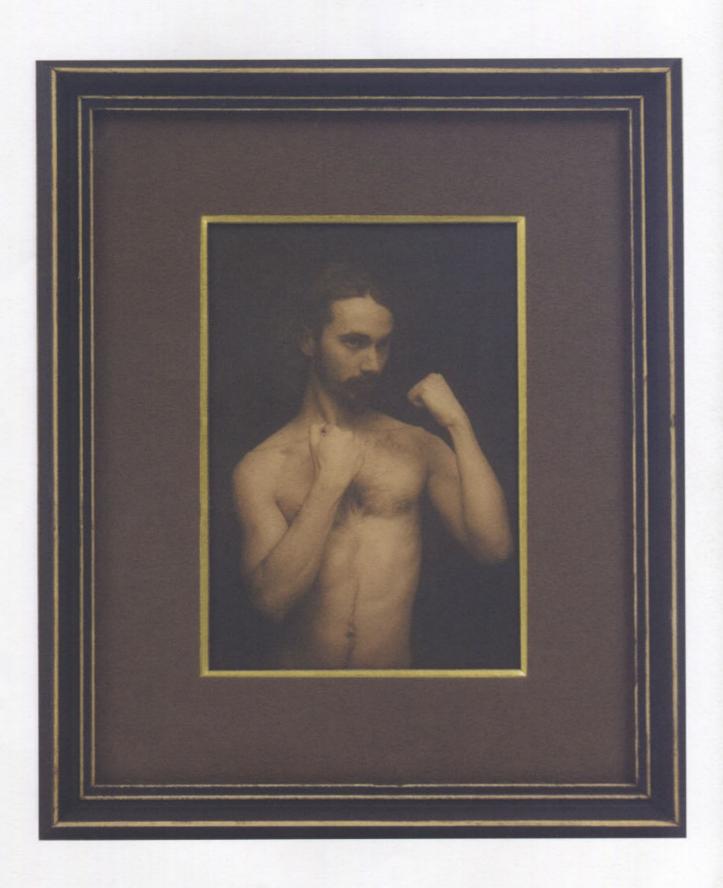
PHYSIQUE PICTORIAL 57

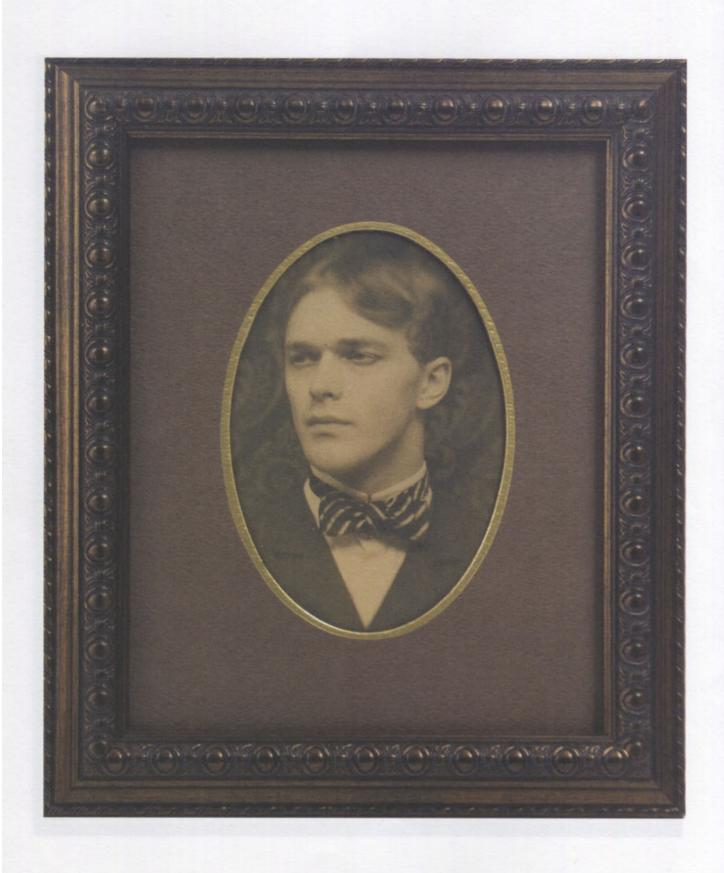
OFFICIAL QUARTERLY OF THE BOB MIZER FOUNDATION

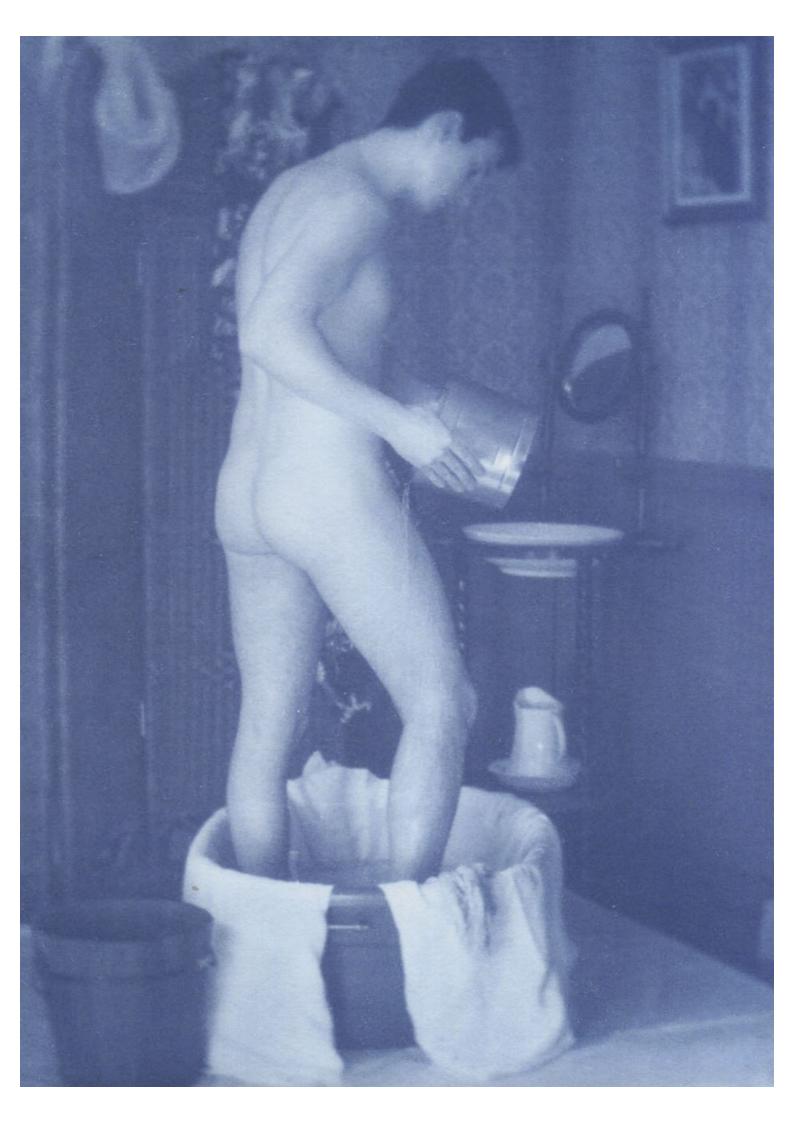
SUMMER 2021

\$30

CURTICE TAYLOR

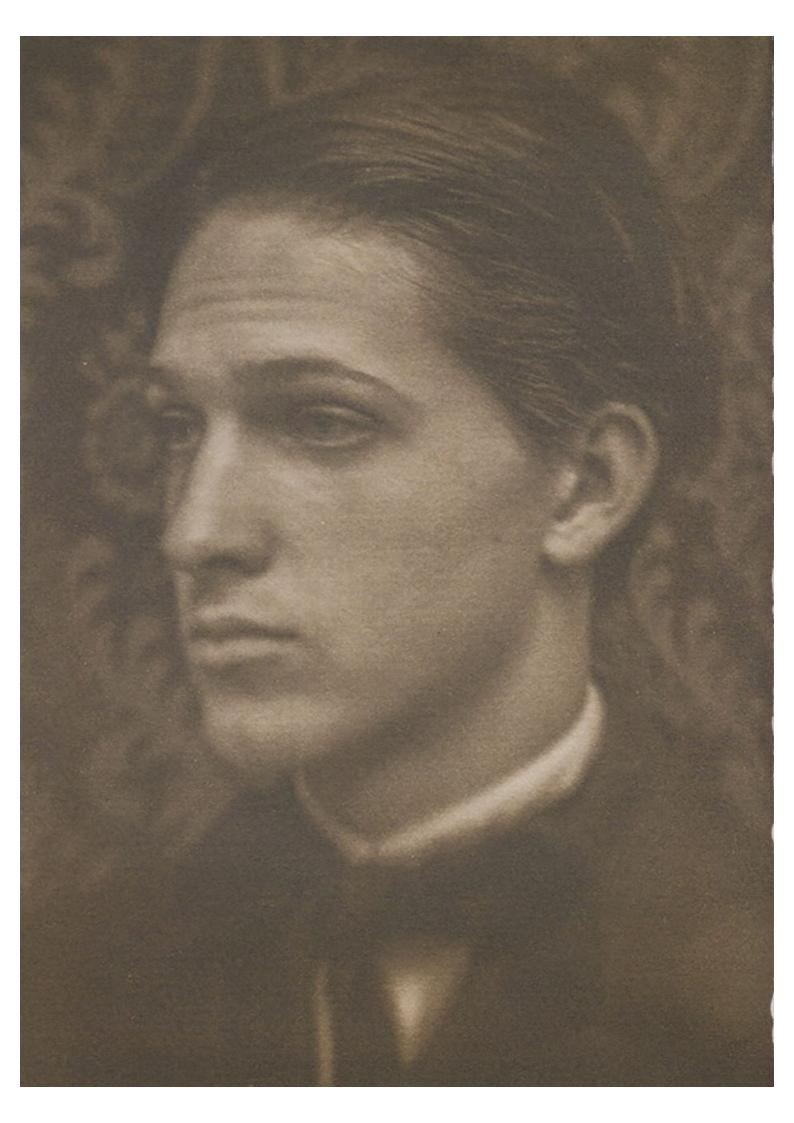














CURTICE TAYLOR has been a teacher and artist for

nearly 40 years, known for his garden photography and for his recent cyanotype images that evoke the past. He is 6'4" and an Aquarius with Pisces rising.

Your recent work is clearly influenced by the past. Do you use vintage techniques as well, or is it more about evoking imagery that is timeless?

Indeed, the work is rooted in the past-not just in the imagery itself but the technical aspects as well. I started out using a large-format camera for this series, but found it cumbersome and, frankly, too expensive. (An 8" x 10" sheet of film runs about \$8 before development). So these are a mix of analog and digital. At each session, I use both a medium-format camera and a digital SLR: I either scan those smaller negatives or use digital images to load them into Photoshop in order to make large negatives, which are printed on an acetate-like medium. The negative is made to the size of the end-result photo. I print the negative using the sun or ultraviolet lights on a sensitized watercolor paper. Exposures can take from five to 15 minutes. The print is washed in running water and the result is the blue cyanotype like you see in a few of these images. More often than not, however, I tone those images in tannic acid to transform them into brownish images.

