

Washington University in St. Louis  
**Washington University Open Scholarship**

---

Graduate School of Art Theses

Graduate School of Art

---

Spring 5-15-2015

# extraction from the essence of pure power

Michael A. Helms

*Washington University in St Louis*, [mikehelms@wustl.edu](mailto:mikehelms@wustl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/samfox\\_art\\_etds](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/samfox_art_etds)



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Helms, Michael A., "extraction from the essence of pure power" (2015). *Graduate School of Art Theses*. ETD 31. <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7MG7MQ5>.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Art at Washington University Open Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate School of Art Theses by an authorized administrator of Washington University Open Scholarship. For more information, please contact [digital@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wumail.wustl.edu).

Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts  
Graduate School of Art  
Washington University in St. Louis

**EXTRACTION FROM THE ESSENCE OF PURE POWER**

2015

By  
Mike Helms

A thesis presented to the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Fine Arts in Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis

**Thesis Advisor**

Monika Weiss

**Primary Advisors**

Monika Weiss

Patricia Olynyk

**Graduate Committee**

Arnold Nadler

Richard Krueger

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Introduction/Exploring My Masculinity	3
Performing the Body	7
Bodybuilding and the Hyper-Masculine	14
Actors and Perfecting the Body	18
Conclusion	22
Endnotes	23
Illustrations	24
Image Citations	34
Bibliography	35

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the intersections of bodybuilding and performance through a masculine lens. Much like theater, the body builder is activated by staging. In an investigation of its history and a sampling of its theories, we can challenge the hyper-masculine identity which is supported through the gym culture and gender constructs. The arena of the gym contains cues contributing to the artworks listed, and the icons of the gym itself are brought into the studio to transform not only the objects, but the actions themselves. The work challenges the ideals surrounding the superhero, godlike persona cultivated through media tropes. These tropes can be damaging to the fluidity of gender performance as well as the male body image. To diminish ones bodily functionality for the sake of standards made by a dysfunctional culture creates a disparity between its health an appearance. While the strategies problematize the masculine identity, they bring frontally the body as a method of making. The outward, physical struggle between the artist and the object is similar to the internalized struggle of performing male. The task is designed to push the performer to his limits. The performance is based in truth and can be described as theatrical realism.

## **INTRODUCTION/ EXPLORING MY MASCULINITY**

“The forgoing analyses of Lacan, Riviere, and Freud’s The Ego and the Id offer competing versions of how gender identifications work-indeed, of whether they can be said to ‘work’ at all. Can gender complexity and dissonance be accounted for by the multiplication of convergence of a variety of culturally dissonant identifications?”<sup>1</sup>

Starting from a young age, life consisted of comic books, TV shows, and movies all portraying superhuman men becoming saviors of society. Influenced by these images, my main mission was to become one of these heroes. Although I did not want all of the responsibilities of a superhero, I merely desired to look like one and appear legendary. To achieve this, I had to start training through exercise with weights. It was then that my childish desire developed into an obsession.

The OMNI gym in Cleveland, Ohio opened at 3:00 am and closed at 10:00 pm. There my blood, sweat, tears, and flesh collided with steel. I began working out with power lifters, who ritualistically maintained their ideals of perfection. By putting on as much fat and muscle mass during the winter and then cutting weight with diets and workouts, they transformed their bodies into shredded physiques ready for the summer. Emulating them, I picked weights up and then slammed them down during my sets, attempting to mark my place within the arena of the gym and receive attention from others who would then admire my body and strength. Usually I was shirtless, wearing only a pair of shorts, always glancing over to the vanity mirror to check my form and physique.

