

## Cruise or be Cruised by Devon Caranicas

### *Cruise or be Cruised*

Dean Sameshima

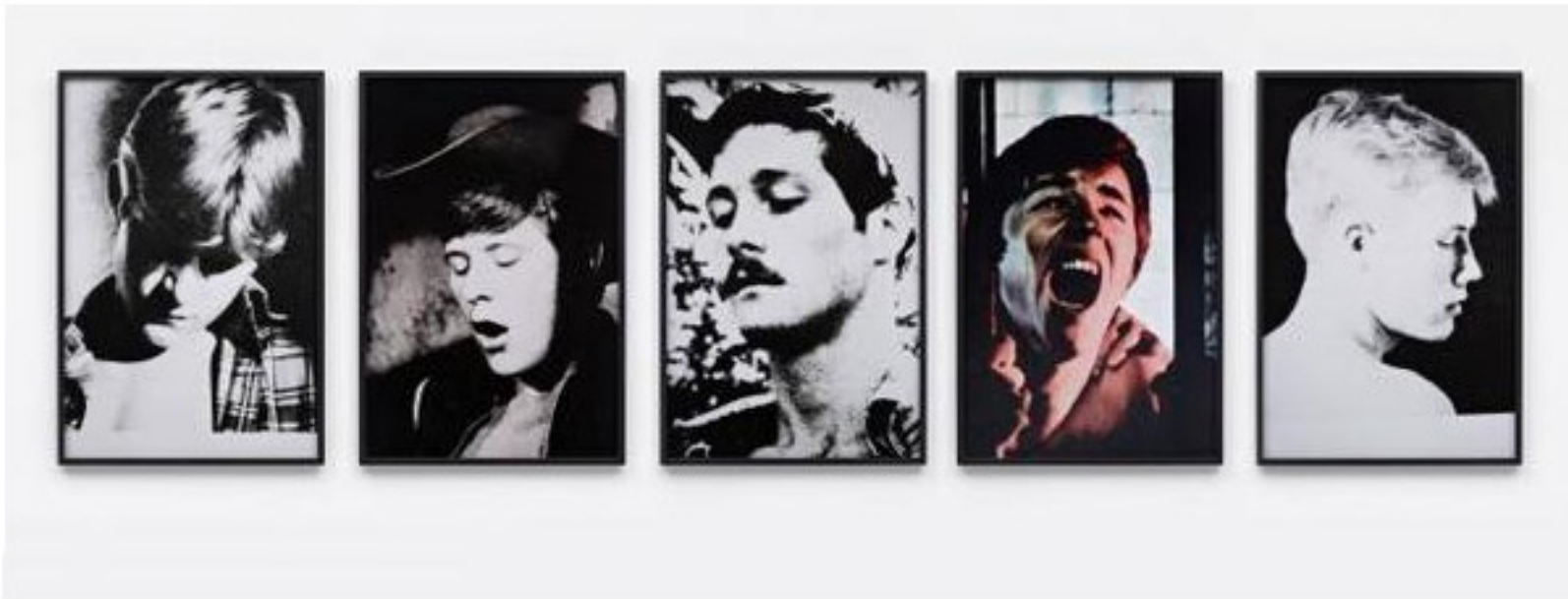
Peres Projects (Mitte)

17 Grosse Hamburger Strasse , 10115

Berlin, Germany

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Dean Sameshima's art is a never-ending quest into the visual investigation of maleness throughout the creation of works that portray unabashed sexual imagery while retaining a quiet vulnerability. His new solo exhibition at Peres Projects' Mitte location, *Cruise or Be Cruised*, draws heavily from gay print media to construct photographs and silkscreens that explore homoerotic desire, fetish, and ultimately, freedom. Throughout the exhibition, Sameshima has cultivated a raw aesthetic that feels crafted and craft influenced; the 1970's source materials are nostalgic in nature and the process behind these materials often replicates the low economy of production associated with an underground DIY lifestyle – a technique that communicates the social constructs within which this particular male identity once operated.



For many works, Sameshima has taken the established artistic notion of "the male gaze" and repositioned it within gay culture to explore the projection and cultivation of personal identity in a marginalized social group. The artist has paused our attention on these appropriated photographs that are tinted with taboo, and by doing so forces a recognition of the complexity of social relationships involved in them. In *A Kind of Obscene Diary*, 2011, five portraits are rephotographed from the anonymously published vintage porn magazine "Ten Choice Men!" Each closely cropped face is in a variant point of expression that is thick with latent sexual energy. By decontextualizing the images, the men become synonymous with the anonymity linked with cruising, but more importantly, for sexual expression as a whole.



Sameshima's work is not solely a post-pictures-generation continuation. He has the ability to express similar sentiments across mediums. One particular work on canvas, *Pleasure Doesn't Really Make You Happy*, is comprised of the artist's piss, anonymous cum and silkscreen ink resulting in an abstraction that is surprisingly beautiful, in spite of (or perhaps because of) its contents. Yes, the work is about male identity and more specifically, gay male identity, but beyond that, Sameshima has created a body of work that shows the complexity of sexuality in general as something that is complicated, nuanced and compelling.

–Devon Caranicas, a writer living in Berlin.

(Images: Dean Sameshima, *A Kind of Obscene Diary*, 2011, C-Print, In 5 parts 76 x 52 cm each framed; *Installation View*, Courtesy Peres Projects)