

FOTOSEPTIEMBRE

2023 MONOGRAPH



PETER BROWN LEIGHTON *THE PEARLY GATES ARCHIVE*

CURATED BY MICHAEL MEHL

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THE PEARLY GATES ARCHIVE

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The Pearly Gates Archive is a body of work through which I've channeled a decade of existential discombobulation into images digitally constructed from scans of discarded twentieth century photographs.

Gabriel García Márquez once optimistically wrote that "Life is the best thing ever invented." *The Pearly Gates Archive* circles this claim like water around an open drain, all while begging the question: If what García Márquez suggests is true, why is it that so many humans at the summit of the evolutionary ladder, seem so ill-equipped to keep themselves, much less the rest of us, alive?

Everyone, I suppose, has an opinion. Humanity's list of shortcomings, after all, is as long as its history. *The Pearly Gates Archive* is a counterfactual take on the subject, summoning fictional narratives and offering copious evidence of absurdities having been committed –while ultimately reaching no common agreement as to what any of it means. Purposely leaving everyone in the end to consider that, of all of the Earth's species, ours is the only one wired to both sustain a sense of humor and to, in ever more complex ways, destroy itself completely.

I came of age in the 1960's in small town Texas, leaving to study history at Trinity University in San Antonio. Later, in the 1970s, I trained and worked with photographer Tom Wright –a National Endowment for the Arts grant