At first, it was intimidating to work out alongside these muscular figures. They did not talk much, only screamed, grunted, and slammed weights on the ground as they picked them

up and put them down over and over again. It seemed very mind dulling, as if they were trying to conquer a task that was never ending. It was very Sisyphian. In the words of Albert Camus:

Do not assume that because I love action I have had to forget how to think, on the contrary I can thoroughly define what I believe. For I of those who say: 'I know this too well to be able to express it.' For if they cannot do so, this is because they do not know it or because out of laziness they stopped at the outer crust.<sup>2</sup>

Soon, my life became dedicated to the gym and the culture that surrounded it. Five days out of the week I devoted my time to the gym. Twice a day I was training my legs at 5:00 am and my upper body at 7:30 pm. Although some athletes stress the difficulty of consistently attending a gym to obtain a herculean body, the reality is that going to the gym is only 30% of the process. The other 70%, diet, is actually the most difficult part of achieving a superhuman body. Every morning I would have a six-egg omelet, four pieces of toast, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and a protein shake. After training my legs, I would eat three salmon filets, spinach on the side, and then drink another protein shake (to recover from my workout). Again at noon, I would eat another four salmon filets with half a head of cooked broccoli. At 4:00 pm I would start to carb up, eating two chicken breasts, a baked potato, and noodles. After my second gym session at 7:30 pm, I would have one more shake. Then, before I went to bed, I would have beef stew from the crock-pot. This diet was not easy to start, but it was what I had to do to gain quick muscle mass.

At the beginning, I thought I was accomplishing a lot. I looked in the mirror, and I saw what I wanted—a cut up muscular man. After time, that changed. All of my old, accomplished goals were replaced with higher expectations. Then, when I looked in the mirror, it seemed like I was getting smaller or only maintaining the same size. That made me angry because of the brutal

work I was putting my body through. I felt discouraged. My friends and family members remarked upon my appearance saying, “You look great.” They could see my progress, but that did not matter to me. I was determined to conquer my own flesh and muscle. I would decide if it was meeting my expectations. Again looking to Camus:

“Conquerors know that action is in itself useless. There is but one useful action, that of remaking man and the earth. I shall never remake men. But one must do ‘as if’. For the path of struggle leads me to the flesh. Even, humiliated, the flesh is my native land. This is why I have chosen this absurd and ineffectual effort.”<sup>3</sup>

After years of this lifestyle, I realized that I had an eating disorder and a flawed perception of my body. I pushed myself—warping and manipulating my body to its limits. The more mass that my body accumulated, the better I felt. The mirror did not reflect satisfaction. There was only disappointment. I was obsessed with perfection. I realized that I was not merely working to become a superhuman action figure or a bodybuilding Arnold Schwarzenegger; instead I was imitating what I thought it was to be a “MAN” in contemporary society. By involving myself in the realm of hyper-masculinity and following the guidelines provided to me by macho men in mass media, I acted, behaved, and resembled a man. I had been living my life by a set of rules that involved me and only me, a very narcissistic pursuit because of my desire to perform masculinity through these standards.

After realizing the absurdity I had put myself through, I stepped back and looked at the bigger picture in front of me. Emotionless and withdrawn in my actions, I began to compulsively act out through violence and aggression. I could have been labeled as a hyper-aggressive male, a “macho man.” I challenged my own motivation. In a spot-lit arena, I wanted to glorify the failure of my own body to impress or perhaps even shock the viewer of this

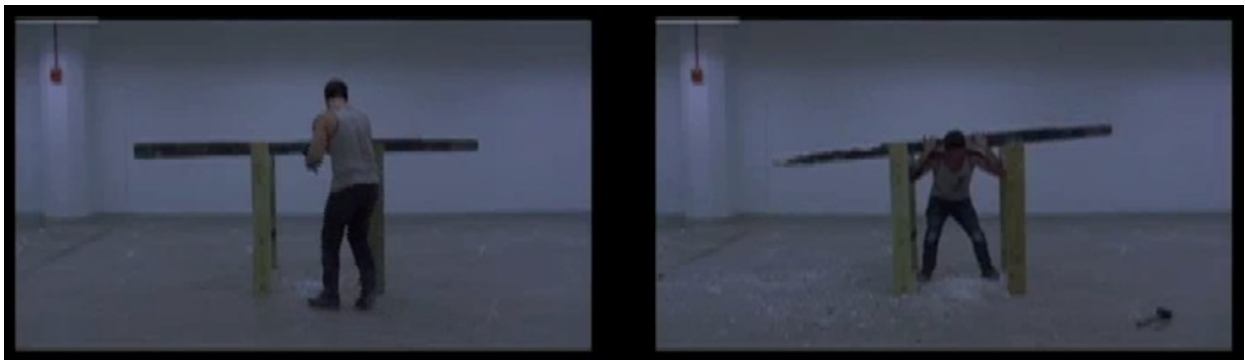
spectacle. Then I created an arena of my own—a gym.



