

THE MISSING PIECE

Chances are you will be well aware of Peter Martin (affectionately called „Sleazy“) Christopherson’s long and enduring legacy in music with Coum, Throbbing Gristle, Psychic TV, Coil, The Threshold Houseboys Choir and Soisong, - you’ve seen the videos he directed for his peers and for paying clients at the height of the pop-promo boom, you might even knowingly or unknowingly have been showered with his professional work in commercials for big name brands.

Yet his photography has remained largely the stuff of legend and rumours, with very few exceptions ever being seen outside a diminutive circle of trusted friends; even though photography was the original source of his creative life. Sleazy began taking photos whilst still in school and the oldest surviving photo in this collection is one which he entered into a competition at the tender age of 15.

It was his keen eye for the right motive (or the right *subversion* of a motive) which in the early 1970s landed him a job with the hugely influential design team Hipgnosis, founded by Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell. He was instrumental in creating and sometimes even featured in the artwork for some of their most celebrated cover designs for amongst others Genesis, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and Peter Gabriel. Almost indistinguishable from his private work at the time is the image he created under the auspices of Hipgnosis for Wishbone Ash’s „New England“ featured in these pages.

Aubrey Powell remembers him:

«This young man walked in and he had the most extraordinary portfolio, black and white photographs that were beautifully lit, so we employed him on

the spot. Peter became an absolutely integral part of Hipgnosis, not only because of his lighting abilities but also because of his ideas. Peter had a habit of surprising Storm and me with his particular outlook on life. (...) He brought a sort of sensuality, a sexuality to our work. It shows in some of our album covers. Typically where Storm and I might design a surreal-looking image, Peter would add something that would set your mind racing in a different direction. „Presence“ for Led Zeppelin, is a perfect example: a black object set against 1950s National Geographic images of people in very mundane situations, Peter certainly would light it and make suggestions to make the black object more interesting, more phallic or dark or more moody. What he added to things was the suspense. (...) Hipgnosis were once asked to design a cover for Paul McCartney for his album „Tug Of War“. You couldn’t find a more conservative fellow in the album cover department than Paul McCartney yet, knowing this, Peter presented a picture, beautifully crafted, of a man hanging himself, surrounded in gold leaf, in the style of Gustav Klimt. Paul said politely, “Just not my image.” Pity, as it would have been a brave move. I think I got a bit of stick too, for being audacious enough to show that idea to Paul.“

(partially quoted from „For the Love of Vinyl: The album art of Hipgnosis“ (2008))

It is exactly this audacity in the creation of his images which convinced the Hipgnosis team to take Peter on board and later make him a full partner in their successful venture, an audacity which now can be seen in full effect and undiluted in these pages. However, it is the same audacity which has effectively stopped publishers, even publishers of fringe and supposedly subversive books from going anywhere near this material, when approached whilst Peter was still alive,

What you are about to see are images, portraits, snapshots of a bygone time, a rare document of youth, a cultural landscape, a state of Britain, a testimony to influences and inspirations. They are a catalogue of intensely personal obsessions, a test of boundaries personal, sexual, existential and social; an investigation of possibilities and a lexicon of desires. But the language they converse in is ultimately honest, unafraid, tender in places (in others not quite), - it’s a very articulate, yet unconventional, inquiring voice, a voice that seeks to learn and to communicate what it has found. A voice of passionate and bold innovation, a voice that finally needs to be heard outside of the inner circle of initiates.

Featured here are not only photos of friends and associates, most notably the bands he has been a key part of, but also some of the now legendary, largely unseen first ever promotional sessions he shot for the aspiring Sex Pistols in 1976.

Some of Sleaz’s most iconic early images were plastered all over Glasgow in two series of posters for that town’s Citizen’s Theatre under Philip Prowse. Other photos were widely seen in advertising posters for the boy punk boutique in London’s Kings Road, whose first window display Peter infamously co-created with John Harwood. This display of what appeared to be very realistic parts of a charred boy’s body had to be removed after two days only and supposedly ended up in Scotland Yard’s Black Museum.

The main focus for me and the true revelation in here are however his intensely intimate portraits, and especially the infamous series «Ways to Die» of young men in suicide situations

*“There is in fact something obscene and sinister
about photography,
a desire to imprison, to incorporate,
a sexual intensity of pursuit.”*

William S. Burroughs

(a theme that recurs in Christopherson's work, *c.f.* the stunning «Terminus» video he did when he was in the first incarnation of Psychic TV, the extremely unsettling short movie «Polarvision» and the infamous over-the-top «Broken» film he directed and conceptualised for NIN). To achieve the stunning effect of some of the very authentic wounds, he used techniques he had learned in simulating emergency situations for rescue teams of the Red Cross and Saint John's Ambulance, as a result some of his work can also be found in instruction manuals for paramedics.

It's impossible to not be moved by these photos and the stories they tell of despair, isolation and coldness. I believe that beyond the obvious testing of what was acceptable, beyond any intentional or unintentional shock value, beyond the vital exploration and exorcising of personal demons, there lies a deep humanitarian concern and a strong artistic vision.

It is telling that his focus on this particular theme began to shift and ebb somewhat with the real-life threat of AIDS on the horizon; when the «sexy death» all of a sudden turned into an omnipresent and very real sex = death equation. Another setback came when his former bandmate Genesis P-Orridge's house was raided as a result of a ridiculously contrived TV exposé and Peter and his partner Geff found themselves under covert surveillance.

He never fully gave up on working with shocking and taboo-breaking imagery though. His last, very relaxed solo tour as The Threshold Houseboys Choir featured strong visual content both of the sexual and the murderous variety. In the 2000s, however, he didn't have to create these kind of images himself anymore,

they were lifted from the ubiquitous cellphone and youtube movies, little clips which were far more outrageous and shocking and certainly less sensual than what is on display here, partly because they totally lacked Sleaz's strong aesthetic eye and purpose.

You finally hold in your hands a book that The Guardian in the 2010 obituary of its subject called «*too shocking for publication*».

The only shocking thing I can see now, is that it took so long for this material to become available to a larger audience.

Now please enter - *at your own risk*.

Claus Laufenburg, 2.X.2014



I saw Peter Christopherson for the first time 24 years before I met him. It was 1974 and I was in my study at boarding school poring over the cover detail of the Genesis album 'The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway'. Look carefully and you'll see Peter's on the cover of this album. Photographed by Hipgnosis, he's running down a corridor of The Roundhouse, in Camden. I studied the cover image obsessively. I saw Peter without knowing it was him. It all seemed so much more important than my impending O Level exams.

The next time I saw him was in 1998. I was recording in Island Studios and had received a message through my manager that the singer from Coil, John Balance, wanted to meet me. Though I was aware of Coil, I was definitely not a fan. I had been impressed enough by Horse Rotorvator on its release to buy a copy, but I remember being more attracted by the song titles than the actual music. John met me outside the studio and we walked around the corner to Beverley Road. He was very friendly and we bonded instantly, chatting about my work with Julian Cope and our mutual synthesizer obsession. On arrival at the house I was introduced to the mysterious 'Sleazy'. He had piercing brown eyes and said little, but when he did speak – asking me searching, personal questions – he came across as mature, well read and rather intimidating. While John and my conversation continued - we were now discussing Pasolini, Burroughs and Crowley - I was shown various artworks and a very imposing magick cupboard. I remember being very impressed with John's eclectic knowledge of art and music, and increasingly intrigued by the polite but largely silent 'Sleazy'. And, more prosaically, I found myself wondering what it was they really did. Surely the lavish lifestyle I saw around me was not funded solely by Coil?

Over the following months as we saw more of each other, Sleazy became less mysterious...but only a little. Often when I visited their house in Chiswick he'd be absent. No one ever said where he was. One day, when my visits had become more regular I learnt that his absences

usually meant he was away somewhere directing a video: although this was only ever mentioned in passing. During this time, as the relationship deepened, I was asked to contribute to the recording of the Coil album Astral Disaster. Sleazy and I spent many hours discussing its structure and playing with ideas. Up to this point I had not really given much thought to the working methods of Coil but this process was very illuminating and changed my own approach to music.

It wasn't until after I had been asked to join Coil that I even realised Sleazy was a photographer. His photographic work was only mentioned when – encouraged by both John and Sleazy – I came to release an album of my own music and the question of cover design came up. Sleazy's input on the cover of my album, I Thighpaulsandra, was a revelation. He somehow managed to manipulate the images and produce a cover that had the Hipgnosis hallmark of atmospheric unreality. And when I mentioned I'd always been a fan of Hipgnosis album covers, it was then he revealed that he had actually been a part of the maverick design team.

Two years later, when I went on to make my next album 'Double Vulgar', the question of artwork arose again. I knew I wanted Sleazy to be involved in some way but had no idea of the direction it should take. Sleazy suggested I see some of his previous work and casually retrieved some cardboard boxes from the basement. The contents of the boxes left me stunned. The images ranged from casual pictures of school friends, social studies of people living in The Gorbals area of Glasgow, to highly stylised and confrontational homo-erotic portraits. Most of the work had been produced in the 1970s and many of the prints captured perfectly the spirit of the time. Every print seemed to have a vibrant life of its own and offered fascinating glimpses into strange, yet recognisable, worlds. At the time my immediate question to Sleazy was: why hadn't these photographs been published? His only response was a nonchalant "Oh, one day".

Some time later on tour with Coil I became aware of how Sleazy saw life through his camera. On days off and when traveling we would both be clicking away on our digital cameras, often photographing the same subjects. Back home we'd swap folders of photos. Most of mine looked like snaps: whereas Sleazy's photos had another quality entirely. They always exploited interesting details or emphasised aspects I had missed completely. It occurred to me that his approach to photography and music were the same. Sleazy was the only person I knew who could make an interesting piece of music from just a few seconds of sound, changing and mutating it into something new and strange by focusing on details, amplifying or distorting minute facets of sound other musicians would disregard. This approach, this ability to see and heighten what others would ignore, is evident both in his music and in his photography and design and is, I am sure, the primary reason why his work has such authority and is so highly regarded.

Choosing the images for this book has been an enormous task. Sorting through the thousands of prints and negatives has been a difficult and harrowing process. Having been totally immersed in Sleazy's world for over nine months, I know all the images intimately: yet still the power of his work affects me deeply. And there are times when seeing pictures of my dead friends stops me in my tracks.

Thighpaulsandra 2014







ENTRY FORM for Classes A, B and C.

pupil's full name..... PETER MARTIN CHRISTOPHERSON

Region... 1 Class..... A Age..... 15 on 13th Nov., 1970

As teacher in charge of the School camera club, I have read the rules governing the Photographic Information Council's Junior Photographers of the Year Contest 1970, and certify that this entry is made in accordance with the rules.

Signature of schoolteacher..... D. R. Cook

Address of school... AUKWORTH SCHOOL

NR PONTEFRAC, YORKSHIRE

There is a camera club at this school Date. 18th OCT '70

Title: "Between Events"







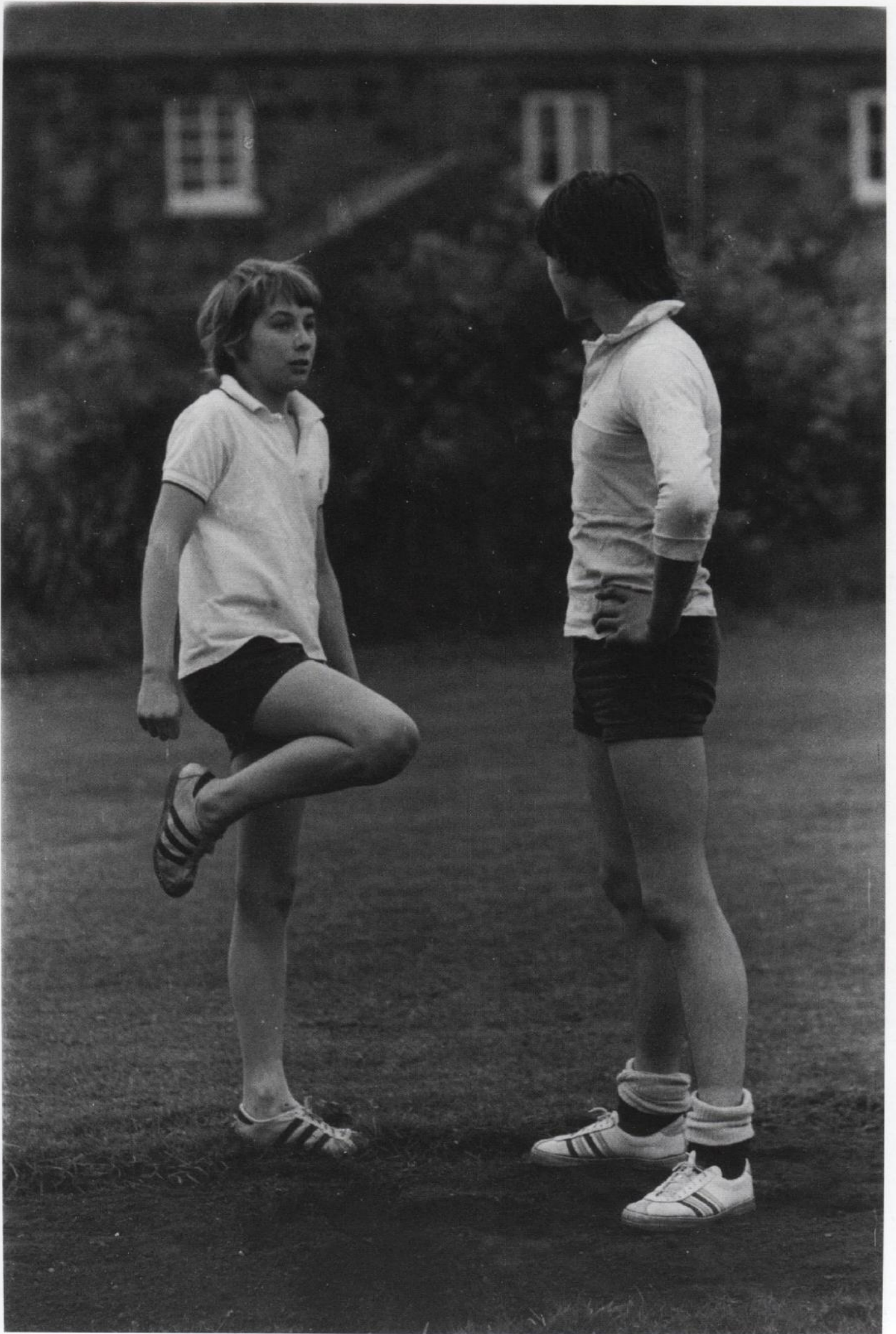






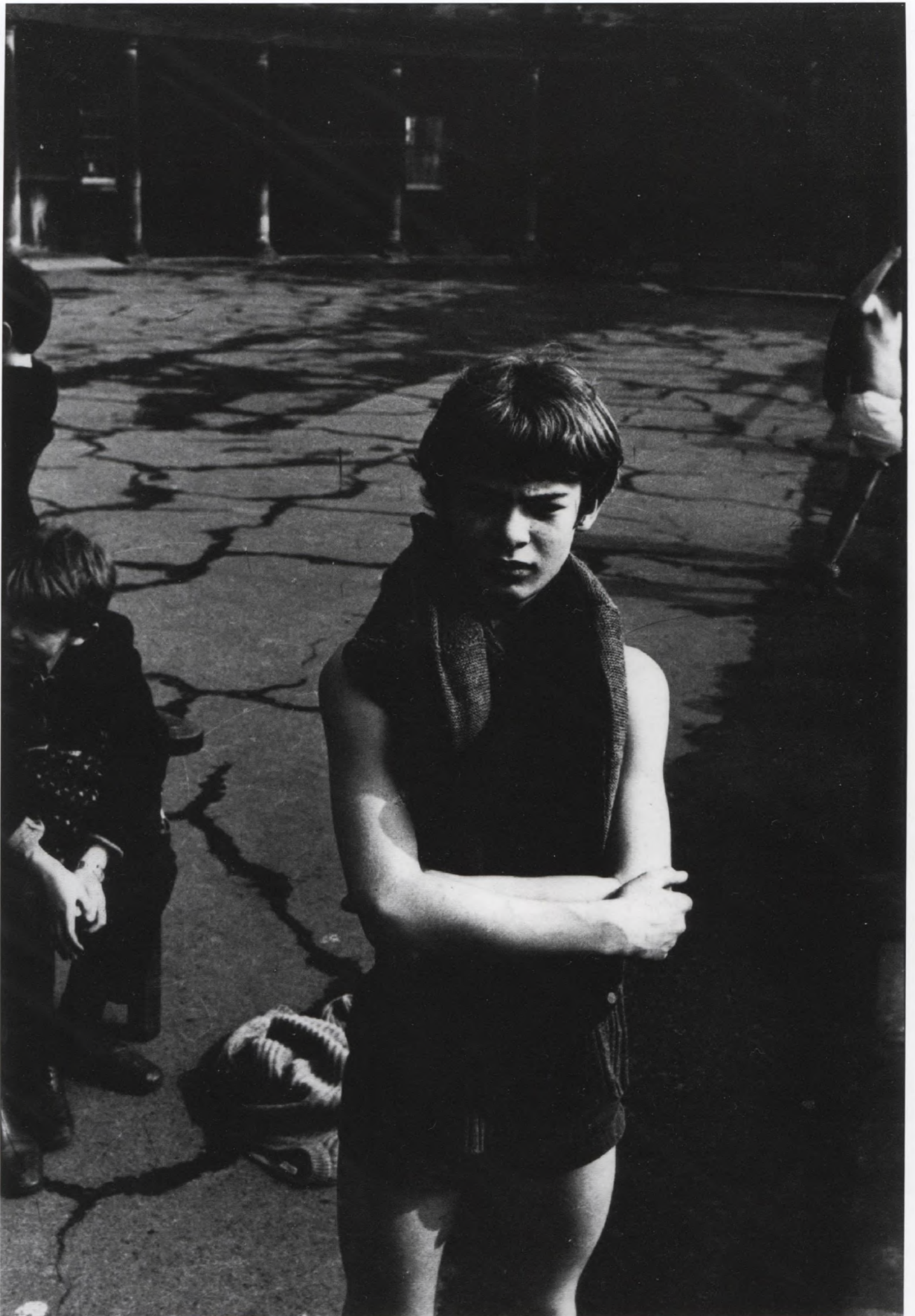


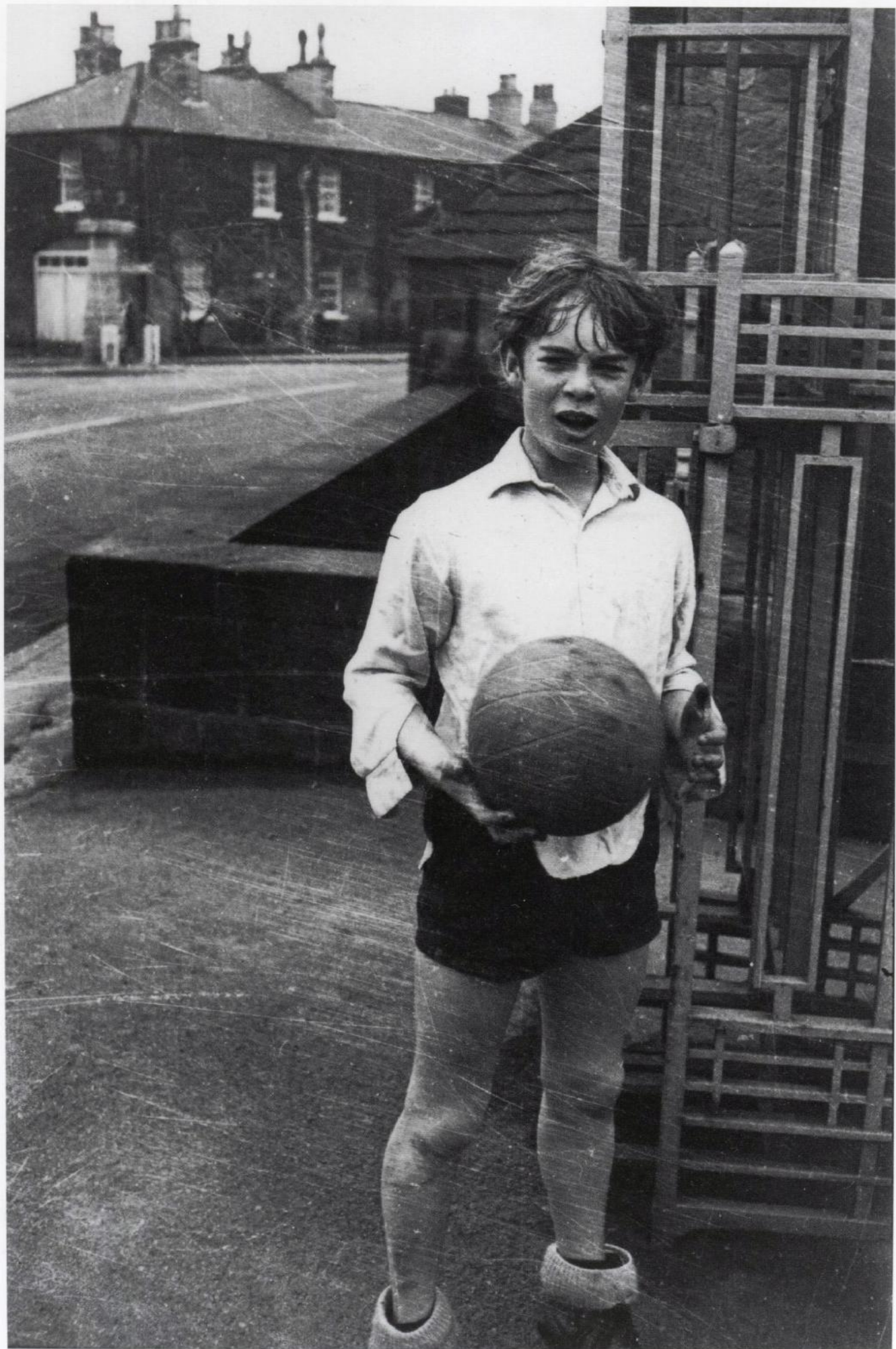




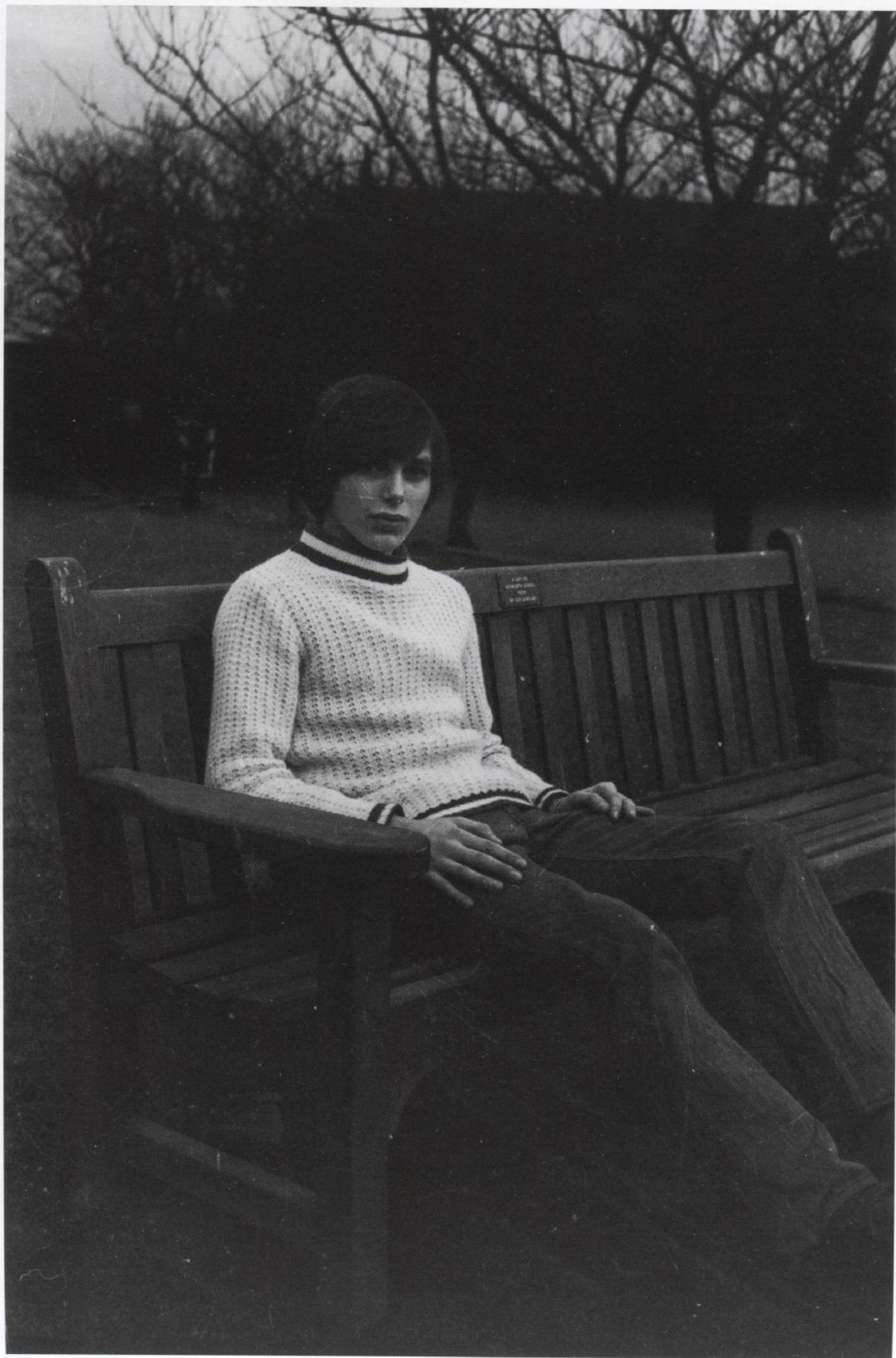




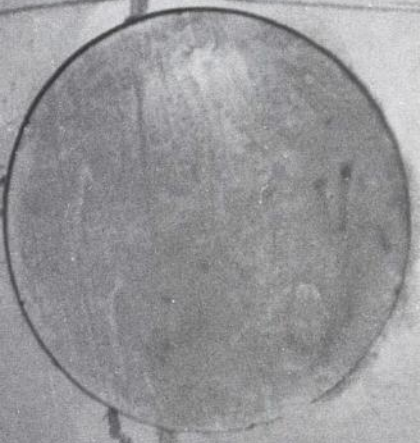












PIPPIN THE



HAMMERSMITH
17-22 JUNE at WORMHOLT PARK

The London Pub Show
MONDAY - SATURDAY 10-11

SATURDAY 4.30pm
Bubble Beano

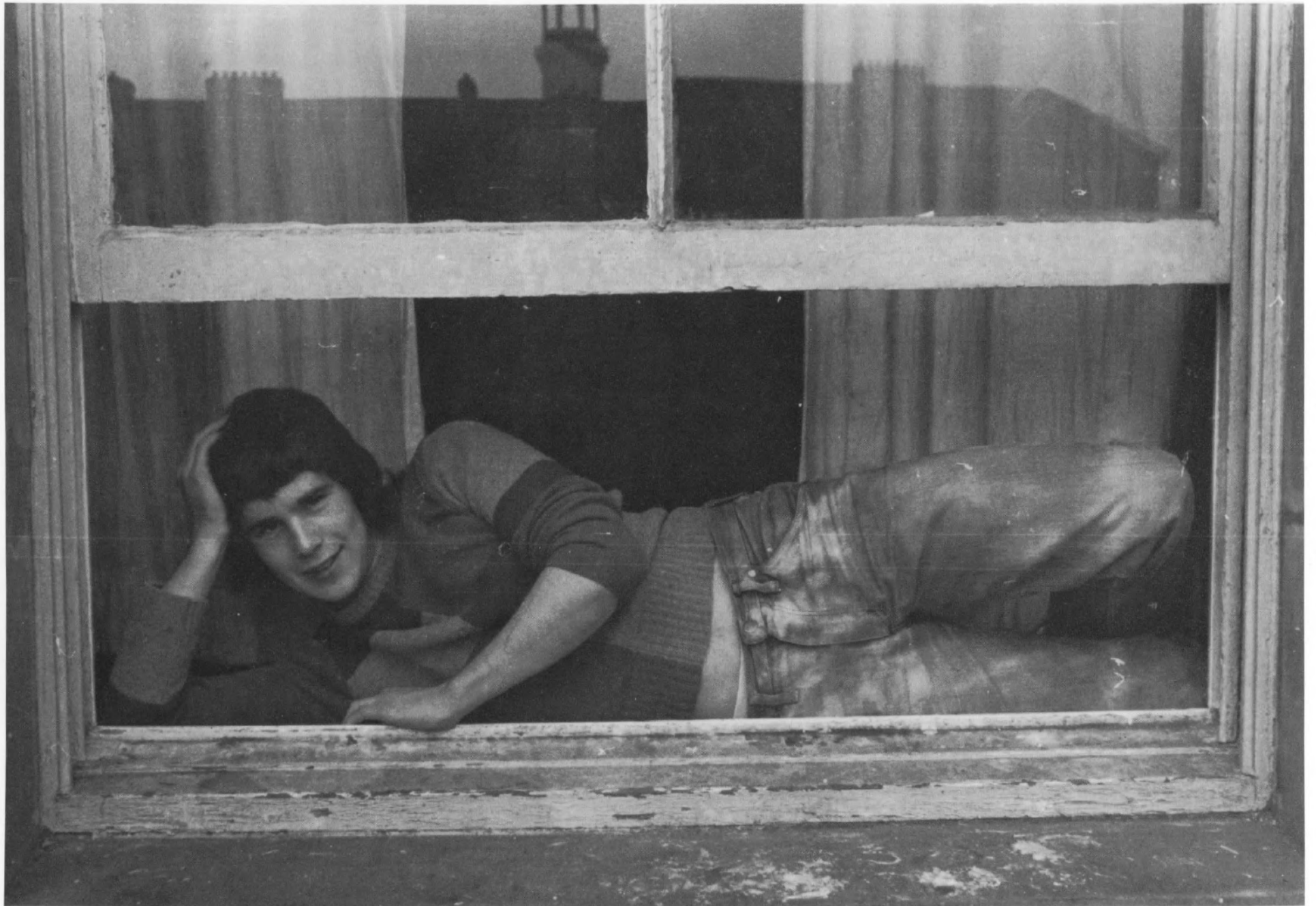
ADMISSION FREE

FOR PARTY BOOKINGS CONTACT
BUBBLE THEATRE COMPANY
9 KINGSFORD STREET N.W.5.
Tel: 485 3420





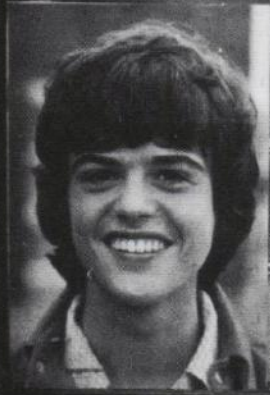




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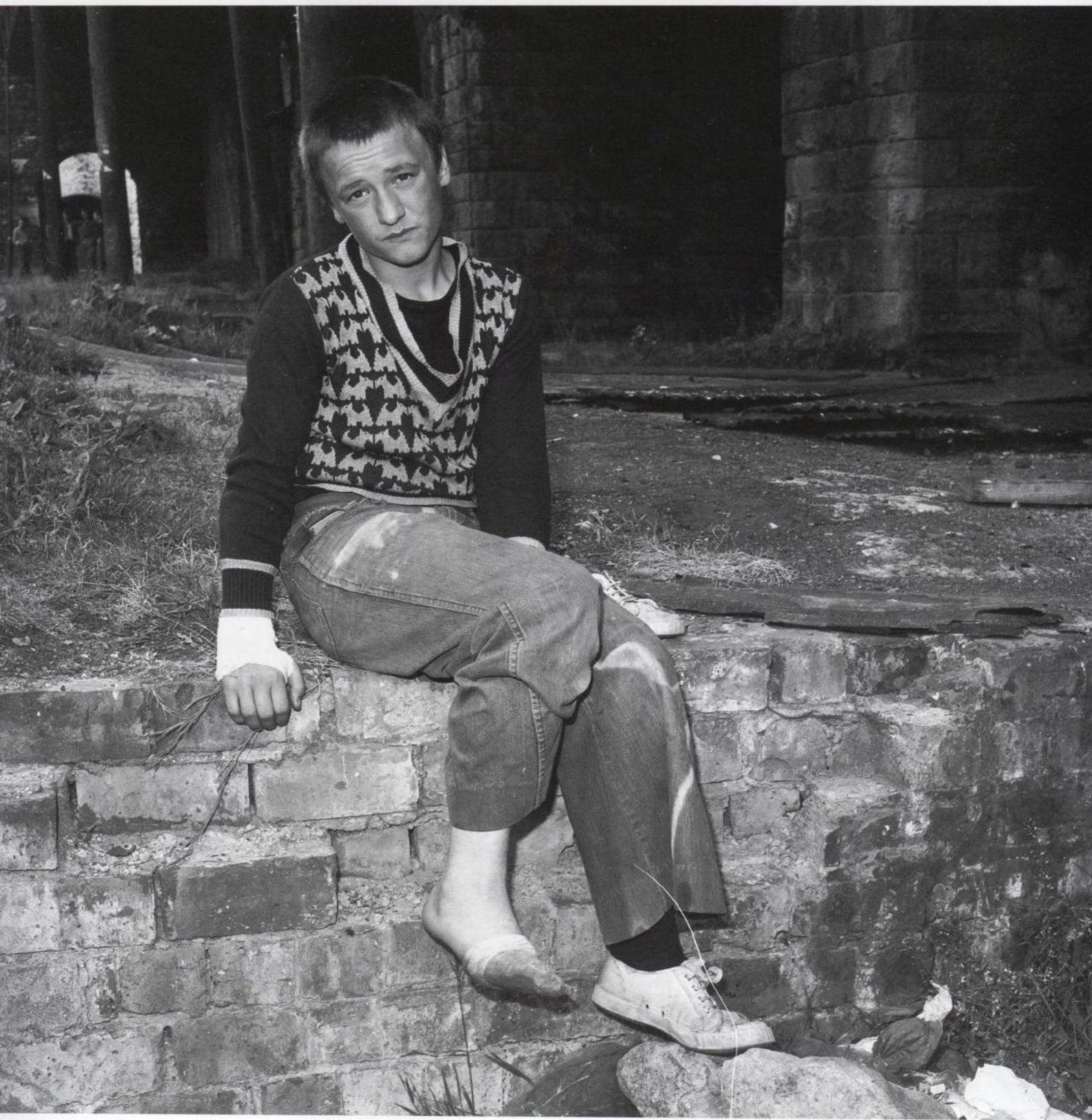




















