



Male Beauty: Postwar Masculinity in Theater, Film, and Physique Magazines

Kenneth Krauss

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Explores how a younger and more sensitive form of masculinity emerged in the United States after World War II.

In the decades that followed World War II, Americans searched for and often found signs of a new masculinity that was younger, sensitive, and sexually ambivalent. *Male Beauty* examines the theater, film, and magazines of the time in order to illuminate how each one put forward a version of male gendering that deliberately contrasted, and often clashed with, previous constructs. This new postwar masculinity was in large part a product of the war itself. The need to include those males who fought the war as men—many of whom were far younger than what traditional male gender definitions would accept as “manly”—extended the range of what could and should be thought of as masculine. Kenneth Krauss adds to this analysis one of the first in-depth examinations of how males who were sexually attracted to other males discovered this emerging concept of manliness via physique magazines.

“The transformation of how masculinity was presented and perceived after World War II is at the forefront of analysis in *Male Beauty*. This definition of what constituted the look and appeal of the male gender broadened to include a younger and more sensitive side of manhood. In a scholarly and personable way, Krauss documents the prime examples of this transition through the early 1960s with over 130 photos.” — *RAGE Monthly*

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