

Queering Art History

‘As a category of identity, “queer” is used to denote non-normative sexualities. It sometimes includes or is aligned with nonnormative genders, but it should not be conflated with transgender or other trans-identities.

[...]

Queer studies as an academic discipline also emerged in the 1990s, in conversation with post-colonial theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, and other schools of thought that center on ideas and experiences of difference. The ways in which multiple marginalized subjectivities intersect and interact is essential to the methodology of queer studies.

Queer studies also introduced the use of “queer” as a verb. To “queer” something or to do something “queerly” is not only to resist normativity but to point out and articulate the conventions that sustain and perpetuate normativity.’

Sylvia Page, ‘ “Making Visible the Otherwise.” Queering the Art Library,’ *Art Documentation* 37 (2018) p. 21

THE SEXUAL PERSPECTIVE

HOMOSEXUALITY AND ART IN THE LAST
100 YEARS IN THE WEST



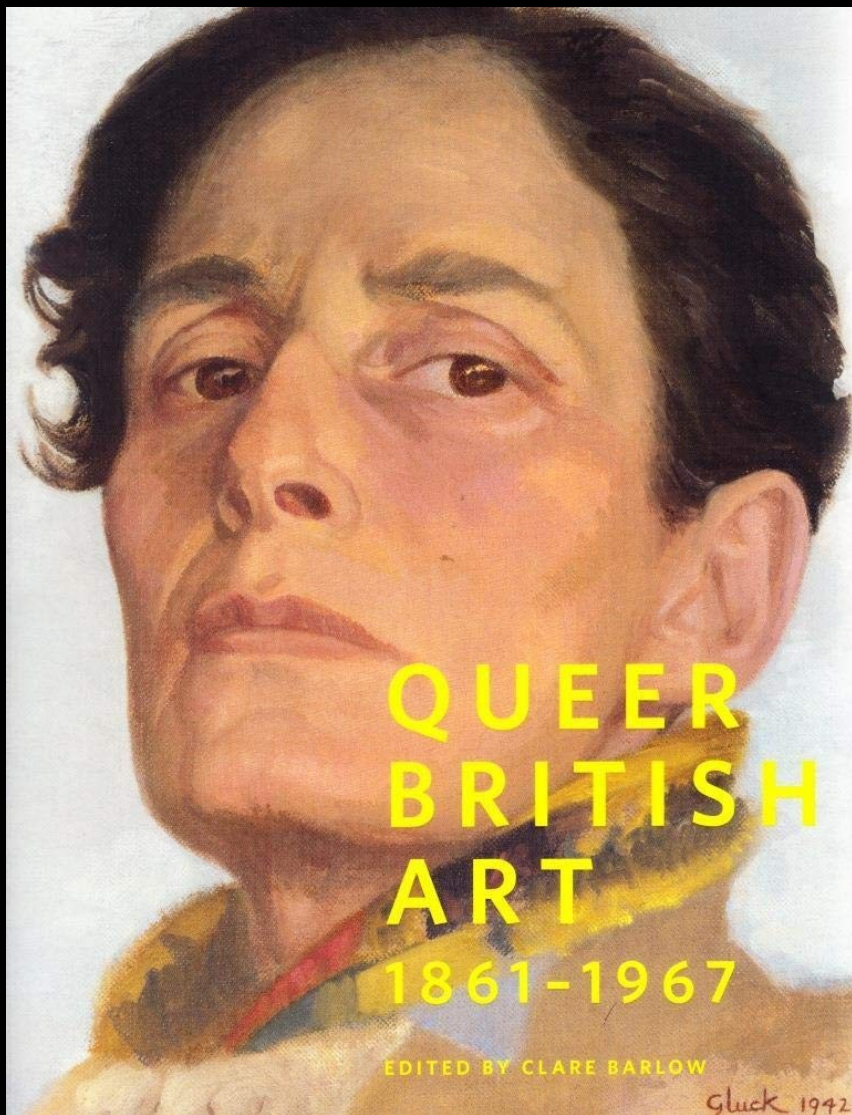
**EMMANUEL
COOPER**

L: Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective* (London, 1986)