Do you have any memories of first encountering physique photography like Bob Mizer's?

I did not see "physical culture" magazines until the 1980s, when they became collectibles. I collected a few of the small 5" x 7" issues and was an avid reader of STH-Straight to Hell-which featured male nudes from the 1950s and '60s and perhaps some of Bob's images, too.

Are you classically trained?

I went to UCLA to study film, but after a few years realized that working in that art form required 30% skills and 70% fundraising to create it. A photographer, noticing my skinny self at an opening, approached me and said, "You have great bones—can I photograph you?" The next day, she had me naked climbing trees in a local park. We became very good friends and I more or less lived with her and her family while continuing my college studies at SUNY Purchase. She taught me the toning of those prints to transfer the black-andwhite images to softer browns.

Your images, though they harken back to a dif-

ferent era, have more freedom to use nudity.

They had the freedom to document nudity back then, but they were safest if they put the images in historic settings. Von Gloeden is a prime example—he put his boys in togas and sandals, surrounded by ancient urns and crumbling walls, thus referencing ancient Greece and Rome. While they were prudish in the Victorian era, male nudity could be depicted in context. As the series matures, I want to move on from what this photographer did create to what he could have created had there been more freedom from the sodomy laws in the U.K. and U.S. Walt Whitman in later years edited out many of his most erotic passages in order to protect his legacy and not be labeled as queer. That is so tragic.

Are your wonderful frames a part of your artistic statement?

The frames give images more heft and help set them in time. Not all are real vintage frames as we wanted to make some of the images more affordable. A good vintage frame can add considerably to the price of an image. Fortunately, there are modern knock-offs that almost pass for real and sell for less.

As an educator, how do you see photography changing in an age where nearly everyone has the basic tools to take at least high-quality photographs? Is everyone with a camera a photographer, an artist?

When I first started teaching, black-and-white was the main medium, but color printing was also required. Back then, I could tell my photo students about at least 10 good papers to print on. Now, there are many fewer. Non-digital color paper, I think Fuji is all you can get. Students have lost the physical part of photography, which is why alternative processes like the ones I use have become so popular at art schools all over.

What do you hope your images say to viewers? I want the series to not just skirt the erotic or sensual, but to attempt to convey the longing of the photographer—a longing that the times forbade.

You can explore more of Curtice online: curticetaylor.com and on IG @curticetaylor



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: Cyanotype print toned with ammonia and tannic acid, © Curtice Taylor, 2020 Courtesy of the artist and ClampArt, New York City, www.clampart.com