

N E W S R E L E A S E

**THE MASCULINE MASQUERADE:
Masculinity and Representation**

Exhibition Dates: January 21 - March 26, 1995
Opening Reception: Friday, January 20, 5-7 pm
Press Preview: Friday, January 20, 10 am-12 noon, with co-curators
Helaine Posner and Andrew Perchuk

The List Visual Arts Center will present the exhibition *The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity and Representation* from January 21 through March 26, 1995. While the subject of the feminine has been explored in depth over the past generation, until very recently its counterpart, masculinity, has been largely ignored in contemporary art exhibitions. This thematic exhibition, to be presented in all three of the List Center's galleries, explores the social construction of masculinity through the works of eleven artists, including **Matthew Barney, Tina Barney, Clegg & Guttman, Graham Durward, Lyle Ashton Harris, Dale Kistemaker, Mary Kelly, Donald Moffett, Keith Piper, Charles Ray** and **Michael Yue Tong**, working in various media. The exhibition will be accompanied by a book co-published with The MIT Press and a film series.

According to Harry Brod of the University of Delaware, traditional scholarship's treatment of gender has meant that "While women have been obscured from our vision by being too much in the background, men have been obscured from our vision from being too much in the foreground." In many ways, masculinity has been assumed to be monolithic and immutable both by its critics and its defenders. Western society has had an enormous investment in mainstream masculinity, typically defined as white, heterosexual, and dominant. Until recently this standard definition remained largely unexamined. Man was posited as the generic person or universal against which all others were measured, this permitted men to

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remain blind to their own subjectivity. As earlier studies of the construction of femininity have demonstrated, any attempt to understand the male gender also requires an acknowledgment of its social diversity and an expansion of its traditional parameters to include such important factors as race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. *The Masculine Masquerade* seeks to examine that diversity.

Recognizing the impossibility of encompassing such a vast subject in a single exhibition, we have structured this exhibition around specific male archetypes as a means of generating a dialogue on specific issues. Our areas of investigation include: postwar American boyhood experience, as interpreted by Dale Kistemaker; the father-and-son relationship, as investigated by Michael Yue Tong; heterosexual identity and practice, as viewed by Charles Ray and Graham Durward; gay male identity, as explored by Donald Moffett; athletics as an arena of male expression, as depicted in Keith Piper's work; male fantasy and eroticism, as seen in Matthew Barney's video-installation; the military and issues of aggression, as explored by Mary Kelly; white-collar authority and privilege, as examined by Clegg & Guttman and Tina Barney; and the narratives of cultural difference surrounding Asian American and African American male identity, as seen in the projects of Lyle Ashton Harris and Glenn Ligon.

The List Visual Arts Center is co-publishing a fully-illustrated exhibition catalog to accompany *The Masculine Masquerade*. This book examines postwar views on masculinity from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition to a primary focus on the visual arts, masculinity in sociology, literature, cultural studies and the mass media are also examined. Co-curators and co-editors Helaine Posner and Andrew Perchuk have contributed *The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity Represented in Recent Art* and *Pollock and Postwar Masculinity*, respectively. Simon Watney has written "*Lifelike*": *Imagining the Bodies of People with AIDS*, sociologist Harry Brod offers *Masculinity as Masquerade*, Steven Cohan has written *The Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit: Gender Performance and the Representation of Masculinity in North by Northwest*, bell hooks has contributed *Reconstructing Black Masculinity* and artist Glenn Ligon has created a photo-essay titled *A Feast of Scraps*. The MIT Press has co-published and will distribute *The Masculine Masquerade*.

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A number of educational events will accompany this exhibition. A series titled *Postwar Masculinity in American Film* will be presented in February and March of 1995 in the Bartos Theater located in MIT's Wiesner Building (20 Ames Street, Cambridge). Double features on such subjects as male initiations, male relations, male rituals, male sexualities and identities will be presented. Henry Jenkins, Associate Professor of Literature at MIT, will introduce this series with a lecture titled *From Bigger than Life to The Incredible Shrinking Man: Masculinity in Crisis in Postwar American Cinema*. A full calendar of films, including *East of Eden*, *Raging Bull*, and *Boyz 'n the Hood*, among others, will be announced in January.

The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity and Representation has been funded in part by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York and the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

The List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building (E15) at 20 Ames Street in Cambridge, a five minute walk from the Kendall Square Red Line T-Station.

Please note hours: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 12-6 pm; Wednesday: 12-8 pm; Saturday & Sunday: 1-5 pm. A member of the curatorial staff is on-call for informal discussion on Wednesdays, between 12:30-1:30. Admission to exhibitions and related events is free. For further information contact Ron Platt at (617) 253-4400.