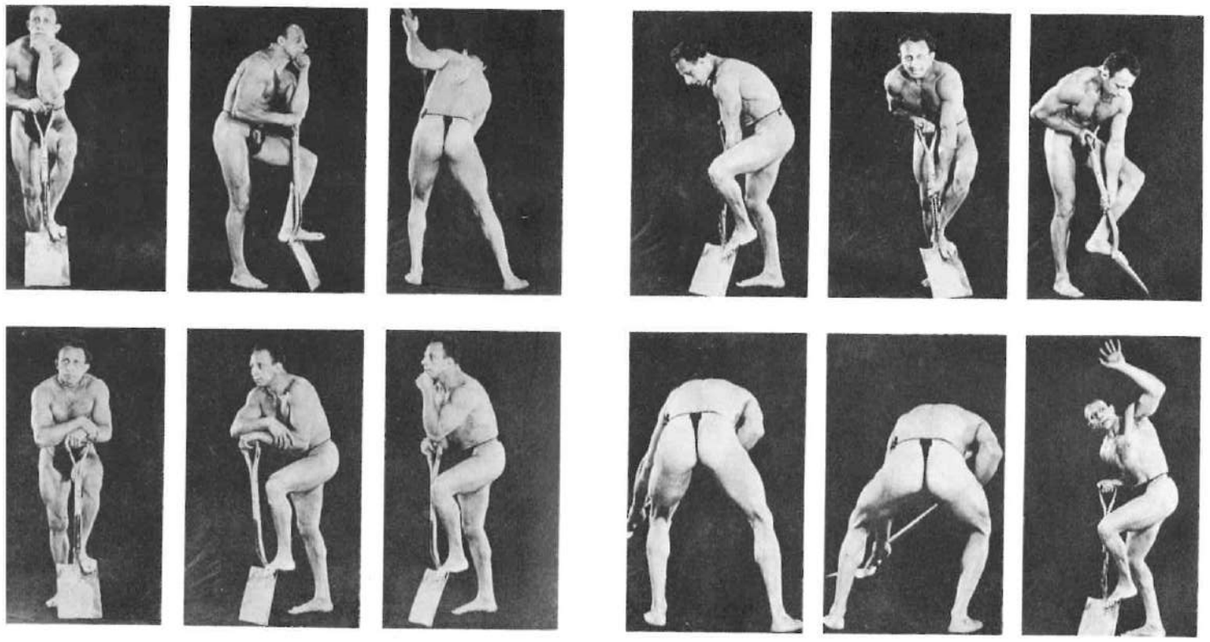
The fear is that if sexuality is not fixed, stabilised, then everything will slide and power will drain away. But if we fail to understand how meanings for the body are constructed, then we shall remain strangers to ourselves, haunted by the spectre of a regressive individualism, a seamless ideology of self that prevents us not only from knowing ourselves, but from experiencing others as equals.[13]

Feminism has been central to such a process. Not only has it redefined what 'the political' might mean — personal *is* political — but it has sought to analyse and understand the differences upon which so much inequality and misery rests.

Furthermore, a feminism which embraces not only gender relations but also psychoanalysis raises fundamental questions about the very notion of identity itself by suggesting that the belief that we are simply fixed versions of 'men' or 'women' is quite simply an act of blind faith, not knowledge. In opposition to homogenity, unifiedness, sameness, feminism proposes heterogeneity, fragmentation, difference. It has therefore been important to have a combined political strategy which not only deconstructs those ideologically over-loaded nouns 'man', 'woman' which act as straightjackets upon our lives, but also has organised us around 'the women's movement' and 'gay liberation'.[14]

It is perhaps fitting, therefore, to end with one particular photograph (Fig. 102) which at first glance may seem out of place in *Behold The Man* — and certainly at odds with works which are primarily aesthetic. But this clinical image from the past could so easily belong to the present. It acts as a timely reminder of the close relationship between the discourses of medicine, sexuality, and aesthetics. In the age of

Fig 100:
John Everard
*Studies of man with spade from "Artists' Models", 1951*
Private Collection







