

THIS IS MASCULINITY



Venkateshwer Acharya

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"This is Masculinity" delves into the evolving landscape of masculinity, challenging outdated notions through interviews, portraits, and appropriation. This exploration highlights the coexistence of traditionally masculine and feminine traits, empowering individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

Historically linked to dominance, masculinity is undergoing a shift. A more nuanced understanding emerges, embracing rationality, creativity, and resilience alongside traditionally feminine traits.

The ongoing project captures this diversity, showcasing individuals who embody the evolving definition. Through their vulnerability, authenticity, and emotional depth, portraits challenge conventional expectations and prompt viewers to reconsider their understanding.

Furthermore, appropriation of elements from advertisements questions how identities and representations are constructed. By juxtaposing these appropriated elements with personal narratives, the project encourages viewers to critically reflect on the constructed nature of gender roles.

Employing a formal style for structure and unity in the form of a magazine, the project challenges societal norms and provokes dialogue around the complexities of masculinity. By showcasing the experiences of a generation redefining masculinity, it seeks to foster understanding, empathy, and acceptance for all.

Venkateshwer Acharya, an Indian artist based in Barcelona, uses photography, poetry, and mixed media to explore the simplicities and complexities of the human experience. Inspired by the diverse narratives woven within each life, Acharya draws upon his background in engineering and marketing to talk about the themes of identity, belonging, and societal structures.



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THE AXE EFFECT



Luiz, Brazil



David, Italy

One of the things that surprised me about understanding my own masculinity is how little I pondered upon it until I started having more women in my life, especially as friends. They brought certain aspects to my attention that were not apparent before. For example, when my female friends explained how they handle emotional problems, it initially shocked me because it was not something I would ever do with a male friend. These experiences challenged my preconceptions. Moreover, I feel we are much more similar, regardless of gender, nationality, or other identifiers. Identity is a highly discussed topic these days. We share significant similarities at a biological level and as participants in the human experience, rather than being primarily defined by the labels we attach to ourselves.

“While studying linguistics, the first concept I learnt was signifiers not being the absolute truth.”

“I believe the media does a pretty good job of keeping us in more traditional boxes, and it’s up to us to break the stereotypes.”

Growing up surrounded by hyper-feminine women put immense pressure on me. Eventually, I grew tired of feeling compelled to choose between two opposing paths. I reached a point where I questioned whether there was a middle ground, a possibility to embrace both and neither simultaneously. This realization prompted me to experiment with mixing elements from both ends of the spectrum. I discovered that I felt most comfortable when blending different styles, such as pairing an oversized shirt with well-done nails. This approach allowed me to express myself authentically without fixating on societal norms. Even though I still adopt this mindset to some extent, it has become so natural to me that I no longer consciously think about it. However, the underlying idea remains unchanged.



Salma, Angola



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German, Columbia

Masculinity was about specific behaviours and clothes that society considered "manly." Nowadays, I'm not so sure if that's what truly defines us as men or women anymore. I have plenty of friends who are quite feminine in how they dress and behave, and yet they still identify as men. On the flip side, I also know a bunch of girls who embrace their masculinity, it's a big part of their identity. So, being a man doesn't necessarily mean being all macho and masculine anymore. You can be a dude, a super feminine dude, and have plenty of feminine traits, but you still identify as a man. So, yeah, I'm not entirely sure if my manhood is all about being super masculine.

"I have been told that when I dance or when I move I look kind of girly and I don't care at all. The way I move or dress, doesn't define who I am."

“I grew up in Russia, learning various things, from chopping wood to cooking. Do tasks really define us?”

I would say that all kinds of behaviours and traits traditionally assigned to men are considered masculinity. However, it becomes tricky here. In the last few decades, women have gained more power and have taken on more roles and attributes that were usually associated with manhood. Therefore, discussing this topic has become very controversial. Everything that was traditionally assigned to men, such as bravery, analytical thinking, and power, now also belongs to women. I believe the controversy stems from the fact that femininity is evolving and expanding. However, one can also perceive this as masculinity expanding. It is no longer limited to those traditional traits. Masculinity can encompass emotions, intuition, and much more!



Elena, Russia



Yasmine, Indonesia



REVEAL

Calvin Clean



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#REVEALMORE **OBJECTIFICATION**

People
~~All men~~ are not equal.
Neither are their ~~razors.~~
definitions.

