

vide contact advertisements and gay news and commercial advertisements. Main-frame-based services offer popular "party line" type discussions; services usually have a gay conversation line, accounting for a third to a half of the party line conversations, and on which a cruisy atmosphere sometimes develops. Computer communications are quickly being given the same legal rights to privacy as telephone messages. In France, since the national telephone system distributed simple computer terminals to all customers, sexual message services, called *messengeries roses*, have been highly successful; indeed, the sexual message services have ensured the success of home computer terminals in France, just as X-rated videos made a hit of the videotape recorder in the United States.

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

"Gay" or "homosexual" photography is an ambiguous concept. While a person can be described as homosexual because of sexual activities, or as gay because of sexual preference or expressing a certain consciousness, an inanimate, unconscious object cannot. Nonetheless, to the extent that a photographic image reflects a particular consciousness on the part of the photographer, it might be termed gay, though that consciousness is notoriously hard to define. Thus images by gay or homosexual photographers are sometimes described as "gay photography," although not every image by a gay person is necessarily marked by gay sensibility. On occasion the term is used to describe the documentation of gay events or meeting places, or of homosexual behavior. At still other times the term is used almost as a synonym for male nudes, though feminist-inspired male nudes (while a gay man may appreciate the images) could not be called

gay images. Yet in each case there is some justification for the usage, if "gay" or "homosexual photography" is defined as those images which consciously or unconsciously portray or evoke homoerotic associations shared by the creator and viewer. Homosexual photographers would be most likely to express such associations, the places or behaviors to be charged with such meanings, and certainly the male nude is the central focus of such homoerotic references.

Until recently, such expression of homoerotic interests had to be masked by a "top dressing" of one sort or another—artist's reference studies, ethnological studies, mythological or classical subjects, nudism, and physical culture. While these cover categories provided an area of safety in which homoerotic photography could exist in the face of social hostility, they also imposed artificial limits on what the photographer could create and how he could present his work, and contributed to a sense of the marginality of the work.

*Pioneers.* From the very earliest processes—daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and the like—very few images of male nudes exist, even as compared with the number of female nudes, and those are rare. It was not until the development of albumen paper and, later, of dry plate negatives, that any significant number of homoerotic images were created.

Photography, in its earliest phases, was not considered as an art form in itself, but as a technique for recording reality in the service of science or art. It was this rationale that provided the cover for the first major development of photographic images expressing homoerotic intentions, in the form of "études," nude studies of men and boys ostensibly for the use of artists who were unable to obtain the services of live models. Such studies flourished in the years 1875-1900, from studios such as Calavaş in France, but were also produced in other countries. As in images of women and girls created for similar purposes, the subjects are displayed in

"statuesque" poses against studio backdrops. Contemporary reports of their availability, and the number that still exist, indicate that the clientele for these was far wider than the artists.

Among the first to treat photography as an independent art form was a German living in Sicily, Wilhelm Baron von Gloeden (1856–1931), whose aesthetic reflected the academic school of painting in which he had been trained. The classical allusions that were standard in this academic art—though certainly used quite sincerely by von Gloeden, at least most of the time—provided a cover for his homoeroticism. While conservative in his aesthetic, he was a technical innovator in moving his models outdoors. His work—including but not limited to his well-known "classical" male nudes—made him one of the best known and best selling photographers in the world at the turn of the century. Similar nudes were produced by von Gloeden's cousin Wilhelm Plüschow, and by the Italians Vincenzo Galdi and Gaetano d'Agata.

Photography as an art, however, did not follow von Gloeden's academic aesthetic. Another important homosexual photographer, the American F. Holland Day (1864–1933), figured in the development of pictorial photography, which modeled itself on impressionism. His New School of American Photography, a predecessor to the Photo-Secession movement, promoted an aesthetic "soft-focus," manipulated prints, and narrative themes. Day's "Grecian" subjects of nude boys and men remain key pictorialist images.

Surrealist photography, though strongly dominated by heterosexual eroticism, also included homoerotic images in the work of the German photographer Herbert List (1903–1975). Another important figure who explored the erotic meanings of the male body was the American photographer George Platt Lynes (1907–1955). Although he did exhibit male nudes, influenced by surrealism, in which mythological references cover the ho-

moerotic subtext, his precisely observed studies of the male form, in which the body itself becomes an object for contemplation, were created primarily for a close circle of acquaintances or published pseudonymously in a European homophile magazine. Another American photographer who shared this interest in the erotic implications of the closely regarded male body was Minor White (1908–1976), while the German Herbert Tobias (1924–1982) produced homoerotic work which shares Lynes' more dramatic vision.

