

working out... how narcissistic.

i work in a gym, i know. i see the "shirts" these guys wear, watch them wink at themselves in the mirror. the ego grows even faster than their muscles. hypertrophy. get big. get ripped. vascularization. six pack....

or for the ladies, making sure not to sweat too much. dont want makeup to run. trying to loose weight, but from the right places. not big, not strong, just "toned".

sterile.

i have been having an interesting e-mail conversation about challenge, exercise and body image... i think most people these days have body issues, and have developed their way to cope... some shirk challenge, choose to accept their bodies as they are. some fight, seek to exert control. diet, exercise, the right clothes.... it can get pretty messy.

i believe training for a purpose is a way to simplify the issue. to value function over form. to craft your body as you would a tool. to make it efficient. to willingly sacrifice certain traits to excel at others. to ignore what mass media has to say about appearance - what the fuck do they know anyway? to accept that time is finite, and we need to put our efforts where they will do the most good. I had severe body image issues in middle/high school, I believe there is a lot of power in physical culture, in watching the cumulative effect of will. not just physical changes, but mental ones. and as for physical changes, becoming connected with your body. being able to identify with each nerve ending, each muscle because you know how far you can push it and what it will cost in return. I feel you develop a deep enough relationship with your flesh and sinew and bone that no corporation or individual can shake it. I met a woman who was a fighter, her legs had purpose. I met an ultra-marathoner - her legs, hell her frame had an entirely different purpose. I guess when you have a goal like that, beauty images loose most of their power. there is a price to be paid and if you want to be a great climber, a great runner or a great biker it will take tremendous will, work and stress. and like age, these will shape your flesh. we become what we do. does it matter more to be "pretty" or to accomplish your goal? because they may be mutually exclusive. it is a choice, and in honoring that fact, consciously forgoing one to embrace the other it (I believe) dispels most of the fear and doubt. it becomes simple, and even a little easy.

i saw a woman at the airport in NYC this weekend, from 50 feet away i knew she was a fighter. she had cauliflower ear, a neck as thick as mine and you could see the definition in her legs through her jeans. she was an embodiment of countless hours of hard work and tough decisions. she was beautiful. she was crafted for a purpose through efforts of her own. function, in and of itself, is beautiful.

not to say athletes lack body issues, they are just easily put in check.

let reality be the judge, everything else is just noise.