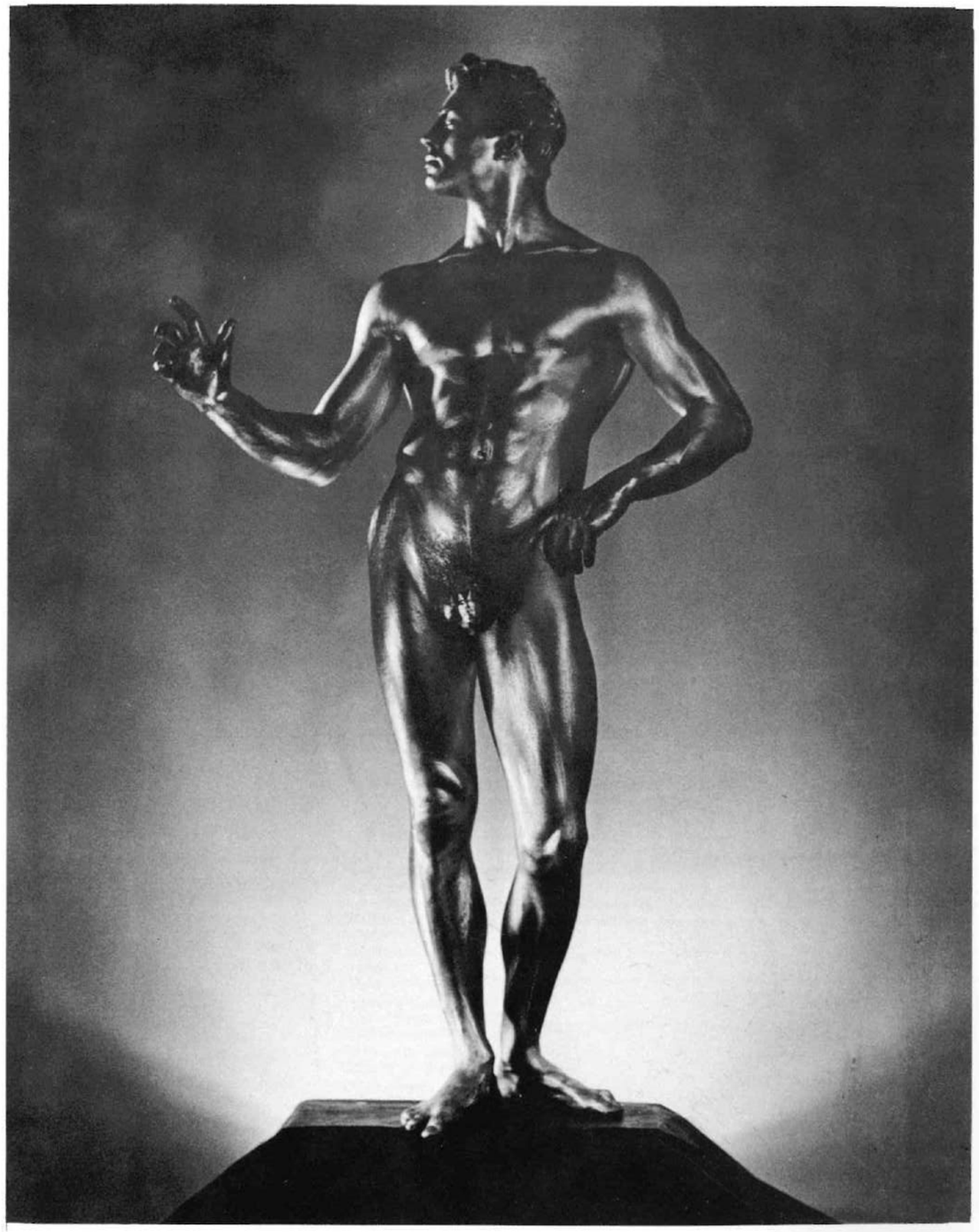


Fig 101:
Gordon Anthony
*"Adonis 1951", 1951*
Courtesy of the photographer

A.I.D.S. — a disease which has deploringly been termed a 'gay plague' the passage below takes on a terrifying resonance when read in conjunction with the image.

