Giving Attitudes:
Living Statues and the Origins of Physique Posing 1708-1830

by K. Mitchell Snow

When Arnold Schwarzenegger "sailed into a perfect imitation" of Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker* the packed audience for the Whitney Museum of American Art's symposium *Articulate Muscle: The Male Body in Ar*t in 1975 reportedly broke into wild applause.[1] Here was an illustration of the thesis that the event's promoter, Charles Gaines, sought to validate. Bodybuilders, the author of *Pumping Iron* proposed, were contemporary master sculptors working in human flesh rather than marble and bronze.[2] Writing for *Sports Illustrated*, Katherine Lowery described Frank Zane, who, along with Ed Corney, had also posed, as looking "as if someone had magic-wanded a perfect marble statue into flesh."[3] The art historians on hand were less favorable in their judgments. Colin Eisler of New York University's Institute of Fine Arts dismissed their posing as "the personification of 19th century camp."[4]

Eisler, a specialist in early Netherlandish art, was an odd choice to comment on the classical sculptural tradition, or its neoclassical revival in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Lowery came closer to capturing the long-standing historical relationship between classical statuary and physique posing when she declared, "If one doesn't accept body building as fine art, posing should at least be considered a performing art."[5]

Entertainers performing as statues had been engaging audiences since well before modern bodybuilding began. The earliest reference we have comparing performing artists to the statuary of the classical world predates the oft cited comparisons of late-nineteenth century strongman Eugen Sandow by more than a millennia. Libanius, the fourth century CE sophist critic, praised Roman-era pantomime dancers—soloists, mostly male, who wordlessly performed all of the roles in what was typically a tragedy from mythological sources, backed by singers and musicians—for surpassing the era's visual artists.[6] He claimed the pantomime dancer made it possible to see "all the gods on stage, for he does not imitate them by means of stone but represents them in his own self, in such a way that even the best of sculptors would yield the first place to the dancers in a contest of statuary beauty."[7] Classicist Ismene Lada-Richards proposes that one of the "thrills of pantomime entertainment would have consisted in watching the dancer's flowing movement stilled for a digit of time" as the performer became a statue—much as a contemporary bodybuilder hits and momentarily holds a pose before transitioning to another—"and then artfully resumed" his dancing.[8]

Much like the male dancers in classical ballet today, the pantomime dancers were expected to perform athletic leaps and rapid turns, feats that were also useful on the battlefield.[9] They trained alongside the elite youth of the late imperial Rome in the same gymnasiums. Their training was such that at least one of the pantomime dancers made a mid-career switch to the gladiatorial arena.[10] According to classicist Ruth Webb, the audience for pantomime dancers shared much more in common with today's sports fans than they did with today's audience for dance: "From the late second century CE, most pantomime performances were staged as contests between two or more dancers, and the star performers attracted fanatical followers."[11] Even the chariot racing factions—the Blues, Greens, Reds and Whites—of cities such as Rome and Constantinople had their own "team" pantomime dancers.[12]

Theater historian David Wiles laments how little we know of non-literary performing traditions from Roman times, but we can be

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assured pantomime dancing was immensely popular.[13] A part of what we do know derives from laws enacted to regulate the unruly crowds attracted by its performances.[14] Pantomime dancing was so popular that it survived the fall of Rome by centuries. The medieval world used one Latin word *ludi* to describe everything from sports to drama, often making it difficult to determine what exactly was entertaining the populace in any given reference.[15] Still, at the beginning of the twelfth century we have evidence that a pantomime evoking the goddess Venus was being performed in France. Even later, kings and their retinues would ritually enter a city through triumphal arches decorated with "unpredictable" living statue performers who fixed the attention of their audience.[16]

In England, forces aligned early in the eighteenth century to consciously emulate the traditions of the Roman world, reviving the pantomime and leading to the performances of what were then called "attitudes" in both elite and popular settings. Samuel Johnson's watershed *Dictionary* first printed in London in 1755 advises that an attitude represented "the posture or action in which a statue or painted figure is placed."[17]