recipient– at what was then the Southwest Craft Center, now the UTSA Southwest School of Art.

As a person advancing in years, I have lived the life I wanted though not the life I thought I would. Along the way, photography has been a means of turning this distinction into a language that makes sense to me. On occasion, the images I've constructed and the stories they've told have made sense to others as well.

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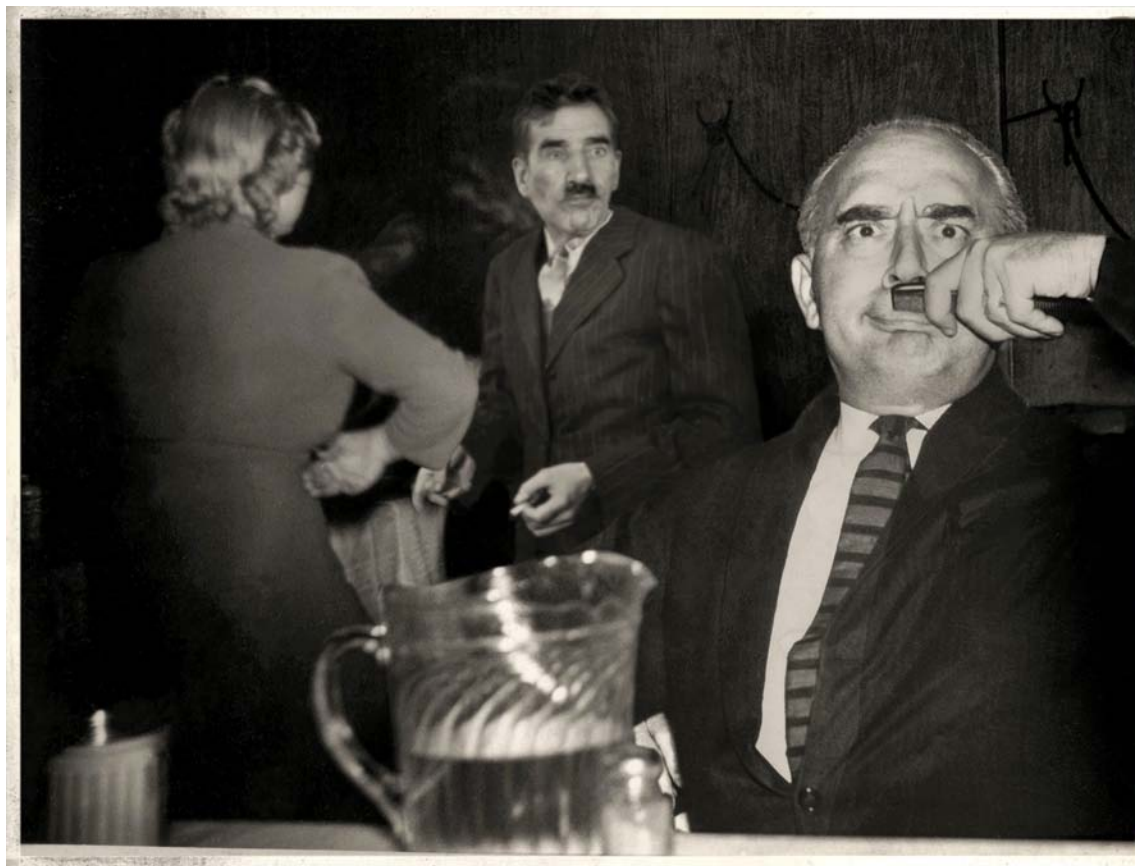
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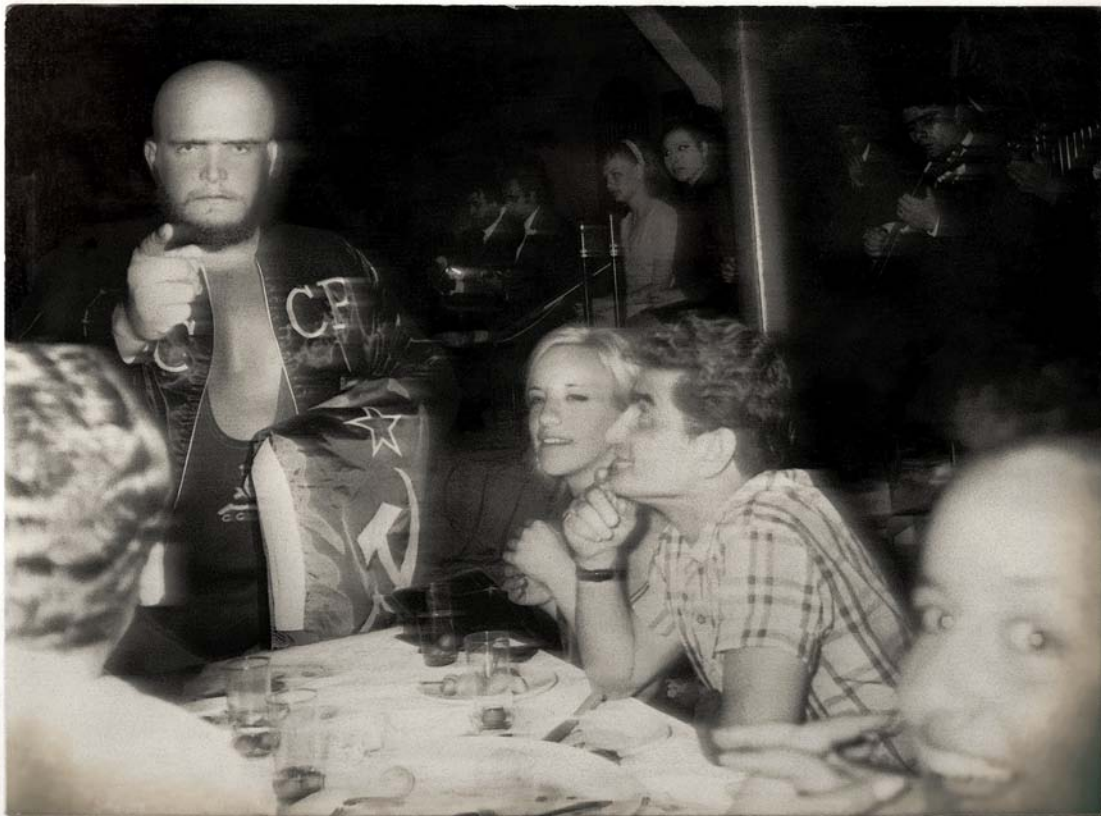
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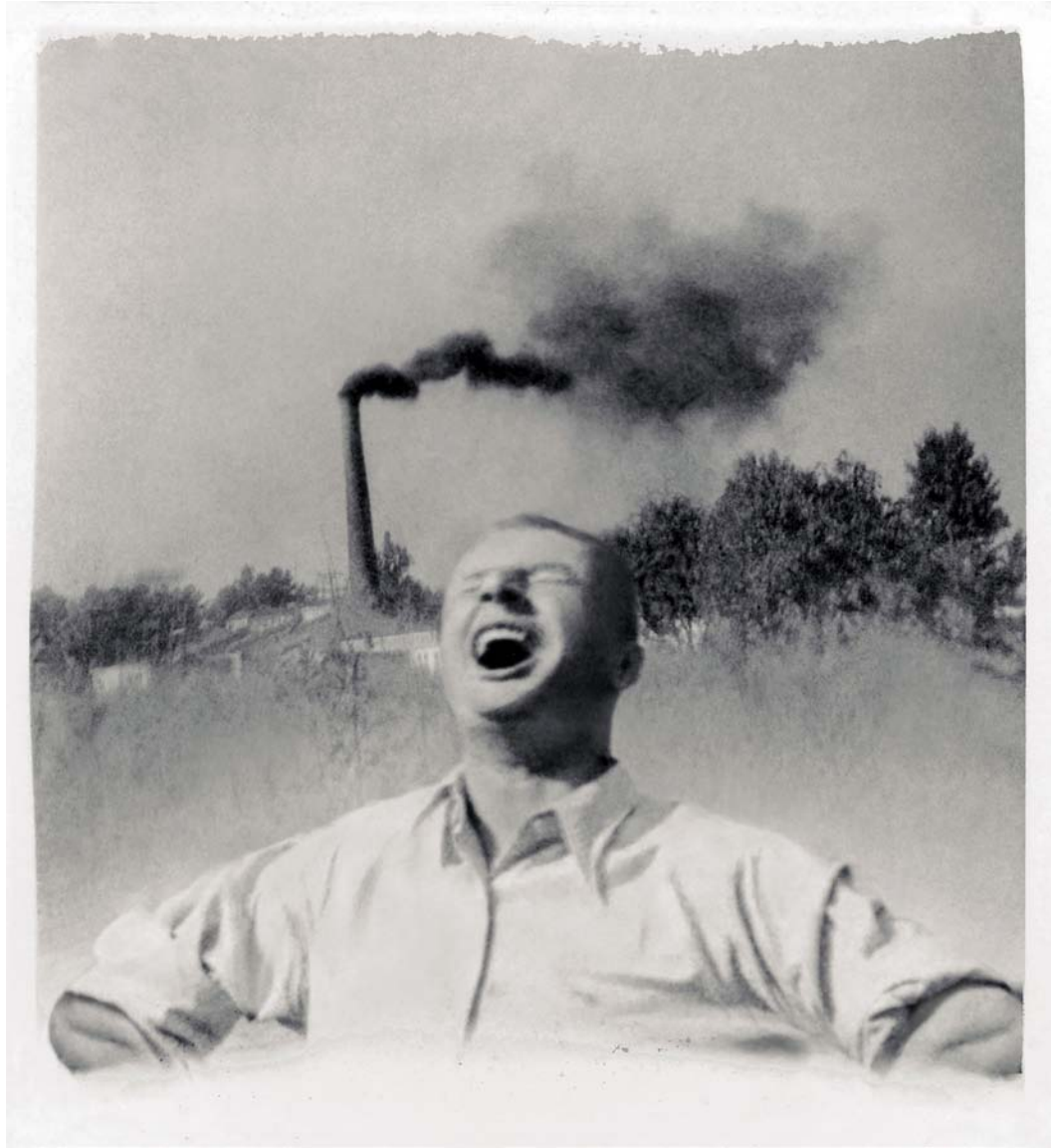
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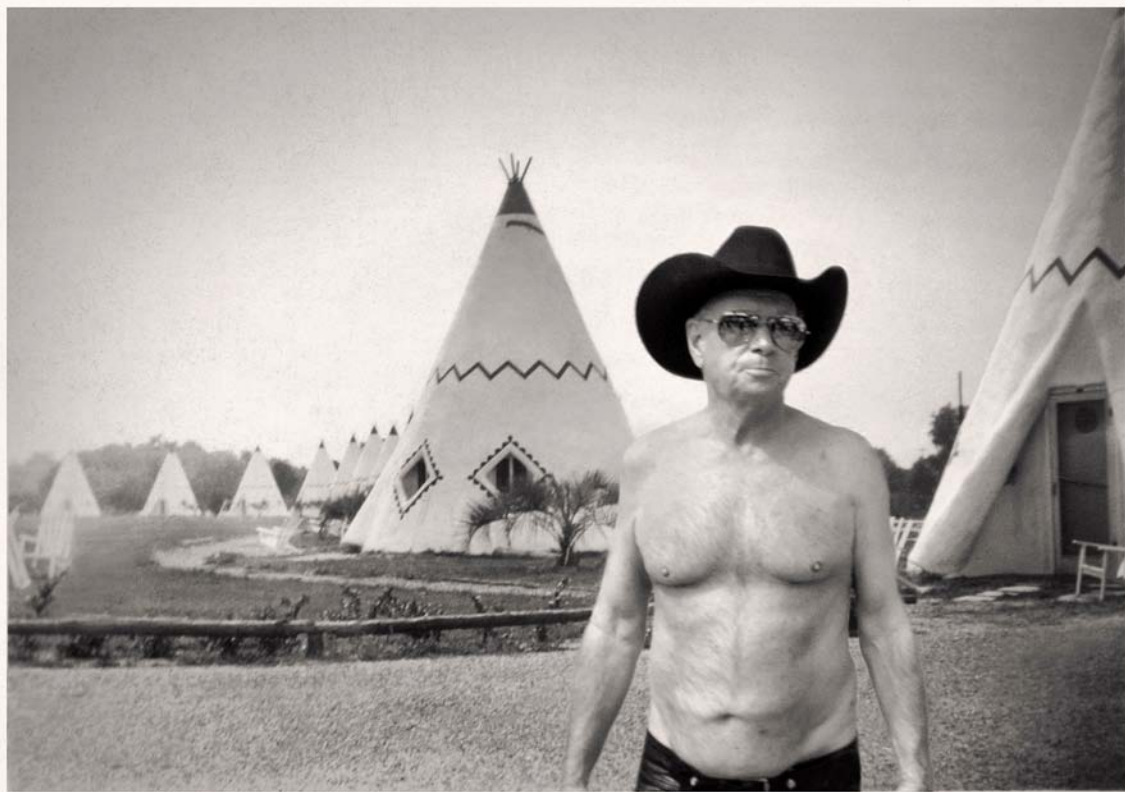