## PERFORMING THE BODY

“According to Kant, the subject desires to live in accordance with reason’s demands, and it is reason’s ‘peculiar fate’ to press itself toward questions and ends it often cannot answer or attain. What Kant calls this ‘peculiar fate’ is, however, anything but failing. As Susan Neimen remarks, the autonomy of the principles of reason permits them to function as a standard by which experience can be judged: by providing a vision of intelligibility that the given world does not meet, they urge us to continue our labors until this idea is attained.”<sup>4</sup>

I started my hybrid practice of art making and bodybuilding. Bodybuilding has a life of its own. Because of this, there was a consistent battle between two passions of mine: art and bodybuilding. I grappled with the decision of which was more deserving of my time. Since I no longer could make it to the gym, I decided to bring the gym to the studio. I started with making unimaginably heavy, minimal forms that I would break away from until I did not have to struggle too much to move them.



(Image 1)

The first piece that I made was *Squat Rack*. It consisted of a 12-foot, 400 lb. beam covered in graphite which was then horizontally raised off the ground by two wooden racks. I was not able to lift the beam off of the racks using only my own strength, so I started to hammer and chisel away at the beam to make it lighter. I tried to squat the beam again, but I could not lift it. It was still too heavy, and I felt it was too difficult to place on my back. My body became a makeshift support for this beam. The place for my back was sculpted into the support beam as I chiseled away for ample space. Again, I tried to lift the beam and could not do it. As I continued, my hands developed large blisters that started to pus and bleed as I worked. Finally, after two hours of chiseling, I got the beam up off of the rack. Through this process, I saw how the labor intensity paralleled that which I experienced while bodybuilding.

During the video of the process, I envisioned the room as a stage, myself the performer, and my *Squat Rack* as the prop. The piece had entered into the realm of theater. Although my theater was motivated by truth, there were no fake injuries or fake blood. The theatrical realism similar to that of the bodybuilder, with his enormous size and artificialness, turns him or herself into an object.

This piece inspired research of other artists that were dealing with this same issue of performance through staging and props. One of the exemplary results was the work of Matthew Barney. His exploration of the hyper-masculine through sexual references, sports, and athletic ability glorify the failure of his body to his audience. In his *Drawing Restraint* pieces, Barney anchors a rope to the ground then attaches himself to it. There is always a wall just far enough away from where he is anchored that he has to use every last bit of energy and strength to barely touch the wall to make a mark. Though this

process of resistance, he put his muscles under a great deal of contraction and strain that caused ripping at a microscopic level. The muscle fibers break down. Through the healing process, the muscle fibers grow back together, creating a larger, stronger outcome.



(Image 2)

Barney says:

The idea that a self-imposed impediment can enhance an artist's output, similar to the way athletes use resistance to build muscle and strength. The conceptual crux runs throughout the series of performances, which are documented in forms and presentation formats that have varied greatly over the years. I initially set up apparatus in my studio that hindered my process of drawing, followed by performances done outside the studio that included the development of increasingly sophisticated and allegorical settings for use in filmmaking, most recently returning to a more physical approach. The resulting works capture

aspects of my action in the form of drawings, sculptures, vitrines of objects, photographs, video, and film.<sup>5</sup>

Barney has also played with the term “cremaster,” from the cremaster muscle that controls the testicular contraction in response to external stimuli. During Barney's *Cremaster* films, the artist and actors play roles in response to the muscle's cycle. The developmental outcome of that cycle is unknown, so he makes up models that are open to manipulation. He utilizes mythological and geological rhetoric to explore this process in his performance.



(Image 3)

Barney's *Drawing Restraint* inspired a work titled *The 1000lbs Shuffle*. During this performance, I cast a 1,000-lb. cube out of cement with a ten-foot chain and a weight belt

attached to it. For two hours, I hit away at the large piece of cement in an attempt to again make it easier for me to move. As I hit away at the object, I became hyper-aware of the specific muscles that were taking abuse from the repetitive swinging of the hammer. After an hour of hitting, I resorted to using a chisel to try and crack the massive block in half. The chisel soon became almost impossible to hold as my hands had been ripped open from the impact of the hammer and were starting to form blisters. At the end of the performance, I ended up only moving the object four feet. At the end of it all, I couldn't help but question: why? Why do I have the drive to complete this task? What is the purpose? It came down to a questioning of my identity and values. The task I put in front of myself was endless and ineffective, completely absurd.