Theater historian Joseph Roach traces the popularity of statue-derived attitudes in England to the operatic performances of the *castrato* Nocolini Grimaldi, known as Nicolino, who first performed in London in 1708-09.[18] Nicolino sang in Italian, relying on his repertoire of expressive poses to convey his meaning. In a January 1709 issue of *The Tattler,* drama critic Richard Steele noted that "[t]here is scarce a beautiful posture in an old statue which he does not plant himself in, as the different circumstances of the story give occasion for it."[19]

At a remove of more than three centuries, it is challenging to imagine what kind of antique statue poses Nicolino, likely dressed in a powdered wig and a full-skirted, knee length frock coat, might have used to convey the meaning of his lyrics to his English audience. It is not in the athletic nudes that we should seek illumination, but the statues of toga clad orators. Art historian Arline Meyer points out that the eighteenth century "hand in waistcoat" pose—think of Napoleon with his hand tucked inside his clothing—originated in an assertion of Aeschines of Macedon in the fourth century BCE. In a speech familiar to upper-class English schoolboys, he argued that the statue raised to Solon in the marketplace of Salamis demonstrated that "the arm inside the cloak was the decorous gesture of decent public men."[20] By 1738, a treatise on *Genteel Behaviour* asserted that this pose denoted "manly boldness tempered with modesty."[21] It was such nuanced, yet fully understood, gestures like this that bore meaning for Nicolino's audience.

Slightly later, British dancing master John Weaver began composing pieces "in imitation of" Roman pantomime dancing, that he staged "as a way of restoring an art that has fallen into decay."[22] On one front, Weaver's productions influenced the future course of classical ballet; on another, of popular theatre. In its theatrical form, early British pantomime typically alternated between serious scenes that were sung and comic scenes performed by the silent Harlequin character drawn from Italian

Gerard van der Gucht's frontispiece for the 1735 third edition of James Morris's verse satire on contemporary English theater, *Harlequin Horace*, depicts pantomime actor John Rich in character as Harlequin (center) and Punch forcibly ejecting fine art, represented by Apollo, from the British stage. Courtesy University of Cambridge Repository.

commedia dell'arte.[23] Harlequin sometimes masqueraded as Mercury in such "scandalous" works as the 1717 *Perseus and Andromeda,* and Mercury would become a favorite persona adopted by fairground performers.

By the mid-eighteenth century a steady stream of acting manuals began to issue from English presses and their authors consistently agreed that the study of both classical literature and artworks were central to a successful acting career.[24] In his 1775 *The Elements of Dramatic Criticism*, William Cooke offered specific statues that merited study by the theatrical community. He directed men to the *Farnese Hercules*, the *Apollo Belvedere*, and the *Fighting and Dying Gladiators*, among others; while he pointed women to the *Venus de Medici*, the *Venus Callipyge*, *Diana*, *Flora*, and the *Three Graces* "as some of the most perfect in their kind, in their various expressions."[25] All of these statues would become standard components of living statue acts over the ensuing years.

François Perrier's book of engravings, *Segmenta Nobilium Signorum et Statuarum*, published in 1638, was the first book showing the statues of Ancient Greece and Rome and helped create an accepted canon for ancient statuary. *The Borghese Gladiator*, shown here, may also be interpreted as a swordsman attacking a mounted opponent. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

The formation of a kind of canon of classical sculpture reflected in Cooke's book predated neoclassicism by more than a century. François Perrier's 1638 *Segmenta* gathered his renditions of famous classical sculptures in book form that proved to be enormously popular.[26] It was reprinted multiple times to meet public demand by century's end. One of the few works to join the canon set by Perrier was the *Discobolus*, uncovered by the Massimo family in 1781 at its villa on Rome's Esquiline Hill during the formative years of Neoclassicism. These statues were widely reproduced and copies could be found in private and public collections and parks throughout Europe.

It is against this background that the modern "attitude" developed as an independent mode of performance not necessarily tethered to a narrative form of theater. It could be presented as a *pose plastique*, or living statue, or its fraternal twin a *tableaux vivant*, or living picture, depending on its original source.