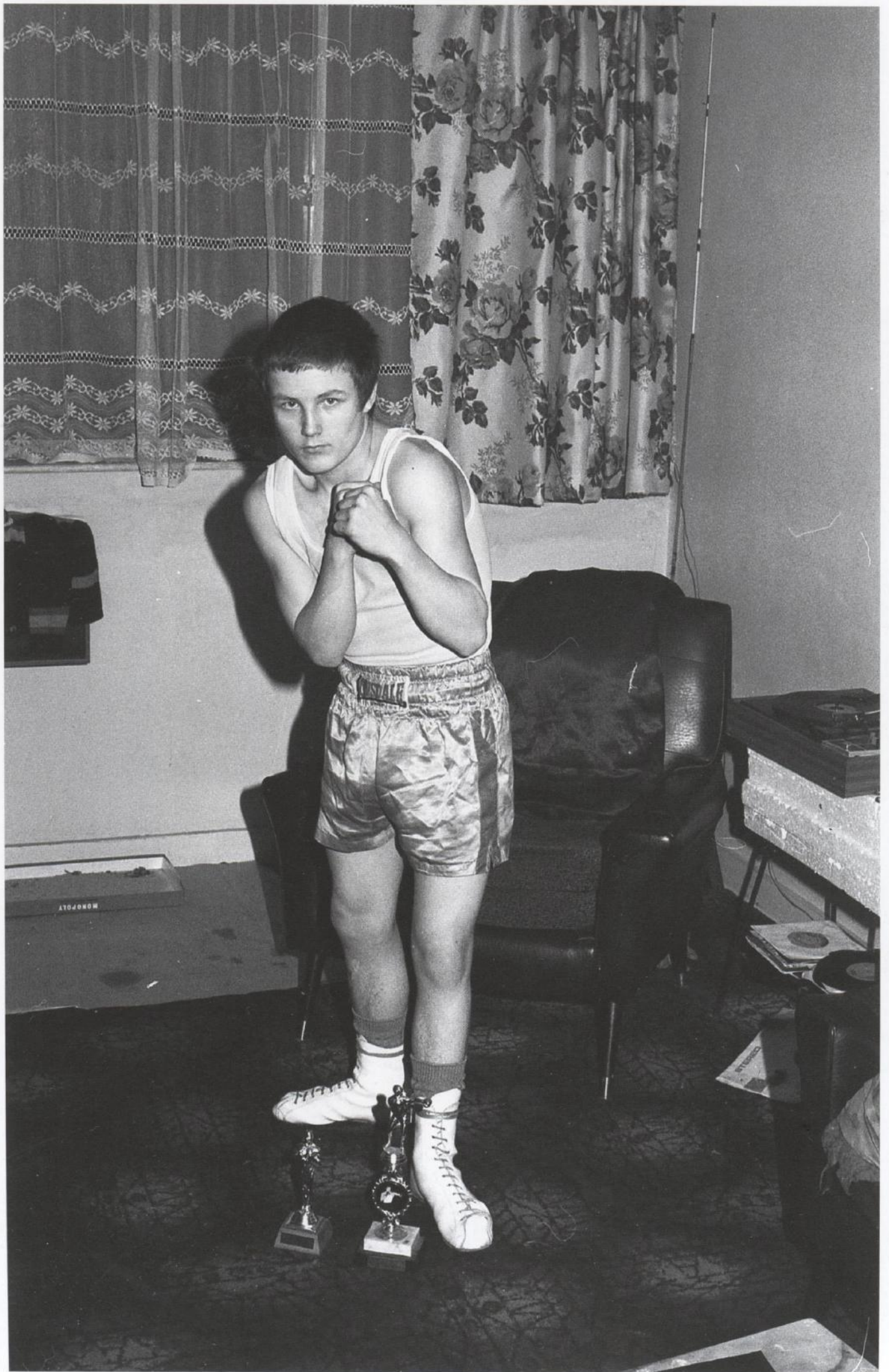
















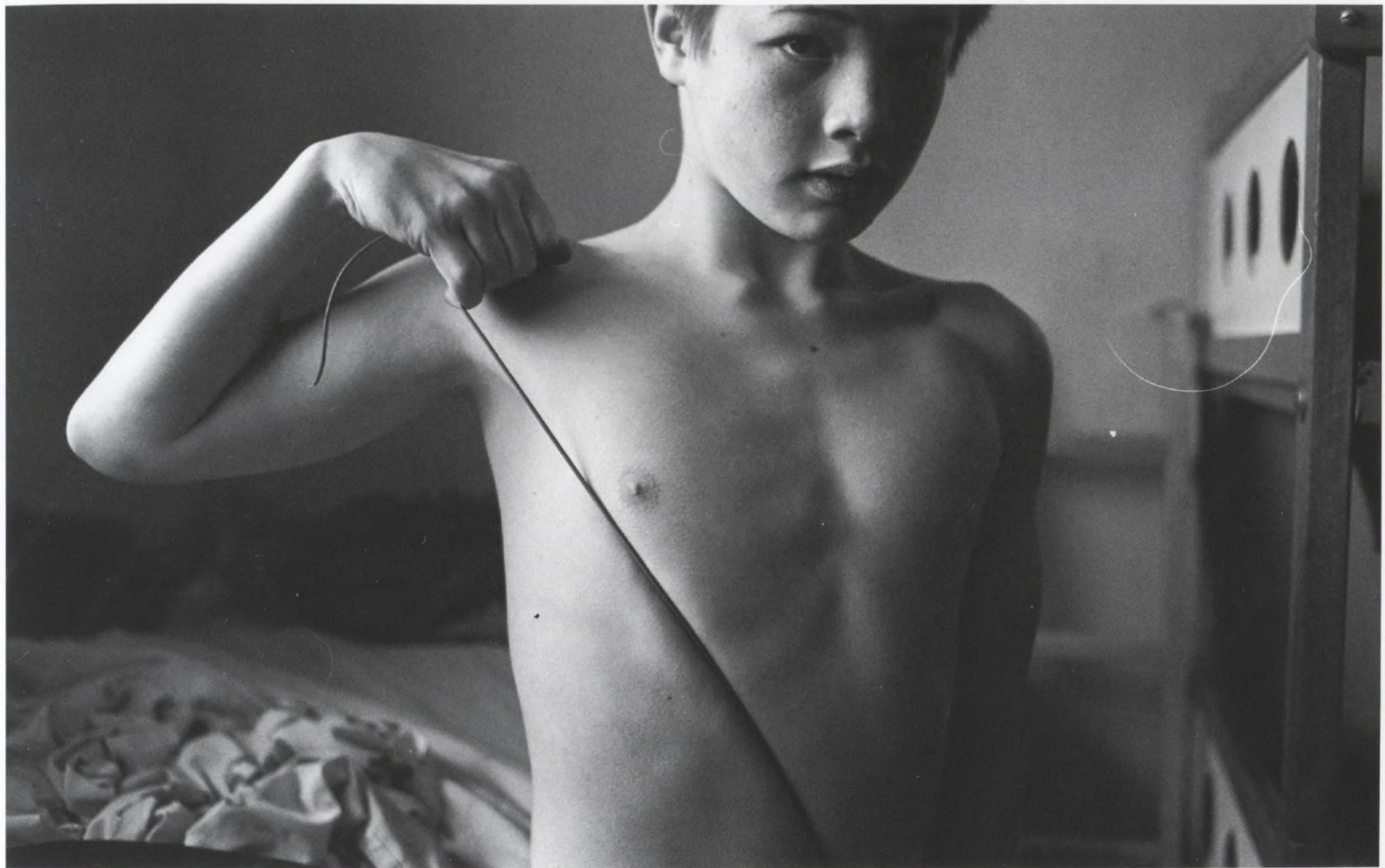


























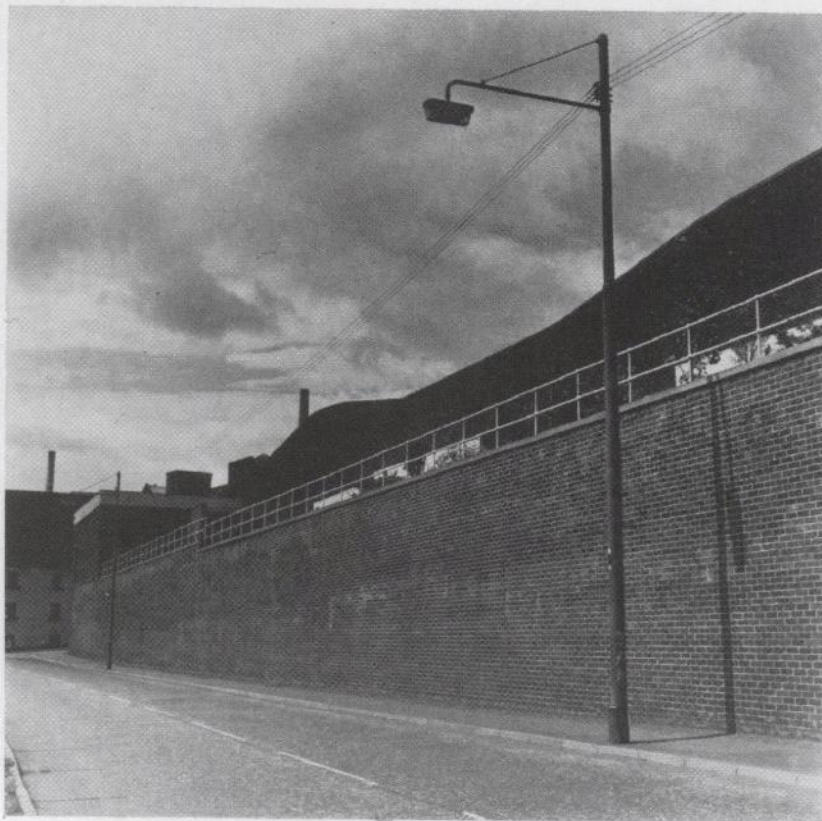
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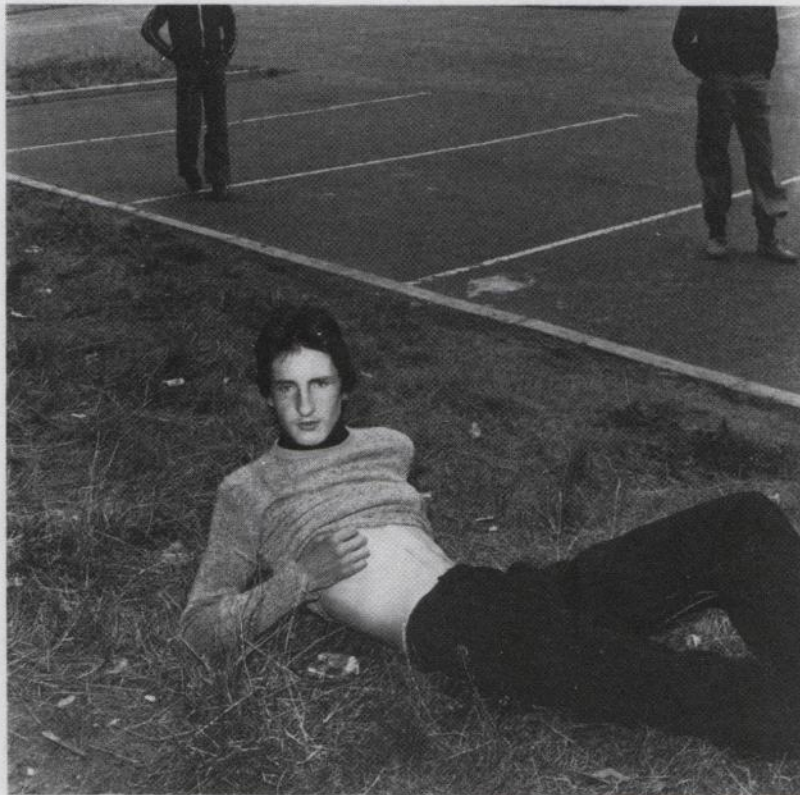
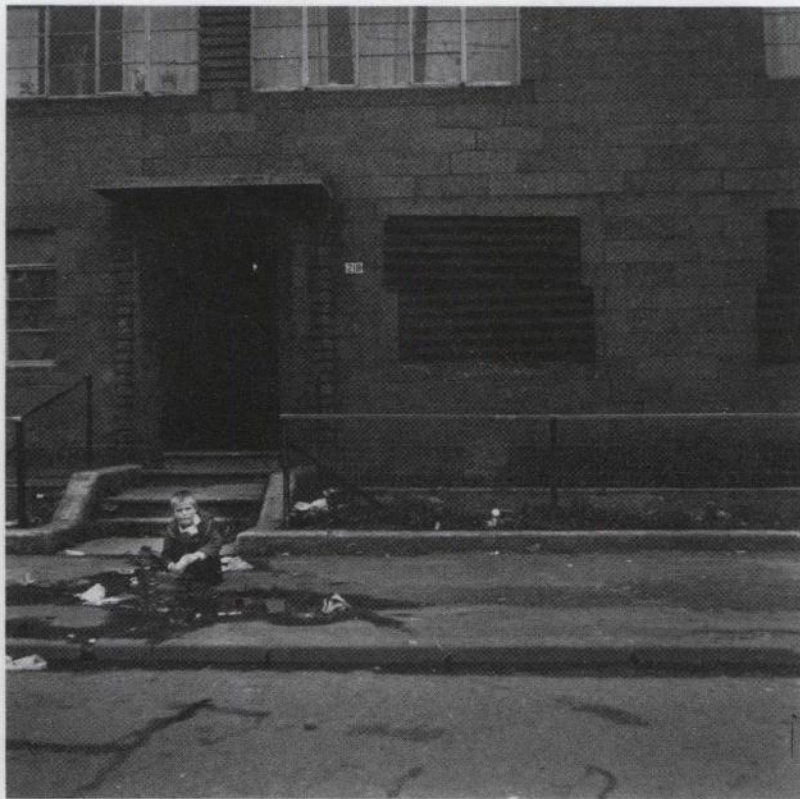
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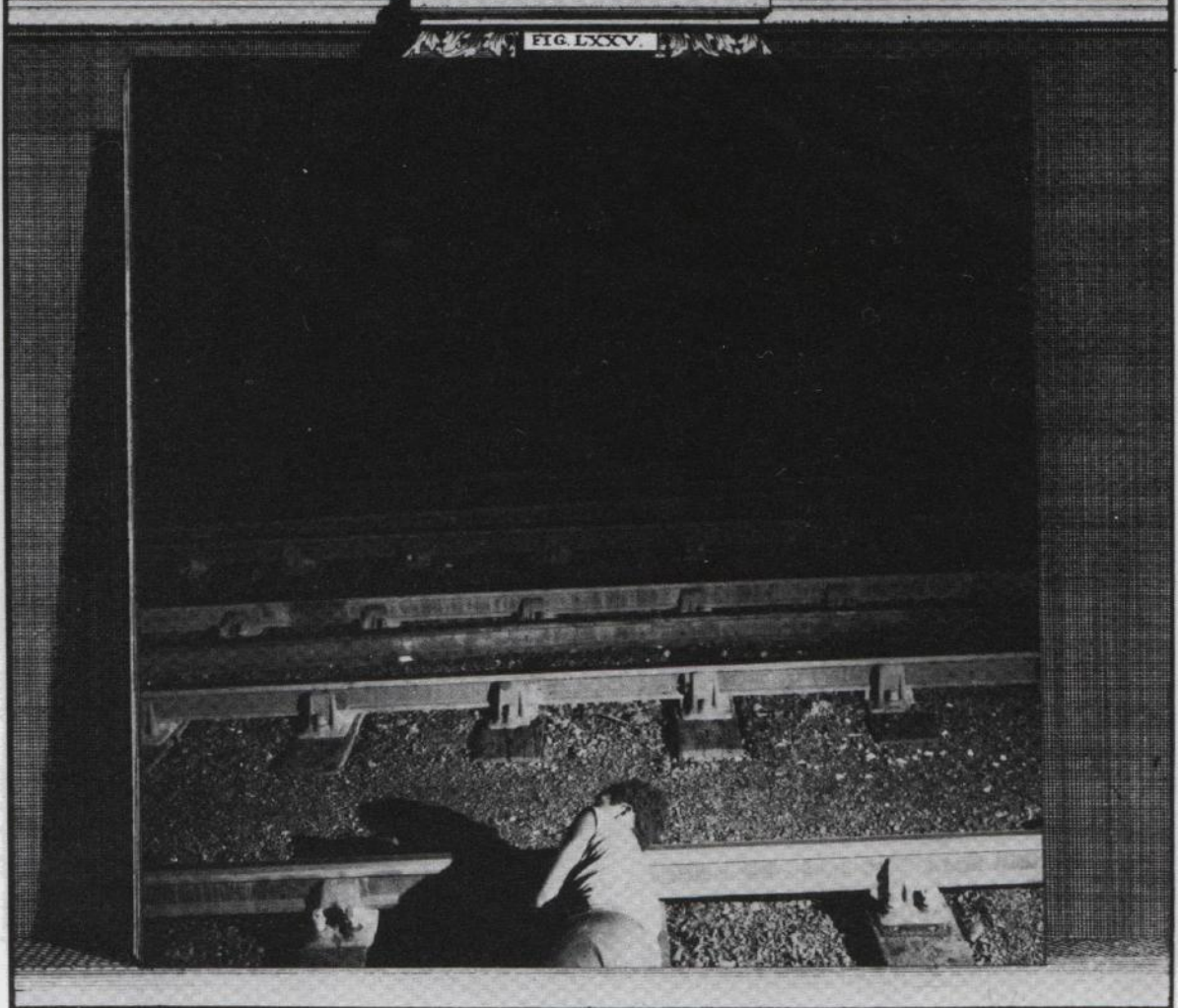
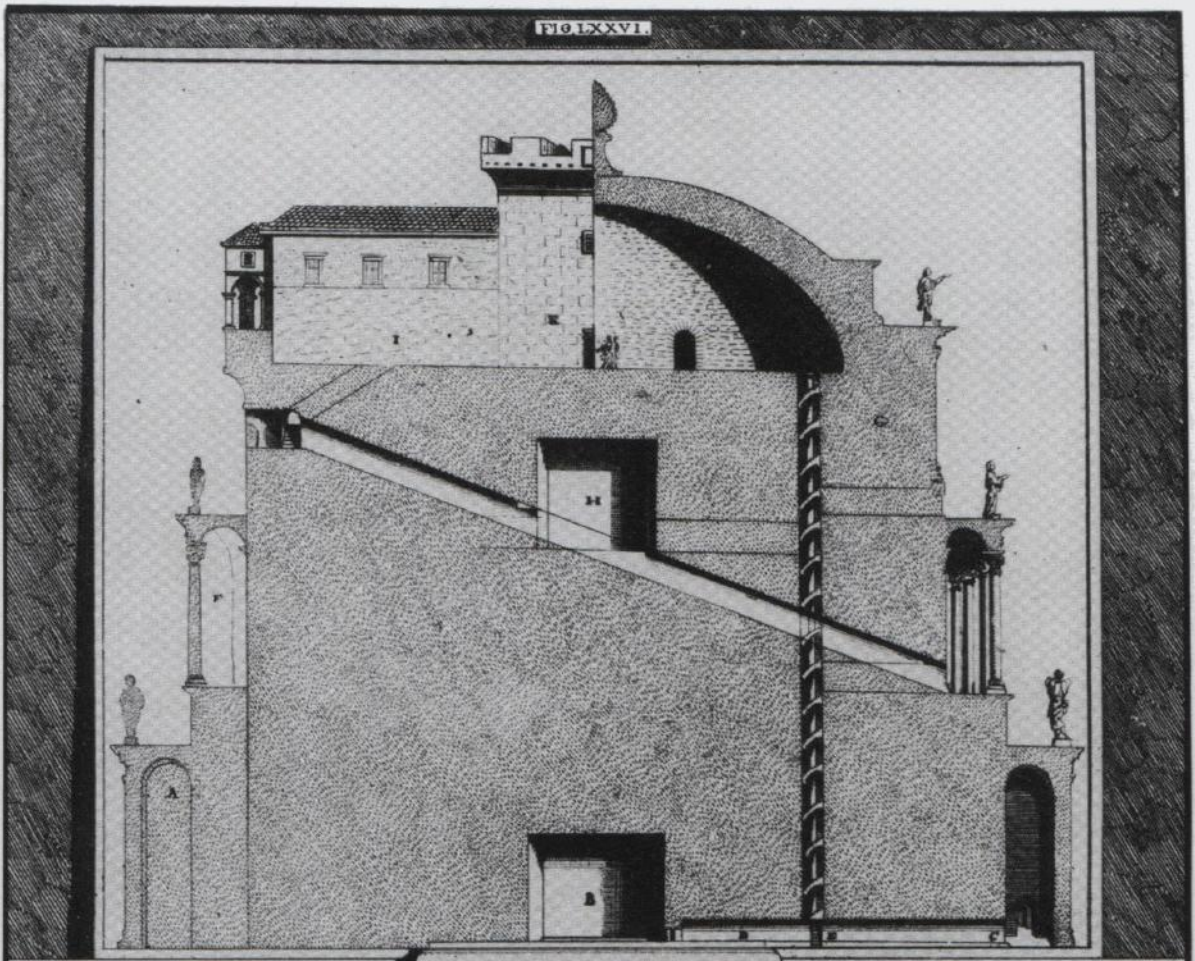
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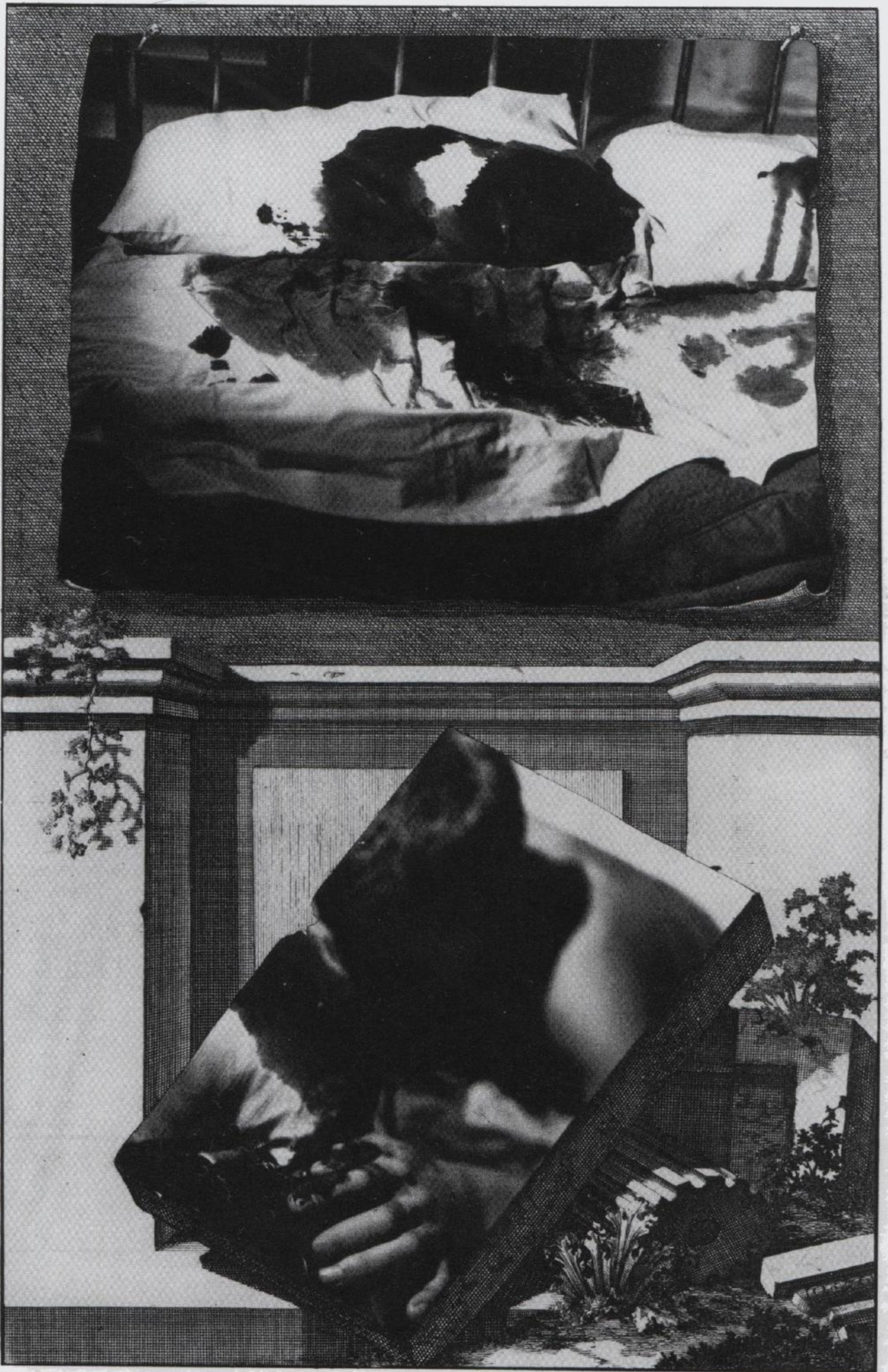
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THE CITIZENS COMPANY 1977-78 GORBALS GLASGOW



THE CITIZENS COMPANY GORBALS GLASGOW 1978-79



THE CITIZENS COMPANY GORBALS GLASGOW 1978-79

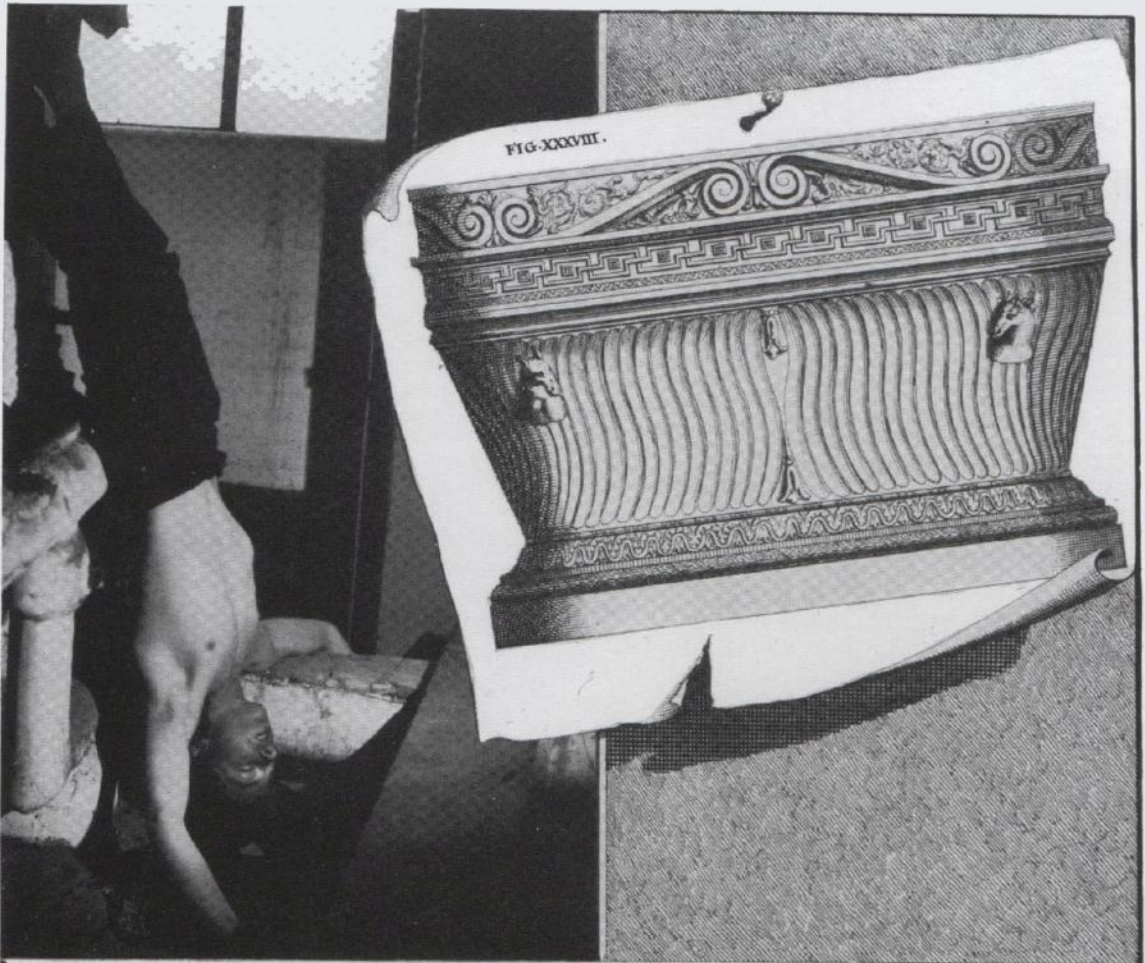
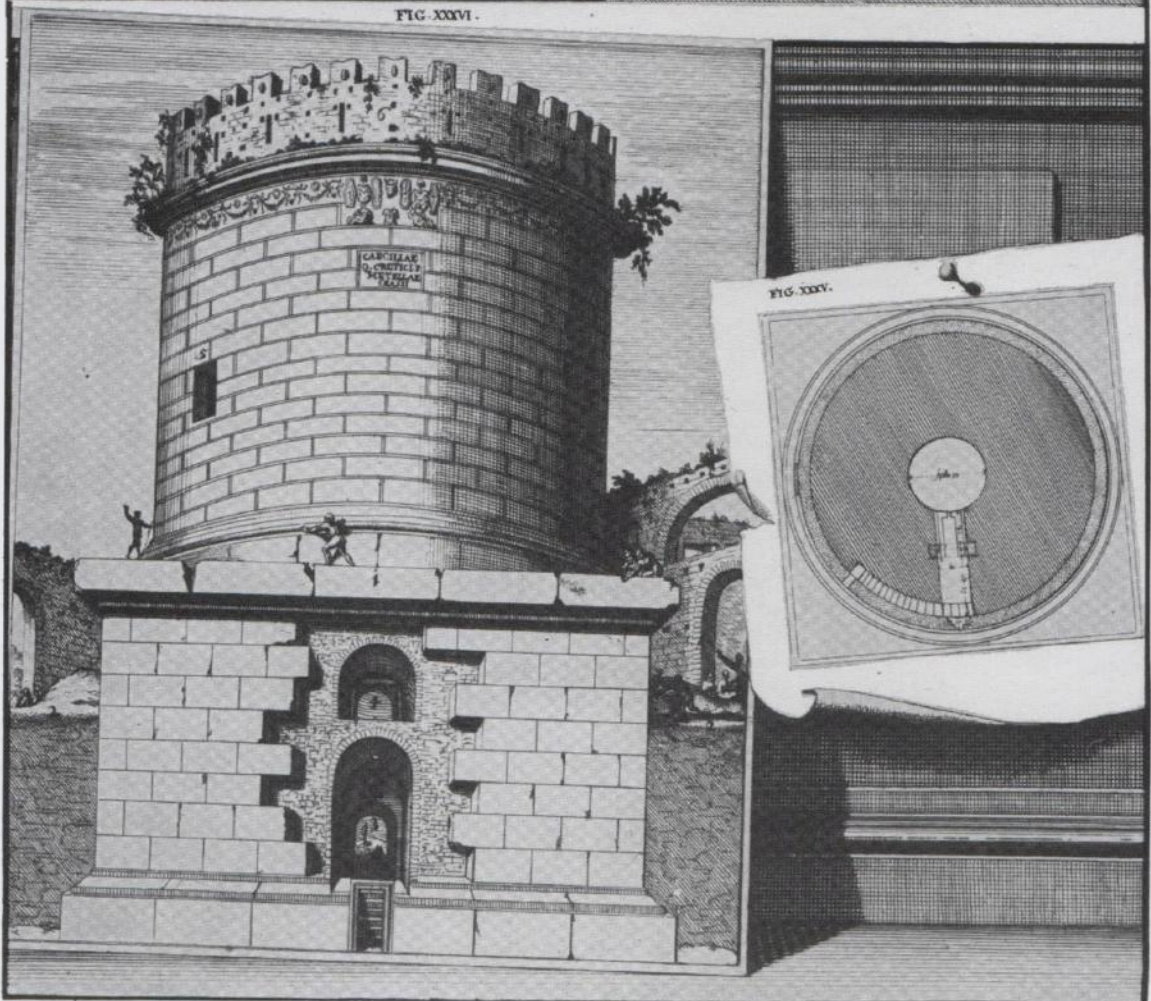
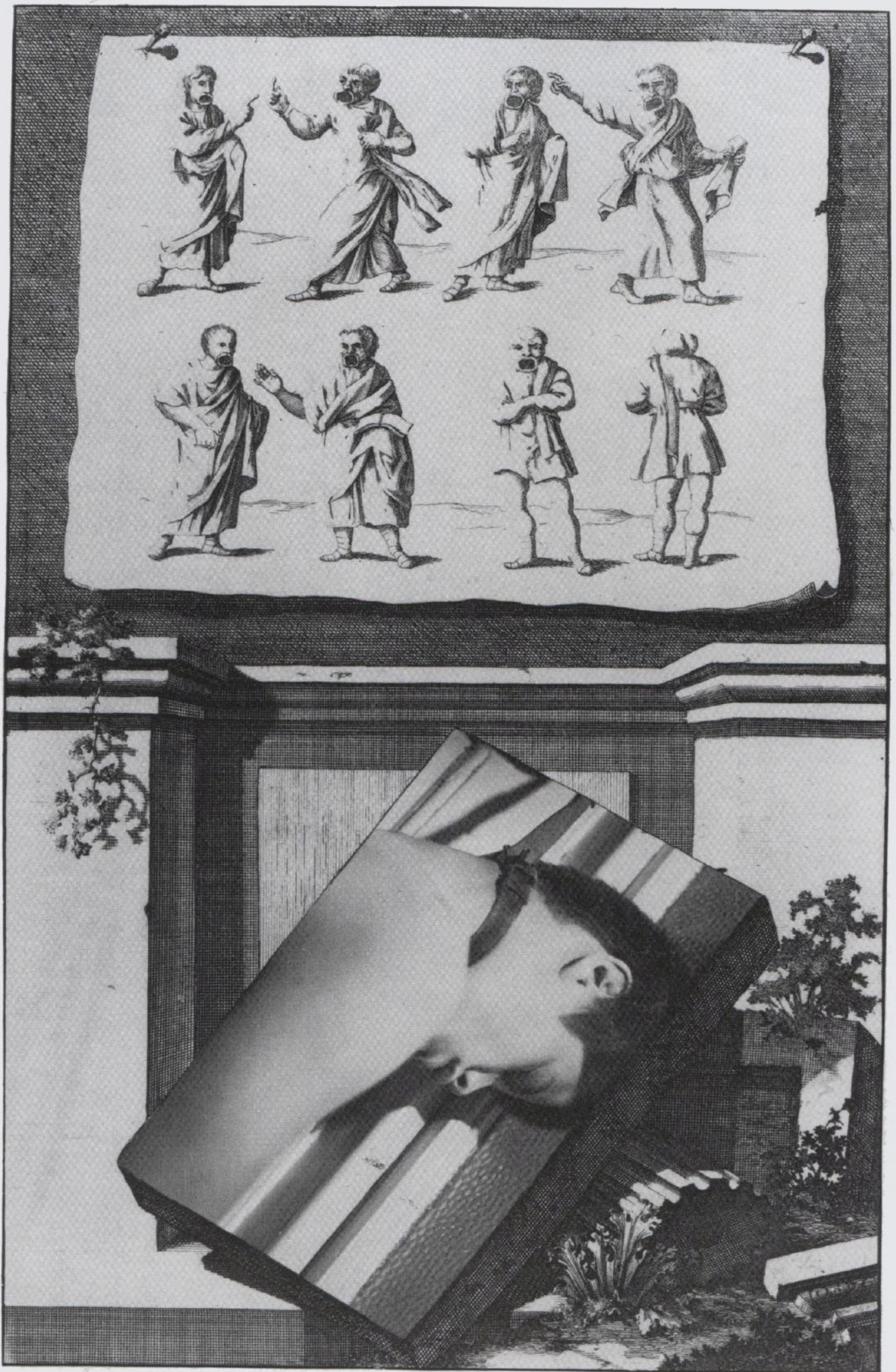


FIG. XXXVI.