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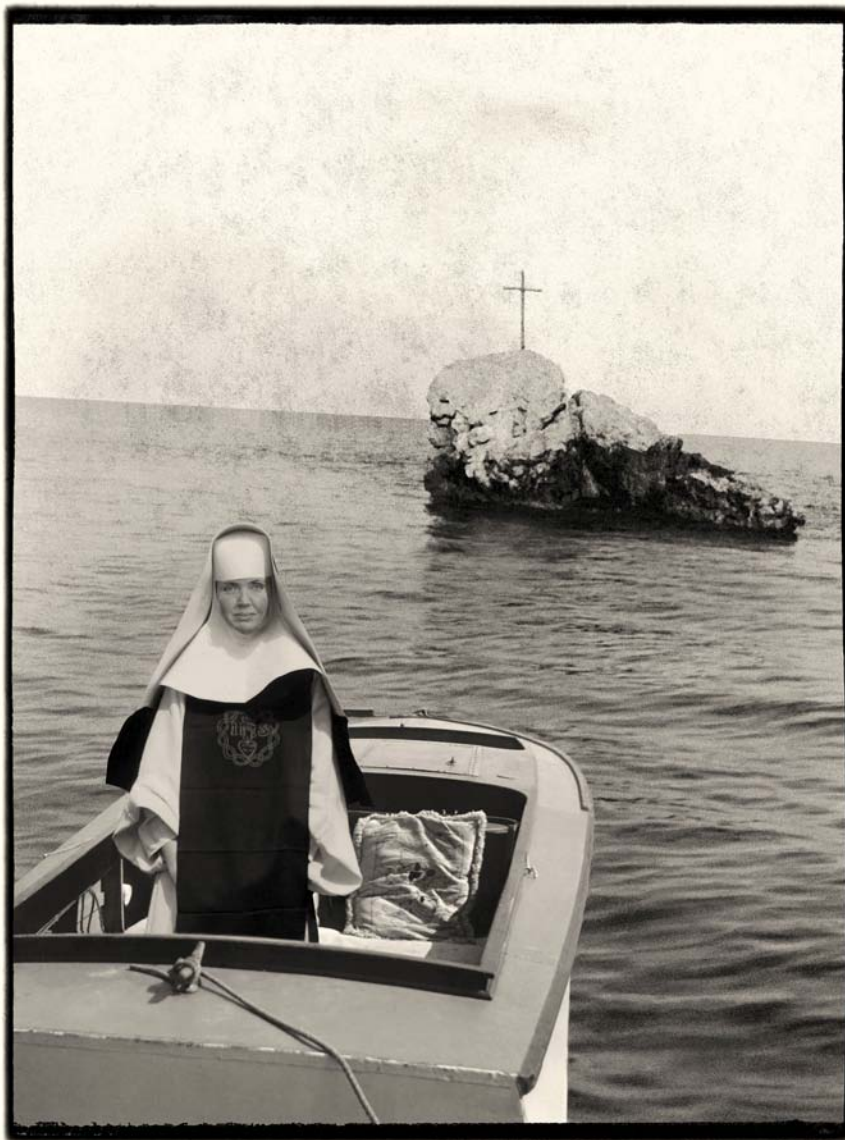
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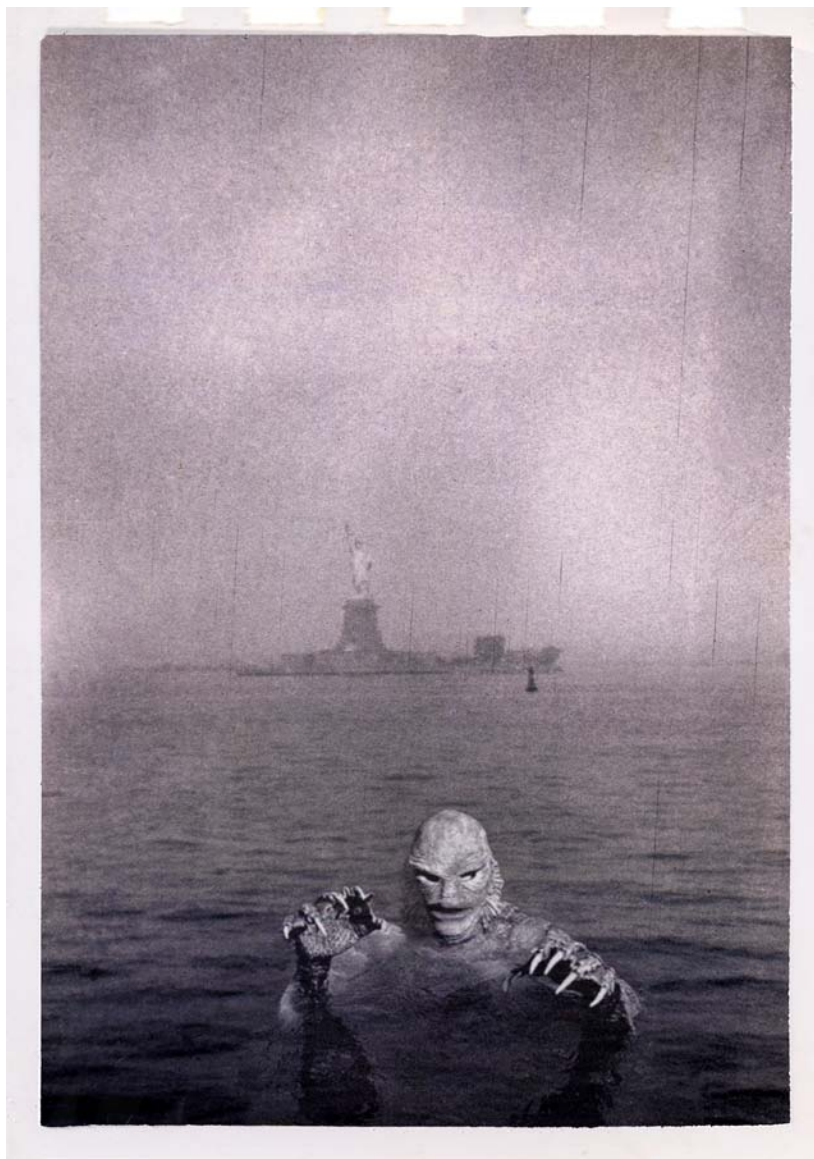
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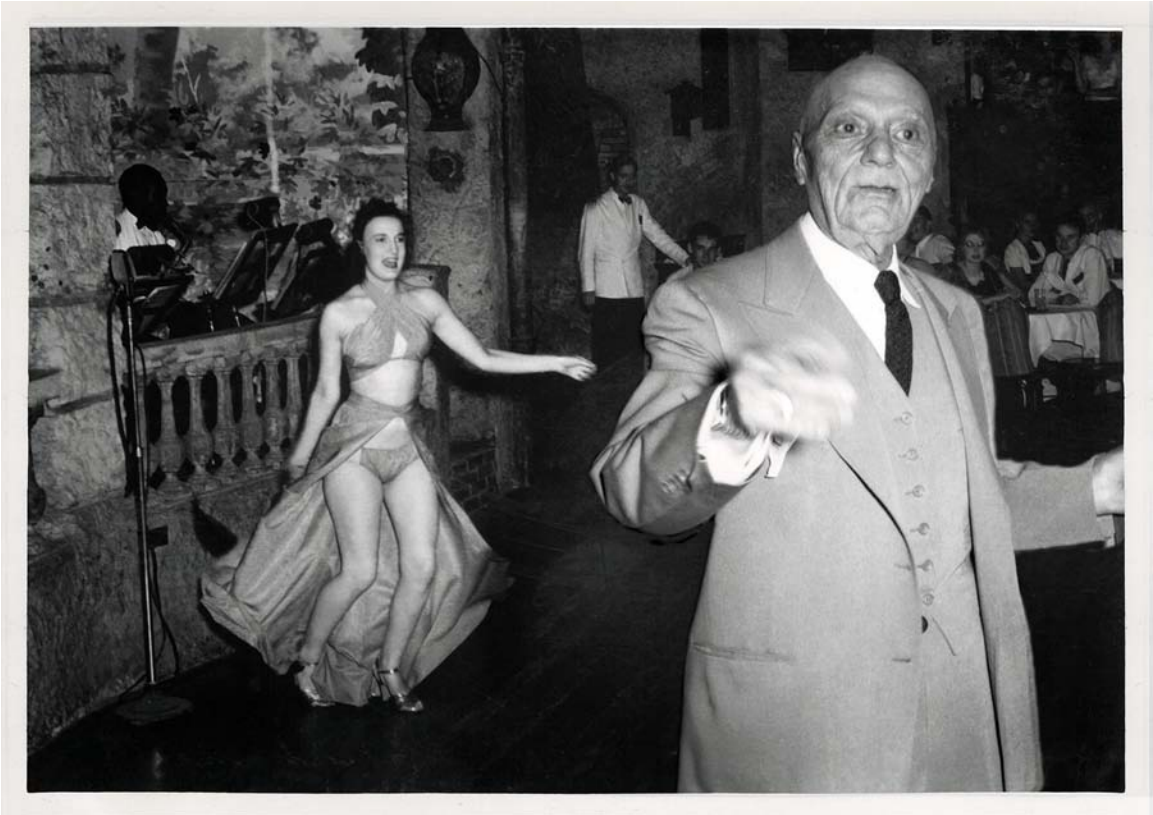
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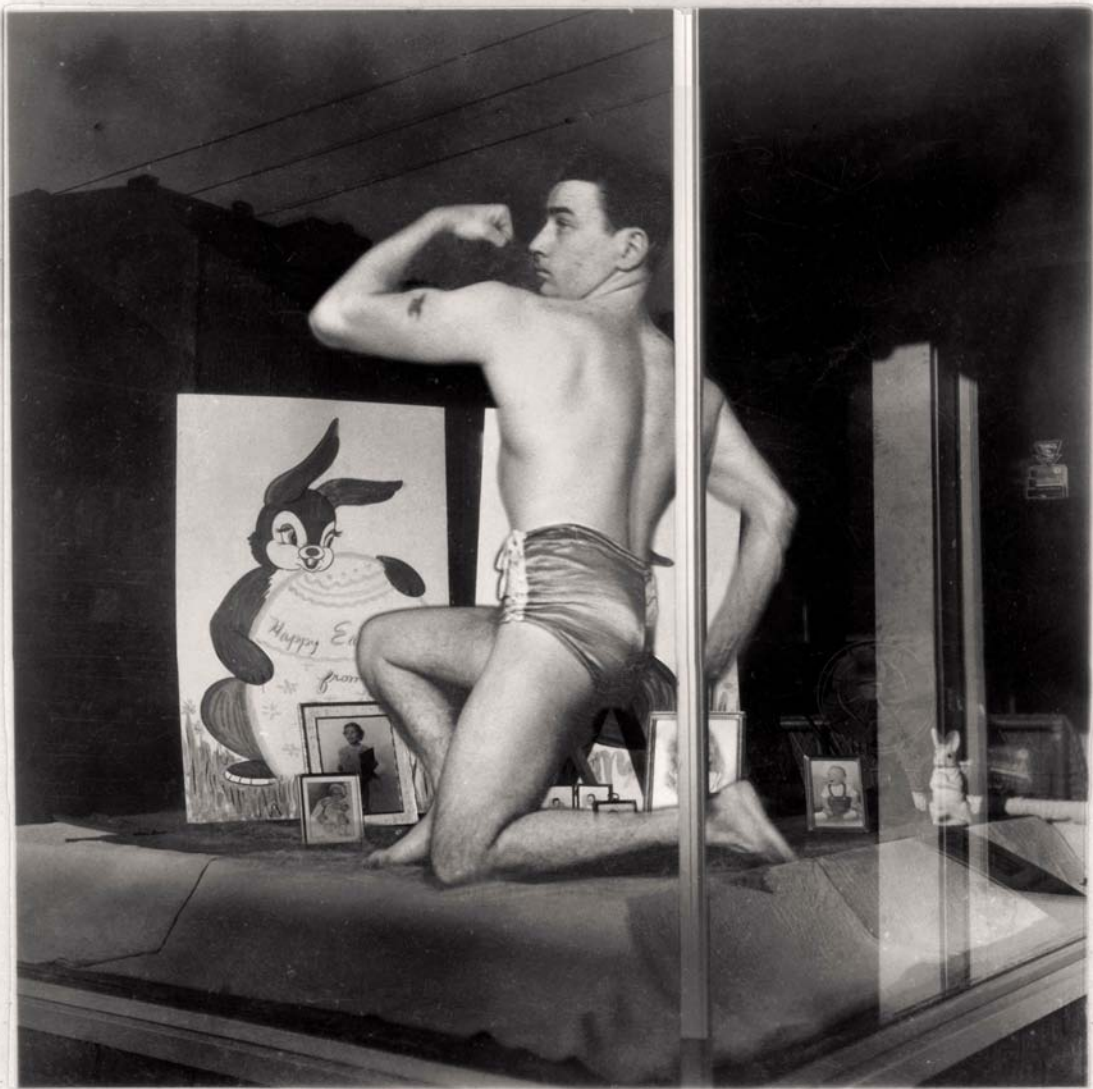
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