

press release

MALE – an exhibition curated by VINCE ALETTI

4 September – 3 October 2010

private view: Saturday 4th September 6.30 – 8.30 pm

Geoffrey Chadsey Graham Durward Peter Hujar Stephen Irwin Patrick Lee Attila Richard Lukacs
Paul P. Jack Pierson Gary Schneider Wolfgang Tillmans Scott Treleaven Karlheinz Weinberger

"Male" is the latest iteration of a series of exhibitions and a book that began as--and to a great extent, remains--a personal way to understand and organise the many representations of masculinity. To some degree, that involves both engaging and undermining stereotypes: the jock, the rebel, the thug, the aesthete, the stud, the pretty boy. Not one version of masculinity, but many variations, gathered here side-by-side for a conversation, an exchange--sometimes reasoned, often heated. What do these guys have to say to one another? And to us?

For me, and for many of the artists gathered here, pictures of men are rarely neutral. Desire, with its potential for drama, always complicates things. The male gaze is often at its most intense when directed at another male, and even a casual look can be charged (Wolfgang Tillmans' photographs of two passersby seen from the back). Whether romantic, erotic, or some messy combination of the two, the work is far from cool. It's ardent, obsessed, freaked-out, blissed-out, sexy. Material appropriated from internet hook-up sites (Graham Durward), vintage porn (Stephen Irwin), turn-of-the-century medical records (Gary Schneider), and various, frequently pastiche, printed sources (Paul P., Geoffrey Chadsey, Attila Richard Lukacs) is re-interpreted with a mix of devilish devotion and passionate restraint. The violently disheveled boy from Jack Pierson's "Self-Portrait" series, the stocky working man and quartet of Puerto Rican brothers who posed in Peter Hujar's bare East Village studio, the young beauties in Scott Treleaven's flower-strewn dreamscapes, and the proto-punk dandies Karlheinz Weinberger cultivated in postwar Zurich have nothing and everything in common.

They come together here not to define the concept of maleness but to keep the definition as open and fluid as possible. Masculinity can be a straitjacket, an armour plate, a bad joke. Or it can be loose, light, and vibrant: Something unexpected, something sweet, something wild.

Vince Aletti 2010

Vince Aletti reviews photography exhibitions for the *New Yorker's Goings on About Town* section and writes a regular column about photo books for *Photograph*. He contributes occasional features and reviews to *Aperture*, *Artforum*, and *Interview*. He was the art editor of the *Village Voice* from 1994 to 2005, and the paper's photo critic for 20 years. He is the winner of the International Center of Photography's 2005 Infinity Award in writing.

Aletti wrote half of the 101 brief descriptive essays that form the backbone of Andrew Roth's *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* (2001) and has written introductions to books by Michael Thompson and Ingar Krauss (both 2005), Mark Cohen and Kohei Yoshiyuki (2007), Jed Fielding and Bruce Bellas (Bruce of Los Angeles) (2008), and Ryan McGinley and Joe Szabo (2010). In March of 2002, he co-curated a show of Steven Klein's fashion photography for the Musee de L'Elysee in Lausanne, Switzerland. *Flesh Tones: 100 Years of the Nude*, a show of photographs he organised, was at New York's Robert Mann Gallery in 2003, and he was the curator of a show of work by the art director and photographer Henry Wolf at the Howard Greenberg Gallery in 2005. *Male*, a show of work from Aletti's collection travelled from New York's White Columns to Vancouver's Presentation House in 2008, followed by the publication of *Male*, a book of photographs and other artwork from that collection, by Andrew Roth's PPP Editions.

In 2009, Aletti was the adjunct curator of ICP's *Year of Fashion*. During that time, he curated *This Is Not a Fashion Photograph*, with work from ICP's collection, and, with Carol Squiers, co-curated *Weird Beauty: Fashion Photography Now and Avedon Fashion 1944 - 2000*. He and Squiers also contributed essays to the Avedon catalogue, published by Abrams. *The Disco Files 1973 - 1978*, a collection of Aletti's weekly columns on disco, was published in spring 2009 by DJhistory in the UK. Aletti was one of four curators chosen for this year's New York Photo Festival in May.

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION:

DIRK STEWEN

9 October – 14 November 2010

The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11.00 am – 6.00 pm and by appointment.
For further information please contact Patrick Shier – patrick@maureenpaley.com