

Bare Men

THE **GROUP** SHOW

Bare Men: The Group Show curated by **Abigail Ekue** is a group photography exhibition celebrating all expressions of the male nude from figure studies, fashion and glamour, editorial, outdoor, conceptual, erotic and self portrait genres. *Bare Men: The Group Show* opens on September 29 with a press preview. The Opening Reception will be held on Tuesday, October 1, 2019 from 7 to 10 PM. The show will be on view through October 4, 2019 at The Living Gallery. On Thursday, October 3, 2019, an Artist Talk will be held at 6 to 8 PM.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT:

Since the dawn of my *Bare Men* series, I've been working to end the taboo of the male nude -- full-frontal, all bodies, erections -- and the men who inhabit those bodies. What draws me to nudes is how much of a person's spirit we're shown.

For *Bare Men: The Group Show*, I invited and selected photographers whose imagery was intimate, delicate, raw, erotic, evocative. The work I was drawn to took my breath away. Photographers who are daring, pushing boundaries or those that are elevating the classic nude tropes.

I chose photography as the sole medium for this show because it is the most censored when it comes to the male nude.

When I'm working with men for my *Bare Men* series or with private clients, I love the process of seeing them strip the armor of "being a man" in society. They are free to express their personal masculinity. The artists in *Bare Men: The Group Show* exhibit many expressions of masculinity through their photography and self portraiture.

This exhibit forces the viewer to face the face of the male nude. The viewer is asked to confront any hang-ups they may have towards the male nude or even nudity, in general, and appreciate that there is art in the male nude. Art that we all have a hand in creating.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS:

Adam Burke: "I am inclined to create imagery that I find to be the definition of beauty, interest, or thought-challenging. I am forever inspired with the works of Michelangelo and Mapplethorpe; and feel I need to continue the idea of the male form as a subject of beauty over utility. Projects are approached

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with concepts of what I want to say, what I want to show, and how I can make people uncomfortable with their preconceived notions of what beautiful art is. Using the language of fashion I create imagery that is unique to the individual that I am shooting; photographing the elements of why I think this person is beautiful. It has been a lifelong dream to exhibit in New York, so this show is the reality of a dream.”

<https://www.adamwburke.com>

Aeric Meredith-Goujon: “I draw much of my inspiration from intimacy, vulnerability, place, mundane ecstasy, and gratitude. To me, these images are about union, reunion, and the reconciliation of the truths, both internal and exterior, which on the surface, appear to be separate or at odds. But, the world is only one world, and my work is made with the desire to honor both THIS aspect of life and THAT one, to reconcile the multifacetedness of experience and character. These works would traditionally be called diptychs, but for me, they are single images, meant to be understood as such. They are my argument for the dissolution of compartmentalization.” <http://aericmg.com>

Andy Kabi: “My photography explores places and situations that cause me discomfort. This is not because I create images with the intention to shock, but because, in this digital world so cluttered with the virtual, I find the real—love, sex, honesty, vulnerability, pain, identity (who we are versus who we pretend to be)—so necessary. Our non-idealistic beauty, our broken brains, our vulnerability and our pain, is who we are when we’re alone and there’s no one else to see. It is this hidden truth that I try to reveal when I make my images.” <https://andyartphotographer.myportfolio.com>

Anira Ivo: “The main focus in this project is: How do environments affect people? What do different rooms do to us. How are they influencing interactions? And I like to explore and experiment with what a society wants to see, allows to be seen and what’s not seen.” <http://www.aniraivo.com>

Ann-Marie Stillion: “Since 2013 Ann-Marie Stillion has concentrated on themes of sexuality and particularly the male figure through large scale photographic installation, video and print. She is seeking the imaginal body outside the confines of historical gender and social expectations. “Sex in Space”, “The Female Gaze”, “Camera as a Lover” and “Transformation of Love” are all series created out of this exploration.” <http://www.arttrek.com>

Arnold Barretto: “Soft Masculinity - This series focuses on the softer side of masculinity; a side that is vulnerable, emotive and calm; a side that we know exists but is rarely celebrated.”

