

The Forbidden Eakins (Stony Brook Manhattan, 24.6.02)

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The Forbidden Eakins: The Sexual Politics of Thomas Eakins and His Circle - Monday, June 24, 2002 7:00pm

Free and Open to the Public

Stony Brook Manhattan

401 Park Ave South (at 28th), 2nd floor

New York, NY 10016

Panel Participants:

Martin Berger, SUNY, Buffalo

Deborah Bright, Rhode Island School of Design

Jennifer Doyle, University of California, Riverside

Michael Hatt, University of Nottingham in England

Michael Moon, Johns Hopkins University

James Smalls, University of Maryland at Baltimore

Jonathan Weinberg, Senior Fellow in-residence, the Getty Museum

Moderator: Jonathan Katz, Stony Brook University

This event takes the June 2002 opening of the Thomas Eakins exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as an occasion to gather in one place scholars at the leading edge of the field to discuss queer and feminist approaches to the subject of sex and gender in Eakin's paintings, photography, and biography. It is necessary because the Met has failed to acknowledge a now quite developed and highly influential queer studies bibliography towards the re-framing of an important artist.

In this round-table conversation, panelists will take up subjects like: homoeroticism, race, and masculinity; women in Eakins's work; Eakins's photographic interest in the naked body; class difference; and the challenges Eakins poses to people working in gay and lesbian studies. We will, furthermore, take up the larger subject of queer perspectives in art history, and the curatorial practices of the museums that manage Eakins's presence in the public sphere.

The conversation partners include art historians, American studies scholars, queer theorists, literary critics, and artists all with

distinct investments in Eakins and in the subject of pleasure, sex, and politics in American culture. Each participant will speak briefly about their own investment in the artist before the conversation opens up to a discussion between panelists and with the audience.

This event emerged directly out of conversations between queer and feminist members of the arts community looking for an antidote to the official discourse on the artist. This symposium is sponsored by the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook and co-sponsored by the Larry Kramer Initiative at Yale University, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York, the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University, Barnard College and the Queer Caucus of the College Art Association.

Seating for this event is limited. For information on registration, call the Office of Conferences and Special Events at Stony Brook University, 631-632-6320.

The Humanities Institute at Stony Brook, E4341 Melville Library, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794-3394; tel.631-632-7765, fax 631-632-7794.

The Panelists:

Martin Berger teaches Art History and English at SUNY, Buffalo. He is the author of *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded Age Manhood* (University of California Press, 2000), and numerous articles on Eakins and masculinity. His current work centers on race and nineteenth-century American painting. He will be in residency next year as a fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Deborah Bright is an Associate Professor of Photography and Art History at the Rhode Island School of Design. Her essays and visual works have been published in several anthologies and in numerous journals, including *Afterimage*, *Exposure*, *Art Journal*, and *Views*. She is the editor of the collection of essays *The Passionate Camera: Photographies and Bodies of Desire* (Routledge 1998).

Jennifer Doyle teaches American Literature and Visual Culture in the English Department at the University of California, Riverside. She is co-editor of *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* (Duke, 1996) and is the author of several articles on art and sexual politics, including "Sex, Scandal, and Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*," and "The Effect of Intimacy: Tracey Emin's *Bad Sex Aesthetics*."

Michael Hatt teaches the History of American Art at the University of Nottingham in England, and has written extensively on race, class, and sexuality in American art. Recent publications include the articles "Ghost Dancing in the Salon: The Red Indian as a sign of White Identity," and "Eakins' Arcadia: Sculpture, Photography and the Redefinition of the Classical Body."

Michael Moon is a Professor of English and a member of the Steering Committee of the Program in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Johns Hopkins University. His research has focused on the writings of queer New Yorkers from Walt Whitman to Horatio Alger and Henry James and on the interaction of visual and literary representations in the work of Joseph Cornell, Jack Smith, Charles Ludlam, and Andy Warhol. He is the author of *Disseminating Whitman* (Harvard, 1991) and *A Small Boy and Others: Imitation and Initiation in American Culture from Henry James to Andy Warhol* (Duke, 1998).

James Smalls is an Associate Professor of Visual Arts at the University of Maryland at Baltimore where he teaches courses on art and visual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and America. His research and publication interests focus on the intersections of race, gender, and gay and lesbian issues in visual culture. He has published extensively on Modern and Contemporary Black Visual Culture. His first book is titled *Escalve, Negre, Noir: The Black Presence in French Art from 1789 to 1870* (forthcoming).

Jonathan Weinberg is an artist and art historian. He is the author of *Ambition and Love in Modern Art* (Yale Press 2001) and *Speaking for Vice: Homosexuality in the of Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley and the First American Avant-Garde* (Yale Press 1993). He has just be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and will be a senior fellow in residence at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

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