

F A L L  
2 0 1 1  
The Journal of the  
Leslie/Lohman Museum  
of Gay and Lesbian Art



TEE A. CORRINE,  
from *Yantras of Womanlove*,  
1982, Silver gelatin print,  
courtesy University of  
Oregon Libraries



(top): Justin Violini, *I Love New York*, 2011, C-print, 11x14"

(left): JEB, *Jane Gurko builds steps for her home, Terpsichore, near Willits, CA 1977*, 2011, Digital silver halide C-type print



## The Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art

is a non-profit foundation established in 1990 to provide an outlet for art work that is unambiguously gay and that is frequently denied access to mainstream venues. The Foundation's gallery mounts exhibitions of work in all media by gay and lesbian artists with an emphasis on subject matter that speaks directly to the gay and lesbian experience, including erotic, political, romantic and social imagery. The Foundation provides special support for emerging and under-represented artists. Its programs include regularly scheduled exhibitions, artists' and curators' talks, panel discussions, a quarterly journal, an archive of artists' data, and a permanent collection of art.

### Founders

Charles W. Leslie  
J. Frederic Lohman (1922-2009)

### Board of Directors

John Caldwell  
Steven J. Goldstein, M.D.  
Daniel R. Hanratty, *Treasurer*  
Jonathan David Katz, Ph.D.  
Cora Lambert, BFA  
Robert W. Richards  
James M. Saslow, Ph.D.  
Professor Peter Weiermair

### Gallery Staff

Charles W. Leslie,  
*Executive Director & Chief Curator*

Rob Hugh Rosen,  
*Director of Operations*

Wayne Snellen,  
*Director of Collections*

Cora Lambert,  
*Associate Curator, Window Project*

Jerry Kajpust,  
*Director of External Affairs*

Victor Trivero,  
*Exhibition Lighting Director*

Todd Fruth,  
*Administrative Assistant*

### The Archive

The Journal of the Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, Number 40  
Editor: Seth Clark Silberman, Ph.D.  
Production and Design: Joseph Cavalieri

©2011 The Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of The Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. Copyrights for all art reproduced in this publication belong to the artists unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved.

### Foundation and Gallery:

26 Wooster Street  
New York, NY 10013-2227  
(212) 431-2609



admin@leslielohman.org  
www.leslielohman.org  
Gallery Hours:  
Tues. - Sat. 12 - 6pm  
Closed Sun. & Mon., all major holidays and between exhibitions

**FRONT COVER**  
Tee A. Corrine, from  
*Yantras of Womanlove*, 1982,  
Silver gelatin print, courtesy  
University of Oregon Libraries

## CONTENTS THE ARCHIVE NUMBER 40 FALL 2011

- 4** OBSCURED, NOT HIDDEN, FROM HISTORY: A QUEER MUSEUM POPS UP IN SOHO  
BY SCOTT MOORE
- 7** LESBIAN FEMINIST PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY ILANA ELOIT
- 10** THINKING, TALKING, SEEING, PHOTOGRAPHING WITHOUT THAT "PRICK IN YOUR HEAD"  
BY SETH CLARK SILBERMAN
- 14** RECENT DONATIONS AND ACQUISITIONS  
BY WAYNE SNELLAN
- 15** *BRIGHT LIGHTS, NEW YORK'S QUEER CITY*  
BY THOMAS BISTRITZ
- 18** VINCENZO GALDI (1871-1961): FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE HOMOEROTIC  
BY DOUGLAS BLAIR TURNBAUGH
- 20** EMERGING ARTIST PROFILE: JUSTIN VIOLINI  
BY SETH CLARK SILBERMAN
- 22** THE MANNEQUIN'S MEDITATION  
BY GO-GO VAN GO



John Burton Harter, *Estrangement*, 1995, Oil on board, 40 x 24"

This issue of *The Archive* is made possible entirely by a generous donation from the **John Burton Harter Charitable Trust.**

# Obscured, Not Hidden, from History: A Queer Museum Pops Up in SoHo

BY SCOTT MOORE

The typical hetero-washing with which others “cleanse” our larger stories about community, class, credo and country can daunt queer historians. Faced with their efforts to obscure our record, we sometimes must read between the lines of history books or comb through archives, libraries and un-compiled paraphernalia to find people “like us” there all along. Given the still-archaeological state the field of LGBTQ studies, tracing a definitively queer history with what we know now poses certain challenges. Our zeal to be here, queer and everywhere in the face of versions of a history that presumes we are merely modern anomalies can produce work fraught with the peril of anachronism.

To introduce an academically valid account of our lives across decades and centuries, queer historians must avoid imposing current, time-bound interpretations of identity onto periods that predated the emergence of our modern-day LGBTQ lexicon. Gay may be good, as Frank Kameny urged us to believe in 1968;<sup>1</sup> but gay remains historically contingent, too. What we write about it can — and often needs to — have the verve of L.J. Roberts’ *Gaybashers: Come and Get it (Limp Wrist)* (2010-2011) (right), a woven banner included in the *Pop-Up Museum of Queer History Exhibition* at Leslie/Lohman in August; yet our words should also carefully honor the complex nuances with which real people lived.

One example that epitomizes our historic struggle is the ongoing battle over the identity of early 20th century doctor Alan Hart. Fierce debates continue to this day: Was Hart one of the first known transgender men in United States history? Was Hart a lesbian who passed as male to become a doctor at a time when women were often refused access to that profession? For too many invested in LGBTQ history, the contemporary political use of Hart as queer transgender hero has trumped the reality that the identities *transgender* and *lesbian* did not even exist for Hart. Hart’s own body has also become fodder in the body politic still dominated by often white, cisgender, gay, male voices who arbitrate what even counts as LGBTQ history — voices



tending to insist that Hart was a lesbian. The counterarguments by transgender activists have resonated with anger at the erasing of their experiences in the lesbian vision of Hart.

The example of Hart does not mean, however, that no sweeping queer history can suffice. Indeed, we have compelling reasons for one, none more powerful than the quote opening the *Pop-Up* show: “If you don’t know you have a past, how can you believe you have a future?” Appalling rates of teen suicide and hate-based murder attest to the poignancy of this question. All of us across the LGBTQ spectrum must recognize that people “like us” have existed, flourished and engaged in a wide array of pursuits other than self-loathing. “We” have done more than nobly weather intense social ostracism or violence.