> Medical communities were so afraid of the plague that the word alone was enough to frighten them. They avoided mentioning it as long as possible and even avoided taking the necessary precautions at the risk of aggravating the effects of the epidemic. So helpless were they that telling the truth did not mean facing the situation but rather giving in to its destructive consequences and relinquishing all semblance of normal life. The entire population shared in this type of blindness. Their desperate desire to deny the evidence contributed to their need for 'scapegoats'.[15]

We live in a time of retrenchment where not only is sexual diversity and women's rights over their bodies under attack, but where the threat of quarantine, tattooing, even the extermination of homosexual men is openly discussed.[16] Such issues are profoundly linked and this should serve to remind us of the urgent need for a renewed and radical politics of the personal (which must include a politics of representation). That which seems furthest from the State, that which we think of as most private, personal, intimate — the body — is not outwith the political field but at its very centre.

1 S. Neale, 'Masculinity as Spectacle', *Screen*, vol. 24, no. 6, Nov/Dec 1983, p. 2.
2 ibid. p. 16.
3 See C. Owens, 'Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism', in A. Jardine & P. Smith, *Men in Feminism*, Methuen, 1987, pp.219-220.
4 See B. Turner, *The Body in Society*, Blackwell, 1984, p.116.
5 P. Adams, 'Versions of the Body', m/f, 11/12, 1986, p.29.
6 See M.A. Doanne, 'The Woman's Stake in Filming The Female Body', *October*, no. 17, 1981.
7 See, for example, E. Ann Kaplan, 'Is The Gaze Male?', in A. Snitow et. al. (eds.), *Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, Virago, 1983.
8 S. Neale, op. cit.
9 L. Mulvey, 'Duel In The Sun: Afterthoughts On Visual Pleasure And Narrative Cinema', *Framework*, 15/16/17, 1981.
10 E. Ann Kaplan, op.cit., p.323.
11 R. Dyer, 'Don't Look Now', *Screen*, vol. 23,nos.3/4, Sept/Oct 1982, p.71, "The penis isn't a patch on the phallus . . . can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus".
12 ibid.
13 K. Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Polity Press, 1987. See especially Ch.2, 'Floods, Bodies, History'.
14 See G. Pollock, 'Art, Artschool and Culture', *Block*, no.11, Winter, 1985/86, p.15.
15 R. Girard, *The Scapegoat (Le Bouc Emissaire*; Grasset & Fasquelle 1982 Trans. 1986), quoted in C. Owens, A. Jardine & P. Smith, (eds.), op.cit., p.232.
16 I'm referring to Clause 28, The Alton Bill, as well as debates on A.I.D.S. In relation to the latter see S. Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, Aids and The Media*, Comedia, 1987.

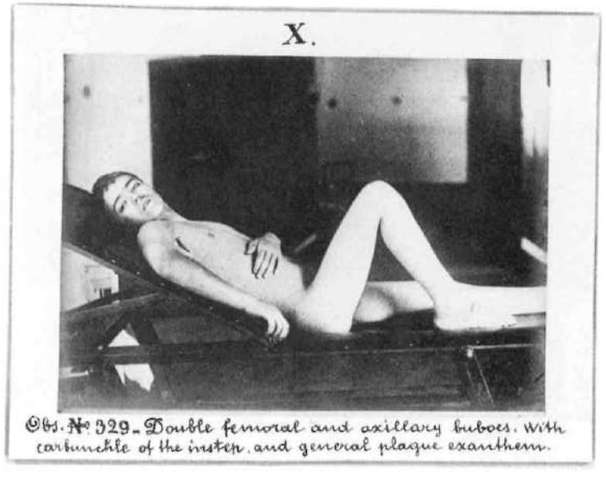



Fig 102:
Pr. Dr. Camillio Terni
*Study in [Bubonic] Plague, Rio de Janeiro, ND*
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London



# EXHIBITION LISTING

## Section One: Acceptable Men

Anon. (French), "Boy kissing girl", c1880,
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Wilhelm von Gloeden (Prussian, working Sicily), "Draped youths on terrace", c1895,
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Wilhelm von Gloeden (Prussian, working Sicily), "Two draped youths", c1900,
Collection Jo Brunenberg, Weert

Fred Holland Day (American), "Moonshadow", c1897
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Henry van der Weyde (American working UK), "Eugene Sandow" c1890,
National Portrait Gallery, London