The best documented, and by far the most deeply studied, proponent of the late eighteenth century attitude was the courtesan who called herself Emma Hart, the future Lady Hamilton. Writing about the Neapolitan home of British ambassador Lord William Hamilton in March of 1787, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe waxed rhapsodic about her performances there: "One beholds here in perfection, in movement, in ravishing variety, all that the greatest of artists have rejoiced to be able to produce."[27]

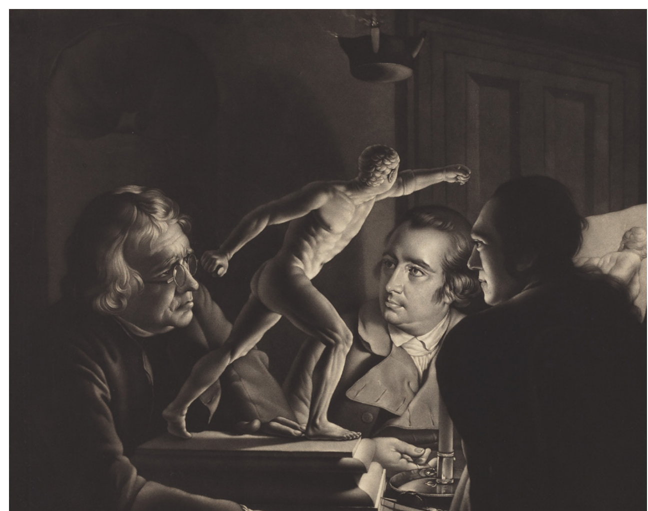
Goethe's description of Hart's attitudes makes it clear that she was more than passingly familiar with the host of classical antiquities that had become the common currency of elite discourse at the time. His report that Lord Hamilton "holds the light for her, and enters into the exhibition with his whole soul," also demonstrates in a less explicit form that Hart wished to emphasize her performance as a work of art in its own right. Diarist Melesina Chenevix St. George Trench provided more detail on the high contrast environment in which Hart desired her attitudes to be seen "with a strong light to her left, and every other window closed."[28] It would appear that another early component of Hart's performance accessories, a kind of posing box, was specifically designed to produce exactly this effect. Goethe described it as "standing upright, open in front, painted black inside;"

Pietro Antonio Novelli (1729-1804) was a well-known Italian painter and engraver. Emma Hart, who married British ambassador William Hamilton, gave performances at their home in Naples, Italy, in which she duplicated the attitudes or postures of classical statues. Novelli undoubtedly saw her perform and immortalized her act by creating this well-known set of engravings, now called *The Attitudes of Lady Hamilton*. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

it proved too "heavy to remove and set up in a proper light" and was abandoned early in Hart's career.[29] Sandow would resurrect something very like Hart's posing box more than a century later, this time lit with newly available incandescent light bulbs, to ensure better display of his musculature.[30]

Theater historian Kristen Holmström, proposed that Hart's lighting scheme derived from the fashion of nocturnal, torchlit tours of sculpture galleries during the 1780s. Given that Hart had extensive experience as an artist's model prior to her encounter with Lord Hamilton, she had first-hand knowledge of their professional practices and it is more likely that this was what informed her performance style. Art academies regularly assigned their students the task of capturing classical statues in high-contrast light and this became part of their approach to making art. Joseph Wright of Derby's evocations of this practice in *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight* (1765) and *Academy by Lamplight* (1769, second version 1771) deftly illuminate its dramatic potential, the resultant shadows modeling the human form in high relief.

In a much clearer instance of Hart wishing to present her performance as an artistic creation in its own right, Goethe also specified that her posing box was completed by a "splendid" golden frame. For Goethe, this allowed Lord Hamilton "to gratify his taste by beholding her as a bright inimitable picture."[31]



William Pether, engraving after the original oil painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight*, 1769. The viewer in glasses on the left has been identified by some authors as a self portrait of Wright. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, the Paul Mellon Fund, Washington, DC.