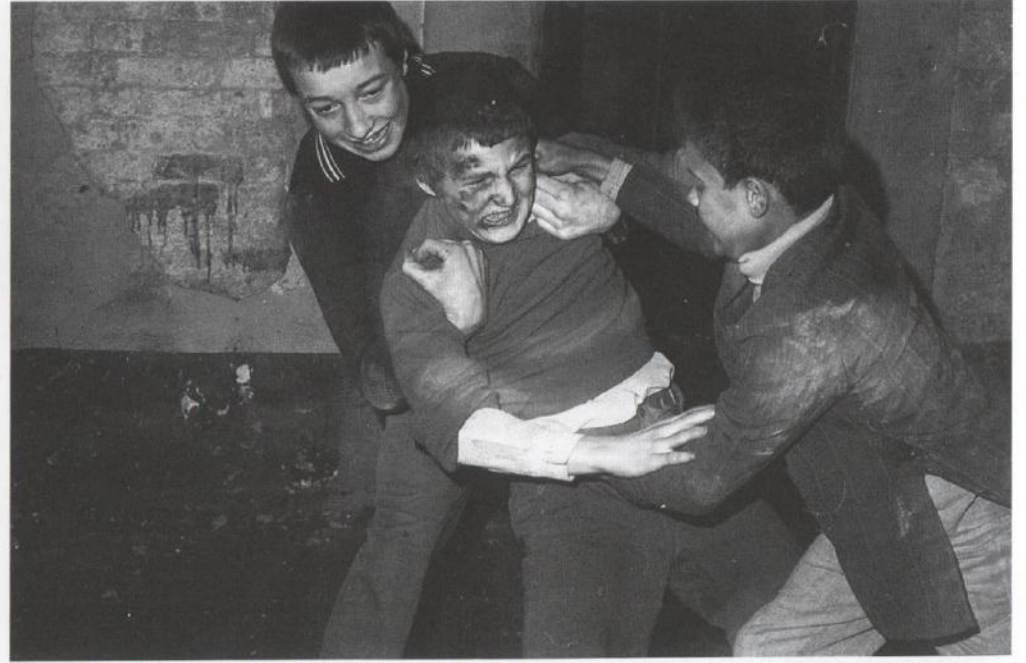
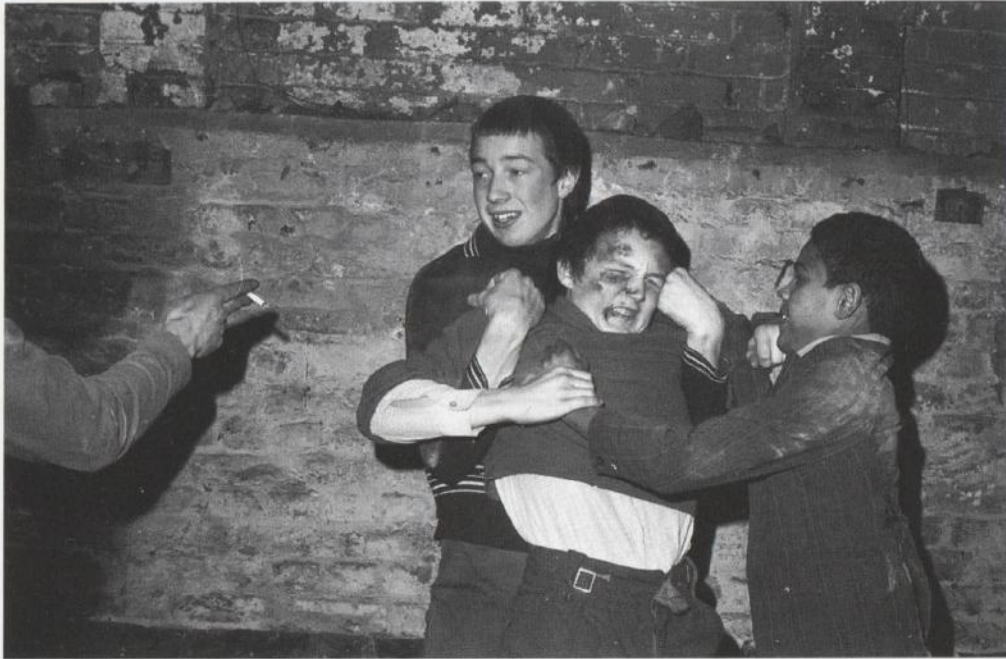
THE CITIZENS COMPANY GORBALS GLASGOW 1978-79

BOY

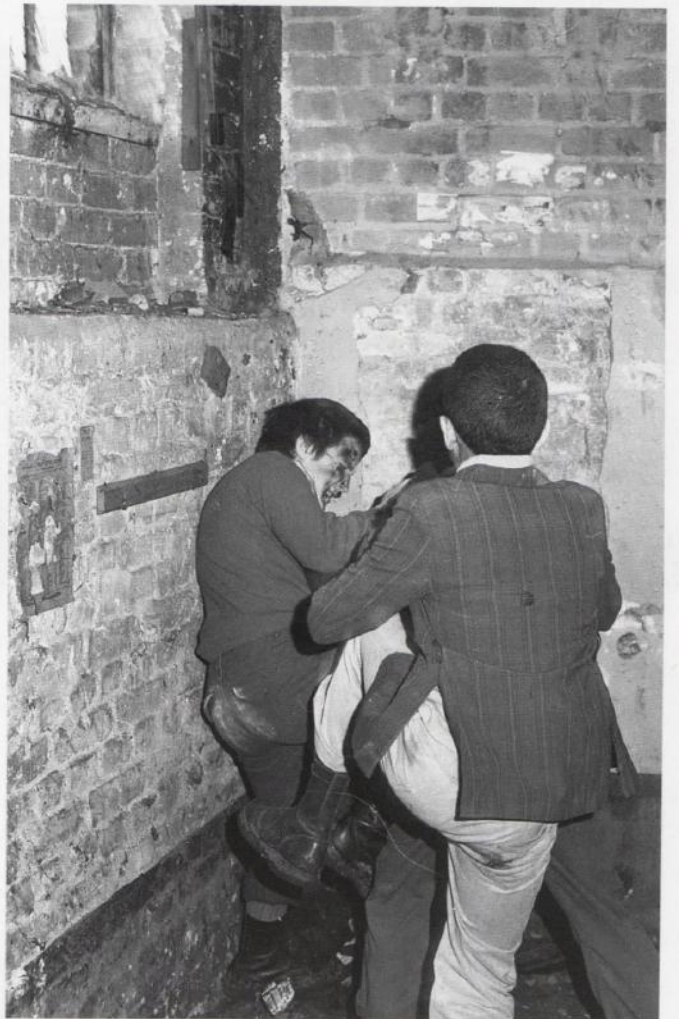
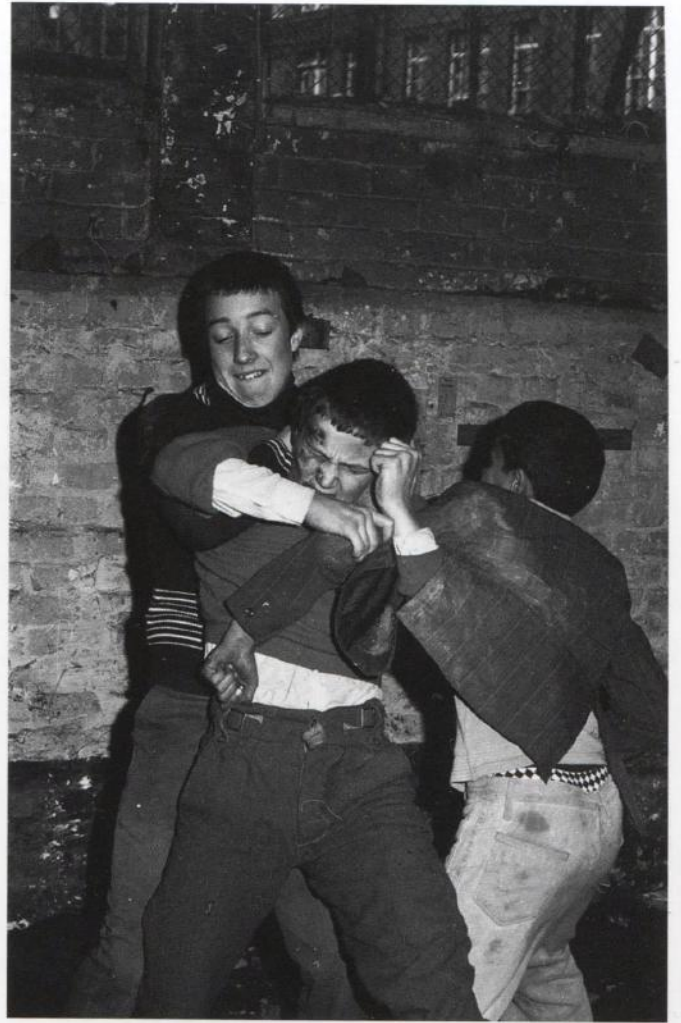


"THE STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRY LIES IN ITS YOUTH!"





















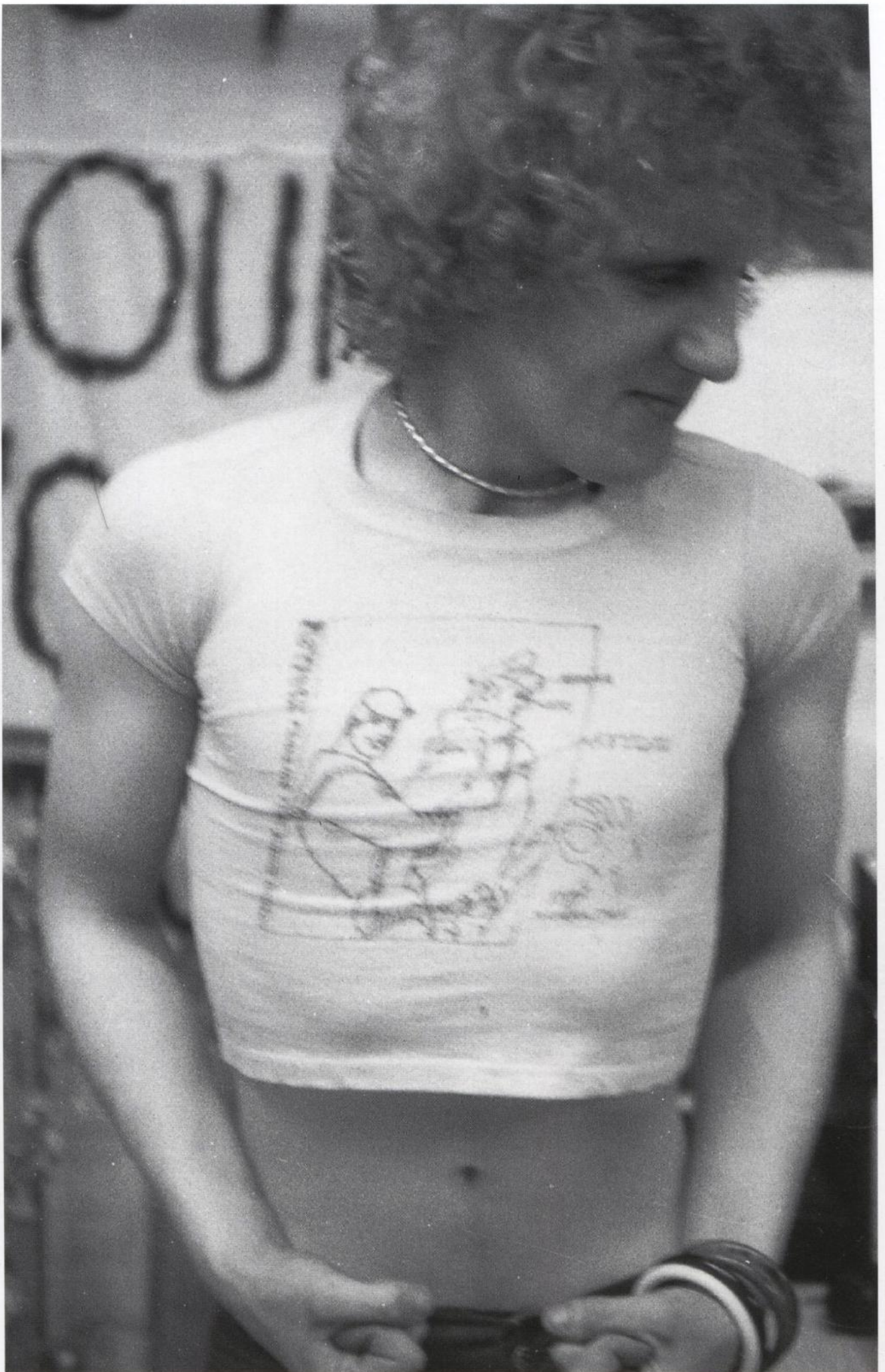


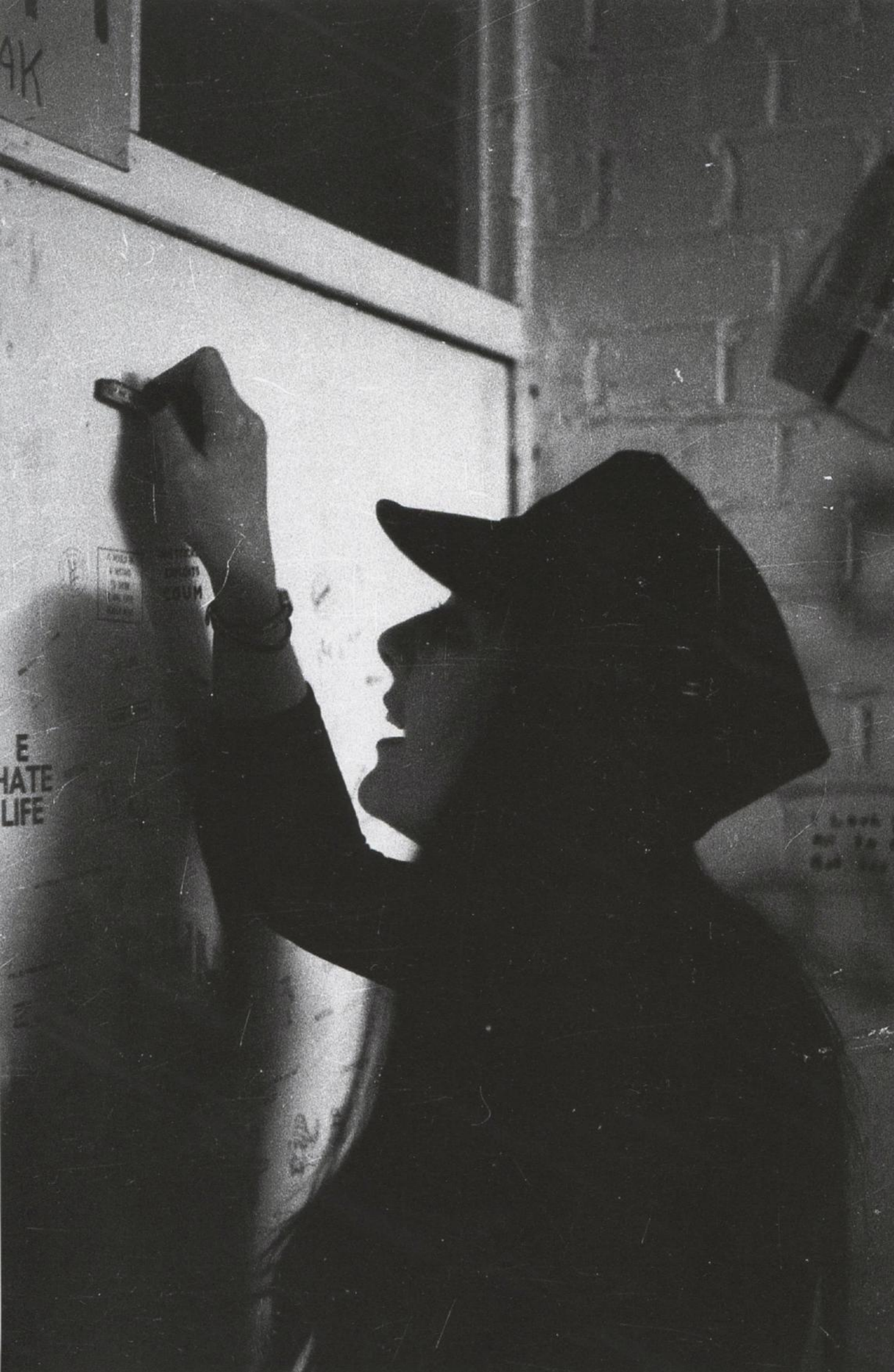
FARFISA











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STAMP
I HATE LIFE
LIFE

I
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STAMP
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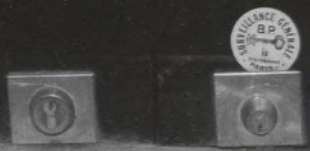
DU MERCREDI 9 AU MARDI 15/4

jeune à 2

Jean-Pierre MAS
Cesaris ALVIN
(mercredi 9 et jeudi 10 au duo)

DE VENDREDI 11 à MARDI 15/4
avec Jean-Louis
et Daniel

CHAUTEMPS
HUMAIR





Throbbing Gristle
A riot of laughter
and excitement





















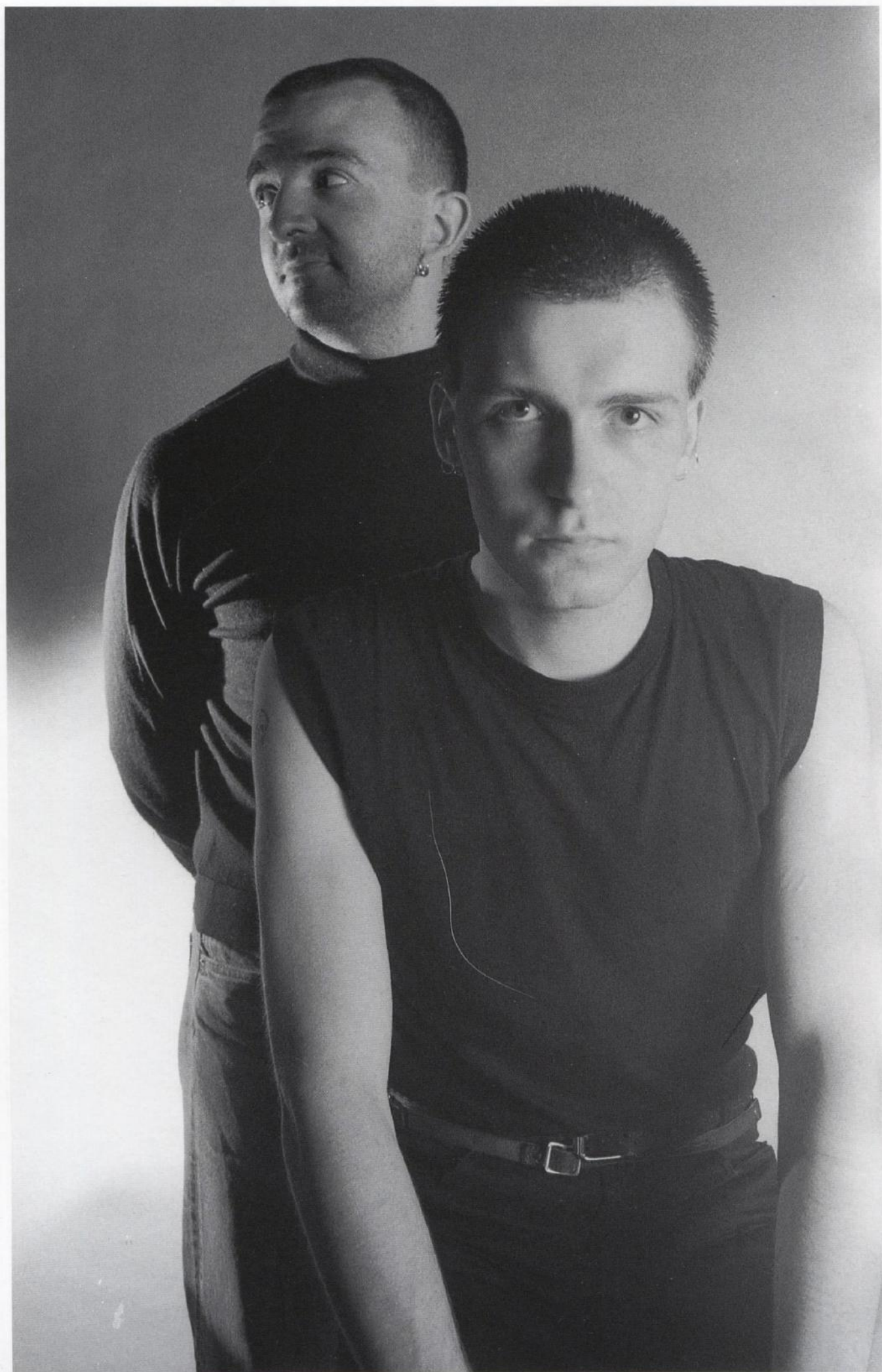




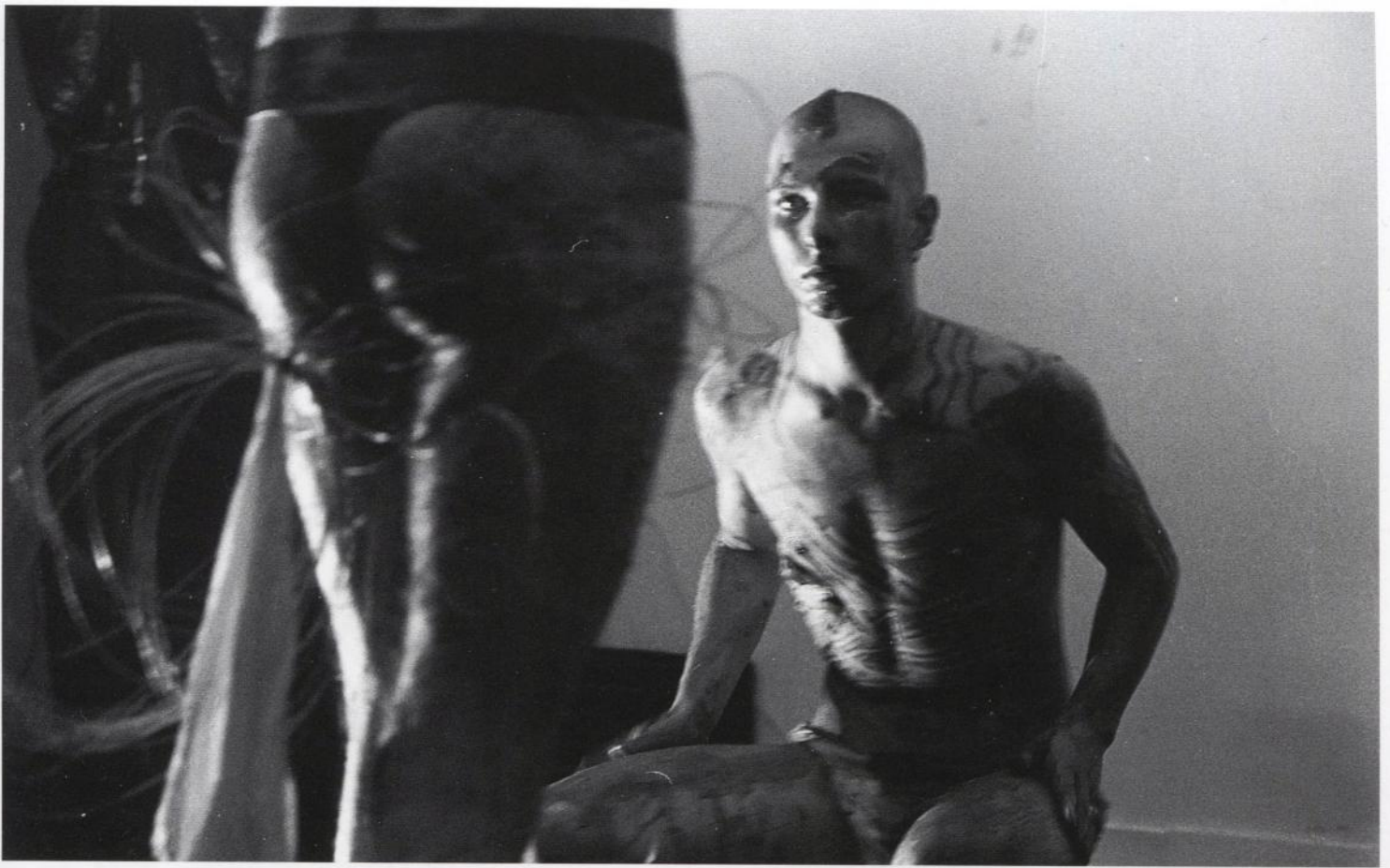






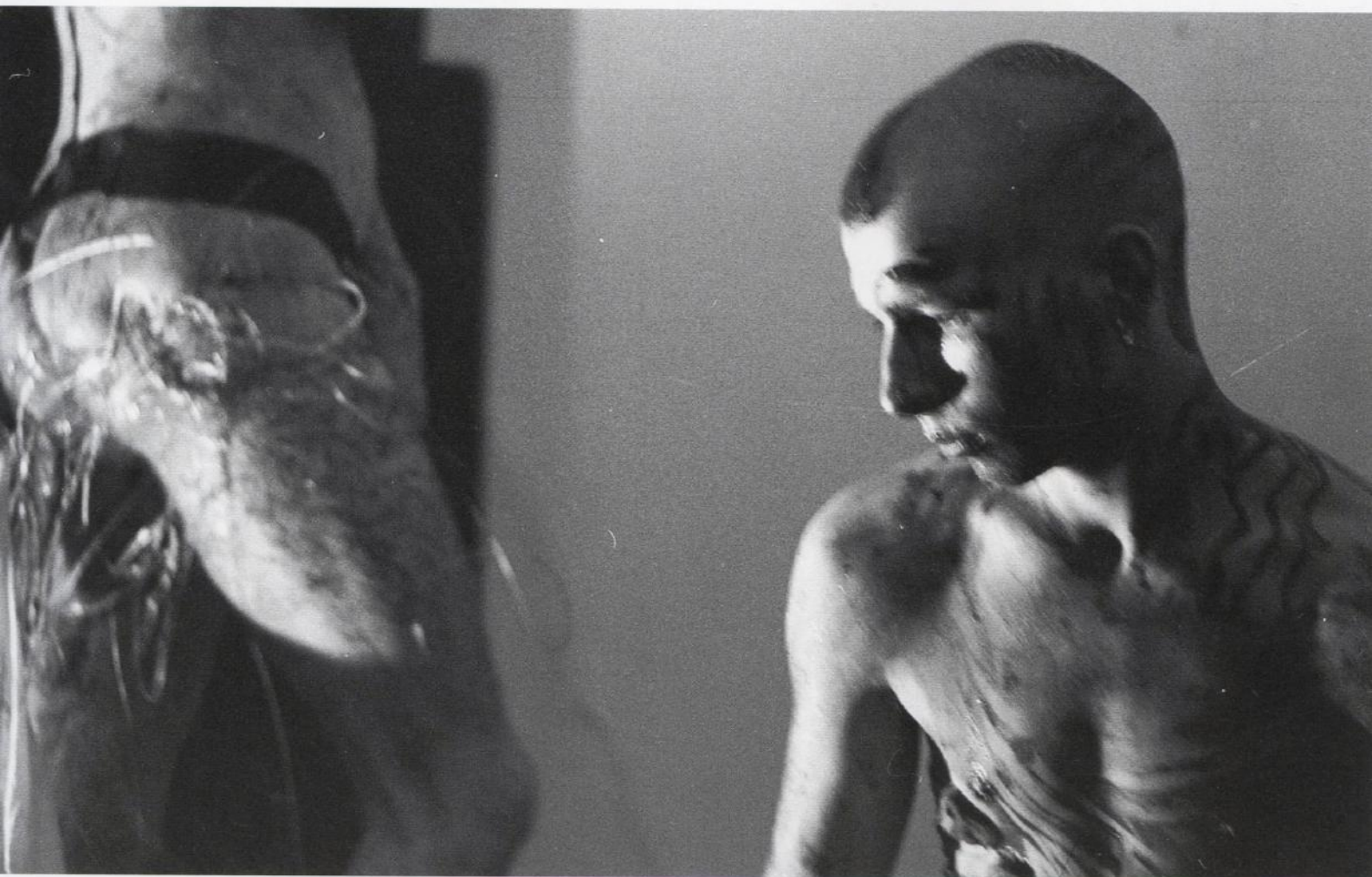
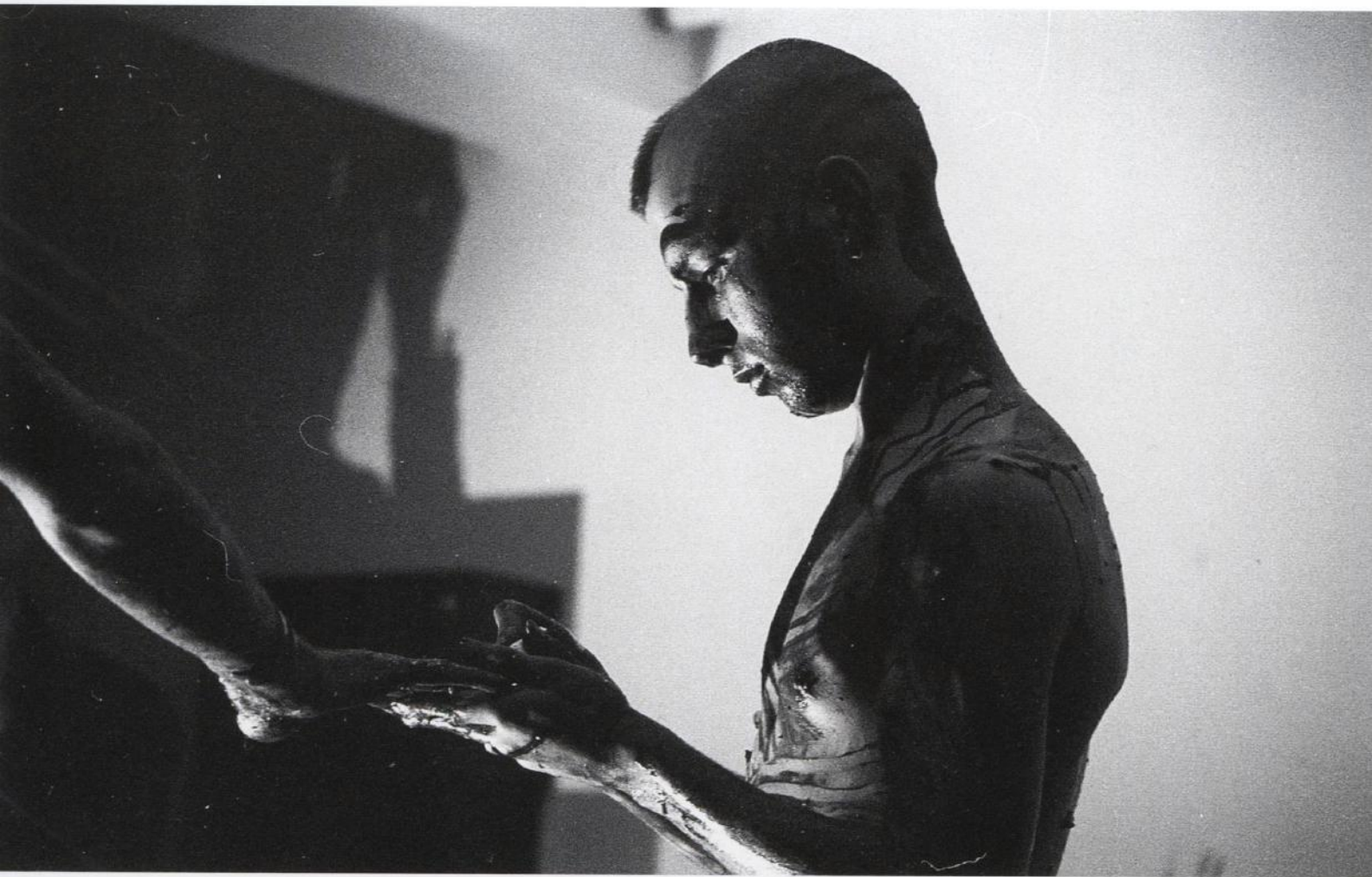