<https://www.arnoldbarretto.com>

Berta A. Daniels: “This project of environmental portraits aims to dismantle the myth of society’s cookie-cutter ideal of beauty and empower ordinary people by celebrating real bodies nude in nature. To know who you are is a powerful thing. To stand up proudly and take your place in the world is intensely personal, yet powerfully political. The courage to “come out” as a cultural minority – no matter what your sexual or gender orientation, religion, or cultural heritage – to expose your inner truth, opens the door to a personal freedom and strength that shines like a beacon. The revolution of empowerment begins with the knowledge that each life has value. In exploring our relationship with the elemental forces, we connect with the primal spirit of the land, and create images that reveal the essential being of each model. This work is about beauty and inner beauty and taking our places in the world.” **Instagram: @berta_daniels**

Bill Mattern: “Inspired by the undeniable core barriers that people put up to protect themselves from one another, I am interested in creating imagery that offers literal representations of the symbolic detachment

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between two figures. In this particular series, I am exploring the notion of the outline physically separating from the lovers in the form of a path through digital collage. Through this separation, I create a dichotomy between the erotic depictions of the male form, evident in the orange lined figures, and the timid nature of the 'real' human figures. By generating environments from multiple sources, I create an atmosphere that constantly forces the viewer to question what is real versus what is constructed. Through this form of "set construction", I set out to create a stage for the lovers to find and accept their inner vulnerabilities, even if it's at the cost of achieving a form of true intimacy." <https://billmattern.myportfolio.com>

DearIndifference: "As men in our society, we are taught that vulnerability is a weakness... This is a project that presents Vulnerability as Courage, it is an exploration of contradictions. I'm fascinated by the idea that courage can live in the same moment as fear, that pride and shame can coexist, or that we can be so guarded yet completely exposed... After my relationship ended in 2012, the depression became overwhelming. Like most men, I was too proud to talk about it, too embarrassed to admit that I was literally heartbroken... so out of desperation, I set up my camera to capture what I was feeling. I stood naked in an empty room of my house and let go. I screamed and cried, I simply felt. I fully expected to delete everything and pretend it never happened, but I didn't. That was the beginning of this project. Over the years it's evolved to explore everything from pleasure to pain, it's become an exercise in self-awareness, acceptance, and understanding. My goal is to keep the process as simple as possible. Once the initial shock of nudity fades, we are left with emotion and a story, I think that's what people connect with. **Instagram:** @dearindifference

Ekin Balcioğlu takes intensely personal, intimate, and sexual photographs of her friends, lovers and people she meets in everyday walks of life: streets, bus, grocery stores, and road-trips taken around the USA, and Turkey. Titled after a poem by Turkish poet Cemal Sureyya, "My breath is a red bird, the burning on my cheeks tell me," is a deeply personal narrative, formed out of the artist's own experiences in Brooklyn. The photographs are captured in intimate moments of love. <http://ekinbalcioglu.com>

Evan Murphy is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. Originally from suburban Philadelphia and is a graduate of the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. <http://www.evanmurphystudio.com>

Exposing40 is a photographer and blogger based in London, UK. Her photography and writing explores the issue of our relationship with our bodies as we age and the impact this has on sex, self-esteem, confidence, participation in sport and how we think about our place in world. She does shoot self-portraits but her work is more often collaborations with friends and partners. She particularly loves the freedom and joy that comes from shooting outside and favourite locations have included forests, national parks, beaches, caves and even lavender fields. <https://exposing40.com>

H. Tim Secnal is an amateur creative person who likes to translate images he sees in his head to the tangible world. He currently lives in the Bay Area and still mourns for his dead dog, Snacky. He has many friends who are in excellent shape and have no sense of modesty. Combine that with a warehouse live/work space and... viola.

Jen Folsom: "Consent is a word prevalent in the news today. The #metoo movement has opened the dialog about how women say yes and how we don't. The latin roots of the word are "con-sentire" or to "feel together" making consent much less about giving permission and much more about sharing a connection. Recently, someone asked me if I saw these images as trophies. Reflecting back on all this work has revealed and exposed in myself, they aren't trophies, they're wishes and possibilities; my

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exploration of consent. In exploring the path of connections between myself and my models, I discovered my greatest fear is that I will never be loved for who I truly am, that men only want me for physical gratification. Photographing these men gave me the power to face this fear head on, to initiate and own the interactions between us.” **Instagram: @circlesofconfusion**