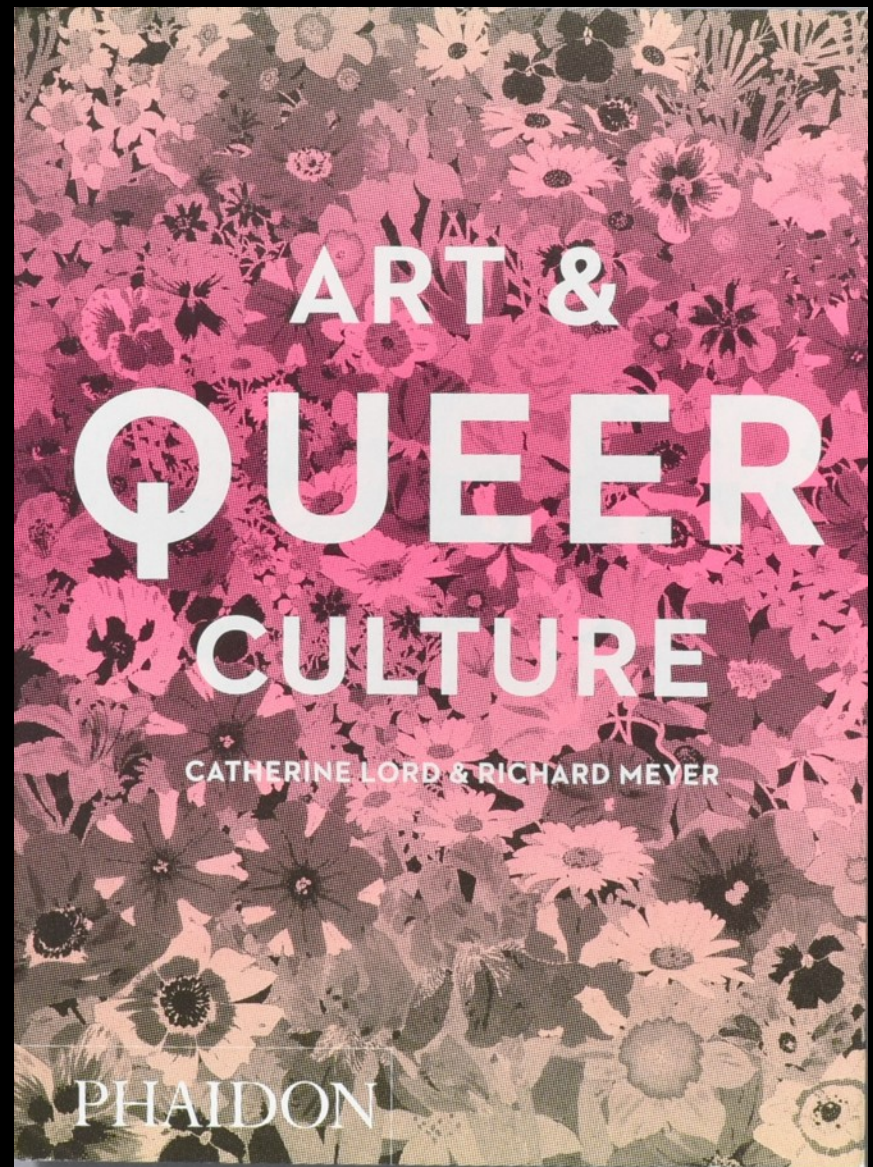
R: Christopher Reed, *Art and Homosexuality* (Oxford, 2011)