William Pether, engraving after the original oil painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, *An Academy by Lamplight*, 1772. Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Like the high contrast performing environment, the idea of literally framing a living statue performer as an independent piece of artwork survived and would appear repeatedly in the performances of living statue performers well into the twentieth century.

Art historian Edward Lucie-Smith asserts that itinerant strongmen clad in animal skins in imitation of Hercules were standard figures on European fairgrounds at the same time that Hart was entertaining her elite audiences.[32] It is unlikely these men were readers of acting manuals or were privy to written reports of Lady Hamilton's attitudes. Nor were they likely to present themselves at the home of the Duke of Richmond to study his collection of plaster casts of classical sculptures as Cooke recommended.[33] "Elite" entertainments at the time, however, were quite diverse. Their entr'actes and afterpieces called upon multiple talents. Steele's review of Nicolino opens with the observation that attendance at the opera on the evening he was there was "thin" because "the tumbler was not to make his appearance that night."[34] As participants in a highly competitive marketplace it is likely fairground performers were both exposed to and aware of any innovations that occurred in public entertainment and updated their presentations accordingly.

Lucie-Smith noted that in all probability fairground strongmen used fleshings beneath their costumes because the "rules for public nudity in life were complex and often contradictory." These tightly fitting bodysuits gave the impression of human skin without actually exposing the body. An 1804 broadside of the Paduan giant, strongman and conjurer Giovanni Battista Belzoni, who had arrived in England as the "Patagonian Sampson" the year before depicts him in animal skins and gladiator sandals, a costume that would become iconic for circus strongmen.[35] Lines around his neck and wrists suggest that fleshings were indeed part of his costume. By the time Belzoni departed England around 1813, eventually to pursue what proved to be a highly successful career putting his strength to use as a tomb raider in Egypt, his strongman act featured "several striking Attitudes."[36] According to a poster advertising his act, his attitudes were drawn "from the most

William Hogarth, *Southwark Fair,* 1733/1734. The entertainment opportunities available at this 1733 fair include allusions to the classical, with an image of the Trojan horse advertising a drama. Immediately to its right is a banner promoting an appearance by Adam and Eve, whose representation by living statue performers a century later would provoke controversy. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection.

Unknown artist, *Mr. Ricketts Bearing his Apprentice in the Attitude of A Flying Mercury*, detail from a poster announcing the 4 August 1797 appearance of Ricketts's Circus. Courtesy Houghton Library, Harvard University.

admired antique statues; amongst others the celebrated Fighting Gladiator" he also presented poses inspired in the labors of Hercules.

Male imitators of classical gods weren't limited to performing strongmen, nor were they confined to Europe. In 1793 when English equestrian John B. Ricketts opened his multi-act circus in Philadelphia, the first documented in the Anglo-Americas, he starred in the "attitude of MERCURY" in which he leapt "from his horse to the ground and with the same spring remounts with his face towards the horse's tail."[37] A few days later, he bounded back onto the saddle, then hoisted a young apprentice "on his shoulders IN THE ATTITUDE OF MERCURY. Standing on two horses, in full Gallop."[38] Ricketts began using Mercury as a kind of trademark, adorning his permanent circus building in Philadelphia with a weathervane of himself riding as Mercury.[39]

In *The Shows of London* (1978) literary scholar Richard Altick designated equestrian acrobat Andrew Ducrow, as the "inventor of the pose plastique," though, as the examples of Belzoni and Ricketts illustrate, male statue posing was already a presence on the fairgrounds.[40] Ducrow's father Peter, known as the "Flemish Hercules," had incorporated his son into his shows as a child. According to Charles Dickens's biography of Ducrow, Peter trained him "with an understanding that any mistake that he might make, or any accident that might happen, would be promptly followed by bodily chastisement of a most merciless kind."[41] The result was a fearless equestrian performer also adept at vaulting, tumbling, slack and tight rope, balancing, fencing, and boxing. Half a decade after Ricketts carried a young rider in the attitude of Mercury atop his horses in the US, the five-year-old "INFANT HERCULES" appeared in the same pose atop one of his father's riders when the family troupe appeared in Hull on 25 October 1798.[42] Andrew reincorporated the Mercury pose into his stunt riding act in his teens and substantially expanded his statuary repertory as he continued performing.

