



# AID

## HISTORY

2022 annual #3

**GEORGE QUAINANCE**

**EUGÈNE JANSSON**

**ANTON KOLIG**

**YANNISTSAROUCHIS**

**ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE**

**AND MUCH MORE!**



editing, writing and design: Filipe Chagas  
editorial group: Dr.Alcemar Maia Souto, Guilherme  
Correa e Rígle Guimarães.

cover: *Spartan soldiers bathing*, oil on canvas by George  
Quaintance, 1956.

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Editorial

Art history often exalts names and leaves others ostracized for various reasons. Usually, it is the market that dictates the rules, especially the western market (which lies between a few European countries and the US). For an artist who uses nudity and sex as a main theme to achieve international recognition, he needs to either be really disruptive or have the right contacts. Falo’s third annual in English brings big names from the field that remain in the mainstream, as well as artists who were most relevant in their countries and in a specific context.

This edition also brings very interesting historical articles: Ken, Barbie’s companion, has his origin revealed along with the reasons for the absence of his genital; the Sacred Band of Tebas, formed by gay couples, closes an article on the constraints of military enlistment; and the evolution of men’s swimwear contains countless curiosities. By the way, an entire community that uses swim trunks as a support for body positivity is also here, with an interview with the organizer, which embodies the essence of this project.

Therefore, the edition you have in your hands is the representation of what Falo is: Art, Male Nudity, History and Body Positivity. It is a tool to release knowledge in search of a better world. However, it can only be seen that way if you allow YOURSELF, if you see the power to change the world within YOURSELF. Calm down... I’m not talking about changing the whole world: change YOUR world and the world around YOU.

Filipe Chagas, editor



Summary

George Quaintance	4
Eugène Jansson	24
Anton Kolig	38
Yannis Tsarouchis	54
Robert Mapplethorpe	70
PHALORRAGIA Ken’s thing	100
PHALLORAGIA Sir, yes, sir?	106
SPECIAL The Sacred Band of Thebes	112
SPECIAL Swimsuits abound! – A story	116
SPECIAL Swimsuit: a community	126
moNUment	134



Spartan soldiers  
bathing, oil on  
canvas, 1956.

# George Quaintance

1902-1957

by Filipe Chagas





**Y**ou simply cannot ignore **George Quaintance** (1902-1957). Take a look at his kitsch oeuvre filled with brilliant bodybuilders, dating from an era before queer advocacy, the AIDS crisis and the sexual revolution... A potentially insecure era in which the artist proclaimed the necessity and right to lose oneself in fantasy.

George was the son of a farmer and dry goods merchant. His parents allowed him to develop his artistic potential rather than forcing him into their way of life. He attended Stanley High School until 1920, where he was popularly acclaimed for his talent in school plays. Since his teens, he was described as “obviously homosexual”. However, he was very discreet and completely closed off among family, friends and fans, repeating a then quite common pattern of gay men who left home to lead a homosexual life.

After graduating, he moved to New York, where he took night classes at the Art Students League with Norman Rockwell – from whom he learned to use the “baloptic”, a kind of overhead projector that allowed him to achieve his hyper-idealized forms. He also performed as a Vaudeville actor, studied dance, and even had a career as a professional dancer. He married ballerina Miriam Chester in August 1929, but it ended in divorce before their first anniversary. During the 1930s and early 1940s, Quaintance often returned to his homeland to direct musical revues and stage performances using local talent.



Portrait by Edwin Townsend.

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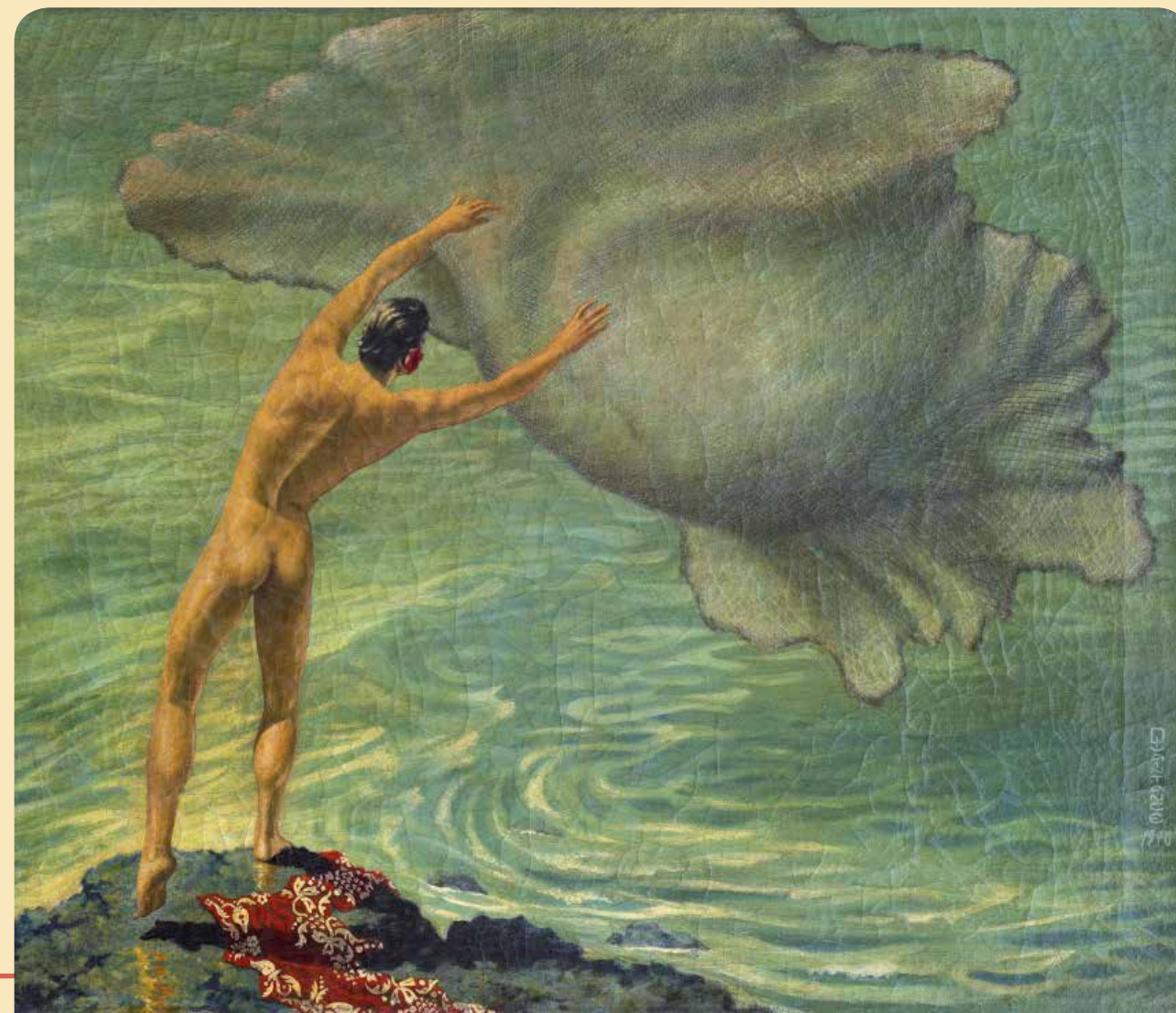
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His first works of art were anonymous advertisements, however, some of his early paintings from the 1930s foreshadowed the path that was to follow. In 1938 – the year he met the Puerto Rican Victor Garcia, his partner in life, business and most frequent model – the artist had turned his formidable talent to elegant settings, the windows of department stores on New York’s Fifth Avenue, makeup feminine and even hairstyles. He became a private portrait artist for stars such as Mae West and Hedy Lamarr, and did many pin-up illustrations for women’s magazines such as *Glorify your Figure* and *Your Figure Beautiful*. In January 1939, an article in the *Picture and Gift Journal* declared his paintings of female figures to be “glamorous nudes that knock one’s socks off”.

When he became a freelancer for “spicy” pulp magazines – such as *Gay French Life*, *Stolen Sweets* and *Tempting Tales*, among others, which were sold in burlesque salons and covertly on newsstands – his name, Geo Quintana, began to appear. In 1944, he was appointed art director for the Bonomo Culture Institute, which promoted Joe Bonomo, a famous and charismatic bodybuilder who appeared in several films. There he developed the body aesthetics of his characters: hair slicked back, huge muscles on shiny, hairless bodies. He moved to Los Angeles in 1948 to fit in with his Hollywood life.

Kanaka fisherman, oil on canvas, 1940.





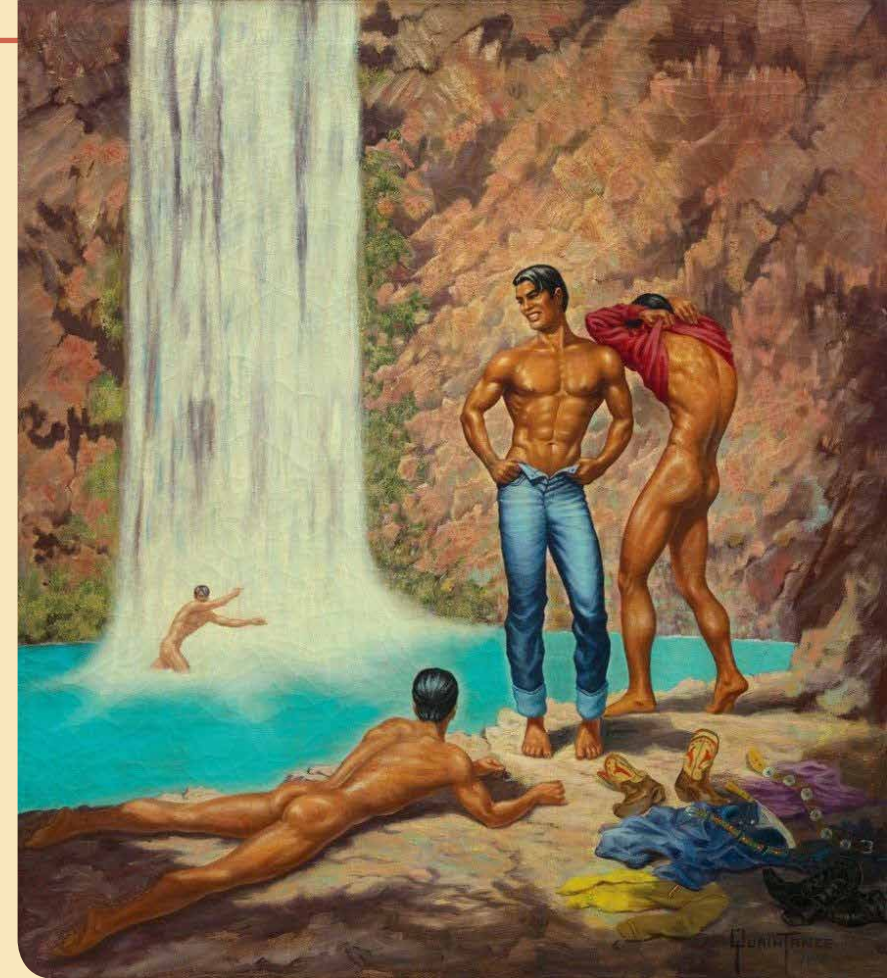


*Dashing*, oil on canvas, 1951, which was used on the cover of the first issue of *Physique Pictorial*.

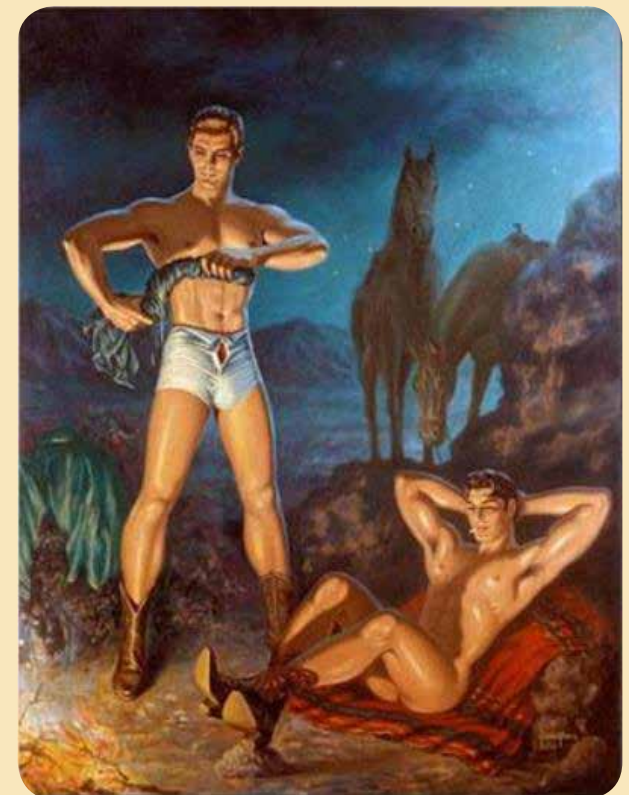
It was with the legendary *Physique Pictorial* – founded in 1951 by Bob Mizer – that he could let loose artistically and make a splash (even becoming a nightmare for American censors). Quaintance illustrated, photographed and even wrote for a lineup of bodybuilding magazines, which included *Body Beautiful* and *Your Physique*, with athlete Dick Dubois and Italian-American stud Zaro Rossi, among others, as models.

In 1952, he moved to *Rancho Siesta* in Phoenix, Arizona, where he concentrated on creating his most successful series of homoerotic fantasy paintings (with help from Victor who took care of photographs of nude models). Christopher Harrity – production manager for magazines such as *The Advocate* and *Out* – says the studio “was envisioned as a bohemian paradise, an ingenious and hugely successful marketing concept, the closest the American West has ever come to an honest incarnation. from Xanadu or Shangri La”. This is because Quaintance grew up fascinated by the Old Wild West without being able to identify with structural machismo. Harry completes:

*He offered idealized male images to an international audience hungry for them. Images in a robust, masculine, romantic, as well as sensual and erotic context helped transform Levi's into a sexy and useful garment.*

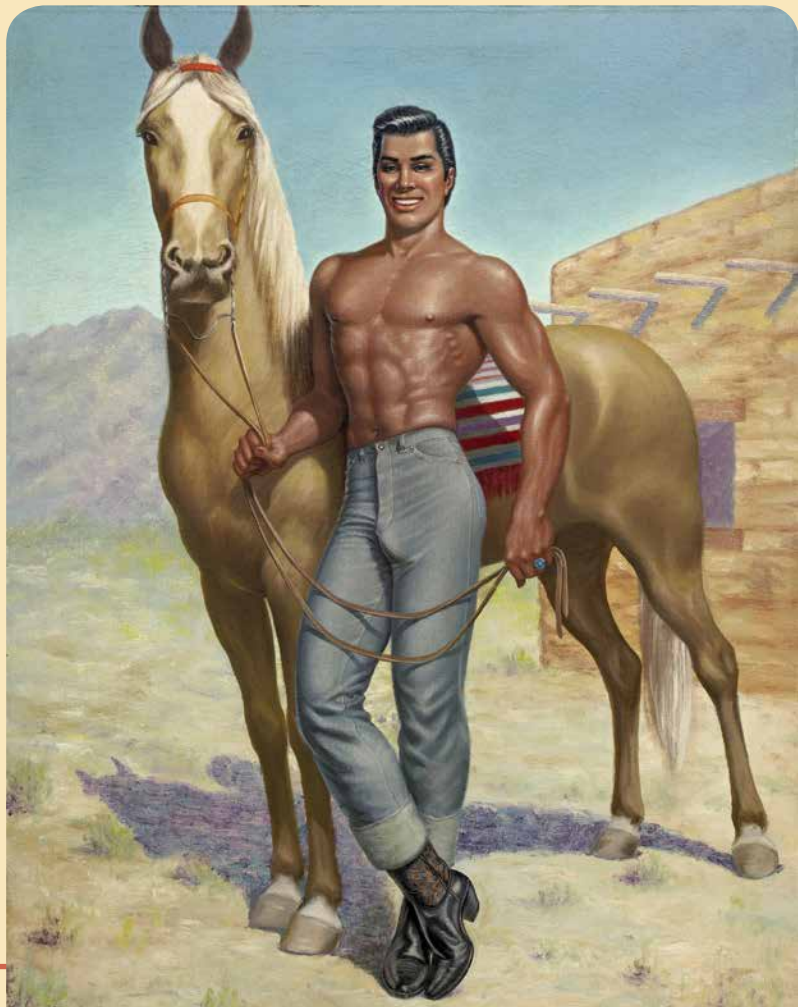
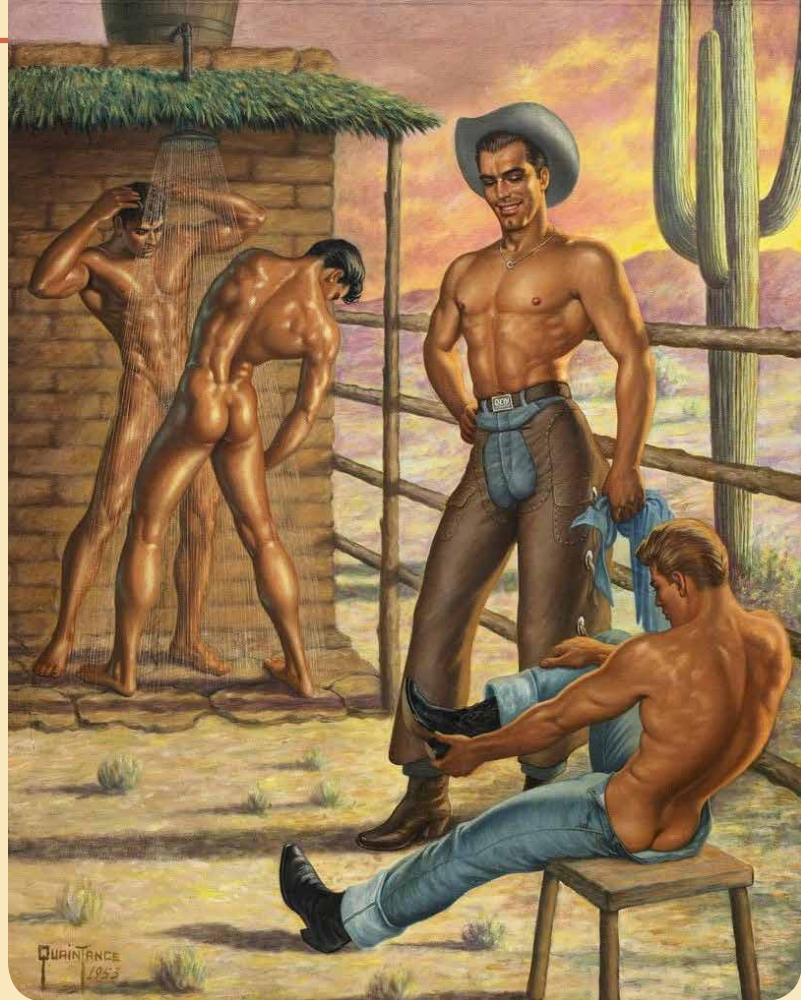
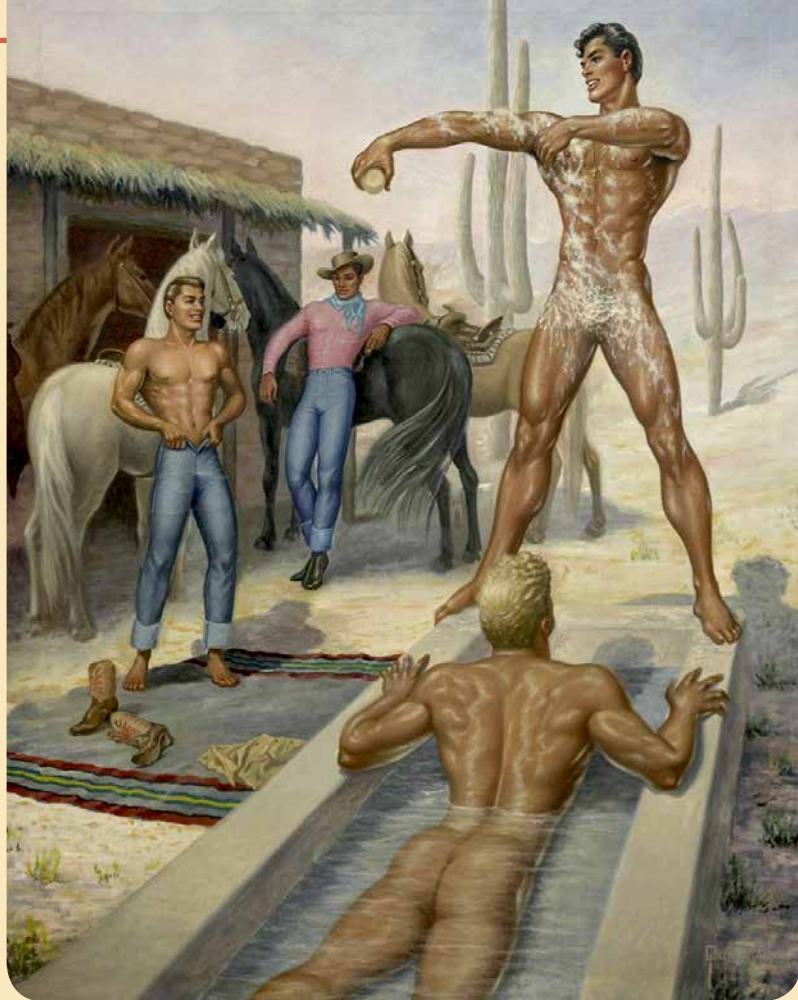
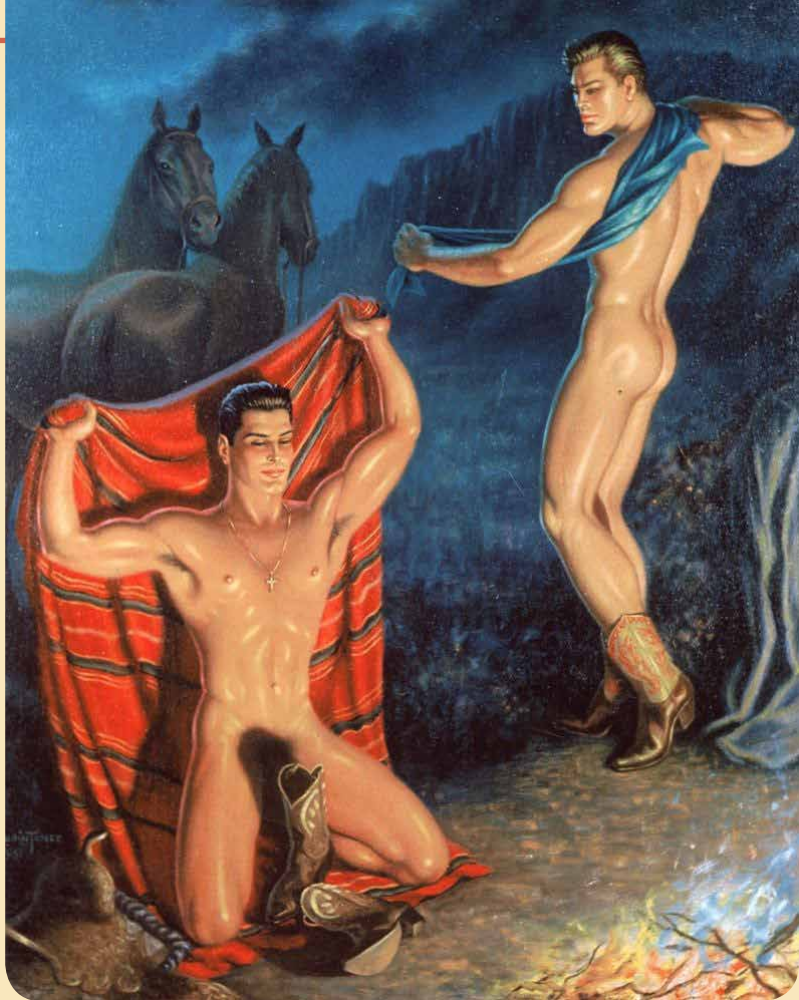


Above, *Havasu Creek* (1948) and, below, *After the storm* (1951), both in oil on canvas.





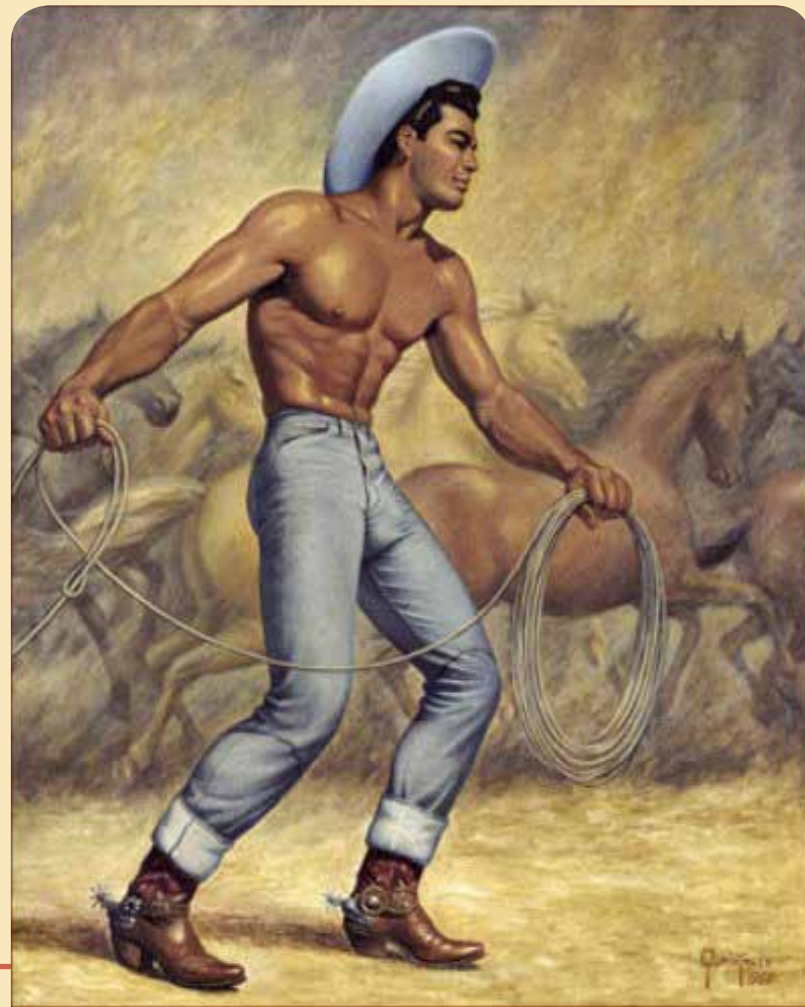
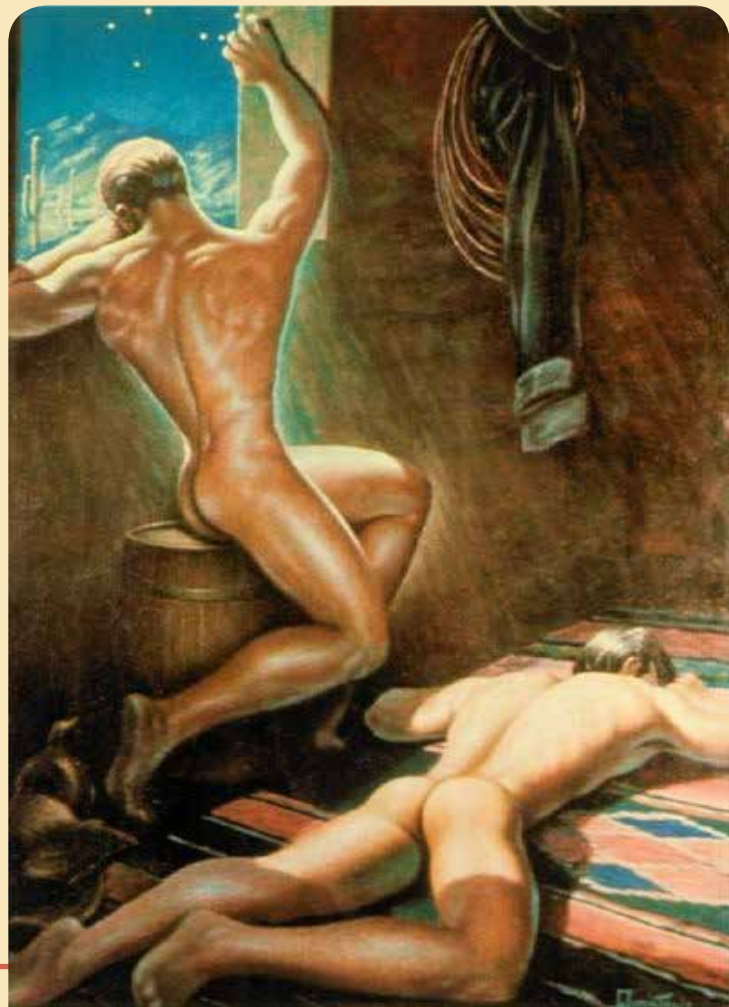
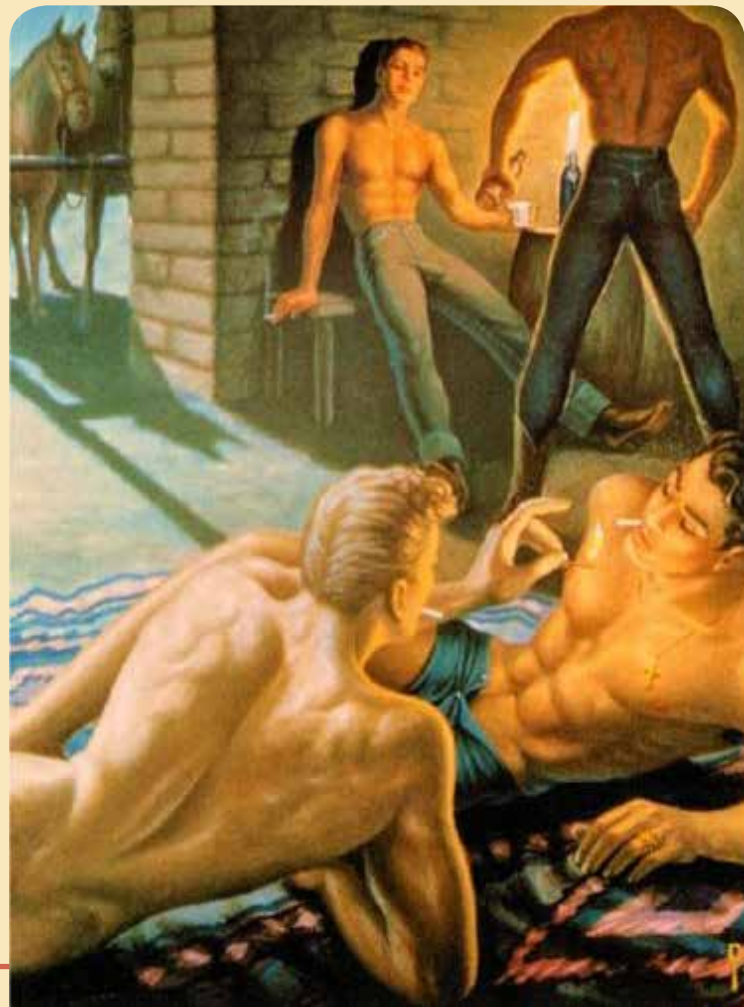
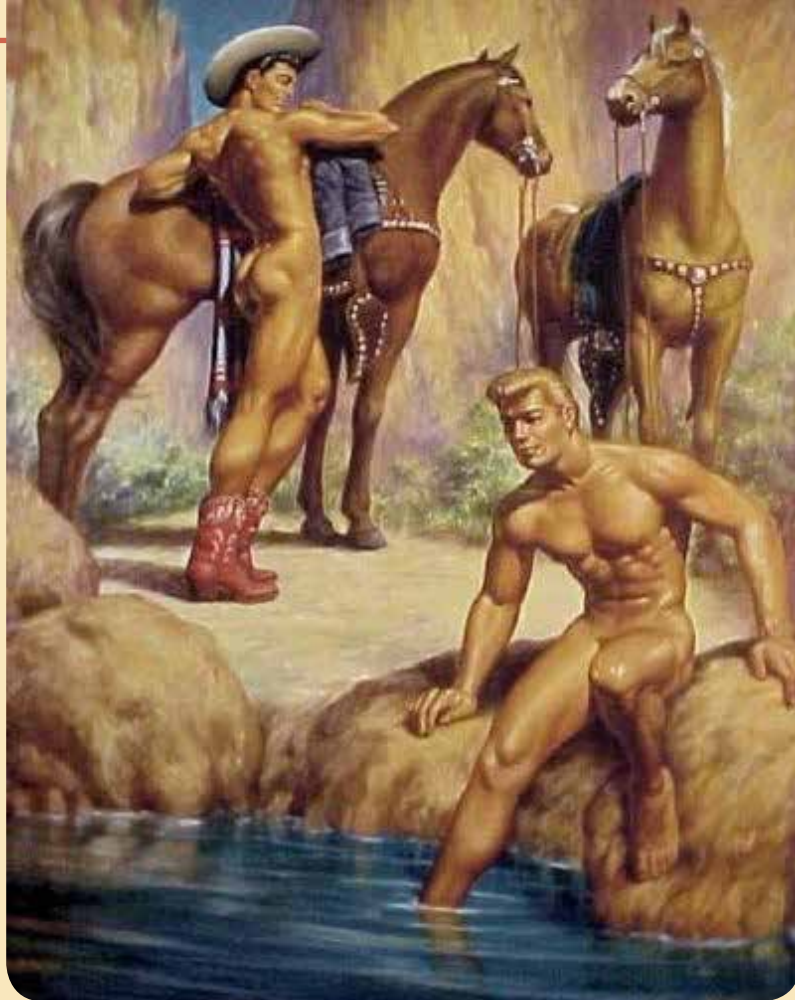
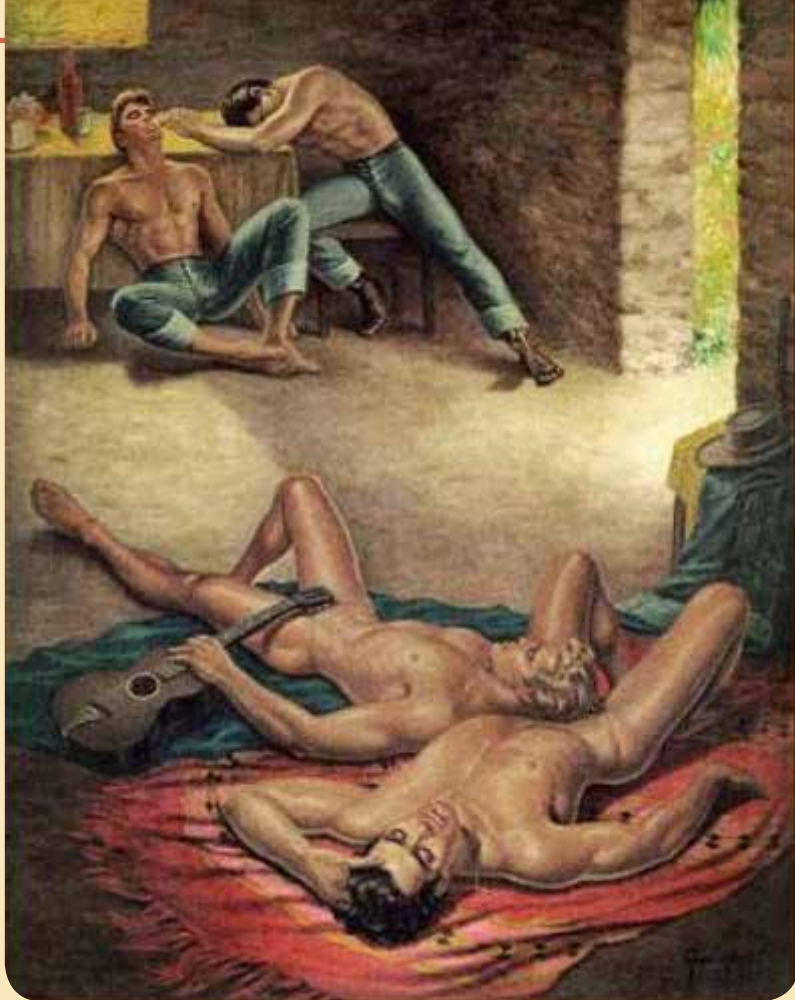
Thunderhead (1951), Morning in the Desert (1952) and Sunset (1953), all in oil on canvas.