ART AND HOMOSEXUALITY
A HISTORY OF IDEAS

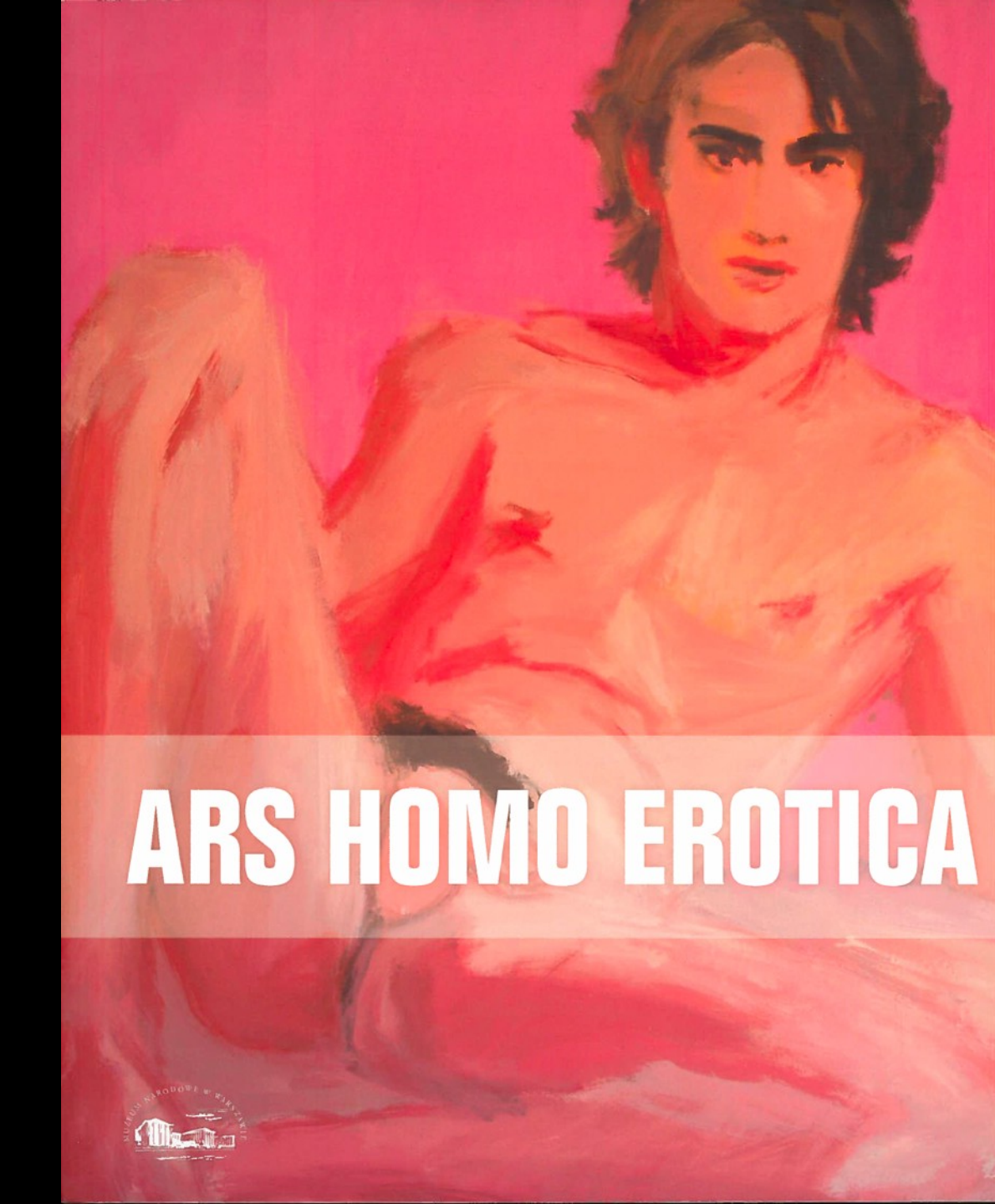
CHRISTOPHER REED



Catalogue cover of the *Queer British Art* exhibition, Tate Britain, London 2017



Catherine Lord and Richard Meyer, *Art and Queer Culture* (London, 2019)



Piotr Piotrowski
Ars Homo Erotica (National
Museum, Warsaw, 2010)

Themes:

- Homoerotic Classicism
- Male Nudes
- Ganymede
- Saint Sebastian
- Lesbian Imaginarium
- Transgender / Androgyny

ARS HOMO EROTICA



Installation short of Ars Homo Erotic with (l) Harmodius & Aristogeiton and (r) David Černý, Poland (from Entropa, 2008)



David Hockney

Peter Getting out of
Nick's Pool (1966)



David Hockney
Domestic Scene, Los Angeles
(1963)

Robert Gober

L:

R: X Playpen (1987)



Thomas Eakins
The Swimming Hole (1885)

Homosocial or 'Homosexual'?