Guglielmo Pluschow (Prussian, working Italy), "Draped youth seated on column", c1902
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Fred Crossley (British), "Morning Dip" reproduction in "The Photographic Art Journal", 1903
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Bowyer B. Mewburn (American?), "Grief", c1910
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Anon., cover of "La Culture Physique" 1914
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Williamina Parrish (American), "Bacio Della Luna" reproduction in "Photograms of the Year" 1915
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Imogen Cunningham (American), "On Mount Rainier 6", 1915
©Imogen Cunningham Trust, Berkeley

Edward Weston (American), Dancing nude, reproduction in "Photograms of the Year", 1916
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Yvonne Gregory (British), "Rhythm" c1923,
Camera Club, London

Gerhard Riebicke (German), "Triad" from "Der Nackte Tanz", 1927
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

Spread from "Schutze Dich vor den Krebs", 1929
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

Gerhard Riebicke (German), Leaping man, c1930
Collection Peter Webb, London

Anon. (German), from "Freude am Korper", 1931
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

Walter Bird, William Davis and E. Townsend, "Beauty in the Human Form" photographs of Gaston and Andree, 1930s
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Anon. (American), Johnny Weissmuller, 1932
Kobal Collection, London

Edwin F. Townsend (American), Tony Sansone in booklet "Modern Classics", 1932
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Special issue of "The Body Beautiful" 1933
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Newspaper "Naturisme" 1936
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Leni Riefenstahl (German), Book "Schonheit im Olympischen Kampf", 1937
Galerie Janssen, Berlin

Book "The Male Body," c1940,
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Roye (British), "Dance of Desire", c1940,
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Anon. (American), Steve Reeves, 1959,
The National Film Archive, London

Souvenir programme from "Oh! Calcutta", c1970
Collection Peter Webb, London

Ian Bradshaw (British), Streaker at Twickenham, 1974
Collection of the Photographer, Courtesy of The Sunday Mirror and Syndication International, London

Graham Wood (British), Nude boxers from the London "Evening Standard", 1974
BBC Hulton Picture Library, London

Naomi Stanley (British), Untitled, 1983
Courtesy of the photographer

Mike Owen (British), "Archer", c1986
Courtesy of the Photographer and Athena, London

Poster for the "Use Your Vote" campaign, 1987,
Courtesy of Kayta aantas r.y., Helsinki

All other material in this section from Private Collections

## Section Two: Men of Science

Eadweard Muybridge (British working USA) Two photogravures from "Animal Locomotion" Carpenter, ©1887, and Amputee, c1887
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Eadweard Muybridge (British working USA), Two photogravures from "Animal Locomotion", Man running, c1887, and Man walking up steps, c1887
Kingston-upon-Thames Heritage Trust

Etienne-Jules Marey (French) Man on bicycle, c1890, and Man walking, c1890,
Musee de Beaune

Thomas Eakins (American), Marey-wheel photograph of man walking towards camera, 1885
Franklin Institute, Philadelphia

Thomas Eakins (American), Man jumping, with photographer's notations, 1885
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

Thomas Eakins (American), Man pole-vaulting, c1885, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of George Bregler

Albert Londe (French), Man flexing biceps, c1890
Societe Francais de Photographie, Paris

(L. Haase & Co.) (German), Four medical studies, c1864 Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London

Pr. Dr. Camillio Terni, Two studies in [Bubonic] Plague, Rio de Janeiro, ND,
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London

Anon. Two studies for the French Army, c1900
Collection Bourgeron, Paris

Anon. (French), Comparative study of two physical types, c1900
Collection Bourgeron, Paris

Alexander Cain and R.D. Lockhart (British), Book "Living Anatomy", 1948
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Anon. (British?), Three anthropometric photographs using the Lamprey system; Oriental man, Caucasian man, Negro Youth, c1868
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Dr. Bleck, Ten anthropometric photographs "S. Africa, Hottentots", ND
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Anon., Ten anthropometric photographs "S. Africa, Bushmen", ND
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

Two photographs for "The Eagle", "The Little Yellow Men" of the Kalihari, 1955
BBC Hulton Picture Library, London

## Section Three: For Art's Sake

D.O. Hill and Robert Adamson (British), Calotype — Figure study (Dr. George Bell), 1840
National Galleries of Scotland

Anon. (French?), Daguerreotype — standing male nude, c1845,
Collection &©Stefan Richter (D) 1988, Reutlingen

Eugene Durieu with Eugene Delacroix (French), Male nude study, 1855
Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