Based on French and British reviews from that period, circus historian Arthur Hartley Saxon provided a reconstruction of a performance known as the "Carnival of Venice," which concluded with

> Another Proteus-like change . . . accomplished by another startling contrast, this time the athletic and graceful attitudes of Adonis . . . with his bow, including an amazing feat of equilibrium when Ducrow standing on one toe, leaned out over the sides of the horse and seemed genuinely on the verge of taking flight. Finally, at the moment he let fly the arrow he assumed the pose of the *Apollo Belvedere*, while the applause from the ecstatic spectators came down like thunder. The changes of costume and accessories were made without Ducrow's once quitting his horse.[43]

Ducrow did set himself apart with one innovation that likely earned him his position as an "inventor." When circus historian T. Alston Brown described Ricketts' Mercury attitude in 1860 he specified that "he never offended the eye by ungraceful postures or by the nude style of dressing [i.e. fleshings and leotards] that now prevails at the circus. His costumes were like that of the actors on the stage–pantalets, trunks full disposed, and neat cut jacket–which were sufficient to make ample display of his figure for all purposes of agility and grace."[44] According to historian David Webster, during a family tour to Scotland when Ducrow was in his teens, "the noted anatomist Dr. Bartlett

This engraving by T.C. Wageman portrays Andrew Ducrow as the showy horseman who created acts on horseback that are still seen in the circus today. Courtesy The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

saw the young circus star and told his anatomy students to go see the act so they could study the perfect human body."[45] By the close of the 1820s, it appears Ducrow began to present himself wearing little more than fleshings to facilitate just such gazing.

German prince Hermann Ludwig Heinrich von Pückler-Muskau described Ducrow's performance of his living statue routine, without horses, in Dublin in October of 1828 as:

> a high enjoyment to a lover of art, and far surpasses the 'Tableaux' which are in such favour on the continent. When the curtain draws up, you see a motionless statue on a lofty pedestal in the centre of the stage. This is Ducrow; and it is hardly credible how an elastic dress can fit so exquisitely and so perfectly represent marble, only here and there broken by a bluish vein. He appeared first as the Hercules Farnese. With the greatest skill and precision he then gradually quitted his attitude from one gradation to another, of display of strength; but at the moment in which he presented a perfect copy of the most celebrated statues of antiquity, he suddenly became fixed as if changed to marble. Helmet, sword, and shield, were now given to him, and transformed him in a moment into the wrathful Achilles, Ajax, and other Homeric heroes. Then came the Discobolus and others, all equally perfect and true. The last was the attitude of the fighting Gladiator, succeeded by a master representation of the dying Gladiator. This man must be an admirable model for painters and sculptors: his form is faultless, and he can throw himself into any attitude with the utmost ease and grace. . . . It gave me pain to see this fine artist, (for he certainly merits no less a name,) ride nine horses at once, in the character of a Chinese sorcerer; drive twelve at once in that of a Russian courier; and lastly, go to bed with a poney [sic] dressed as an old woman.[46]

The performance von Pückler-Muskau witnessed in Dublin seems to have provided the basis for a full-scale theatrical work known as *Raphael's Dream! Or the Mummy & Study of Living Pictures* (1830), which premiered at Astley's Amphitheatre in London.[47] It was narrated by an actor portraying Raphael who guided audiences through his personal art collection as embodied by Ducrow. At one point in the proceedings, a servant interrupted the artist to advise him that a new frame had arrived. Raphael had it set up in his studio so Ducrow could occupy its confines to present the remainder of his statue interpretations. As cultural historian Elena Stevens points out, the narration "tended to give the impression that each of Ducrow's characters was linked with, or exemplified by, one particular character trait," heroic strength in the case of Hercules, lightness in that of Mercury, "and Ducrow's immobile representations corroborated this impression."[48]