Anton von Maron

Portrait of Johann Winckelmann
(1768)

313
Johann Winckelmanns,
Präsidentens der Alterthümer zu Rom, und Scrittore der Vaticanischen Bibliothek,
Mitglieds der Königl. Englischen Societät der Alterthümer zu London, der Maleracademie
von St. Luca zu Rom, und der Petrurischen zu Cortona,

Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums.

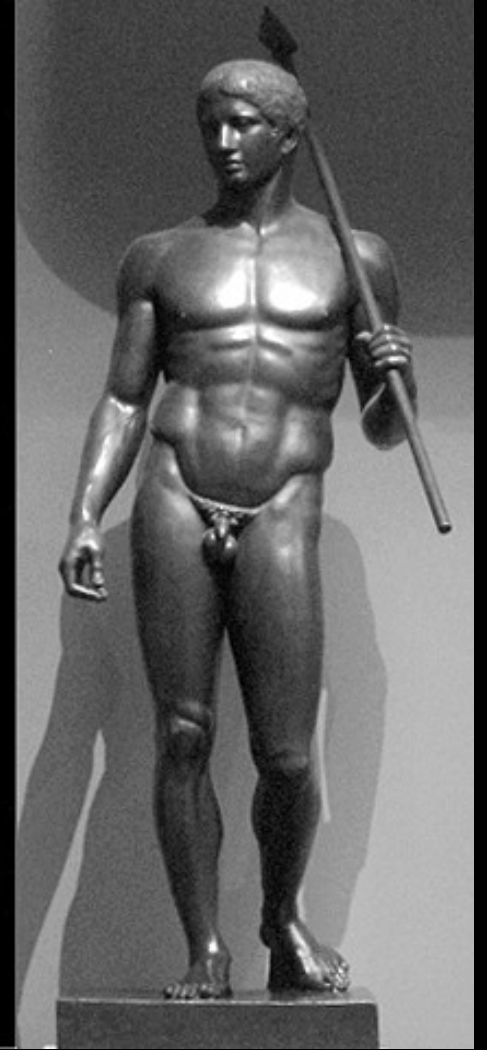
Zweyter Theil.



Mit Königl. Pohlnisch. und Churfürstl. Sächsl. allergnädigsten Privilegio.

Dresden, 1764.

In der Waltherschen Hof-Buchhandlung.



Roman copies of the lost Greek original sculpture the Doryphoros ("Spear carrier")



Achilles and Patroclus
Red figure vase, ca. 440 BC

Roman 2nd century copy of a
Greek sculptural pair of
Harmodius and Aristogeiton



Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Socrates* (1787)



'I was interested in having my students challenge the rather sanitized, if not down right inaccurate, accounts propounded by various proponents of "our Western heritage." Lynne Cheney wants students to study Socrates; and why not? I thought. Socrates was surrounded with pretty boys; the dialogues, as narrated by Plato and others, are partly just fancy versions of the intellectual cultivation, the ostentation, contest, and romance, and the idealization of the merely sexual into the broadly ethical that characterized Greek male courtships. Certainly most of the standard textbooks of the history of art do not address the issue, despite the great importance that studies of gender and sexuality have come to have in art history generally and the obvious presence of an erotically meaningful representation of the male body in classical art.'

Whitney Davis, 'Founding the Closet: Sexuality and the Creation of Art History,' *Art Documentation* 11.4 (1992) p. 172

LIMITS OF CONCEPT: CLASSICAL AND RENAISSANCE SEXUALITY



Copy of Michelangelo *Ganymede* (1532). Original now lost.



