

UNDERSTANDING GAY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of gay culture have changed dramatically over the last century. Before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, mainstream society chose not to acknowledge the existence of a gay sub-culture. The photographic works of Brassi provide evidence of a culture that hid from view. After the Stonewall Riots and the emergence of the gay liberation movement, artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe reacted to the negative perceptions of homosexuality by creating aggressive, shocking works that emphasized the distinctions and differences of gay culture from mainstream society.

Since the 1990's however, a greater acceptance of alternative lifestyles has prevailed and changed perceptions of homosexuality. These perceptions include the idea that many similarities exist between homosexual and heterosexual culture. The thesis work provides examples of the artist's intention to create sculpture that investigates the common humanity of homosexual and heterosexual culture in order to foster a greater understanding and tolerance of a gay life.