Some of us like writer and photographer Carl Van Vechten, known for his promotion of the Harlem Renaissance and his ubiquitous attendance at its key parties and hotspots, kept a campy and bawdy record of his contemporaneous scene, with a sensibility that some now call queer. Van Vechten comes represented in a *Pop-Up* installation by Daniel Lang/Levitsky called *Fashionable Places out of Season (a little too much is just enough for me)* (2011) (pictured in *Still No. 1*, above). Lang/Levitsky “exca-

vates” Van Vechten’s personal notebooks by posting photocopies from them on faux wood paneling that partially enclosed a front corner, as if he had used them to decorate his bedroom walls. Van Vechten’s notebooks come filled with the details and images still often obscured from accounts of 1920s Harlem even though they are now finally available for perusal at Yale University and have been written about by many scholars: news items, memorabilia, details about the

Fishback, a writer, performer and one-time Artist-in-Residence at Dixon Place. Fishback makes literal the bedroom motif suggested by *Fashionable Places* by adding a mattress, pillows and a box of reading materials (zines) for visitors to peruse while looking at photocopies lining his corner walls. As with Lang/Levitsky, Fishback’s use of photocopies suggests a human, personal touch, a connection with the source material that someone perhaps found in a library, material

“Lang/Levitsky ‘excavates’ Van Vechten’s personal notebooks by posting photocopies from them on faux wood paneling that partially enclosed a front corner, as if he had used them to decorate his **bedroom walls.**”

night’s reverie and his own photographs of the noted and notorious. Some of Van Vechten’s photographs were explicitly homoerotic. His notebooks documented the theatre of Harlem’s nightlife that he enjoyed. They also display the complicated race politics of the period, even between black and white men with complementary sexual desires.

A similarly intimately-cluttered installation called *Pen Pals* (2011) (pictured in *Still No. 2*, page 6) comes from Dan

that someone wanted proof of to gaze at while lying in bed. Photocopying was also the means of communication and distribution for the do-it-yourself queer (maga)zines included on the mattress. In our increasingly paperless world, Fishback’s installation provides a necessary reminder that people “like us” created and wrote about LGBTQ lives before the instant connectivity to be found on the Internet. Indeed, the fact that some of us still do communicate apart from or in ad-

(left): Michelle Temple, edited by Buzz Slutzky, *Still No. 1* from *Pop-Up SoHo* of L.J. Roberts’ *Gaybashers: Come and Get it (Limp Wrist)*, 2011, digital file

(above): Michelle Temple, edited by Buzz Slutzky, *Still No. 2* from *Pop-Up SoHo* of Daniel Lang/Levitsky’s *Fashionable Places out of Season (a little too much is just enough for me)*, 2011, digital file

“Given the still-archaeological state the field of LGBTQ studies, tracing a definitively queer history with what we know now poses certain challenges.”

dition to the usual online routes requires a proactive re-writing of our contemporary history that assumes our easy metacorporeal bonds have trumped the laws that either protect or elide our rights.

The strength of Fishback and Lang/Levitsky’s installations — as well as so many of the show’s multimedia work — is that both require audience participation and thus include us in the necessary questions of and over our own historicity. So does the triptych of “Lady King” Christina of Sweden by otherly-abled queer artist Al Benkin. Entitled *She/her* (2011), it speculates about the identity of the child of King Gustav II Adolph, who raised “her” as a prince. “She” took her oath as the king, not the queen, upon “her” father’s death, refused to marry and left the country after abdicating the throne on horseback, in men’s clothes. Did this “Lady King” take advantage of “her” class privilege to sidestep sexism? Was “she” a transman centuries before that lexicon joined our language? *How do we identify “Lady King” precedents like this if not through the limited language (gay, lesbian, etc.) that we have at our contemporary disposal?*

As the *Pop-Up* exhibition travels across the US (by publication time, it will have made it to Bloomington, Indiana), it will continue to engage in the crucial questions about how our LGBTQ subjectivities continue to unfold and flourish, both now and through our engagement with the available past. The exhibition understands that where we (or it) go(es) in our foreseeable future rests upon our critical interaction with the public, private and imagined pasts out there of people “like us.” ■

Scott Moore’s work has appeared in many publications, including *Rethinking Schools*, and will appear in the forthcoming anthology *Homofiles*, which focuses on LGBTQ issues in public schools. For five years, he taught middle school English in New York City. Currently, he works at an education non-profit and is an Adjunct Professor in the Teacher U Program at Hunter College.

“Like” The Pop-Up Museum of Queer History on Facebook and learn more about it at <http://www.queermuseum.com>.

<sup>1</sup> See The Kameny Papers website at <http://www.kamenypapers.org> to learn about his activism.

Michelle Temple, edited by Buzz Slutsky, *Still No. 3* from *Pop-Up SoHo* of Dan Fishback’s *Pen Pals*, 2011, digital file



# Lesbian Feminist Photography<sup>1</sup>

BY ILANA ELOIT



“With its ability to reveal and document new social worlds, photography became a particularly **useful** medium to thwart the sexist imaging of women.”



The sudden development of feminist and lesbian feminist publications in the early 1970s fostered a demand for visual self-representation. Among the most prominent artists of this generation to meet that call were three photographers whom the *Lesbians Seeing Lesbians* exhibit highlights: Tee A. Corrine, JEB (Joan E. Biren) and Cathy Cade. They joined lesbian feminist artists working in other mediums to lend a public face to this new politic, so much so that the New York-based journal *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* (1977–1993) distinguished itself by becoming the first non-lesbian journal issue to focus exclusively on lesbian work in their fall 1977 issue: *Lesbian Art and Artists*.

Men had long constructed the female body according to the dictates of heterosexual male desire — and never more so than with art. Indeed, even lesbians often saw their own bodies through that heterosexual male aesthetic filter. But just as books like Jill Johnston’s *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* (1973) were imagining how newly-engaged lesbian communities configured themselves, “lesbian photographers,” as JEB explains, “[were] making visible that which ha[d] been invisible.”<sup>2</sup> With its ability to reveal and document new social worlds, photography became a particularly useful medium to thwart the sexist imaging of women. Photography was an apt aesthetic tool to choose since women had always been centrally involved with it. At its inception, according to Annie Gottlieb, photography was “not surrounded by entrenched taboos or possessed by the mystique of brotherhood; it was not, for that matter, taken seriously as an art form, any more than women were taken seriously as artists. This gave women a paradoxical advantage in gaining a foothold.”<sup>3</sup>

If photographers Tee A. Corrine, JEB and Cathy Cade all adopted different ways of visualizing and empowering

(top left): Cathy Cade, *Limbo* at the Amazon Music Party, Santa Cruz, CA 1974, 1974, Silver gelatin print

