

# HESSE FLATOW

Watzl, Paula. "Oh Boy! How Painting is Reinventing Masculinity." *Kunstmagazin Parnass*, November 5, 2025. Online.

KUNSTMAGAZIN  
**PARNASS**



Masculinity is in deep crisis. With the aging white man, the image of the young, strong man is also faltering. Painting seeks answers.

---

When mothers are asked what qualities they wish for their sons, almost all mention strength first. Yet the very power of boys' clubs is one of the major problems of our time. Some men recognize this and lose their bearings and clarity—regarding their role in the world and their relationship to themselves and their environment. Numerous new visual worlds also speak of the search for a new masculinity. They explore the potential of a masculinity that understands itself as more than just strength, but also paint a picture of a troubled generation that has lost its self-understanding and whose new self-image has yet to be found.

Numerous young artists are attempting to shape a new canon of masculinity. They are breaking with clichés of the "strong man" and instead addressing vulnerability, intimacy, the diversity of male identities, and queer perspectives. As early as 2019, for example, the exhibition "Tender Men" at the Georg Kolbe Museum in Berlin highlighted alternative images of masculinity from the turn of the century. Such examples of alternative masculinity are now numerous in contemporary art. Critics even speak of a new intimacy in painting ("New Intimists") to describe this trend. It's time to present a few examples in more detail.

# HESSE FLATOW

Watzl, Paula. "Oh Boy! How Painting is Reinventing Masculinity." *Kunstmagazin Parnass*, November 5, 2025. Online.

## 12 IMAGES OF A NEW MASCULINITY

### ALEX FOXTON

British artist Alex Foxtan (born 1978) initially worked as a menswear designer. Today, he reinterprets classic male icons—from cowboys and Greek gods to matadors—in expressive portraits. Overwhelmed by the expectations placed on men, he consciously seeks to reshape the male anatomy, thereby revealing the tensions men face. "These figures stand at the crossroads between identification, fear, desire, and compassion," Foxtan explained to emergentmag.com.

### JAKUB ČUŠKA

As part of ViennaContemporary 2025, the Jiri Světska Gallery presented a solo booth featuring works by the painter, born in Bruntál (Czech Republic) in 1989. The booth was filled with lost dandies, their gazes vacant and their features blurred. Skillful use of color and familiar gestures—such as taking refuge in a smartphone—managed to evoke a sense of connection between the viewer and the figures depicted.



Alex Foxtan, *The fascists*, 2025, Oil and glitter on canvas, 250 x 296 cm (diptyque),  
Courtesy of the artist, Derouillon and Salon 94 © Pierce Sapper



Caleb Hahne Quintana, *The Boy Fights Himself*, 2025, Oil on linen, 76.2 x 101.6 cm,  
Courtesy the artist and Anat Ebgí, Los Angeles / New York, Photo: New Document

### CALEB HAHNE QUINTANA

Born in Denver, Colorado in 1993, the painter depicts young men in moments of melancholy and vulnerability. His figures lie exhausted on the couch, gaze out of windows, or lose themselves in daydreams. In muted color palettes, Caleb Hahne Quintana reflects on the fragility of male identity and the insecurity of a generation oscillating between intimacy and being overwhelmed.

### SALMAN TOOR

Salman Toor (born 1983 in Lahore, Pakistan) lives in New York and gained international recognition through his Whitney exhibition "How Will I Know." He paints scenes from the lives of young gay men in rich shades of green and brown—in bars, shared apartments, or on the couch. The delicate, androgynous bodies break with colonial and Western clichés, creating images of a queer, vulnerable masculinity of color.

# HESSE FLATOW

Watzl, Paula. "Oh Boy! How Painting is Reinventing Masculinity." *Kunstmagazin Parnass*, November 5, 2025. Online.

## NAT MEADE

Nat Meade (born 1975, Massachusetts/Oregon) focuses on archetypal male figures: bearded, stoic characters in American landscapes, reminiscent of lumberjacks or Western heroes. Yet his protagonists often look down in shame or appear introspective. Meade confronts the myths of the strong man with a quiet, self-doubting poetry, revealing the hero as a seeker.

## ALEXANDER BASIL

The visual worlds of Alexander Basil (born 1997), who was born in Russia and grew up in Germany, are populated by a recurring "prototype"—bald, with rosy skin, almond-shaped eyes, and ornamental chest hair. This archetype, simultaneously an abstracted self-portrait, appears both in intimate domestic scenes and in a distorted form as an anthropomorphic object. Basil dissects the male subject into aggregate states of the self, which bear witness to humorous self-reflection. Scars, suggesting gender reassignment, lend his figures additional openness and ambivalence.