L: Zeus abducting Ganymede
6th century BCE

R: Zeus and Ganymede
mid-5th century BCE



Red figure vase depicting an older man bargaining for sex with a younger man (mid 5th century BCE)



Ganymede on a crater by
the so-called Berlin Painter
(ca. 500-490 BCE)



Andrea Alciati
The Rape of Ganymede in
Emblemata (1531)



Nicolò degli Agostini – Zeus and
Ganymede from Ovid, *Metamorphosi*
(Venice, 1522)



Michelangelo
The Fall of Phaethon (1533)

Given to Tommaso dei Cavalieri



Correggio

The Rape of Ganymede
(1530)



'If you would share in my society
Do not discourse on female love to
me

How pitiful the man who changes
his mind
For woman, or for her feels joy or
dismay
Or who permits her his liberty to
bind
Or trusts her words or glances that
betray'

Angelo Poliziano, *Orfeo* (1480)

Benvenuto Cellini

Ganymede and the Eagle (1545-
46)



Benvenuto Cellini

Narcissus (1545)



Parmigianino

Amor (1532-33)

'In Florence, Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi, known as Donatello (1386–1466), never married and the records from his patron Cosimo de Medici repeatedly refute rumors that the artist's erotic interests led him to choose apprentices more for their beauty than for their talent. This has led some scholars to interpret his winsome statue of David, the boy warrior of the Bible as a record of the artist's erotic desires.'

Reed, *Art and Homosexuality*, p. 44

Donatello
David (1440s)



'The argument for civic iconology would alleviate both Janson's and Schneider Adams' assertions of intentional homoeroticism from problems inherent in a presumed contemporary Florentine religious reaction. In other words, had the statue been consciously commissioned as both religious symbol and homoerotic emblem, one could plausibly argue that the Church and contemporary Catholic sensibilities would have unconditionally condemned a blatant eroticizing of so potent a connection to Christ, particularly one conspicuously visible in the palace cortile of an eminent Florentine patrician.'

Peter Weller, 'A Reassessment in Historiography and Gender,' *Artibus et Historiae*, 33.65 (2012) pp. 52-53



'When one looks upward at the statue from this more severe angle and distance below the base, di sotto in sù, the elongated lower abdomen visually collapses by means of Donatello's gift of intentional foreshortening and the viewing angle now emphasizes an adolescent chest that may be gendered with a hetero-prowess and self-confidence. As Munman opines, the statue's legs become stronger and the countenance more defiant, the entire body evokes torsion and dynamism that overpowers the modern eye's notion of effeminacy endowed by the current view displayed from the shallower angle and shorter height.'

Weller, p. 54

Furthermore

' ... records suggest that sexual behavior in Renaissance Italy was not seen as a basis for individual identity. When preachers fulminated against sodomites as a group, their hyperbolic claims about the seriousness of the problem cast sodomy as a ubiquitous form of youthful delinquency, rather than a characteristic of an identifiable minority. Their ongoing recourse to such rhetoric also suggests that sermons did little to change behavior. The absence of modern notions of homosexual identity in the fifteenth century should not be surprising, however, for modern ideas of individual identity in general postdate the Renaissance.'

Reed, *Art and Homosexuality*, p. 43.

MODERNIST READINGS



Marsden Hartley

Portrait of a German
Officer (1914-15)

