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R E S E A R C H A T T H E K I N S E Y I N S T I T U T E ,
B L O O M I N G T O N , I N D I A N A .
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G e o r g e P l a t t L y n e s p h o t o g r a p h s f r o m
t h e C o l l e c t i o n a t T h e K i n s e y I n s t i t u t e .

It is interesting to note that most of the photographs list the names of the models used but I am unable to print them here due to an agreement between GPL and Dr. Kinsey as to their secrecy. Also most of the photographs have annotations in code on the back of them giving details of age, sexual proclivities of models and what they are prepared to do and where they were found. This information gives a vital social context to GPL's nude photographs of men and positions them within the moral and ethical framework of the era in which they were made. I hope that one day this information, along with the names of the models, can be made available to the public to give them a greater insight into the development of GPL's personal aesthetic as well as the development of the visible erotic desire of the male body by and for other men during the 1940s-50s.

Untitled Nude. 1944.

Photograph of a well built older (about 25?) nude man reclining on a bench with a high back. Lit by one spot on body forming heavy shadows with the backdrop lit to form outline of body against it. Head is tilted back so face not visible, left arm flung out. man is smooth, toned and quite hunky. Hairy legs with one knee in air. This is a very passive pose and the genitalia are hidden in deep shadow as though afraid to be revealed. Despair/sex/anonymity?

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 16.

Some earlier nudes especially portrait of Reginald Beane, 1938, have a very Man Ray quality too them.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 47.

Untitled Nude. 1953.

Black man lying on a white mattress in a horizontal position, the top of mattress showing creases in the sheet covering it. Photographed from slightly higher than the prone body, horizontal print. This photograph is an exercise in tonal scale and lighting/textures. Beautiful light on body. The image is divided into different planes and spaces.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 57.

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Male Nude Hanging. 1940.

Close up of fuller length photograph of 1940 Crucifixion showing agony on face, shaved armpits(!) and pubes, legs, ropes cutting into wrists. Beautiful cool brown/grey tonality to print. Lighting is from two sides as can be seen by the shadows formed on the body and the backdrop. Quite a feminine image I feel, with the heavy eyebrows, very smooth ephebe body and the lean of the torso. Print is more tonal than the reproduction in the book.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 75.

Untitled Nude. 1955.

Tanned older (25?) nude man with hanging big cut dick standing in front of graffiti wall. Head back and eyes closed, not engaging with the camera. Tan line of shorts very visible. Beautiful smooth body, and lovely skin tones in print.

Untitled Nude. 1952.

This photograph has much more life than the reproduction in the book. Every hair on his chest GLOWS. The grey of the print is more intense and the print darker overall. The arm of the left hand side of the print is not so blown out and the hands have more of a feeling of suspension to them.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 41.

Male Nude. 1951.

Paper negative? Smooth, young man lying on his back, breathing in, thin waist, arm behind head, looking straight into camera. Backdrop lit by two spots to outline body. Horizontal print with lots of negative space above body. Those eyes really get you and the tufts of pubic hair really stand out in the original photograph. Outline shape is amazing and the reproduction does not do it justice. Real presence.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 72.

One of the most moving prints yet. It is a privilege to see it!!

Untitled Nude. 1954.

Young man on left hand side of photograph wearing necklace, ring on right hand, tattoo of rose on right forearm, rocker haircut, looking down and away from camera. Darker figure. Another smooth, youthful male form behind opaque screen has hand reaching for first figure, touching him with left hand. Lighter figure with tattoo on left hand bicep. Print is mid to light grey in its tonality. **Very homoerotic.**

Untitled Nude. 1952.

Beautiful photograph of a nude young male sitting on a work bench table in a derelict building, 2 windows behind him to either side. His body is very smooth and he has a cut dick. His arms are out behind him on table to support his body which is leaning back. One leg is hanging over edge of table whilst the front leg is raised with knee in the air with the foot resting on the edge of the work bench. The background is lit from the left and the figure is lit from behind and above - great lighting.

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Strong use of chiaroscuro and opposite way lighting in later photographs. There are several photographs of men in unmade beds, genitalia showing or face down showing butts off.