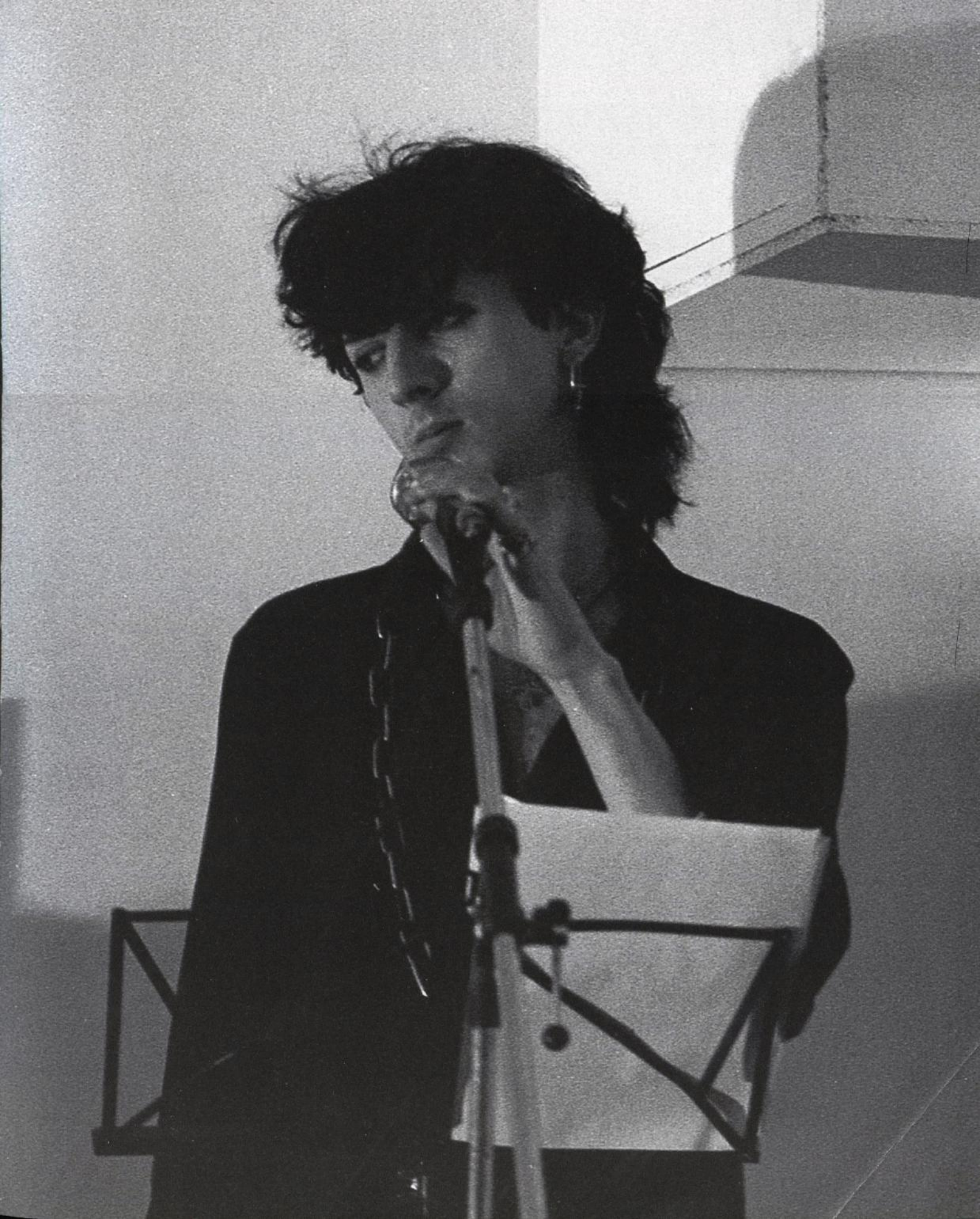


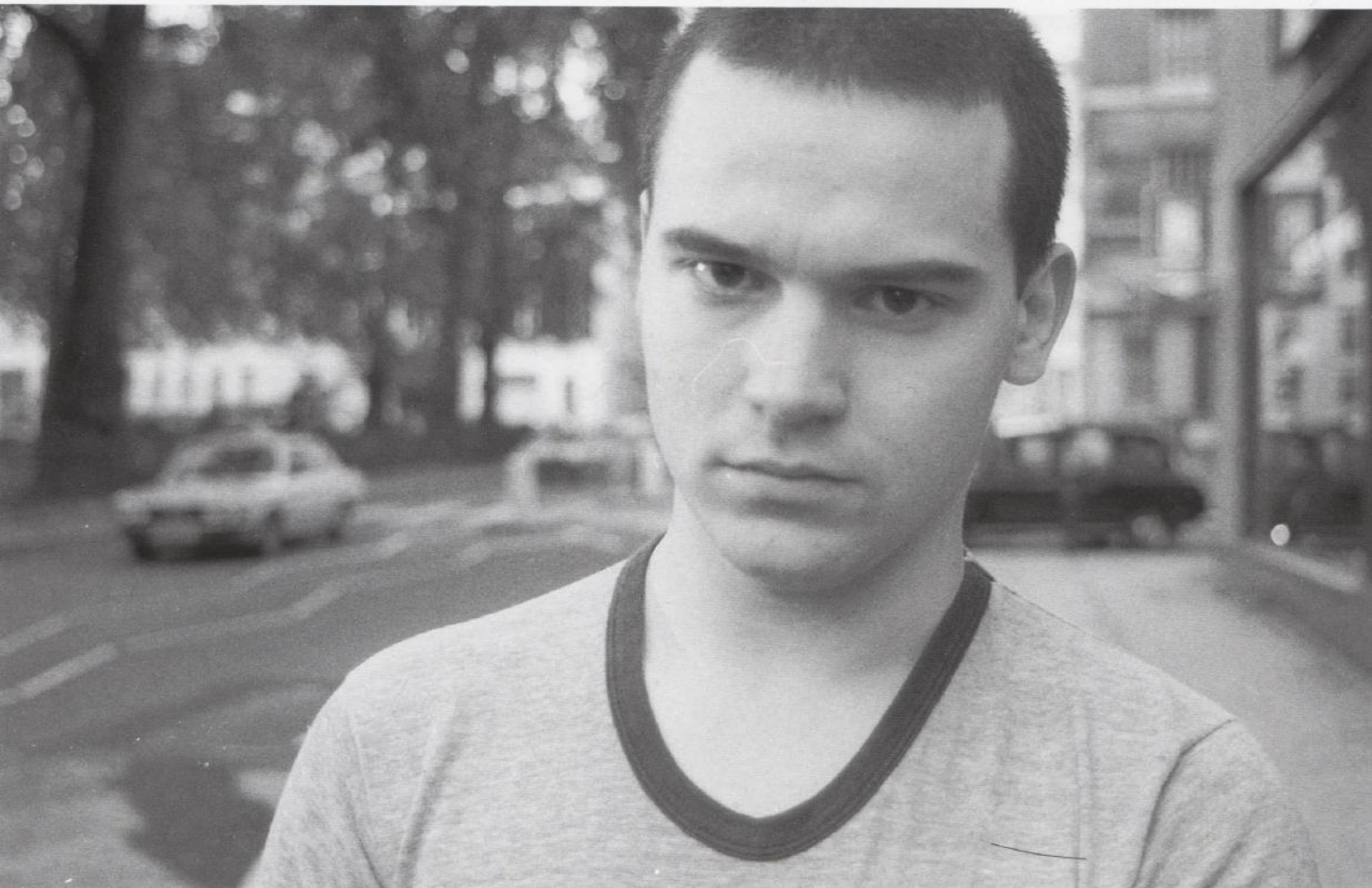


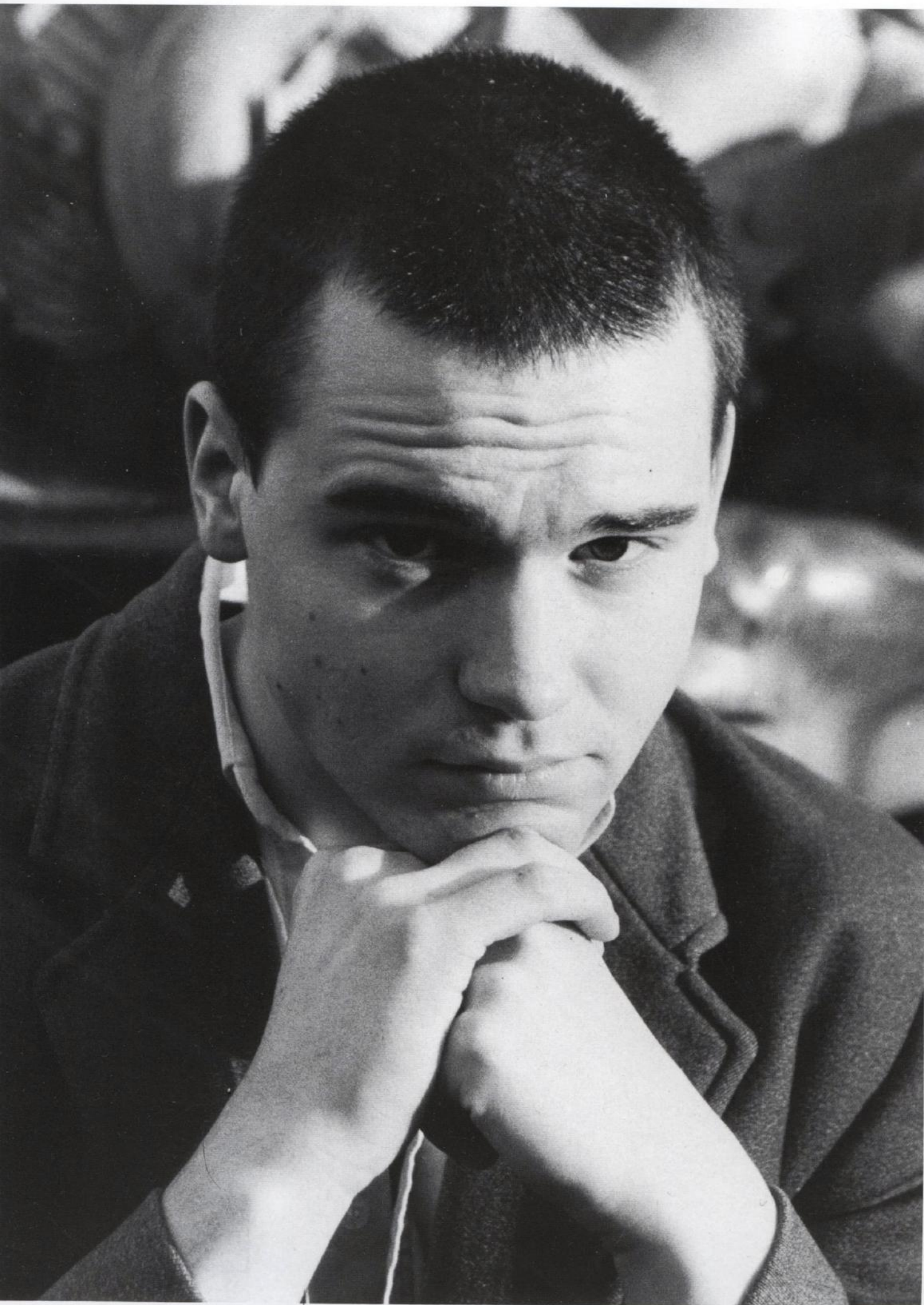




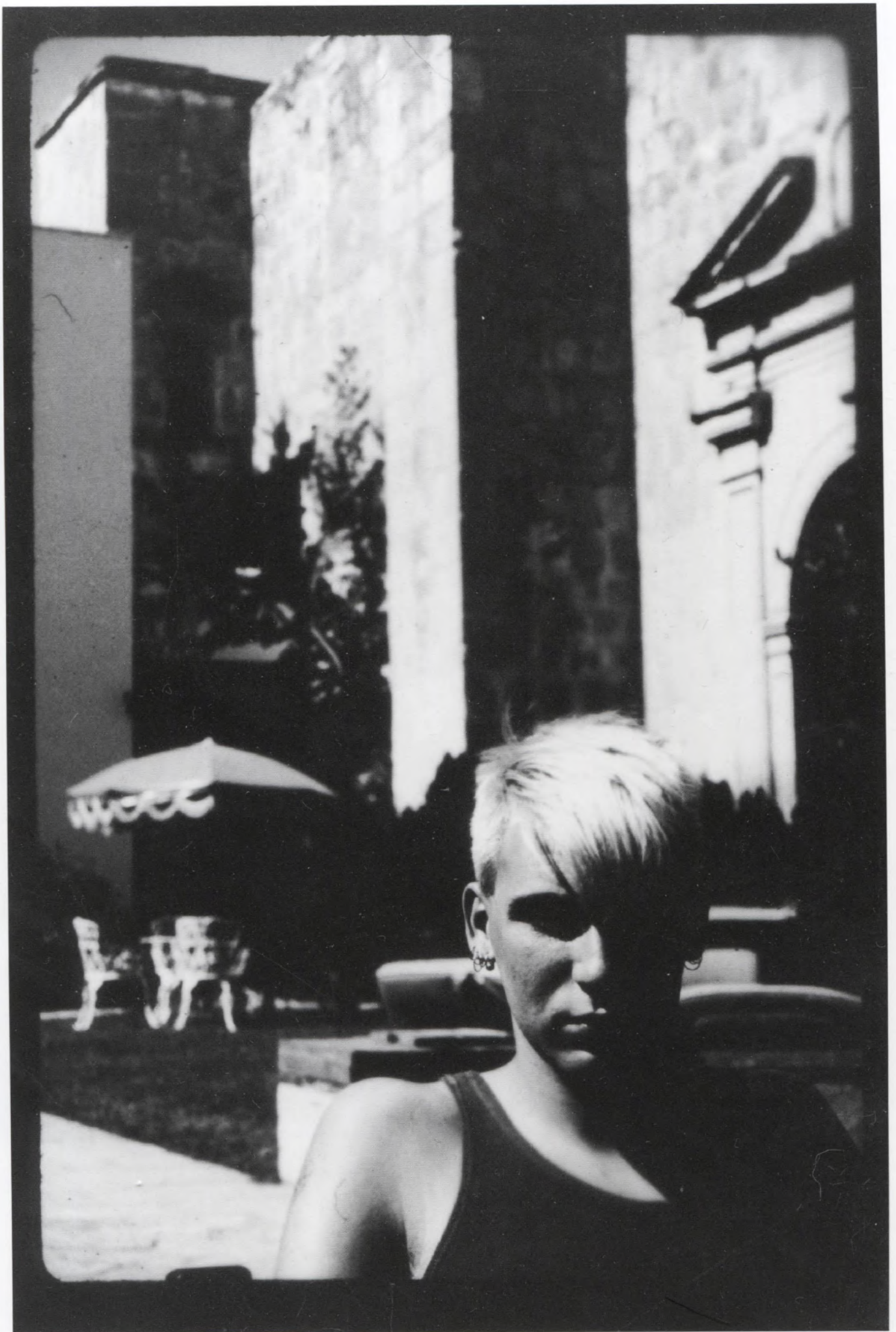








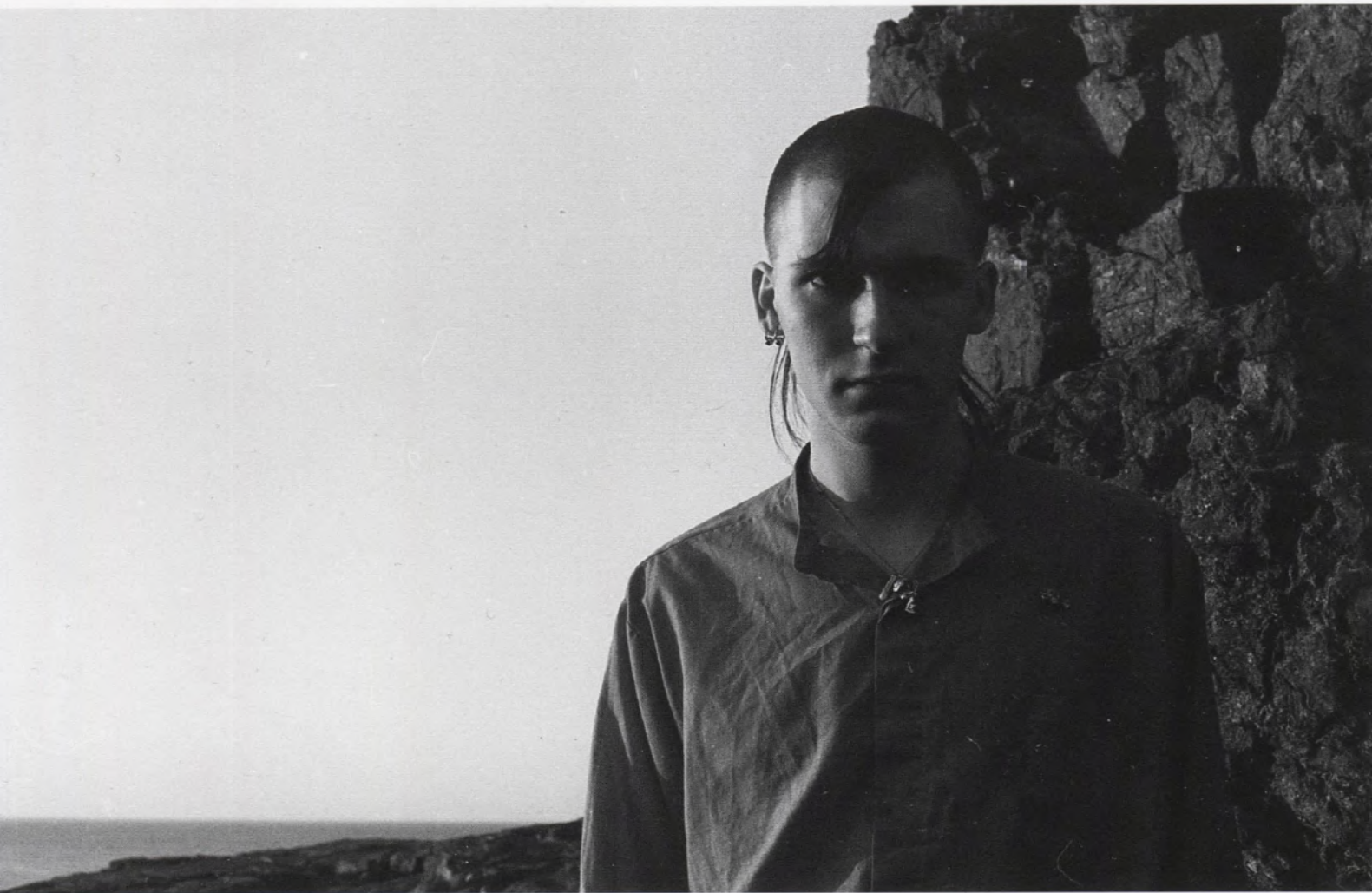






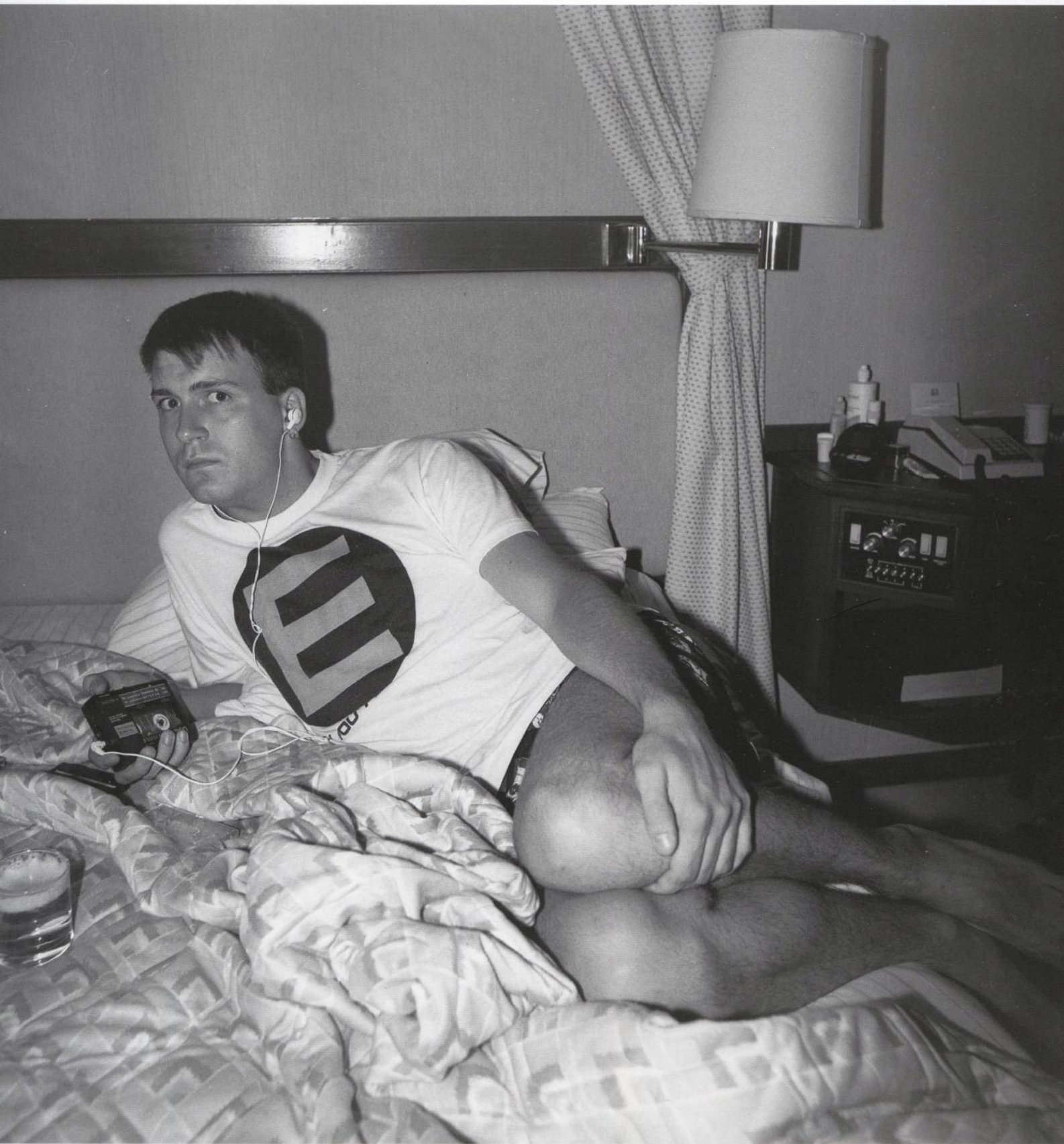






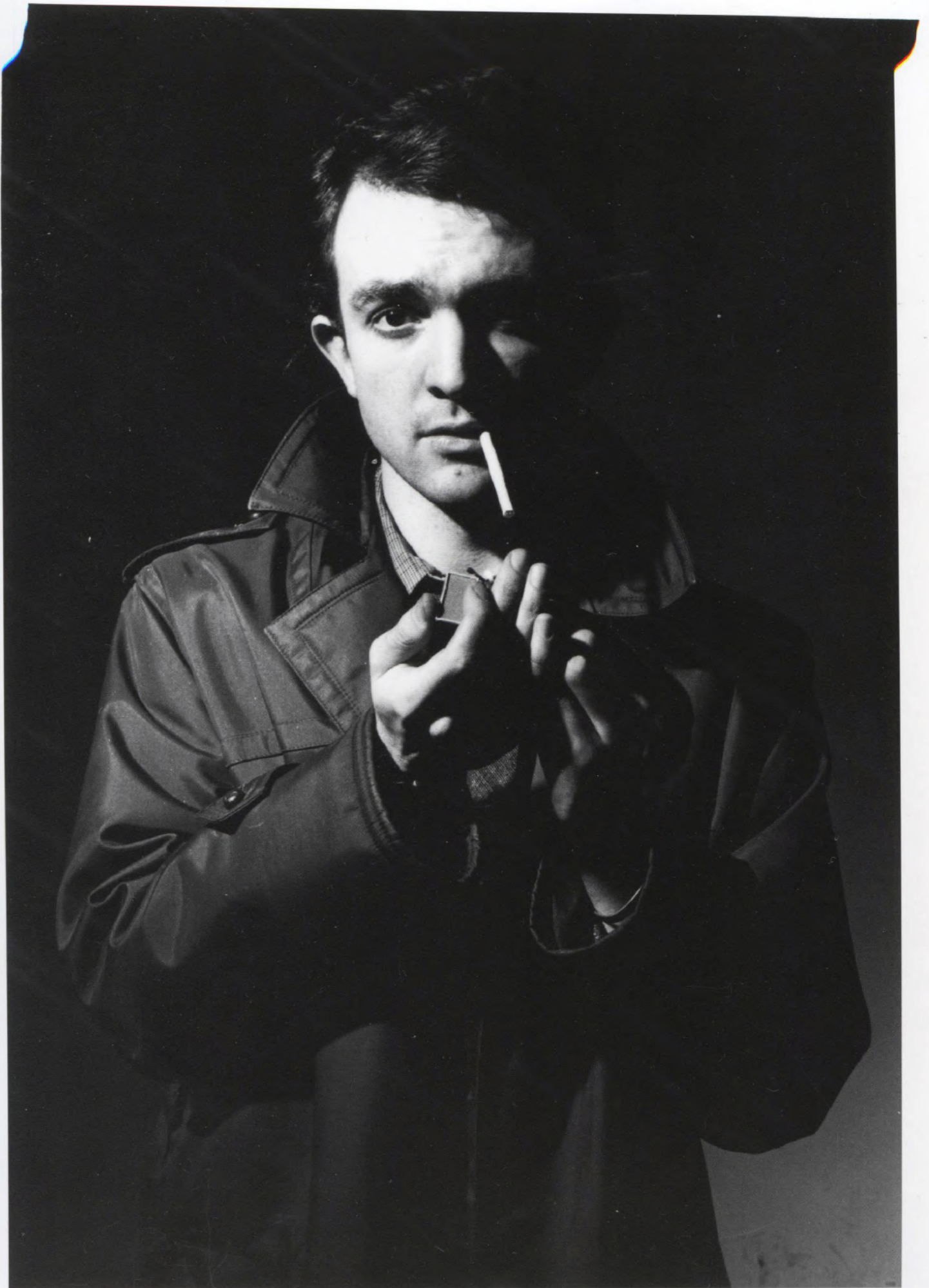


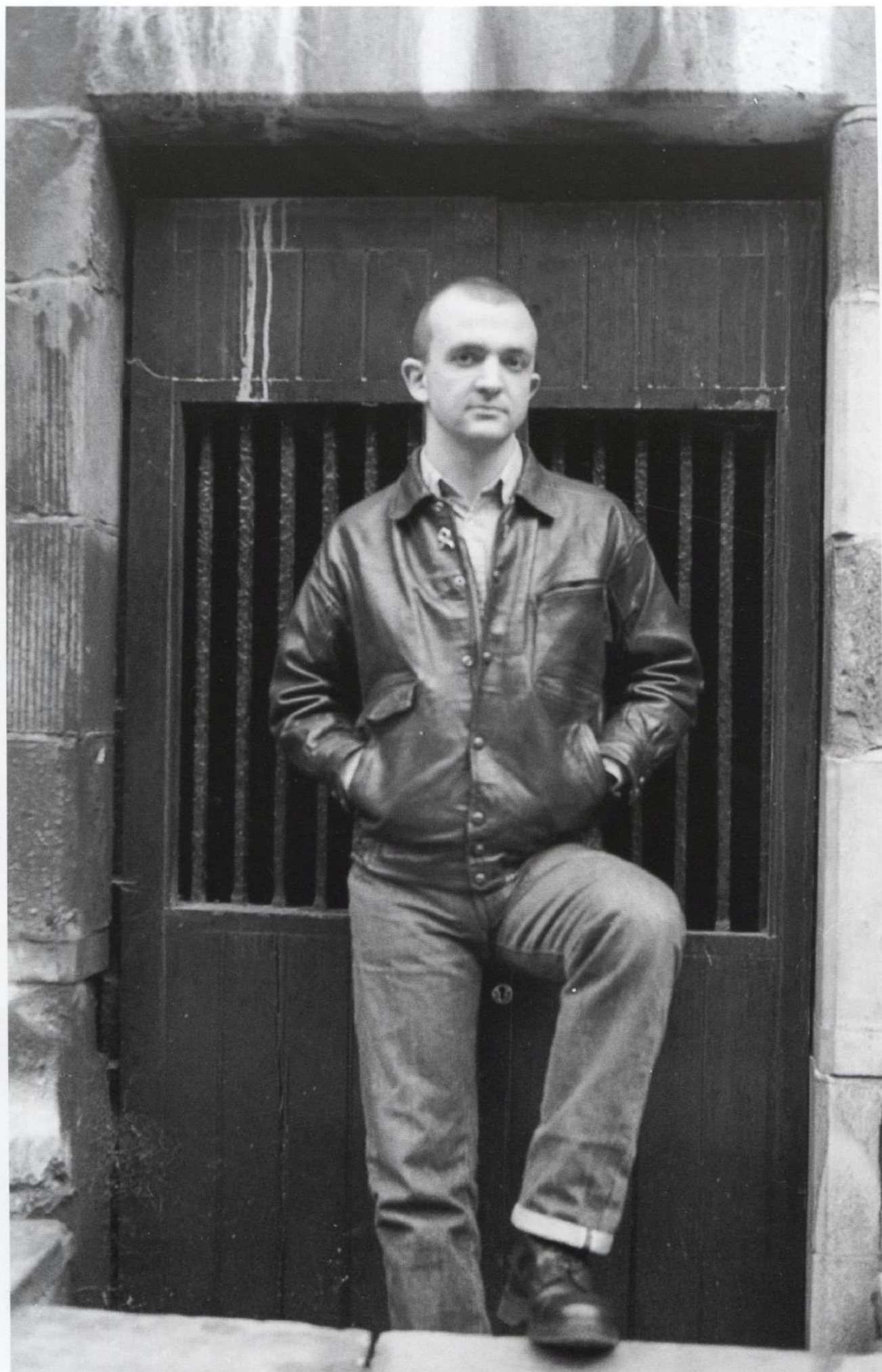


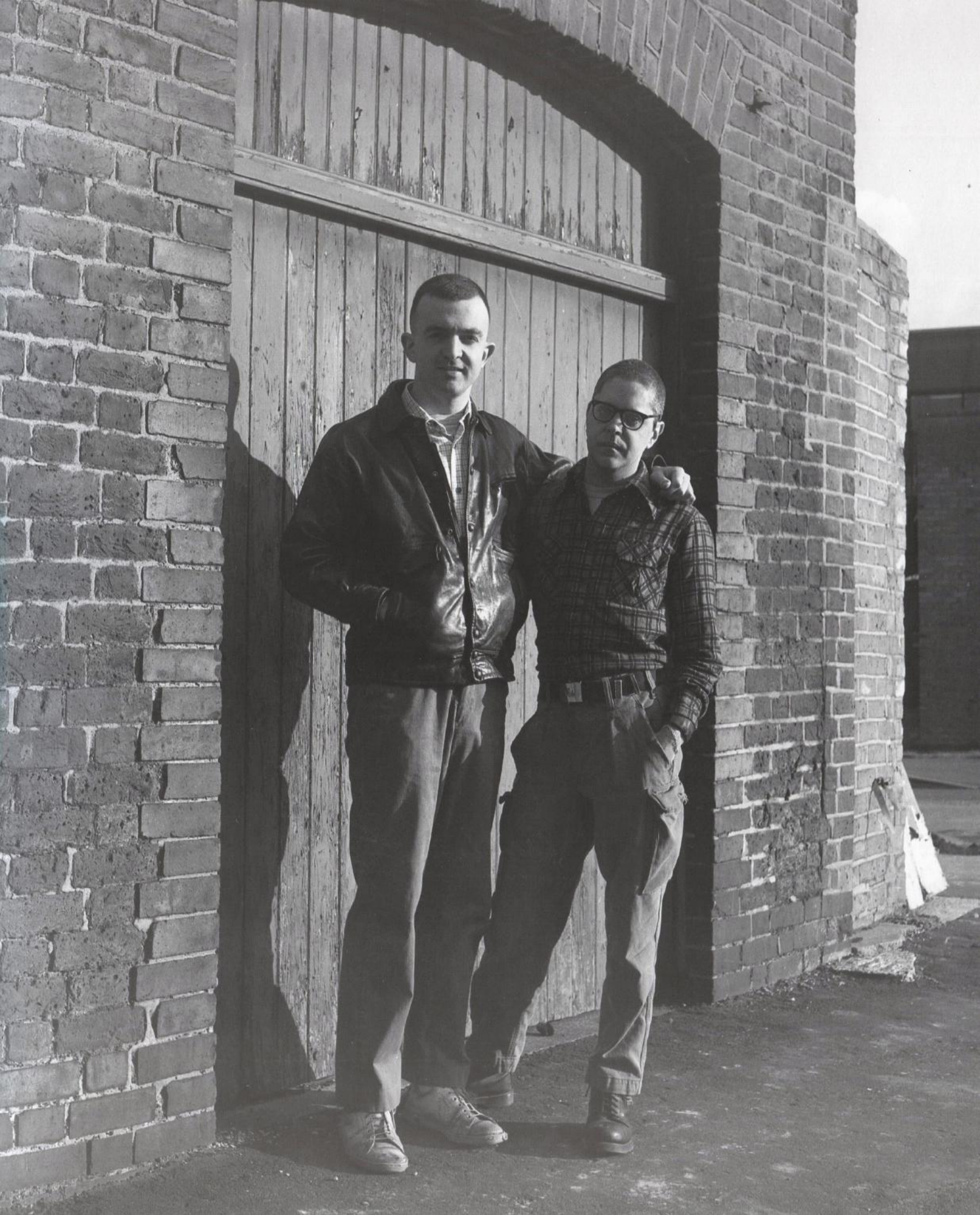










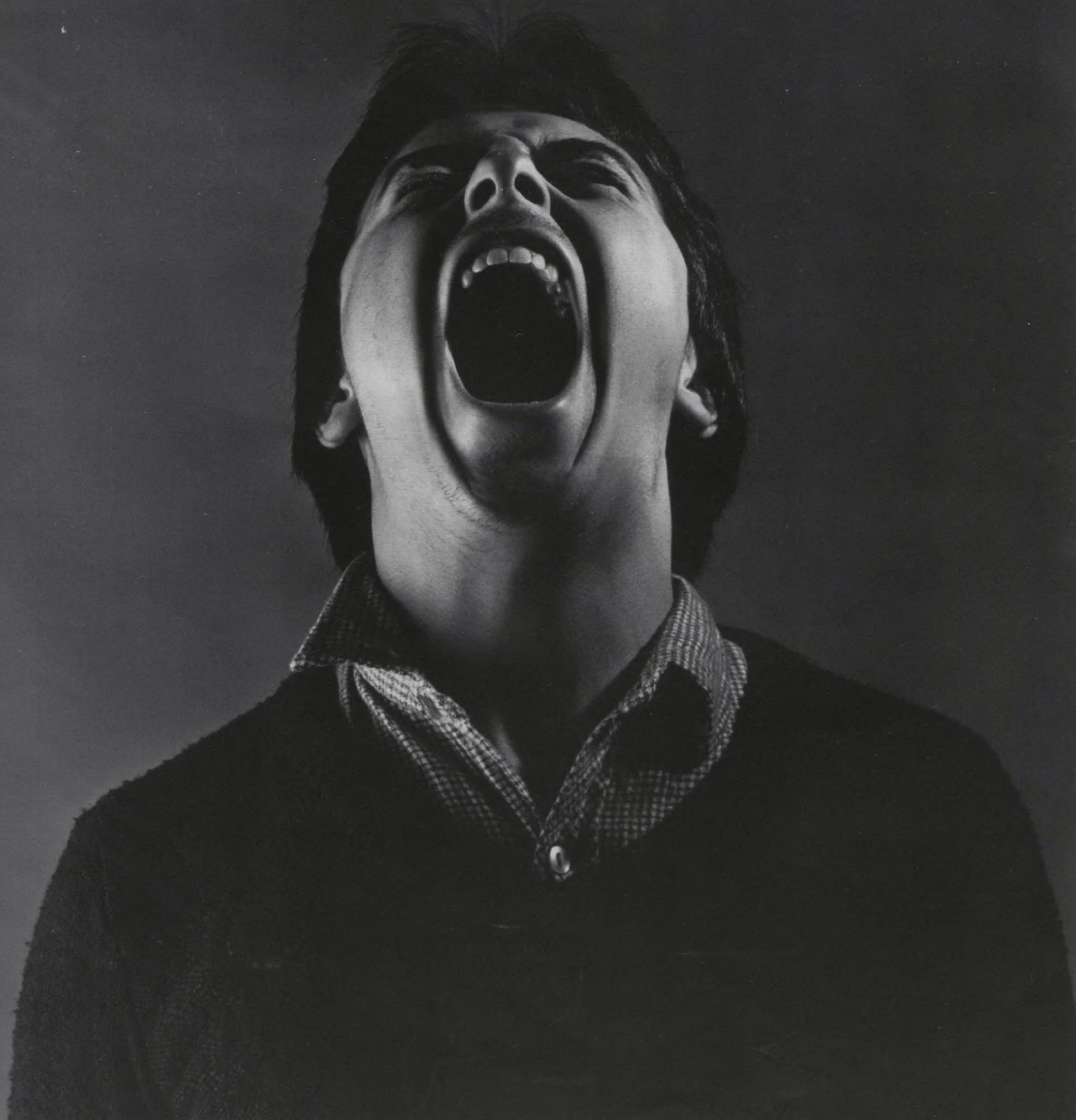


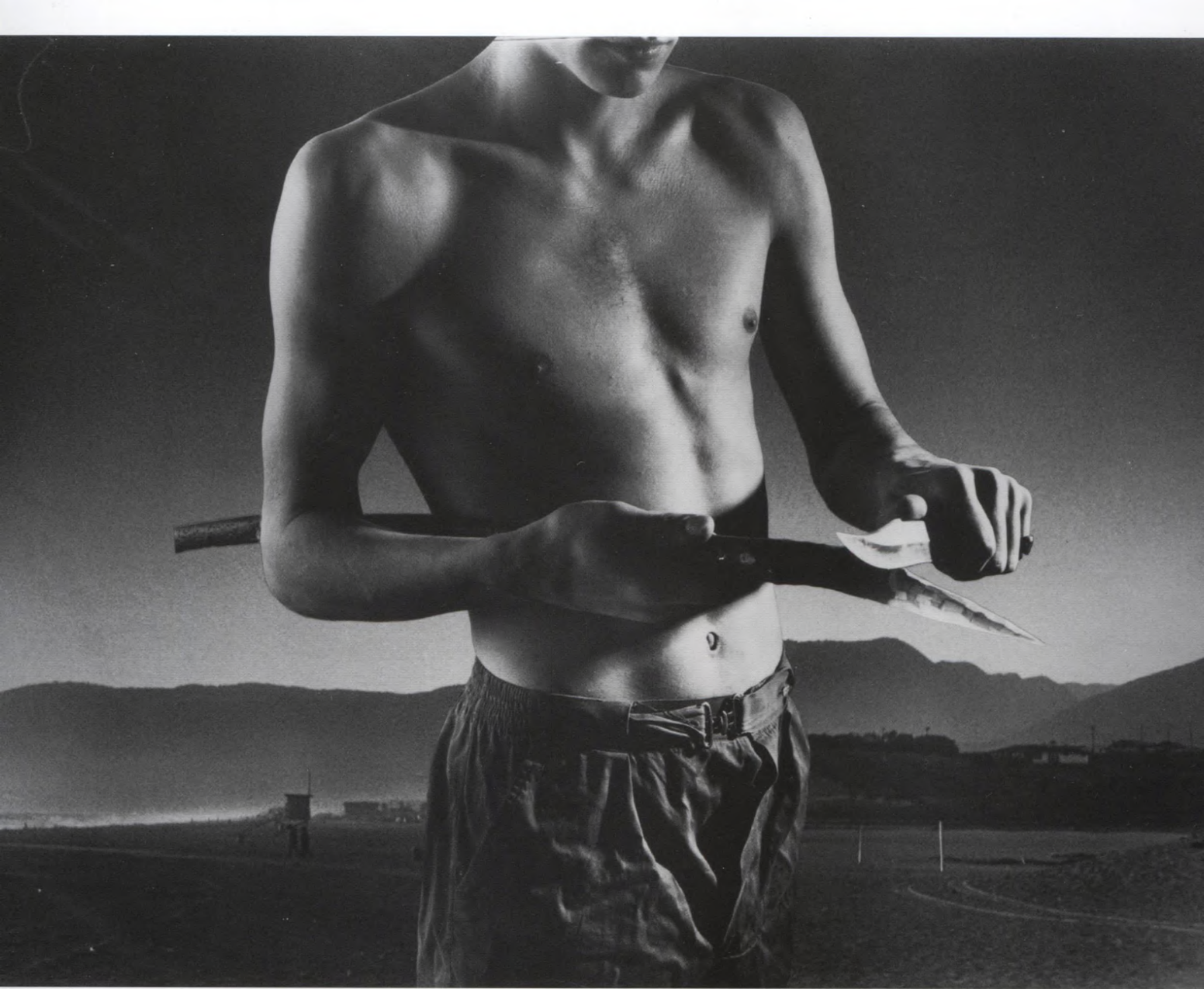
Dear Peter, Nov 24, I just received
your package. I recently found an
abandoned hospital full of iron lungs
& body braces etc. that might be a good
local - (a bit cold). New work is in
Room 103. I include a transparency
of friend with shoes. My pants are for
sale & I have many available at
moderate price. I will be in NY for
winter except for a few days when I
go South to visit Mother in St. Petersburg,
Florida - I remember your photo
group "Hypnosis" from the book ...
& I always liked it.