Stevens describes Ducrow's performance in *Raphael's Dream!* as having abridged "the Classics, facilitating broader access to ancient and mythological works" for his largely lower class audience.[49] Nonetheless, William the Fourth, who was certainly afforded an elite education, had a pavilion erected at Brighton

specifically so he could enjoy Ducrow's living statue performance, along with his equestrian feats, in royal privacy.[50]

"Old Cerberus," the pseudonymous theatrical reviewer for *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, encapsulated Ducrow's attitudes in *Raphael's Dream!* as:

> the most wonderful thing we ever saw. We need not say of the sort, for they are altogether unique; no man ever attempted any thing like them before, and no man will ever be able to do any thing half so good again. We have had actors and actresses, who acquired celebrity by their talents in melodrama and pantomime, but the very best of them were uncouth, unenlightened, and vulgar, compared with Ducrow.[51]

Strength athletes were just as willing as Ducrow to match their imitative talents with the sculptors of antiquity for the benefit of their British audiences. Two performing strongmen and one "teacher of gymnastic exercises" were hailed as "three remarkable foreigners" in the 1 February 1823 edition of London's *Literary Review*, that advised the "professors and lovers of the Fine Arts" to take note of their arrival.[52] The unnamed author assured his readers that the strongmen had "exhibited themselves, and sat as models to artists of great reputation abroad and at various continental academies of the Fine Arts." There they had been acclaimed for the "beauty and grandeur of their forms, and the spirit and genius with which they display them in attitudes, similar to those of the finest of the antique statues which have descended to us, and in others of a great and energetic character."

The three of them had appeared separately "at the rooms of Mr. Henry Sass . . . before his scholars and many other persons who had assembled there, including, on the day first mentioned, several Members of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts." The author's particular favorite "M. [Charles] Roussel [sic] . . . *L'Hercule du Nord*" had been the most recent visitor to Sass's preparatory school for postulants to the Royal Academy. There, Rousselle

> successively placed himself in the attitudes of the fighting and dying gladiators, to the Hercules Farnese and other antique statues, as well as in that of the Atlas of Michael Angelo [sic]; and he rapidly threw himself into numerous postures of his own invention, representing athletes or warriors engaged in combat or expiring; and into others of an equally fine character, which excited the admiration of the judicious and enlightened assembly and merited the applause which was bestowed on him.

His competition at this exhibition was provided by "plaster casts of many antique statues" that surrounded him in Sass's schoolroom. The author did not specify the statues in the collection, but Sass had singled out the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Farnese Hercules* for praise during his 1817 visit to Italy, so copies of these works were likely among their number.[53] Sass's plaster casts provided Rousselle's observers "a fair opportunity . . . of comparing his form with that of several of those so much celebrated; and it is but justice to observe, that although he might in some instances appear inferior in that which has been made ideal beauty, yet he excelled in energy and expression."[54]

Two weeks later, Sass himself took to the pages of the *Literary Review* to argue for the superiority of physical education instructor Phokhion-Heinrich Clias over Rousselle:

Unknown artist, *Mr. Ducrow as Adonis Going to the Chase* (Undated print published by M & M Skelt). Courtesy Houghton Library, Harvard University.

François Joseph Bosio, *Hercules Fighting Acheloos Transformed into a Snake*, 1824. Edmond Desbonnet identified Charles Rousselle as Bosio's model for Hercules in *The Kings of Strength*. Courtesy of the Louvre Museum, Paris.