Manolo (1952), Young Stallion (1951) and Navajo (1953), all in oil on canvas.



*Siesta* (1952),  
*Lake Apache* (1954)  
 and *Sunrise* (1953),  
 all in oil on canvas.



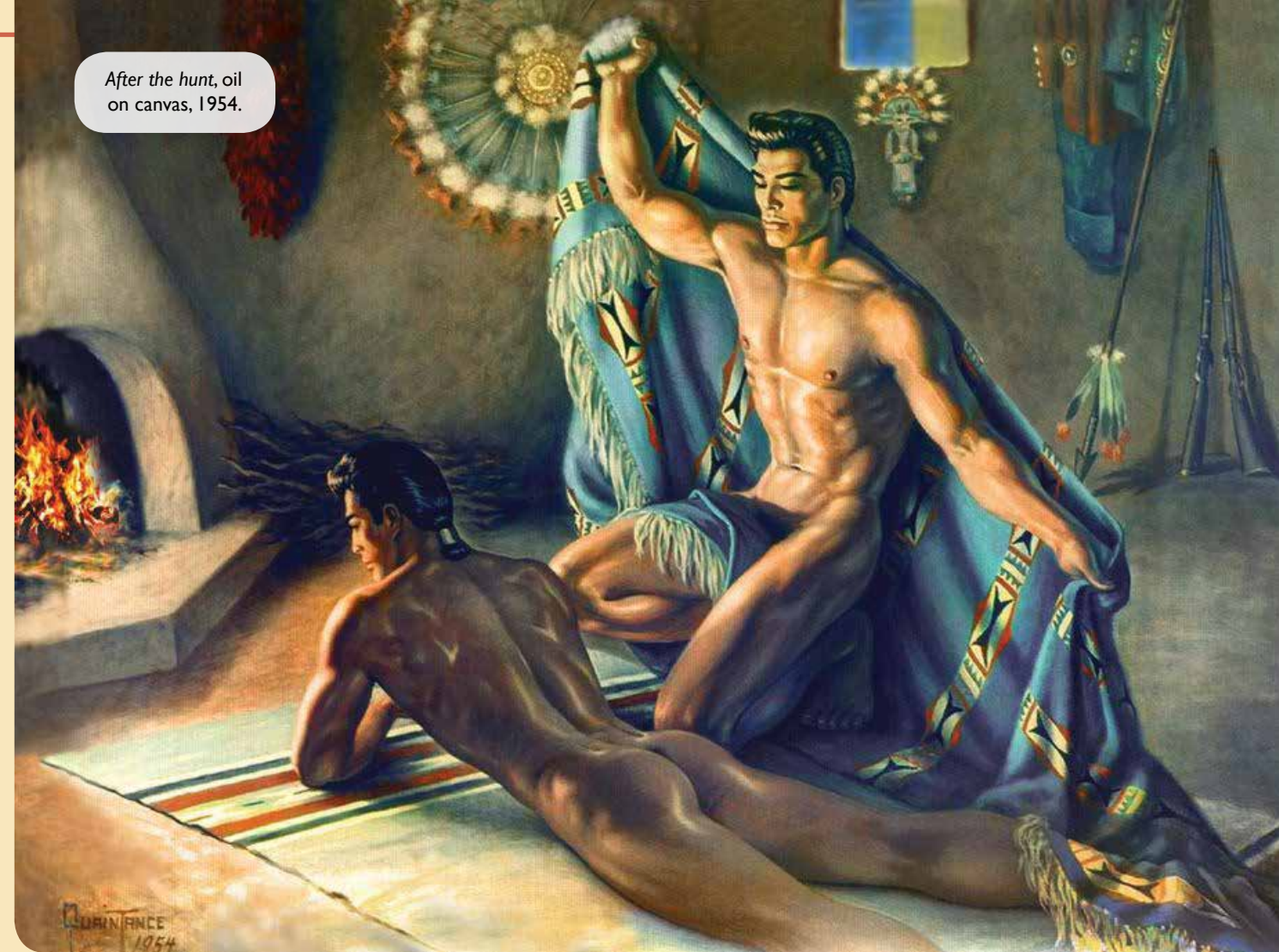
*Night in the Desert* (1951),  
*Moonlight* (1953)  
 and *Red Dust* (1955),  
 all in oil on canvas.



*Bandit*, oil on canvas, 1953.

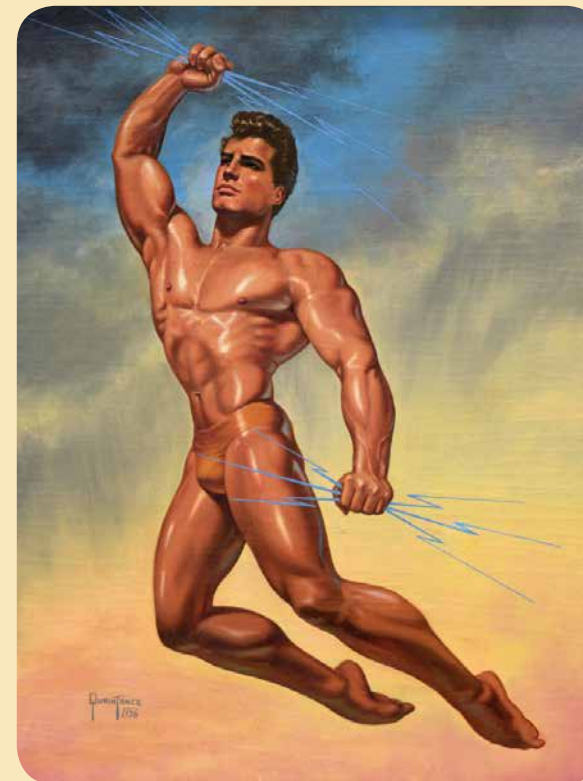


*After the hunt*, oil on canvas, 1954.



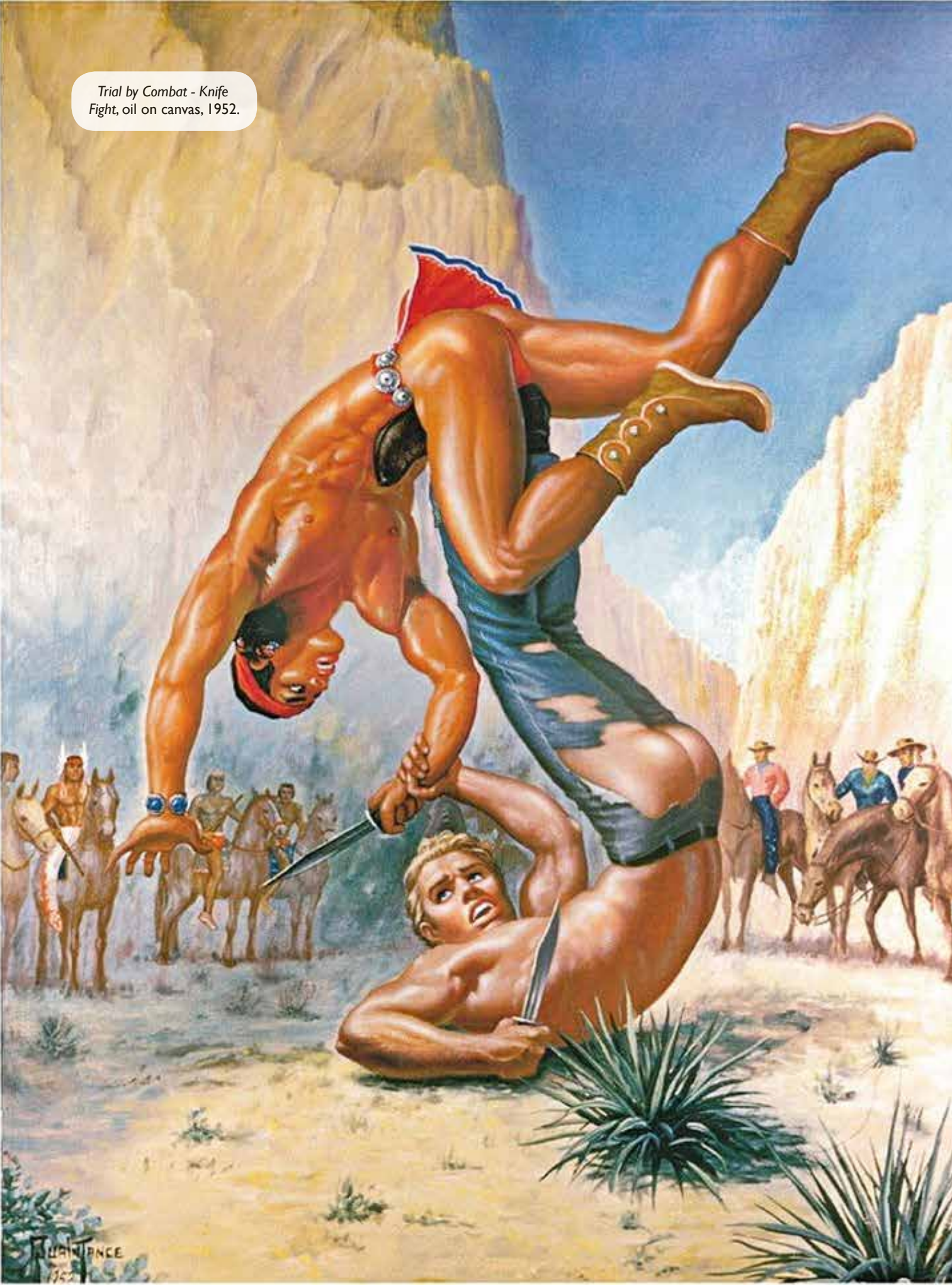
In addition to Latin lovers, wild Indians, vigorous cowboys and sculpted farmers, the world of fetish and seduction he created found inspiration in mythology to justify nudity and distance the characters from modern society. Many believe that the Ken doll, Barbie's boyfriend who appeared in the 1960s, was inspired by his Zeus (who, in fact, was inspired by Steve Reeves, actor and bodybuilder, Mr. America in 1947 and Mr. Universe in 1950). He also tapped into an ancient masculinity and socially accepted outlet for physical interactions between men – violence – as in *Egyptian Wrestlers* (1952) and *Trial by Combat - Knife Fighting* (1952).

*In the Arms of Morpheus* (1951), *Zeus* (1956) and *Egyptian Wrestlers* (1952), all in oil on canvas.



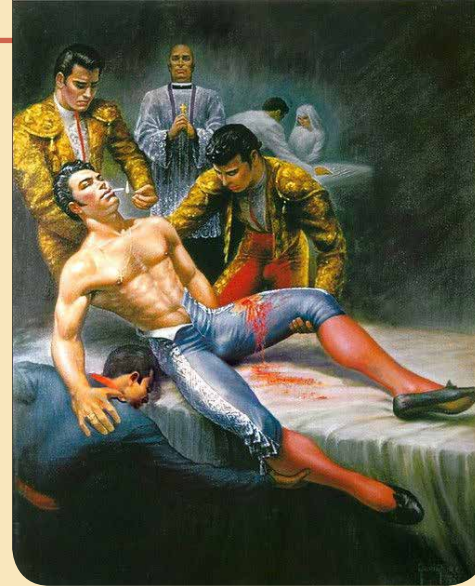
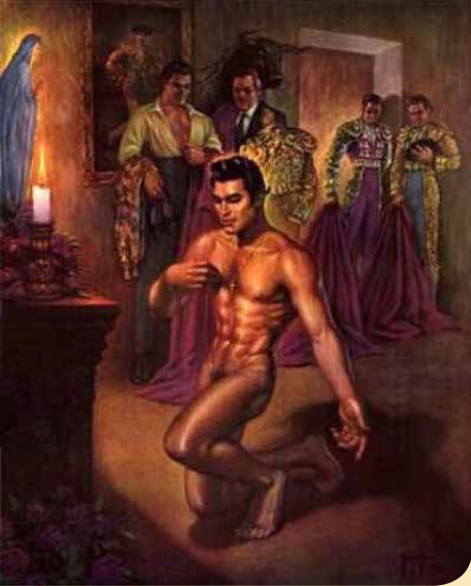


Trial by Combat - Knife  
Fight, oil on canvas, 1952.



Aztec Sacrifice, oil on canvas, 1952.



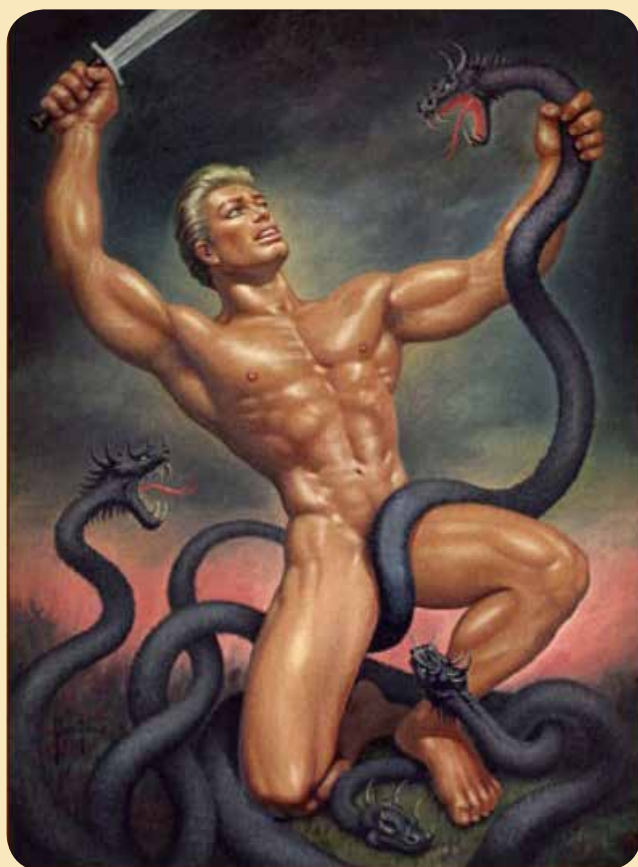


In 1953, Quaintance completed a series of three paintings about a bullfighter (*Prelude, Glory and Dying*), modeled by Angel Avila, one of his lovers. In a letter to a friend, he wrote that the paintings “were done in turmoil, in passion... I might even say in emotional agony”.

Above, the matador trilogy (1953). Below, *Hercules*, oil on canvas, 1957.

In the aftermath of World War II, Quaintance and Garcia began to market black and white photographs of their nearly nude models and color prints of the paintings. He even wrote to a friend that “business has grown to fantastic proportions and I am practically mad trying to keep up with the demand”. In 1954, his work appeared in the Swiss magazine *Der Kreis*, one of the world’s first openly gay publications.

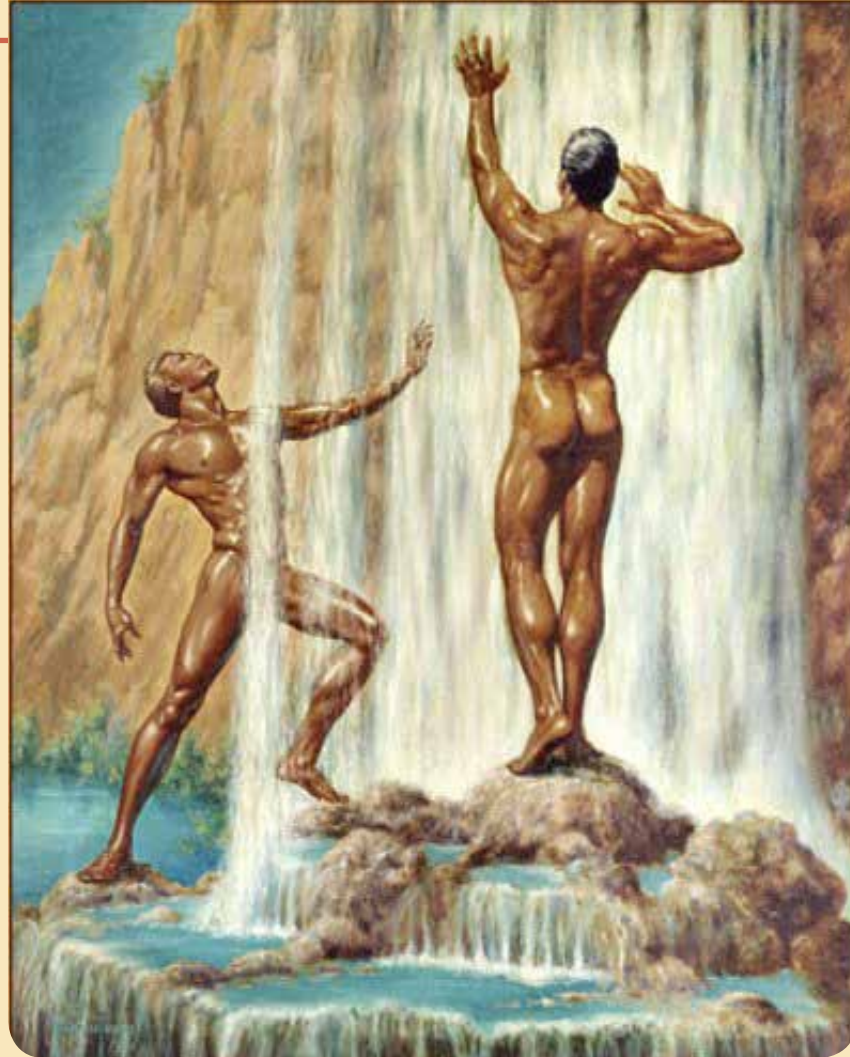
Unlike Tom of Finland – his successor at *Physique Pictorial* – the genitals were always strategically hidden in his works. Not because of censorship, politics or social context: Quaintance painted the utopian pleasure, the dream, the desire. And he portrayed himself as the blond character, even when his dancer’s body was no longer in the same physical shape and his hair was thinning (he is said to have worn elaborate wigs, often with comical results for those who noticed).



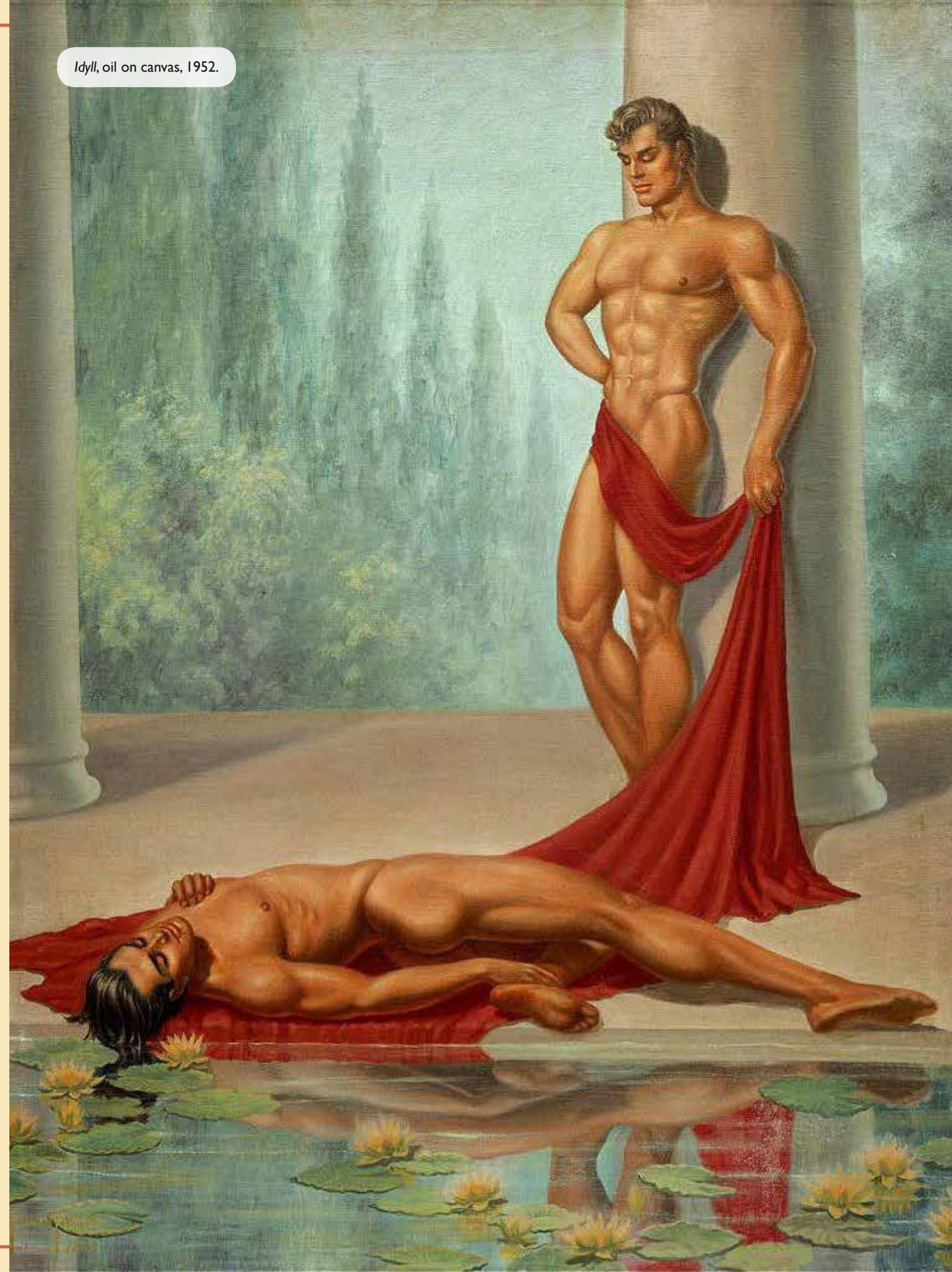
*Orpheus in Hades*, oil on canvas, 1952.



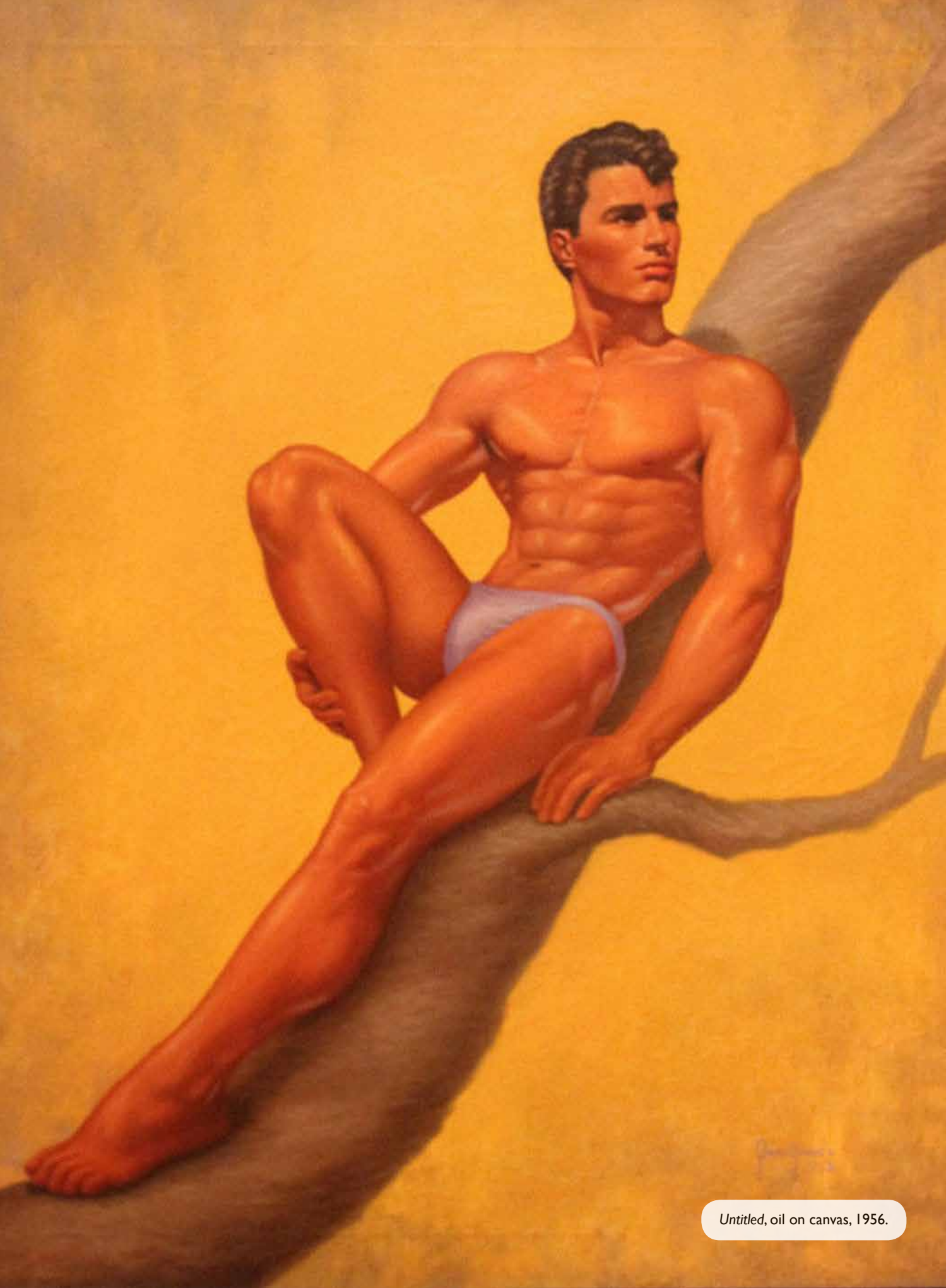
Beside: *Rainbow Falls*, 1954. Below,  
*Sunlight Depths* and *Coral Reef*, 1956.  
All in oil on canvas.



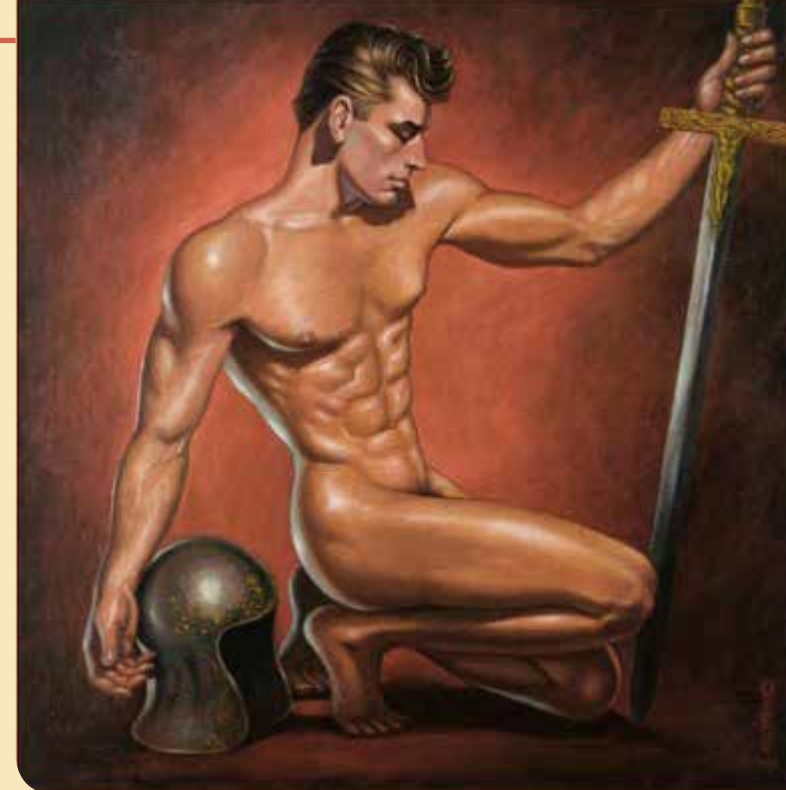
*Idyll*, oil on canvas, 1952.



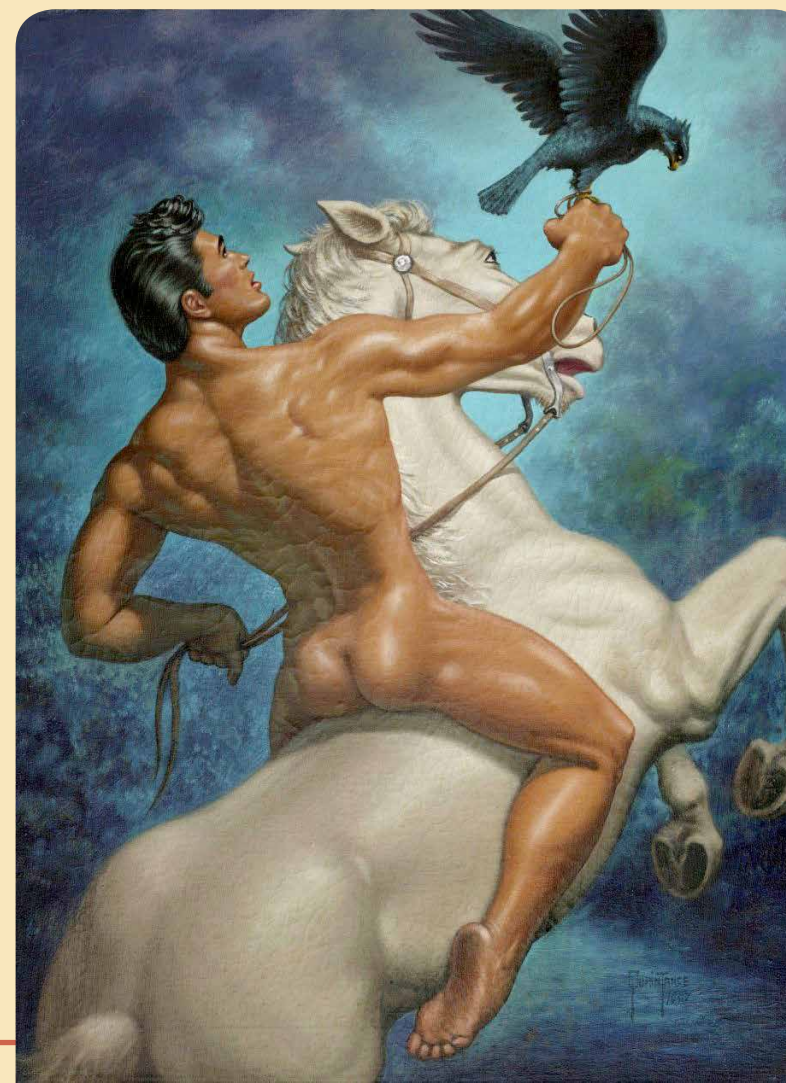




Untitled, oil on canvas, 1956.



Above: *The Crusader*, 1943.  
Below: *The Falconer*, 1957.  
Both in oil on canvas.