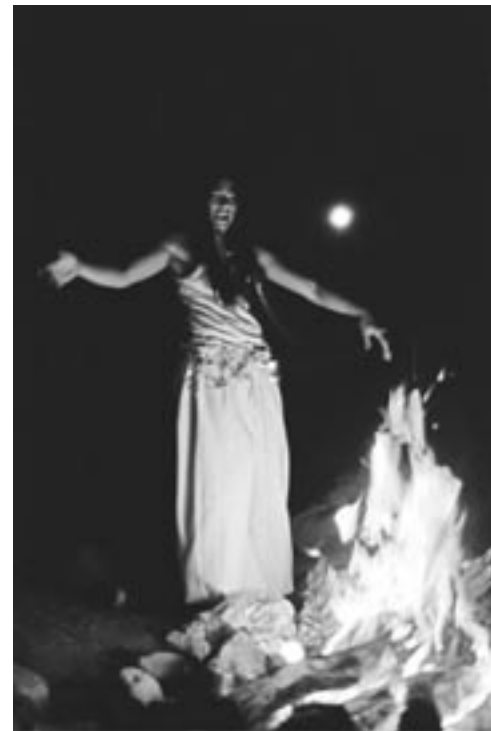
(bottom left): Cathy Cade, *Inez Garcia Demonstration and Arrests*, San Francisco, CA 1975, 1976, Silver gelatin print

lesbianism, what they shared was an attempt at representing the vast diversity of the community to include different ethnicities, races, religions, social backgrounds, physical appearances, ages and disabilities. At the same time, they equally worked hard to avoid presenting women as merely the sum of their bodies. For example, because Tee A. Corrine wanted erotic images of women that denied the masturbatory male gaze, she deployed solarized negatives: “Often I work from solarized negatives because they distance, universalize and romanticize the images as well as afford my models some measure of privacy.”<sup>4</sup> Solarization worked as well as a metaphor for the social status of lesbians. According to Corrine, “These heavily manipulated images function not only as protection for the model’s identity, but also as a correlative for the status of the public lesbian: present yet invisible, out yet hidden, provocative yet in need of protection.”<sup>5</sup>

Drawing a clear distinction between erotica and pornography, Corrine attempted to protect and humanize her models as real photographic subjects, not objects of fantasy. Corinne repeatedly shot pictures of vaginas and assembled her now



providers, protectors and political actors — often focusing on dissident or activist endeavors from protesting homophobia to celebrating the beauty of fat bodies. However, if women were often portrayed naked in lesbian feminist photography of the 70s, Cade made a point to not sexualize the naked women she shot. There were too many other ways to picture under-represented women, from women



(top right): Cathy Cade, *Two Torsos*, Oakland, CA 1979, 1979, Digital archival pigment print

(bottom right): Cathy Cade, *Summer Solstice Celebration*, Covelo, CA 1975, 1975, Digital archival pigment print

“Drawing a clear distinction between erotica and pornography, Corrine attempted to **protect** and **humanize** her models as real photographic subjects, not objects of fantasy.”

famous *Cunt Coloring Book* as an affront to that objectification. She wanted women to reclaim a typically unmentionable part of their body as lovely and loveable. As invested in the recontextualization of the lesbian body, JEB insisted on taking her clothes off when she photographed a naked woman in order to balance the power between them, as illustrated in her picture *Ovular*, where a group of women photographers — include Corrine — stand naked behind their camera. Such a move, as JEB explains, demonstrates the goal of “lesbian photography, where the muse is a woman, we strive for collaboration, not domination.”<sup>6</sup>

Collaboration also guides Cathy Cade’s work, which presents lesbians as social actors in the larger world as well as with their own domestic environments, anchored by lovers and children. Cade represents lesbians as proactive, engaged and absolutely independent from men. Her vision of the lesbian community entails numerous variations on women as

as community builders to women as the instantiation of nature. ■

**Ilana Eloit** is an intern from France at The Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. She is getting an M.A. in Public Affairs from Sciences Po Paris as well as an M.A. in Art History from the Sorbonne.

<sup>1</sup> This is an excerpt from the *Lesbians Seeing Lesbians* catalogue essay.

<sup>2</sup> JEB (Joan E. Biren), “Lesbian Photography — Seeing through Our Own Eyes,” *The Blatant Image: A Magazine of Feminist Photography* 1(1981).

<sup>3</sup> Annie Gottlieb, Introduction to *Women See Women*, eds., Cheryl Wiesenfeld, Yvonne Kalamus, Sonia Katakchian and Rikki Ripp (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt from a presentation Corrine gave at the Women’s Caucus for Art Conference, New York City, February 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Tessa Boffin and Jean Fraser, *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photography* (Rivers Oram Press, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> JEB, *Lesbian Photography*.



JEB, *Gabrielle Daniels and Merle Woo celebrate Gay Freedom Day*, San Francisco, CA, 1980, 2011, Digital silver halide C-type print

# Thinking, Talking, Seeing, Photographing without That “Prick in Your Head”

BY SETH CLARK SILBERMAN

Like documentary film, photography dwells in a central paradox. The photographs we take belie the subjects, objects and settings we see through and around the viewfinder, however one exists on our equipment these days. The relationship that those prints or digital files have to the action of that fraction of a moment in which we took them lies in their radical decontextualization. Verisimilitudinous at best, photos bear their own lives as aesthetic and political objects corresponding to their own histories while we continue to believe that they represent snippets of ours, as if by fortunate accident or grand synecdoche.

Decentering our physical senses in photography's method reveals its profound political possibilities as a perceptual palate cleanser — or, as JEB (Joan A. Biren) explained the role photography had in her visual recertification at the Curator's Talk for the *Lesbians Seeing Lesbians* exhibition, “I had to do something that I had not been trained in by the patriarchy. It couldn't be verbal.”<sup>1</sup> A knowing roar from the audience met JEB's explanation of the psychic mark of patriarchy that had to be obscured: “We called it ‘prick in the head.’”

Some might say that patriarchy had to be erased from “all these skills that are so twisted, polluted and tainted by our education,” as JEB continued to explain; but complete erasure remains a necessarily impossible goal. We constantly engage with and between the overlapping social spheres that brought us into our changing sense of self, even those that politicized us with an understanding of the world that we recognize must substantially change. The inability to rescind completely from the larger society, even when retracting from it for a time or with a particular purpose in mind, proved to be a provocative step for JEB: “For me, as a woman and a lesbian and a



Tee A. Corrine, *Kiss*, from *Intimacies*, #7, n.d., Silver gelatin print, Courtesy University of Oregon Libraries



“For me, as a woman and a lesbian and a feminist, I can separate those three things out — I can in my mind, but not in my being.” — JEB

feminist, I can separate those three things out — *I can in my mind*, but not in my being. I can theoretically separate them but clearly I tried to separate them in my life at different times, and thank goodness I failed.”

