

The Sporting Life: Statement

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Taken from an online collection of early 20th century glass plates, these digital montages explore the restricted world of male homosocial environments. Photographs of young men in athletic or leisurely poses are superimposed on desolate backgrounds. The images of the young men are often multiplied and arranged on the page as to suggest a kind of movement, or dance taking place. Their poses reflect a sense of naivety about their seeming sexuality in front of the camera. The images themselves are trying to explore a male-male desire that homosocial environments of the time, such as sports, boarding school, universities, the military and even boy scouts, seemed to welcome.

Writings by Eve K. Sedgwick on the topic of homosociality explain the immanence of men's same-sex bonds. Such bonds, and the desire they produce can take many forms, and so there is a continuum between homosocial and homosexual. However, in our society, this male continuum is constructed to differentiate clearly between these desires and to discourage the formation of the later. Artists like Collier Schorr explore this concept in her photographs of high school wrestlers. Her explanation that the homosocial bonds between these young men is an integral part of their sexuality is supported by her observation of the young men, and their being unaware of, or still playing with their "sexiness." This unknowing, or at least inactive desire is the dynamic I am interesting in exploring.