Despite being recognized as the creator of a historically influential gay aesthetic, the theme prevented his work from becoming part of the conventional art world: his only gallery exhibition was when a friend lent *The Crusader* to an exhibition of works by American artists from the 1950s. Even so, his few paintings are highly prized and rarely auctioned, selling privately for undisclosed sums.

Quaintance died of a heart attack on November 8, 1957, aged 55. Recounting the artist's death, Mizer described him as "a perfectionist who ruthlessly drove himself, slaving away days and nights on end (taking Benzedrine to stay awake), to be hailed as the pioneer of a culture that was all but ignored for 20 centuries". **8=D**

QUAINTANCE



# Eugène Jansson

1862-1915

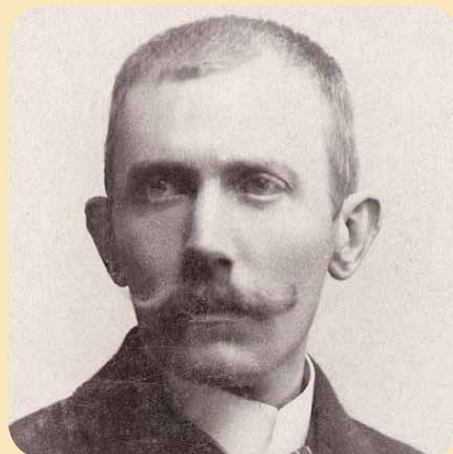
by Filipe Chagas



*Fleet bathhouse*, oil on canvas, 1907.



**Eugène Fredrik Jansson** (1862-1915) was a Swedish painter known for creating a painting style with Scandinavian origins that reflected the spirit of his homeland. Historians place him either as a symbolist or a romantic nationalist, but Jansson went further.



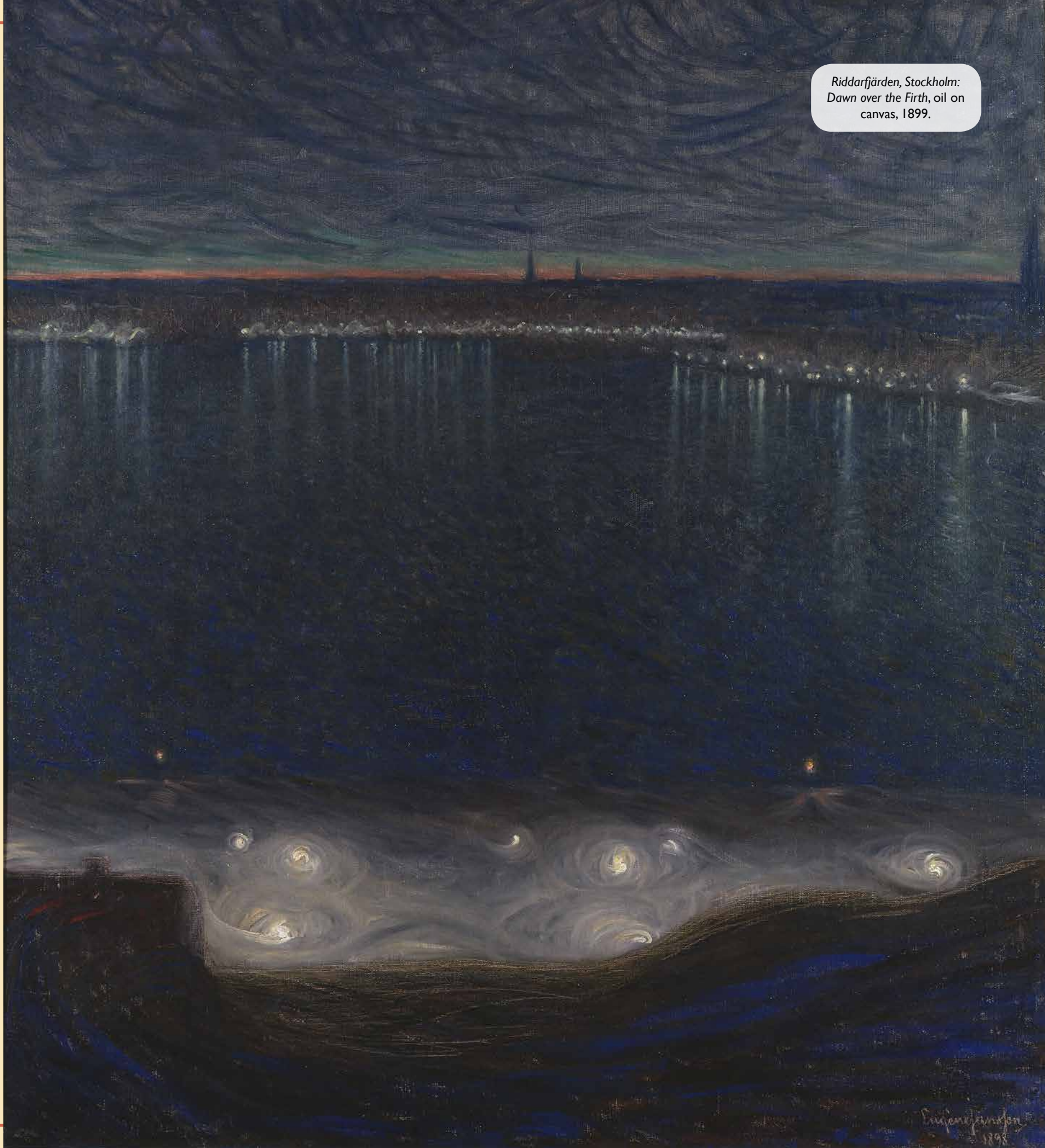
His parents belonged to the working class and experienced some financial difficulties, but they wanted the best for their children, Eugène and his younger brother Adrian. Eugène went to the German School in Stockholm and took piano lessons. A bout of scarlet fever at the age of fourteen caused him chronic vision, hearing and kidney problems, which caused him to live with his family for the rest of his life.

Jansson studied with Edvard Perséus, a painter who ran a private art school in Stockholm, and helped him produce portraits and still lifes. Around this time, he met the Swedish painters Karl Nordström and Johan Axel Gustaf Acke, who may have turned his gaze to the city around him – Södermalm, south of Stockholm, which became his main subject.

In 1881, he was accepted into the school of antiquities at the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts, but he did not have the means to follow most of his contemporaries to Paris for further study and left the institution the following year. In 1885, his colleagues returning from France established the *Konstnars Forbundet*, an association of artists, radical critics of traditional institutions, which came to be known as “The Opponents”. Jansson joined this secessionist group betting on outdoor painting in 1886 and pledged himself as a board member.

From 1893, Jansson experimented with a new style of painting in which dark blues and blacks predominated in pastel or crossed oil brushstrokes – and earned him the name *blåmålar*, “the blue painter”. He moved towards simplification and semi-abstraction and, at the end of his “blue period”, little more than street lights and their reflections in the waters of Riddarfjärden Bay could be discerned from the mass of blue on the canvas. Some of his nocturnal landscapes, titled *Nocturnes*, were in reference to Chopin, his favorite musician.

Riddarfjärden, Stockholm:  
Dawn over the Firth, oil on  
canvas, 1899.







*Self-portrait, oil on canvas, 1901.*

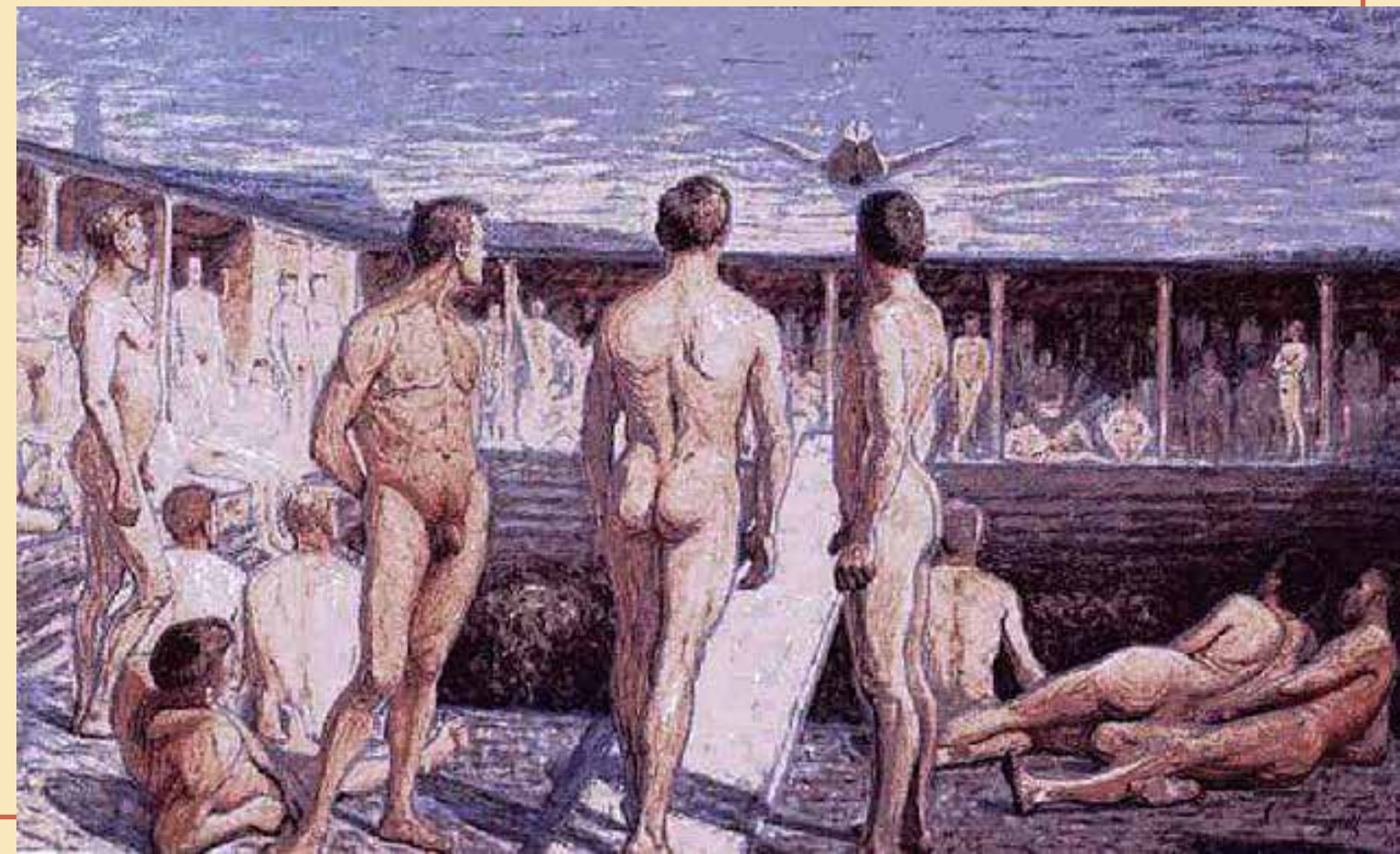
His first trip outside the Nordic countries was in 1900 – finally to Paris –, when he was already consolidating himself as a painter and his economic situation was beginning to improve. In 1901, he visited Italy and Germany, where he had the opportunity to study the paintings he admired by Edvard Munch in the Ernest Thiel collection.

After 1904, when he had exhausted his views of Stockholm, Jansson stopped participating in exhibitions and for three years he isolated himself. As he frequently visited the spa to swim and tend to his fragile health, he ended up finding a new inspiration: naked men bathing and exercising.

In 1907, he caused quite a stir when he unveiled the first of his large series of male figurative subjects. Perspective and proportion were sacrificed and a great sense of movement and activity was introduced. Jansson portrayed muscular bodies and turbulent water with calligraphic brushstrokes, and with a superb richness of impasto and exuberance of luminous colors, showing a strong influence of Munch's expressionist work.



*Boys on the beach, oil on canvas, s.d.*



*Bathhouse, oil on canvas, s.d.*



Diving in the bathhouse,  
oil on canvas, 1911.

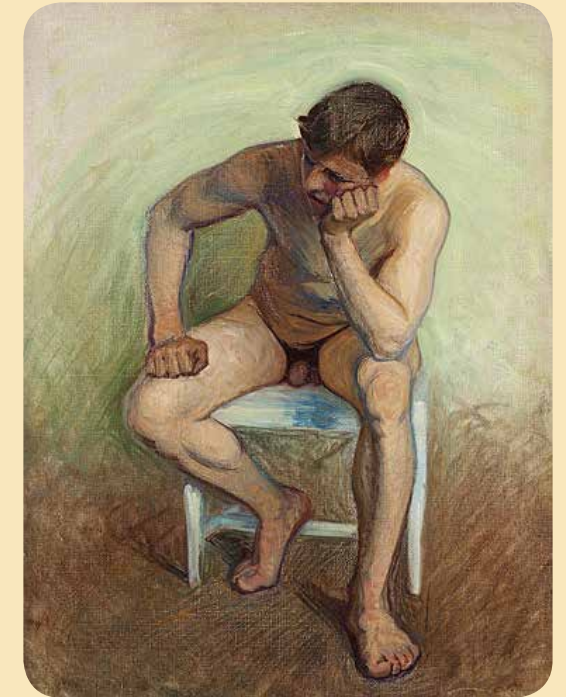
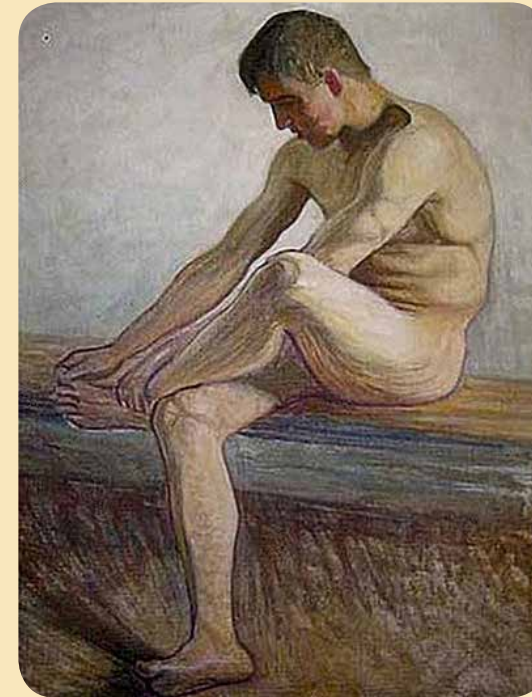




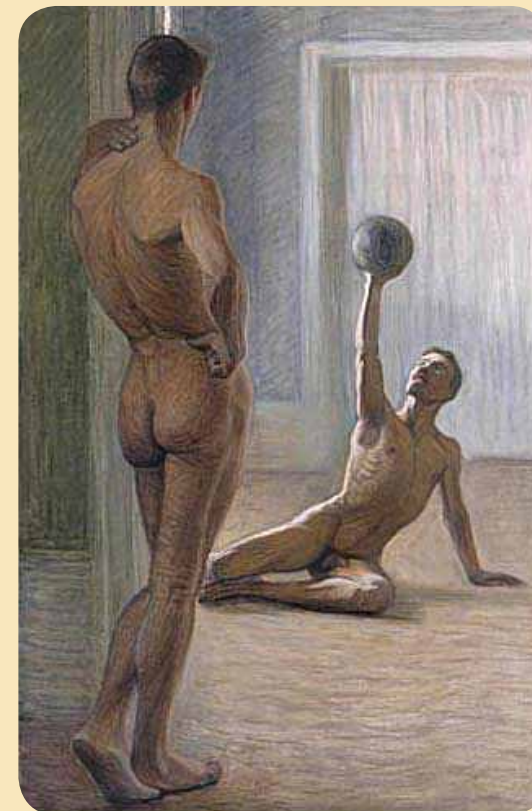
His 1910 self-portrait (oil on canvas, here) was intended to question traditional gender roles at a time when homosexuality was prohibited by law (and remained so in Sweden until 1944). Jansson and many of his contemporaries used the figure of the dandy\* to portray femininity in the male figure.

\* Dandy is a term used to designate a man of good aesthetic taste, who did not necessarily belong to the nobility and spent most of his time in leisure and idle activities. Because he placed enormous value on aesthetic appearance, he was considered futile and, in some cases, excessively feminine – which reveals the sexist nature of the term.

Many art historians and critics have avoided developing a homoerotic reading of Jansson's final phase of art, positing these paintings as a response to the cult of the body, exercise and outdoor nudity celebrated by Nietzsche's belief in nature as a source of primordial energy for humanity (in Sweden, this philosophy became known as *vitalism*). It was with this approach that he was given permission to work in a temporary studio inside the Swedish Navy Bathhouse at Skeppsholmen, where he can study sailors diving and bathing in the pool, as well as their naked and clothed comrades standing or lounging in the sun at the pool's border.



Oils on canvas of seated young men, s.d.

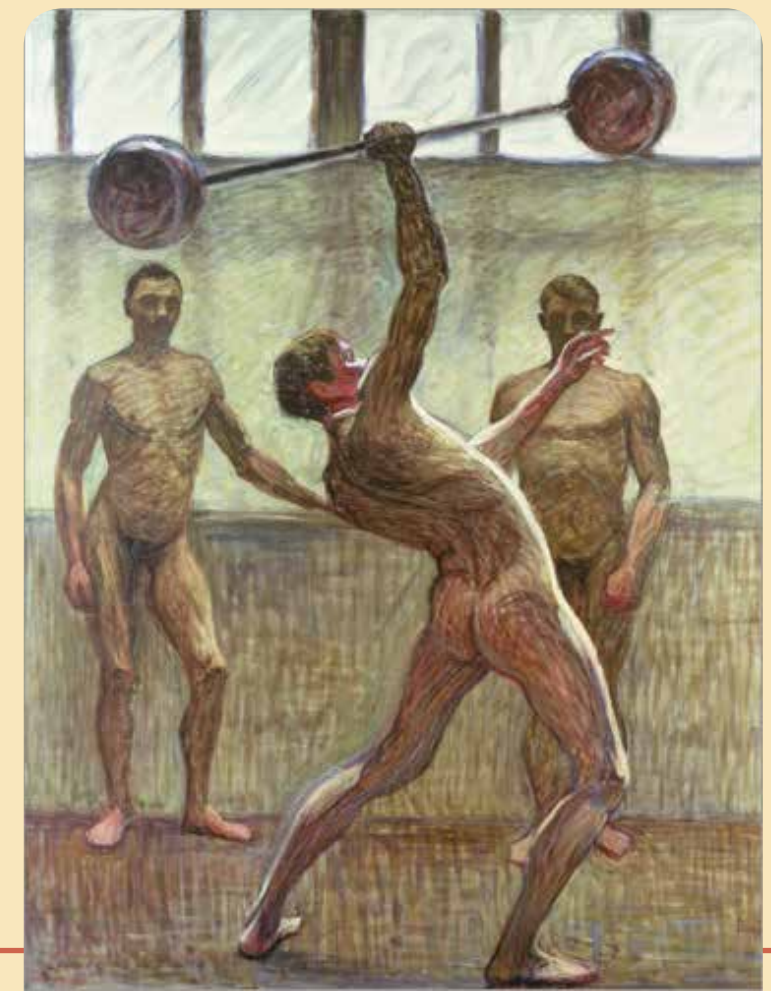
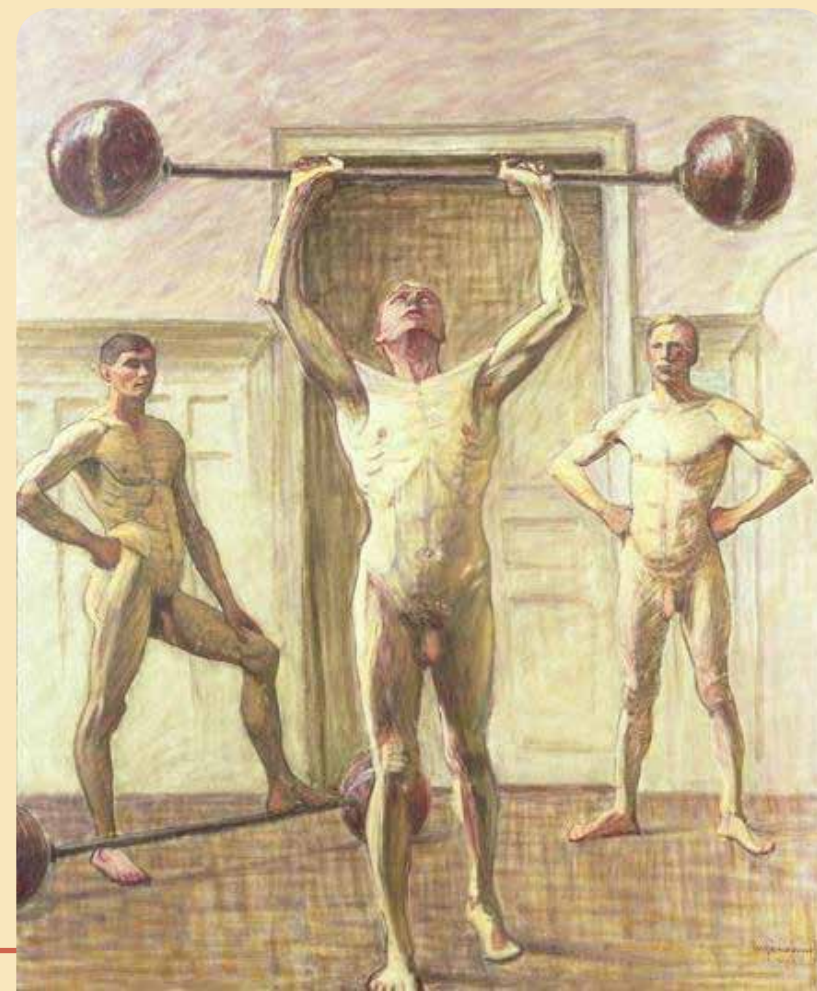
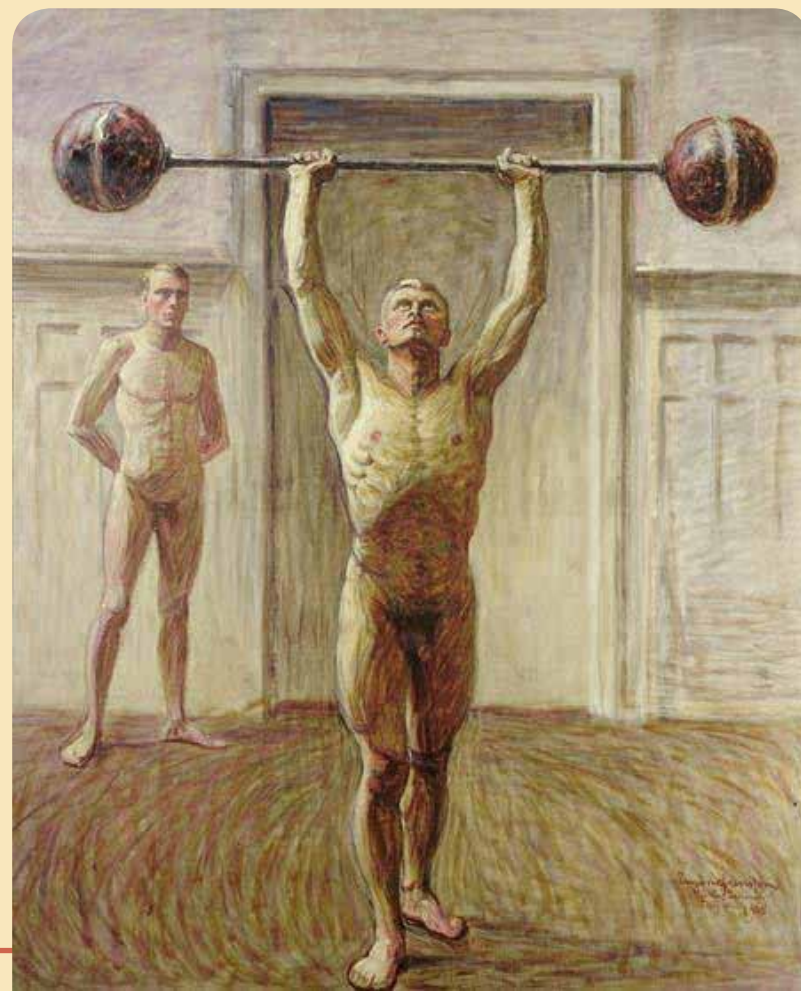
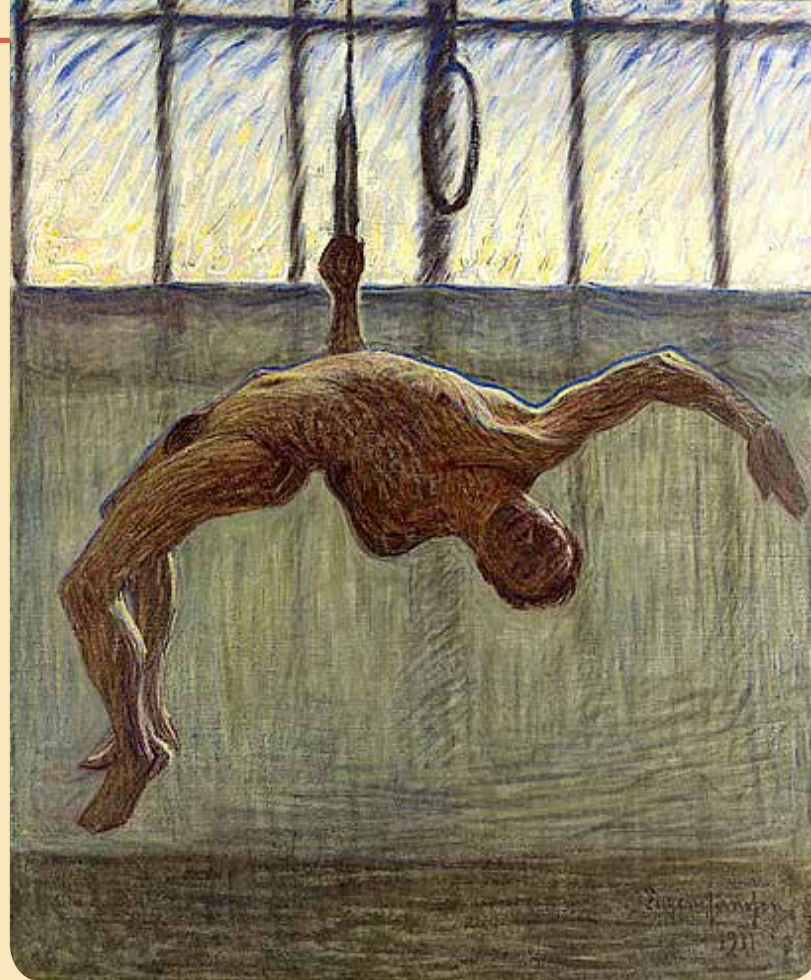


Oils on canvas of athletes, 1912.



Above, oils on canvas with  
*Gymnasts on Rings (I and II)*, 1915.

Below, oils on canvas with  
*Pushing weight with two arms (I and II)* and *Lifting weight with one arm*, all between 1913 and 1914.





A stroke took Jansson's life in 1915 and his brother Adrian burned evidence\* that Eugène was homosexual, but he is believed to be Sweden's first gay painter. Detail: Adrian was also gay and seen as reclusive and misanthropic, much like his brother.

It is possible to see Jansson's role as a solitary observer who, affected by issues of health and acceptance of his sexuality, does not participate in the world: he only had to portray what he saw from his window or his desire from a distance. It is in the contrast of these phases and the colors used that the deepest feelings can be found, opposing a simple and apparently monotonous life. **8=D**



\* For example, letters to Knut Hyman, a model he met in the Navy bathhouse and even lived with him in the studio until 1912 (provably the model of the above artwork, *Young Naked Man*).

*Riding waves*, oil on canvas, s.d.



*Plastic  
surgery  
for you.*



**Dr. Alcemar Maia Souto**

CRM 5246681-1

+55 21 97395 8000

alcemarmaiasouto@gmail.com





Olympic Games in Berlin, oil on canvas, 1933.

# Anton Kolig

by Filipe Chagas

1886-1950





Expressionist **Anton Kolig** (1886-1950) is among the most eminent Austrian painters of the first half of the 20th century. He is believed to have produced over 3000 drawings and 400 paintings, but more than two-thirds were lost during the First World War and that may be the reason for his ostracism.

Son of the painter Ferdinand Kolig and his wife Maria, Anton was born on the 1st of July in Neutitschein (in ancient Moravia, today Nový Jičín, in the Czech Republic). At the age of 18, he began studying at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* (School of Arts and Crafts) in Vienna, together with Oskar Kokoschka, but in 1907 he moved to the Academy of Fine Arts and visited the classes of Heinrich Leffler, Rudolf Bacher and Alois Delug.

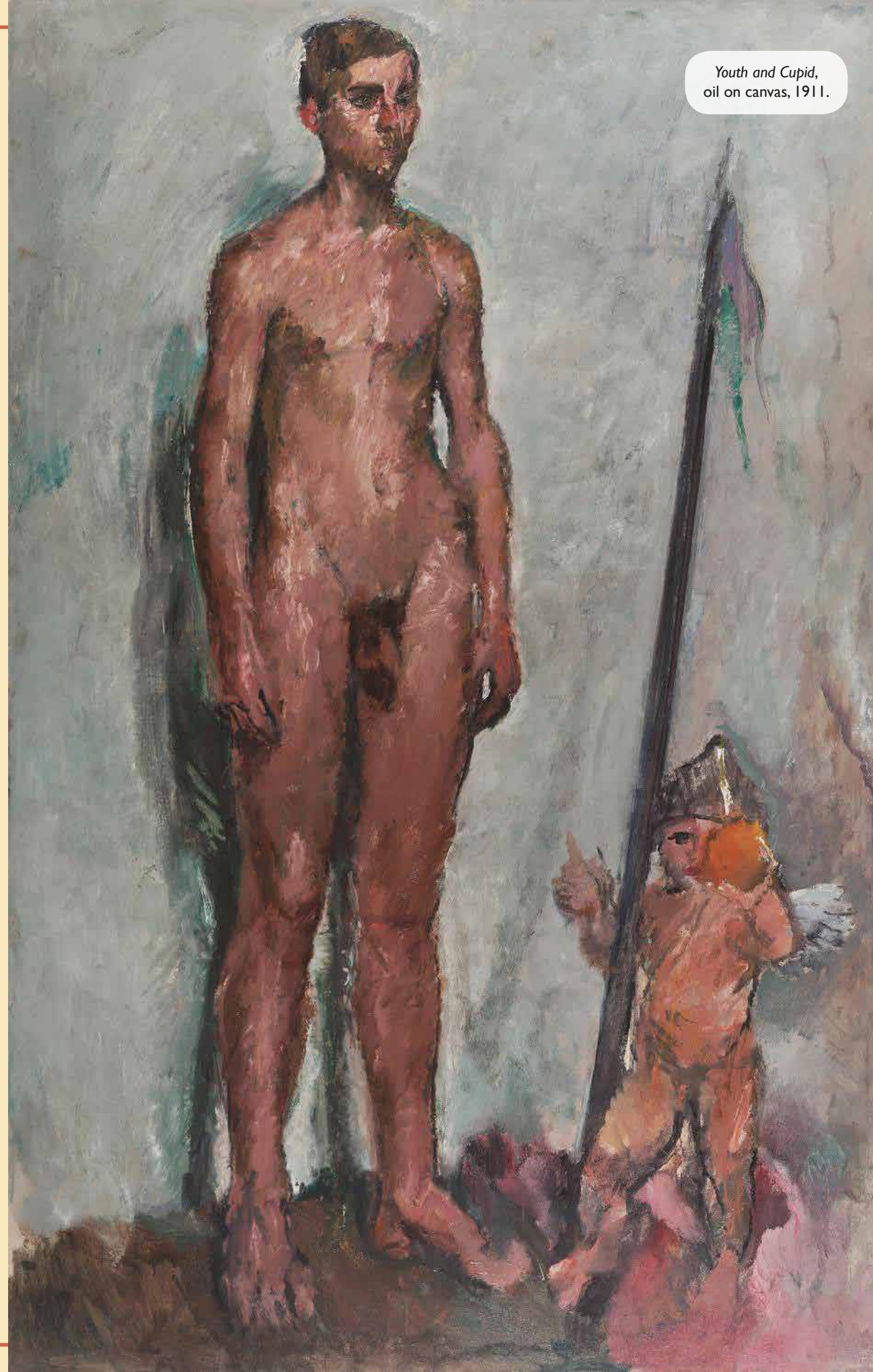
At the Academy, he met Sebastian Isepp and Franz Wievele, who became his lifelong friends. They traveled to Nötsch (in Carinthia, southern Austria, which was the home village of Isepp and Wievele), where, with Anton Mahringer, they formed the *Nötscher Kreis* (Nötsch's Circle). Displeased with the outdated and conservative academic classes, Kolig also participated in the founding of the *Neukunstgruppe* (New Art Group) in 1909, whose members included Egon Schiele and Wievele.

1911 was an important year for Kolig: in addition to marrying Katharina Wievele, the sister of his friend Franz, the artist exhibited nine works for the first time – including his first painting “Youth and Cupid” – at the “Special Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture” of the *Hagenbund* group, in Vienna, alongside Kokoschka, Schiele and their friends. Gustav Klimt and Carl Moll were impressed by the artist's work and recommended him for a fellowship in Paris. The following year, then, the artist took his family to France.

Study of two men lying down, graphite on paper, 1918.



