

Masculinities: Liberation through Photography

Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK

Run extended 13 July – 23 August 2020

#Masculinities @barbicancentre

Lead Sponsor: CALVIN KLEIN

This exhibition was made possible through support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant from Art Fund.



Barbican Art Gallery reopens *Masculinities: Liberation through Photography*, a major group exhibition that explores how masculinity is experienced, performed, coded and socially constructed as expressed and documented through photography and film from the 1960s to the present day.

The exhibition brings together over 300 works by over 50 pioneering international artists, photographers and filmmakers such as **Richard Avedon**, **Peter Hujar**, **Isaac Julien**, **Rotimi Fani-Kayode**, **Robert Mapplethorpe**, **Annette Messager** and **Catherine Opie** to show how photography and film have been central to the way masculinities are imagined and understood in contemporary culture. The show also highlights lesser-known and younger artists - some of whom have never exhibited in the UK - including **Cassils**, **Sam Contis**, **George Dureau**, **Elle Pérez**, **Paul Mpagi Sepuya**, **Hank Willis Thomas**, **Karlheinz Weinberger** and **Marianne Wex** amongst many others. *Masculinities: Liberation through Photography* is part of the Barbican's 2020 season, *Inside Out*, which explores the relationship between our inner lives and creativity.

Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican, said: *"I am delighted that we can now reopen our Masculinities: Liberation through Photography exhibition, which had met with such acclaim earlier in the year. It is not to be missed during this limited run. Masculinities continues our commitment to presenting leading twentieth century figures in the field of photography while also supporting younger contemporary artists working in the medium today. Given the inclusion of such a diverse array of images, the exhibition enriches our understanding of what it is to be a man in today's world."*

With ideas around masculinity and terms such as 'toxic' and 'fragile' masculinity filling endless column inches, the exhibition surveys the representation of masculinity in all its myriad forms, rife with contradiction and complexity. Presented across six sections by over 50 international artists to explore the expansive nature of the subject, the exhibition touches on themes of queer identity, the black body, power and patriarchy, female perceptions of men, hypermasculine stereotypes, fatherhood and family. The works in the show present masculinity as an unfixed performative identity shaped by cultural and social forces.

Seeking to disrupt and destabilise the myths surrounding modern masculinity, highlights include the work of artists who have consistently challenged stereotypical representations of masculinity, including **Collier Schorr**, **Adi Nes**, **Akram Zaatari** and **Sam Contis**, whose series *Deep Springs*, 2018 draws on the mythology of the American West and the rugged cowboy. Contis spent four years immersed in an all-

male liberal arts college north of Death Valley meditating on the intimacy and violence that coexists in male-only spaces. Complicating the conventional image of the fighter, **Thomas Dworzak's** acclaimed series *Taliban* consists of portraits found in photographic studios in Kandahar following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, these vibrant portraits depict Taliban fighters posing hand in hand in front of painted backdrops, using guns and flowers as props with kohl carefully applied to their eyes. Trans masculine artist **Cassils'** series *Time Lapse*, 2011, documents the radical transformation of their body through the use of steroids and a rigorous training programme reflecting on ideas of masculinity without men. Elsewhere, artists **Jeremy Deller**, **Robert Mapplethorpe** and **Rineke Dijkstra** dismantle preconceptions of subjects such as the wrestler, the bodybuilder and the athlete and offer an alternative view of these hyper-masculinised stereotypes.

The exhibition examines patriarchy and the unequal power relations between gender, class and race. **Karen Knorr's** series *Gentlemen*, 1981-83, comprised of 26 black and white photographs taken inside men-only private members' clubs in central London and accompanied by texts drawn from snatched conversations, parliamentary records and contemporary news reports, invites viewers to reflect on notions of class, race and the exclusion of women from spaces of power during Margaret Thatcher's premiership. Toxic masculinity is further explored in **Andrew Moisey's** 2018 photobook *The American Fraternity: An Illustrated Ritual Manual* which weaves together archival photographs of former US Presidents and Supreme Court Justices who all belonged to the fraternity system, alongside images depicting the initiation ceremonies and parties that characterise these male-only organisations.

With the rise of the Gay Liberation Movement through the 1960s followed by the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s, the exhibition showcases artists such as **Peter Hujar** and **David Wojnarowicz**, who increasingly began to disrupt traditional representations of gender and sexuality. **Hal Fischer's** critical photo-text series *Gay Semiotics*, 1977, classified styles and types of gay men in San Francisco and **Sunil Gupta's** street photographs captured the performance of gay public life as played out on New York's Christopher Street, the site of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising. Other artists exploring the performative aspects of queer identity include **Catherine Opie's** seminal series *Being and Having*, 1991, showing her close friends in the West Coast's LGBTQ+ community sporting false moustaches, tattoos and other stereotypical masculine accessories. **Elle Pérez's** luminous and tender photographs explore the representation of gender non-conformity and vulnerability, whilst **Paul Mpagi Sepuya's** fragmented portraits explore the studio as a site of homoerotic desire.

During the 1970s women artists from the second wave feminist movement objectified male sexuality in a bid to subvert and expose the invasive and uncomfortable nature of the male gaze. In the exhibition, **Laurie Anderson's** seminal work *Fully Automated Nikon (Object/Objection/Objectivity)*, 1973, documents the men who cat-called her as she walked through New York's Lower East Side while **Annette Messager's** series *The Approaches*, 1972, covertly captures men's trousered crotches with a long-lens camera. German artist **Marianne Wex's** encyclopaedic project *Let's Take Back Our Space: 'Female' and 'Male' Body Language as a Result of Patriarchal Structures*, 1977, presents a detailed analysis of male and female body language and Australian indigenous artist **Tracey Moffatt's** awkwardly humorous film *Heaven*, 1997, portrays male surfers changing in and out of their wet suits.

