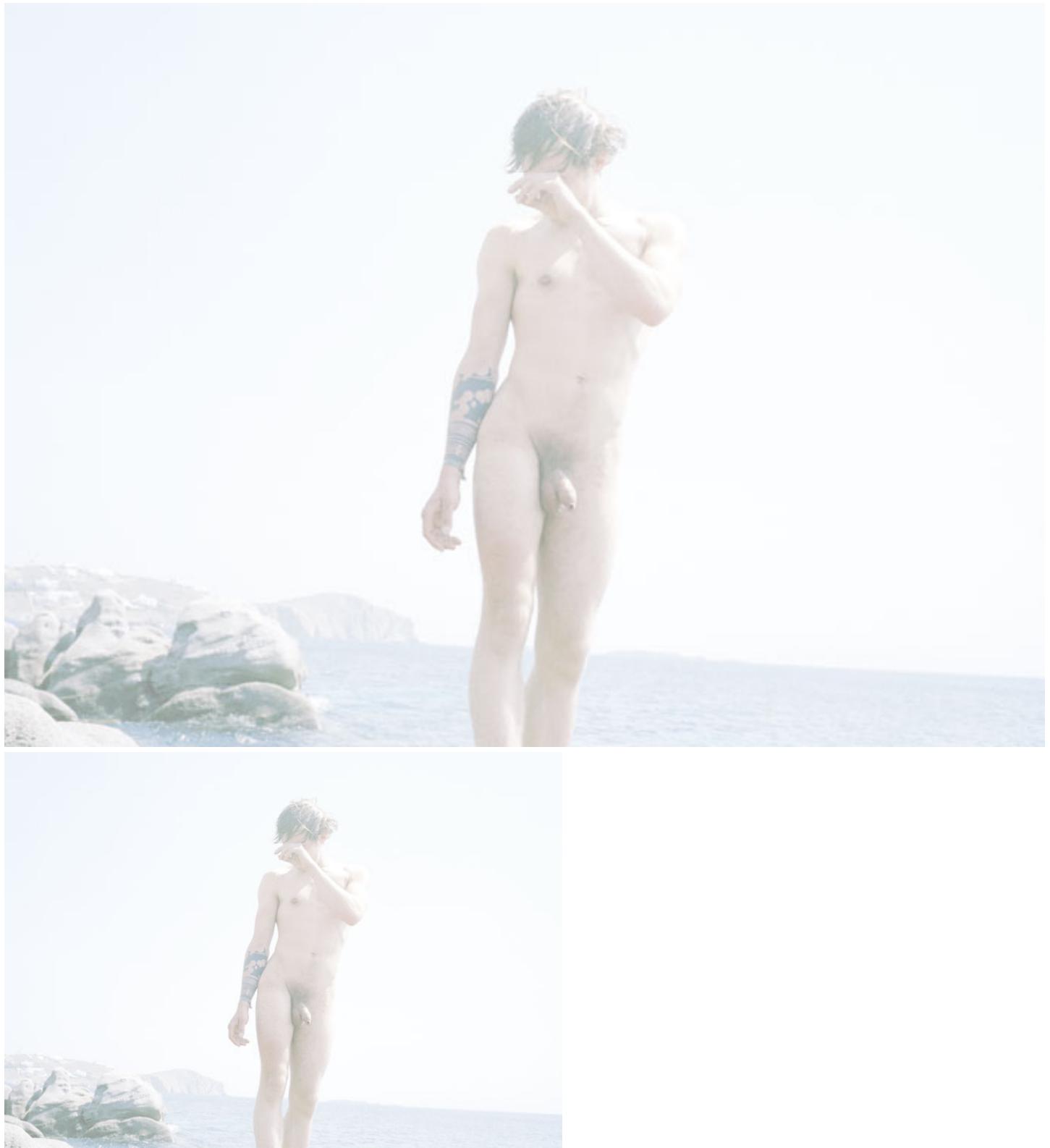


Psychic Realities

- [Thematic Remarks](#)
- [Positions](#)
- [Dates](#)
- [Legal Notice](#)
- [Deutsch](#)

- [Carlos Aires](#)
- [Richard Crow](#)
- [Dustin Dis](#)
- [Petra Gerschner](#)
- [Marina Gržinic - Aina Šmid](#)
- [Jens Haaning](#)
- [Hiroko Inoue](#)
- [Ursula Mayer](#)
- [Boris Missirkov - Georgi Bogdanovs](#)
- [David Benjamin Sherry](#)
- [Carlos Aires](#)
- [Richard Crow](#)
- [Dustin Dis](#)
- [Petra Gerschner](#)
- [Marina Gržinic - Aina Šmid](#)
- [Jens Haaning](#)
- [Hiroko Inoue](#)
- [Ursula Mayer](#)
- [Boris Missirkov - Georgi Bogdanovs](#)
- [David Benjamin Sherry](#)
- [Carlos Aires](#)
- [Richard Crow](#)
- [Dustin Dis](#)
- [Petra Gerschner](#)
- [Marina Gržinic - Aina Šmid](#)
- [Jens Haaning](#)
- [Hiroko Inoue](#)
- [Ursula Mayer](#)
- [Boris Missirkov - Georgi Bogdanovs](#)
- [David Benjamin Sherry](#)

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Tears, 2006

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David Benjamin Sherry

David Benjamin Sherry's photo of a nude young man on the beach, who is holding his hand before his eyes to wipe away tears, shows the vulnerability of the 'male' soul, which seldom enters the public eye. Appropriately, the subject can only be made out with difficulty in the image on account of the photo's sunny overexposure. Although it has been proven that more women than men suffer from affective disorders, questions regarding the social acceptance of male instability remain open in the wide field of mental illness. The tendency to dramatize everyday phenomena is often accompanied by an implication of homosexuality, since the public depiction of gender-specific forms of psychical lability continues to follow cultural attributions linked to 'the' male and 'the' female. At the latest since Judith Butler's 1990s studies involving the nullification of gender-specific models of differentiation, male levels of feeling have in the process of a developing Queer Theory emerged from a purely artistic or subcultural context into the space of general media and social attention. Admitting weakness is no longer considered a gender-specific phenomenon, but rather the result of social demands on the individual, who must stand his/her ground in the face of an ever-increasing struggle against professional and social competitors and thus come to terms with an increased level of anxiety to fail.