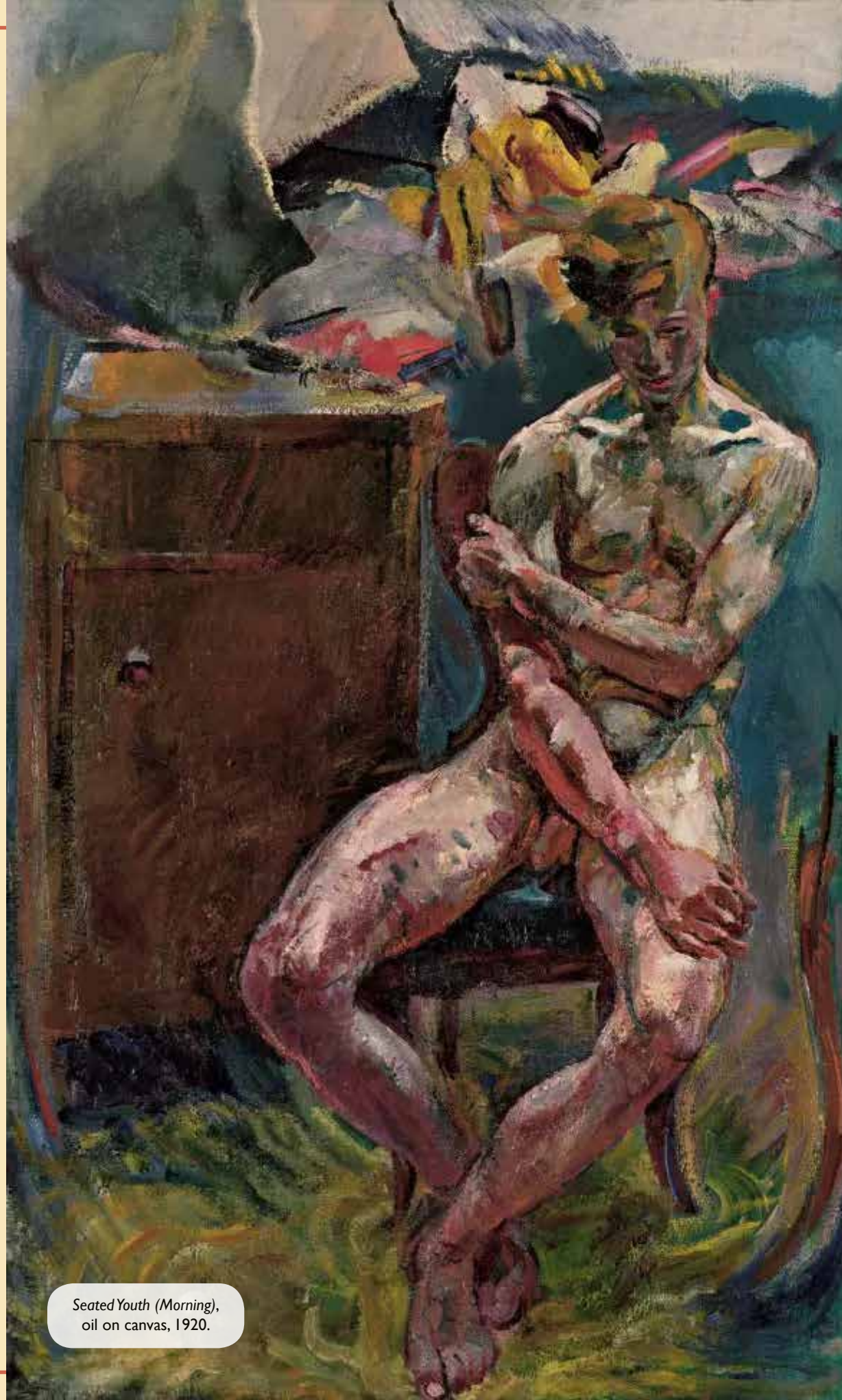
Youth and Cupid, oil on canvas, 1911.



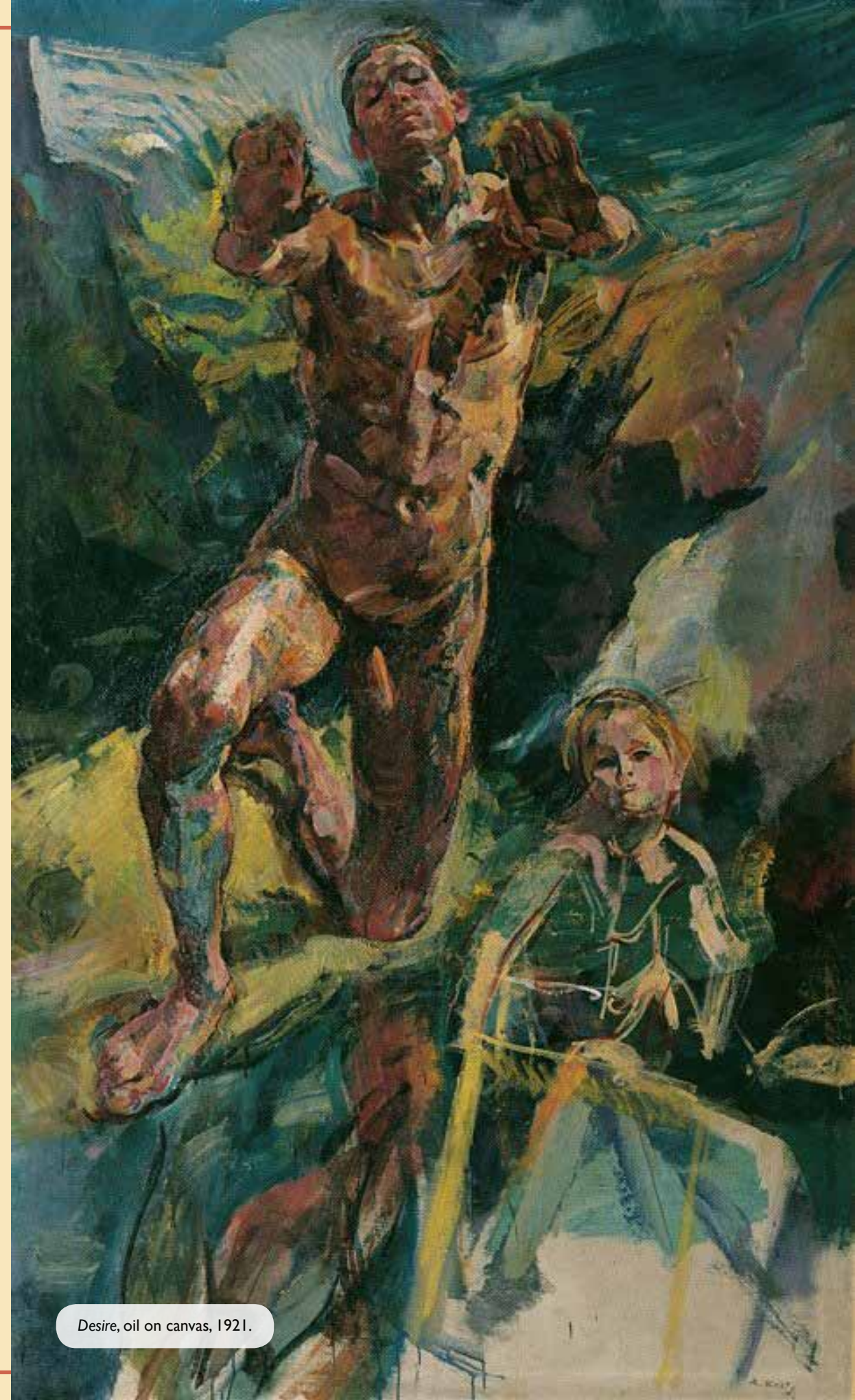


Kolig was in Cassis, near Marseille, when he was overtaken by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. He fled with his family via Genoa and Venice, Italy, and returned to Nötsch, but was unable to take most of the paintings he had done in his stay in France (which were lost).

In April 1916, Kolig was summoned to the emergency reserve hospital in Klagenfurt, the capital of Carinthia, and remained there until he was assigned to the Italian front in July. Through the mediation of the poet Richard von Schaukal – who was also Minister of Public Works at the time – he was designated a war painter and joined the Press Agency of the Austro-Hungarian Royal Army. In 1917, he was ordered to create an altar from the Carinthian Fusiliers as a gift for Emperor Karl I (which was left unfinished with the end of the monarchy).



*Seated Youth (Morning)*,  
oil on canvas, 1920.



*Desire*, oil on canvas, 1921.



Sorrow, oil on canvas, 1920.



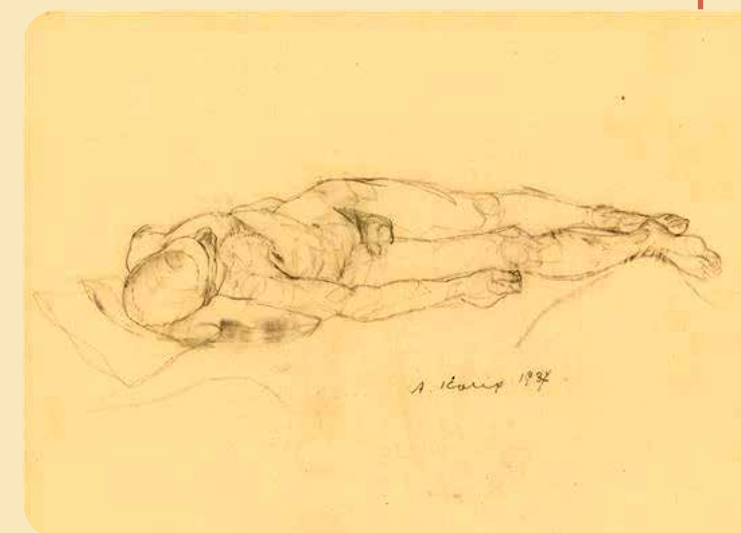


After the war Kolig tried to set up a private art school in Nötsch. His war drawings were featured in an exhibition in Klagenfurt, along with paintings by Egon Schiele, and caused a stir.

A great admirer of Michelangelo, Hans von Marées and Lovis Corinth, Kolig became a prominent representative of dynamic figural painting typical of his time. His works are characterized by an energetic brushstroke with vibrant, luminous and intense colors. His main subjects were portraits, but he also made still lifes and monumental paintings. What drew attention was the large number of drawings of male nudes – mostly lying down. The nudity in his work may have been influenced both by the contact the artist had with Egon Schiele's production, and by the naturist way of life common in countries with Germanic bases or by life in the army. However, some scholars believe that Kolig possessed repressed homoerotic tendencies (having been Kokoschka's lover) and his frenzied brushstrokes of color would be an internal conflict with his religiosity.



Studies of male nudes in graffiti, 1930s and 1940s.







*Male Pietà, oil  
on canvas, 1946.*

From 1926 he worked on tapestries and mosaics for a festival in Salzburg. He received a chair at the Württemberg Art Academy in Stuttgart – moving with his family of five to the city – and his work became increasingly respected internationally, even winning a gold medal for his “Portrait of General Seibt” (1918), at the exhibition “German Art” in Düsseldorf in 1928. The following year, he was commissioned to paint frescoes in a hall of the government building in Klagenfurt, which he finished together with Anton Mahringer and his students.



*Above: Portrait of General Seibt (1918).*

*Below: Large nude with mirror (1926) and  
Nude male couple (1925).*

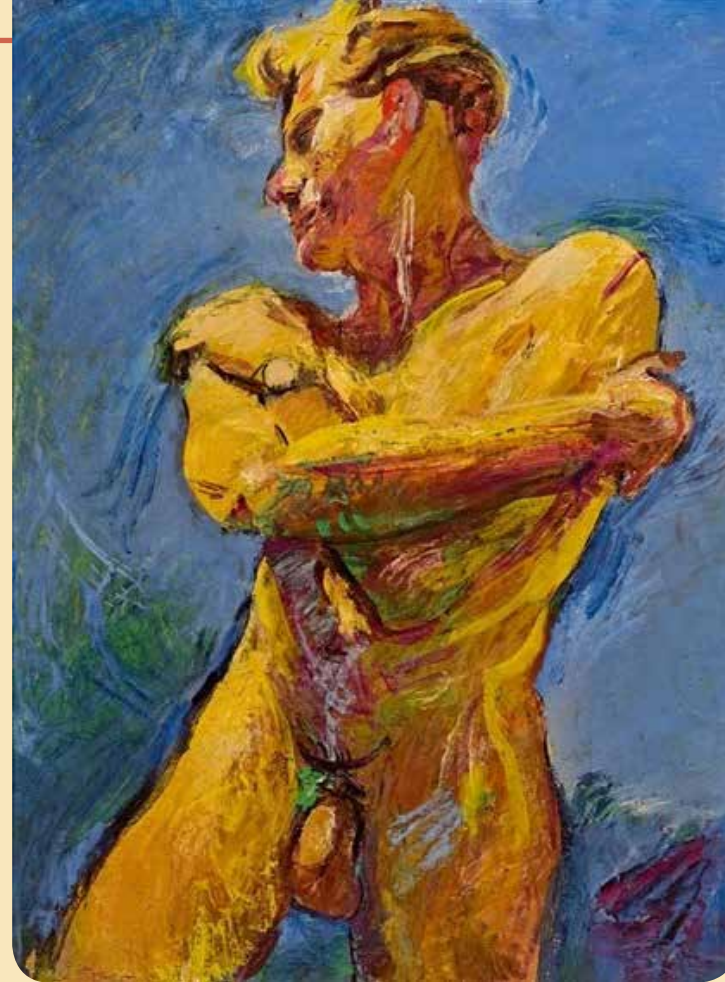
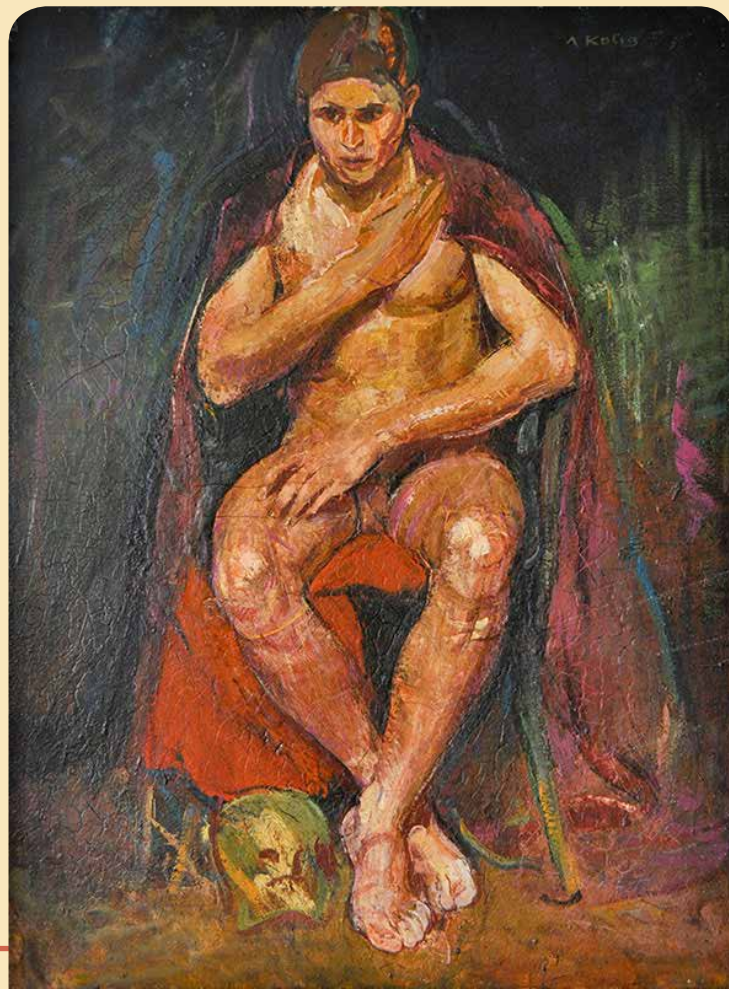
*All in oil on canvas.*







*Wrestling and Young Man with a Red Coat*, both oil on canvas, 1933.



*Study for an angel* (Rudolf Hradil) in the unrealized design of an iron curtain for the Salzburg Festival, oil on canvas, 1948.

*Seekers of the Sun*, oil on canvas sketch for a stained glass window in St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, 1947.



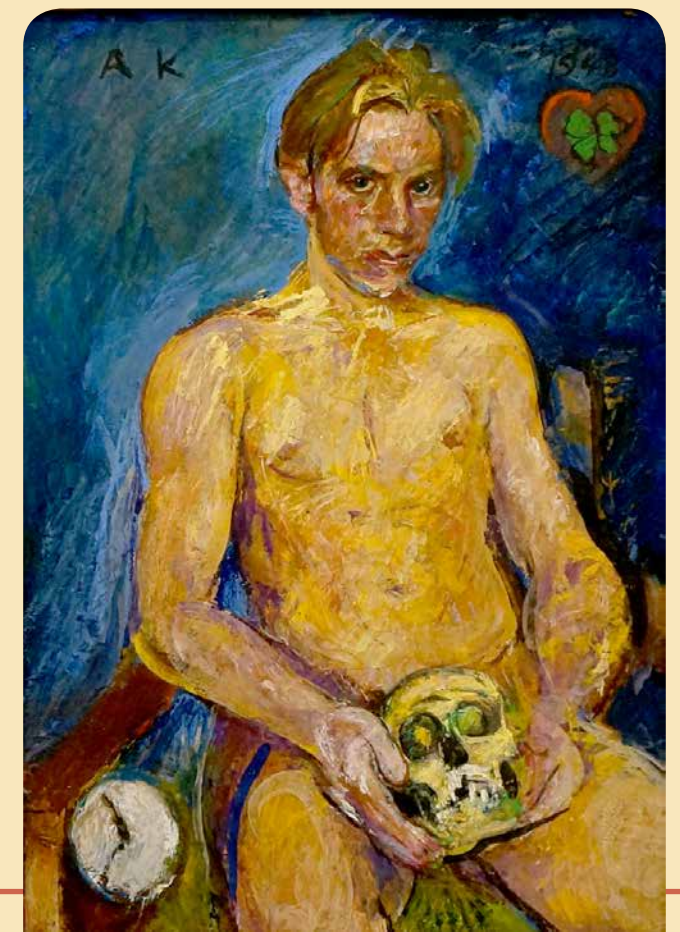
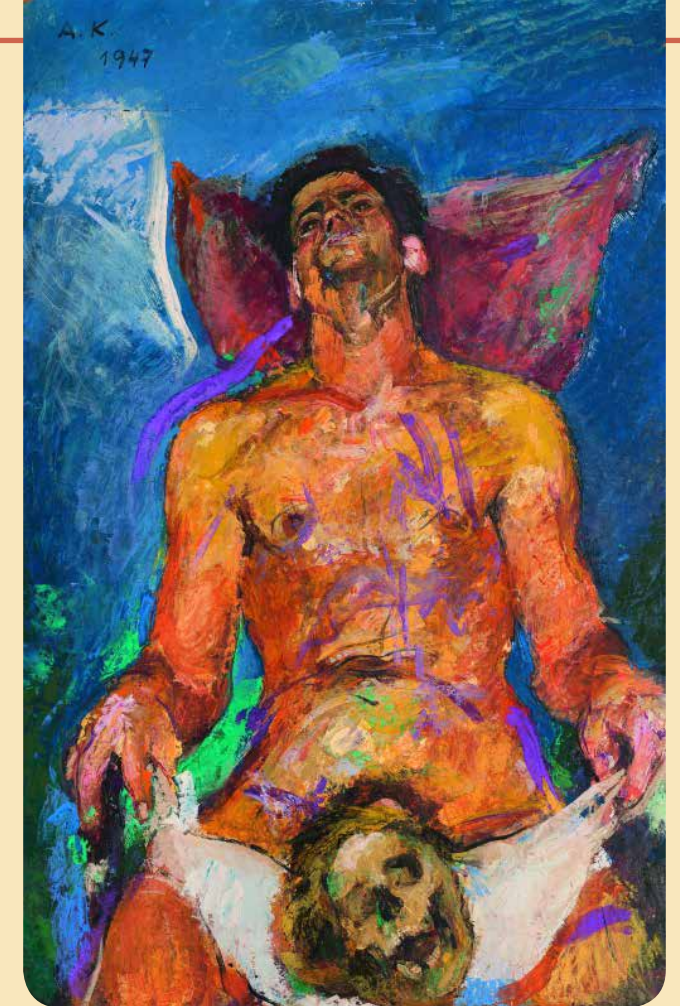




*Man with scythe*, oil on canvas, 1924.

In 1936, he received the Austrian State Prize, however, during the Nazi regime, many of his works were destroyed or removed from galleries, as well as the mosaic in Salzburg and the frescoes in Klagenfurt that were ruined during the German *anschluss* of Austria, in 1938. Hitler himself came to demonstrate against Kolig's expressionist art.

In 1943 Kolig was forced into retirement by the Nazis and returned to Nötsch. In 1944, during a bombing of the city, Kolig was buried under rubble with his wife and was seriously injured. A large retrospective of the artist opened in Vienna in 1948. The artist died on May 17, 1950 in Nötsch. **8=D**



*Our youth (at balance)* (1947) and *Our youth* (1948), both in oil on canvas.



*Mourning spirit,*  
watercolor, 1966.

# Yannis Tsarouchis

1910-1989

by Filipe Chagas





The Greek artist **Yannis Tsarouchis** (1910-1989) has gone down in history as the one who tried to balance popular tradition, Byzantine art, neoclassical style and modernity. In addition to being a painter, he was an internationally renowned theatrical director, set designer and costume designer.

Tsarouchis grew up in neoclassical Greece, surrounded by ruins, beautiful houses, statues and Hellenistic pediments. In Piraeus, “where light is silver and gold”, he developed a strong connection with his Greek origins, which he has been researching and improving over the years. Although he had been designing costumes since he was six years old, his parents envisioned him as a great lawyer or mechanic. The Tsarouchis family moved to Athens in 1927, but Piraeus and Karagyozis\* were already deeply rooted in the artist’s soul.

At the age of 18, he entered the School of Fine Arts in Athens, where he learned to prepare his own canvases and fell in love with ocher and reddish-brown colors. He was also actively involved in theatre, making costumes and props for the Princess Malena National Theater. In 1929, his first studies of landscapes and still lifes were exhibited at the Art Asylum collective. In 1931, he was introduced to the art of Byzantine hagiography by Fotis Kondoglou.

*If I were to revive my artistic career, I would look for a good craftsman to learn the technique of painting well and not go to school, where the teachers are trying to fill their nomination with straw. I became Kondoglou’s student and assistant to learn as much as I could about Byzantine painting. It was the only solution, as he wanted to combine eternal Greek design with pure color, fast freehand execution and Renaissance chiaroscuro. After three years, I looked for other masters to whom I owe a lot... Each one of them gave me the strength and the bitterness of knowledge.*

Tsarouchis with model in his studio. Photo by Herbert List, 1949.

\* Shadow theater of Chinese origin that arrived in Greece by Turkish gypsy caravans and became a very popular adult theater and later a comic theater for children. Today it is recognized by UNESCO as intangible heritage.



Nude standing and seated, oil on canvas, 1933.

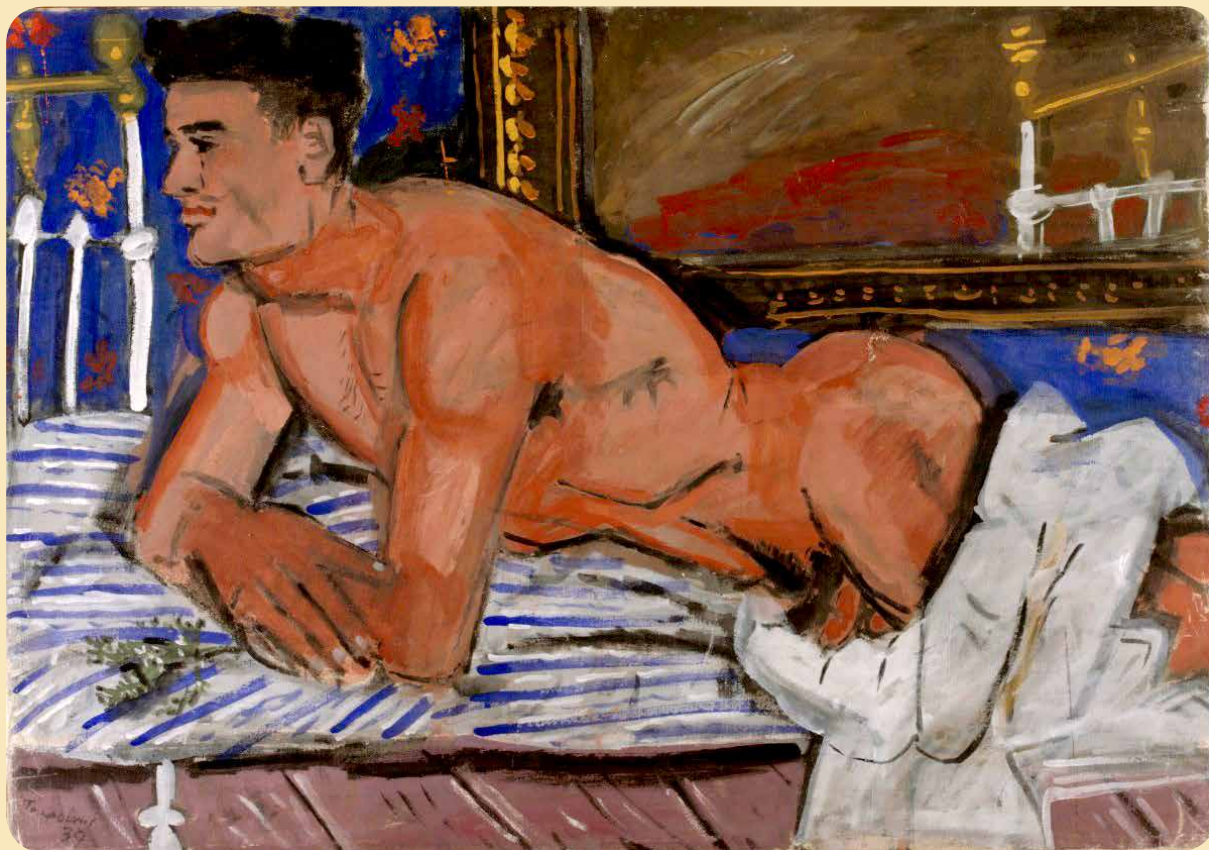
In 1934, on a ship to Constantinople (now Istanbul), Tsarouchis watched a performance of *zeibekiko*, a Greek folk dance performed by men and characterized by an emotional and improvised expression of individual gestures. The affective power of this dance left a lasting mark on the artist: he photographed, drew and painted dancers until the 1980s. In the same year, he learned to weave, founded the theater group *Laiki Skini* and even started writing surrealist poetry.

The following year, he made his first trip to Paris and Rome. Passionate about Delacroix, Vermeer and Caravaggio, he discovered the avant-garde of Henri Matisse and Alberto Giacometti and produced a series of abstract paintings. In 1938,

he held his first solo exhibition in Greece with paintings in which his personal style, the result of his studies and aspirations, began to show through. It received praise from Athenian critics as “a revolutionary thrust in the midst of classical contemplation”.

Tsarouchis fought in the Greek armed forces during the Greco-Italian war, in the course of World War II, in 1940. He was tasked with camouflaging military installations and uniforms, never stopping painting and creating portraits of soldiers. In some of his subsequent paintings, he worked out the taboos around men in uniform. During the German occupation he worked mainly as a set designer, restorer and decorator to earn a living.





Above, *Youth posing as a statue from Olympia*, animal glue and pigments on canvas, 1939.  
Below, *The Arrest of Three Communists*, watercolor on paper, 1944.



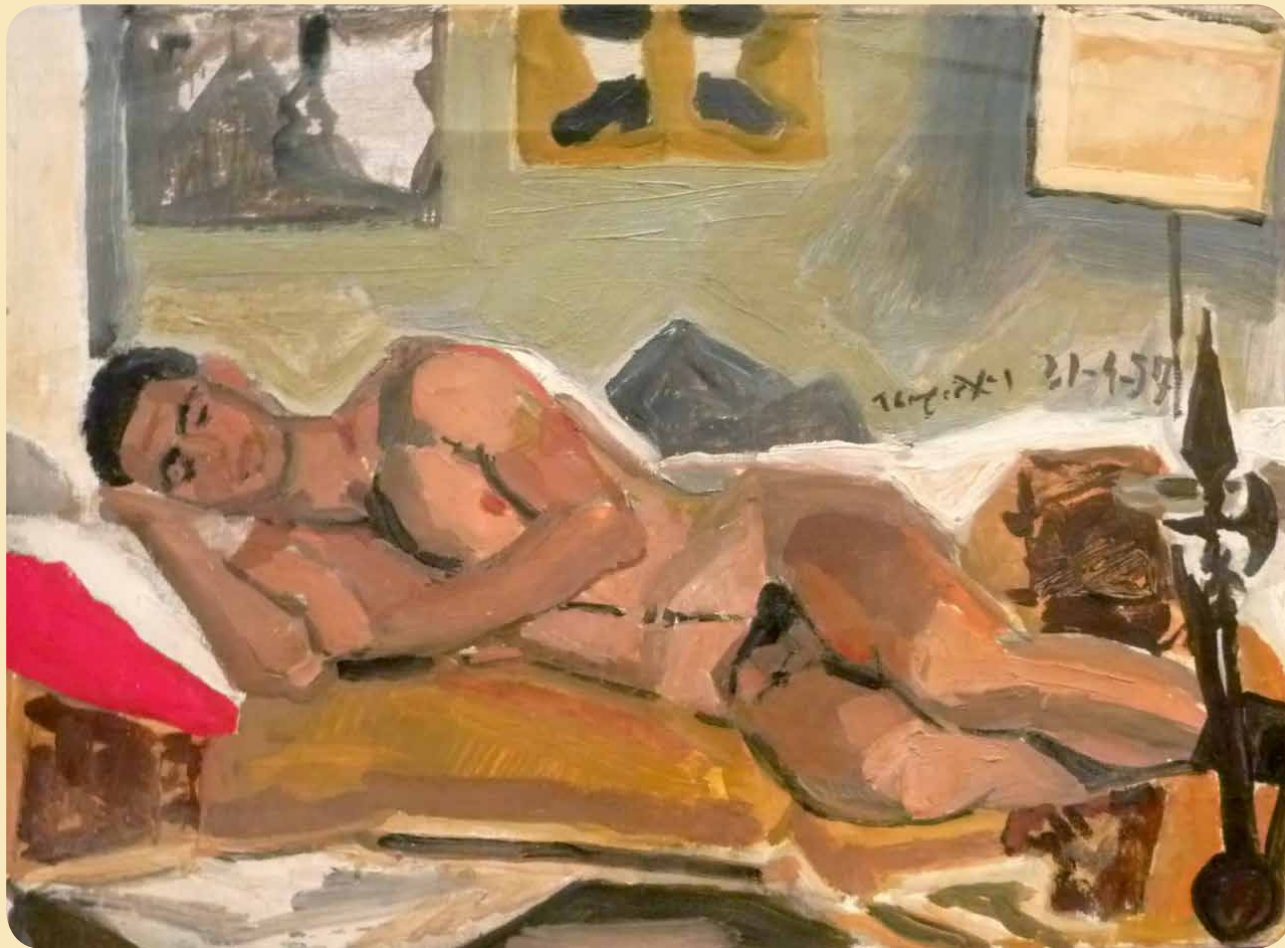
*Sailor seated and lying naked*, gouache on canvas, 1948.



A member of the Armos group, founded in 1949, Tsarouchis took two different directions: one orientalist and sensualist with a strong influence from Matisse and Byzantine art, and the other from the Greek ideal expressed by elements of classical Hellenic sculpture and vase painting as well as the Renaissance movements and baroque. These constant references to the past and present, from ancient sculpture to folk art, shaped his vision of the complexities of Greek identity.