> The form of M. Clias is by far the most perfect of the three, or indeed of any who have ever been exhibited in England. In him we discover all those markings which we see in the antique figures, of the correctness of which there had been expressed such doubts, because they could not be seen in the dissected subject . . . from their bodies not being sufficiently developed by a regular system of scientific exercises, such as M. Clias has practiced from the example of the Greeks.
>
> The form of M. Roussel [sic], whom I afterwards exhibited at my house . . . partakes greatly of the character of the Hercules Farnese, and which a celebrated sculptor said he had never thought true to nature until he saw M. Roussel [sic].
>
> The upper part of the figure of M. Debrayat [sic?] . . . is the form of Jove himself. It would be difficult to imagine any thing more grand.
>
> Thus it has been my good fortune to introduce to my brother artists' admiration living examples of three characters of Grecian sculpture — beautiful simple Nature, Heroic, and Divine.[55]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, artists were pointing to athletes as proof that classical statuary was based on living individuals rather than imagined ideals. Their ideological precursor Johann Winckelmann had asserted in his 1755 *Gedanken über die Nachahmung dar griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture) that it was by exercise that the Greeks "got the great and manly contour observed in their statues" and that their gymnasia were "schools of art."[56] At century's close, Sandow, Edmond Desbonnet and their colleagues inverted this formula and pointed to classical statuary as evidence of human potential.

Regardless of where they performed, Lady Hamilton in her elite home; Belzoni, Ricketts and Ducrow on fairgrounds and circuses; or Clias, Debrayat and Rousselle in both popular and elite venues, they forged identifiable places for themselves within the culture of their time. Ducrow in particular achieved widespread celebrity status as a performer and, as unparalleled as his supporters thought him to be, sparked a host of imitators throughout Europe and in the United States. They too adopted Ducrow's fleshings for their performances. When professional female statue posers, clad in the same skin tight outfits, joined forces with the men in the 1840s controversy ensued, but that did not prevent statue posing from proliferating throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. A living statue concept even provided the plot for the record-breaking run of the Broadway musical *Adonis* (1884). It was in an afterpiece for its 1893 revival—one of several for this musical—that Sandow made his US debut.[57]

Notes

1. Katherine Lowery, "The Show of Muscles at the Whitney was Vitiated by Academic Flabbiness," *Sports Illustrated* (7 June 1975): 4.

