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Art in Review

Male

Work From the Collection
of Vince Aletti

White Columns
320 West 13th Street, West Village
Through March 29

Vince Aletti is many things: a former rock critic and editor, an independent curator, a photography critic and a zealous archivist of fashion magazines. He is also a discerning collector with no

budget to speak of and a single focus: photographs and other art depicting the male face and body.

For this fascinating show Mr. Aletti has selected and tellingly installed a small portion of his holdings, filling four large walls. The images include Rodchenko's famous portrait of the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky; the discreet eroticism of Wilhelm von Gloeden and George Platt Lynes; soft-core pornography by Bruce Bellas (known as Bruce of Los Angeles); and anonymous pictures of body builders.

There are expected names: William Klein, Nan Goldin, Peter Hujar, Justine Kurland and Bill Jacobson. There are also surprises, like a 1910 photograph of a young boy by Lewis Hine, the most visually sensitive of early photography's social muckrakers. Nearby, a second Hine photograph could almost be taken for the same boy 15 years later, now a handsome mechanic who looks as if he stepped out of "Chariots of Fire."

The ensemble has many themes, foremost the variety of beauty, love and sexual attraction. The ancillary shows provide wonderful contrasts: a display of the latest, diverse additions to the collection of Robert Nickas, another acquisitive independent curator and critic; late '70s nude self-portrait photographs by the artist-turned-art-dealer Janice Guy (of the Chelsea gallery Murray Guy), creating a closed loop that excludes the male gaze; and a little display of art about Michael Jackson, organized by Studio Voltaire in London and centered on 36 feverish portrait drawings by Dawn Mellor.

ROBERTA SMITH