

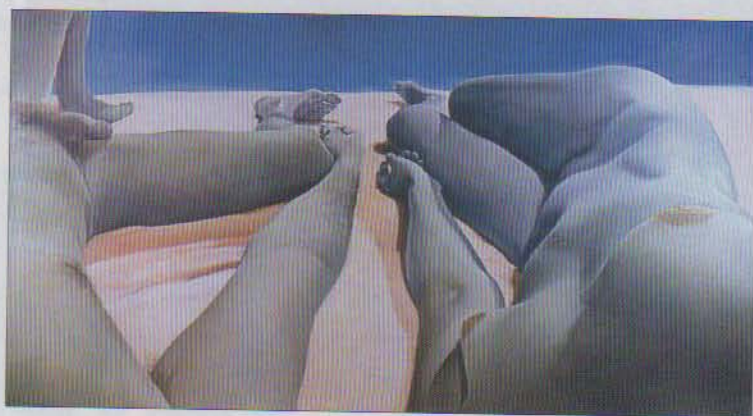
The Great American (Male) Nude

Turning the tables on art-historical tradition, more women artists are depicting the naked male body

BY LILLY WEI

charged portraits of male nudes that parody the male gaze. Some she presents with eyes closed, arms behind their heads, legs apart, mimicking a classic female nude pose. *Penis* (2006), an anatomically correct, crisply drawn close-up of

BELOW *Mike, Private Property, New Paltz, NY, 2003*, by Katy Grannan.



the body part, offers an upending of Gustave Courbet's *Origin of the World* (1866), an unblinking look at the male phallus that is both real and theatrical, perversely clinical but with an undertone of heat, appealing to the voyeur—and exhibitionist—in all of us.

Other artists find more subtle ways to critique the objectifying gaze, to make pictures about sex that are not about power and subjugation. **Joan Semmel** is best known for her ongoing series of almost photorealistic nude self-portraits—a re-possession of the female body from the male gaze and a meditation on time and its effects. But she has also depicted male nudes and, in the '70s, created suites of paintings that show her

ABOVE **Placing the male and female on equal footing, Joan Semmel's painting *Intimacy-Autonomy*, 1974.**