Untitled Nude. 1946.

One such photograph shows 2 boys lying in single unmade beds next too each other. The second young man is way out of focus in the background. These are not studio shots any of these. They are much more personal. In this photograph the erect, stiff, nodular end post of the bed is like a metaphor for an erect penis, the opposite side of flaccid one of the young man on the bed nearest the camera. The young man has his one hand on his stomach and the other behind his head, eyes closed, as though he is asleep. Flash or strong lights? Definitely flash.

Untitled Nude. 1953.

Same backdrop but different pose from Plate 61 in **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute**. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993. Here one of the men has his hand under his chin, arm resting on folded knee, looking down at prone body which is face down beside him. Young man face down has cute butt with tan line. Beautiful tonal print, especially skin tones.

Image No. 141. Untitled Nude. 1942. Acquired GPL 1950.

Beautifully toned photograph of a young man kneeling on a mattress with feet hanging over its edge. Backdrop is lit to give outline and form to shoulders/head and fade into darkness above. His balls hang down between his legs and you can see every hair on them. Young man has a cute butt. Photograph is very erotic, very suggestive of anal penetration, and very about form as well.

Image No. 144. Untitled Nude. 1953. Acquired GPL 07/1955.

Strong image always quoted as an example of GPL's more direct way of photographing the male nude in the last years of his life. Male is solid, imposing, lit from above, heavy set, powerful, massive. Eyes are almost totally in shadow. Later photos have more chiaroscuro possibly, more use of contrasting light (especially down lit or up lit figures) but are they more direct? Yes. Models look straight into camera.

See Plate 59 in **Ellenzweig, Allen. The Homoerotic Photograph**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p.103.

Image No. 153. Untitled Nude. 1953. Acquired GPL 07/1955.

Really strong image of older man sitting on edge of bench, cropped mid thigh and under mouth. Image shows hairy chest, arms, legs, cut dick and great definition of abdominals. Tan line visible, skin tones in print are just above mid grey. Really good shadows on stomach, under pecs. Lit from above, softbox?

Image No. 186-194. Untitled Nudes. 1951. Acquired GPL 09/1954.

Whole series of studio shots of male butt and arsehole in different positions. Quite explicit. Some close-up, others full body shots with legs in the air. Not his best work but interesting for its era. Very sexually anal or anally sexual! As in GPL's work, very about form as well. In one photograph a guy spreads his cheeks while bending over from the waist, in another photograph he spreads his cheeks while standing slightly bent forward.

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These are the most explicit of GPL's images in the collection *that I saw*, though perhaps not the most successful or interesting photographically.

8" x 10" contact print.

See **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, Plate 78 for an image from this series.

It is interesting to note that George Platt Lynes photographed his own erect penis as early as 1929, although this photograph is not present in The Kinsey Institute Collection and belongs to The Collection of Anatole Pohorilenko (See **Crump**, James. "Iconography of Desire: George Platt Lynes and Gay Male Visual Culture in Postwar New York," in **Kinsey Institute** and **Crump**, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, p.151, Footnote 19).

I also did not see the photograph titled "Erection, c.1952," (See Figure 29 on page 255 of the Hard copy of the Project notes; Crump, James. "Iconography of Desire: George Platt Lynes and Gay Male Visual Culture in Postwar New York," in Kinsey Institute and Crump, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, p.153), while at The Kinsey Institute which illustrates this article. This is the most sexually explicit photograph of GPL's that I have ever seen but there is no accreditation listed for this photograph in a book which is subtitled 'Photographs From The Kinsey Institute'. Is this photograph part of The Kinsey Collection and if it is, why didn't I see it when I was researching there?

Replying to my enquiry about this image and another image titled, "Black Men Embracing Before Sex, c.1952," (Crump, James. "Iconography of Desire: George Platt Lynes and Gay Male Visual Culture in Postwar New York," in Kinsey Institute and Crump, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993, p.154), I reprint below an e-mail reply I received from Jennifer Yamashiro, Curator of the Collection at The Kinsey Institute on Monday, 1st November, 1999.