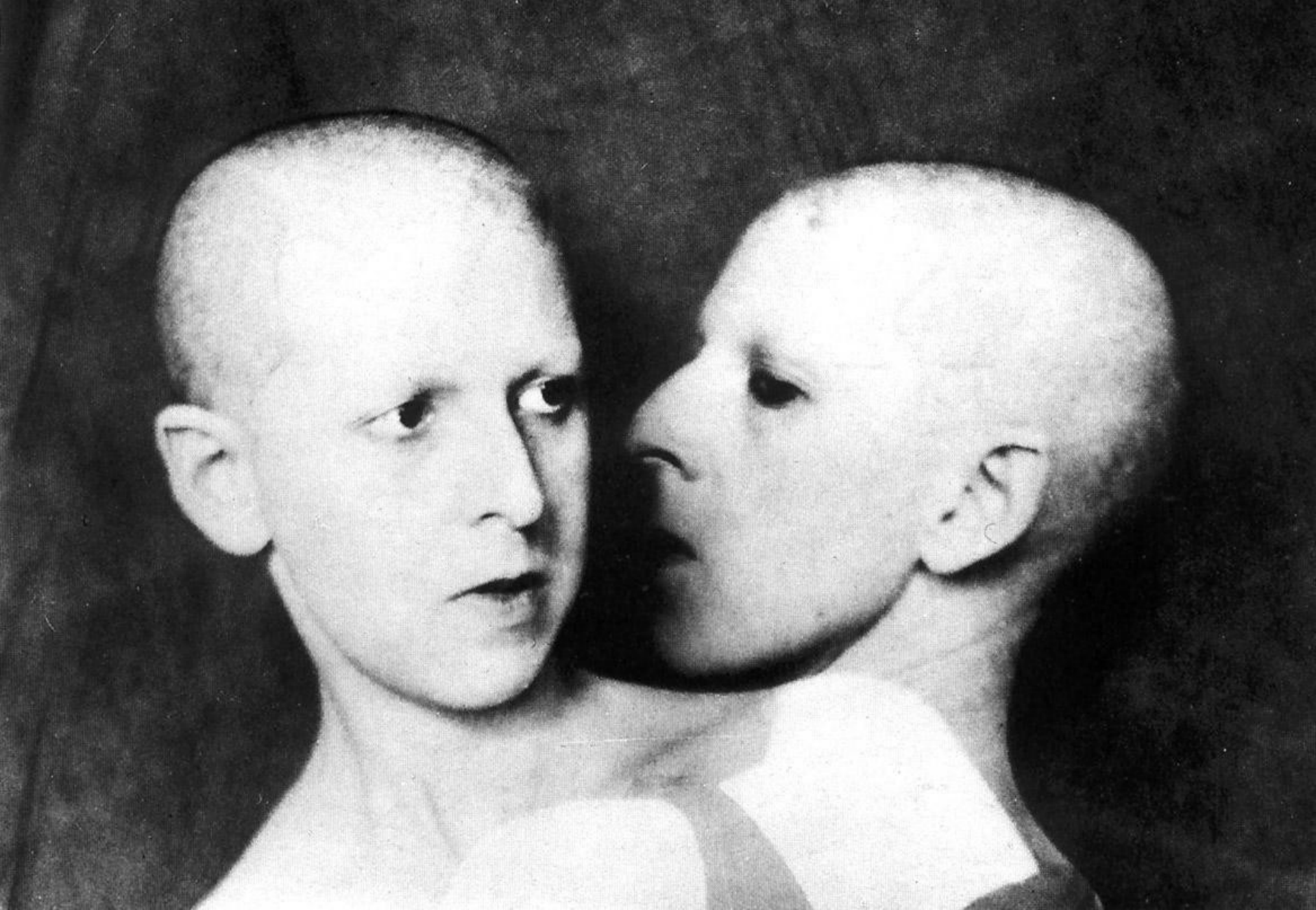


Marsden Hartley

Painting No. 48
(1913)



Claude Cahun
Self-Portrait (1920)



Claude Cahun – What Do You Want? (1929)



Claude Cahun

Self Portrait (1929)

To my friend Sam White
Feb 1922
Man Ray



lovingly
Rose Selavy
alias Marcel Duchamp

Man Ray

Photograph of Marcel
Duchamp as Rose Selavy
(1921)