(Image 4)

That work led me to question my capability to perform as a man. By bringing the culture of bodybuilding into my studio and pushing both my physical and mental capacity,

my body became the project. I developed a certain style of dismembering the objects in my studio while simultaneously relating the act to my body. My viewer bears witness to an adult male athlete expressing aggressive behaviors and attributes away from the competitive sport environment which shows how the my male ideal is created with the purification of labor through discipline. As I destroy these objects, I demonstrate the fragility of the male figure. Ideas of masculinity have been always been flawed. This is damaging when it comes to the individual male and especially while establishing gender parameters. Through this theatrical performance, I demonstrate a metaphor of man versus the masculine, thus conveying that the masculine does not reign supreme.

Comparatively, Chris Burden performance *Shoot*, which took place in *F Space* (Santa Ana, California), put his life directly in danger. Burden stood at one end of the gallery with a friend standing fifteen feet away holding a .22 long rifle. His friend then proceeded to load the gun and shoot Burden in the left arm. When people asked him why he went through with this piece, he answered that he wanted to be taken “seriously as an artist.” Through this performance, he attempted to show a larger context of humanity during the historical period of the Vietnam War. His gesture reveals the nature of suffering by self-manipulated extreme situations. *Shoot* was one of several performances Burden completed in the 1970s in which he subjected himself to danger. In this action, he also placed his viewers in a precarious situation. At the time, the public was consistently exposed to an overabundance of violent imagery on television of injuries, violence, and death in Vietnam. It was then through his performances that Burden portrayed the reality of pain to his audience.



(Image 5)

## **BODYBUILDING AND THE HYPER-MASCULINE**

I have been obsessed with the act of bodybuilding and its painful, laborious task. Attempting to build a better, or rather a different body, I treated it like I was working with clay. I became a material that could be molded and sculpted to accumulate more mass. Watching bodybuilders that competed in the heavyweight classes exposed a somewhat artificial average-sized human being, as they primp, tan, and oil their bodies to further define the muscles while on stage. Bodybuilders have become the “muscleheads” or “meatheads” of our generation. Joel Sanders states:

“A male bodybuilder’s body ideally has no interior, it is to contain no space, but be solid, lean meat. The term ‘musclehead,’ a colloquial and non-pejorative synonym for ‘serious lifter,’ even suggests that his head be equally dense. The language muscle heads speak in the gym is, furthermore, low on content but high on performativity.”<sup>6</sup>

Every bodybuilder is collectively a builder of skin, muscle, and tissue; they all are sculptors and painters of their own flesh. They stand on stage trying to impersonate a higher power of dominance, reigning over others like a god. In fact, many classical gods look like men. For example, the sculpture of Hendrick Goltzius Farnese’ Hercules stands in a heroic stance, proud on his platform above everyone as a savior and a protector. The new era of bodybuilding has become more than mere representation and imitation of the classical gods. Instead, they have become abject biomorphic monsters, macho men that use their abilities to intimidate and to scare, rather than to protect.





(Image 6)

Bodybuilding began as a practice of strengthening and enlarging the body's muscles through exercise. In 1887, Eugene Sandow, the father of modern bodybuilding, created the Institute of Physical Culture, a gymnasium for bodybuilders. He also held the first major bodybuilding contest at the Royal Albert Hall on September 14, 1901. Sandow was the strongman of his day who possessed a need to create the perfect body, and audiences became fascinated with his incredibly sculpted physique along with the large amount of weight he was able to lift over his head. As a result, Sandow started to perform at carnivals by posing and mimicking the mannerisms of classical Greek and Roman sculptures. This was the start of what we see today in modern day bodybuilding competitions. This was reflected in the passion Sandow had for these ancient sculptures. In fact, he even measured the exact proportions of the sculptures and compared them to the dimensions of his own body as a reference for perfection. He was eventually able to build his body to the same proportions of those sculptures. Unknowingly, Sandow started a positive evolution in bodybuilding.