*Popular Aspects.* Two popular expressions of homoerotic photography, which had no pretensions to art, also developed between 1900 and 1950. Physique photos originated with publicity photographs of Eugene Sandow, Bernarr McFadden, and other turn-of-the-century health and physical culture practitioners. With the 1930s images of Tony Sansone and movie stills of Johnny Weissmuller as Tarzan, these developed into an equivalent of the contemporary pictures of glamorous actresses. The naturist (nudist) movement, flourishing particularly in Germany between 1920–1933, contributed outdoor studies of relentlessly healthy, active male groups. The display of the male body inherent in both these genres became explicit by the late 1950s as they intermingled in the work of photographers like Alfred Heinecke (1915–1975), who had been involved in German nudist photography before coming to America, and later, in more overtly homoerotic images of Anthony Guyther's New York-based Capital studio, Bob Mizer's California-based Athletic Model Guild, and Bruce Bellas ("Bruce of Los Angeles," d. 1974), who still used physique studies or naturism as a cover while acknowledging the increasing distance between what the image purported to be and what it really was by adding such "camp" references as cowboy hats, motorcycle jackets, and construction equipment.

The habit of covering real intentions for the sake of safety, of "things-

being-what-they-aren't," is perhaps one of the elements that fed into camp sensibility, with its elevation of the artificial, of appearances, style, and the theatrical. A number of homosexual photographers, including Baron de Meyer (1868–1946) and Lynes, have been involved with fashion and theatre, but perhaps the "campiest" photographer was Sir Cecil Beaton (1906–1980), known for his exquisitely superficial (in the sense of being absolutely concerned with surface appearances) portraits of society and theatre figures.

*Contemporary Trends.* With the climate of sexual liberalization in the 1960s, gay photographers found themselves increasingly free to explore overt homoerotic themes without the excuses previously necessary, and stripped of the formulas that provided cover in the past, they also have been more able to explore their personal visions. Healthier social attitudes and more positive self-perceptions among homosexuals that followed the rise of gay liberation have also encouraged personal expression.

In the years since 1970, homoerotic photography has become both more personal and more intimate. Examples of the former are explorations of private imagery by such stylistically diverse photographers as Duane Michaels, Arthur Tress, Bernard Faucon, and David Lebe. The uncovering of personal intimacy is a common thread which connects the work of such photographers as George Dureauux, Peter Hujar, Erwin Olaf, and Hans van Manen, whose friends or acquaintances are often their subjects. In addition to exploring the erotic meanings of the male body, their nudes frequently also explore the implications of the photographer's relationship with the subject of the photograph. Robert Mapplethorpe (1947–1989), whose reexamination of the studio techniques of the 1930s and 1940s, often with homoerotic or sadomasochistic subjects, led to a rethinking of the possibilities of the studio nude and por-

trait, is the central figure in this development.

*Lesbian Elements.* Although there are isolated figures such as Viscountess Clementis Hawarden (1822–1865) and Alice Austen (1866–1952), owing largely to the historical underrepresentation of women in the photographic profession lesbian photography has no broad heritage. What lesbian images exist may be characterized as more concerned with affective relationships, and less concerned with erotic meanings, than their male counterparts. An important figure in this tradition is the American "JEB" (Joan E. Biren), noted for her portraits of lesbian women. The last few years have seen the emergence of photographers like Diana Blok and Marlo Broekmans (The Netherlands), whose imagery more openly explores women's eroticism.

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## PINDAR (518–438 B.C.)

Ancient Greek poet of Thebes.

Pindar's works exemplify the classical Greek tradition of male devotion to the *kouros*, or beautiful young man, witnessed also in surviving statuary and vase painting, and in the poetry of Pindar's near-contemporary Theognis of Megara. Pindar's epinician odes, or songs of victory, were commissioned to celebrate the exploits of athletes at the great games, the most famed of which were the Olympian (in Elis) and the Pythian (in Delphi), held every four years; and the Nemean (in the northeast Peloponnese) and the Isthmian (on the isthmus of Corinth), held every other year.