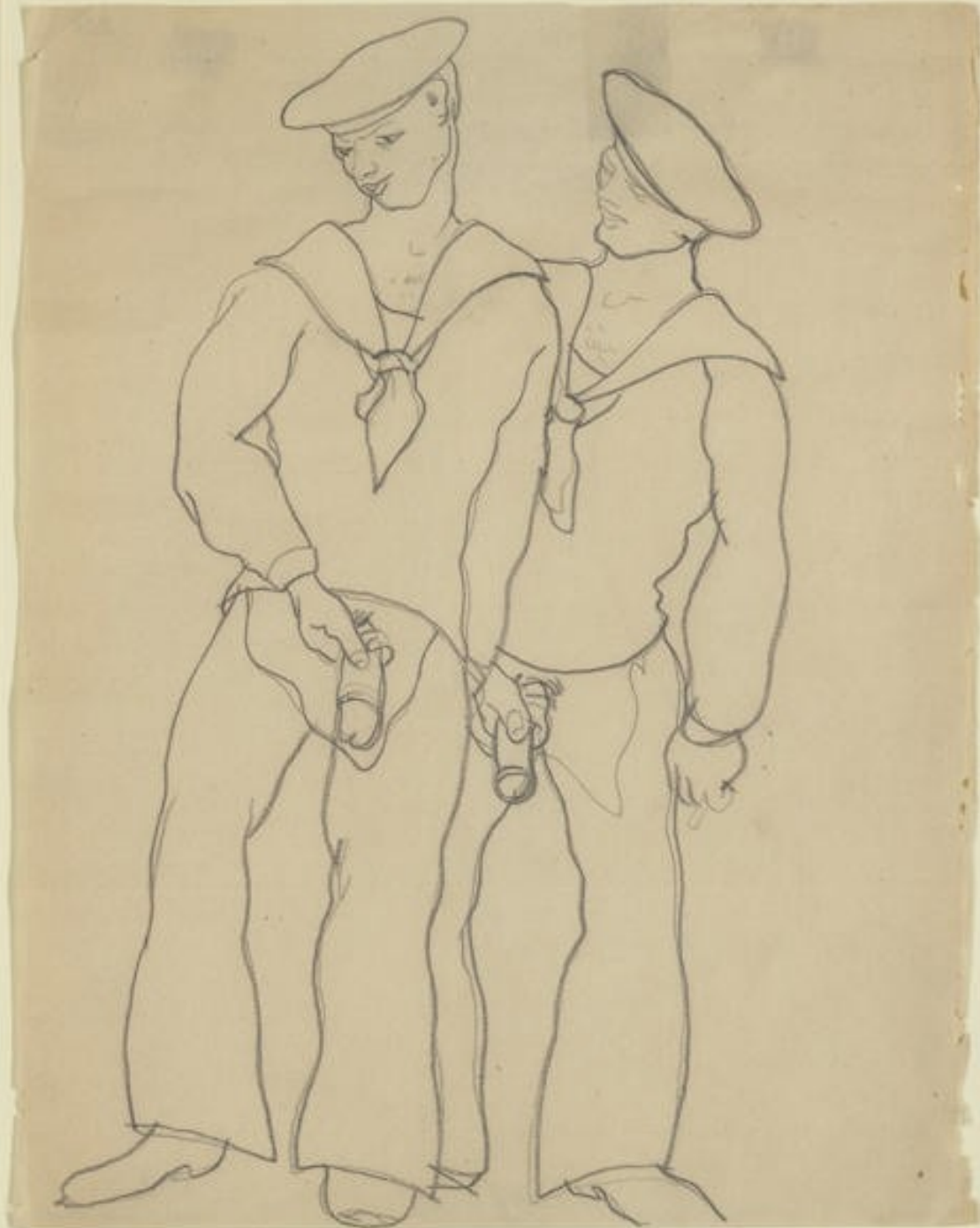


Marcel Duchamp

Fountain (1917)



Charles Demuth – Three Sailors Urinating (1930)