(Image 7)

Over the years, people have followed and adapted Sandow's bodybuilding philosophy. Recently, his ideologies have been warped. Others have sculpted their body to a larger and more grotesque version of Sandow's ideals. The introduction of anabolic steroids, insulin, and human growth hormones (HGH) into the practice of bodybuilding has devastated the sport. HGH is a drug that was originally used to help children and adults with growth and hormone deficiencies. However, when bodybuilders began to use the drug for their own benefits, a cycle of drug abuse began. The sport of bodybuilding has become an abject freak show of swollen biomorphic men and women standing on stage. The ideas of health, performance, and sculpting the body are gone, and the ideals of classic bodybuilding, dead. In this era of bodybuilding in which the body no longer can function as a body, the act is seemingly destructive. It can no longer be a building process as the name indicates. The withering of the principles and health intertwine and become a shadow of what Sandow once created. A subculture of the physically obsessed have become bloated, swollen, non-functioning beings. Their bodies are a shell, with its value placed only in aesthetics.

On stage, I critiqued them on five factors similar to the regulations used in competition: mass—the size and proportion of the muscular development of the body; definition—the degree of muscularity through the loss of body fat; proportion—the balance of muscular development in comparison to each muscle group; symmetry—the proportion of the left and right sides of the body; and stage presence—the posing performance and general appearance of the body (skin tone, grooming, and charisma). I started to put those same standards, values, and criteria into my own work. The bodybuilder’s insides correlate with the abstracted forms and images present in an untitled series. The first piece I made suggested the bodybuilders boxy stomach and blown out abs from swollen intestines.



(Image 8)

Display is pervasive in the gym. The way that I displayed myself was materialized in clothes, body techniques, muscle magazines, facilities, and pictures of bodybuilders and powerlifters on the wall. Many, including myself, also attempt to lift enormous amounts of

weight during their workouts to display their strength and power. Through this act, presence is created. Expressing to the population around me that I am strong, masculine, tough, proves that I deserve to be there. These emotions and actions come from constant attempts to sexually please or impress others. I peacocked and flaunted my appearance to another potential mate. However, these attempts failed. There was defeat and sexual frustration. I was thriving in the display of a masculine identity, and it was an attempt to protect my persona. Suffering and pain often reformed into anger. The masking of emotions fell into the realm of the hyper-masculine. This term is defined as “the extreme exaggeration of male characteristics. These are often displayed in an attempt to assert or strengthen a sense of the self-image. Strength, aggression, violence, risk-taking, etc. are all characteristics of the hyper-male.”<sup>7</sup> Northern Illinois University has conducted extensive research on this topic, concluding:

“An association between the hyper-masculine personality pattern and a history of sexually aggressive behavior. This study was conducted to examine emotions experienced by the hyper-masculine or macho men when prevented from attaining a goal relevant to their sense of attractiveness and sexuality by a woman. It was hypothesized that macho males would respond to high and moderate threats to their masculine identity with greater blame and anger than non-macho males. Macho men's blame was hypothesized to mediate the transformation of negative emotions such as distress into anger.”<sup>8</sup>

## ACTORS AND PERFORMING THE BODY

The film industry also contains examples of actors transforming their bodies under extreme circumstances. Christian Bale is one of the most courageous actors of his time. The dramatic transformations he puts his body through to play a part illustrate his commitment. Bale, weighing in at 185 pounds for his role in *Batman Begins*, then went on to shoot *The Machinist* at 63 pounds lighter to play the part. To achieve, this he went on a dangerous diet by eliminating food all together and working out excessively. This diet is symptomatic of anorexic behavior. Lack of nutrition weakens bones and induces hair loss. Right after Bale finished *The Machinist* he gained 100 more pound of muscle rapidly in 5 months for the next Batman film. Many actors in today's film industry go to these extremes at the expense of their healthy.