Another failure of sorts guided both JEB and Cathy Cade into their lifework, not just the fortunate occasion of being at the Leslie/Lohman Museum to talk about the politics of 1970s lesbian feminist photography. As Cade recalled for us, “I grew up with artists in my family but was still surrounded by the sentiment that *very few people are born with artistic talent and please don't embarrass us by thinking you might be one of them.*” Cade credited her recognition of her artistry to the women's liberation movement, singer-songwriter Holly Near, the Southern Freedom movement and par-

ticularly photographer Tee A. Corrine (1943-2006): “I didn't start out with an identity as an artist; but Tee [A. Corrine] did. And Tee was always pushing us to identify as artists.” Cade was drawn to the role accrued to “cultural workers” at that time, in which “activism and documenting and being an artist were respected and put all into one,” and encouraged by the sight of the first woman among the documentary photographers she saw throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Corrine's later influence, including pulling Cade and JEB into the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of the College Art Association, attuned their connection to a history of aesthetic and political foremothers.

JEB, too, had been politically energized by the push for Civil Rights and by Black Nationalism, in particular, which “made sense as a means to find our own



(top): JEB, *Photographers at the Ovular*, a feminist photography workshop at Rootworks, Wolf Creek, OR 1980, 2011, Digital silver halide C-type print

(bottom): JEB, *Jan and Barbara do a cervical self-examination at the Lesbian Health and Counseling Collective, Washington, DC 1979, 2011*, Digital silver halide C-type print

“JEB and Cathy Cade wanted the audience to understand some of those particularities by contextualizing what some discard now as a politic of disdain: “lesbian separatism.”



power base.” That repositioning was in pursuit of trying to “figure out how to make an alternative society where everybody would be liberated — the liberation was not just for lesbians or just for women — it was clearly the kind of liberation that would turn society around [with] a different set of consciousness about male domination.” If photography seemed the obvious means for JEB’s cultural work to effect a radical change in perception, it was because she was already struck with “certain images that had made actual change in the world,” ones like Lewis Hine’s of child labor and Charles Moore’s of protesting black citizens being hosed and chased by dogs in Birmingham, Alabama: “These images I had in my heart and mind before I became a photographer. So I already knew the power that I feel unfortunately photography has lost because you can change an image so easily now — but in that time, photography was believed to convey a truth about the real world.”

The truth that Charles Moore’s photographs told, for example, about how peaceful protests were met with outsized, inhumane violence forcefully change public opinion. Even in those heady revolutionary days, however, JEB didn’t presume “that I would make that one image that

would make change in that way. What I felt I could do was make people visible to each other.” JEB knew the key was through publication. Reaching even an anticipating lesbian public was paramount to stoke social transformation: “You can’t bring political change when you’re hidden.” At first, though, JEB amassed more “conversations with people about why I wanted to photograph them and what it would mean to them and what it would mean to me” than actual photographs. The community was certainly visible on its own terms but publishing lesbian images had different social burdens for some and political implications for others, ones particular to the 70s.

JEB and Cathy Cade wanted the audience to understand some of those particularities by contextualizing what some discard now as a politic of disdain: “lesbian separatism.” Cade explained that 1971-1973 was a particularly heady time when “it was important to have women-only events — but that didn’t mean you were a lesbian separatist.” Cade revealed that the motivation to join gender-separated social structures was largely internal: “In those years, I limited my connections with men, not because of what men were doing, but in order to unlearn the internalized sexism that I had.” For Cade, being a

lesbian separatist was impossible because of the work she did a decade before while she was an undergrad at the historically-black Spelman College in Atlanta: “Because of my closeness and heart connection to my family and lovers from the Civil Rights Movement, I could never just be against men. It didn’t work for me.” An unabashed one-time separatist, JEB nevertheless echoed Cade’s comments by highlighting that individual men, or even men collectively, were not universal targets: “[Lesbian separatism] wasn’t just anti-male but [also] a division in the lesbian community.”

JEB wanted to make clear that the decade’s politics, however unforgiving they seem to some in retrospect, did not suspend people’s desire: “The 70s were very sexual. People think that we were prudes or ‘these humorless feminists’ [who felt that] penetration is terrible.” JEB assured us that “whatever the myths are, *they’re myths*. Trust me on this one.” A political lesbian in name only does not exist: “You can’t think or talk about lesbianism without talking about sexuality.” Yet that uncomplicated asexual lesbian separatist still dominates some contemporary depictions of three decades ago.

Cade sees the shortsightedness as an unfortunate function of history writing

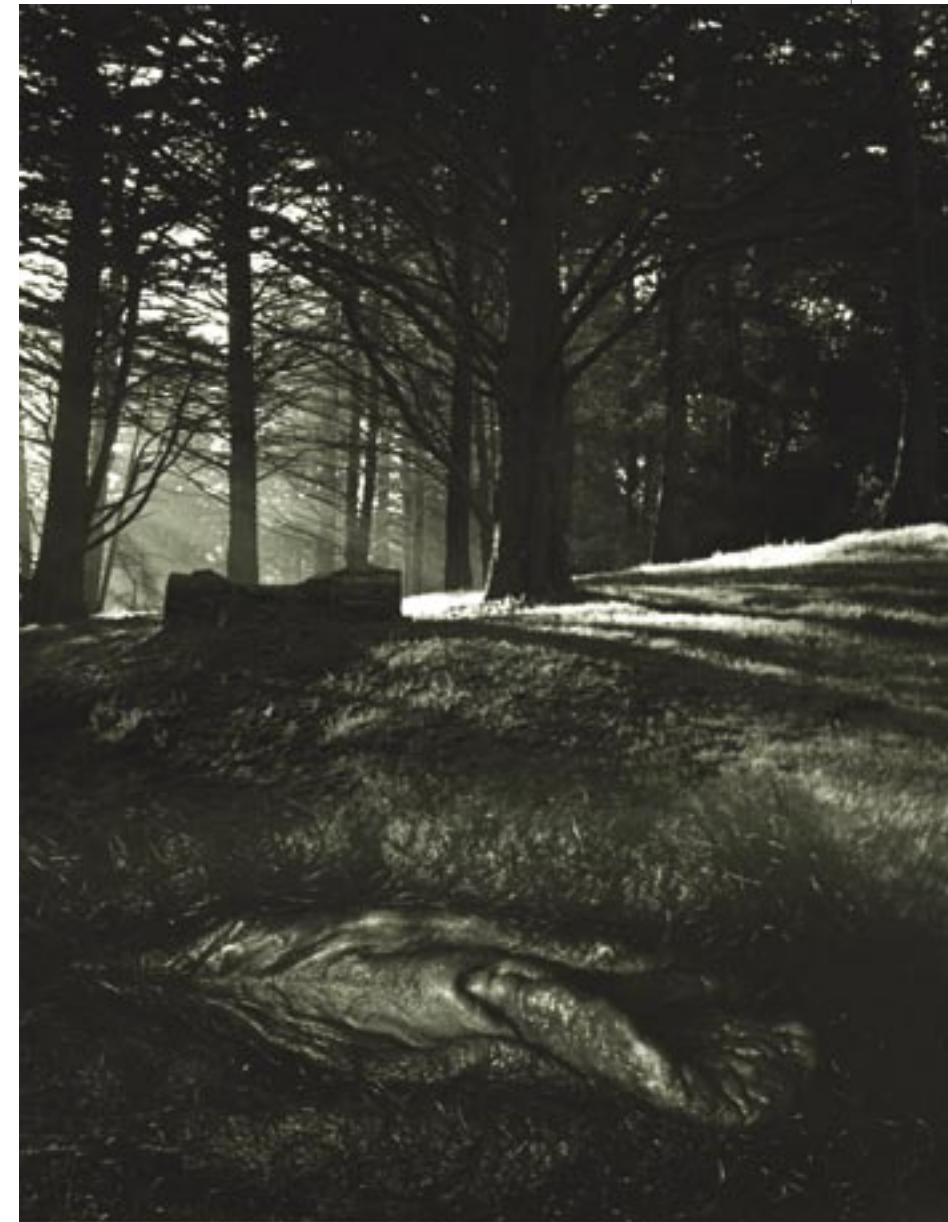
— “We try to make generalizations so that we can say something” — but there’s also a new contemporaneous orthodoxy about what “out” and “proud” should look like. Most treat this new lens as an obvious progression, or the appropriate way that we have always been “us” now that “we” can finally see it. It’s the same mindset that treats photography as merely transparent documentation rather than an aesthetically chosen and politically presented pause, a film still from ongoing activity that is always revealing its ever-changing cultural references and hardly stopping in front of any camera to be framed.