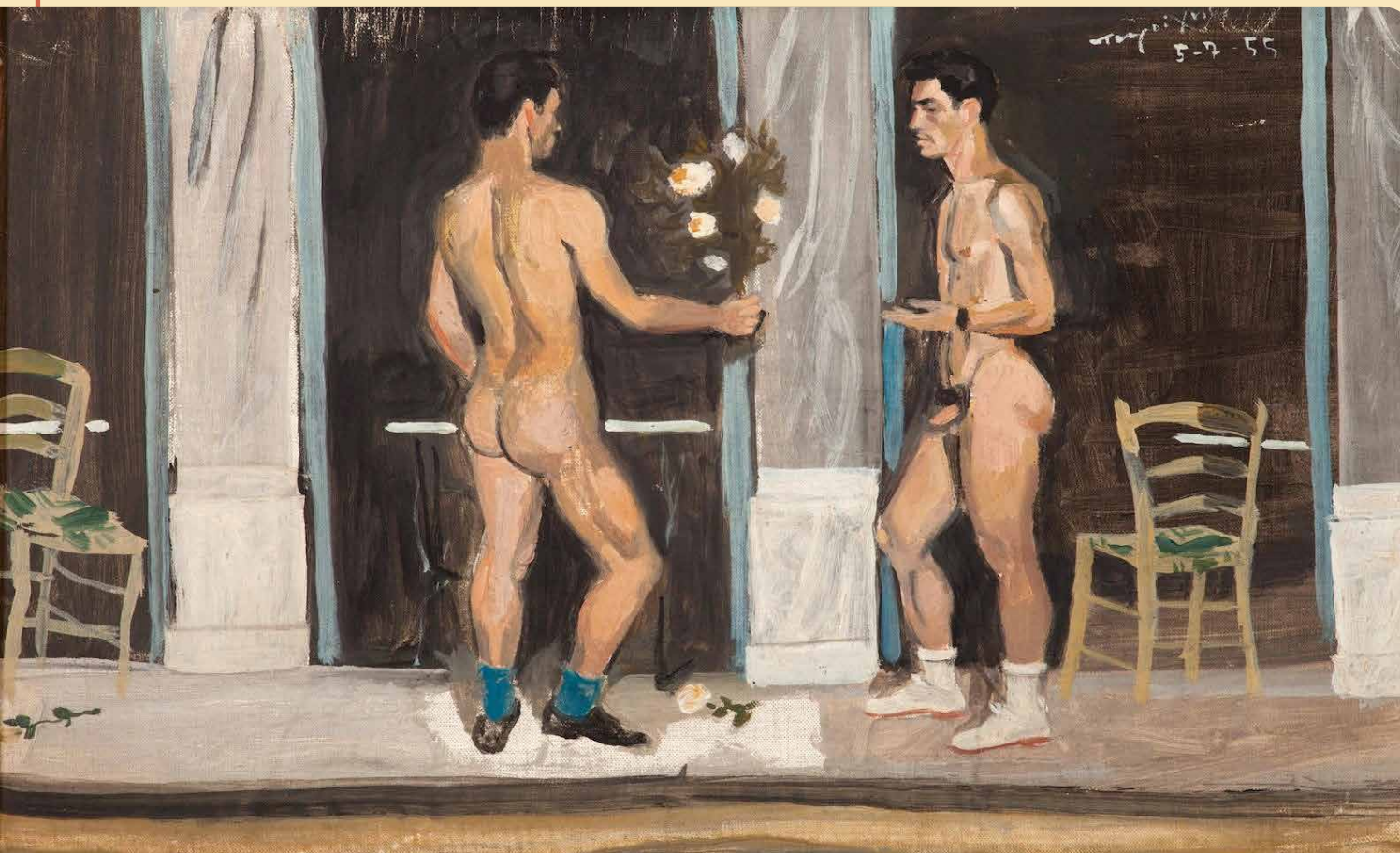
*Since I was a child I have tried to capture what touches me deeply and I think the best way to do this is to combine drawing and color. Two are my basic searches, despite all the thousand differences that my works have: to assimilate the ancient classical ideal, expressed by the Baroque and the Renaissance, and to express all my objections to my own ideal.*





Above, *Little Plage*, mixed media on canvas, 1962.

Previous page, above, *Lying Nude*, oil on fabric, 1957; below, *Bouquet*, mixed technique on paneled canvas, 1955.



He participated in the group's exhibitions in 1949, 1950, 1953, 1954. In 1951, he exhibited for the first time in Paris and London (where he also had paintings, scenography and drawings presented in 1952). From 1953 to 1957, he had a contract with a gallery in New York, which gave him a steady income so that he could paint some of his best work, such as *The Forgotten Garnisson*. He was nominated for the Guggenheim Prize in 1956, and two years later he represented Greece at the Venice Biennale.

During the Greek military dictatorship (1967-1974), Tsarouchis went into exile in Paris, even though he was a member of the Greek Chamber of Fine Arts. Between 1972 and 1973, several exhibitions of his work were organized in Italian cities such as Rome and Bologna.



*The forgotten garnisson,*  
oil on canvas, 1956.







*Military policeman arresting the Spirit, watercolor and pencil on paper, 1965; and Perfection, gouache on paper, 1967.*



In 1981, he founded the Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation and, the following year, the Yannis Tsarouchis Museum was inaugurated, in his residence in Marousi, to promote and encourage the study of his work through annual exhibitions on specific themes. With his definitive return to his homeland, several exhibitions celebrated his work in life. He continued to work as a set designer until the end of his life. In 1989, he was preparing to stage "Orestes", by Eurípides, translated, directed and with sets and costumes of his own design, when he died at the age of 79.

It is said that he painted by talking to his models, friends and assistants, and listening to music, which ranged from folk songs and operas to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. When asked if there was an overall message in his work, Tsarouchis replied:

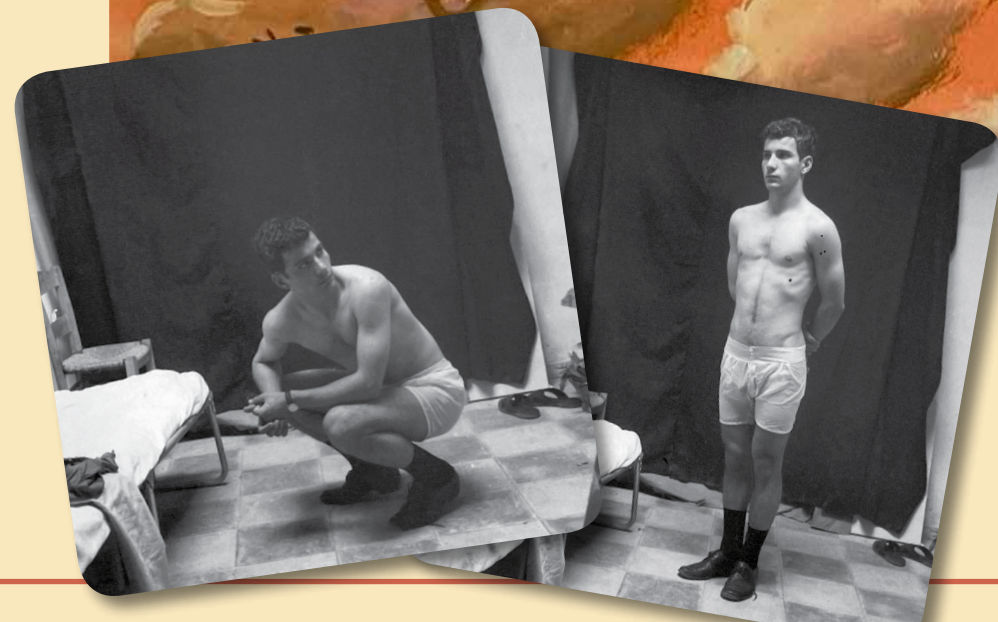
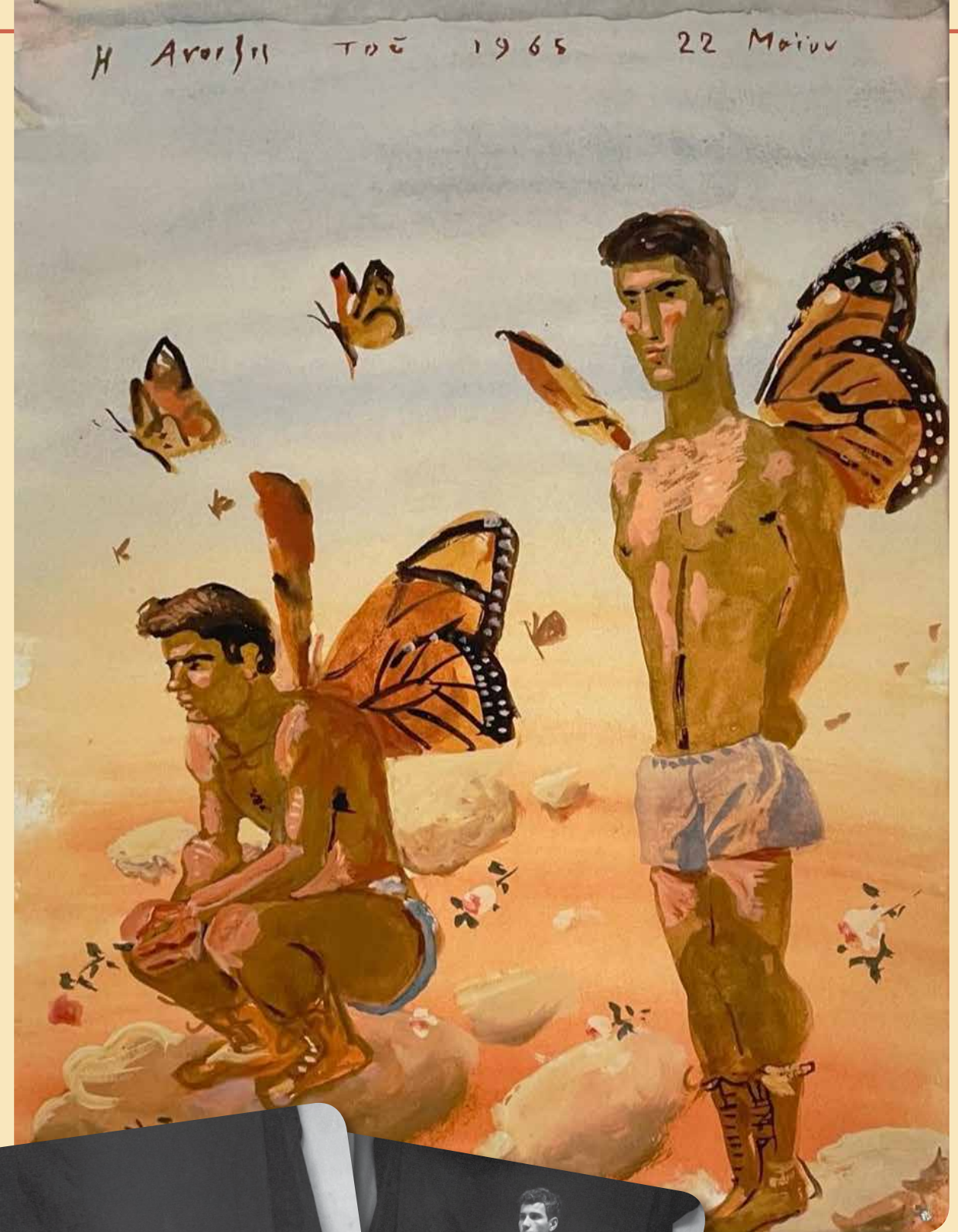
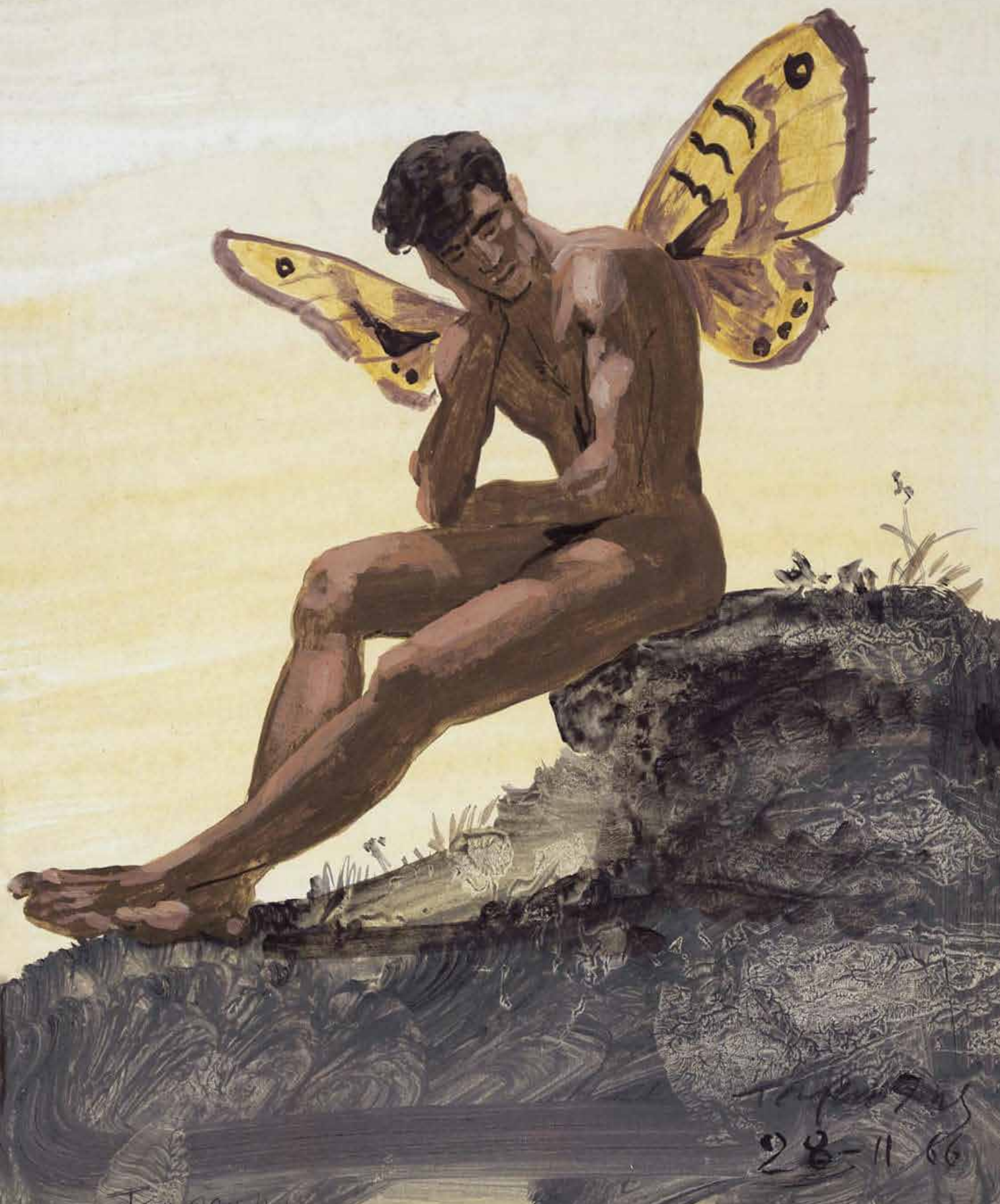
*I dare not say, so as not to appear that I pretend to be a great artist, but through my paintings and colors I want to find peace and tranquility in my life and share it with others.*

*Spirit of boredom over Piraeus, oil on canvas, 1984.*



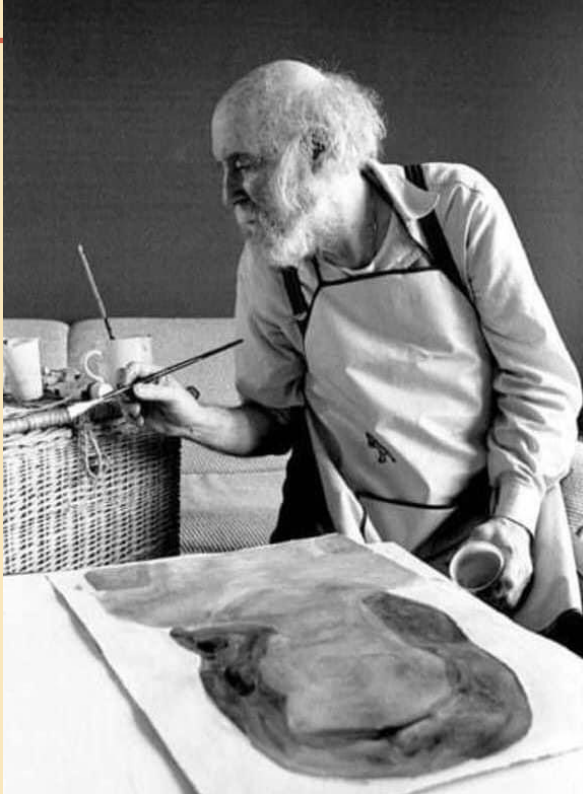


Thinking Spirit, oil on canvas, 1966.



Reference photos for the piece Two spirits, oil on canvas, 1965.



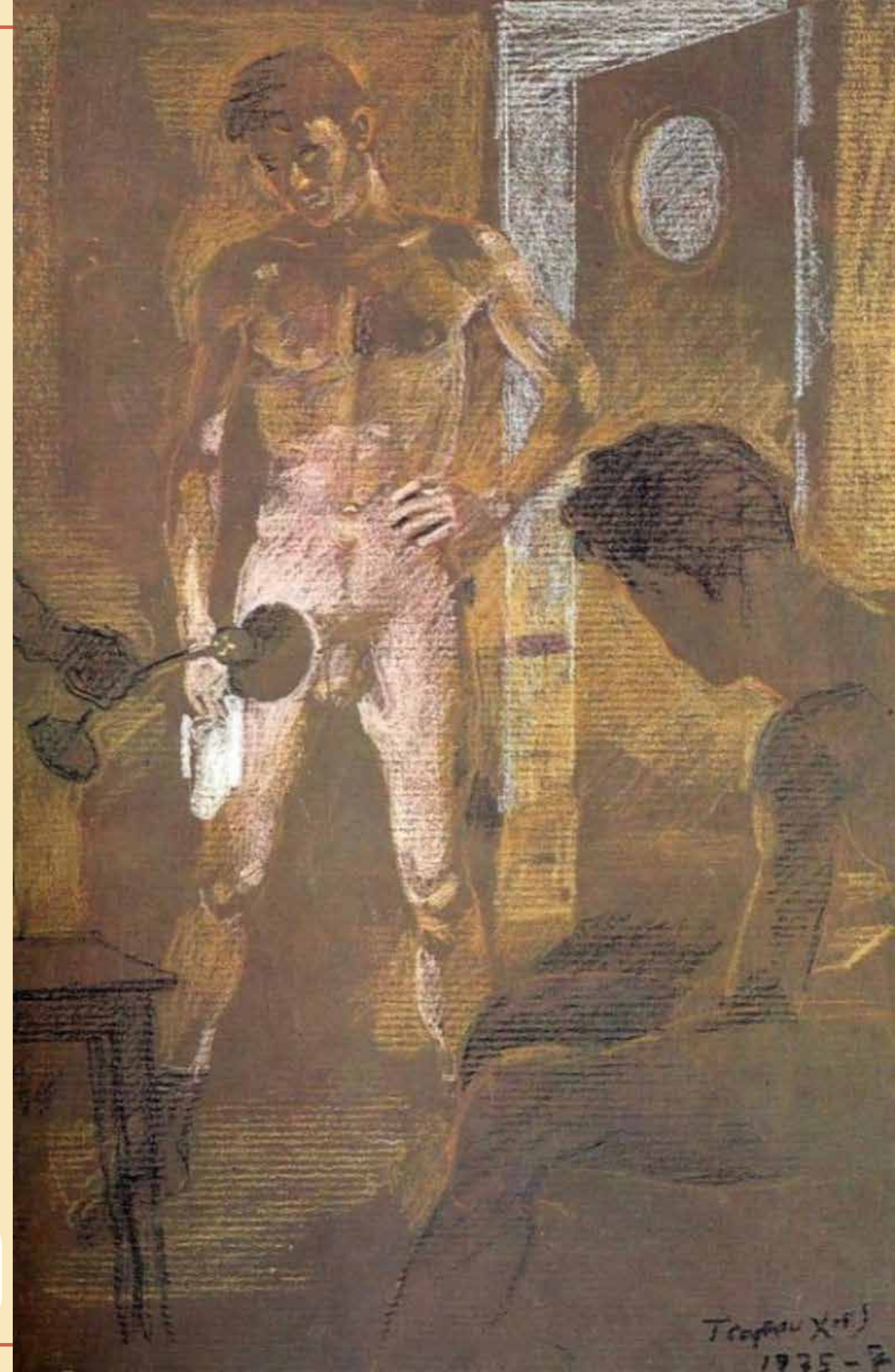


\* In 1952, one of his paintings was removed from an exhibition after the Royal Hellenic Navy denounced its depiction of a sailor in bed with a naked man as offensive. In 1959, a staging of *The Birds* of Aristophanes, with the artist's scenography, was canceled when the right-wing Greek government imposed tough measures against homosexuality.

It is noteworthy that the painter portrayed the vulnerability and latent sexual energy of the male body, in mythological metaphors and representations of sailors, often painted naked, with a feeling of inadequacy in a conservative society. He was seen as controversial for “humiliation of the Greek man”, as well as being censured by the powerful Greek Orthodox Church\*. However, its international artistic relevance led to a “blind eye” from critics. Today his works are analyzed as a pioneering and radical recoding of the conventional gender roles and hierarchies represented in the modernism of the 1930s. He left as advice for young artists:

*Confess with your art. Talk about your life, what interests you. When going to confession, millions of people find satisfaction and feel lighter.*

8=D



Untitled, pastel on cardboard, 1975.



Two men in the interior, gouache on paper, 1979.





Cock and devil, 1982.

# Robert Mapplethorpe

1946-1989

by Filipe Chagas



Steeped in a pop milieu, **Robert Mapplethorpe** (1946-1989) was an American photographer who worked primarily in the studio and almost exclusively in black and white – with the exception of a few works in his final exhibition *New Colors*. Although his body of work presents a wide range of subjects, most of it (and the best known) is about images considered erotic, which he himself referred to as pornographic, with the aim of awakening the viewer.

Of British, Irish and German descent, Mapplethorpe was born in Queens into a strict Catholic family with two sisters and three brothers (Edward later worked for him as an assistant and also became a photographer). After finishing school in 1963, he entered the Pratt Institute to study Graphic Arts, where he studied drawing, painting and sculpture. Influenced by artists such as Joseph Cornell and Marcel Duchamp, he also experimented with a variety of materials in mixed media collages, including images cut from books and magazines.

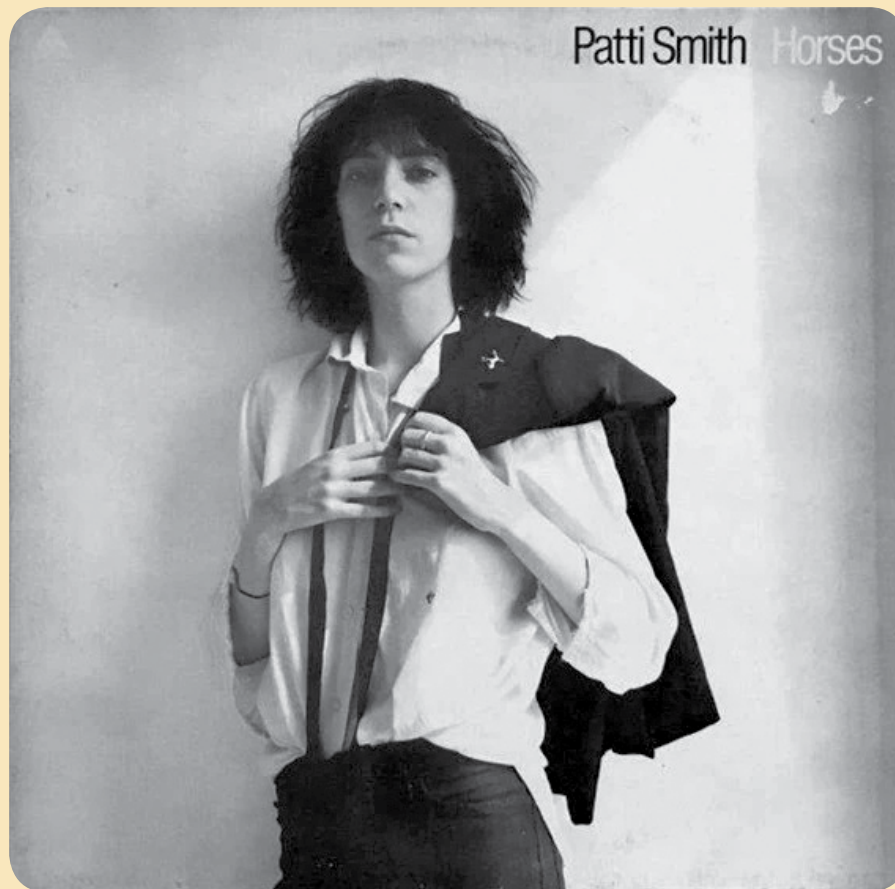


Self-portrait, 1972.

Below: *Black XXX* (halftone collage with applied coal-tar dye pigment, knife blade and typed poem mounted on canvas, 1970), *Erotic Scene* (brush on page of a porn magazine, s.d.) and *Self-portrait* (Polaroid photograph painted in plastic case with string, beads and dice, 1971).  
On the next page: *Untitled* (painted photograph, 1971).







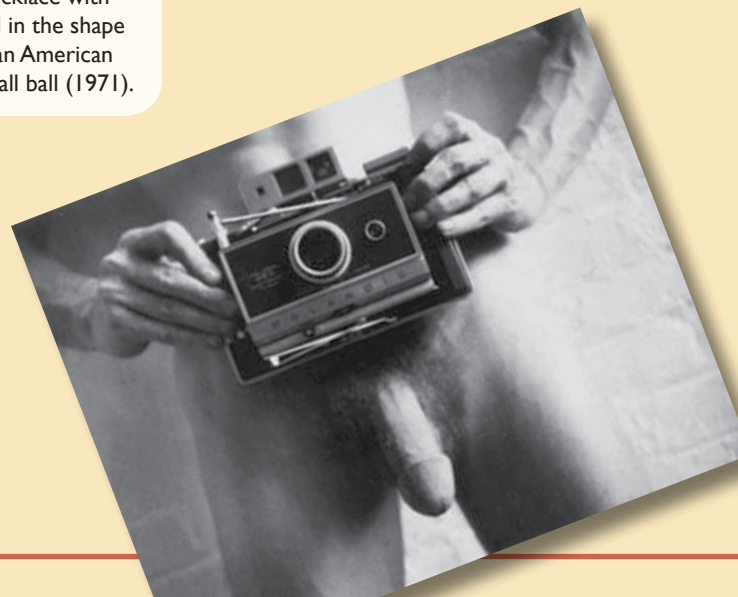
Iconic cover of Patti Smith's *Horses* (1975) album, which established her androgynous look.

He dropped out of college in 1969, before graduating, and went to live with the poet, songwriter and singer Patti Smith, his friend, lover and biggest enthusiast, at the Chelsea Hotel, after convincing the manager to give them a room in exchange for some drawings, assuring that "you may not know us yet, but we are going to be big stars". Many say that Patti was Mapplethorpe's biggest encourager to jump into the world of photography based on the Polaroid camera she bought in 1970 to use in his collages. During this period, he also designed and sold his own jewelry, which was worn by Andy Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro.

*Robert took areas of obscure human consent and turned them into art. He worked without apology, investing the homosexual with grandeur, masculinity and enviable nobility. Without affectation, he created a presence that was wholly masculine without sacrificing feminine grace. He didn't want to make a political statement or an announcement of his evolving sexual persuasion. He was presenting something new, something not seen or explored as he saw and explored. Robert sought to elevate aspects of the male experience, to imbue homosexuality with mysticism. As Cocteau said of a poem by Genet: "His obscenity is never obscene." — Patti Smith, in her book Just Kids.*

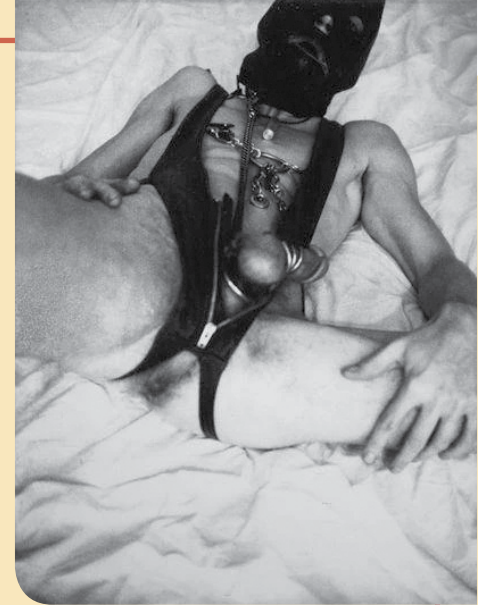


Necklace with bead in the shape of an American football ball (1971).



In 1972, Mapplethorpe met Sam Wagstaff, an art collector and curator, who would become his mentor, patron and companion. Wagstaff became convinced that the photographs were works of art, unrecognized as such, but possibly very valuable. So he started selling his painting collection, bought 19th-century American, British and French photographs, and gave Mapplethorpe a Hasselblad camera. The photographer began taking more professional photos of his circle of friends and acquaintances, including artists and socialites. Already in 1973, he got his first exhibition, *Polaroids*, at the Light Gallery in New York.

On the side, self-portraits from 1973. Below, the invitation from *Polaroids* exhibition, at the Light Gallery, in New York.

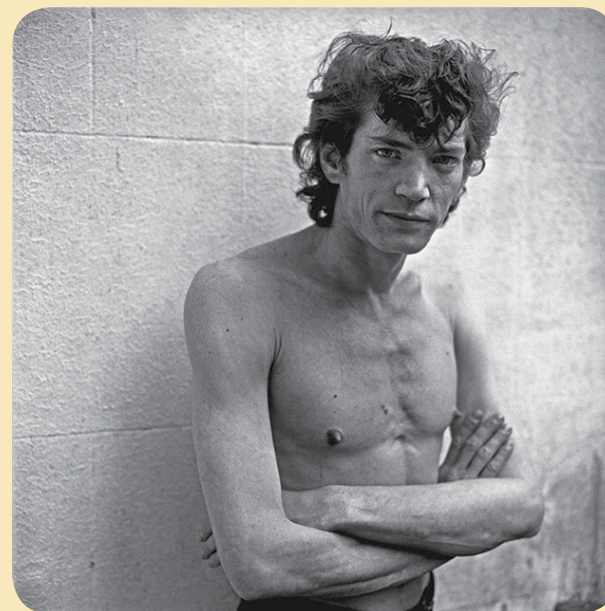






*Untitled (Cock), 1973.*





Two photos by George Dureau that show how closely Mapplethorpe followed his aesthetic (Wilbert Hines and Mapplethorpe himself).

78

It was during this time that Mapplethorpe became friends with George Dureau, an artist known for his charcoal sketches and his photographs of people with disabilities that exhibited a character far more human than pious or caricatured. This artist's impact was so profound that Mapplethorpe even remade several photographs of Dureau under his guidance.

Between 1977 and 1980, the photographer had a relationship with Jack Fritscher, a pre-Stonewall gay activist and editor of the important *Drummer* magazine, who defined concepts and introduced new artists. The two frequented a trendy New York gay club – *Mineshaft*, exclusive for leather and BDSM members – of which Mapplethorpe became the official photographer. He was called a “participant observer”, that is, most of the time, he participated in the sexual acts he was photographing. In 1978, he published *X Portfolio*, featuring his records from the New York underground scene.

*For me, SM means sex and magic, not sadomasochism. I don't like that particular word, “shocking”. I look for the unexpected. I look for things I've never seen before... I was able to take these pictures. I felt obligated to do them.*

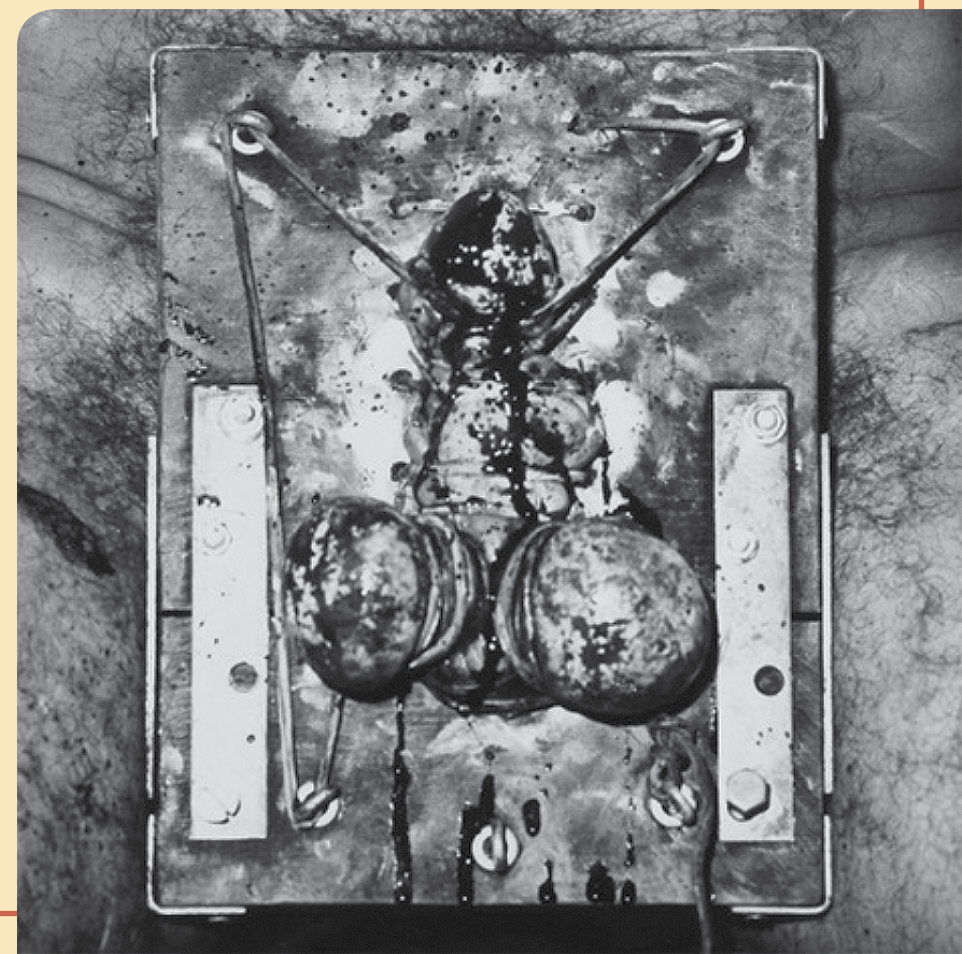
Self-portrait with whip, 1978.