(Image 9)

Transforming the body into these proportions comes from ideals created in the film industry that are directly linked to the social roles of the male/female. It seems difficult not to compare to an ideal that is constructed without one's consent. It is a constant struggle to conform to a standard that is sometimes unattainable. Some consequences of this struggle involve plastic surgery, extreme dieting, excessive exercise, etc. Just like the in the gym, the body is on display to others, which can cause anxiety making it easier to default to destructive rationalizing of uncontrolled and unwarranted behavior. A false sense of comfort lies in constant small gains. Sexual dimorphism dictates most of the perceptions of how a man and a woman should present him or herself. Being small and petite to look more feminine is illustrated in the modeling industry. For example, the size zero in women's clothing never used to exist until modern runway modeling, and most men want the opposite—huge muscular bodies demonstrating dominance.

Sexual drive also has the power to dictate the changes made to one's appearance. The appearance of femininity has gone down the road of evaporating yourself into nothingness. The appearance of masculinity is to transform your body into a shit brick house, indestructible. In this case, body becomes their main focus. The sexual drive is not there; the venture is purely masturbatory. Arnold Schwarzenegger once said that he does not lift for the glory and attention of people anymore; rather, he lifts for the feeling he gets when the blood swells up in his muscles. He said the sensation he gets is like cumming, and that is why he lifts weights day in and day out.

Once manipulating your body becomes a self-obsession, it can lead to hurting one-self rather than bettering one-self. Disillusions can occur in the mirror. Anorexia can be a consequence of this. People that develop this disease have anxiety and fear of being overweight,

even when they are underweight. They take dieting and exercise to the limit to maintain their frame.

Historically, body image has only been a concern for the female, but the male form has been commodified, idealized, and fetishized as well. The male has reached a point where self-improvement has become a necessity. The male's role in society used to be defined by offering strength through security and power. Now, this male function no longer exists. The contemporary male needs to display strength, aggression, and physical appearance to be proven as "masculine." Previously, man's masculinity level was distinguished through his job and how he provided for his family. Now the masculine identity is judged on how he looks with no shirt, or how many abs show through his newly purchased muscle tank. The male has been slowly transforming into an objectified object to be gazed upon.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has laid the groundwork for what it is to be an ideal man in contemporary culture. Starting at the age of fifteen, he began his bodybuilding career in Austria, later moving to America to compete professionally in bodybuilding contests. In 1968, he was elected as the first Mr. Universe, an annual bodybuilding event organized by the National Amateur Bodybuilder's Association. Over the years, he has won this award five times. After gaining international renown, he used his well-sculpted physical appearance to penetrate Hollywood as an actor. Throughout his career, Schwarzenegger played dominant masculine roles like Hercules, the Terminator, and Conan the Destroyer. Ultimately, he was chosen for these roles because his massive body represented the Greek gods and heroic looking men that he portrayed; there were no other actors at the time that could compare to his massive physical appearance. His symbolic masculine persona led him all the way to gaining political reign over the state of California. Susan Jeffords states, "Schwarzenegger was the

‘remasculinization of America’ after the loss Americans took in Vietnam. When Schwarzenegger hit the screen he brought the muscular male body, along with giant guns and explosives attached to him. Schwarzenegger did not waste much time talking in these films, but used most of the time shooting, fighting, and destroying his enemies. With creating this massive spectacle of himself he became one of the most popular American heroes of all time.”<sup>9</sup>



(Image 10)



## CONCLUSION

Through this thesis, I have been exploring the ideas of the masculine construct and a strange understanding on the truth of the body. My career of weight lifting has encouraged the comparison of myself to others. Other males that were bigger and more muscular than me instigated insecurity in my own masculine identity. Through my performances, I explore my ideals of what it is to be a man. In doing so, I created an absurd spectacle of myself in my own arena with spot lights to glisten and shimmer. As I tried to accomplish my feats of strength, I never came out on top. My audience is confronted with the reality of pain and the failure of my body to continue to perform. This violent act of performing and destroying during my performances becomes a punishing ritual to prove myself. It provides a point of meditation and contemplation, calling into question the purpose of labor in a physical manifestation. Constructing an image of self alongside the ideas of the masculine creates a tenuous environment for me to interact with my props, although this performance extends beyond my studio into my everyday life and projects a call to action.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 89.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and other essays* (New York: First Vintage International, 1991), 84.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>4</sup> Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson, *PERFORMING THE BODY PERFORMING THE TEXT* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 12.