2. John D. Fair, *Mr. America: The Tragic History of a Bodybuilding Icon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 229.
3. Lowery, “Show of Muscles,” 4.
4. Cited in Fair, *Mr. America*, 229.
5. Lowery, “Show of Muscles,” 7.
6. See Edith Hall, “Pantomime: Visualizing Myth in the Roman Era,” in *Performance in Greek and Roman Theater*, ed. George Harrison and Vayos Liapis (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 466, for an overview of the evidence for female performers.
7. Translated in Ismene Lada-Richards, “ΜΥθων Εἰκών: Pantomime Dancing and the Figurative Arts in Imperial and Late Antiquity,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* Third Series, 12, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 18.
8. Ibid., 23.
9. W. J. Slater, “Three Problems in the History of Drama,” Phoenix 47, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 189-212.
10. Ruth Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 67.
11. Ibid., 2.
12. Ibid., 42.
13. David Wiles, “Theatre in Roman and Christian Europe,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Theatre*, ed. John Russell Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 58.
14. Ibid., 63.
15. Ibid., 66.
16. Ibid, 77.
17. Viewed at https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=Attitude.
18. Joseph Roach, *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 68-69.
19. Richard Steele, *The Tattler and the Guardian* (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1880), 240.
20. Arline Meyer, “Re-dressing Classical Statuary: The Eighteenth-Century ‘Hand-in-Waistcoat’ Portrait,” *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 1 (March 1995): 57.
21. Ibid., 53.
22. John O’Brien, *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690-1760* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 55-56.
23. John O’Brien, “Harlequin Britain: Eighteenth Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s),” *Theatre Journal* 50 (1998): 489-510.
24. Alan S. Downer, “Nature to Advantage Dressed: Eighteenth-Century Acting,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 58, no. 4 (December 1943): 1002-1037.
25. William Cooke, *The Elements of Dramatic Criticism* (London: G. Kearsly and G. Robinson, 1775), 200-201.
26. Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique,The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1200*, 2d ed., (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1982), 20-22.
27. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Goethe’s Travels in Italy: Together with his Second Residence in Rome and Fragments on Italy*, trans. James William Morrison and Charles Nisbet (London: George Bell and Sons, 1855), 199.
28. Cited in Ersy Contogouris, “Emma Hamilton, a Model of Agency in Late Eighteenth-Century Europe” (PhD diss., Département d’histoire de l’art et d’études cinématographiques, Université de Montréal, 2114), 109.
29. Goethe, *Goethe’s Travels in Italy*, 330-31.
30. David Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 136.
31. Goethe, *Goethe’s Travels in Italy*, 330.
32. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Adam: The Male Figure in Art* (Vancouver, BC: Raincoast Books, 1998), 47.
33. Cooke, *The Elements of Dramatic Criticism*, 200.
34. Steele, *The Tattler and the Guardian*, 240.
35. Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), 243; Benedictus Antonio van Assen, *Giovani Baptista Belzoni. The celebrated Patagonian Sampson*, viewed at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1841-0313-1.
36. Cited in Altick, *The Shows of London*, 343.
37. James S. Moy, “Entertainments at John B. Ricketts’s Circus, 1793-1800,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 30, no. 2 (May 1978): 188.
38. Ibid., 189.
39. T. Allston Brown, “A Complete History of the Amphitheatre and Circus, From its Earliest Date, With Sketches of Some of the Principal Performers,” *New York Clipper*, 29 December 1860: 296.
40. Altick, *The Shows of London*, 491.
41. Charles Dickens, “Andrew Ducrow,” *All the Year Round,* 3 February 1872: 224. Strength sport historian David Webster tentatively, and probably incorrectly, suggested that the senior Ducrow was the first strongman to be represented in the “so-called block pose.” He based this on what he described only as a “very detailed circus picture circa 1815” supposedly by François Pannemaker, a Flemish graphic artist who was born in 1822. See David P. Webster, “The Flemish Hercules,” *Iron Game History* 6, no.2 (January 2000): 27.
42. The poster was offered at auction by Dreweatts Auction House in London in 2016. Viewed at https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/eighteenth-century-circus-ducrow-the-last-night-b-105-c-9934fa0afe.
43. A.H. Saxon, “The Circus as Theatre: Astley’s and Its Actors in the Age of Romanticism,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 27, no. 3 (October 1975): 299-312.
44. Brown, “A Complete History of the Ampitheatre and Circus,” 296.
45. Webster, “The Flemish Hercules,” 30.
46. Hermann Ludwig Heinrich von Pückler-Muskau, *Tour in England, Ireland and France, in the Years 1826, 1827, 1828, and 1829 by a German Prince* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1833), 426-27.
47. Elena Stevens, “Striking an Attitude: Tableaux Vivants in the British Long Nineteenth Century” (PhD diss., Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton, 2017), 69-71.
48. Ibid., 82.
49. Ibid., 23.
50. Dickens, “Andrew Ducrow,” 226.
51. Old Cerberus, “The Edinburgh Drama,” *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* (December 1830): 378.
52. “Remarkable Foreigners,” *Literary Review and Journal of Belle Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.* (1 February 1823): 73-74.
53. Henry Sass, *A Journey to Rome and Naples, Performed in 1817* (London: Longman, Hurst, Reese, Orme & Brown, 1818), 120-22, 168.
54. “Remarkable foreigners,” 74.
55. Henry Sass, “Remarkable Foreigners,” *The Literary Review and Journal of Belle Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c*. (15 February 1823): 106. Debrayat, or more probably Dubrayat, whom the anonymous author of the 1 February article presents as a Lyonese strongman known as *“L’ Hercule du Midi,”* does not appear in the pages of Edmond Desbonnet’s *The Kings of Strength: A History of All Strong Men from Ancient Times to Our Own*, ed./trans David L. Chapman (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2022), Kindle edition. In part four of his book, Desbonnet acknowledged that very little was known of strongmen prior to 1845. Desbonnet’s extensive reportage on Rousselle was facilitated by the fact that both hailed from Lille. I thank David Chapman for providing a more likely spelling of the Debrayat surname.
56. Johann Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, trans. Henry Fusseli, (London: A. Millar, 1765), 6 and 9.
57. John Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in Americ*a (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 22-25.