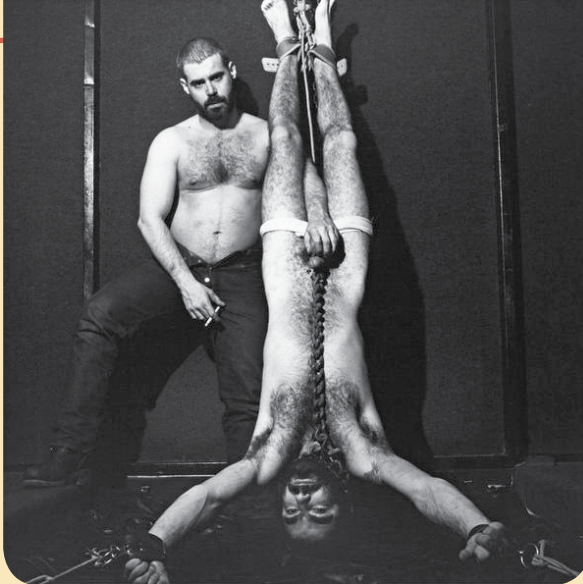
Three photos of Patrice, 1977.











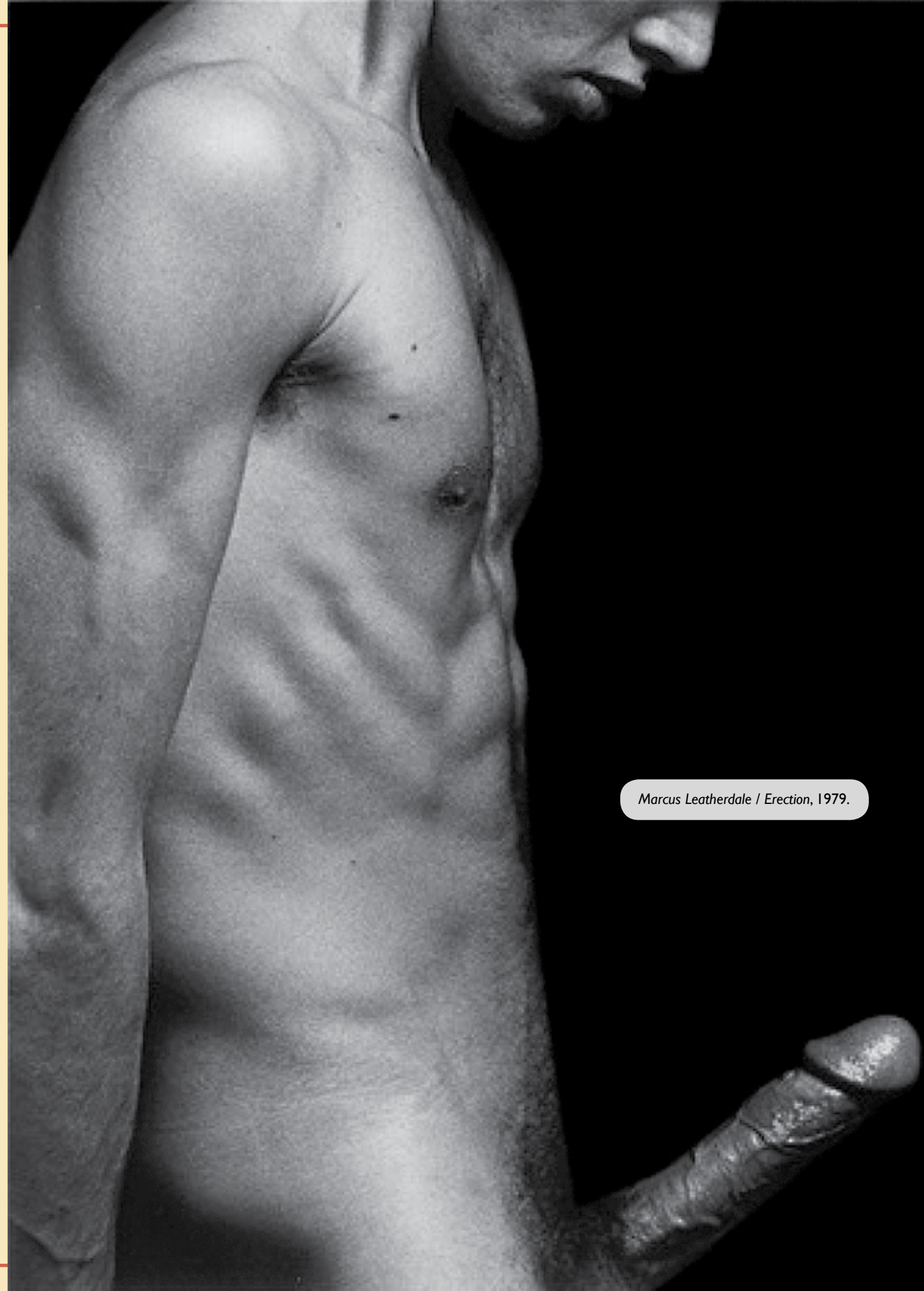
Dominic and Elliot, in two moments, *Sucking ass* and *Alan Lynes*. Pictures from 1979.

His compositions were generally rigid and static, but of immense visual impact. The combination of cool studio lighting, precise focus, and symmetrical graphics created dramatic tonal contrasts and turned bodies into sculptures.

*If I had been born a hundred or two hundred years ago, I could have been a sculptor, but photography is a very quick way of seeing, of making a sculpture.*

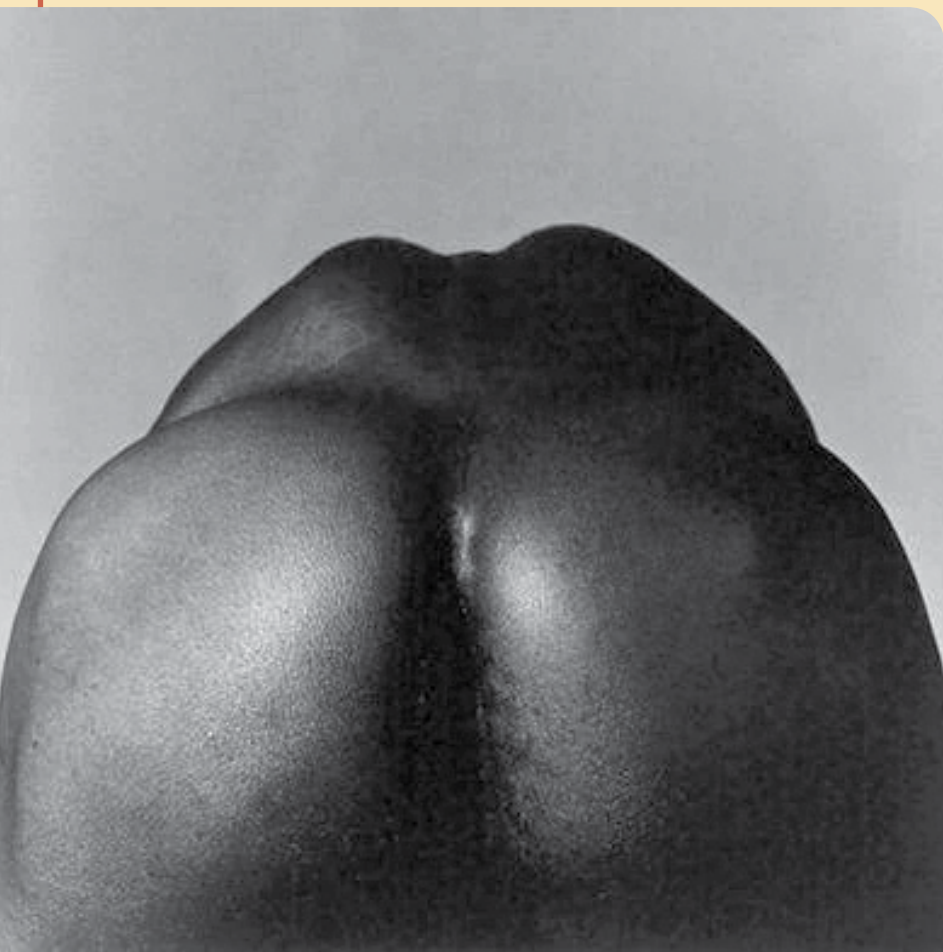
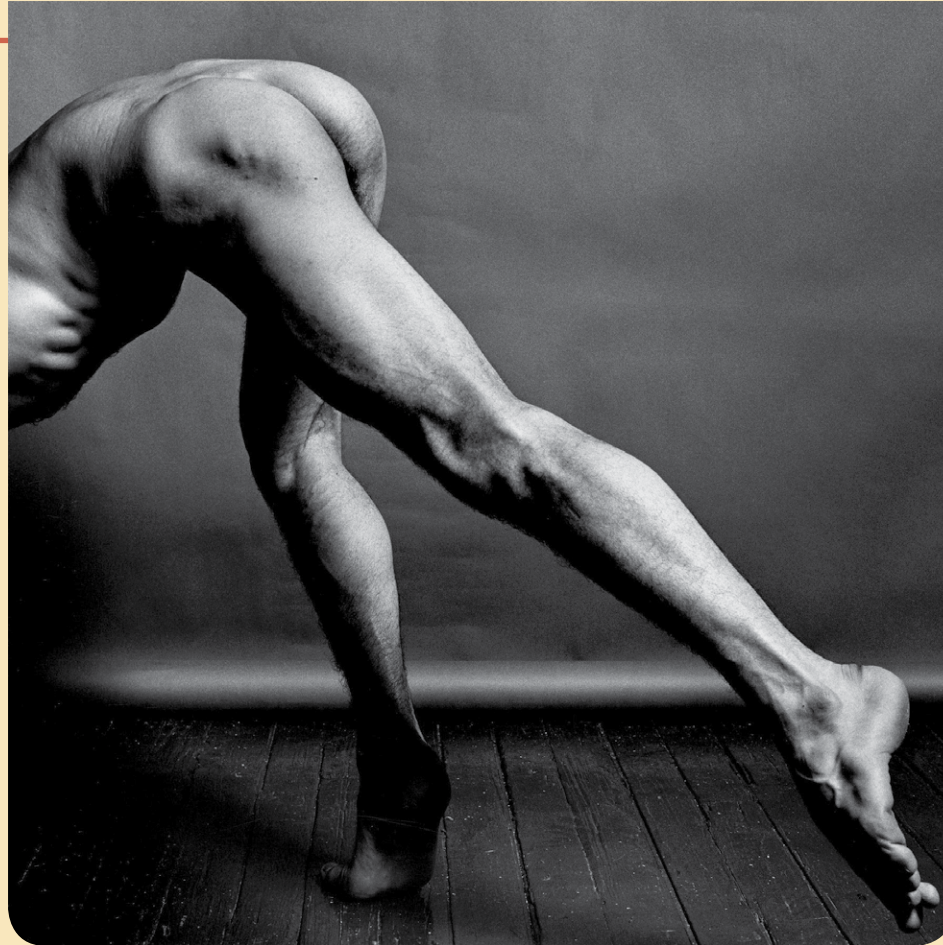
Whether it was a penis or a lily, Mapplethorpe employed the same aesthetic refinement. The initial estrangement from the provocative themes is then quickly replaced by the plastic contemplation that monochrome elevates to the status of Art.

*I don't think there's much difference between a photograph of a fist in someone's ass and a photograph of cloves in a bowl.*



Marcus Leatherdale / *Erection*, 1979.

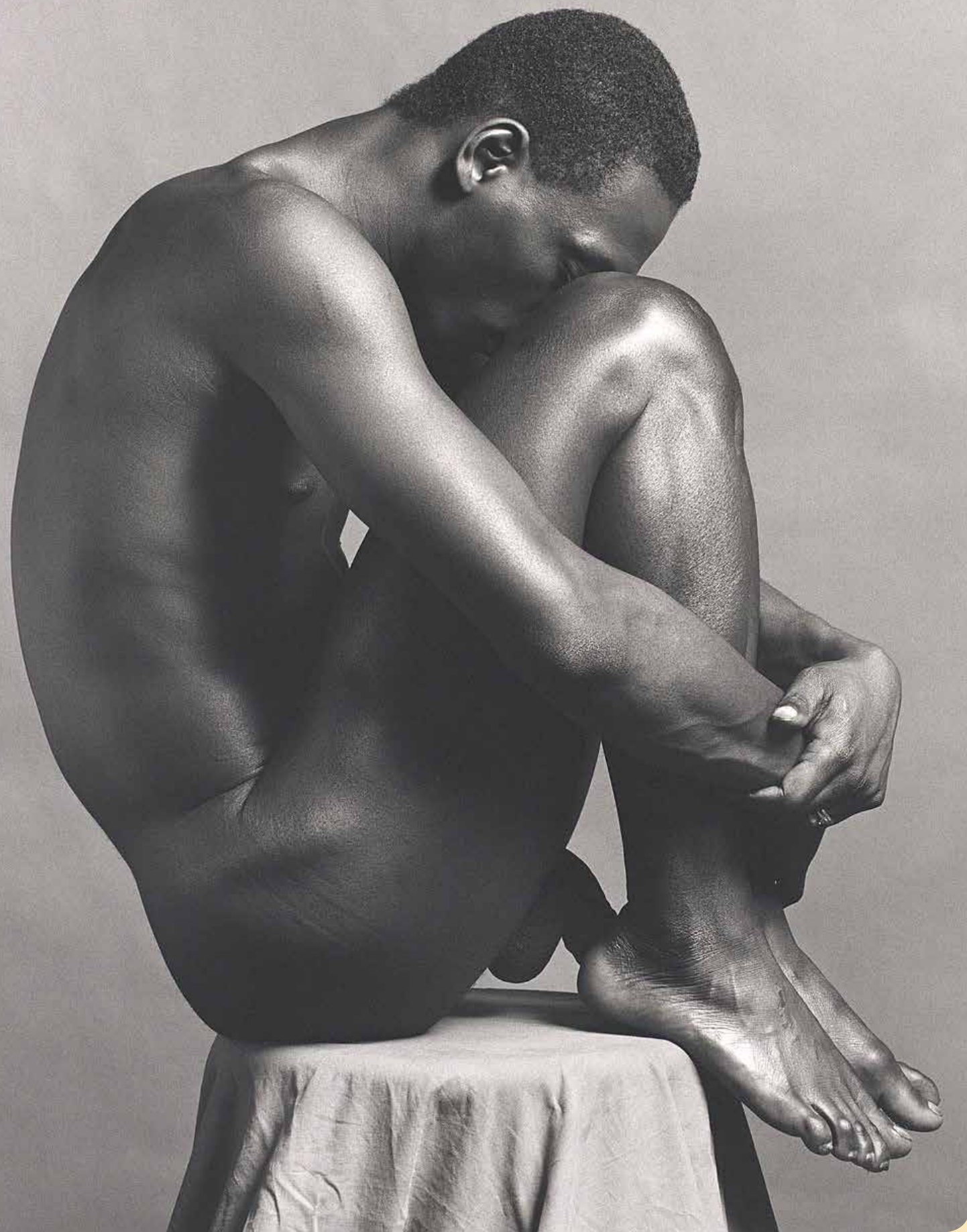












Ajiro, 1981.

During the 1980s, he opened his studio in Manhattan, where he worked mainly with sculptural female\* and male nudes, still lifes with sensually charged flowers, formal portraits of celebrities and even photography of children. He even worked for Andy Warhol's famous *Interview* magazine. In his self-portraits, Mapplethorpe experimented with different aspects of his identity. He also briefly returned to the sculptural use of photography seen in his early montages, creating sensuous diptychs and triptychs from photographs printed on fabric.

*I was his first model, a fact that fills me with pride. The photos he took of me contain a depth of mutual love and trust inseparable from the image. His work heightens his love of subject matter and his obsession with light. So, as someone who has been in front of the camera of many artists and friends, I can only advise a photographer to love his subject and, if that is not possible, love the light that surrounds him. — Patti Smith for Times Magazine.*

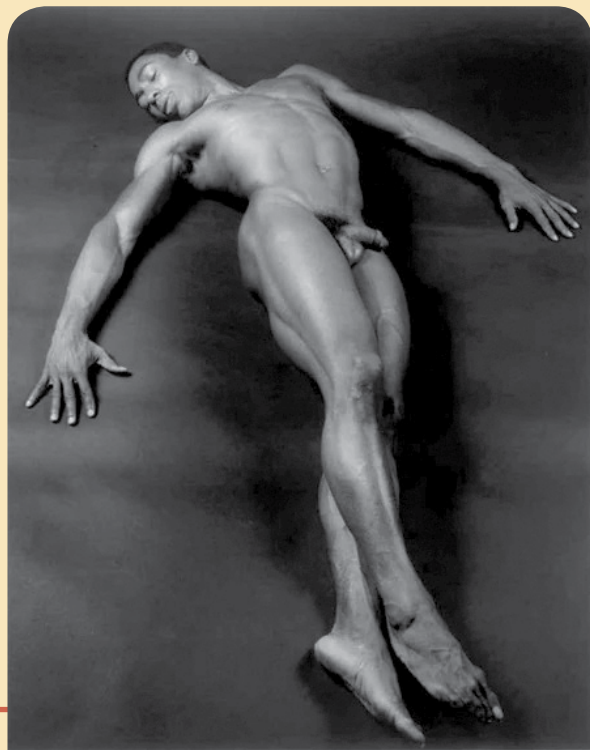
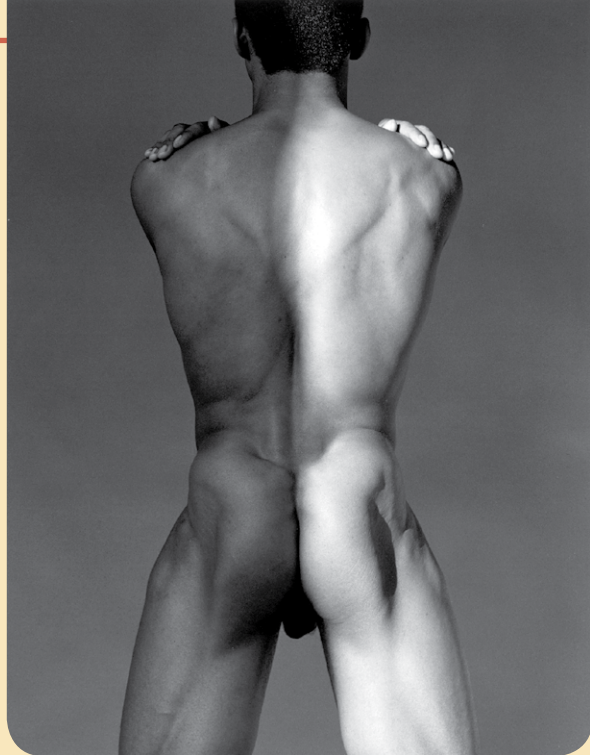
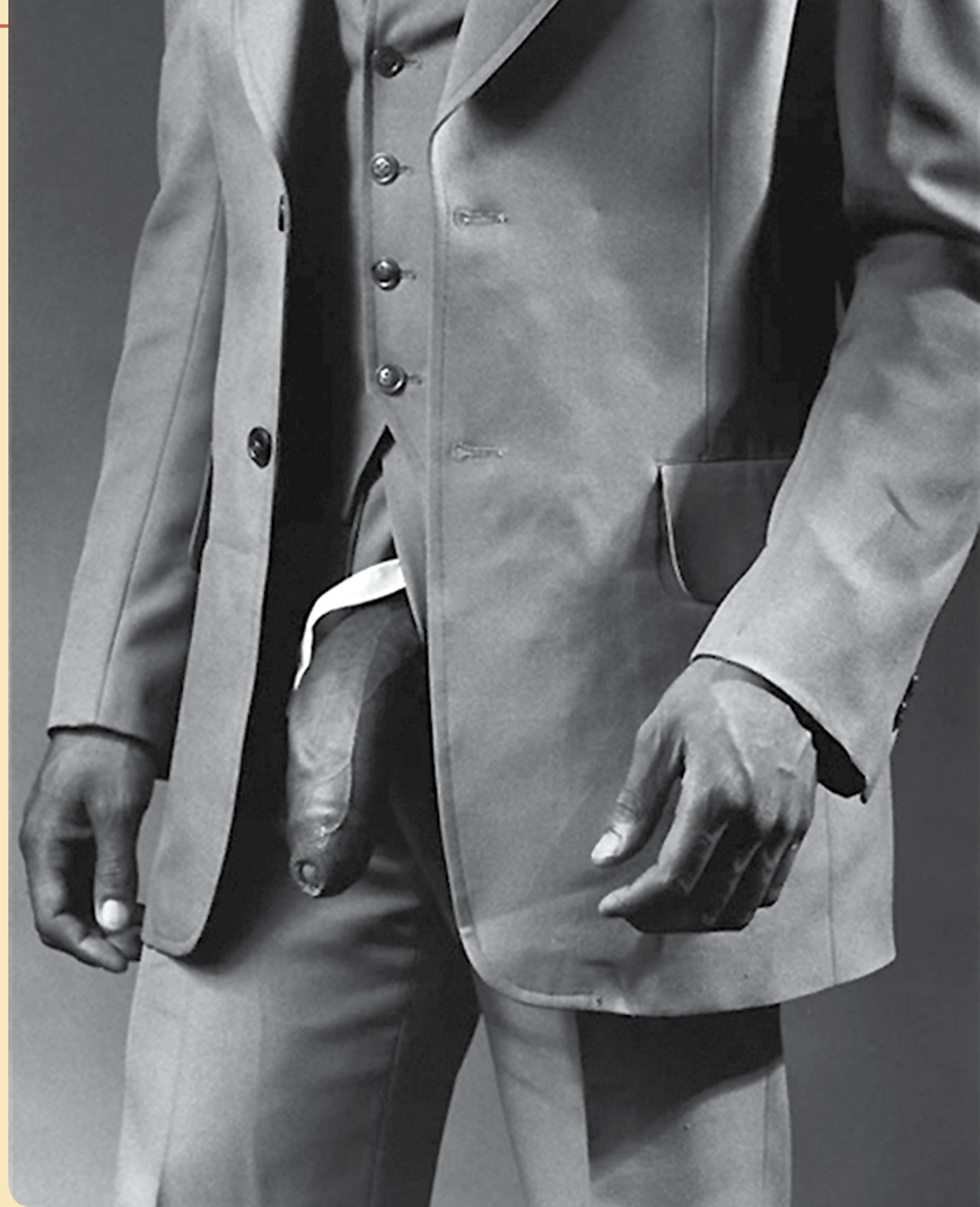
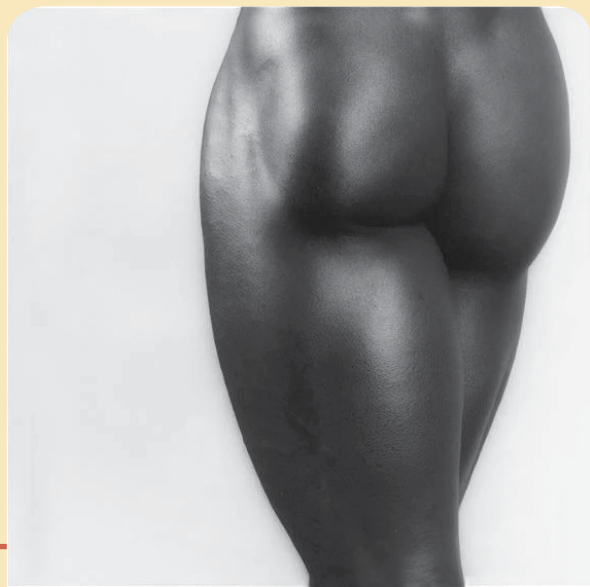
He often worked with black models. He said that his intention was the pursuit of a platonic ideal of perfect form and black skin allowed "to extract greater richness of color through light". However, the solo exhibition *Black Males* (1986) and the subsequent book, *The Black Book* (1988), are still considered controversial for their fetishized representation of black men.

On the side, Grace Jones painted by Keith Haring (1984), Ken, Lydia and Tyler (1985) and Self-portrait in drag (1980).

\*With bodybuilder Lisa Lyon, he produced more than 150 images that were turned into a book.



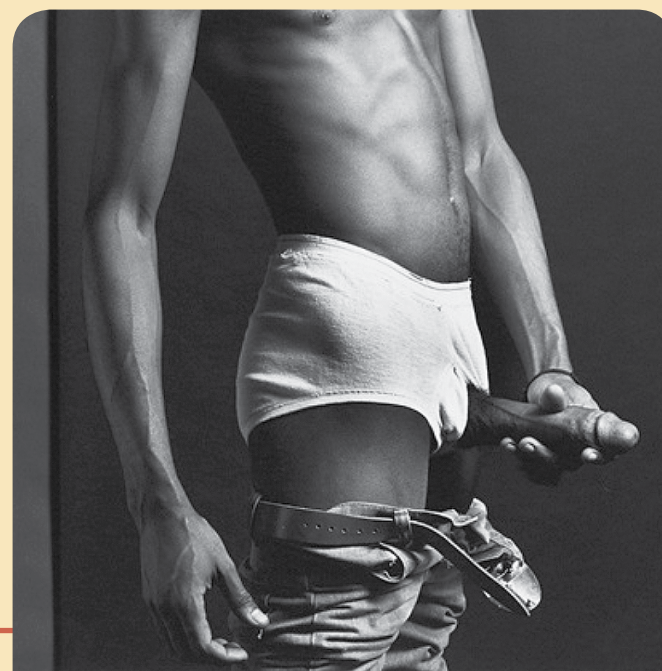


Models: *Dan S.* and *Eric* (1980).Models: *Derrick Cross* (1982) and *Carlton* (1987).Model: *Derrick Cross* (1983).*Man in polyester suit*, 1980.

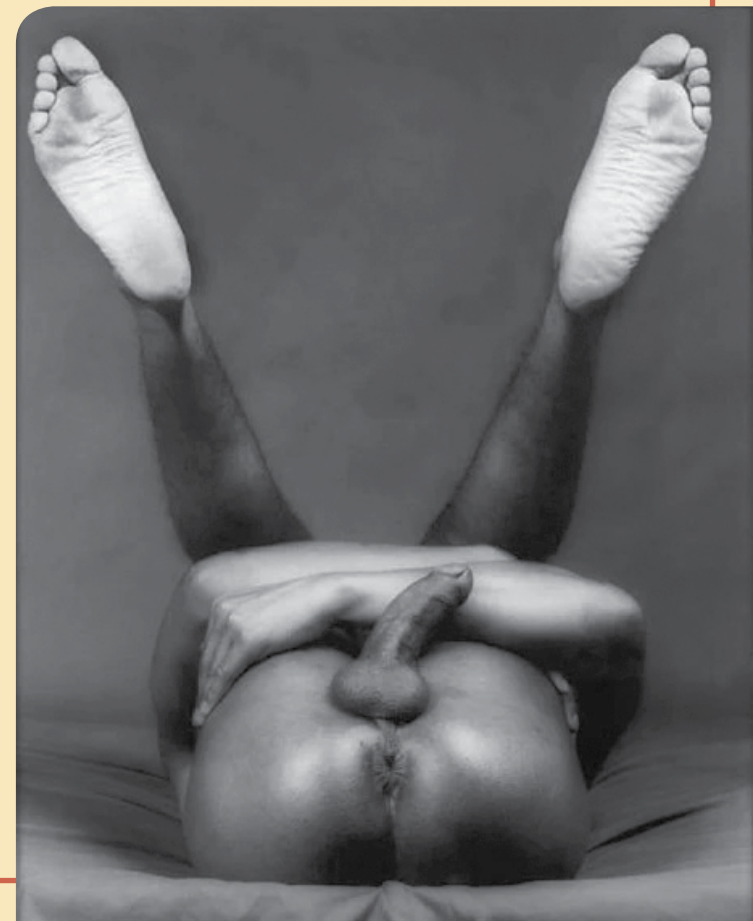




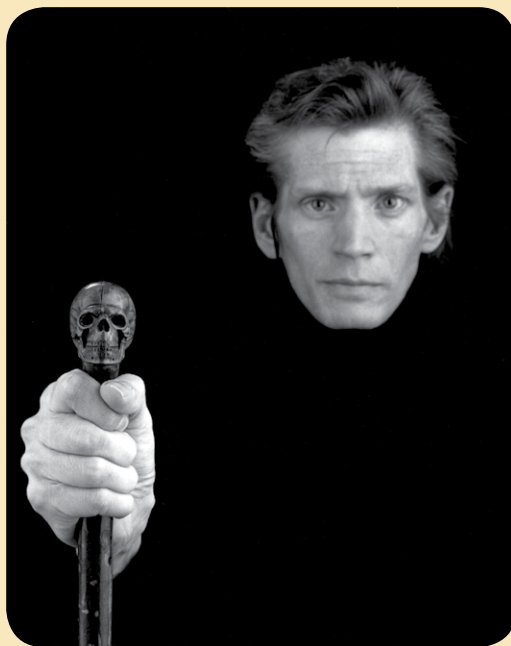
Above, *Christopher Holly*, 1980.  
Below, *Milton Moore*, 1981-2.



Above, *Formal cock* and *Cock*, 1986.  
On the side, *Dennis Speight* (1981)  
Below, *Phillip Prioleau* (1981) and  
*Marty Gibson* (1982).



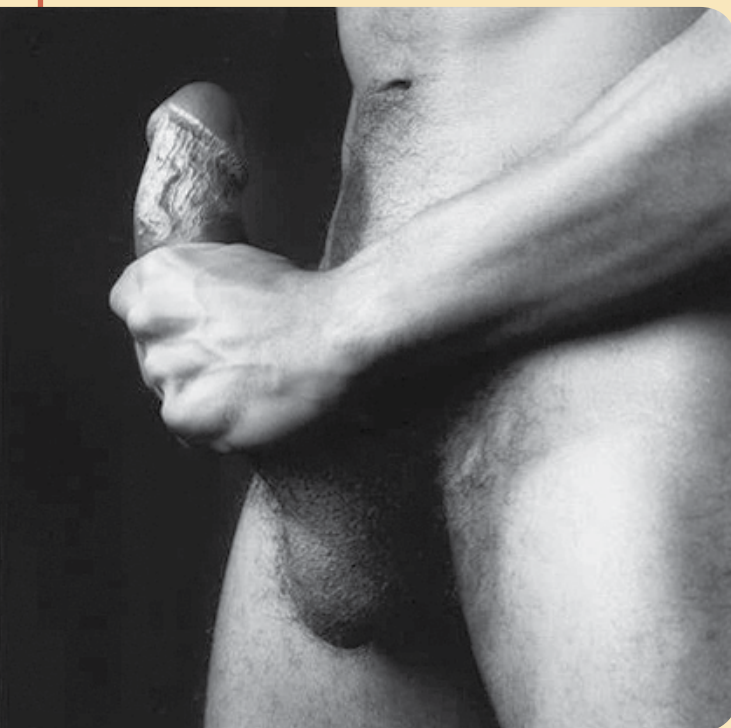




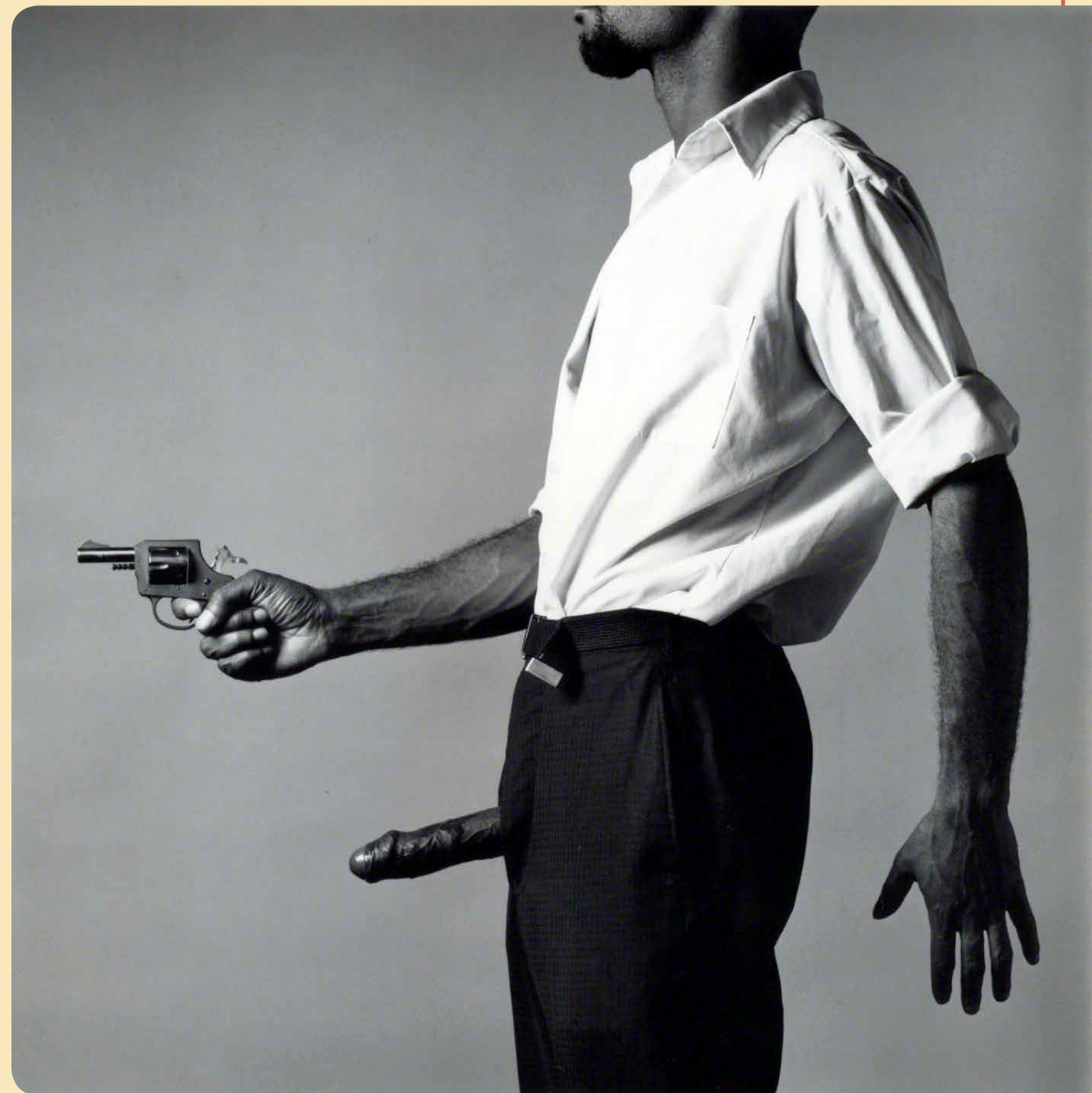
One of his last self-portraits, 1988.