"Dear Marcus,

I just received your requests this morning from the library ...

1) George Platt Lynes - yes, these photographs are in The Kinsey Institute's collection of GPL photographs. As I recall, you did not have time to see all of the GPL works in our collection and we pulled work by subject for you. It turns out that both of these images were in the "study print" box which is comprised almost completely of copy prints.

The Institute has a large collection of vintage 8 x 10 negatives by GPL - several of these were printed for the exhibition and the book by a contemporary (and local) fine art photographer. It seems to me that the two images about which you have inquired are modern prints from vintage negatives. Unfortunately, we do not have the funds to even have contact prints made of all of the negatives at this time and clearly there are a great number of images that we do not have prints of (approx. 600 prints and approx. 1700 negs).

Since the images do fit the focus of your study, I regret that we did not look in the "study print" box during your visit. I apologize for the oversight. I'm afraid that I do not know why the sources were not printed in the book, but you may wish to contact the author, James Crump, to ask about this decision if it is important to your research.

2) Mark Berry's "Physical Improvement." According to our electronic cataloguing records, The Kinsey Institute does not have either of these volumes in its library. I am sure that you recall what a strong collection of physical culture photographs we have in the Documentary Collection of photographs. Since this publication would

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complement one of our strengths in the visual collection, we would be very interested in having it in the library.

Good to hear from you. Best wishes with the writing.

Sincerely,
Jennifer.”

Jennifer Pearson Yamashiro
Curator, The Kinsey Institute,
Morrison Hall 313, Indiana University,
Bloomington, IN 47405.

I felt that further investigation was required. I e-mailed Jennifer Yamashiro on Wednesday, 3rd November, 1999 as follows:

“Hi Jennifer,
I hope this e-mail reaches you well.

Many thankx for your reply which sort of helps clear things up in my mind. Just a couple of things - the book states that these were vintage silver prints but in your e-mail you said that they were modern prints from vintage negatives - interesting detail? I would also like to contact James Crump to ask him about the accreditation - perhaps you have his e-mail address so that I could contact him please.

In regards to the Mark Berry books - these are fabulous rare books from my collection that I have had repaired. I know that they are only books but I am worried about them being put on the general shelves due to their age and fragile nature. The hard covers are all stained and I have had the spines redone but I do not think they will stand up to general usage or being on the shelves - any advice on how they would be stored and properly looked after? I include as attachments some of the images from the books.

With Best Wishes,
Marcus.”

A reply was received from Jennifer Yamashiro the same day.

“Hi Marcus,

The only prints of the two in your last e-mail were found in the study print box and look very much like copy prints or contact prints from an 8x10 negative. Because of their location and their quality, I very much doubt that the prints I located are vintage GPL photographs. If KI (**Kinsey Institute**) had vintage GPL prints of these images, there is a problem since they are now missing. James Crump may be able to answer your questions, but please remember that it has been some time since he did the GPL publication or dealt directly with the collection. He was the curator here from 1991-1993. James recently started his own fine art photography press. It's called Arena Editions.

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Here's the information I have:

James Crump, Publisher.
573 West San Francisco Street,
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87501-1881 USA
(505) 986-9132 telephone
(505) 986-9138 fax
arenaed@arenaeditions.com e-mail
www.arenaed.com website

I will ask my colleague Liana Zhou, the Head of the Library, to respond to your inquiry about the storage and treatment of books. I do know that they have quite a large collection of rare books and are equipped to handle this sort of fragile material, but Liana will be able to answer your question more thoroughly. Thank you for considering making the donation.

Best wishes,
Jennifer.”

I tried to contact James Crump on Tuesday, 16th November, 1999 for more information regarding the two images.