What does 70s lesbian feminist photography look like without a particularly patriarchal frame, without that prick in your head? Some examples are collected here in *The Archive*. Both JEB and Cathy Cade left us at the Curator’s Talk with final comments about how to look back at them — with humor and passion. Both stress the ongoing need to *defamiliarize*. That process does not cast into the wind anything already learned. Rather, it reconfigures materials we do know in new ways. It is a process decidedly illustrated by Tee A. Corrine’s kaleidoscopic series *Yantras of Womanlove*, one of which graces this issue’s cover.

JEB recalls that some of the ideology back then was “so over the top”: “I lived in a collective where we didn’t have individual toothbrushes. We had collective toothbrushes because, you know, *you’re supposed to share everything*. So, you know, *there are parts you do n’t miss*. And then there are parts that I’m very sad that they have fallen away, particularly the conscious building of community, which is why I am so glad that that’s part of what this show is about. I really feel badly for the young folks who aren’t building communities for themselves. I don’t feel that’s utopian and I feel that it’s missing a lot now.”

Cathy Cade suggests that the aesthetic community they built together was organized by exploration: “The fact that I didn’t go to photography school [was important]. Getting to choose what I learned when I learned it helped me go for those questions and those issues [that mattered to us]. On the other hand, I could have learned a lot more simply and faster; so there’s a trade off. But I am aware of and I do value the self-taught part.” ■

<sup>1</sup> Curator’s Talk with JEB and Cathy Cade, Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, 15 September 2011. All subsequent quotes come from this panel discussion led by Jonathan D. Katz and Ilana Eloit.



(left top): JEB, *Lesbian feminist witches fire leap to celebrate the Summer Solstice, Flint Hill, VA 1979, 2011*, Digital silver halide C-type print

(right top): Cathy Cade, *Gay Is Good, San Francisco, CA 1971, 1971*, Digital archival pigment print

(right bottom): Tee A. Corrine, *Isis in the Trees, 1986*, Double exposed silver gelatin print, Courtesy University of Oregon Libraries

# Recent Donations & Acquisitions

COMPILED BY WAYNE SNELLEN  
DIRECTOR OF COLLECTIONS



The Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art would like to take this opportunity to thank the following donors for their generosity and belief in the continuing work that must be done to build a foundation for the study of GLBTQ art.

**Anonymous donor** 41 watercolor paintings, support material for the video, *Blue Movie (Afghanistan)*, and a copy of the video.

**Gift of Fernando Carpaneda** A sculpture, “I love to be dominated...”, from his recent exhibition.

**Gift of Eleo Pomare and Glenn Conner** 45 pieces by James Snodgrass including 3 oil/acrylic on canvas and 42 woodcut prints.

**Gift of Xavier Radic** Two pieces: *The Pose*, 2009, and *Nudus Calendarium (October)*, 2007.

**Gift of Richard de Thuin** A drawing by Gerhardt Liebmann

**Gift of Gordon Micunis and Jay Kobrin** Complete work from three exhibitions: 1001 Buddah’s, 500 David’s, 500 Mona’s (literally!) and supporting material.

**Gift of Samir Sohby** Various watercolor paintings on the theme of “the blessing” and “gay marriage”.

**Stanley Stellar** A photograph, *Peter gets his dick sucked*, 1981.

**Charles Leslie**, co-founder, purchased for the Leslie/Lohman Museum collection a Carmine Santinello and a Robert W. Richards drawing as well as two color photographs by Henning von Berg.

**Leslie/Lohman Museum Purchase** Nine photographs: One each by Catherine Opie, Cynthia Warwick and Stanley Stellar and three each by Cathy Cade and JEB (Joan E. Biren).

Just a note to say that the Leslie/Lohman Gay Art Foundation has morphed into the Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art (LLM). The staff and Board of Directors has made a smooth transition and hope that your continued support will be stronger than ever.

Once again, thanks to one and all. ■

Wayne Snellen is the Director of Collections at the Leslie/Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art



(top right) James Snodgrass  
*Miss America*, 2011  
36 x 36" Acrylic on canvas

(above) Gerhardt Liebmann  
*Untitled*, 2011  
12 x 18" Pencil on paper

# Bright Lights, New York’s Queer City

BY THOMAS BISTRITZ



(top) Seth Clark Silberman,  
*I Got You, Babe.com*  
(Demanda Dahling and Robert Cassidy, Griffin), 2011,  
digital C-Print, 14 x 11"

(left): Andrew Werner, *Markus*,  
2011, digital print

(bottom): Andrew Werner,  
*Amanda to the Rescue*, 2010,  
digital print



I was not sure what to expect when I arrived at the Leslie/Lohman Gallery (now Museum). All I knew was that I received many invitations to the opening of the Fresh Fruit Festival exhibit, *Bright Lights, Queer City* — and that I was going to be in attendance for three reasons: a few of my friends were showing their artwork; there was free wine; and I very much enjoy both bright lights and queers. Oh — plus, I was featured in several of the pieces as Demanda Dahling, my slightly tainted and tipsy stunt double.

Curated by nightlife and entertainment personality Lady Clover Honey and award-winning recording artist Lovari, the show included a stunning collection of shots celebrating New York City’s eclectic gay nightlife. When I arrived to the opening reception fashionably late, of course, the room was sparkling with so many characters I rarely see in daylight — and they looked surprisingly comfortable outside of a nightclub. Perhaps everyone felt

secure because of the familiar “open bar” near the entrance. They were certainly crowded around it.