your truly,

Arthur Pers







Model Release Form

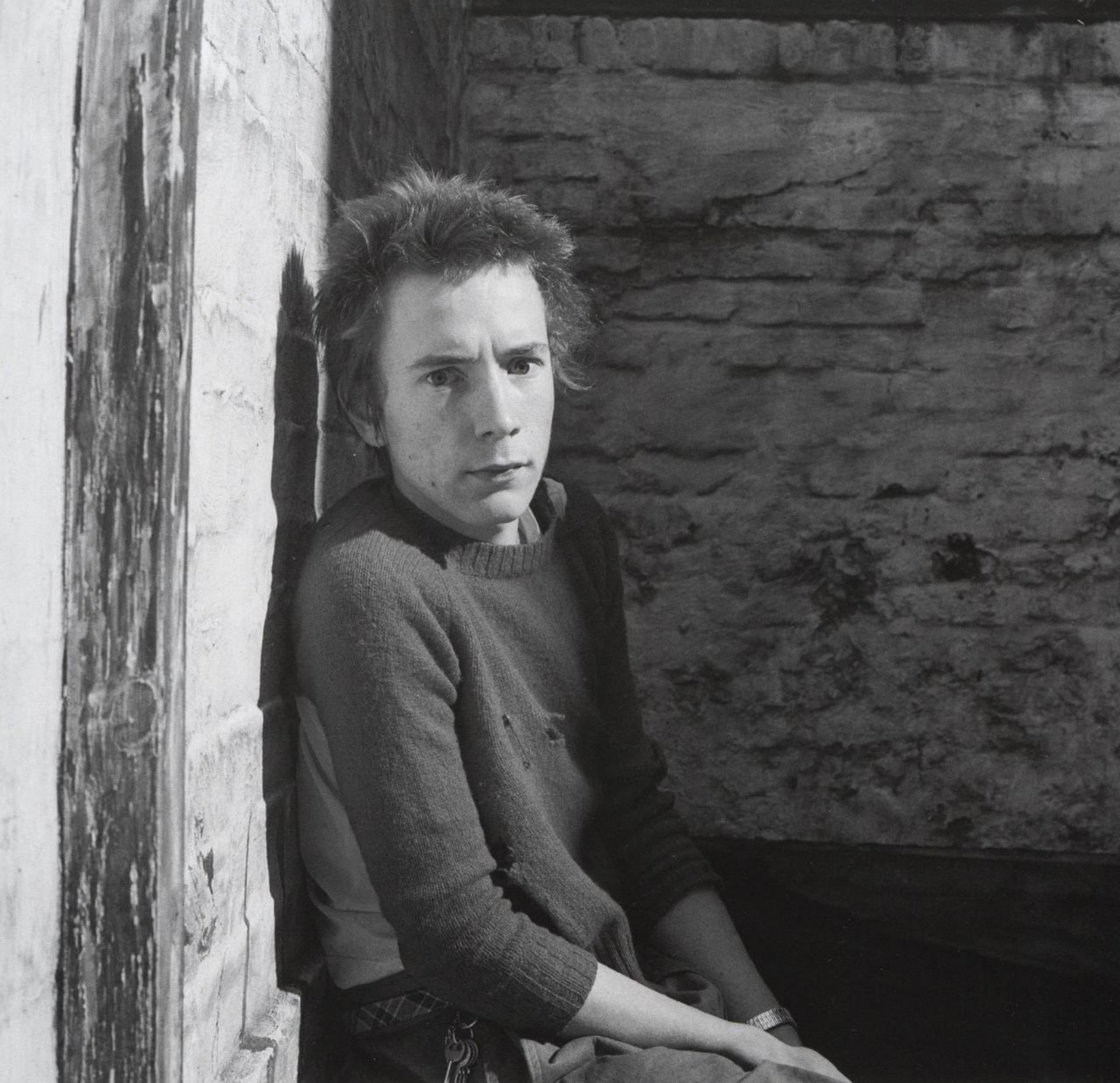
I hereby give my permission to HIPGNOSIS or their agents to use any pictures of me taken by them at their studios in connection with the WISHBONE ASH record cover and in related publicity.

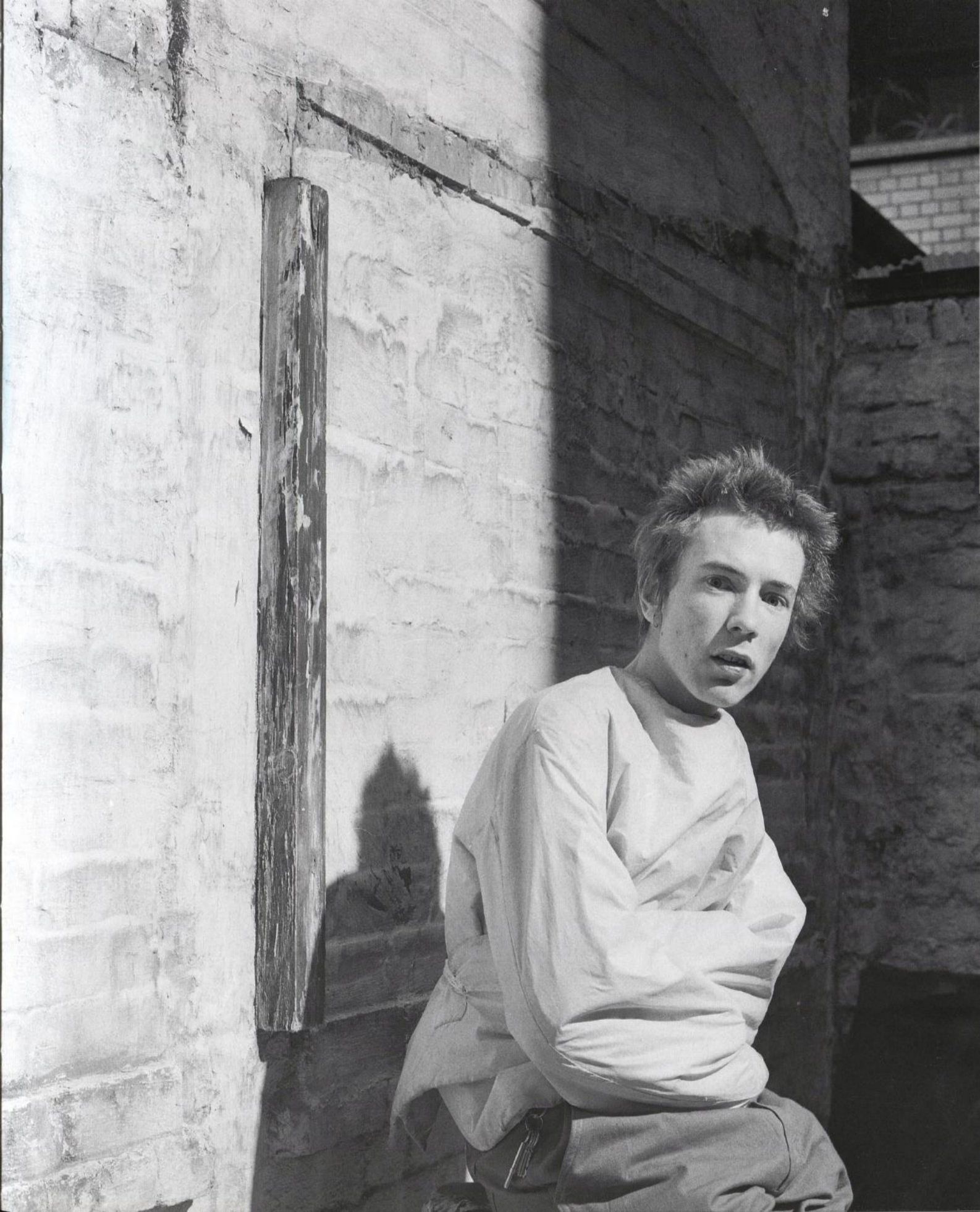
Signed ...*W. J. ...*.....

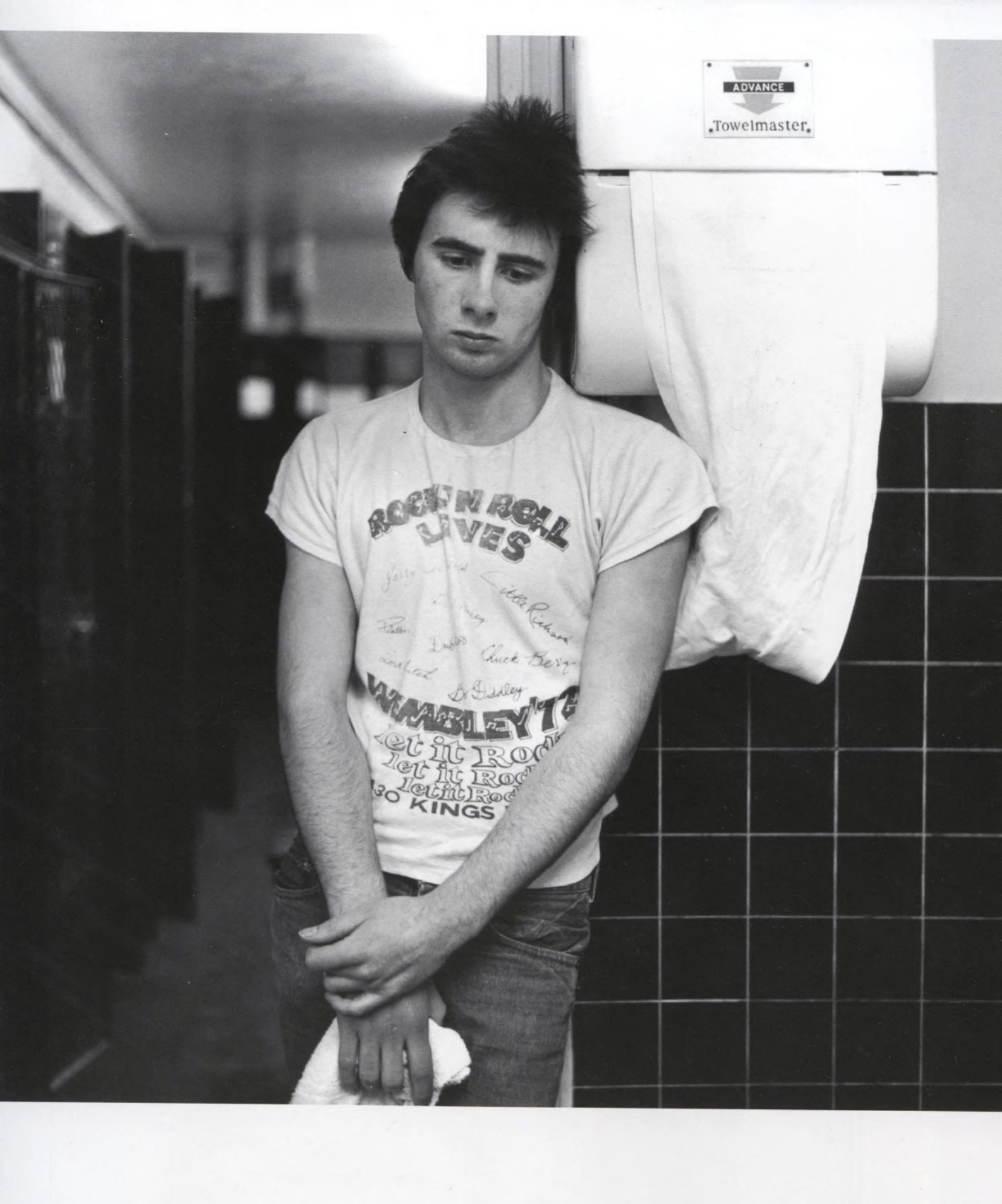
September 9th 1976











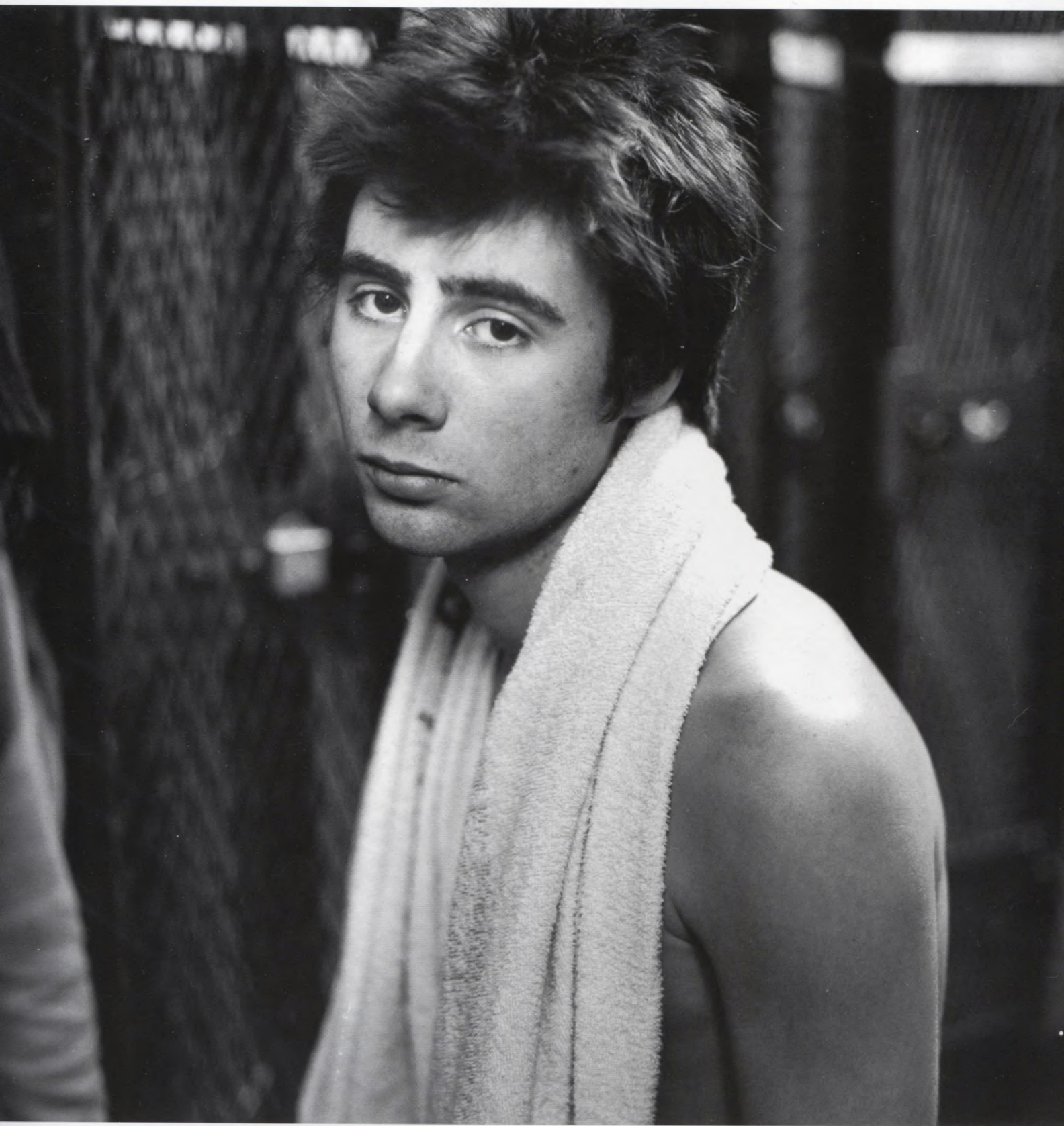
ADVANCE
Towelmaster

ROCK N ROLL
LIVES

Jerry Lee
Little Richard
Pete Townshend
Luther
Chuck Berry

WIMBLEY '78

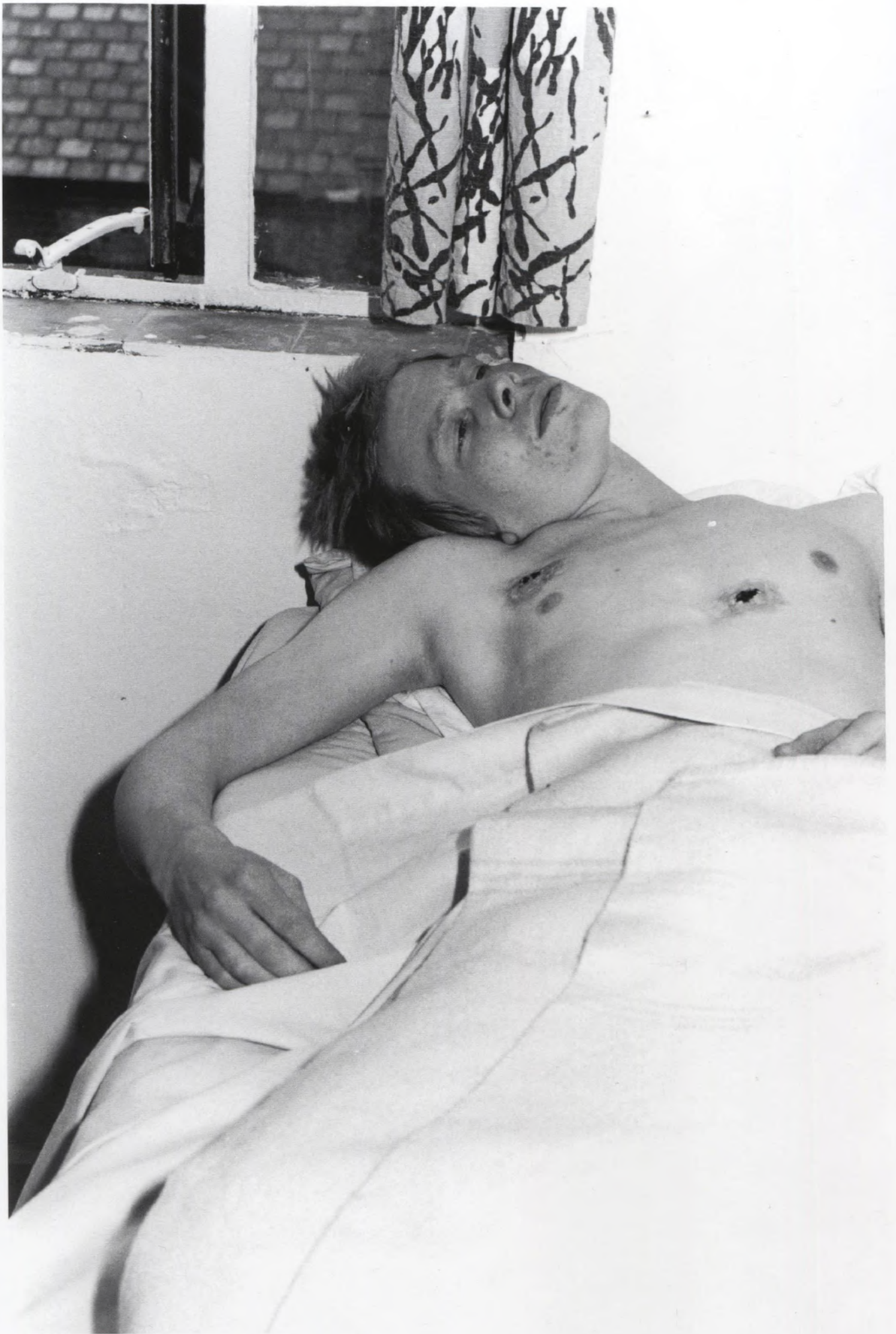
let it ROCK
let it ROCK
let it ROCK
GO KINGS