Guglielmo Marconi (Italian working France), Study — possibly after "The Triumph of Alexander", 1865-70
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Thomas Eakins (American), 27 standard poses, c1883
Franklin Institute, Philadelphia

Eadweard Muybridge (British working USA), Man in set of standard poses, 1887
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Published by Calavas, Studies for artists, c1900
Collection Jo Brunenberg, Weert

Cecil L. Burns and Robert J. Colenso, sheet from "Living Anatomy", 1900
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Published by Emile Bayard (French), Male nude from "Le Nu Esthetique", c1900
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Fighting male nudes from "L'Etude Academique", 1905
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

F.R. Yerbury (British), "Two brothers at play" from "Studies of the Human Form", 1918
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

A. Thomson (British), Comparative study of man and woman lifting weight from "Handbook of Anatomy for Artists", 1915
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Anon. (French), Stereo-daguerreotype of man with column, c1855
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Wilhelm von Gloeden (Prussian working Sicily), Arcadian tableau, c1900
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Guglielmo Pluschow (Prussian working Italy), Three draped youths with sculpture, c1900
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Vincenzo Galdi (Italian), Draped man with dagger, c1900
Collection GERARD LEVY, Paris

Fred Holland Day (American), Youth with Lyre, c1915
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Herbert List (German), "Athen", 1938
Succession Herbert List/Max Scheler, Courtesy of PPS-Galerie FC Gundlach, Hamburg

Gordon Anthony (British), "Adonis 1951", 1951
Courtesy of the photographer

Cover of "Mr. Universe", 1954
Collection Alasdair Foster, Edinburgh

Aaron Jones & Lis DeMarco (American), Discobolos from "The Scott Madsen Poster Book", 1984
©Scott Madsen, 1984

Bertram Bahner (W. German) calendar "Olympia — A Tribute to the Ancient Games", 1987
Courtesy of the model: Andre Fiset, PO Box 1721, JAF Building, New York, NY 10116

Fred Holland Day (American), Crucifixion, 1898
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Herbert Tobias (German), Heidelberg, 1955
PPS-Galerie FC Gundlach, Hamburg

©Joel-Peter Witkin (American), "Penitente", 1982
Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York and Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Fred Holland Day (American), St. Sebastian, 1906
Royal Photographic Society, Bath

Jean Reutlinger (French), Self-portrait as St. Sebastian, 1913
Collection Bourgeron, Paris

Gerald Incandela, from the film "Sebastiane", 1975
Collection Derek Jarman, London

Evergon (Canadian), "Sebastione", 1984
Courtesy Centro di Cultura Auson

Guglielmo Marconi (Italian working France), Adam, c1880
Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

Alvin Langdon Coburn (British), George Bernard Shaw in the attitude of Rodin's "Le Penseur", 1906
George Eastman House, Rochester

Magazine clipping of Rudolph Valentino in the pose of "The Thinker", c1924
Kobal Collection, London

Hans van Manen (Dutch), "Pieta: self-portrait with Thijs Westerbeek van Eerten", 1984
Courtesy of the photographer

## Section Four: Heroes For Sale

All material in this section from Private Collections except the following:

Anon., Rudolph Valentino dressed as a Red Indian, c1920
Kobal Collection, London

Bragaglia (working America), Ramon Novarro, c1925
Kobal Collection, London

Hal Phyfe (working America), George O'Brien, c1925,
Kobal Collection, London

Cecil Beaton (British), Johnny Weissmuller, c1930
Courtesy Sotheby's, London

Anon., Johnny Weissmuller with javelin, 1932
Kobal Collection, London

Anon., Errol Flynn, c1940
Kobal Collection, London

Anon., Kirk Douglas, 1947
Kobal Collection, London

Anon., Randolph Scott, ND
Kobal Collection, London

Anon., still from "Tarzan and the Slave Girl", 1950
The National Film Archive, London

Anon., Joe Dallesandro, c1970
Kobal Collection, London

Anon., Sylvester Stallone as "Rambo", 1985
Courtesy Filmhouse, Edinburgh

Hoffman of Edinburgh (British), Physique study, c1960
The Hoffman Collection, Edinburgh

Jean-Francois Bauret (French), Advert for Semaille bri... c1968,
Courtesy of the photographer