The floor was packed — I later heard that over 700 people came through, a record — and it was difficult to get some wine. So, I opted to admire the artwork. It was like my scrapbook was all around me. There were moments of the parties I’ve been to or hosted captured by nightlife photographers Andrew Werner, Seth Clark Silberman, Hannah Ulrich, Dex Star G, Ryan Wolowski, Wilson Models, Jed Ryan, Evan Laurence and more. Plus, there were paintings by artist Tracy Von Becker. I couldn’t help but find myself a little breathless. Photographs of icons whom I have admired for so long — Amanda Lepore, Kenny Kenny, Sherry Vine — adorned every wall. Alongside them, I found my friends Matthew Herra C, Chip Cirrhosis and Dina Delicious.

Leslie/Lohman became a club of its own that evening — its own VIP room hosted



“Photographs of icons whom I have admired for so long — **Amanda Lepore, Kenny Kenny, Sherry Vine** — adorned every wall. Alongside them, I found my friends **Matthew Herra C, Chip Cirrhosis and Dina Delicious.**”

by renowned columnist and nightlife elder statesman Michael Musto. Patrons turned into photographers themselves, snapping countless shots of us in front of the photographs. Double layers of painted now digital flesh. Working through the circus of all of us, two energetic men introduced their daughter who shook hands with all the artists. The camera-less admired the flashing and posing while they mingled and chatted away. The positive vibe was heartwarming and a reminder that we as a nightlife community can celebrate and support artists, too.

The show sparked great conversation about New York City after dark (and sometimes a bit past the dawn — or, are those just the headlights from the taxi I took home?) and about the future of our nightlife. Forever a part of the city’s LG-BTQ culture, nightlife has changed from the decadence that defined the 70s and 80s. Our club kids aren’t quite the same as those from the 80s and 90s. I have heard that some complain that the scene has lost its edge. Those people need to come out one night with my friends and me. Sure, we are still marinating in an unstable econ-

omy; but the proof of our vitality filled the room and covered Leslie/Lohman’s walls that evening. Of course, our New York differs from the City of other decades, but New York City still thrives with artistic integrity and creativity. I know that I was humbled to see others inspired to create their own art by what I bring to nightlife. To see yourself — or your stunt double — so lovingly preserved as “she” is with my friend Bobby Cassidy in Seth Clark Silberman’s *I Got You, Babe.com* (2011) is incredible. ■

Thomas Bistriz is a New York City-based freelance writer and performance artist. He is the author of *Don’t Piss in My Martini, Please!* (2006). As Demanda Dahling, he was nominated for the 2010 Best Alternative Artist Grammy, New York City’s nightlife awards.

(left): Andrew Werner, *Oh, Kenny*, 2010, digital print

(above): Andrew Werner, *Boys Will Be Boys*, 2010, digital print

# Vincenzo Galdi (1871-1961): First Photographer of the Homoerotic

REVIEW OF NICOLE CANET, *VINCENZO GALDI, GALDI SECRET, PHOTOGRAPHIES PORTRAITS ET NUS, 1890—1920*

BY DOUGLAS BLAIR TURNBAUGH

*Obscene photography, far from being a marginal factor in the history of photography, provided without question one of the mysterious, yet essential and fertile conditions for its development and perhaps even, for some obscure reason, its very raison d'être.*

— Sylvie Aubenas,  
“Obscenities, Les Photographies  
interdites d’Auguste Belloc”

At the turn of last century and up until World War I, Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden took the bulk of the photographs for which he is now known. Typically, he arranged absolutely passive Sicilian boys in elegant nude poses amid classical architecture. Sometimes they sported headbands and a toga or held flutes to suggest ancient Greece. Because of von Gloeden’s pastoral scenes and his clever use of outdoor lighting, his photography was perfectly respectable, not prurient. His “ethnic studies” won prizes at international photography shows and were purchased by collectors, museums, the National Geographic Society as well as by tourists.

By contrast, von Gloeden’s photographer cousin and fellow German exile, Guglielmo von Pluschow, did not bother with any classical set up or “beard.” His studies were unashamed naked portraits of exhibitionistic boys and girls in the tradition of *Acadiennes*, or the code word for naked boys in the open air. A third and the most daring from this period is Vincenzo Galdi. His work is the subject of another fabulous collection of vintage photographs, many never exhibited before, put together by the intrepid Nicole Canet, whose boutique at 11 rue Chabanais, in Paris, is an Ali Baba’s cave of homoerotic treasure.

Contemporary interest in *acadiennes* photographers like Galdi had fallen off the gay radar until Charles Leslie’s 1977 book *Wilhelm von Gloeden Photographer*. It was a revelation and created a market for von Gloeden’s work where there had been none because of the shock and publicity of Oscar Wilde’s conviction. Wilde’s trial did more than condemn him in the British court; it also sparked new persecutions of gay erotic art in Italy. Details from the trial made visible previously overlooked signs of “perversity”; new levels of discretion for gay men and art thus became critical. Photos like von Gloeden’s that previously went unremarkable were now evidence of “perversity.” In the chaos to divest, books, letter, photos and other materials for fear of being publicly marred, a great deal of important erotic artwork in Italy that was not considered academic was lost.

Add to this loss the misidentification of so many surviving photographs since the models that the three *Acadiennes*



(top right): Guglielmo von Pluschow, *Vincenzo Galdi kissing his lover Edoard*, c.1890, courtesy of Nicole Canet

(bottom right): Vincenzo Galdi, *Two young men*, c. 1890, courtesy of Nicole Canet

Vincenzo Galdi,  
*The Snake*, c. 1890,  
courtesy of  
Nicole Canet



used were all of a type. Photographers’ stamps were often covered up by protective backing (see my article on this in *The Archive*, No. 28). Initially all the photos of naked boys were all lumped together as Von Gloeden’s work.

Over the past decades, more accurate identifications have been possible. Now, so far as we know, Von Gloeden did not take, or at least did not market, erotic photos. Von Pluschow’s photographs are of nubile youth, but he, too, avoided the pornographic. Thanks in large part to Madame Canet’s publications and her relentless pursuit of hidden collections, it is now obvious that it was Galdi who was the first homoerotic photographer to publish photos of sexual activity. Canet’s new collection of Galdi’s work presents

“Contemporary interest in *acadiennes* photographers like Galdi had fallen off the gay radar until Charles Leslie’s 1977 book *Wilhelm von Gloeden Photographer*. It was a revelation and created a market for von Gloeden’s work where there had been none because of the shock and publicity of Oscar Wilde’s conviction.”

rare photographs never published before from her own collection and also many from anonymous *collections particulières*. Canet calls Galdi “the foremost photographer of homosexual images of his time. His images are the incarnation of desire in the raw state. It is a joyous and intimate style of pornography.” She points out that very few photographers at this time dared to take such pictures of men; pornographic images of women were less risky.