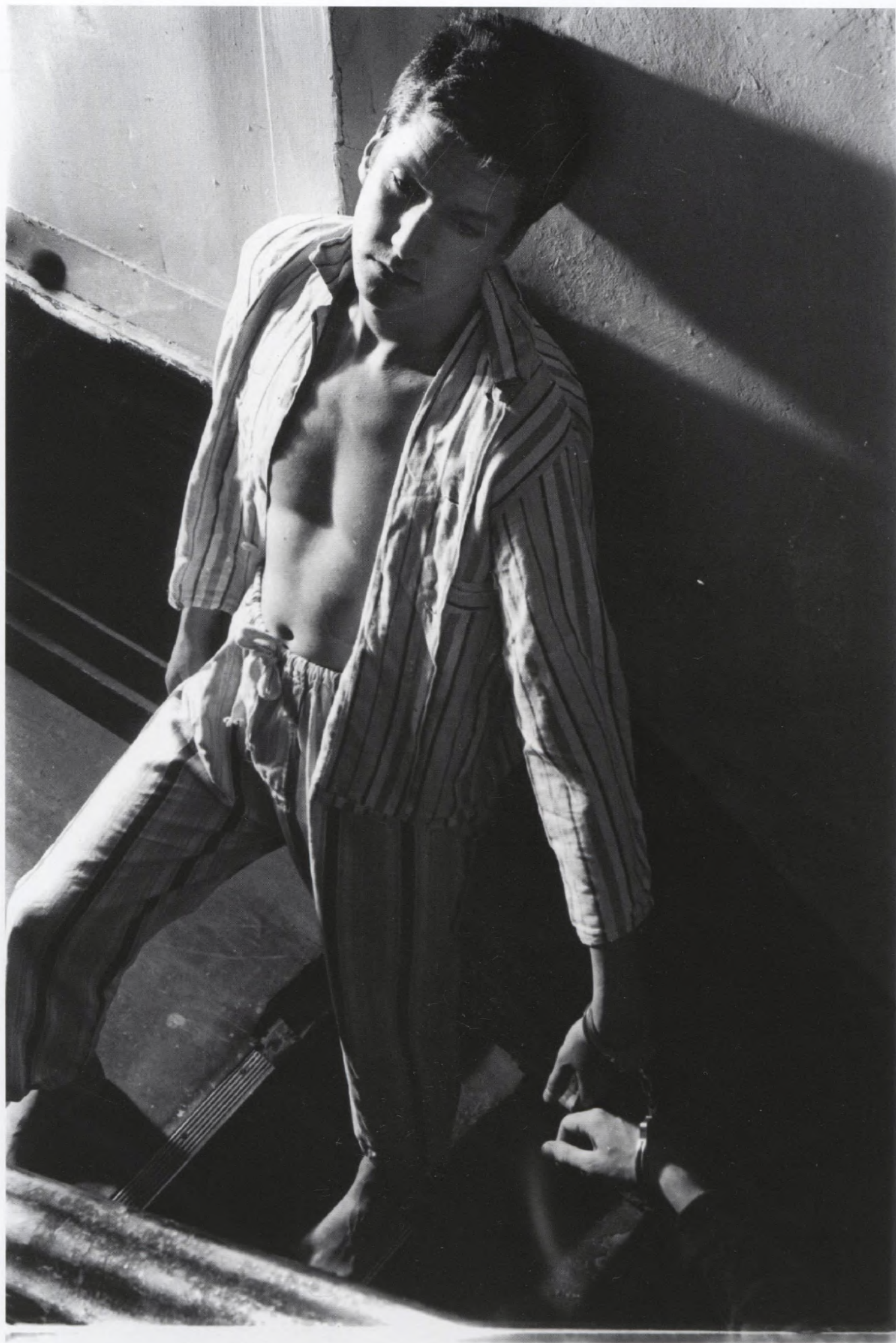


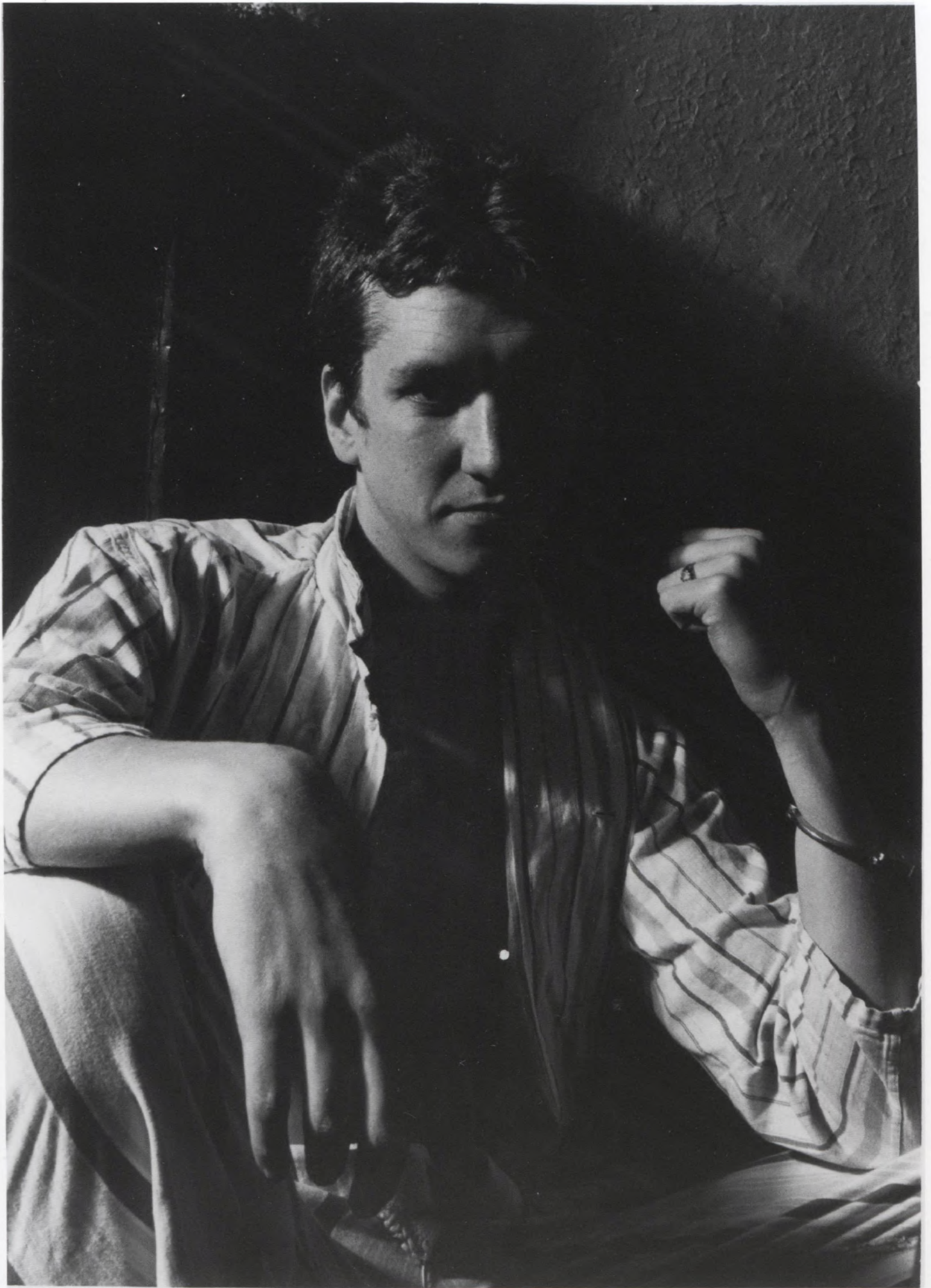




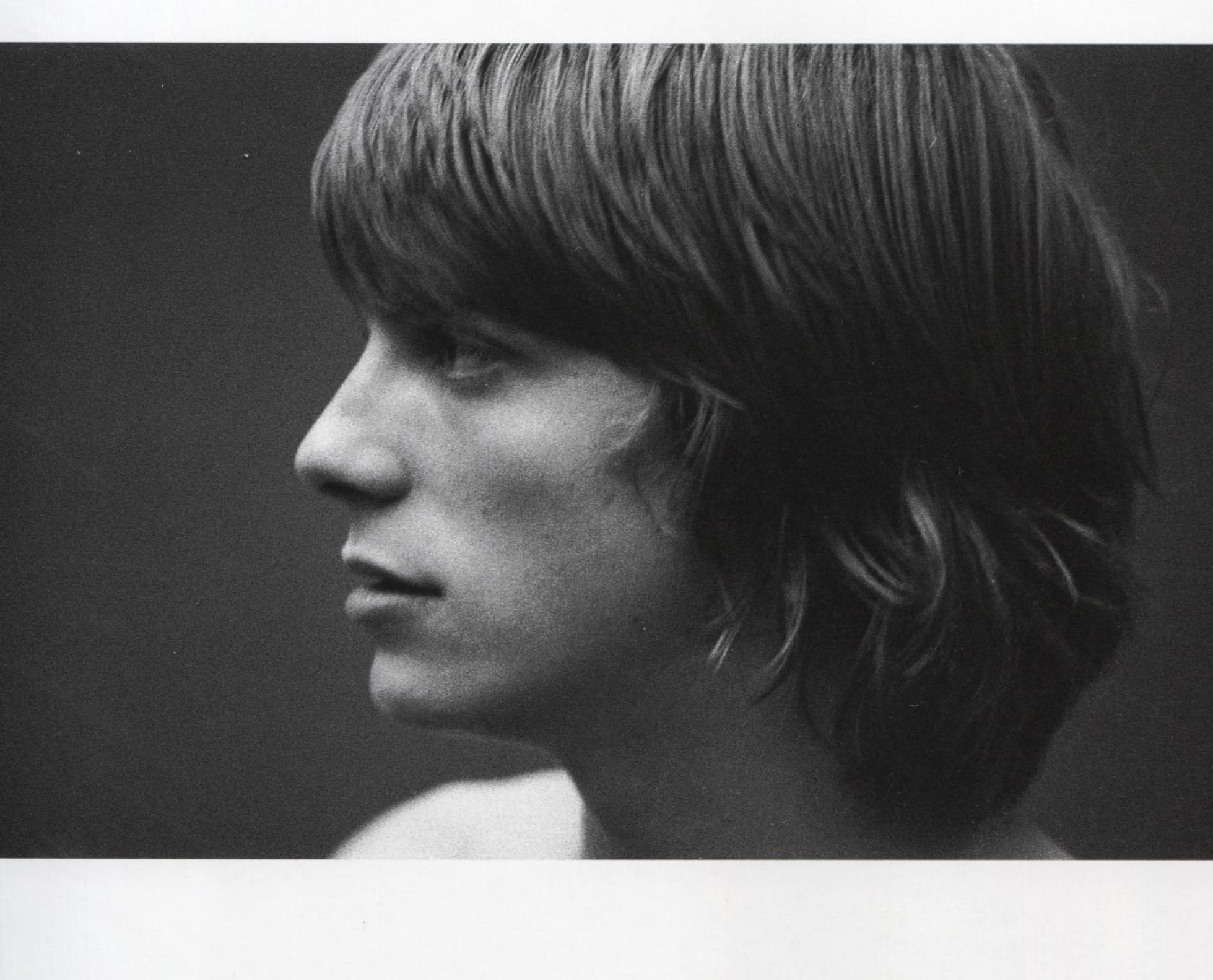




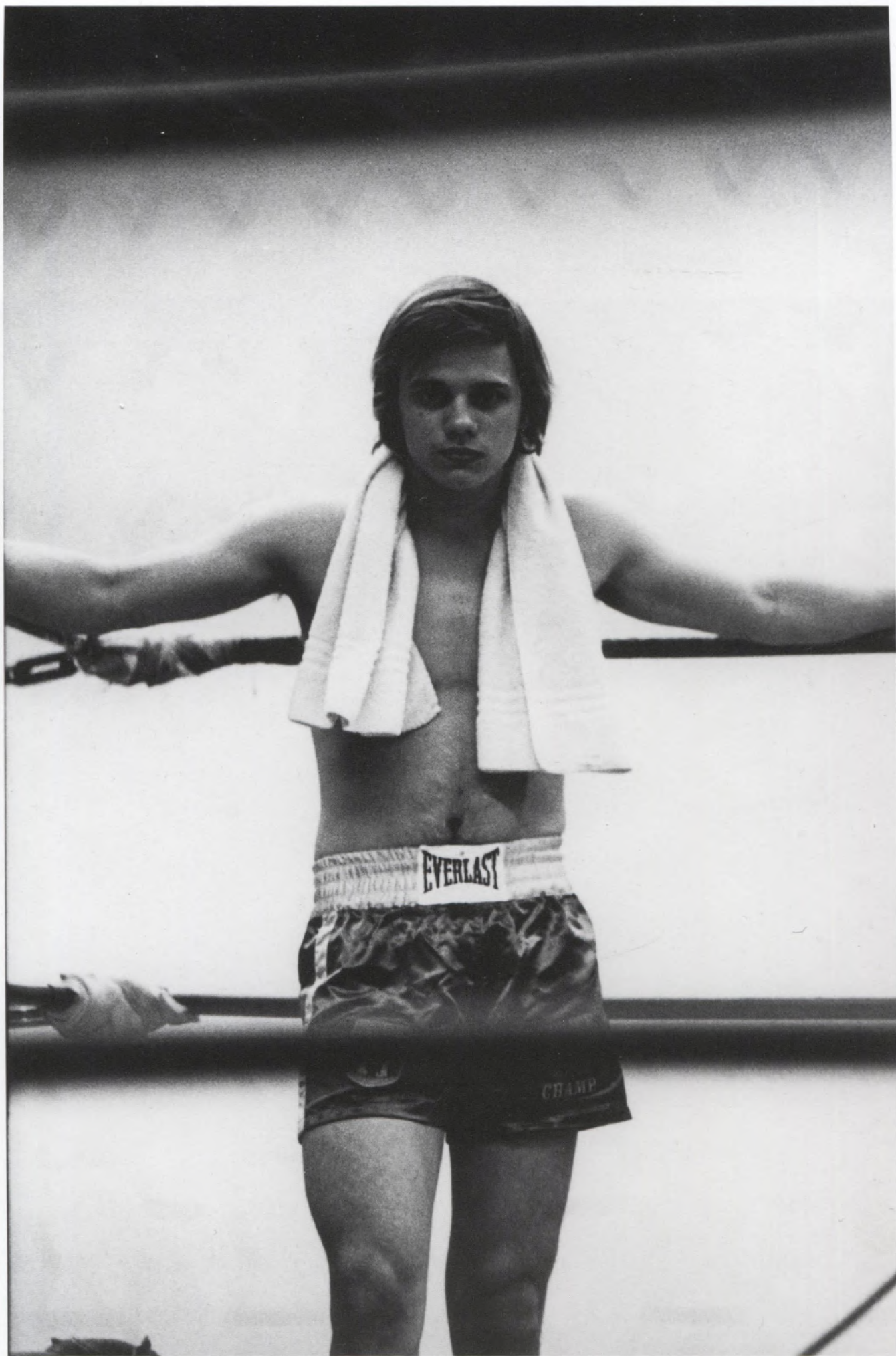




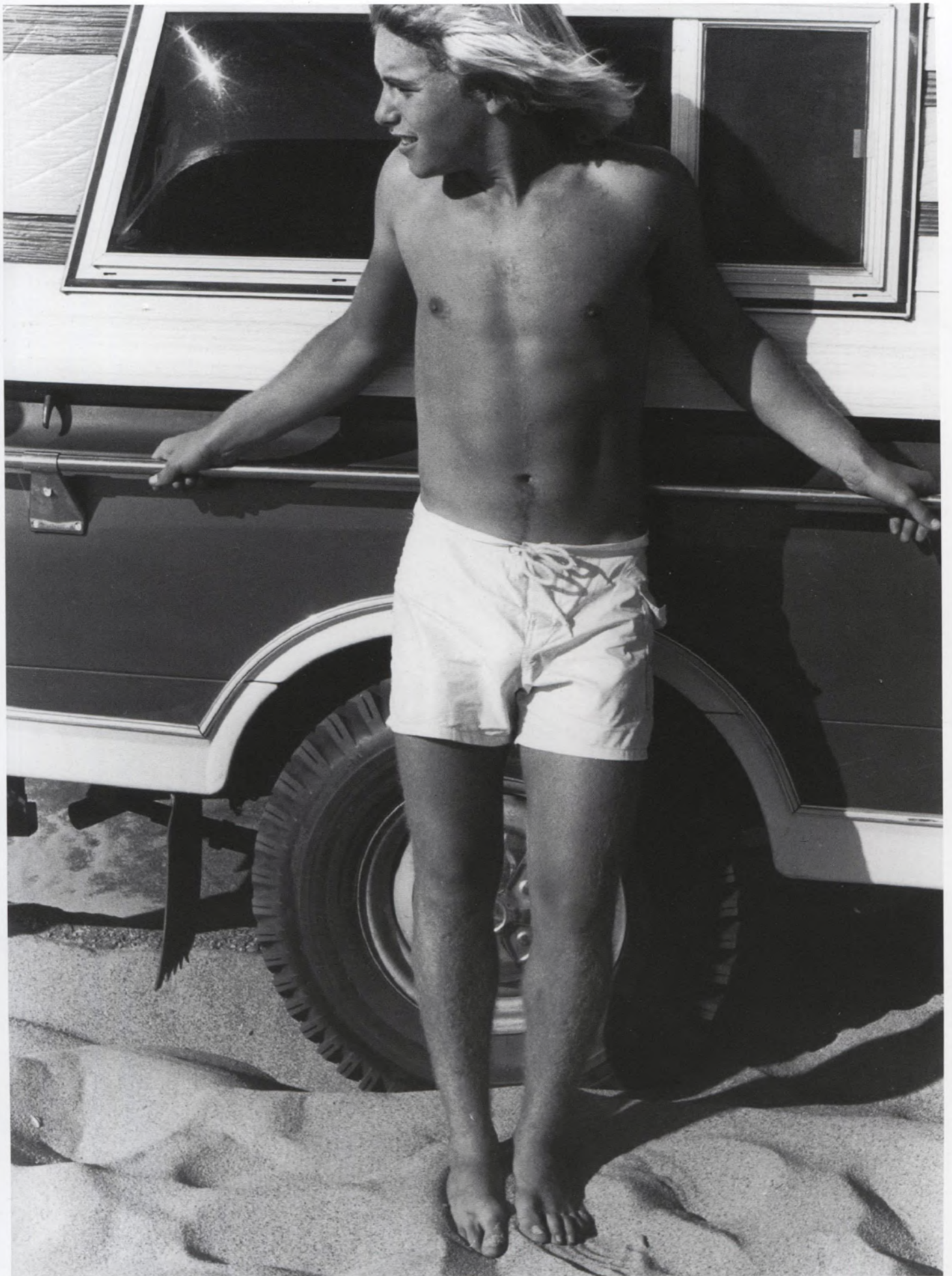




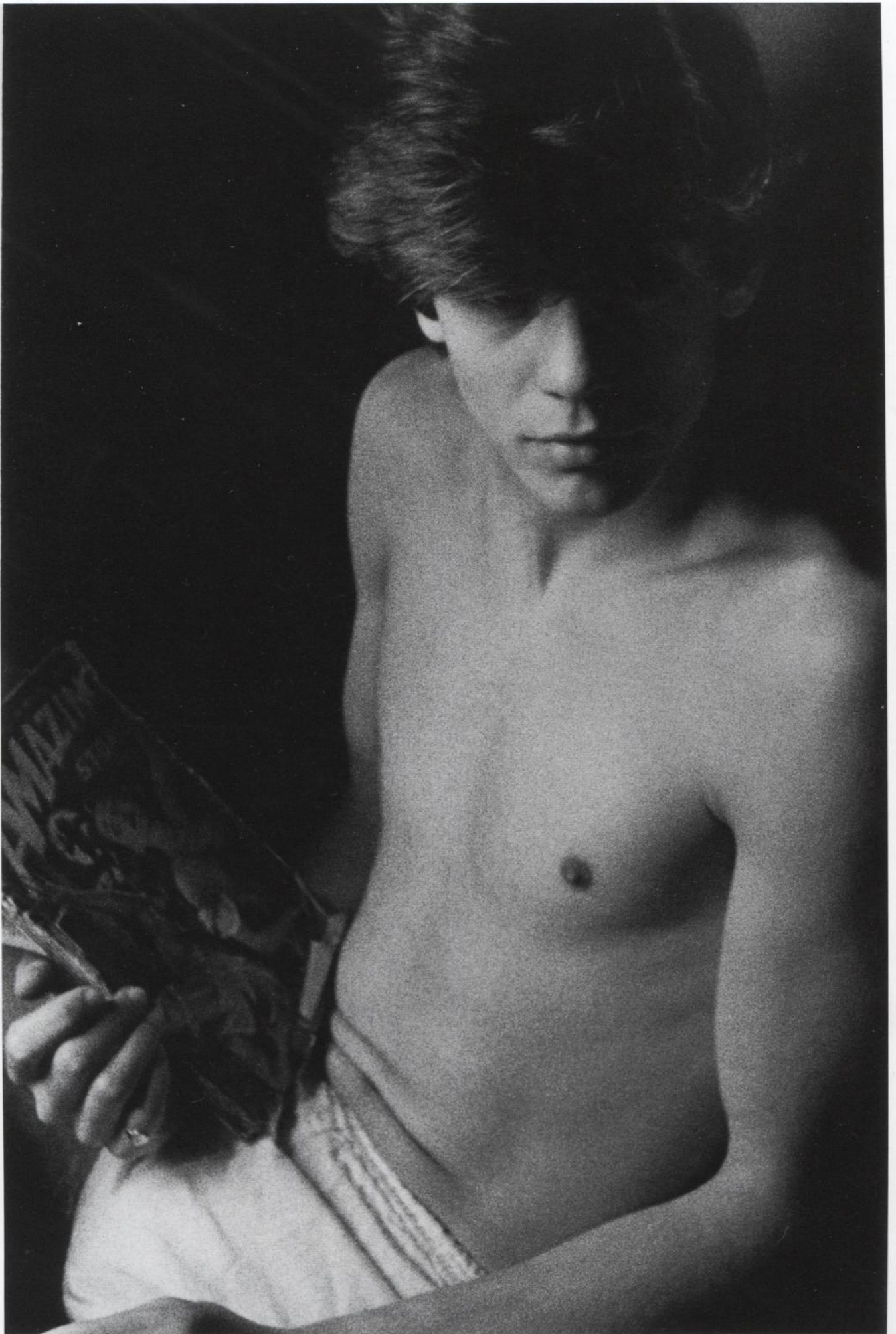


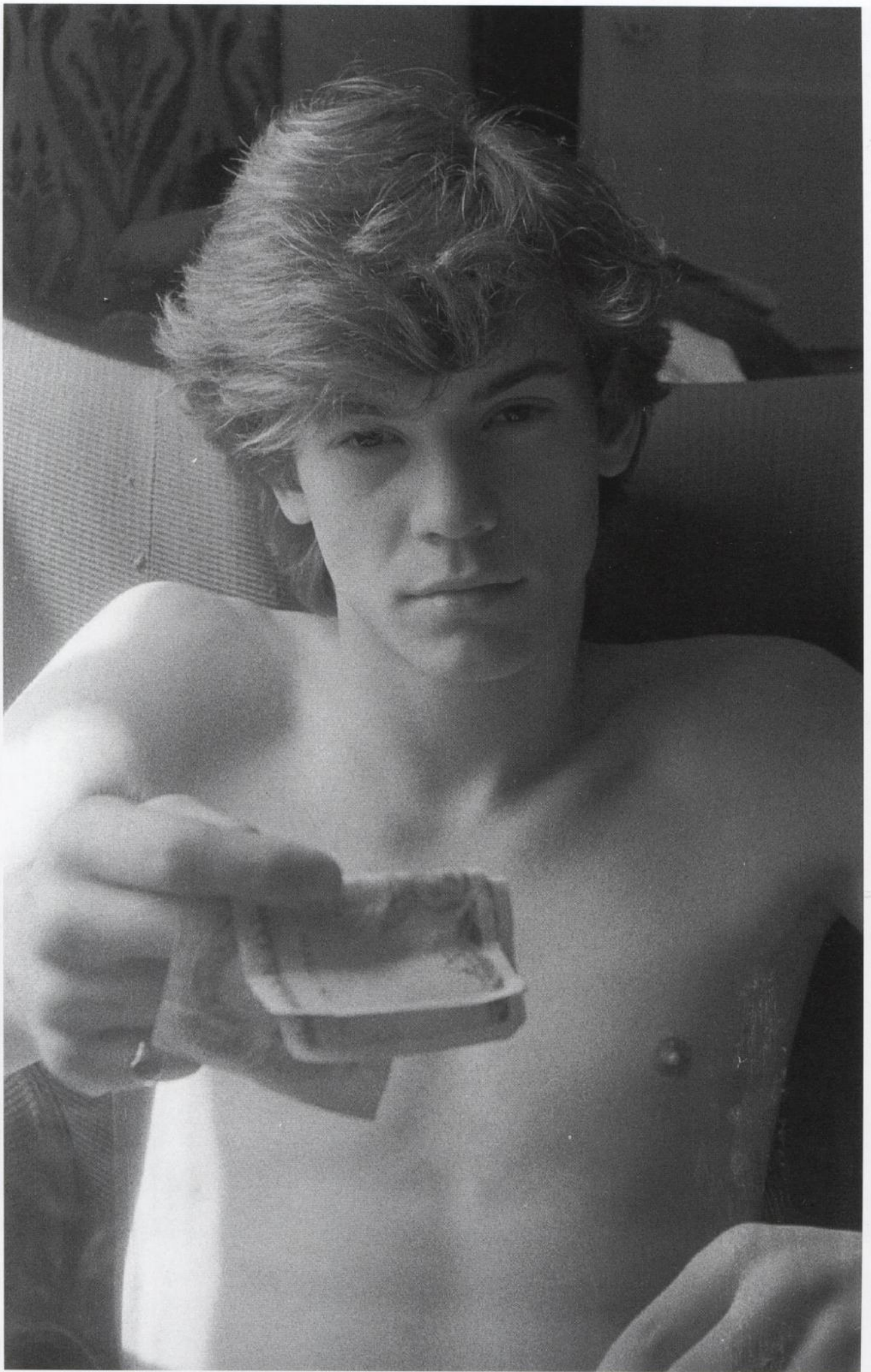




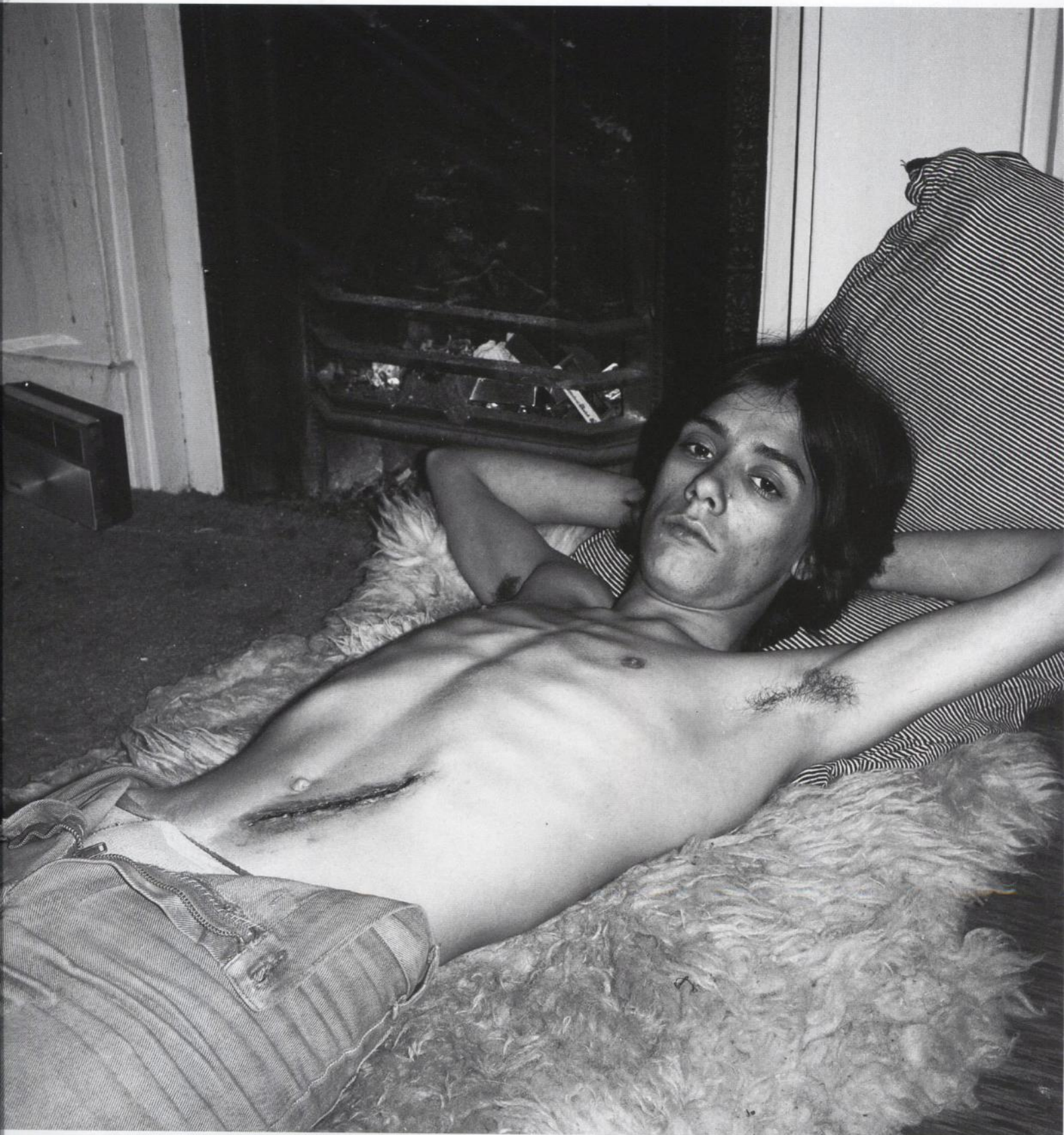




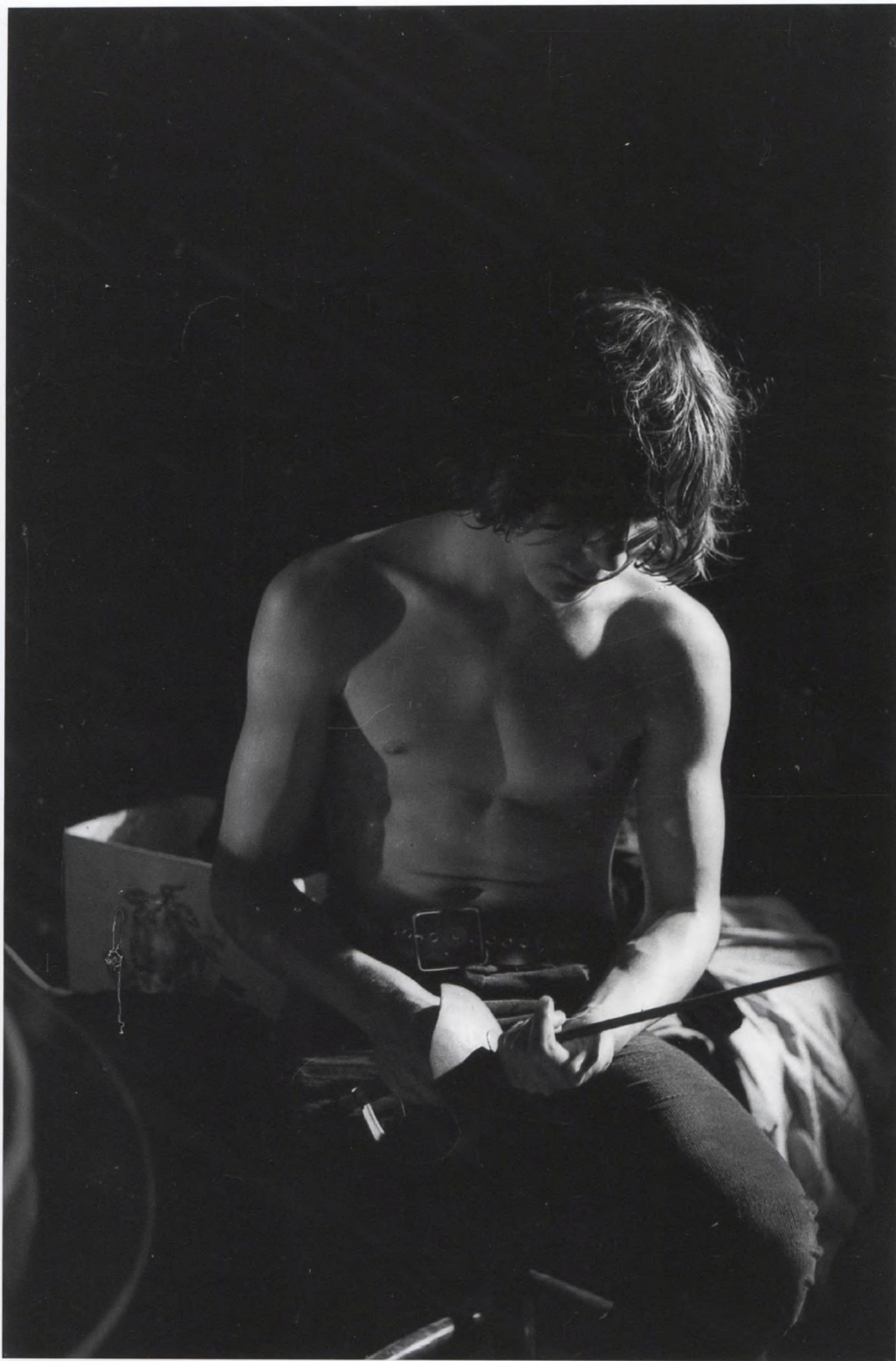






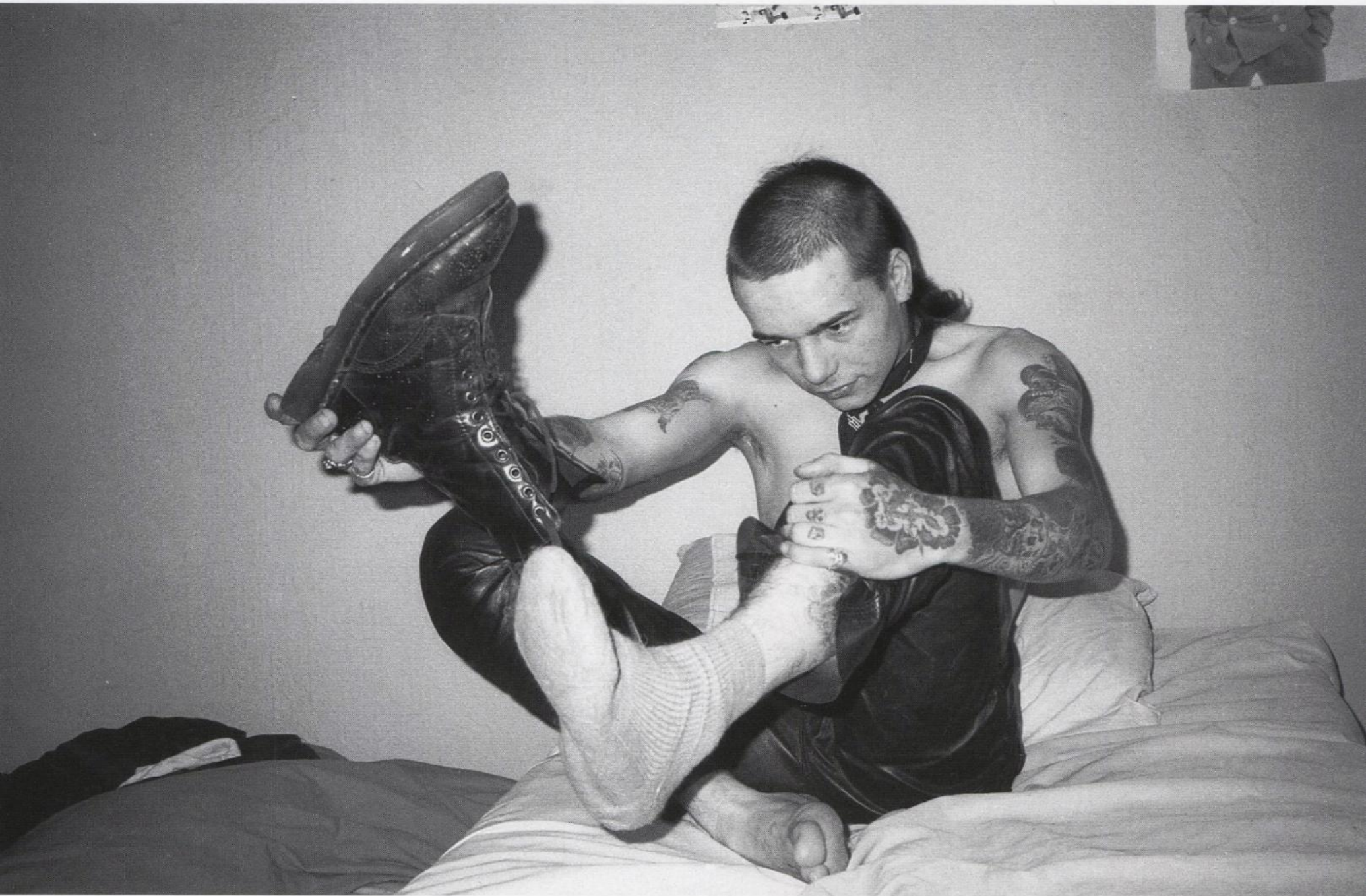


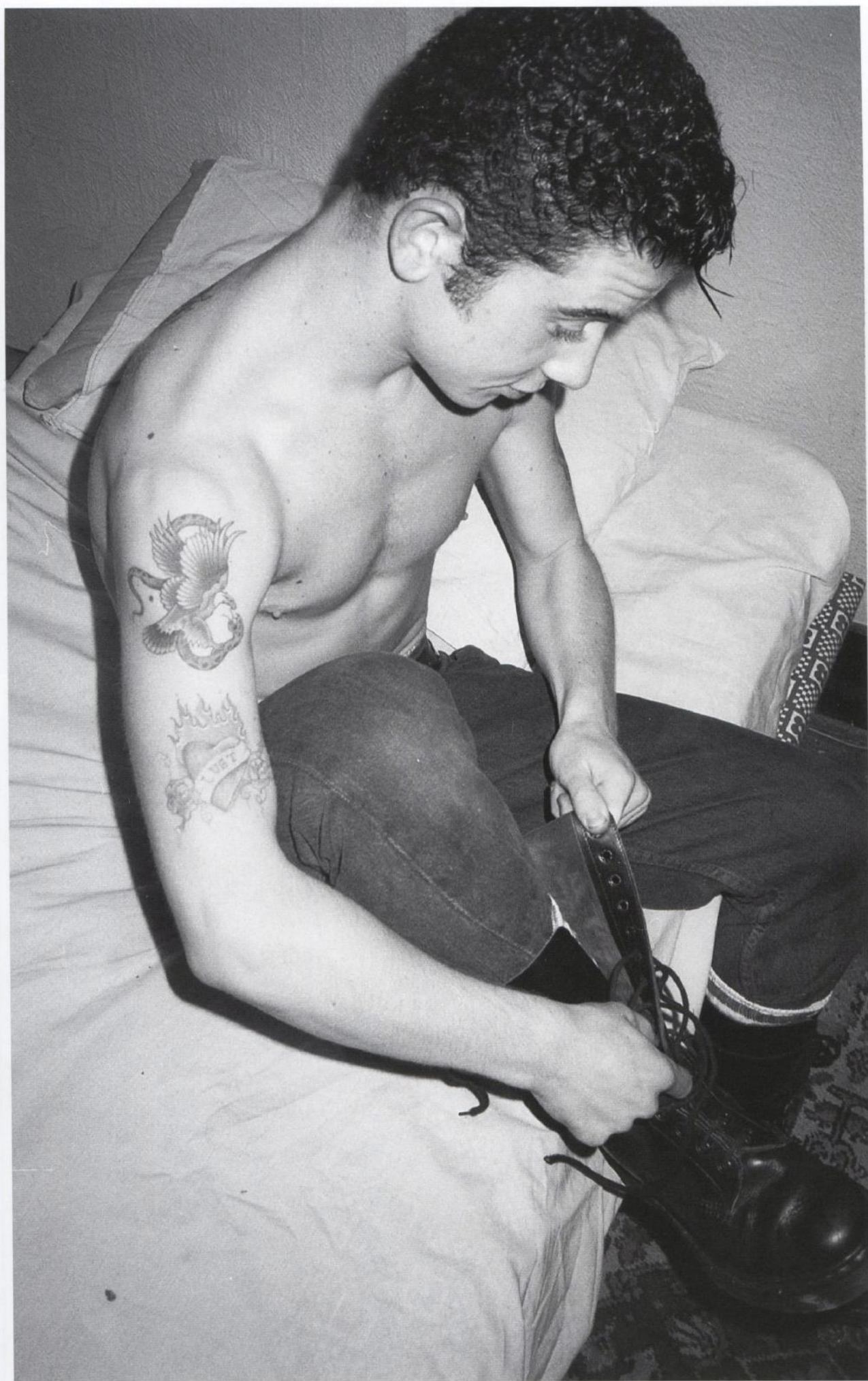


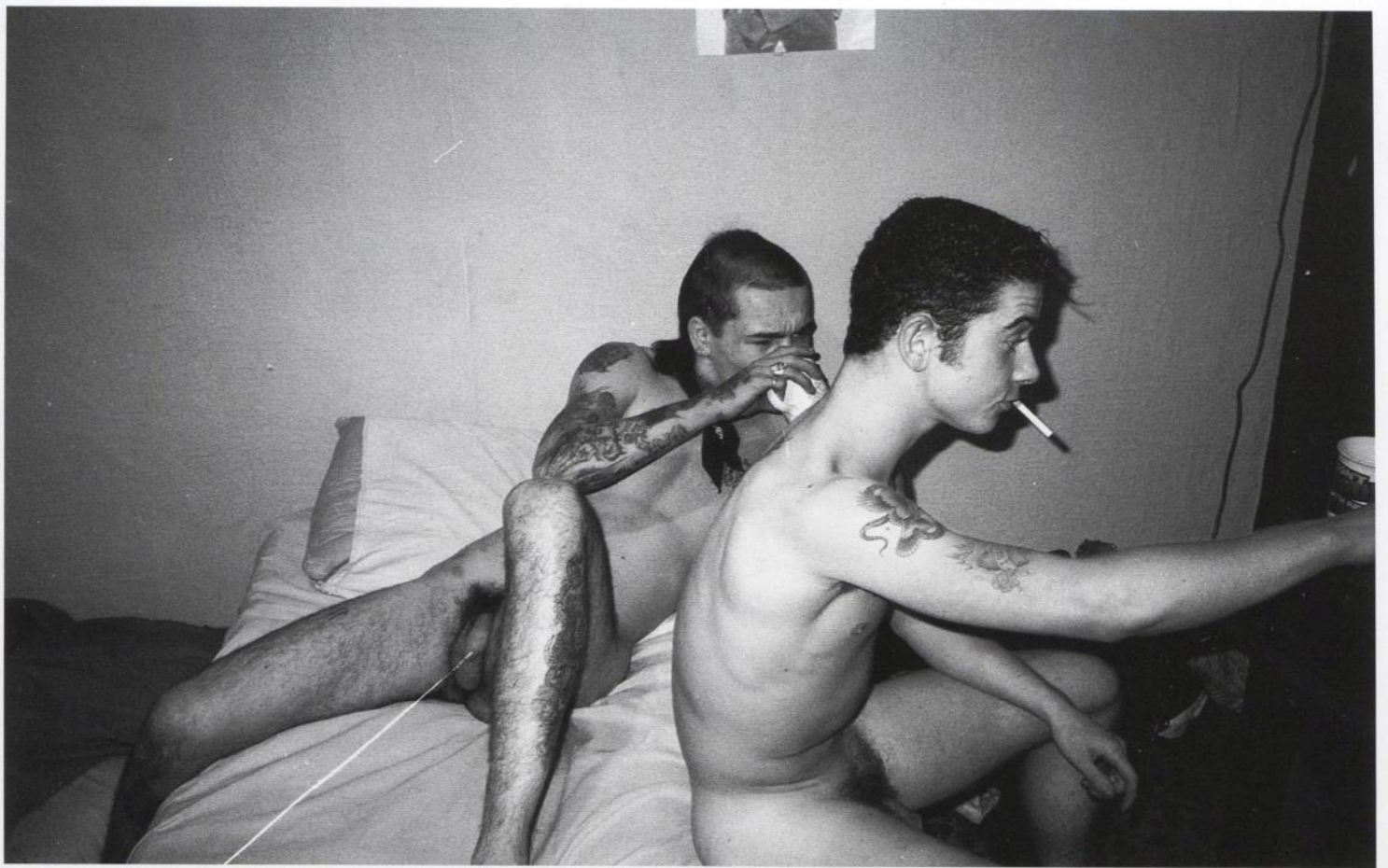


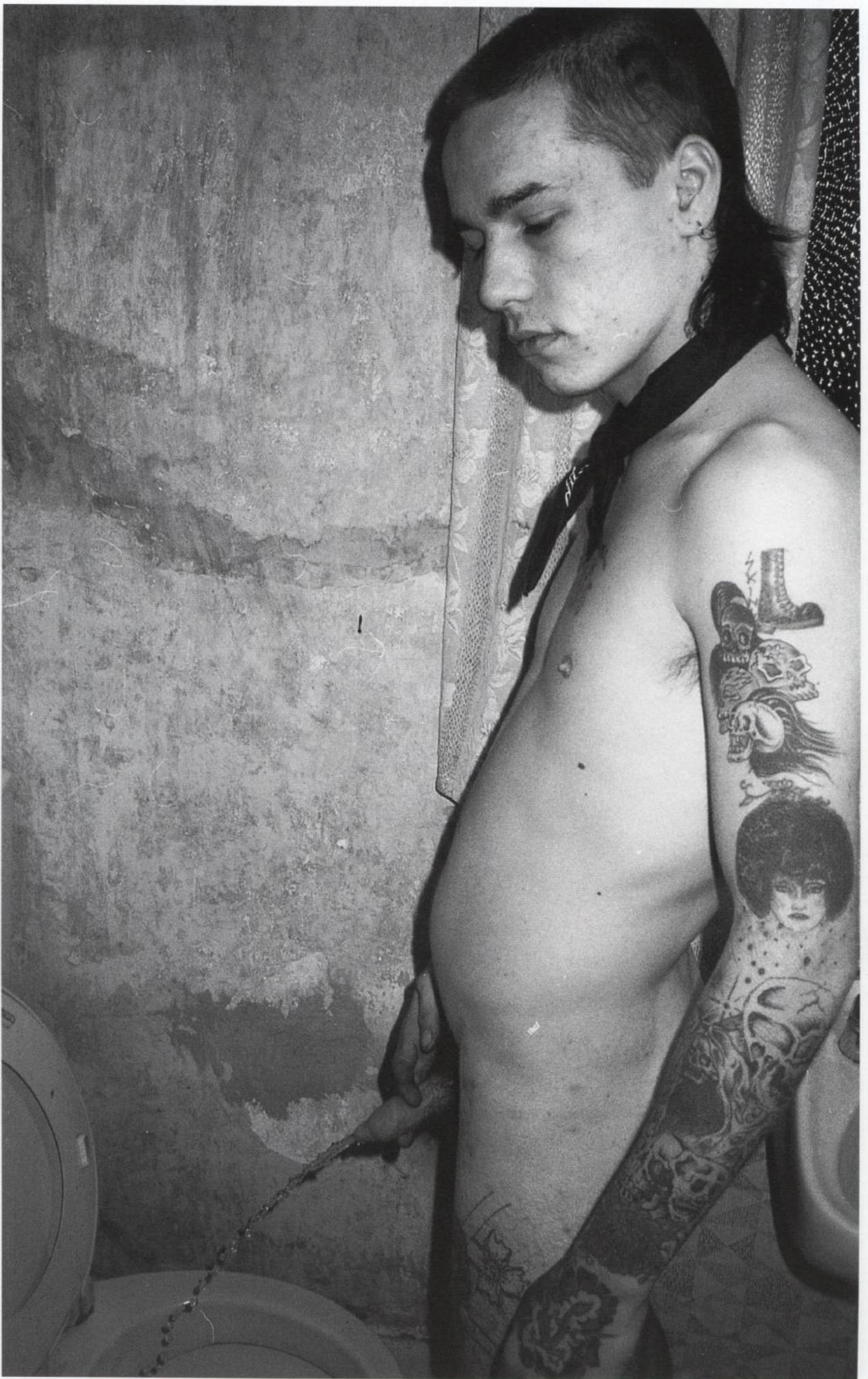














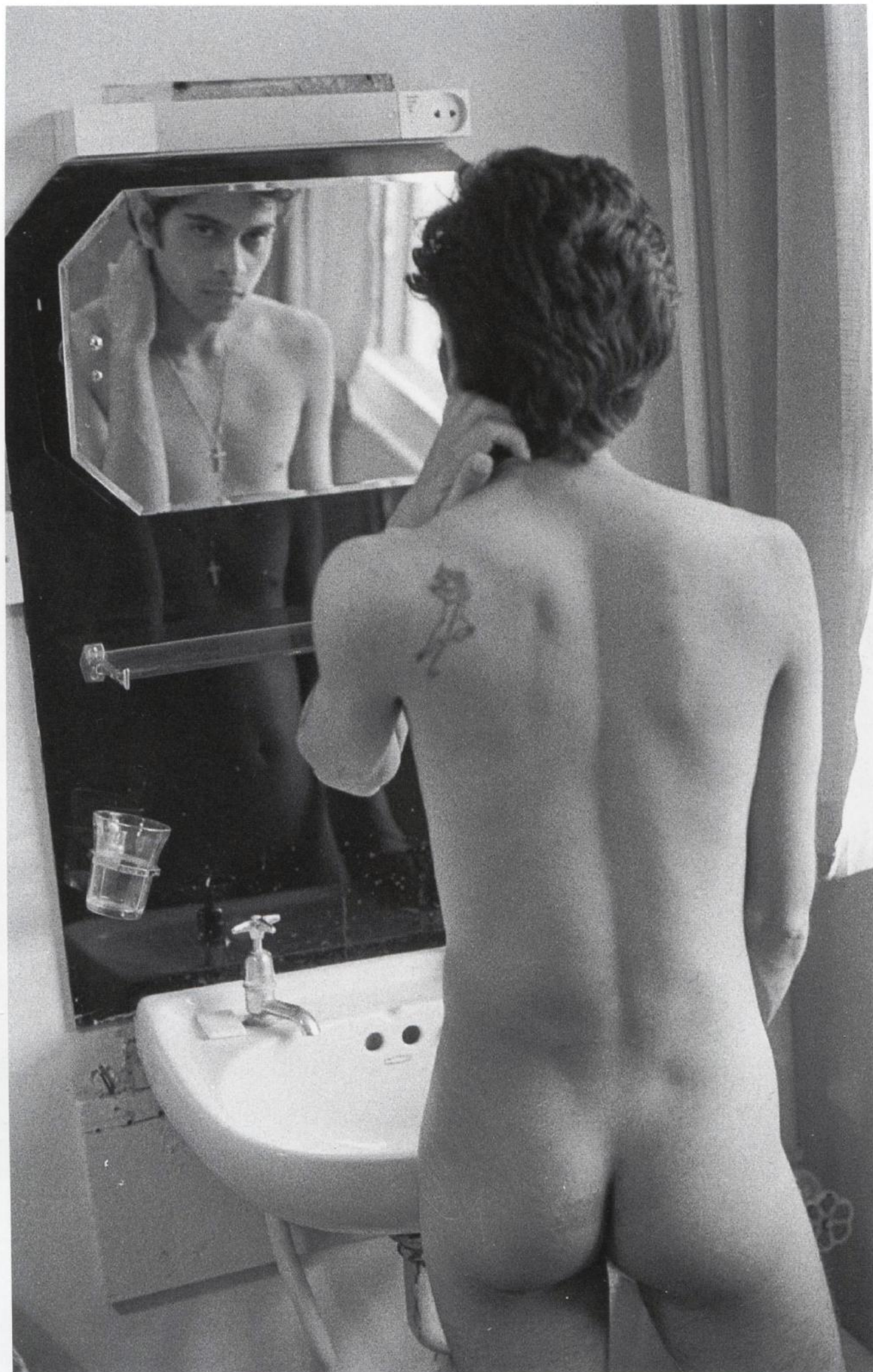






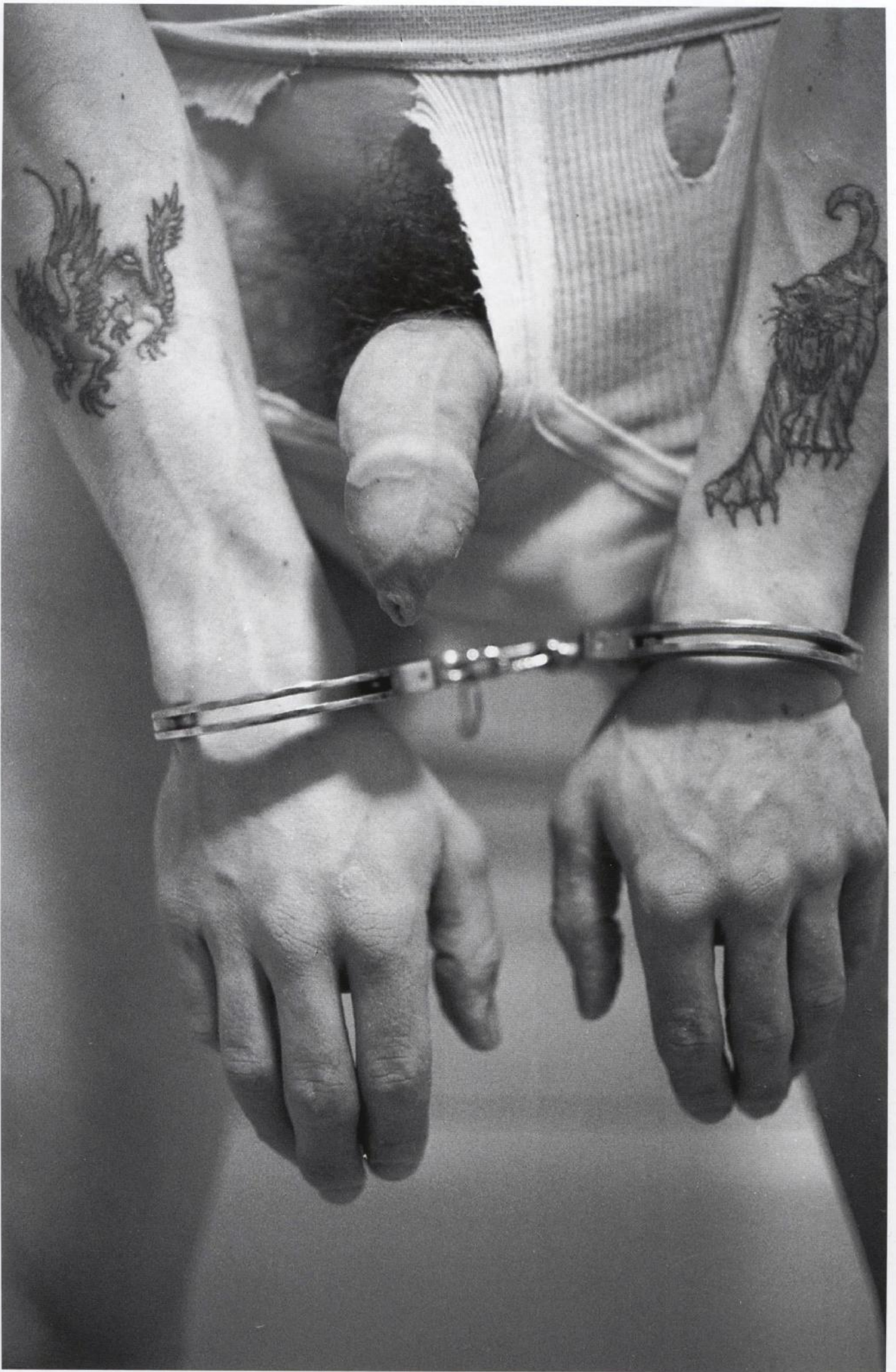








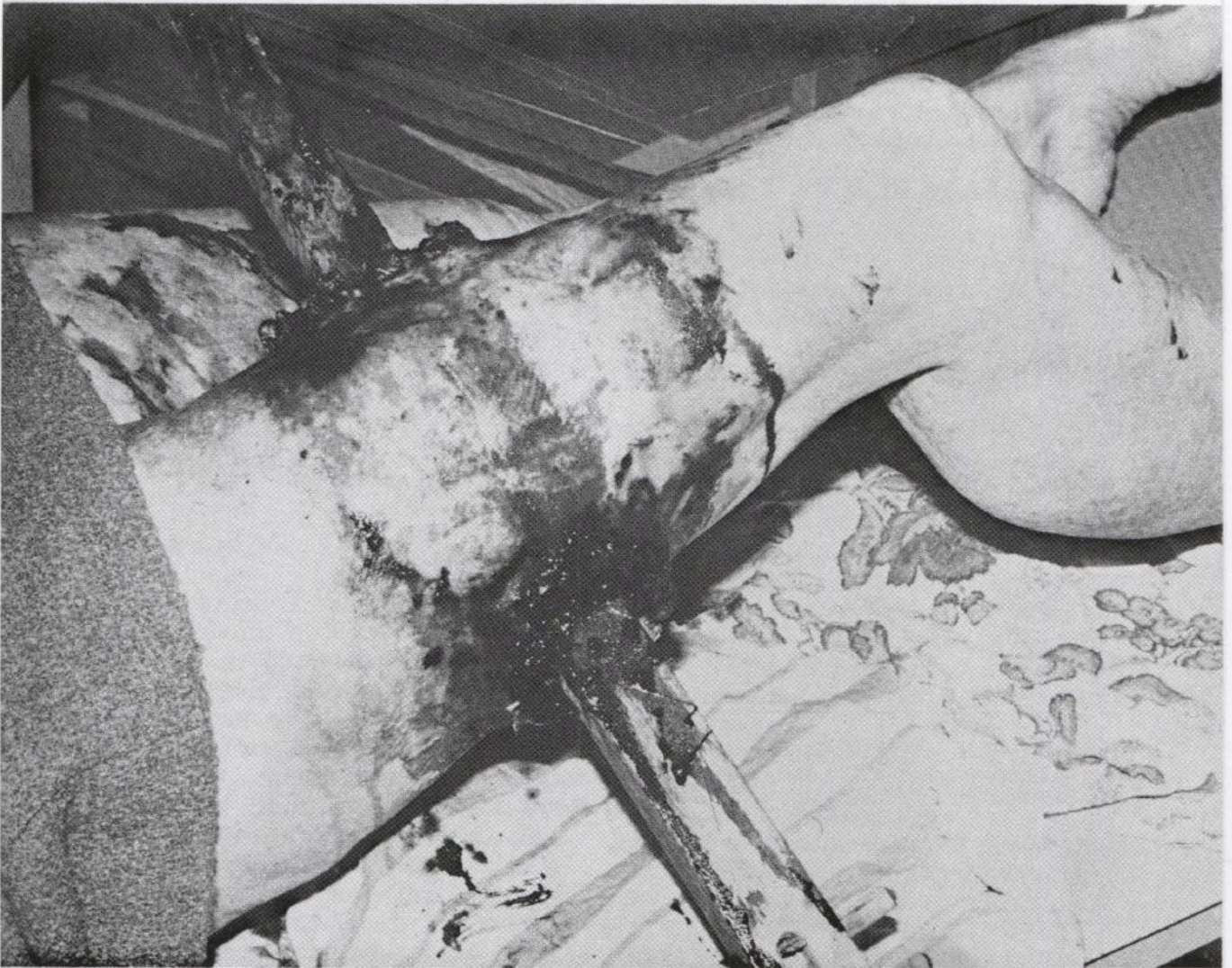




SUMMER 1977

CASUALTY SIMULATION

10p



**DIAGNOSIS EXERCISE
ANNUAL REPORT**

CASUALTY SIMULATION

THE JOURNAL OF
CASUALTIES UNION

Headquarters:
1 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, LONDON, S.W.1
Tel: 01-235 5366

TO STIMULATE REALISM IN
THE TEACHING OF FIRST AID,
NURSING AND RESCUE

VOL. XII. No. 4 SUMMER 1977

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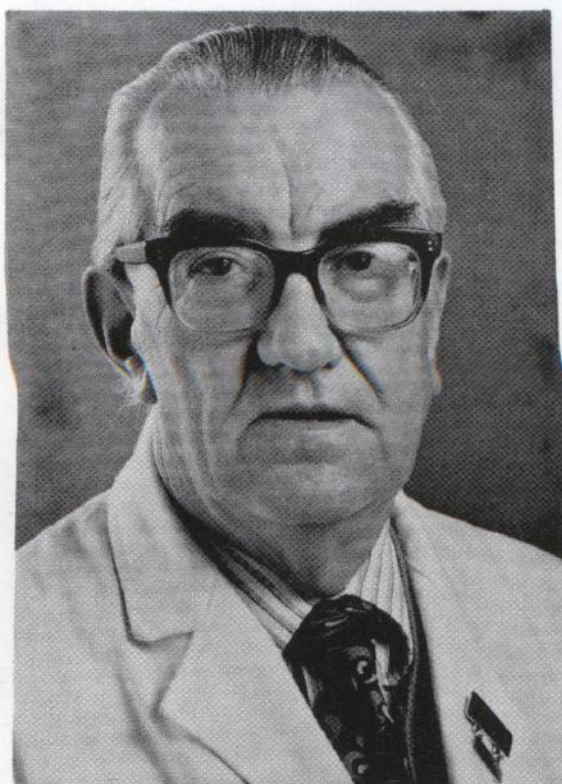
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OUR COVER PICTURE was taken by Peter Christopherson of London Branch at the SJA Seminar for Lay Instructors at Whitelands College, Wimbledon. It was a simulation of an injury from a Birmingham bombing incident, a chair-leg through the thigh, made up by Harry Hawkins on Dorothy Burnett.