Nat Meade, *Urge for Going 1*, 2024, Oil on hemp, 45.72 x 40.64 cm, Courtesy of the artist and HESSE FLATOW, New York, Photo: Jenny Gorman



Andrej Dúbravský, *Me as Andrea Dora as Neptune by Bronzino, but with cats*, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 115 cm, photo: Jens Ziehe, Courtesy DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM

## ANDREJ DÚBRAVSKÝ

Slovakian artist Andrej Dúbravský (born 1987) explores sexuality, nature, and youth culture in expressive scenes. Naked "porn boys" frolic in gardens or dystopian landscapes, both ironic and merciless. His works combine homoerotic directness with apocalyptic imagery, creating ambivalent portrayals of masculinity poised between idyll and abyss.

## KYLE DUNN

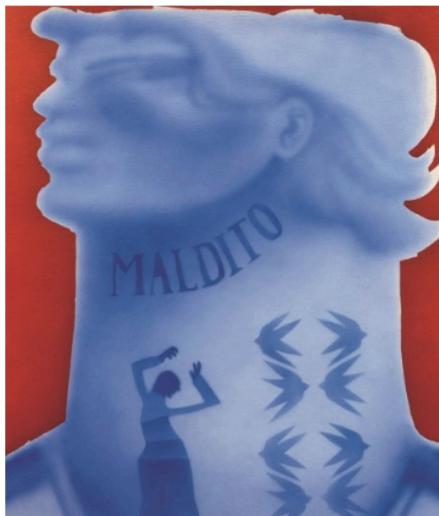
Kyle Dunn (born 1990, USA) draws on homoerotic paintings like those of Paul Cadmus and transposes them into the digital age. His muscular male bodies, often depicted in floating, surreal scenes, are reminiscent of both real models and artificial avatars. Dunn explores themes of desire, technology, and body worship—thus opening up a space for hybrid, posthuman conceptions of masculinity.

**» New visual worlds explore the potential of a masculinity that understands itself as more than strength, but also paint a picture of a battered generation that has lost its self-understanding and whose new self-image has not yet been found. «**

Paula Watzl

# HESSE FLATOW

Watzl, Paula. "Oh Boy! How Painting is Reinventing Masculinity." *Kunstmagazin Parnass*, November 5, 2025. Online.



Leo Guglielmi, *Maldito*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, © Leo Guglielmi, Courtesy the artist

## LEO GUGLIELMI

Born in Italy in 1997, the painter presents large-format portraits of flamboyant male figures. With makeup, tattoos, and erotically provocative poses, he subverts classic macho posturing. Often kneeling, yet gazing proudly, his protagonists radiate a singular individuality. Guglielmi plays with fashion, camp, and physicality, thus staging masculinity as a performative act.

## DEVAN SHIMOYAMA

Devan Shimoyama (born 1989, USA) incorporates glitter, fabrics, and collage into his paintings, portraying Black men in colorful, vibrant scenes. He is particularly known for his images of weeping men getting their hair cut in a barbershop—a traditional site of masculinity. Shimoyama celebrates vulnerability, nurturing, and self-expression, offering a powerful counterpoint to toxic masculinity stereotypes.

## LOUIS FRATINO

Louis Fratino (born 1993, USA) makes his life as a gay man in America the subject of his art. Fratino creates intimate interiors—living rooms, bedrooms, gardens—in which family life, friendships, and homoerotic scenes coexist naturally. His snapshots, which often draw on the styles and color palettes of early 20th-century modernists—Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse—make him highly sought after in the art market.

## DORON LANGBERG

Queer physicality and sensual encounters are also celebrated in the works of Doron Langberg (\*1985, Israel/USA). The New York-based painter is known for his large-format, intensely colored, expressive paintings of gay intimacy.



Louis Fratino, *The red chair*, 2025, Oil, charcoal and pastel on paper, 128.3 x 181 cm, © Louis Fratino, courtesy of Sikkema Malloy Jenkins, New York

# HESSE FLATOW

Watzl, Paula. "Oh Boy! How Painting is Reinventing Masculinity." *Kunstmagazin Parnass*, November 5, 2025. Online.



Alexander Basi, *Untitled*, 2025, oil on canvas, 140 x 120 cm, © the artist, Courtesy Galerie Judin, Berlin, photo: Trevor Good