<sup>5</sup> “MoMA Acquires Matthew Barney’s ‘*Drawing Restraint*’ Series,” *artdaily.org*, last modified April 3, 2015, <http://artdaily.com/news/38069/MoMA-Acquires-Matthew-Barney-s-Drawing--Restraint-Series>.

<sup>6</sup> Joel Sanders, *Stud: Architectures Of Masculinity* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 191

<sup>7</sup> Northern Illinois University, “*The Role of Blame, Distress, and Anger in the Hypermasculine Man*,” *Violence Victims*, Spring 1997 (1): 19-35.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 3

---

## ILLUSTRATIONS



**Figure 1.**  
Mike Helms, *Squat Rack*, 2013, Still from video, 1h 57m.



**Figure 2.**  
Matthew Barney, *Drawing Restraint*, 1987



**Figure 3.**  
Matthew Barney, *Cremaster Cycle*, 1994- 2002



**Figure 4.**

Mike Helms, *1000lbs Shuffle*, 2013, cement, steel chain, wood, lifting belt.

---



**Figure 5.**

Chris Burden, *Shoot*, 1971, Santa Ann California, F Space, still from video, 2m 30s.





**Figure 6.**  
Ronnie Coleman, Eight Time Mr. Olympia winner, 2007.



**Figure 7.**  
Eugene Sandow, pioneer of bodybuilding, 1894.



**Figure 8.**

Mike Helms, *Untitled*, 2013, laminated birch, red burlap, butcher paper.



**Figure.9** Christian Bale, *Machinist*, 2004, still from video, 1h 42m. Christian Bale, *Batman Begins*, 2005, still from video, 2h 21m.





**Figure 10.**

Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Conan The Destroyer*, 1984, 1h 43m.

---

## IMAGE CITATIONS

**Figure 1.**

Mike Helms, *Squat Rack*, 2013, Still from video, 1h 57m.

**Figure 2.**

Matthew Barney, *Drawing Restraint*, 1987

**Figure 3.**

Matthew Barney, *Cremaster Cycle*, 1994- 2002

**Figure 4.**

Mike Helms, *1000lbs Shuffle*, 2013, cement, steel chain, wood, lifting belt.

**Figure 5.**

Chris Burden, *Shoot*, 1971, Santa Ann California, F Space, still from video, 2m 30s.

**Figure 6.**

Ronnie Coleman, Eight Time Mr. Olympia winner, 2007.

**Figure 7.**

Eugene Sandow, pioneer of bodybuilding, 1894.

**Figure 8.**

Mike Helms, *Untitled*, 2013, laminated birch, red burlap, butcher paper.

**Figure 9.**

Christian Bale, *Machinist*, 2004, still from video, 1h 42m.

Christian Bale, *Batman Begins*, 2005, still from video, 2h 21m.

**Figure 10.**

Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Conan The Destroyer*, 1984, 1h 43m.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and other essays*. New York: First Vintage International, 1991.
- Fischer, John Martin. *The Metaphysics of Death*. The board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, 1993.
- Foster, Hal. *The Return of the Real*. MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996.
- Huxley, Sir Julian. *The Phenomenon of Men*. London: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Jeffords, Susan. *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Jones, Amelia and Andrew Stephenson. *PERFORMING THE BODY PERFORMING THE TEXT*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Le Feuvre, Lisa. *FAILURE Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, 2010.
- Mansfield, Harvey C. *MANLINESS*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- “MoMA Acquires Matthew Barney’s ‘Drawing Restraint’ Series.” *artdaily.org*. Last modified April 3, 2015. <http://artdaily.com/news/38069/MoMA-Acquires-Matthew-Barney-s-Drawing-Restraint-Series>.
- Northern Illinois University. “The Role of Blame, Distress, and Anger in the Hypermasculine Man.” *Violence Victims*, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 19-35.
- O’Reilly, Sally. *The Body In Contemporary Art*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009.
- Sanders, Joel. *Stud: Architectures Of Masculinity*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- Schwarzenegger, Arnold and Bill Dobbins. *Encyclopedia of Modern Body Building*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.
- Stiles, Kristine and Peter Selz. *Theories and Documents of CONTEMPORARY ART*, a sourcebook of artist writings.

---