Mapplethorpe was diagnosed with AIDS in 1986. Despite his illness, he accelerated his creative endeavors, broadened the scope of his photographic investigation, and took on increasingly challenging commissions. He died in March 1989, aged 42, due to complications from the HIV virus. That same year, an exhibition entitled *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* provoked an intense debate in the United States about the use of public funds for works of art considered “obscene” and the constitutional limits of freedom of expression in the country. Galleries, collectors and public institutions found themselves in the midst of controversy, with censorship, accusations and financial blackmail. As a result, some of Mapplethorpe’s photographs tripled in value, and other objects that went up for auction after his death fetched \$8 million, making him one of the most prominent photographers of the 20th century.

The Corcoran gallery’s decision to cancel the exhibition sparked a controversial national debate: Should tax dollars support the arts? Who decides what is “obscene” or “offensive” in public exhibitions? And if art can be considered a form of free speech, wouldn’t it be a violation of the First Amendment to revoke federal funding on grounds of obscenity? To this day, these questions remain very much in vogue. — Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)



On the previous page, *Cock* (1985) and *Cock and gun*, 1982.



*Jack Walls*, 1982.





*Dennis with flowers, 1983.*



*Dennis with thorns, 1983.*



In 1998, another controversy, this time in England. A student was writing an article about Mapplethorpe's work and intended to illustrate the article with some of his photographs. She got a book from the library and took it to make a copy. Store staff informed the police of the nature of the images and the book was confiscated with a promise to return it if the student removed the photos from her article. The university refused to interfere with the academic project, but only got the book back after six months, when it was informed that no legal action would be taken.

In 2000, the book *Pictures* – which featured Mapplethorpe's sexual photos – was seized from a bookstore in South Australia for breach of indecency and obscenity laws. However, the state's Attorney General's Department adroitly decided not to get involved in the growing firestorm of publicity that raged around the photographer's name.

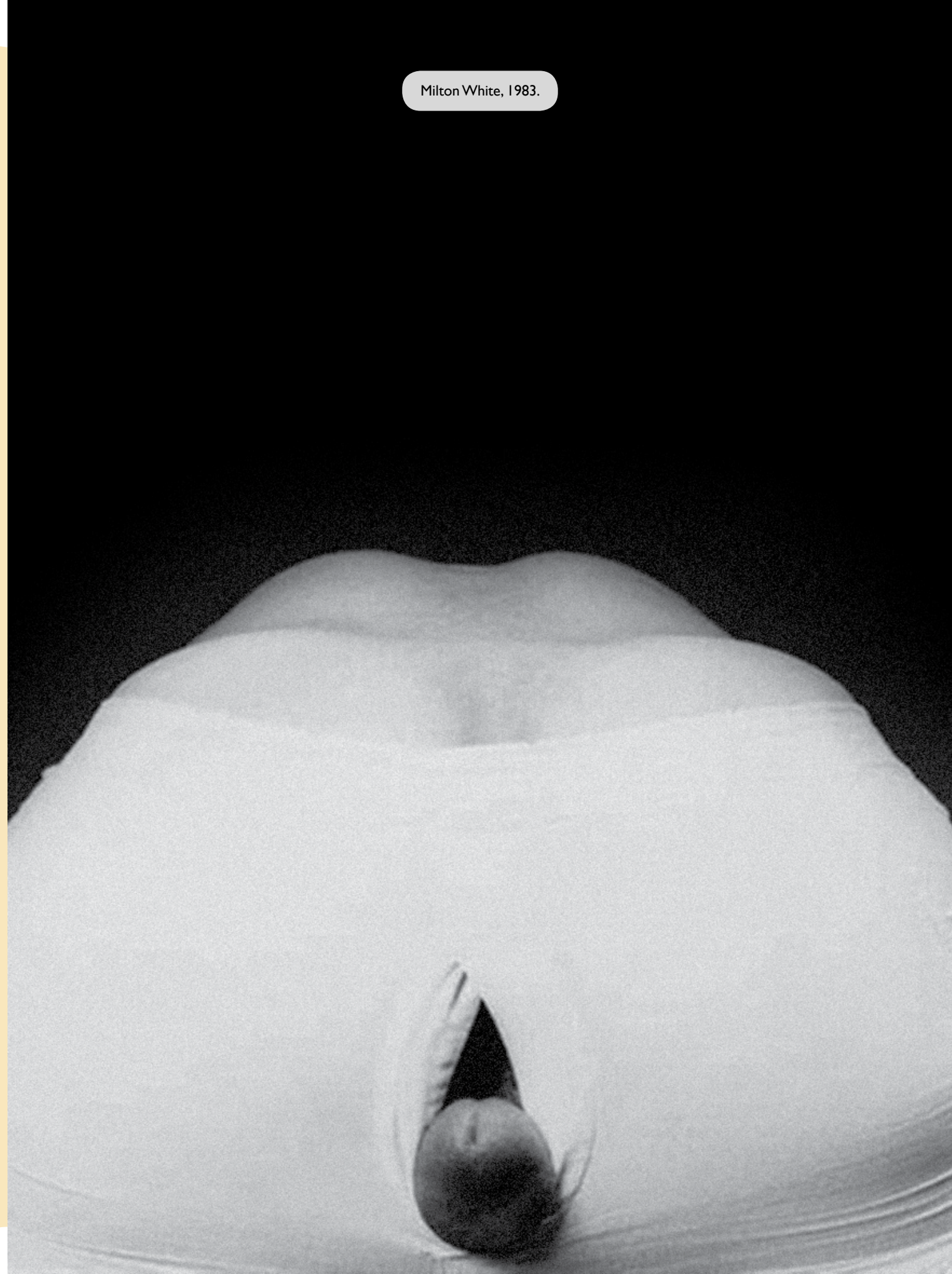
In 1988, Mapplethorpe selected Patricia Morrisroe to write his biography, based on over 300 interviews with celebrities, critics, lovers and himself. The posthumous book was published in 1985 and received rave reviews from media outlets and art critics alike.

About a year before his death, already ill, Robert created the *Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation Inc.*, whose purpose was to protect his work, propagate his creative vision and promote causes he cared about. Since his death, the foundation has both managed the artist's official estate and raised and donated millions of dollars to medical research funds committed to unraveling and fighting HIV and AIDS. Robert's entire collection was donated by the foundation to the Getty Research Institute in 2011. **8=D**



Three photos of Thomas in 1986.

Milton White, 1983.





PHALLORRAGIA

# Ken's thing

by Filipe Chagas



A doll is not born, so why navel or genitals?

Everyone knows: Ken, Barbie's companion, has nothing between his legs, not even a little volume. This international joke isn't merely a matter of public relations or branding: it's about which realities our culture deems acceptable and which ones it seeks to keep hidden. Get this: Barbie has breasts, however, the absence of nipples made them socially acceptable for children to look at. This should make it a little clearer how the head of censors works in today's social networks.

So let's get to know a little more about **Kenneth Sean Carson**, Barbie's boyfriend.

Launched in 1961, the name "Ken" was a tribute to Kenneth Handler\*, son of Ruth and Elliot Handler, director of Mattel, the great toy company behind Barbie. What he would have between his legs was a central question from the beginning of its conception. According to the 2009 book *Barbie and Ruth*, Ruth Handler wanted Ken to have at least a bulge, just as Barbie has breasts, but there was resistance from her husband and the design team – the same ones who also complained about the breasts.

After pressing, Handler was able to convince the design team to create mockups, and three were made: one has nothing, one has too little, and finally one was over the top. "Then the men – especially one of the vice presidents – were terribly embarrassed," said Barbie's first fashion designer, Charlotte Johnson, in the 1994 book *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll*. To Ruth's dismay, it was then decided to put a "permanent underwear" on Ken. Isn't it interesting that a woman was fighting over male genitalia, while men were scolding in horror?



\* By various reports, Ken Handler was embarrassed to share his name with a doll without genitalia. It is said that he also loathed the body image problems his parents' company created. As a music producer, he put together an art show about the AIDS crisis in 1987 and went on to direct films, including the 1980s comedy *Delivery Boys*, where he talked about sexuality. He was very upset when the doll became a gay icon in the 1990s, showing his internalized homophobia, since, even though he had a wife and children, he had relationships with other men and died of AIDS in 1994. Family members and the company hide this factor even today.







There seemed to be some certainty that Ken's genitals would be of particular interest to children. Psychologist, marketing expert, and "father of motivational research," Dr. Ernest Dichter, was commissioned to observe little girls playing with Barbies. He pointed out that the main game was changing clothes and accessories. He questioned whether children would be old enough to understand that Ken was a boyfriend (or even what it was like to be a boyfriend), if they wouldn't end up seeing the character as their parents, brothers or neighbors and if it was healthy to see these people (men) naked.

It turned out that everything changed because of manufacturing and, of course, money: molding the shorts was too difficult for the factory in Japan to do and that would add a penny and a half to the final cost of the doll. An engineering supervisor "arbitrarily" took the lead and Ken ended with the "nothing" so derided in pop culture.

Historically, some variations of the toy ended up gaining embossed underpants or swim trunks in the same color as their "skin". Marvin Barab, Mattel's director of marketing research from 1959 to 1965, is quoted in *Barbie and Ruth* as saying, "They decided it would be better for the company if he were castrated." Ultimately, however, this made no difference to consumers, as the kids weren't left wondering what had happened to Ken. In his 1987 book, *Children's Advertising: The Art, the Business, and How It Works*, former Mattel publicist Cy Schneider wrote:

*All these issues were concerns of adults who had overstressed the problem. Ken was, and still is, accepted as a necessary companion for many of Barbie's activities. There was a lesson in this for all of us: **don't substitute your own tastes, thoughts or imagination for those of a child.***

The original Ken from 1961.

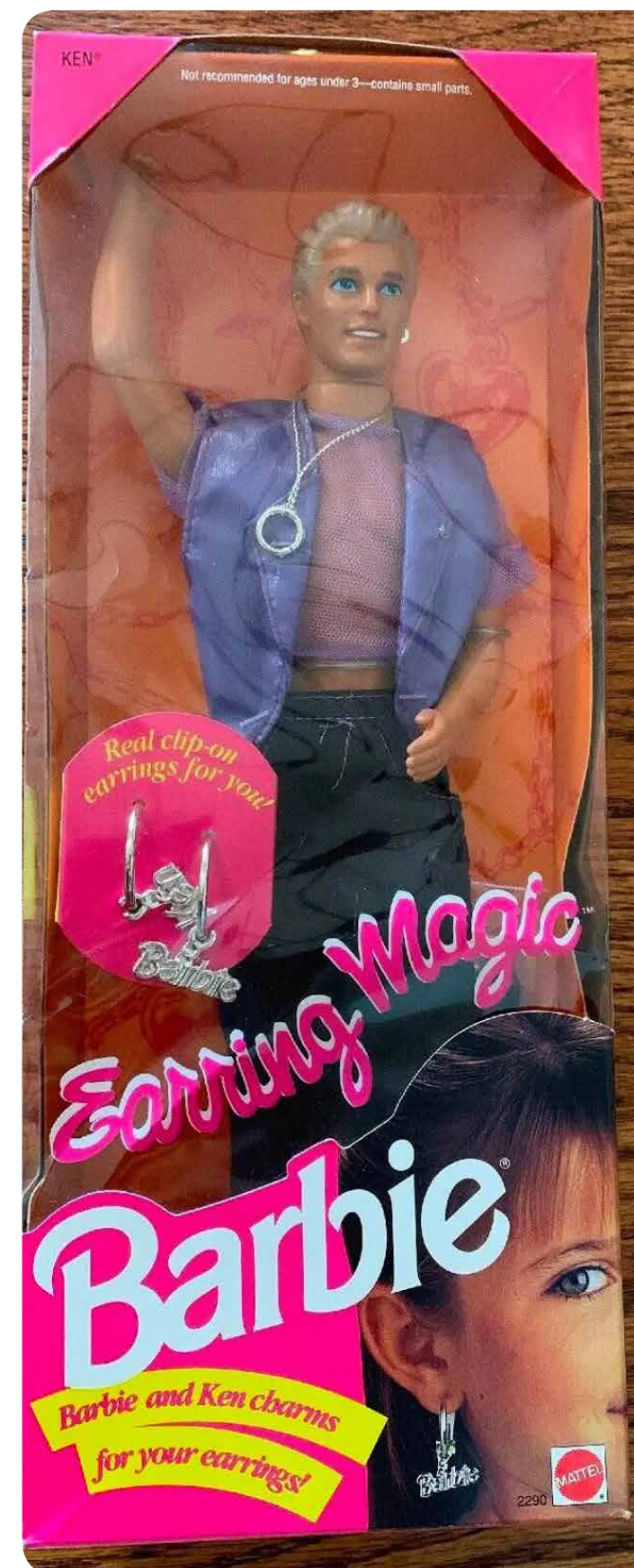
"Ken was conceived as a fantasy companion for Barbie and Mattel wanted to give him a clean, non-threatening, asexual boyish look," concludes Schneider. And success came.

Some scholars say that the character's accessories ended up becoming compensations: Ken's first clothes sold separately came with accessories to mark a "masculinity" (car keys, electric shaver) or "what was missing" (a wooden stick for a pennant, a baseball bat) – or even both, as in the case of a rifle or a barbecue skewer with a sausage.



Look at Ken's sausage!

In 1993, Mattel ended up drawing attention to Ken's lack of a penis and also to Ken's sexuality with the launch of the now famous *Earring Magic Ken*, with his close-cropped blonde hair, bright lavender vest and a matching knit shirt underneath, and of course, earring. It wasn't just the style that made this Ken a sensation among gay men who saw the signs and claimed him as one of their community: hanging from his neck on a metallic silver wire was an actual earring to be worn by whoever buy it, however, ten out of ten people will say it looks like a cock ring. Of course, Mattel's marketing at the time repeatedly denied to the press that Ken used a sex toy, and even though it was successful, the company stopped manufacturing it after a year.





In her 1994 blend of history and criticism, *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, Erica Rand interpreted Ken's lack of a penis as coming from society's structural phallocentrism:

*It's no surprise that Mattel considered the penis a crucial feature of girls' sexual fantasy and psychological health. This is the assumption widely promoted by Freud and his followers: that childhood psychosexual development depends on the discovery of the penis – not the vagina – followed by an immediate realization of the great value of the penis and an inescapable conclusion that people who don't have one are incomplete or damaged.*

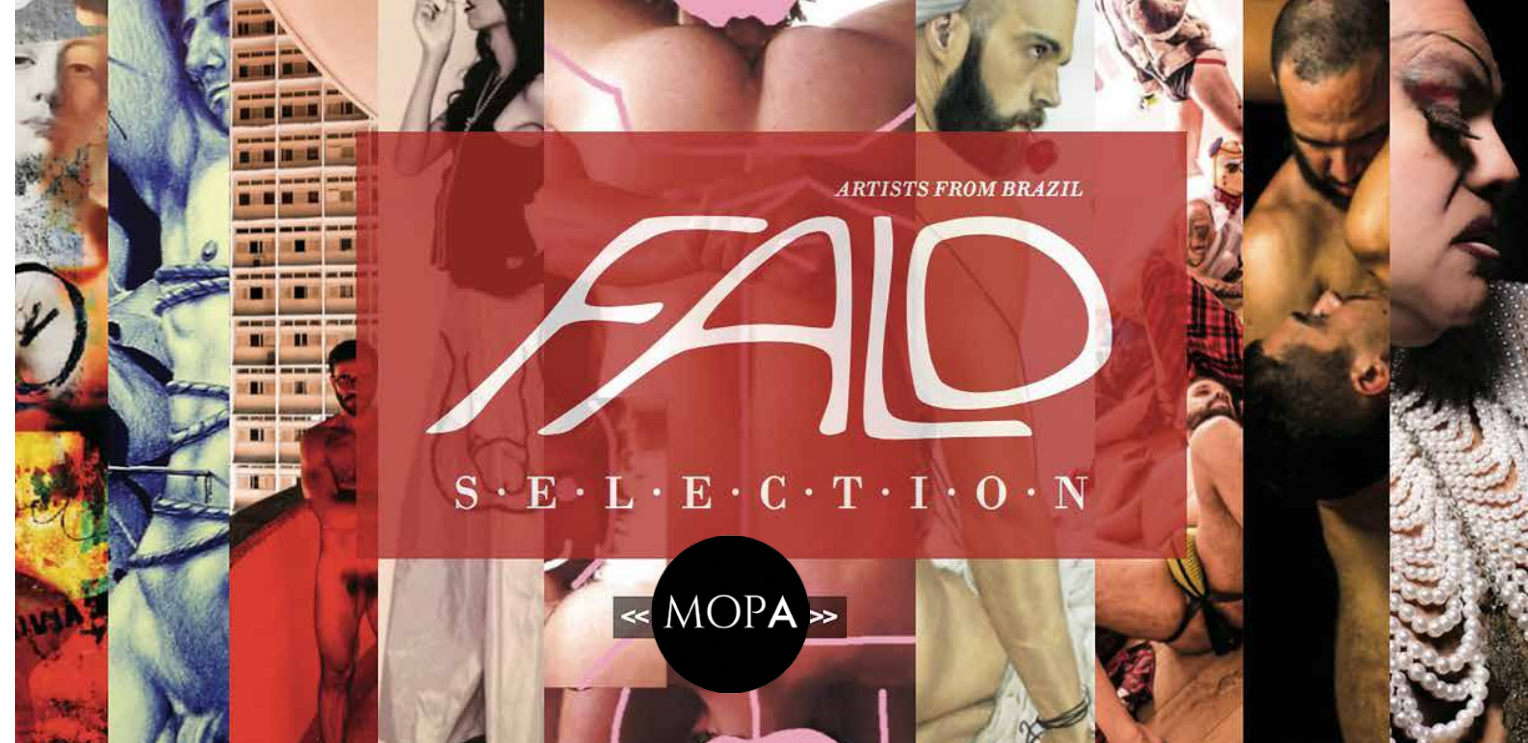
However, Rand sees it differently today. With the new understanding of gender identities, she believes that the doll can give a broader understanding of the transgender world. "If you identify as male, you have a male body, whatever parts you were born with," she reflects. This shows how important it is to review your own history to place yourself in contemporary times. Whereas Mattel's manufacturing, public relations, and representational considerations in the early 1960s eliminated sexuality in the name of a standard binary, today Ken can be used as a representative figure.

Ken leaves us, then, with two questions for reflection: is having a penis to be a man? What else does society hide in the name of an "acceptable standard"? **8=D**

In May 2022, actress Laverne Cox became the first trans woman to be honored with a Barbie doll from the "Tribute" collection, which honors influential and visionary women around the world. The following month, a Brazilian deputy decided to bring a discussion to the Chamber on "the psychosocial implications for children as a result of the version of the Barbie doll with a male sexual organ". I think he needs to read this article...



Ken fashionista of 2017, the first black Ken, however, with a belt and still without volume. In 2020, the *Fashionista* collection gained a Ken with vitiligo.



9 Brazilian artists | 100 pages | 21 × 14.8 cm | Soft Cover





PHALLORRAGIA

# Sir, yes, sir?

by Filipe Chagas



It's not from now...

It is very likely that most Brazilian men have a story to tell about military enlistment. It may even be about how he got discharged, but the story will almost certainly be about the embarrassment in the physical and medical examination.

It must be said that Military Service in Brazil is mandatory (Art. 143 of the 1988 Constitution), that is, every Brazilian man\* must enlist in the Army, Navy or Air Force in the year he turns 18 to receive military instruction, destined to the training of 1st or 2nd category reservists, aiming at the defense of the Homeland. There are ways to alternatively serve (bureaucratic service for philosophical, religious or political reasons) or ask for leave (for significant medical reasons or being the breadwinner of the family). Those who do not enlist lose civil rights and are left with "military debt", but they have until age 45 to do so.

After enlistment, comes the General Selection, where pre-selected young people undergo medical examinations, aptitude tests and interviews. The so-called Health Inspection, carried out by an Expert Medical Agent, aims to ascertain the health condition of the candidate – which must be within a parameter accepted by the military service. First, medical certificates are requested that candidates have taken in order to determine a waiver without the need for a general clinical examination. Then, measurements of height, weight and pressure, cardiac and pulmonary auscultation, visual acuity, otoscopy, mandibular opening, teeth counting, posture analysis (spine) and flat feet, among other exams, such as the famous breath test, or the *Valsalva Maneuver*.

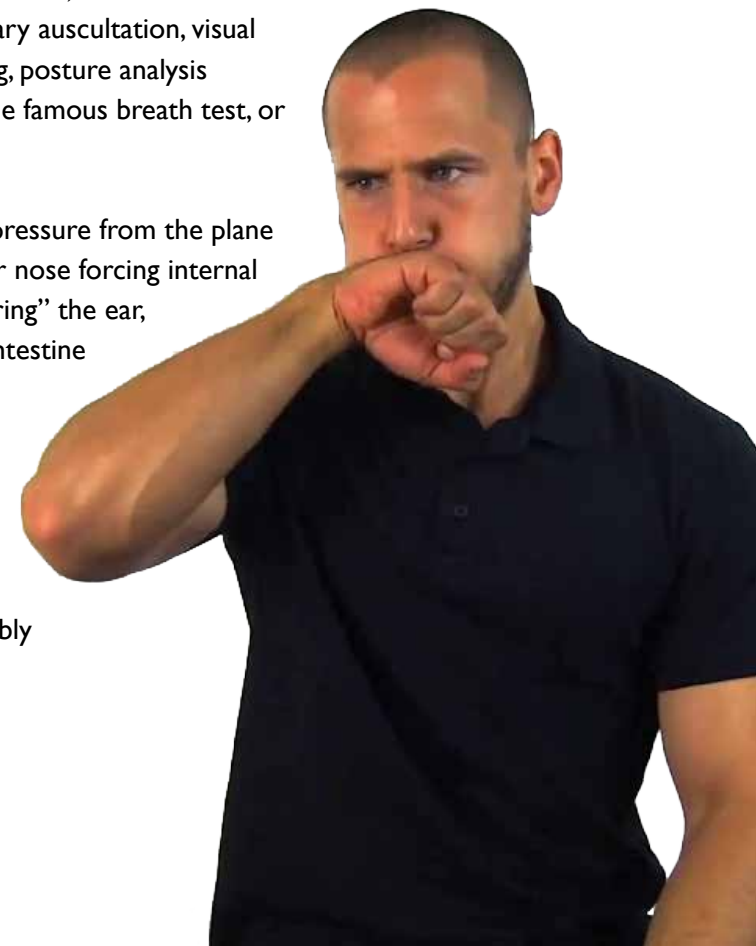
Do you know when your ears are clogged due to pressure from the plane or from climbing the mountains and you pinch your nose forcing internal pressure? So, this maneuver, in addition to "uncovering" the ear, can also identify an inguinal hernia, i.e. part of the intestine or other organ that expands through an opening in the abdominal wall in the groin. In the army exam, the maneuver is usually done as follows: the agent asks the candidate to blow on the back of the hand or forearm without letting the air out so that there is strength in the abdominal region. At that moment, the candidate must be naked, preferably holding the penis so that the scrotum is exposed.

This is where the trouble starts...

\* On the website it says "Every male Brazilian" and also states that male disabled people must also enlist, even if they are already automatically dismissed. The absolutely incapable person must be represented by his legal guardian, upon presentation of the supporting document.

The Valsalva Maneuver  
(or the blow test).

107

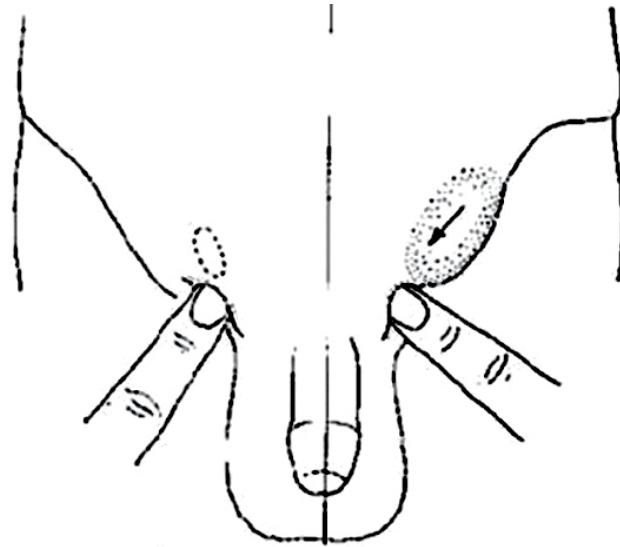




It is expected that the exams will be carried out individually by a single agent – and this happens in some cases, where the candidate is separated from the others by a screen or textile. However, it is known that a huge group of candidates is usually called who stand side by side in only their underpants and, at the time of the breath test, they lower their underpants to the knee and perform the maneuver in front of the other candidates and other army corps members. It is a fact that the exam lasts about 5 seconds, however, numerous reports confirm that, sometimes, all candidates are asked to be naked waiting for their turn to take the exam or, then, that they must perform physical activities (running, jumping jacks, push-ups) without clothes on, while the “evaluators” seem to laugh at the situation.

It is also frequently reported that there is contact between the agent and the candidate’s genitals, either to perform the *Landivar Maneuver* – placing the index fingers in the candidate’s groin while he performs the breath –, palpating the testicles or opening the foreskin to check the glans. Much is said about the possibility of harassment at this time (and it is very likely to happen), but it is necessary to understand that these clinical exams are important, especially if

The *Landivar Maneuver*.



we consider that male health is neglected and the number of penile amputations due to poor hygiene increases exponentially each year. Have you ever thought that this might be the only time a man will have his penis examined?

Incidentally, here is the starting point for a reflection on the origin of this embarrassment in the face of collective male nudity. If there were several naked men in a locker room after a sports match, there wouldn’t even be a question. However, being collectively naked to be analyzed with a focus on the penis becomes something traumatic. Men do not talk about the body, penis, health and hygiene, regardless of sexual orientation or parental relationship, and this silence interferes physically and emotionally in the lives of each one of them. Correcting... in everyone’s life, because the companions of these men who don’t take care of themselves, who don’t expose themselves – because, many times, they don’t even know how to do it – also suffer the consequences.

goes beyond having an erection in the middle of so many naked boys (which, in fact, is almost impossible with such fear): reports reveal that some are publicly humiliated for being effeminate. Here is another point of reflection, that of the structural machismo that plagues our society. Although we could not expect anything different from an institution like the Armed Forces...

In a way, this military medical examination seems to function as a modern rite of passage, the transformation of the adolescent into a “man” when having to deal with the presence of other naked bodies in a trial situation. Rites of passage in civilizations considered primitive are much more physically violent, with circumcisions, scarifications and aggressions. The emotional consequences are never discussed or even studied and worked on, but they are there in both cases. And, still within this military universe, I suggest reading the book *My Buddy*, by Dian Hanson, to have a new reflection from another point of view: soldiers and veterans.

It is even more complicated for those who, at the age of 18, already identify with another gender or assume their homosexuality. The embarrassment

Here are some brief reports of that embarrassing moment:



It’s not separations that make it less embarrassing...



It’s not just in Brazil...



## TESTIMONIALS

I went to try to be dismissed because I passed the university exam but ended up screwing myself: I took the medical exam twice! In the first, in the Army itself, I was placed in a group with approximately 20 candidates, including two friends of mine, all side by side. First, certificates were requested that dispensed two or three. Then we were ordered to stay in our underwear. One by one we were called for the basic exams, then returned to the position. Until the order came for everyone to be naked, while a doctor passed by and asked for the breath test. It turns out that, when passing by one of my friends, the doctor stopped, asked to blow again and even called a colleague to check. At that point, that bunch of naked 18-year-olds started laughing and an angry commander shouted: “Everyone turn on your backs, except the candidate under observation!” We were only allowed to put on the clothes after the last candidate had been examined. My friend found out he had a varicocele. When I said that I had passed the entrance exam, they sent me to the Rio de Janeiro Reserve Officers Preparation Center, which called college students during vacations and weekends to become a high-level reserve for the Army. And in doing so, I underwent a second medical examination as embarrassing as the last. This time it was a smaller group of maybe 6 or 8 candidates, but in a room so small that everyone was shoulder to shoulder. The examiner made some jokes about penis size, asking if “it” worked and that there was no point in being ashamed in the army. Leaving the exam room was a huge relief, which became even greater when I got my discharge after an uncle of mine convinced a general (I don’t know how).

8=D

I took the exam at the Military Village battalion, where the majority took the exam in the hallway. Many were released after a cough. It is not possible to know the criteria they use to divide the classes. In the group they put me in, everyone was groped until they had some level of erection. The examiner didn’t just touch the testicles like he did with the guys in the hallway: he felt our dicks. And they even selected some to do physical activities naked. It was not a medical exam. It was abuse, a bizarre embarrassment.

8=D

Before joining NATO, military service was mandatory in Romania. So, in the last year of high school, every boy had to undergo an examination to see if he was fit to join the military. If you go on to attend university, you might not have to serve, but the examination was mandatory. I didn’t know what that entailed, but as gay kid in the closet, very straight environments scared me. Regardless, the day came and all the boys in my class went to the military headquarters to be inspected. After a quick introduction on what’s about to happen, all the boys took off their clothes and we walked into a room where we sat huddled naked, covering our genitals and waiting for inspection. Romania is an orthodox Catholic country, so we are shy with our bodies. I had never been naked in front of people. The doctor was in the same room, sitting at a table where everyone had to go to be examined, especially the feet and balls. The doctor lifted the dick to see if the balls were normal. This is when we ended up seeing the genitals of our colleagues, most of them hairy and uncut. Despite

all the discomfort of the situation, it ended up serving as material for my fertile teenage imagination.

8=D

At my medical exam, we had to stand naked in a row. The one in front of me was an African descendant that the doctors kept asking to turn sideways, front, side, back... and that’s when I understood the malicious laughs of the examiners: the guy had a huge penis! They didn’t even touch anyone, just his balls. And there was a catch: we had to run around and do jumping jacks naked. A lot of sacking and jumping rolls!

8=D

I had to pass the exam twice. In the first exam, they put us in a circle. They had some closets to separate, but the room was so small that you could see everyone naked. It was an uncomfortable situation. I didn’t want to look at anyone and I didn’t want to be looked at. The second time, I entered with only three other boys. We stood side by side naked and they asked us to crouch, blow and turn to see if anyone had a tattoo.

8=D

I remember my enlistment well. I went through all the stages (written test, physical test...) and when it came to the medical evaluation, it was as embarrassing as the locker room at the military school I attended for eight years. At least there were partitions between the candidates, who entered in groups of ten. We were directed to an individual partition where we were only in our underwear. The examiner (I use that term because I’m not

sure it was someone in the medical field) took some measurements and some questions about family illnesses and drug or prescription drug use. Then, he asked to put his underwear on at knee level, open the foreskin, pull the sac from one side and the other and perform a breath test. In addition to the discomfort of being naked, I was also judged: when I said that I did not want to serve after being asked, the examiner said in a loud voice “this one will be released for alcoholism” due to the stigma of having a tattoo.

8=D

I was dismissed in the last stages, but I underwent a medical examination that was not so... intimate, shall we say. I was together with other boys in a room, only in my underwear, and we had to get down, get up, jump, etc. Without taking off your clothes. I don’t know how that would give any diagnosis...

8=D

On the day of my exam, there were about 30 boys in a room with 4 military personnel. I don’t remember if one of them was a doctor or something. We were ordered to stay in our underwear and with our backs to the table where they were. They called each one by name and we had to face forward, lower our underwear and blow our hand. After that, we got dressed and left the room. However, they were laughing and whispering to each other, making everything very awkward.

8=D

At the quarters, they asked us to line up and enter a room with three soldiers. Another soldier guided us to some wooden stalls where we were supposed to stay in our under-

wear. They asked if anyone had a problem taking off their clothes, but no one came forward. I was right in front of one of the soldiers taking notes and froze. I noticed that two doctors, one on each side, were examining each one. On my turn, I was afraid I would get an erection, but it didn’t happen. He identified himself as a doctor and asked to lower his underwear to knee length. I was so nervous, I shook and said I didn’t understand. Unemotional, he repeated the action and I ducked. He looked at my cock. I froze. He said to blow on his hand and I did. He told me to get dressed and left. I kept shaking. Everything must have lasted 1 minute, but it felt like 1 year.

8=D

I was so terrified that all I thought about was disappearing. I don’t even remember much, but I know that everyone was naked and a friend from school who was in the group was looking at me. As I was wearing glasses, I was excused from the exams. It wasn’t welcoming at all.