"Casualty Simulation" is published three times a year, in April, August and December, by Casualties Union, 1 Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1, and printed by Wright's (Sandbach) Limited, Cheshire. Advertisements and contributions should be submitted by the first of the month preceding publication.

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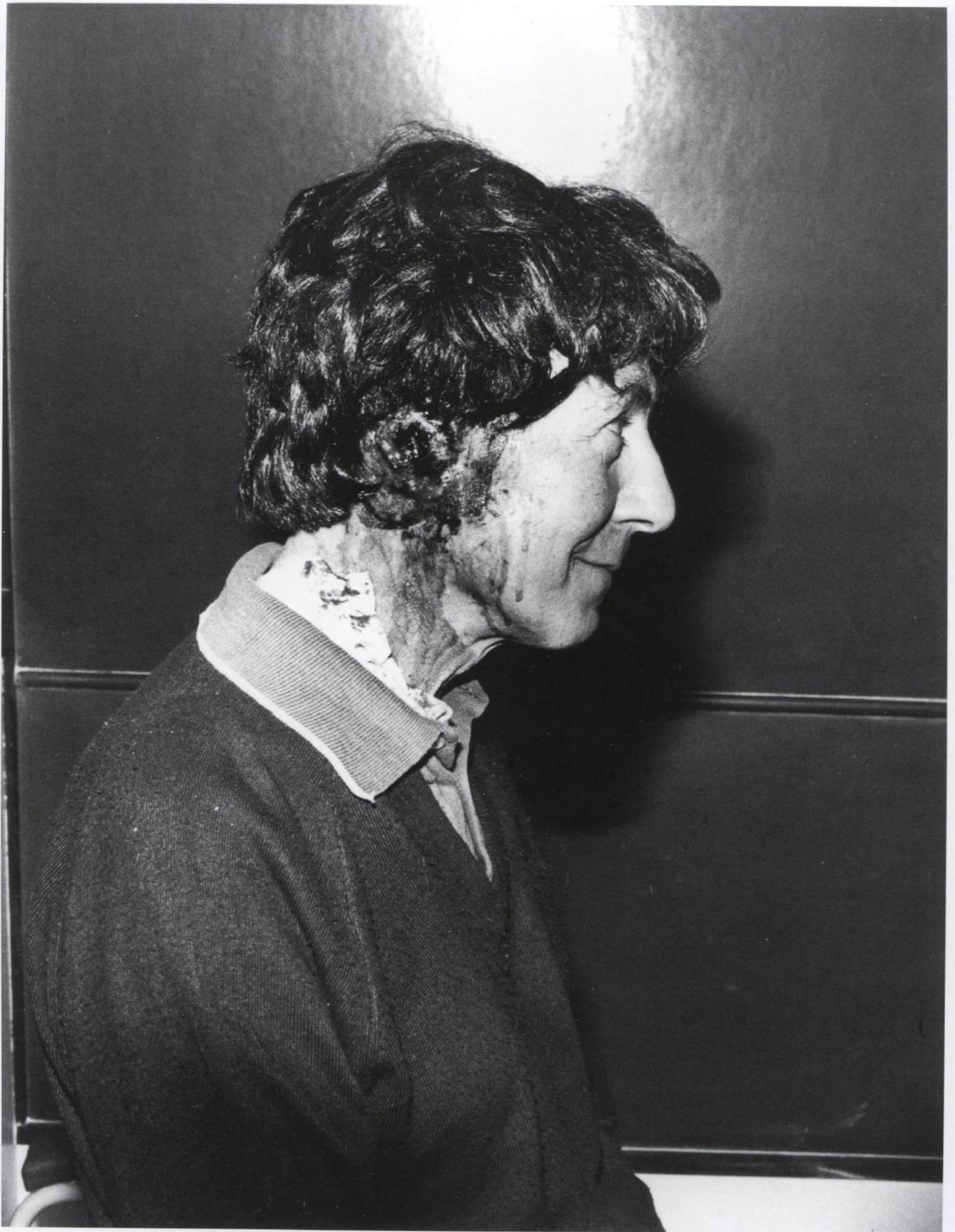
CONGRATULATIONS!
TO "WALLY" WALTON



for being honoured by Her Majesty the Queen in the Jubilee Honours as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, for his services to Casualties Union. George W. Walton, better known to us as Wally, enrolled in London Branch in 1960, and rose "through the ranks" to become a Senior Instructor in 1974. He is Chairman of London Branch, and in addition to the amount of commitments he is able to do through Headquarters, he helps out in the Medway Branch area. As a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Defence he has been instrumental in organising many intensive courses in casualty simulation within the Royal Ordnance Factories, especially at Leeds, and helps with their inter-factory first aid competitions. He has other sidelines too, as an instructor in the BRCS, an examiner for the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Awards, and membership of the London blood transfusion service, which offers blood direct to the hospitals. H.M. the Queen has honoured a thoroughly public spirited and useful bloke, and with his wife, son and daughter, and three grandchildren, we bask in reflected glory. Well done, Wally!