“Dear James Crump,
Hello, my name is Marcus Bunyan. I am a Ph.D. scholar at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia.
I am studying the development of the muscular mesomorphic body image in gay men and I recently studied at the Kinsey Institute. I was interested to find that there was no accreditation for the images on pages 153 (“Erection, c.1952,”) and 154 (“Black Men Embracing Before Sex, c.1952,”) that accompany your essay “Iconography of Desire: George Platt Lynes and Gay Male Visual Culture in Postwar New York,” in **Kinsey Institute and Crump, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute**. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993.
I have asked the current curator of the collection, Jennifer Yamashiro about this point but she was unable to answer and directed me to you. I wonder whether you could tell me why the accreditation was left out for these photographs? Also the only two copies of these photographs at the Kinsey are modern copy prints from original negs kept in the study print box but in the book it states that the images are vintage silver prints. Are there original vintage prints? I wonder whether you could clear up this point for me please.

Best Regards,
Marcus Bunyan.”

I received a reply from James Crump on Wednesday, 17th November.

“Dear Marcus,
The images you reference are modern copies made from the negatives. The attribution in the book is inaccurate.

Best of luck with your research.
James Crump.”

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Although clearing up one point (that of the images being vintage silver prints), James Crump's reply still leaves unanswered the question of why the two photographs in the book were not attributed to the Kinsey Institute Collection of GPL's photographs. Perhaps it was felt that in a politically conservative atmosphere it would not be advisable for The Kinsey Institute to admit to possessing such photographs by a distinguished American photographer, due to the sensitive nature of the content of the images. Don't forget that this book (Kinsey Institute and Crump, James. George Platt Lynes: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993) was published only three years after the National Endowment of the Arts/Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center controversy where Robert Mapplethorpe and the center had been taken to court by the conservative right in America on obscenity charges, tried and finally acquitted.

Image No. 457. Untitled Nude. 1955.

Man on an unmade bed staring into camera. Tattoo of 'Chuck' on upper left arm bicep/shoulder. Older man with tan line and cute butt. Behind is a dark, dark background of a bedroom with a Venetian blind over a window, plant just visible in front of it, bookcase in back right of photo, down light from table lamp highlighting books on side table. Printed down background to make it darker?

Man stares straight into camera with a penetrating gaze - presence, engagement, defiance! After sex? Before sex? with GPL? Photograph is blurred so slow shutter speed and tungsten lighting. The white highlights of sheet nearest camera are almost blown out by lighting. Very personal and beautiful photograph placing the male body in bedroom available for sex with another male.

See Plate 50 in **Ellenzweig**, Allen. The Homoerotic Photograph. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p.93.

Image No. 481. Untitled Nude. 1941. Acquired GPL 10/05/1950.

Two young men stretched out, intertwined legs and arms, very sensual pose. Horizontal print. Lots of darker negative space above the bodies. Backdrop lit to highlight body outline - usual GPL trademark.

Image No. 482. Untitled Nude. 1941. Acquired GPL 10/05/1950.

2 smooth young men, ephebes, about 19 years old, one cut off at the waist, leaning backwards and resting on others stomach. Both have blond hair and the young man at front has his right hand resting on his chest, eyes closed. Rear figure has his head turned away from the camera.

See Plate 52 in **Ellenzweig**, Allen. The Homoerotic Photograph. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p.95.

One of the best images in the collection. Very evangelical and homoerotic at the same time.

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Image No. 483. 'Charles 'Tex' Smutney, Charles 'Buddy' Stanley and Bradbury Ball'. 1941. Acquired GPL 10/05/1950.

Studio shot of 3 smooth, nude young men in various positions on an unmade mattress bed sitting on GPL's studio floor. All three young men are intertwined with a white sheet covering some of the bodies and faces. Dark chair in background has clothes lying on it. Lit from above left. Skin tones in print are just above mid grey. According to **Leddick**, David. Naked Men: Pioneering Male Nudes 1935-1955. New York: Universe Publishing, 1997, p.21, the names of the models are as above and come from a series of 30 photographs of three boys undressing and lying on a bed together. Image No. 483 and 484 come from the same series as the reproduced photograph.

Image No. 484. 'Charles 'Tex' Smutney, Charles 'Buddy' Stanley and Bradbury Ball'. 1941. Acquired GPL 10/05/1950.

Different pose from above. No genitalia visible. No touching each other. Darker print than above. Beautiful tone of print.