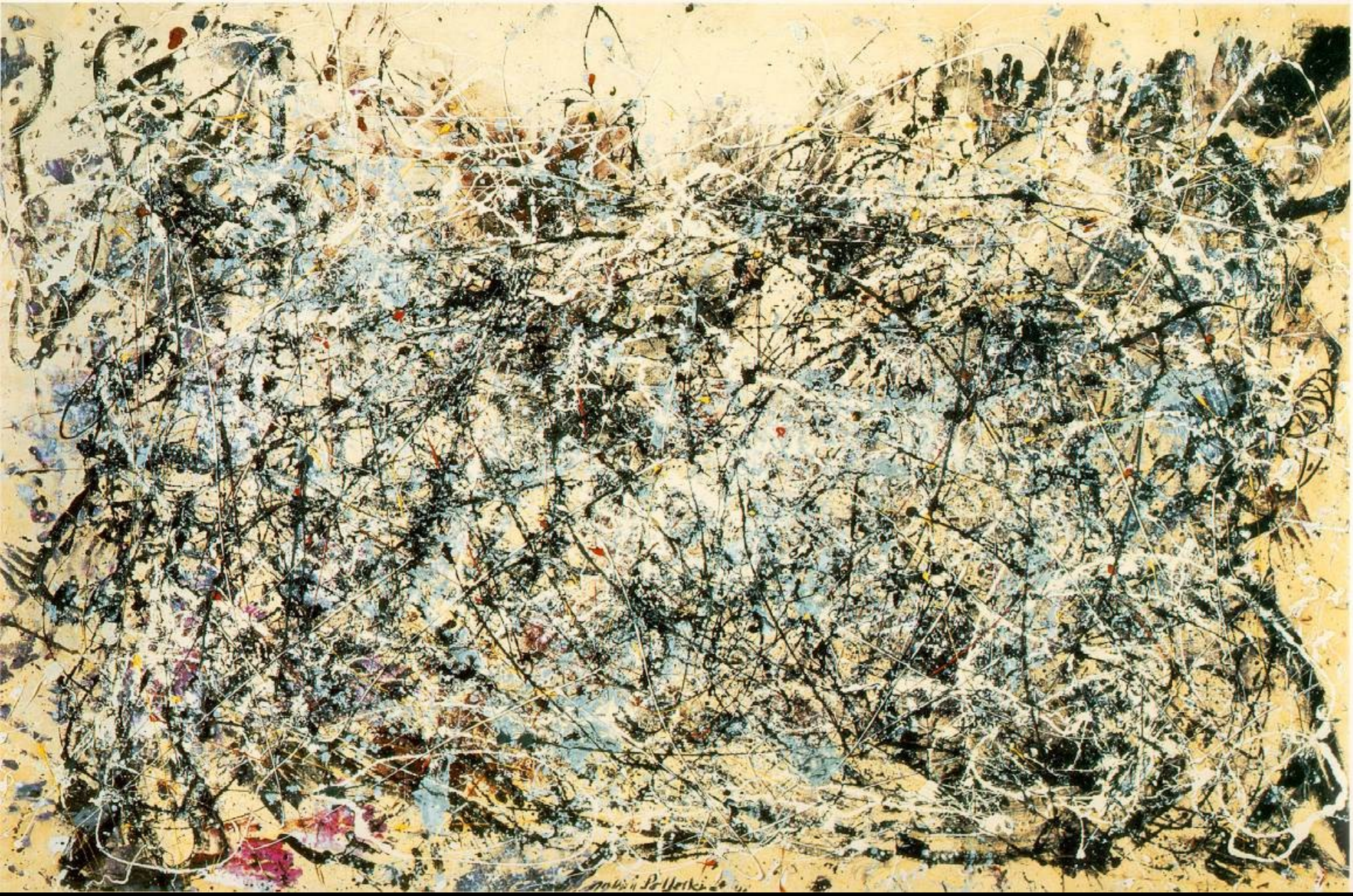
Charles Demuth

Sailors urinating (1930)



Andy Warhol – Oxidation Painting (1978)

(Copper metallic pigment mixed with acrylic and urine)



Jackson Pollock – Number 1 (1948)



Robert Mapplethorpe

Jim and Tom, Sausalito (1977)





Andres Serrano

Piss Christ (1987)

‘These bad boys of modern art – metaphorical bed-wetters all – Duchamp, Demuth, Mapplethorpe, Warhol, Serrano and perhaps even Pollock ... *void* the civilized boundaries placed on our concept of the body’s beauty, on what is clean and dirty, and finally on what is sexually permissible.’

Jonathan Weinberg, ‘Urination and its Discontents’ in Davis, ed, *Gay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, p. 242