8=D

I was in the military and passed two exams because I tried to be a paratrooper. In the first, the boys were gathered in alphabetical order. They asked to wear underwear, but some were without, maybe because they didn’t wear them or didn’t even have them. Because I was letter V, I spent a long time in my underwear until I was called by the urologist, who examined my testicles and my glans to see if everything was OK. As for the paratrooper exam, I had to stay naked all day as a team, starting at 4 am, performing physical activities. We ran, swam, jumped and then we were dismissed. I didn’t

need to do the medical exam again because I already had the previous one attached to my file. My biggest embarrassment was in the first exam when I saw candidates with old underpants. I felt comfortable doing physical activities in clothes even in the cold because I made great friends.

8=D

I enlisted correctly, but I had to do the whole process twice because they lost my data the first time! When I say “the whole process”, I mean written test, medical exams, physical tests, all the bureaucracy... even though I made it clear that I didn’t want to serve. As I entered college at the age of 16, and they wanted to recruit people with higher education, they passed me by. The medical exams were pretty embarrassing... They put me with nine other boys, next to each other in a room. Initially they asked to take off the shirt and then lower the shorts and underwear to the feet. We had to turn our backs, jump on one foot, jump on both feet... and lift our penises to show the testicles when an examiner passed by feeling each one. Finally, the breath exam to see if there was a hernia. Since I had a tattoo on my back, one of the examiners was pretty rough, hitting my tattoo hard, asking what that was. I asked him if he knew what a tattoo was and he angrily asked if I was finding it all funny and passed it on to someone else. One of the boys in my group was extremely effeminate. When everyone was cleared to get dressed and leave, he was told to stay. I don’t know what happened to him... I remember being very stressed about all of this.

8=D



# The Sacred Band of Thebes

by Filipe Chagas

**B**ecause of the comics and the eponymous film, Sparta's 300 became famous and fueled the dreams of men **AND** women with the group of ultra muscular warriors in tune. Perhaps what few know is that not only did the idea of a small group of well-trained warriors spread across Greece, but also that, less than a century later, the most impressive battalion was formed by couples, that is, by pairs of men, who defeated the mighty Spartans more than once.

Before continuing to talk about this, let's understand that, in Ancient Greece, it was common for an older man (*erastes*) to relate to a young teenager (*eromenos*) in a kind of rite of passage to adulthood (*paiderastia*). The elder should educate, protect and be an example for the young in exchange for their beauty, youth and service, keeping the structure of Greek civilization functioning in an important power dynamic. The relationship ended when the youngest was able to grow a full beard (or until about age 30). It is important to say that not all pederastic relationships were sexual: many were simply forms of friendship and guidance.



\* The first recorded appearance of a deep emotional bond between adult men in ancient Greek culture was in Homer's *Iliad* (800 BC), but the author does not describe the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus as sexual, rather as one of great intimacy. (*Achilles bandages the arm of Patroclus*, 5th century Greek pottery.)

It is worth mentioning that Greek society did not distinguish desire according to the gender of the participants, but rather according to the role each participant played in the sexual act. The penetrator corresponded to dominant social roles, masculinity, higher social status and adulthood, while the penetrated role was associated with femininity, lower social status and youth... that is, the macho patriarchy that until today is revealed in men who do not say they are gay because they are “only active” dates back to the origin of Western civilization. The reversal of this or the relationship of two men of similar ages was considered taboo and perversity\*.

Returning to the “army of lovers”... The Sacred Band of Thebes (*Hierós Lókhos*) was a troop of selected soldiers, composed of 150 pairs of male lovers who formed the elite force of the Theban army in the 4th century BC. The battalion was originally formed by the Boeotian military leader, Gorgidas, shortly after the expulsion

of the Spartan garrison – with support from Athens – that occupied the Theban citadel of Cadmea, around 379 BC. It was occasionally referred to as the “City Band” as they were funded by the polis and permanently based in Cadmea.

According to Plutarch\*\*, the 150 couples – one *eraste* and one *eromeno* – were chosen by Górgidas for skill and merit, regardless of social class. The *eromeno* should be at least 20, 21 years old, and have complete armor given by his *eraste*. The band's regular training included wrestling and dancing, as well as cavalry equestrian training.

The writer Athenaeus of Naucratis reveals that the “sacred” comes from honoring the god Eros, indicating that they “embraced a glorious death in the name of love”. An exchange of sacred vows took place at the sanctuary of Iolaus (nephew and one of Hercules' lovers) in Thebes.

The first recorded combat of the Sacred Band was in the summer of 378 BC, at the beginning of the Boeotian War, when the Spartan king Agesilaus decided to attack Thebes. Outnumbered, Agesilaus ordered his entire army forward, believing that just the sight of his massed forces resolutely advancing would be enough to intimidate

\*\* Plutarch was a Greek historian and philosopher, born in Chaeronea, site of the last battle of the Sacred Band.



the Theban forces (with Athenian allies). However, the opposite happened: the military leaders of Athens and Thebes ordered their men to be at ease and, in unison, all assumed the resting posture – with the spear pointed upwards and the shield resting on the left knee. The audacity and discipline of execution led Agesilaus not only to stop the advance of his army but to retreat.

After this stalemate, Agesilaus left the situation to General Phebidas, who, from so many destructive attacks on Theban territories, led to a reaction from the Sacred Band. At the end of the summer, the Gorgidas forces killed Phebidas and the Spartan forces fled. In the following year, Agesilaus again tried to attack Thebes and, once again, withdrew in front of the Theban army.

In 375 BC, the young Pelopidas took command of the band – it is not known what happened to Gorgidas – and turned it into a separate tactical unit. Its main function was to paralyze the enemy and advance through the ranks to kill their best men and leaders in battle.

The first recorded victory of the Sacred Band of Pelopidas was at the Battle of Tegyra (375 BC). Plutarch reports that the Spartan forces outnumbered the

Thebans by at least two to one. A Theban is supposed to have said, “We have fallen into our enemy’s hands!”, to which Pelopidas replied, “And why not them into ours?” The commander then ordered his cavalry to attack, leaving the Spartans confident that they would win by numbers. However, the Sacred Band infiltrated and killed the enemy leaders. Leaderless, the Spartans faltered and opened their ranks, being completely routed, with considerable loss of life. The Thebans set up a *tropaion* (commemorative trophy left at the site of a battle victory) before returning. The battle, although minor, was notable for dispelling the myth of Spartan invincibility. This left a deep impression on Greece – both positive and negative – and boosted morale among the Boeotians.

In 371 BC, Thebes refused the terms of the peace conference on Greek territory and this led to Sparta declaring war. As usual, Spartan forces were greater in numbers, less in cavalry. The so-called Battle of Leuctra was started by the equestrian forces of both armies and the victory ended up being Theban. Defeated, the Spartan cavalry withdrew in a disorderly fashion and raised so much dust that the Spartans were unable to observe the advancing Sacred Band, which held back the enemy until the heavy infantry of Thebes finally routed them.

All this strength from Thebes and the Sacred Band became a problem for the expansionist plans of Philip II of Macedon. In 338 BC, at the



The Lion of Chaeronea, marble monument, 4th century.

Battle of Chaeronea, the battalion was finally defeated by numerous Macedonian spears. The Thebans erected a gigantic lion statue for those killed in that battle. Plutarch reported that Philip II, upon finding the corpses “jokingly heaped on top of each other”, understanding who they were, wept and exclaimed:

*Perish any man who suspects that these men either did or suffered anything unseemly. – Plutarch, Pelopidas 18*

It is quite true that most of the Athenian writings that have withstood time and report the Theban hegemony in the 4th century are highly critical of, and in some cases even downplay or omit, Thebes’ accomplishments. This resentment fell on the homoaffective composition of the Sacred Band and, therefore, very little is known about the true relationship of the warriors or how they behaved in battle, that is, if they were really moved by love for each other. Even with this thinly veiled prejudice, both the term *lokhos* is still used by the Greek military as a synonym for a specialized military unit and the name “Sacred Band” was used by the Greeks in the War of Independence and in World War II. **8=D**

*And if there were only some way of contriving that a state or an army should be made up of lovers and their beloved, they would be the very best governors of their own city, abstaining from all dishonour, and emulating one another in honour; and when fighting at each other’s side, although a mere handful, they would overcome the world. For what lover would not choose rather to be seen by all mankind than by his beloved, either when abandoning his post or throwing away his arms? He would be ready to die a thousand deaths rather than endure this. Or who would desert his beloved or fail him in the hour of danger?*

– *Simpósio, de Platão*



# Swimsuits abound! – A story

by Filipe Chagas and Marcos Rossetton

Summer is coming. The ideas of enjoying a beach, getting a tan and diving gain strength. With that, the swim trunks\* are getting ready to come out of the drawers. Synonymous with both freedom and embarrassment, this item in the men's closet turns 90 in 2022. But the story is much longer: this men's costume accompanied the evolution of social behavior, recreation practices and man's freedom of expression.

Classical Antiquity makes it clear that nudity was not a problem. The Roman baths in the public baths (*thermae*) had different purposes, including body hygiene and water therapy with medicinal properties. In general, mornings were reserved for women and children and afternoons for men. The oldest known baths date back to the 5th century BC. at Delos and Olympias.

Later with the development of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the practice of public baths was associated with paganism, resulting in its prohibition. Hydrotherapy, however, reappeared in the European Renaissance period, associated with sauna practices, especially in the Nordic regions and bordering Asia\*\*.

This same Christian pudency made the Portuguese astonished by the nudity of Brazilian natives (perhaps, if we had not been colonized by them, Brazil would have a much more liberal culture around the naked body). However, Protestant Europe was quite liberal – with nudity – to public bathing habits (for men only, of course) until the 18th century.\*\*\*

\* In Portuguese, the word “sunga” is used to describe men's swimwear. Despite its probable African origin (in the Kimbundu language of Angola, it means “to pull, to lift” and was often used by enslaved seamstresses in Brazil to suspend the waistband of pants), a different etymological strand places the word with Anglo-Saxon origin, being a shortening of the expression “sun garment”.



\*\* In the East, the use of a loincloth (like the Japanese *fundoshi*) was common in public saunas.

\*\*\* Read about Free Body Culture in Germany in the article on Naturism in *Falo Photo* 2022.

www

Summer is coming...







Summer trend 1900.

118

Front fabric gusset, a precursor to today's speedo.



There are documents dating back to 1737 that show that some English corporations began to prohibit nude bathing for men over 10 years old. In 1860, naturist activity was completely banned in the United Kingdom and, from then on, swimwear for men began to be thought of in the West.

Until 1880, bathing suits were a copy of “undergarments” (that resembled overalls) in dark colors, almost always black, to avoid the transparency of wet fabrics. In other words, puritanism. Because they were made of knitted wool, they were slightly more elastic and held less water than cotton at the time. Even so, a suit manufactured by the Portland Knitting Company (which, in 1916, became Jantzen) weighed as much as 10 pounds when wet! Weren't the heavy bulges enough?

During the 1910s, swimwear gained designs for sports activities by the sea, with cuts and fabrics that facilitated body movements. However, in 1917, the *Regulation of Bathing Suits* was released: extremely detailed social norms aimed at modesty and decency, which even contained measurements in centimeters about what the pieces should cover. For example, fabric reinforcement was needed on the front of the bottom of swimwear (something that still exists in swimwear today!), so it was suggested that men wear knee-length flannel pants. The company Jantzen was responsible for numerous innovations in terms of sewing, making their swimwear lighter and simpler.

The beach was beginning to be a really desirable destination and sporting a tan was a sign of health and status. The British fashion industry bet on shortening the sleeves and legs of bathing suits, resembling a female bathing suit. Inspired by the Art Déco movement, the designers tightened the garments with the arrival of nylon

and *lastex* (synthetic rubber threads), which made clothes tighter, glued to the body. As comfortable as they were, the costumes began to contour the male body, gaining a seductive aesthetic, however, also exposing the differences.

The year 1932 is credited with the appearance of the first swimming trunks as we know them today. This year, the swimmer and Olympic champion Johnny Weissmuller\* was co-opted by Hollywood to live the first Tarzan in the cinema. Before swimming clothes were also unique pieces like overalls. So technically, by wearing just the bottom part as the King of the Jungles thong, it ended up setting a pattern.

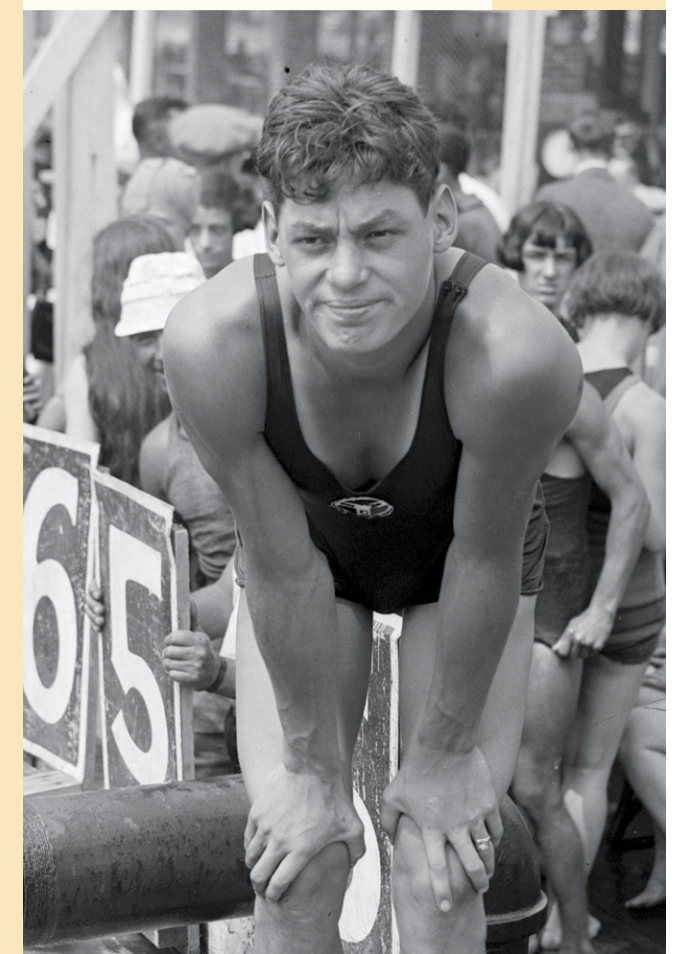
In 1933, the *Men's Topper* was launched, which was actually two pieces, i.e. a short separate from a shirt, offering the option for the wearer to choose how to wear it. Weissmuller helped promote these swimsuits and was one of the first athletes to participate in the development of performance-enhancing swimming products.

These modifications were released in Europe, since the US was still “regulated by decency”. Young people's enthusiasm for dressing like Tarzan led to men being legally allowed to swim without their tops in 1937. However, there was much controversy and shirtless men were shunned on public beaches.



The outfits from the 1920's were more waisted and some even simulated shorts with a belt! The front gusset was replaced by an idea of “shirt outside the shorts”, which looked more like a miniskirt.

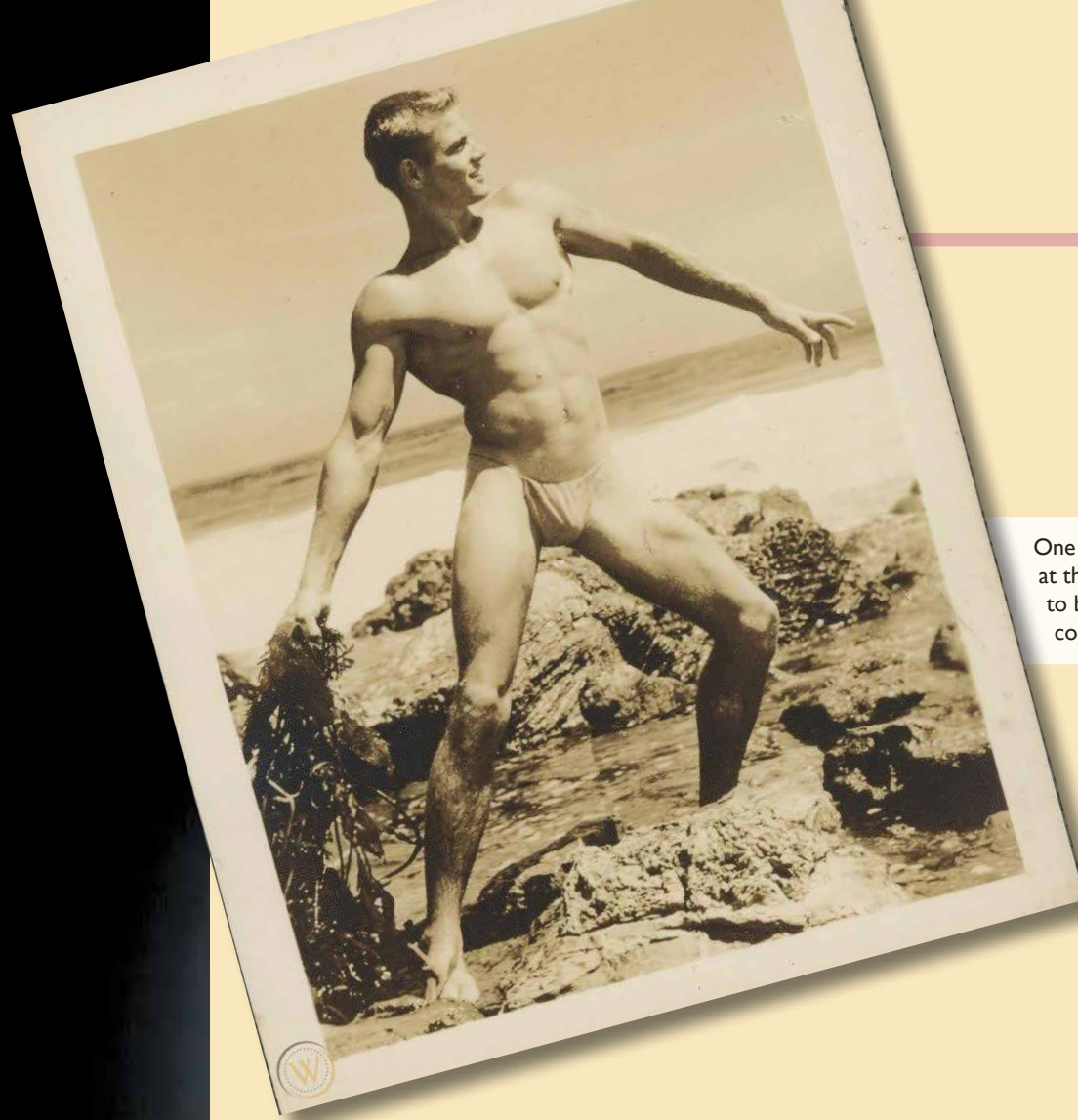
Weissmuller at the Paris Olympics in 1924.



119



Weissmuler as the first Tarzan of cinema.



One of the photos that Bob Mizer took at the *Athletic Models Guild*, deeming it to be much more of a bodybuilder's codpiece than a bathing suit.

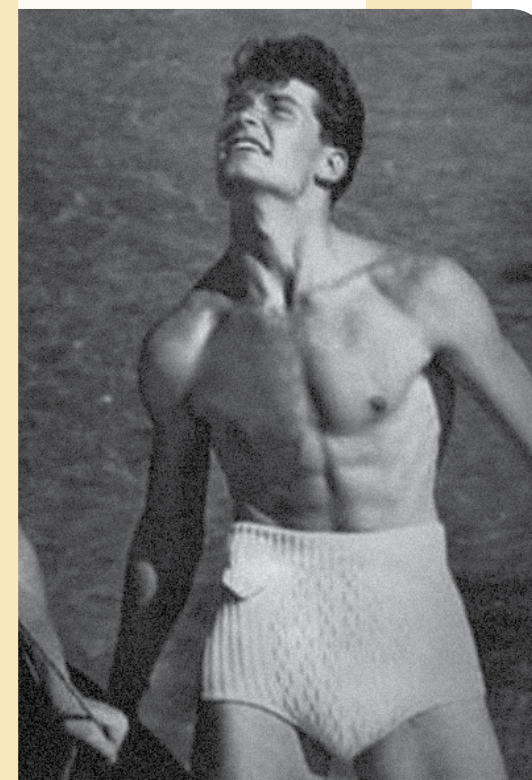
\* Read the underwear story in *Falo History* 2020.

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The war years and the resulting scarcity of fabric led to men's swimwear being produced even shorter, establishing swimming trunks as the ultimate men's swimwear. Therefore, what we find modern today is, in fact, a reinterpretation of this wider and more rectangular model, closer to a boxer short than to the underwear slip format, which would only appear in the 1960s\*.

The *Athletic Model Guild* – famous male nude photography studio created by Bob Mizer in late 1945 – celebrated the male form (yes, in a homoerotic way!), along with a growing interest in male bodybuilding. Some of the most memorable swimwear ad campaigns from this period were quite daring, such as the Jantzen ads featuring James Garner in 1947.

Actor James Garner modeling for Jantzen at age 17.







In 1953, the film *From Here to Eternity* features an iconic scene: a kiss by Burt Lancaster (at the time, one of Hollywood's biggest heartthrobs) and Deborah Kerr on the beach, with the actor appearing wearing what we now call a bathing suit. Almost immediately, the garment became essential – along with short shorts and printed shirts – for the new middle class that held pool parties.

122



In the 1960s, while Austrian fashion designer Rudi Gernrich was revolutionizing women's swimwear, the Speedo\* brand was born in Australia with its hydrodynamic models created by designer Peter Travis. Swim trunks have never been so short, so cut, so colorful! Some manufacturers took advantage of technological innovations driven by the space race to produce velvet and denim trunks, with belts reminiscent of 1930s models.

\* In parts of Europe and the USA it is common to call *speedo* a man's swim trunks.

Image from the *Speedo* catalog from the summer of 1960-61, which was considered "dramatic" at the time.

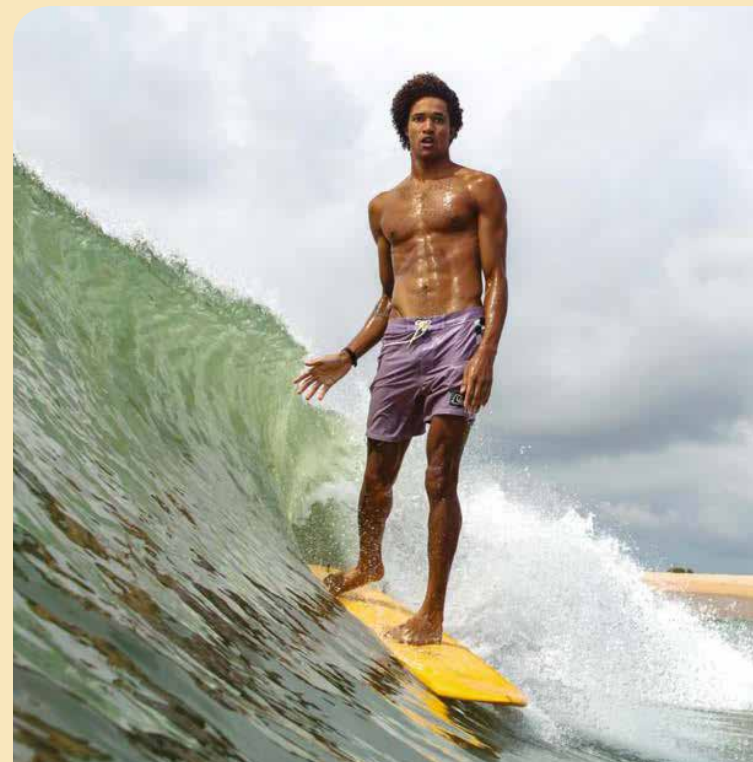
The hippie movement reduced the format of bathing suits to loincloths similar to those used by bodybuilders – which already referred to the codpieces used at the end of the 19th century in athletic photographs. A well-known passage in Brazil was the crochet thong (actually the bottom of a bikini) worn by Fernando Gabeira in 1979, in Rio de Janeiro. In the following years, innovations were due to synthetic materials, such as lycra, polyester and spandex, which allowed a more fitted cut to the body and faster drying.

In the 1990s, the adherence to shorts by the surfing culture – and by a homophobic and sexist construction around the male body image – made the swim trunks become just a sports uniform. However, Calvin Klein underwear advertisements with their seduction strategies and the use of swim trunks by MMA fighters repositioned the use of clothing in men's daily lives. Brazil, a country with a long coastline, lush beaches and a tropical climate, has become relevant in men's beachwear and in the construction of the Brazilian fashion identity. Renowned brands – such as *Rosa Chá*, which brought stylist Amir Slama – created beach fashion for export and became references on the catwalks of international fashion weeks.



Oh yes, Gabeira!

123



Surfers vs. Fighters!





In various sizes: a skinsuit worn by a triathlon athlete and a men's bikini.

The Information Age of the 21st century has created a culture of body exposure that has exponentially expanded the market for swimwear – especially in Australia and the US – which have become increasingly comfortable and technological. What is interesting is the expansion of differences in sizes, ranging from cuts close to the female bikini, such as thongs, to the return of complete garments used by professional swimmers (skinsuits) and by some fighters (*singlets*). Brazilian design continues to be avant-garde, daring, a reference for innovation around the world, whether in terms of cuts, inspirations, technology or patterns. Swim trunks are everywhere! **8=D**

# TSM SWIMWEAR

by *Codey*

FROM THE  
CREATOR OF  
THE SPEED-OH  
MOVEMENT

ENTIRE COLLECTION AVAILABLE AT [WWW.TSM-SWIMWEAR.COM](http://WWW.TSM-SWIMWEAR.COM)

## THE THALASSOPHILE



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# Swimsuit: a community

by Filipe Chagas

In late 2019, I discovered an Instagram profile that celebrated body diversity and self-esteem through the use of swim trunks. I was impressed for being an American profile, a country that has no history of being a reference for beachwear, unless it was for the surf culture. But what really surprised me the most was the man behind it all. Cody's sincerity and warmth towards the community participants were always so genuine that I was immediately co-opted into that way of looking at the world. So, I decided to join the community and sent a picture of myself to the profile. Then, I gradually started commenting and messaging Cody, until, earlier this year, I invited him to have an ad page on Falo. From that moment on, the identification was immediate and I can say that we became friends. Like me, Cody takes the project alone – with the help of collaborators, whom he calls ambassadors – and reveals to us in the following interview his desire to improve the world little by little, regardless of the difficulties and the time it takes.

**[Falo] Hi Cody! Welcome to Falo Magazine!**

*[Cody] Hi Filipe! I am happy to talk to you!*

**What led you to create The Speed-OH Movement\*?**

*I have been interested in swimwear, underwear and gear for a while now. As a designer I wanted to have a place that accepts and celebrates the diversity of the human experience. In the fall of 2019 Joe, my original business partner, approached me to work with him. I was so excited! This community is for everyone and I love that it helps people really see themselves for the beauty they have!*

\* It is worth mentioning that the community started with the name *The Speedo Movement*, however, the swimwear brand demanded a name change due to copyright.



Cody, the front (and back) man in his *Angles* swim trunks.





One of the photos I sent to the TSM community.

### Why swimwear as a body positivity platform?

The swim brief is one of the most controversial types of swimwear ever. This, of course, has some to do with where in the world one is and what is “acceptable” there, but for me, more to do with the personal internal struggle people have when wanting to wear them. They are tiny, tight and sexy and therefore so many want to wear them but feel like they don’t fit the “standard” body type to be able to do so. I’m here to prove that anyone can show the world who they are and wear what they want because it’s about so much more than the swim brief – it’s about empowerment, taking off the weight of societal expectations, letting yourself love what you see in the mirror as well as what’s inside, and overcoming your own fear. Swimwear can be so powerful in that journey. It is quite amazing to see someone change their mindset when they finally take the step into a swim brief and love themselves and let themselves embrace who they are!

### What is your personal relationship with swimwear (and body image)?

I love swimwear and how it has become such a huge part of my life! It makes me feel happy, fun and sexy. However, when I was a teenager, I was terrified that anyone would know I wanted to wear a swim brief. I didn’t want to be labeled or shunned. Over time I’ve gained confidence and self respect to know what others may think about me isn’t my truth and therefore I may as well do and live my truth as I know it.

I would say I’m always going to be “in progress.” There are days I fall back into negative self talk and don’t like what I look like. I get caught up on weight or clothing size, for sure. It’s important to recognize the ebbs and flows with the struggle. The fact that I’m doing it along with so many others (the TSM community) is so helpful. We all learn from each other. I have been more empowered, confident and self loving than ever since this project started three years ago.

I have a general feeling now that anyone should wear what they want to and I have a far less hard time

Cody presenting the Triton design.



Ambassador Keith (The Underwear Guru) wearing the silver design by Cody.

sporting my swim briefs these days, and am grateful my body is mine – because it’s the tool that I get to bring my essence to the world with. I support that and continue to try to help as many people see that as possible, and in so am continuing to learn from them the very same thing.

### Do you think there is a difference in the use of swimming trunks where you live and in other parts of the world?

Oh for sure - here in the Midwest of the USA swim briefs are not very common. People tend to have a knee jerk reaction to them that is negative. I haven’t quite figured out why though. There seems to be some very real issues that people place on the garment itself as opposed to regarding the issues on their own merit. What I mean is it feels like where I live some people will say a swim brief is “gay,” “perverted,” “flashy,” or “only for swimmers and models” but what I hear is misplaced homophobia, misplaced body shame, misplaced toxic masculinity. Swimwear is literally just fabric! Then you can go to certain countries and even locations here in the States where swim briefs are regarded as normal, functional and even preferred or in some places mandated! It’s so interesting to see how much location influences how they are generally regarded. I feel strongly about the ties with this garment and the cultural impact they have - or rather the cultural impact people let them have.

**We know that male swimwear shows (or even enhances) male bulge and some cuts also show pubes and butt cheeks. In a society that hides the male parts, that can bring a lot of issues not only about body image but especially about male sexuality. What do you think about that?**

I fully think one should generally decide how to dress more for themselves and less for others but in the same breath I think there is a time and a place for everything though as well as individual preferences and style. I don’t feel that swim briefs are inappropriate, yet there are for sure styles that can be easily worn in one environment and not another. I’d also mention one would very rarely wear jeans to a black tie

Alex wearing a two-color design by Cody.







Cody in a thong outfit, showing that all cuts (and bodies) are welcome!

event and while jeans and tuxedo slacks are both technically pants, they are usually for vastly different occasions and environments.

I personally tend to want to be on the more modest side when it comes to my anatomy and how or what you can see when I'm wearing swimwear. I find I prefer swimwear that allows room for me to feel comfortable in (i.e. a contoured front as opposed to a more competition style flat front). I tend to try to minimize the overt appearance of my anatomy by using a modesty cup when my swimwear is of a lighter color or thinner material. I don't think a bulge in and of itself is a bad thing, but I do think it is important to be aware of your environment when choosing swimwear and/or enhancement features. For example, at a friend's house that I know is more open minded, and I feel comfortable with, I may choose a smaller, more display type of suit or even a thong – which my wife loves! – and for a family oriented community pool I may choose something more conservative with full coverage. I always get asked what to do in the situation of an erection while wearing a swim brief and my response usually is something like lie on your stomach until it passes or use a towel to cover up. Choosing darker colors or a pattern also helps to make things less obvious.

### What led you to produce your own brand of swim trunks?

I have wanted to design and make Swimwear since I was a teenager. I still have patterns that I printed off of the internet from when I was in high school. I've always been somebody that has a creative side, it just took me a long time to be confident enough to explore designing swimwear. Worrying about what people would think got in my way. My mother knows how to sew but I was always too terrified to ask her to teach me, especially to teach me how to make swim briefs [LOL]. Once I let go of those fears I was able to actually go for it. About 7 or 8 years or so ago I taught myself how to sew and some of the first things I worked on were swim briefs and underwear. I've been learning and having a blast ever since. Getting to the point where I found a manufacturer to work with to produce my designs, coordinating collections and getting them in front of people has been a huge challenge. TSM Swimwear is still very young and I'm still learning but the joy it brings me to see my designs on human beings I can't even describe it! It has been a dream for over half of my life at this point and at 42 I'm finally making that happen!

Community-branded Noodlebagz design.



Ambassador Ricky using the design with the Ukrainian flag's colors to raise funds for the country.

### What makes your brand different, whether in material, cut or concept?

My swimwear is a premium product and there is so much art and a lot of passion that goes into it. I don't want it to ever be a static collection. I am a one man operation so there is a lot to do! Taking a design from concept to a finished garment has many, many steps and if I have to outsource any of them I try hard to work with small companies and businesses, independent artists and the such. Whenever possible the fabrics are made from recycled plastics as well.

It is a way for me to bring TSM from the internet, take the beautiful conversations and experiences I have within the community and bring it into a physical presence. My swimwear and designs belong just as much to the TSM community as they do to me. That is truly special!

Currently, I've been working on my Ambassador Series at TSM Swimwear. Each design is the manifestation of concept and art, each has a statement and each looks amazing! I don't know many other brands that have as much collaborative input in their products. We've done limited edition releases with actual artists and raise funds for various causes. It is an expensive, challenging and so very fun project, but also a group effort by and for the community that it represents. It's a very special thing!

### What do you consider to be a good swimsuit?

If you put it on and you feel great, that's THE BEST swimwear you can ask for!

### Thank you so much, Cody, for the interview and the project.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about my work in a safe space of expression that also celebrates our individual uniqueness and supports each other regardless of any factors that so commonly separate us.

8=D

Proud members of the TSM community!





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falonart@gmail.com