Linda Richard is committed to photography as a form of creative artistry over technical mastery. Through their art, they celebrate all that is real, bold, and uncomfortable. **Instagram: @linda.richard.art**

Logan Benedict: “Scary, sexy, Scorpio: that’s as simple as my art gets. As a queer individual in this day and age, my work confronts the modern stigmas and stereotypes attached to gay identities. Through unconventional, destructive processes, I use self-portraiture as a means to explain my gender identity and the subsequent experiences I’ve had within the gay sphere and overall society. My goal in the creative process is to explore the dark, sexual underbelly of queer culture and depict themes of intimacy, lust, pain, masculinity, and trauma. Through my portraits and poems, I try to convey the utmost feeling of alienation and an identity torn between labels and societal archetypes.”

<https://www.artbyloganbenedict.com>

Naked World: Photographic work “Agape” belongs to the series of works constituting the Project “Naked world”. I created these works in a manner that is somewhat unusual for fine-art photography. This team consists of myself – the scriptwriter/director who authored the intervention and of two photographers. This Project is an original, free, stereotypes breaking outlook on the world around us. The range of the involved genres is quite wide: from impressionism to grotesque. The distinguishing feature of these photographs consists also of the violation of the conventional notions of aesthetics of the human body. This often happens in combination with compassion, irony and humor.

<https://www.facebook.com/NakedWorld>

Nick Kershaw: “I have been working in the TV industry as an editor for over 20 years. Photography has always been a passion for me. I particularly love to take photos of people, though living in Wales also gives me a great opportunity for landscapes. I like to shoot with a relaxed alternative and modern reportage style and try and capture a natural feel with my subjects.” <https://www.groovy.pictures>

Oliver Estrella: “The concept of shame is not only made up, but it’s also something that will hold us back from seeing the reality as it is. Dissecting my shame of my existence, I overcome the fear of not wanting to be seen, to surrendering.” **Instagram: @osoelmar**

Only Sky Studios: I have always been fascinated by people and social interactions. This interest led me to a Master’s degree in Sociology and years of photographing people. I enjoy helping others express themselves and often nudity contributes to emotional transparency. Through photography, I attempt to tell stories in a dynamic, enriching, and genuine way that showcases people rather than the masks we show in public. **Instagram: @ONLYSKYSTUDIOS42**

Patrick: “These three pieces, Husbands, 2019; Freedom From a Sexualized Body Part, 2016; Open Relationship Study, 2018; are all individual images taken from broader, on-going body’s of work that explore gay and transgender men’s sexual, romantic, and platonic relationships, and the beauty found within those relationships.” **Instagram: @smellslikefixer**

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Peter J. Robinson Jr., looks to document his curious vision of beauty and truth melding digital photographs with today's image technology. A native of New York, he uses his vision to capture city and rural life, street art, gay culture and travel images from the 30 years of travelling around the world as an international trade expert. **Instagram:** [@peterrobinsonjr](#)

Raj Kamal: "My self-portraits depict the reality of my life which I can't dare to speak. My works might show depression or be full of sadness, but it describes basic human nature and struggles which we face throughout our life. These self-portraits are snapshots that explore aspects of my emotions. Each one is approached and created with utter abandonment resulting in a work that communicates and exposes raw emotion to the viewer. This exploration of the overlooked helps me engage more deeply with where I am in space and time. Having acknowledged my personal idealized concepts of self and seeing them reflected in others, has become a means for expressing my own internal narratives. I create dramatic scenes, using props and characters, with a strong focus on color, to emphasize symbolism and depict various states of the idealized self. I want to educate people around the world about self-portrait so that everyone would be able to understand the worth of self-expression that is "Self-portrait"." **Instagram:** [@rkselfportraits](#)

Shelagh Howard's work with the male figure explores a rarely seen perspective, moving away from traditional masculinization, eroticism or toxicity, and towards a deeper position of empathy, vulnerability and curiosity. The drive to photograph the male form initially stemmed from the desire to present a different viewpoint: to create work that explored and challenged her own vulnerabilities, while attempting to portray these bodies in a way that was sensitive, genuine, and unshackled by societal expectation. Once the project was underway it became evident that it was impossible to avoid the culturally imposed male/female dynamic that she was exploring and inadvertently pushing against: the taboo of a woman photographing the male nude figure. <https://www.shelaghhoward.art>

