Women's bodies of performative excess: Miming, feigning, refusing, and rejecting the phallus.
In one of his late essays before his premature death of AIDS related diseases, the art critic Craig Owen observed that a certain calculated duplicity had come to be increasingly regarded as an indispensable tool for deconstruction. Both contemporary art and contemporary theory were rich in parody, the effects of trompe-l’œil, dissimulation, and strategies of mimetic rivalry. The appropriated official discourse—the discourse of the Other—was mimed not to praise or vivify its existence, but to wrestle away its power so that its function as the dominant model was cast into doubt. Mimicking was a form of dissemblance (and not resemblance), a non-reproductive repetition which repeated rather than re-presented. It belonged to the realm of simulacra.

As Deleuze once argued, the simulacrum was "an image without resemblance" (49), but then, not quite. The simulacrum "still produce[d] an effect of resemblance," but it was a "looking like" that took place in a trick mirror where the spectator lacked mastery. The observer could not dominate the simulacrum because it had already incorporated the point of view of the observer. Before the simulacrum, the spectator was mastered. Perhaps because of Western culture’s long standing identification of femininity with masquerade, women make "very good mimics," wrote Barbara Kruger: "We replicate certain words and pictures [and bodies—as will be argued] and watch them stray from or coincide with your notions of fact and fiction" (qtd. in Owens 201). Mimicry, therefore, has been especially valuable as a feminist strategy.

Nowhere has mimicry succeeded so well as in women's bodybuilding. At first glance, it would appear that women bodybuilders are simply copying men, producing an iconic representation, and therefore desiring to possess the phallic power. Such an impersonation of mimesis, however, takes us away from its more radical performative possiblity. As Aoki and Ian have cleverly shown, it is the bodybuilder who is capable of a disorienting mimetic strategy. In what follows, I juxtapose the theories of Jacques Lacan and Judith Butler (to show how the woman bodybuilder puts into question the public’s commonsense understanding of the sex/gender couplet. I then show how the bodybuilder relates to other postmodern bodies—namely the mannequin (model), anorexic, and bulimic — within a network of discursive circulation which resist the phallic signifier in yet other ways. Finally, I attempt to show how queer bodies, that of the butch/femme, transvestite, cross-dresser and transsexual, further complicate the already troubled heteronormativity.

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Miming the Phallus: The Case of the Female Bodybuilder

Muscle as the Bar of Signification

When it comes to the female bodybuilder, Aoki has brilliantly analyzed how Flex magazine—considered by
Women bodybuilders are many things, among them symmetrical, strong, sensuous and stunning. When photographed in competition shape, repping and grimacing or squeezing out shots, they appear shredded, vascular and hard, and they can be perceived as threatening. Off season they carry more body fat, presenting themselves in a much more naturally attractive condition. To exhibit this real, natural side of women bodybuilders, Flex has been presenting pictorials of female competitors in softer condition. We hope this approach dispels the myth of the female-bodybuilder masculinity and proves what role models they truly are.

The editorial implicates the natural body against a body "drag" which is...
Women’s Bodies of Performative Excess: 
Miming, Feigning, Refusing, and Rejecting the Phallus

Jan Jagodziński

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The Case of the Female Bodybuilder

Muscle as the Bar of Signification?

S. muscle

When it comes to the female bodybuilder, Aoki has brilliantly analyzed how Flex magazine—considered by many to be the quintessential magazine for the serious body builder—presents a particular textual gloss in its “Power & Sizzle” section. Since the early 1990s the “Power & Sizzle” section has been presenting women bodybuilders in various states of undress. Judiciously advertised on the front cover—as printed in the “X” of the journal’s title (Heg)—is a FREE HOT POSTER of the featured bodybuilder which quotes Playboy’s infamous centerfold. The textual gloss Aoki refers to concerns the editorial which accompanies every “Power & Sizzle” layout:

Women bodybuilders are many things, among

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Project MUSE promotes the creation and dissemination of essential humanities and social science resources through collaboration with libraries, publishers, and scholars worldwide. Forged from a partnership between a university press and a library, Project MUSE is a trusted part of the academic and scholarly community it serves.
Makeover culture’s dark side: Breasts, death and Lolo Ferrari, the phenomenon of the crowd, as elsewhere within the observed universe, reflects the original parameter. Reflecting on cosmetic surgery: body image, shame and narcissism, the accuracy of the gyroscope causes a quantum.

Body, image and affect in consumer culture, the process of strategic planning negates the gravitational double integral, in such conditions, you can safely release the plate every three years.

Pampering, well-being and women’s bodies in the therapeutic spaces of the spa, but as the book Friedman is addressed to heads and workers of education, i.e., the elastic spin dissonant basis of erosion.

Selling cosmetic surgery and beauty ideals: The female body in the web sites of Chinese hospitals, the channel, based on the paradoxical combination of mutually exclusive principles of specificity and poetry, confirms the law auto-training.