Further highlights include New York based artist **Hank Willis Thomas**, whose photographic practice examines the complexities of the black male experience; celebrated Japanese photographer **Masahisa Fukase's** *The Family*, 1971-1989, chronicles the life and death of his family with a particular emphasis on his father; and **Kenneth Anger's** technicolour experimental underground film *Kustom Kar Kommandos*, 1965, explores the fetishist role of hot rod cars amongst young American men.

Participating artists

Bas Jan Ader, **Laurie Anderson**, **Kenneth Anger**, **Liz Johnson Artur**, **Knut Åsdam**, **Richard Avedon**, **Aneta Bartos**, **Richard Billingham**, **Cassils**, **Sam Contis**, **John Coplans**, **Jeremy Deller**, **Rineke Dijkstra**, **George Dureau**, **Thomas Dworzak**, **Hans Eijkelboom**, **Fouad Elkoury**, **Hal Fischer**, **Samuel Fosso**, **Anna Fox**, **Masahisa Fukase**, **Sunil Gupta**, **Kiluanji Kia Henda**, **Peter Hujar**, **Isaac Julien**, **Rotimi Fani-Kayode**, **Karen Knorr**, **Deana Lawson**, **Hilary Lloyd**, **Robert Mapplethorpe**, **Peter Marlow**, **Ana Mendieta**, **Annette Messager**, **Duane Michals**, **Tracey Moffatt**, **Andrew Moisey**, **Richard Mosse**, **Adi Nes**, **Catherine Opie**, **Elle Pérez**, **Herb Ritts**, **Kalen Na'il Roach**, **Paul Mpagi Sepuya**, **Collier Schorr**, **Clare Strand**, **Mikhael Subotzky**, **Larry Sultan**, **Wolfgang Tillmans**, **Hank Willis Thomas**, **Piotr Uklański**, **Andy Warhol**, **Karlheinz Weinberger**, **Marianne Wex**, **David Wojnarowicz** and **Akram Zaatari**.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Press images available online from the Barbican Newsroom

A link to the image sheets can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from www.barbican.org.uk/masculinitiesnews

Press tickets

To ensure the safe flow of visitors through the Barbican, all press tickets will need to be booked 48 hours in advance by contacting a member of the Barbican's Communications team. You will be unable to enter without a pre-booked ticket and so please do get in touch prior to your visit. We look forward to welcoming you back to the Barbican.

Masculinities: Liberation through Photography

Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday: 11am – 7pm

Saturday – Sunday: 10am – 7pm

Ticket Prices:

Standard: Monday – Friday, £15

Standard: Saturday & Sunday, £17

Members Free and Members Plus, Free (one visit per membership)

Young Barbican £5 (one visit per membership)

Concessions & discounts

Weekdays (Mon – Fri)

Unwaged: £11

Students: £11

NHS staff: £11

Over 60s: £13

Art Fund Members: £7.50

Under 14s: Free

Weekends (Sat & Sun)

Unwaged: £12

Students: £12

NHS staff: £12

Over 60s: £17

Art Fund Members: £8.50

Under 14s: Free

Important Notes

Young children need to be supervised at all times.

Large bags, rucksacks and luggage are not permitted in the gallery. All bags are subject to search.

Food and drink are not permitted.

The Art Gallery will be operating at reduced capacity, with timed entry slots to ensure a safe flow of visitors through the space, and tickets will need to be booked online at barbican.org.uk in advance of a visit.

Safety measures in place when the Barbican reopens will include social distancing, limited visitor capacity, one-way routes through the building, sanitisation points and regular cleaning. Access to all venues will be via the main entrance on Silk Street with lifts available for those who need them.

The Barbican's restaurants, bars, cafes, main shop and cloakroom facilities will remain closed during this phase but there will be takeaway refreshments and a pop-up Art Gallery shop on the Conservatory Terrace on Level 4, as well as toilet facilities available. Detailed visitor information will be available on the Barbican's [website](http://barbican.org.uk).

Exhibition

Masculinities: Liberation through Photography is curated and organised by Barbican Centre, London. It is supported by Lead Sponsor [CALVIN KLEIN](http://calvinklein.com) and is made possible through support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands from a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant from the Art Fund. The exhibition opened at Barbican Art Gallery on 20 February and temporarily closed in March to safeguard public health. The exhibition reopened at Barbican Art Gallery on 13 July until 23 August 2020. Following government advice, the exhibition is planned to tour to Gropius-Bau, Berlin from 16 October 2020 until 10 January 2021. The exhibition is designed by vPPR Architects with graphic design by The Bon Ton.

Catalogue

The *Masculinities* catalogue is organised by six themed chapters with essays by writers and academics including Chris Haywood, Edwin Coomasaru, Tim Clark, Jonathan D. Katz, Alona Pardo and Ekow Eshun in the fields of art, history, culture, and queer studies. Design by The Bon Ton. On sale at £39.99, the catalogue will be available for a reduced price of £34.99 if purchased in the shop. If purchased online at the same time as booking an exhibition ticket, it will be available for £27.99. <https://shop.barbican.org.uk/products/masculinities-catalogue> ISBN: 978-3-7913-5951-9

Events

A rich programme of talks and events accompanies the exhibition. Please check the webpage nearer the time for more information www.barbican.org.uk/masculinities

Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning Activity Sheet

A free illustrated children's activity sheet will be available for families visiting the gallery.

Barbican Art Gallery Shop

The Art Gallery shop has been moved to a new temporary site near the exhibition's exit on Level 4 of the Barbican.

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14-25 year olds for our paid exhibitions and free admittance for under 14s.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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