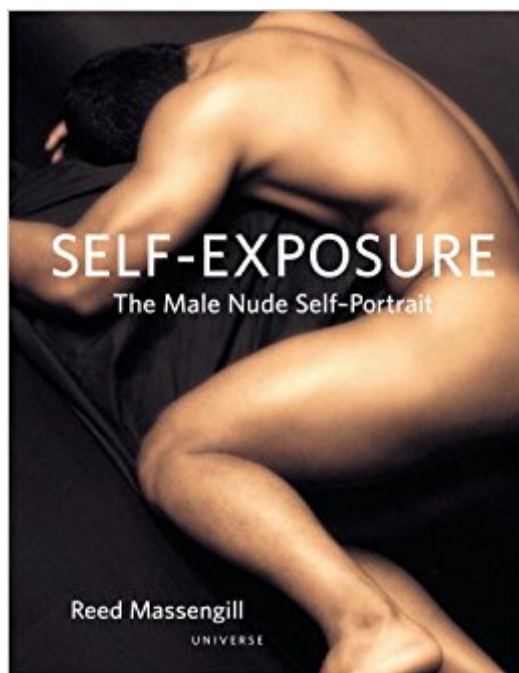


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Self-Exposure : The Male Nude Self-Portrait



Synopsis

The nude self-portrait is perhaps the most intimate form of photography. It delves deep into taboo territory and strips away the traditional barriers between artist and viewer. Witnessing such a private act, we may feel the queasy embarrassment of a voyeur, but we are always compelled to look further. The images cut to the core of issues of identity, sexuality, and ego – and as they reveal an essential truth about their creators they also tell us something about ourselves. *Self-Exposure* features more than 100 works from both established masters and up-and-coming photographers – many never before published. This groundbreaking collection traces the development of the male self-portrait from its earliest beginnings with such greats as Hippolyte Bayard, Herbert Tobias, and André Kertész, to the contemporary efforts of such artists as John Dugdale, Anthony Goicolea, and Yasumasa Morimura. Each artist takes a uniquely individual approach ranging from the shockingly perverse and aggressively erotic to the elusively self-conscious and sublimely beautiful. Complete with brief biographies of each artist, *Self-Exposure* is a powerful survey of this most seductive subject.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reed Massengill is himself a photographer specializing in the male nude and has published several books of photography, including *The Male Ideal*: *Lon* of New York and the *Masculine Physique*. He is a correspondent for the magazines *blue* and *Black & White*, and he is an avid collector of photography both from the past and present.

The title says it all. Reed Massengill has put together a collection of male photographers doing nude-- for the most part-- self-portraits, a very creative idea for a book. In his "Introduction" to this volume he says: "The common thread that binds together these images is not simply that they are self-portraits by men; each of these artists shows us what is beautiful and different about their work and about themselves through these images." Certainly each photograph here is different; unfortunately, they are by no means all beautiful, although many of them are. In alphabetical order-- the way the photographers are presented-- Plate 4, John Arsenault; Plate 16, Armando Branco; all the pictures by John Dugdale; the two photographs by Mark Jenkins (beautifully lit and printed); Plate 91, Douglas Prince; and the two photographs by Brian To would meet the severest critic's requirements for beautiful. Then there are the erotic, the pornographic (by Jesse Helms' standards), the very creative, the cutesy, the dull and the just plain ugly. An inordinate number of photographers chose to present themselves as just body parts, reinforcing the cliché that if you have it, flaunt it. Several of the artists are into crossdressing and fetishes. And David Hockney forgot to remove his clothes. The Pierre et Gilles and Jan Saudek self-portraits are as creative as we expect from these fine artists. A very young Robert Mapplethorpe, believe it or not, radiates innocence. Tom Bianchi's portraits are exactly what we would expect from him. There is obviously not a shy bone in his body. Both Arthur Tress and Duane Michals are to be commended for removing their clothes although they do not have beautiful bodies. There is an honesty and vulnerability in the Tress self-portrait that is very moving. Finally, Andy Warhol proves that anyone can take a bad photograph of himself. Mr. Massengill also says in his introduction that he had to exclude a lot of "beautiful" work. Perhaps he will publish SELF-EXPOSURE TWO in the not too distant future.

At least ninety artists work is shown in a beautifully printed and well presented book. Everything is done well, the forward and introduction, the references to artists web presence, the variety of the selections; personal, obscure, in-your-face, from subtle to campy obvious, many different personalities take the art of the nude in photography another step forward. Recommended.

This is not twink boy porn, so if that is what you desire then look elsewhere. These are amazing self portrait photographs. They have a wide variety of styles but all very well done. Excellent!

"Self-Exposure" is one of the better photography books on the ever-expanding field of male nudes. Both the content and production quality are excellent. It is fascinating to see how the photographers

reveal themselves--some, such as Tom Bianchi, quite explicitly. Alan Cumming, in his forward, proves once again that for this actor the subject is always himself.

Reed Massengill has created a book that will interest everyone who has followed the centuries-old fascination with artists' self-portraiture, a practice dating back to the beginning of art, blossoming in the Renaissance, and persisting through all periods of art change as a manner in which the artist can evaluate his own development as an observer - and as the mirror for the aging process. The difference between those images and the ones collected for this book is the fact that the self-portraits are photographs and hence less able to be 'altered' to enhance the artists' egos! In a brief introduction actor Alan Cumming states 'I think everyone secretly wants to take nude self-portraits. To be able to see ourselves as others see us - whether passive or in the throes of passion - is always illuminating, but isn't it also erotic just to have in our possession an image that captured a moment in our lives when we were at our barest?' This is followed by a well-researched and very well written essay by Massengill himself who traces the history of photographic nude self-portraiture to an 1840 image of Hippolyte Bayard 'drowned' (staged of course is a case which became a cause célèbre in photography's history). Massengill continues his examples from Eadward Muybridge, Thomas Eakins, F. Holland Day, Andre Kertesz, and Herbert Tobias, bringing us into the 20th century when male nude photography became a true art form. The photographs in this lavishly produced volume are by famous photographers as well as brilliant but not yet famous ones. The works are arranged in alphabetical order according to artist and range from frank frontal nudity, to gently subtle shadow work, to self-portraits in tandem with other models, to reflected images. Some are details of the body (JD Talasek, Shelton Walsmith, Steve Diet Goedde for example) while others are erotic and fully frank. Among the famous names included are Massengill himself, Hockney, Warhol, Mapplethorpe, Michals, Samaras, Saudek, Tress, Bianchi and their works are excellent and not the usual known images. For this reader the photographs by artists such as Jack Balas, Adam Raphael, Brian To, Roberto Rincon, cover photographer John Eric, and Robert Rye are the more refreshingly captivating. Massengill graciously supplies brief bios of the artists along with website directories where more of each artist's work can be viewed. This is book that, yes, celebrates the male form, but it is so much more than that: it is a rare insight into artists' creative minds and reveals how they perceive themselves - and how they wish for us to perceive them! Highly recommended for a very broad audience. Grady Harp, November 05

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