Steve Stenzel is a St. Paul based photographer who has taught close to 100 college courses at various colleges and universities. Steve's latest work has been seen in *Illuminance*, a biennial photography exhibit in Texas; *The ReFresh Print Biennial* at the University of Wisconsin; *Art on the Plains* at the Plains Art Museum in North Dakota; *After Dark*, and an International juried show at The Center for Fine Art Photography in Fort Collins, CO. Steve was commissioned by the New York Times Magazine to shoot a cover story, and since has completed 4 more projects for the Times. **Instagram:** [@photostenzel](#)

Tim Foley: "Often, I have used my body in my photographic work but rarely was I identified as the figure in these images. During this time in my artistic development (2017), I sought to challenge my use of the self by photographing my body as gendered, vulnerable, and as the direct subject of the work. I would retroactively determine that these images were a visual exploration of my doubts and anxieties: my body, being an artist, understanding my transience and my place in the world. I would also discover other flaws in my original intention. How I perform for the camera and how I obscure, fracture, and distort my body only serves to expand and emphasize the gap between my physical self and the version of me that is created. Therefore, I have used my body like an object to convey the subject of the work: identity, artistry, mortality, and photographic distance." <https://www.timfoley.net>

Wolf Schwarz: "The artistic background is digital photography. The denial of the superficial reproduction of the human body is based on an interaction between modern technology and haptic materiality, through a 80 x 80 Inches tall latex skin, which makes the body in its most original form perceptible. A series of

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photographs emerges with male and female and intersexual models of all ages.”

<https://www.facebook.com/isidor.fish.75>

Wylde Soul Photography: “Stepping into full frontal male nudity portraiture allows me to interact with men in a non-sexual manner. At the same time, it allows men, of all body types, gender classifications and disabilities to express themselves as erotic, sensual subjects. My subjects for this portraiture may come from me approaching men that inherently spark what I feel constitutes true male beauty and emotional connection or from a subject that feels he has a story to share and wants to be “seen”. Full nude male photography allows all of us to have a conversation and create a foundation upon which we can build a world of new relationships, new beginnings and new stories that lead to the dissemination of rape culture, the acceptance of male emotional expression and to true equality of the sexes.”

<http://wyldesoulphotography.com>

Zaza Greene is a photographer, filmmaker and fiber artist living in Detroit. Her diverse artistic interests were born in an immediate family of performers and artists. She earned an MFA in Film from Syracuse University, in a strongly interdisciplinary program where, among many experiences, she was able to help high school students develop their photography skills. Her narrative and documentary work has screened in local and international film festivals and been added to the Detroit Historical Museum's archives. Her latest visual art explores the meeting of flowers and water, their sensuality and transience. **Instagram:** [@zaza.greene](https://www.instagram.com/zaza.greene)

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Abigail Ekue is a New York City-based photographer and author. Her primary body of work includes portrait, editorial and nude photography. Through her *Bare Men* series, she displays men the way women are presented - full frontal, vulnerable, and objectified. Her work has been published in *PAPER*, *The Huffington Post*, *Time Out New York*, *WideWalls*, *L'Oeil de la Photographie*, *Refinery29*, *The Naked and the Lens* (2nd Edition), *The Creators Project*, *Queerguru* along with various publications in the US, UK, France, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, and India. Selections from *Bare Men* have been exhibited in group exhibitions in New York and Johannesburg and as the “Artist of the Month” for two months at the Erotic Heritage Museum in Las Vegas. In May 2016, she presented *Bare Men* in a pop-up exhibit at the Living Gallery. *Behind the Lens: Bare Men* is a short documentary about the series and her process, which was produced by Zoomin TV. Abigail Ekue's work with the male nude has been cited in graduate theses on vulnerable masculinity and the differences in the depiction of males versus females in fashion photography. Her editorial photography has been exhibited in the Museum of the City of New York, digital display at Musée du Louvre and in online outlets *Flavorwire* and *BLOUIN ARTINFO*. Abigail Ekue has been a guest on numerous radio shows and podcasts to discuss her series including *Artgasm* and *W Radio Colombia*. <http://abigailekuephotography.com> | <http://baremen.net>

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