Vincenzo Galdi was himself a sumptuous boy, a model for Von Pluschow and probably his lover. Von Pluschow took the first known photograph of two men kissing, of Vincenzo and his friend Edo-

ard. Von Pluschow taught Galdi photography; and soon Galdi opened his own studio a few doors down the street from his mentor’s. Galdi found his models on the streets of Rome, as Caravaggio had done 300 years before. For a time, his muse was a model nicknamed “The Snake,” who was famous for a series of auto-fellatio pictures. Galdi was also in demand; men from the circle of gay aristocrats commissioned portraits of their lovers.

Unfortunately, much of the *Acadiennes*’ work did not survive the Mussolini era. Von Gloeden’s work was destroyed. Police searched Von Pluschow’s studio for pornographic material and imprisoned

him following a trial. Galdi was considered an accomplice; but Madame Canet does not detail what happened to him. All she tells of his fate is that he became a gallery owner some time after 1910, in via del Babuino, in Rome, and that he lived until 1961. Someone needs to do the research to write a biography since, as Jacques Desse writes in his introduction to the collection, he “could be considered the first “gay” photographer, the first photographer of male desire in the twentieth century, someone from whom we might learn much, if for no other reason that that he was an explorer, an ‘inventor’ of the representation of desire between men.” ■

# Justin Violini

BY SETH CLARK SILBERMAN

If queer connections rehearse the coincidences and affinities that place us in each other's reach, it's because the strength of our community comes from how we forge those *family* bonds. Ours is a kith and kin codified by the sometimes unspoken yet always already known differences from bred bloodlines. Others' discretion complements our self-creation. We fashion ourselves, our subjectivities, with the materials and technologies of

which is not beholden to the picture policies on Facebook, for example. Gone may be the LGBT bookstores where we conjugated over literature, art books and the porn magazines in the back; but our computers and smartphones carry on.

Online is where I found Justin Violini and *The Fearless Project* that he started — “an art and cultural initiative bringing together artists, outsiders, thinkers, musicians, designers, writers, creatives:

“His long days on the business side of a creative industry left him “discovering myself in New York on nights and weekends...”

our lives, in both response and repose.

These days, photography has become a radically democratic means to image, “reblog” and “like” our queer selves online. For gay and queer men, explicitly homoerotic imagery explodes all over social networking websites like Tumblr,

anyone who has ever had the urge to do something outside of their comfort zone,” as its website explains it. I took note of the pictures of barely dressed cute guys with the word *fearless* scrawled on available flesh that constantly came across my Facebook news feed. Violini's *Fearless*

*Project* helped him break away from a fashion business career that included his helping launch the Gilt Groupe as their Associate Buyer. His long days on the business side of a creative industry left him “discovering myself in New York on nights and weekends,” needing his own outlet to express himself and finding the like-minded he needed where he could.

Violini happened upon a copy of Slava Mogutin's *Lost Boys* (2006), a remarkably intimate collection of young Russian men combining the voyeurism of fashion and porn imagery, in the window of the Barnes & Noble that once was at the Trader Joe's now on Sixth Avenue. He also randomly picked up a copy of Lance Reynald's novel *Pop Salvation* (2009) about a queer teenage boy who finds himself when he sees Andy Warhol's art at the Hirshhorn Museum and accordingly refashions his world. These books left Violini wondering how he could transform himself: “What can I do? What can I get away with? What can

Justin Violini,  
*Au Natural*, 2011,  
35mm digital image



I do to then also push people?” Violini was also inspired by Stuart Sandford's *Cumfaces* series, largely created by MySpace contacts sending in their own shoulder-up, brink of orgasm portraits.

Violini joined the conversation with *Instant*, a series of face-on Polaroid shots of guys cumming: “I wanted to challenge people's ideas of sexuality — not sexuality in terms of your sexual preference but your acknowledgement of being a sexual being. It's like that book *Everyone Poops*; only it's *Everyone Cums*.” When over 80 different shots were shown at the Robert Goff Gallery last year, Violini mounted them on square Plexiglas mirrors so that “you're seeing bits of yourself” alongside. Violini wants to include us because he wants us to ask, “What would it take for me to do that?”

His photography under his own name, apart from *The Fearless Project*, also started by chance, when buying up the last stock of Polaroid film at Urban Outfitters, where he saw and decided to buy a newly made Diana camera that produced the same gritty, dreamy prints like those from the 1960s. Experimenting

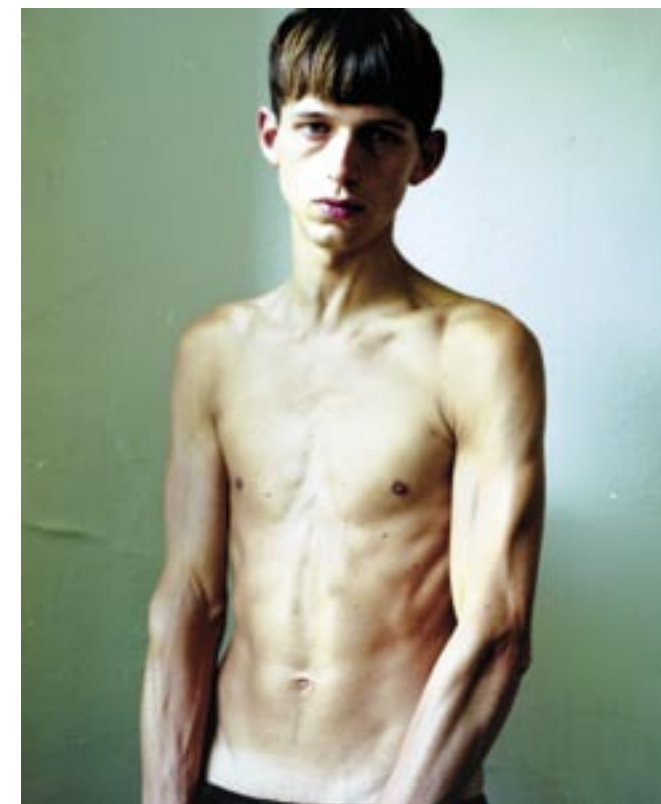
with unpredictable lomography cameras led him to purchase a 35mm snapshot and SLR cameras. Not everything turned out; but all contributed to his training in the “school of figuring it out,” as he jokes. Violini worked to match the new refinement with the raw tactile residue that prints like Polaroids can suggest. I find his intuitive photographic navigation an apt metaphor for how we can wield desire.

He may be a part of the online world; but he wants to continue to “set myself apart by making physical things.” Those objects testify to the fraction of a moment that photography documents and manipulates. Those prints can also act as our blood, the visual language we find when we see ourselves. ■

Find *The Fearless Project* at <http://www.fear-less.com> and Violini's photography at <http://www.justinviolini.com>.

(top): Justin Violini,  
*The Russian*, 2011, Velvet  
Fine Art Paper, 11x17"

(right): Justin Violini, *Ruben in Light*, 2011, 120mm digital file



# The Mannequin's Meditation

BY GO-GO VAN GO

I'm having too much fun.

G kneels in front of me, his broad, muscular back facing the rapt room. A few guys have focused their attention on his butt — it's a gorgeous butt, reddish-olive and lightly hairy. I'm staring down at my hard cock, slick with G's spit. He's blowing me in super-slow-mo; it's by turns exquisite, torturous and pervasively dull. At the moment when Frank catches my gaze from the back of the room, I have given in to a wave of pleasure.

Frank taps his nose silently, quickly swishes his head back and forth, then freezes and points ahead. *Stop moving your face!*

Such are the challenges of modeling for the men at Leslie/Lohman Erotic Drawing Studio. You have to hold very very still while a gorgeous Latin hunk sucks you off. You try it. Later that night, I ran into a similar problem when my legs were tied up to the ceiling. We got up a really terrific bondage pose, if I say so myself: wrists and ankles bound together and trussed up to the overhead posing bar; G in full dom posture, "beating off" over my hooded face; my ass, glimpsed through my trusty chaps, at bulls-eye downstage center. Alas, my poor hips started giving out in the exaggerated stretch and we had to break off the pose after ten minutes. The ropes were too far apart — our eyes had been bigger than our stomachs, as my mother used to say when we didn't finish our plates.

No matter. The drawings from that pose are especially fantastic. The tension in the legs, the quiver of struggle, the excited, trembling knot of my sphincter — it's all there in each one. The strokes are rougher, wilder. It's sex on paper. This was true of the simpler bondage pose I did on my solo modeling session, too: I was in a slight squat facing the wall, wearing boots and a jock — boots and a jock, boots and a jock; is anything as sexy as boots and a jock? — with my hands bound together behind my back. A number of the artists sent me JPGs of their drawings from this pose. My discomfort reads clearly. Tension in my quads, in my ass, a touch of fear, maybe, in the sharp line of my shoulders and neck. This won't shock any student of art, but the more dynamic the pose, the more dynamic the drawing.

I'm mostly a writer. I also act, edit, and take pictures. I even draw myself (often drawing myself, naturally). Occasionally I go-go dance at *Fire in the Hole*, a monthly party for gingers and their admirers. That's how I got into modeling for Leslie/Lohman, I think. For the last year or so as Go-

Go Van Go, I've been "making my art and shaking my part" — I take breaks and do self portraits played on the pool table — but the "art" part has slowly eclipsed the "part" part for me. Don't get me wrong. I still find it titillating to shake my junk in a jock for the mostly Williamsburgish hipsters who come into Nowhere bar on the last Thursday every month. They love their Ginger Daddy; I love to show off. But more and more the drawings — the gimmick — are more interesting to me. Anyway, somewhere about six months ago, Go-Go Van Go piqued Frank's interest; and soon I had a date to pose for photographer Stanley Stellar one afternoon and the erotic drawing group later that night.

The number-one thing you learn as a writer is to work your verbs. Sentences sail or founder on the strength of the verbs. (A bad metaphor can sink a sentence, too, but more on that later). After modeling a few

"Such are the challenges of modeling for the men at Leslie/Lohman Erotic Drawing Studio. You have to hold very very still while a gorgeous Latin hunk sucks you off."

times now for Frank and the men down in the basement, I see that this is true of a sketch, too. The whole reason Leslie/Lohman goes to all this trouble — setting up the lights, putting out the cheese and cookies, coaxing away our inhibitions, peeling off our clothes — is to capture *action*. Even in the tamer poses (and Frank does a great job mixing it up; sweet and sedate often follow lustful), there is always an action at work.

The Erotic Drawing Studio and the GMHC drawing group where I've also now modeled are my free art classes. There are some serious, serious talents down in that basement. Doing a quick round after a long pose, I am amazed by the wildly divergent worlds of Joe Modica, George Towne, Chuck Nitzberg, David Livingston and the others. Some work in color; some not. Some idealize the model's lines; some embrace each wrinkle and pudge. Some will focus on the face; others a shoulder, a butt, a boot. So many things go on when live intelligence is caught in front of an artist. How do they start? Where do they go? They follow whatever cue the model gives

them, wherever that action leads.

I got an iPad earlier this summer — it was a gift; nude modeling doesn't pay *that* well! — and Go-Go Van Go quickly began sketching with it. First I did a lot of self-portraits, of course, but more recently I've taken to the subway. I'm no Joe Modica; but my drawings aren't bad. I'm getting better. The more I do it, of course, the more I want to get back to Leslie/Lohman and see how the big boys work.

While the Erotic Drawing Studio doesn't host live sex to render — or hasn't since the seventies — the group remains completely structured around sex. It's not called "the office-cubicle drawing group." Still, mostly the sex is metaphorical. I say *mostly* because — let's face it — the models, myself included, are often narcissists who enjoy showing off. We do get carried away. But each pose is a "story." Some hot guy is up there as if he is at home alone or with a trick or a partner. Tokens of fetishism — the ever-popular boots, rope, boxing gloves, even a bunch of grapes or, in my case, Van Gogh's straw hat; Frank is really good with costumes and props — heighten the fiction. The artist takes that fiction into his psyche and gives back a new reality.

Even when the sex is not metaphorical — when a model has an orgasm — it's still at a remove. I'm up on a stage doing my thing; the artists remain fully clothed out there, doing theirs. I might be holding my cock; but they are holding brushes and pencils. This protects the models, of course, from feeling exploited. It's also central to the artist's process, I think. Without this layer of metaphor, the artists would be left with ... *Inches* magazine, I guess. The artist needs those six to eighteen feet of remove. He needs a space to fill with his imagination.

And me, up there under the lights, I *am* the metaphor. So, where do I go? I won't speak for the other models, but I take a wonderful trip. Think about it: I'm not at home, undressing for the first time with a new date. I'm not worrying that I didn't get to the gym this week, change the sheets or put away the laundry. I'm not tied into knots, anxious about playing this or that role. I'm not actually about to make love with a man I desire/fear. I'm naked and aroused before a roomful of men. Yet the vulnerability is gone. The pressure is off. I am a fantasy, after all.

Like the artists, I come through the fiction right into a heightened reality, too. I am a hot ginger man. And I need to hold very, very still.



Stanley Stellar, Go-Go Van Go's Mouth with Grapes, 2011, digital file



Justin Violini. Struggle.  
2011, digital file