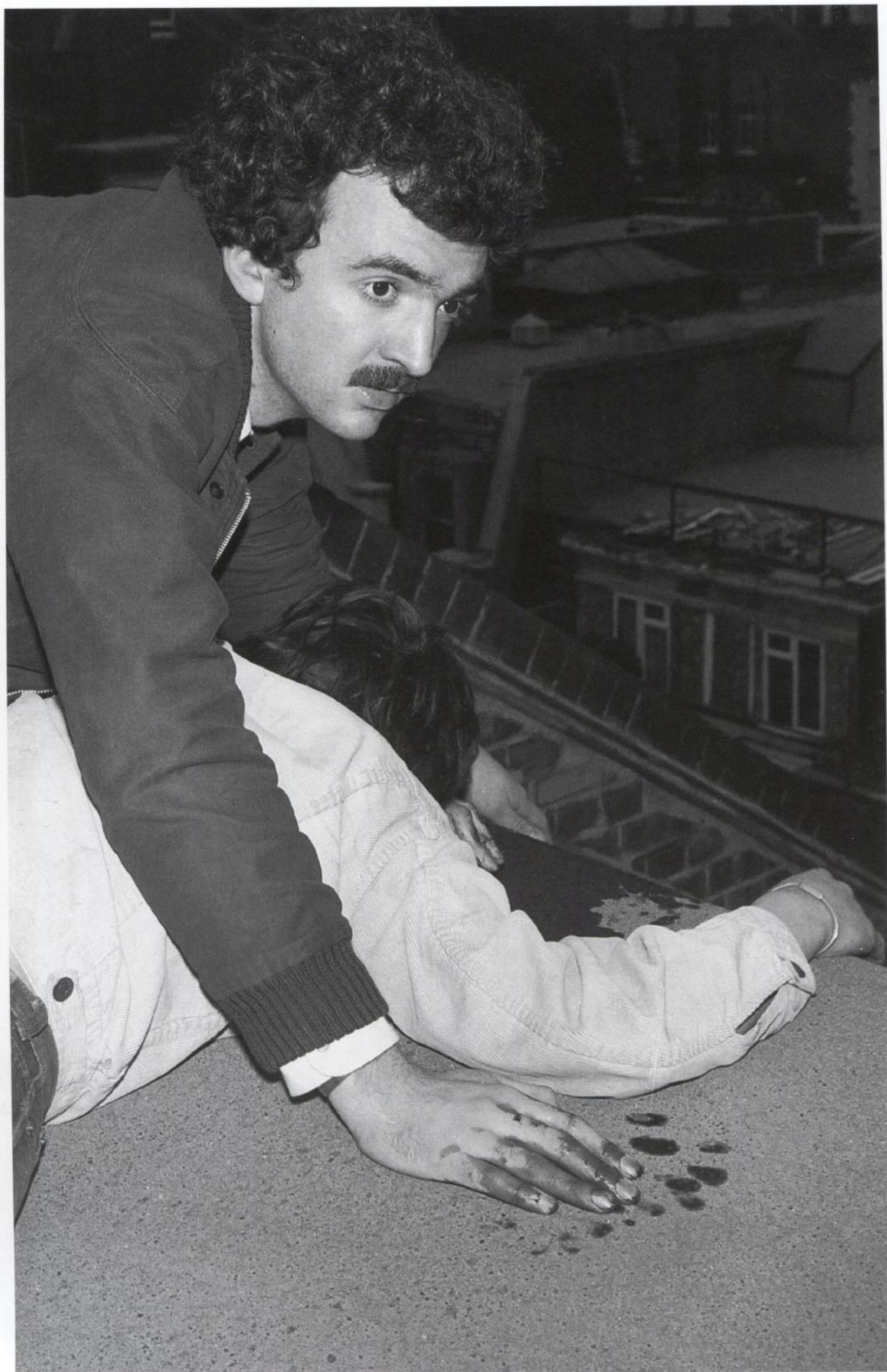


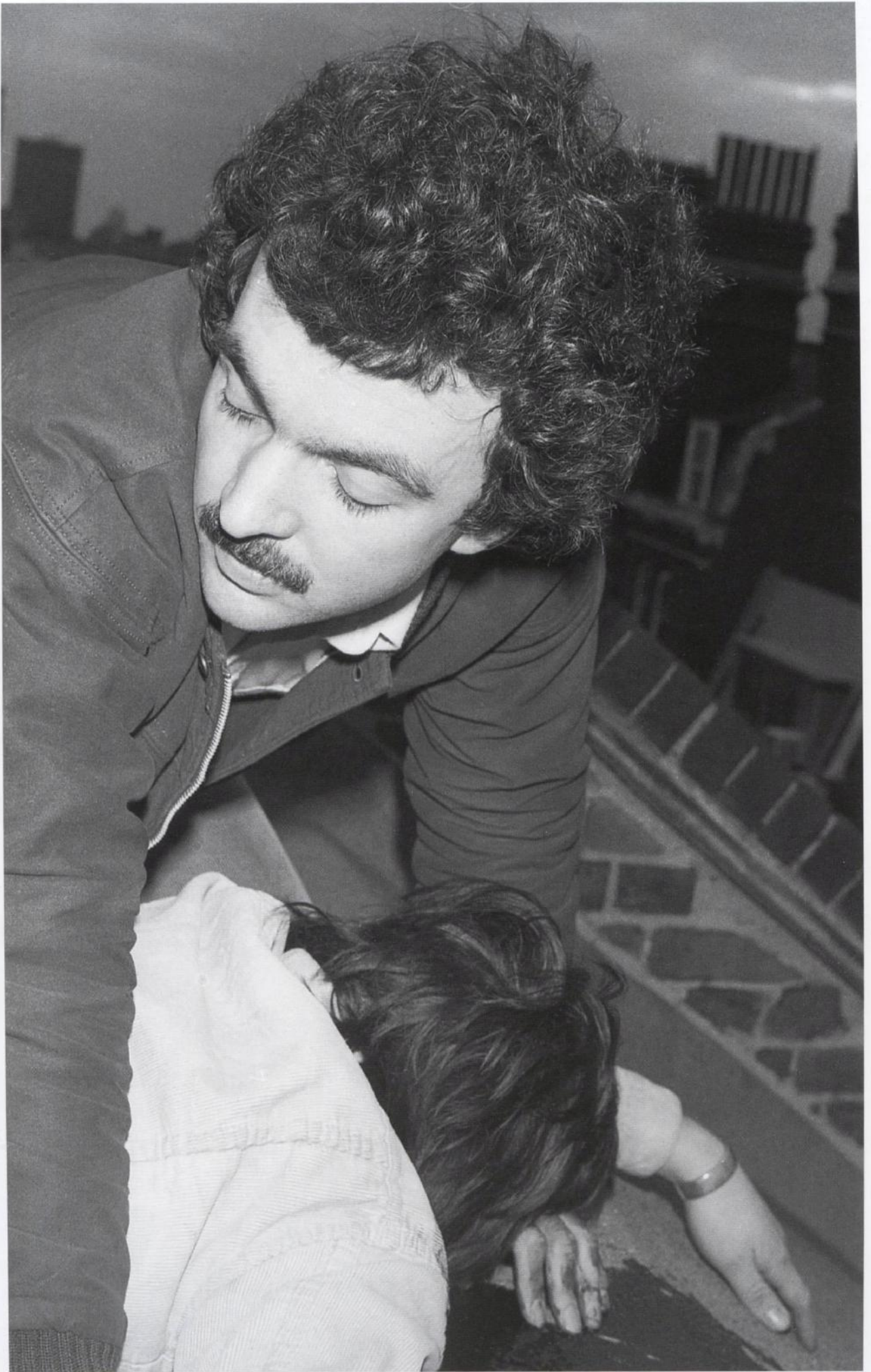


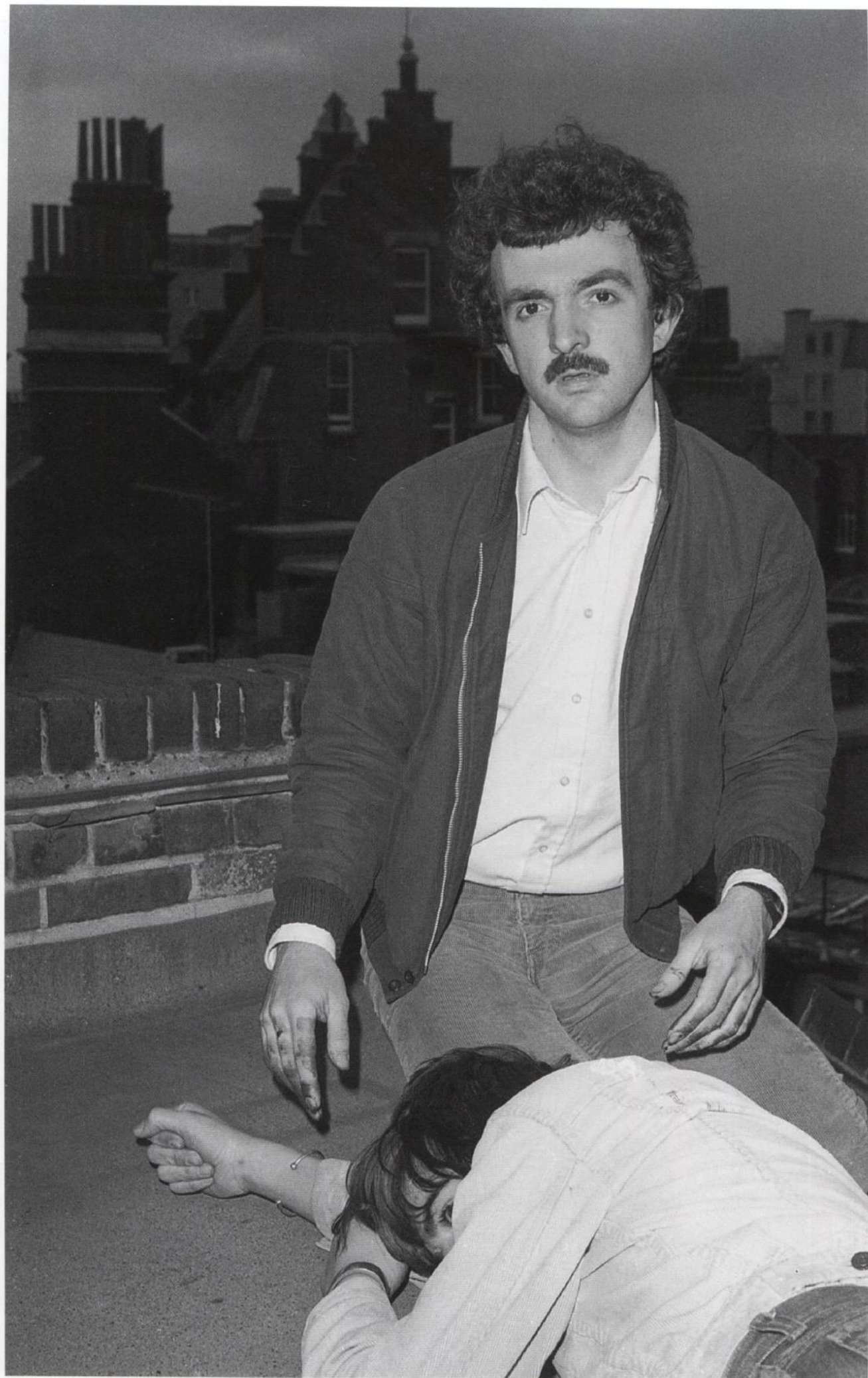


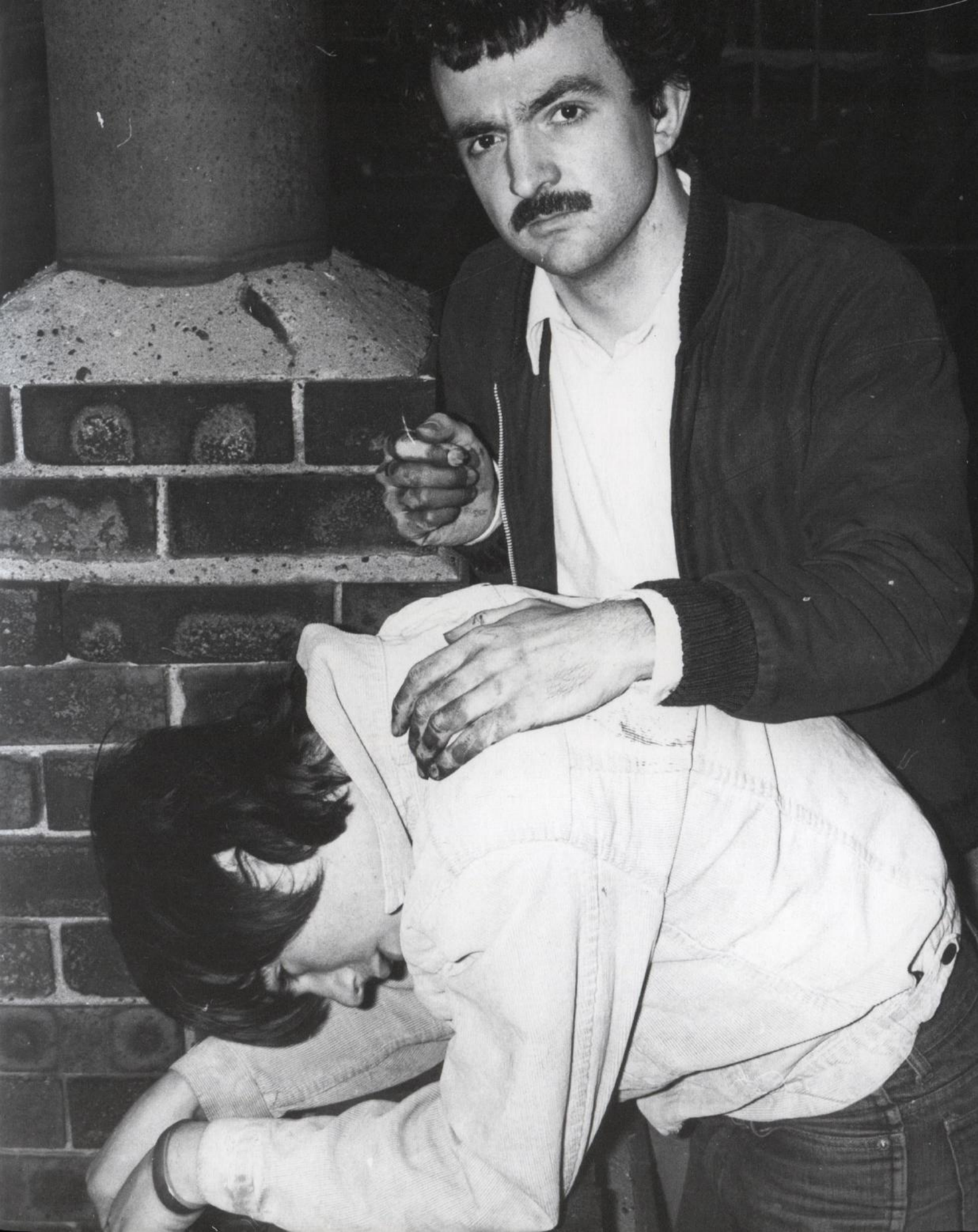


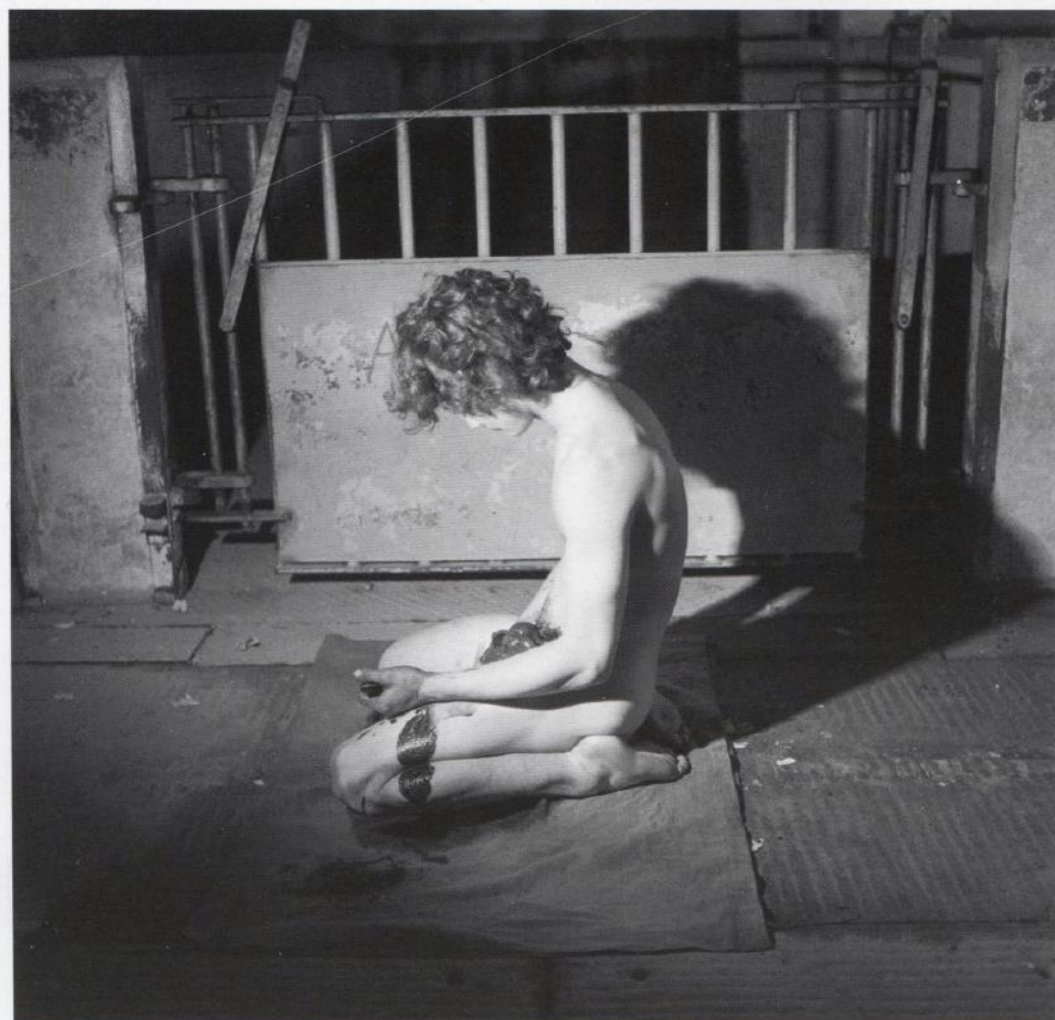












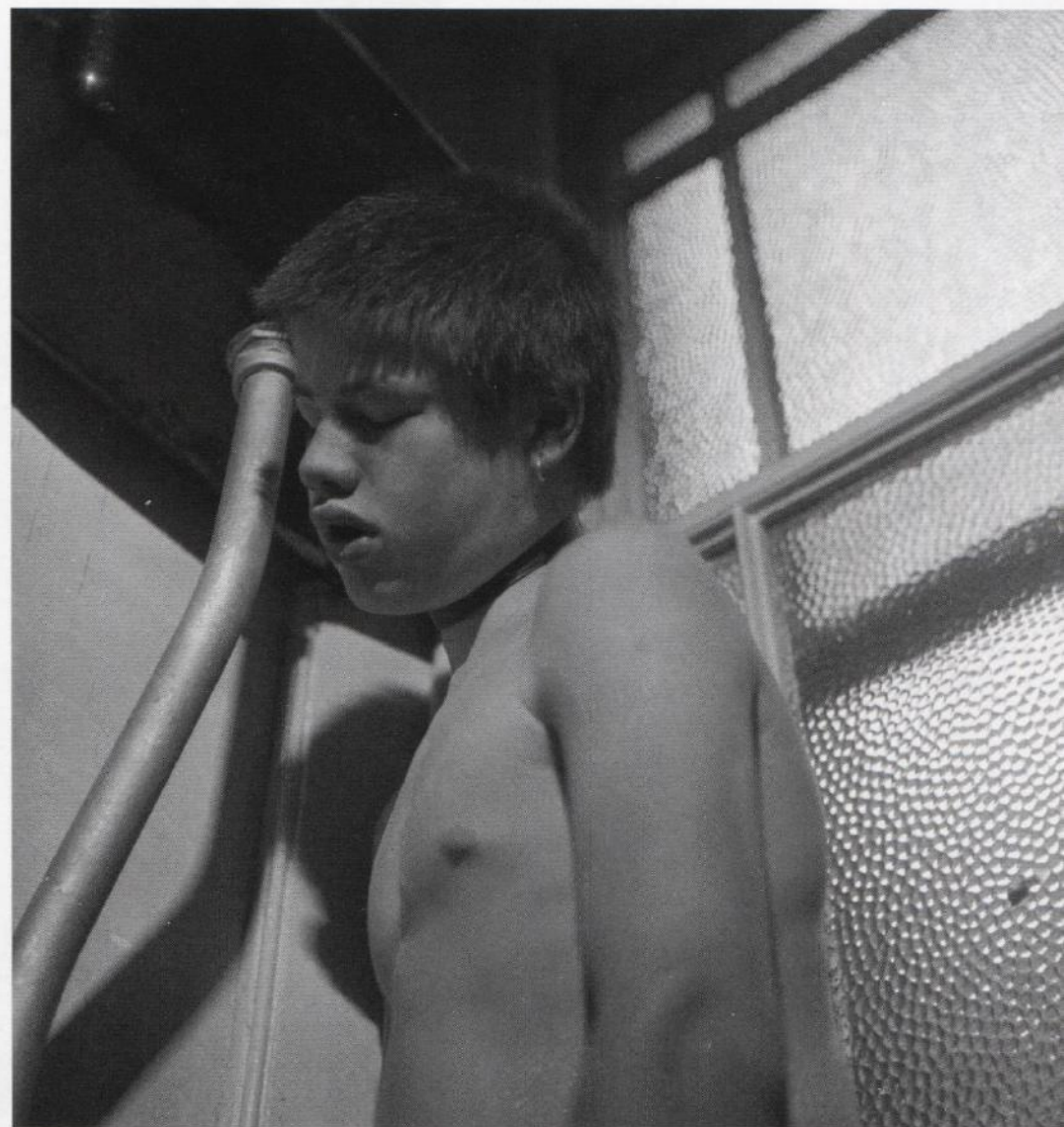


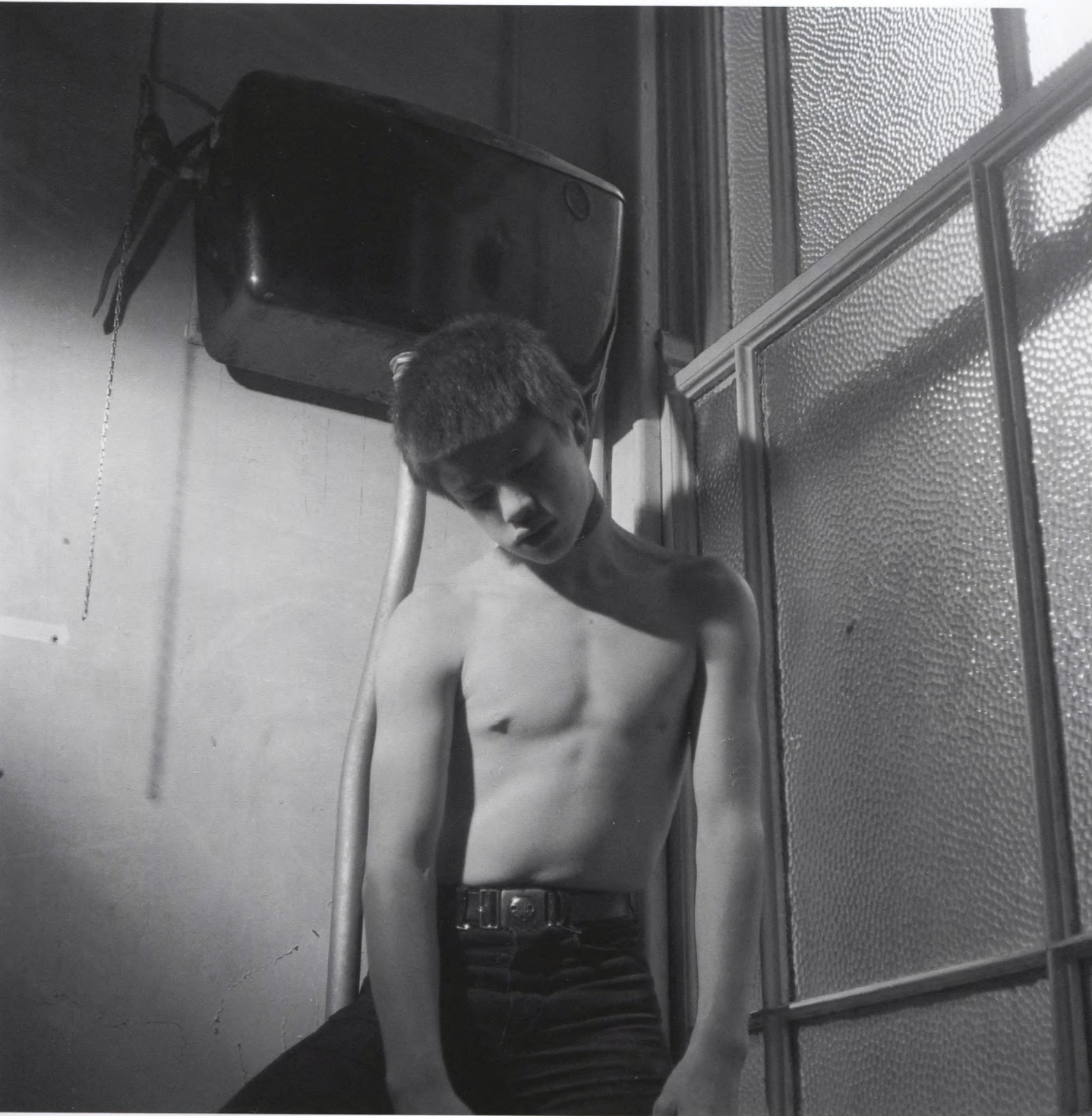


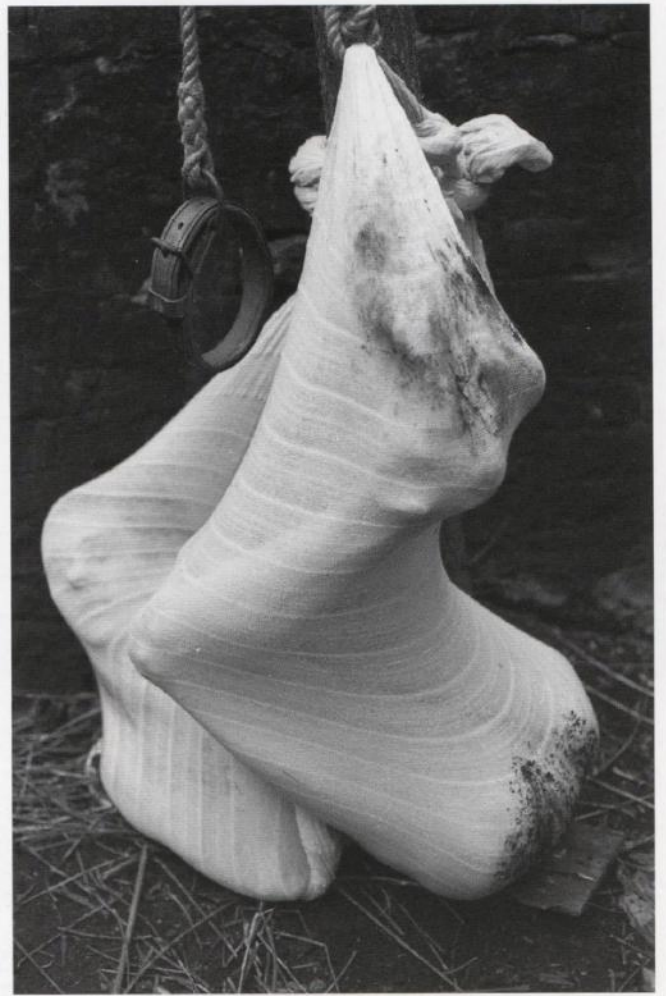


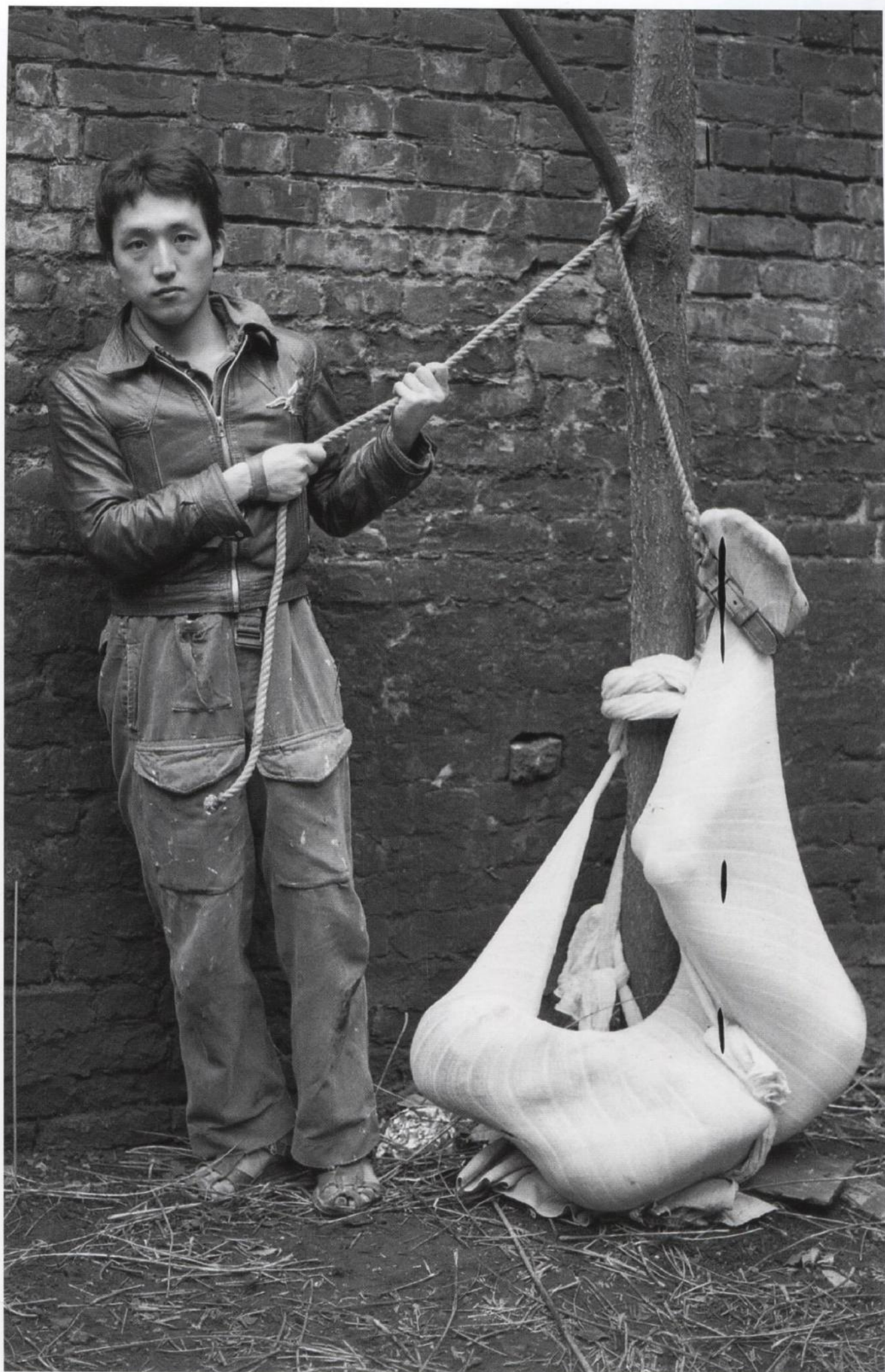


















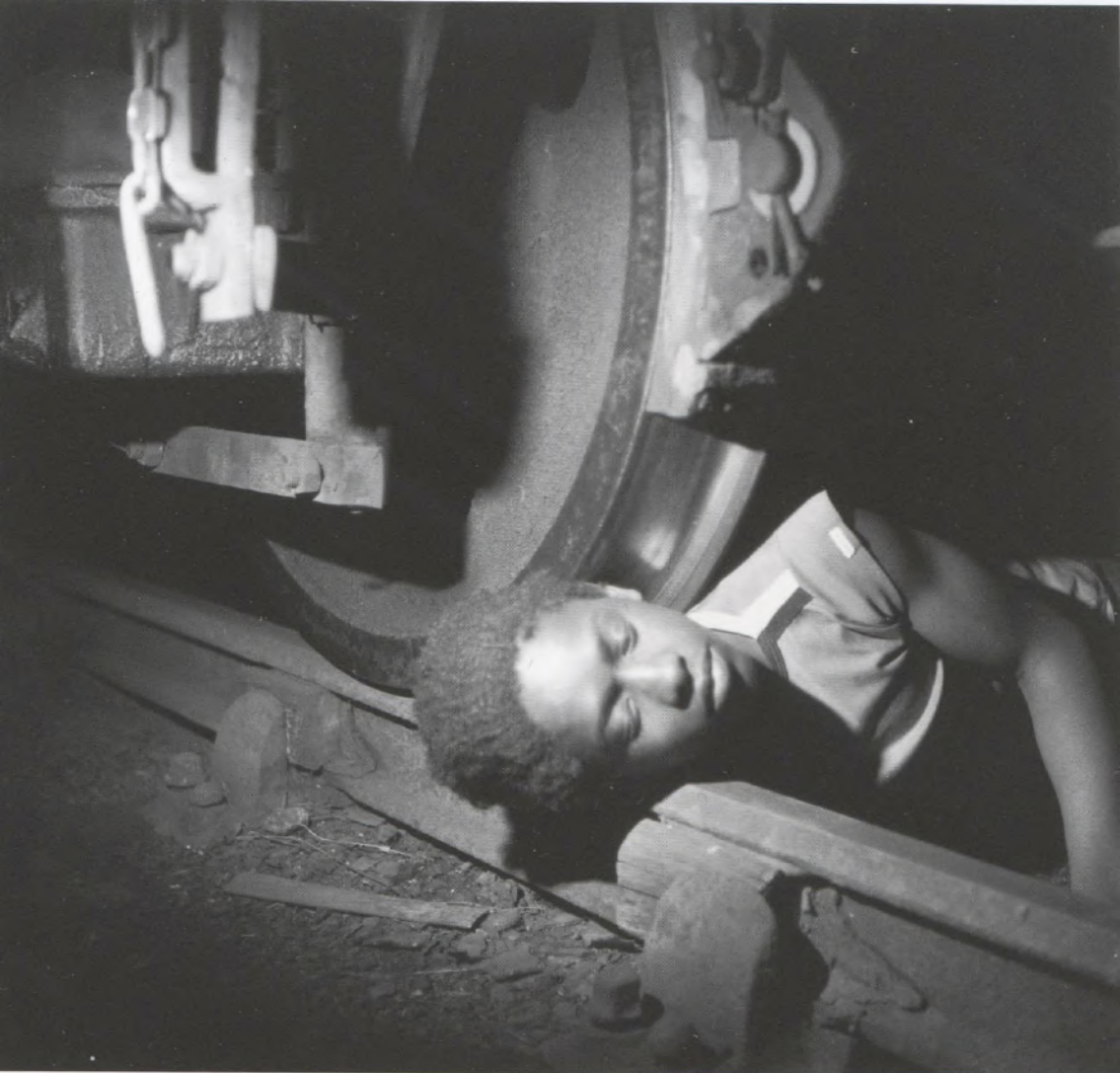




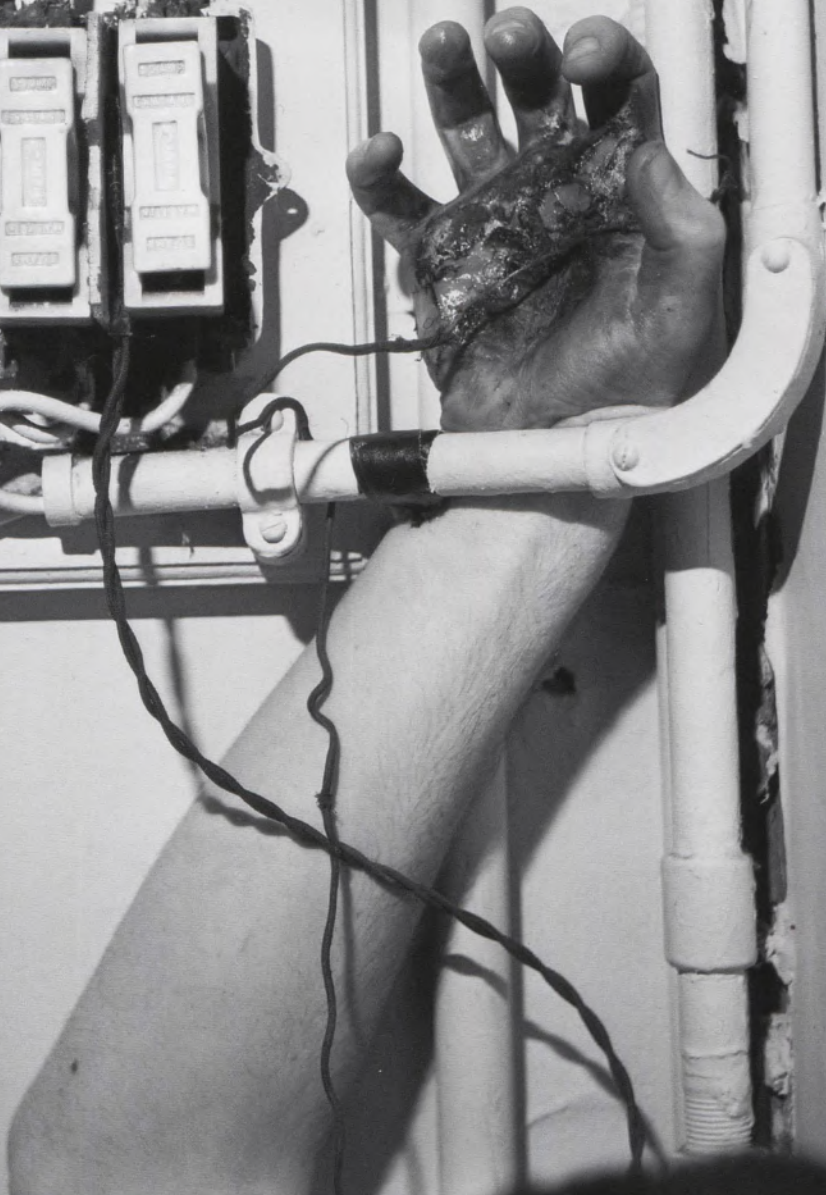
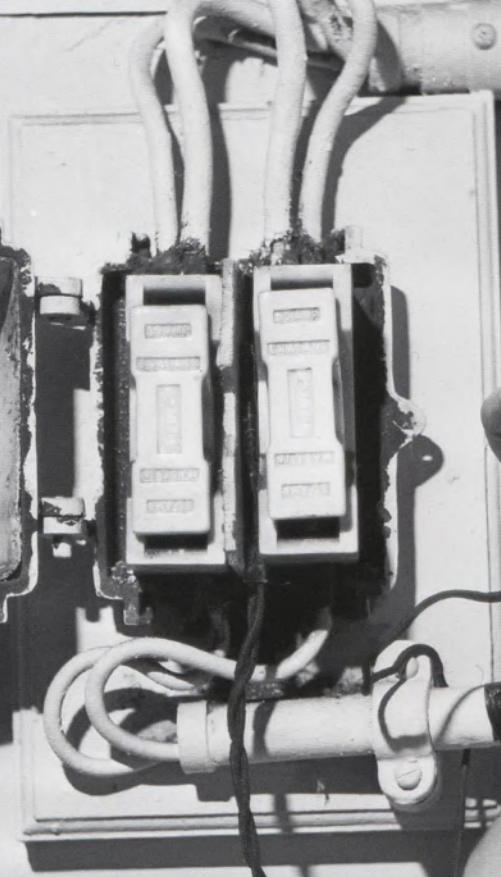
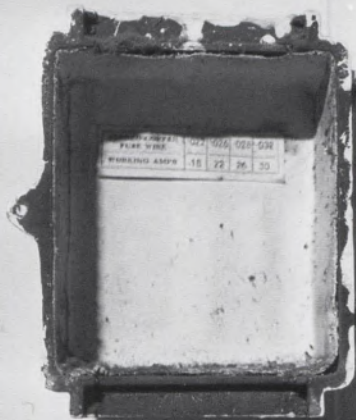


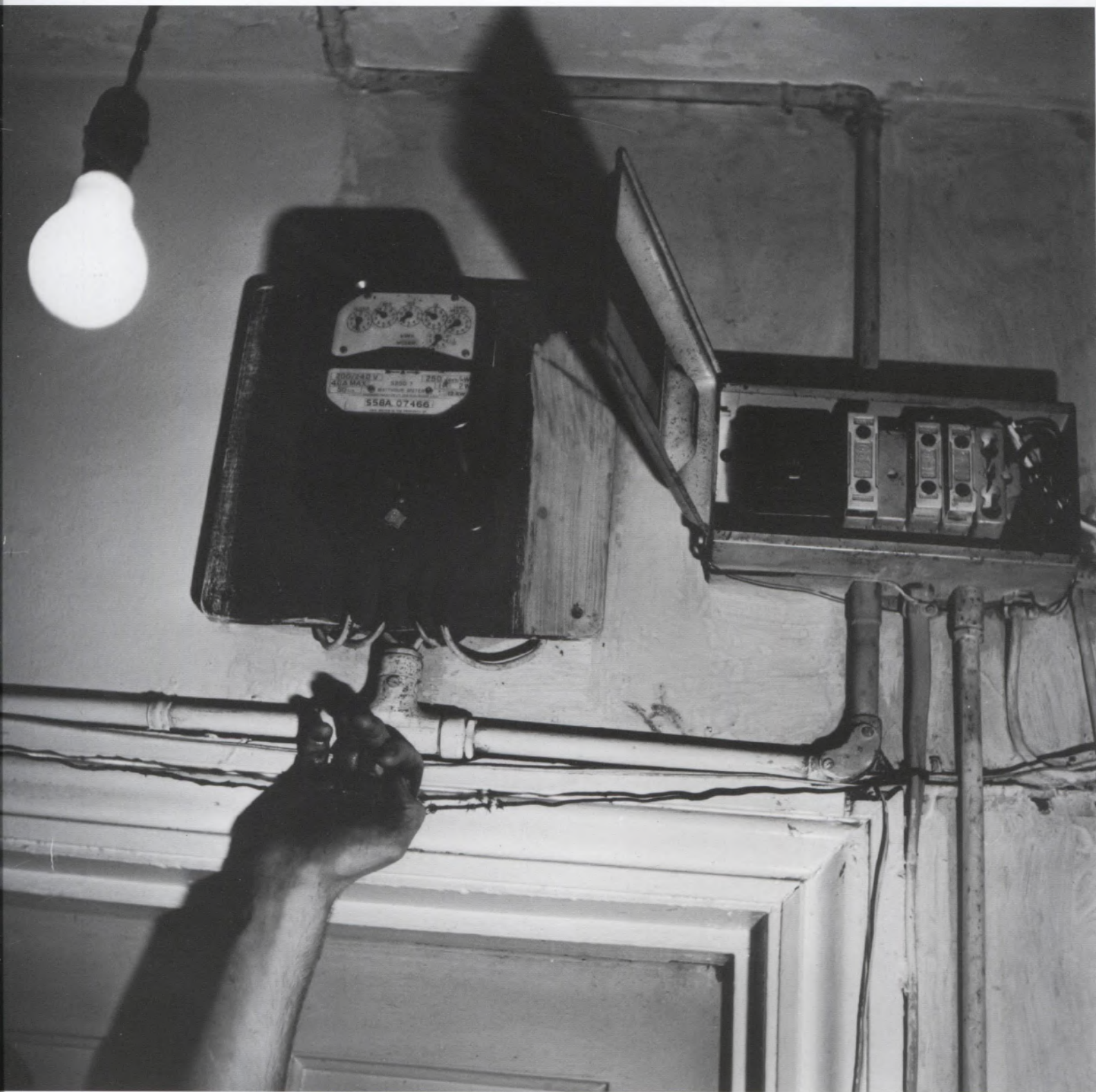








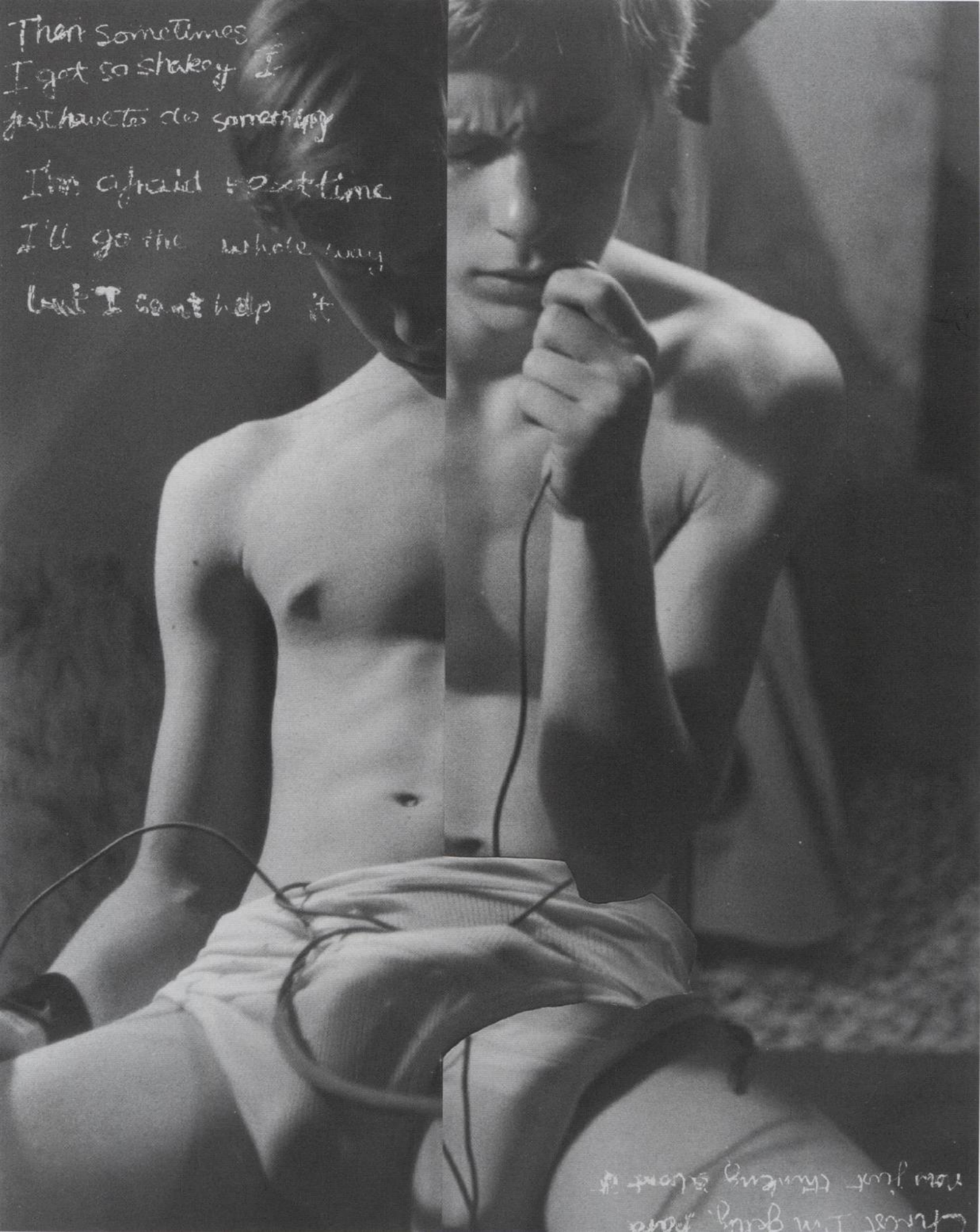








Then sometimes
I get so shaky I
just have to do something
I'm afraid w/ set time
I'll go the whole way
but I can't help it



At first I'm going para
now just thinking about it

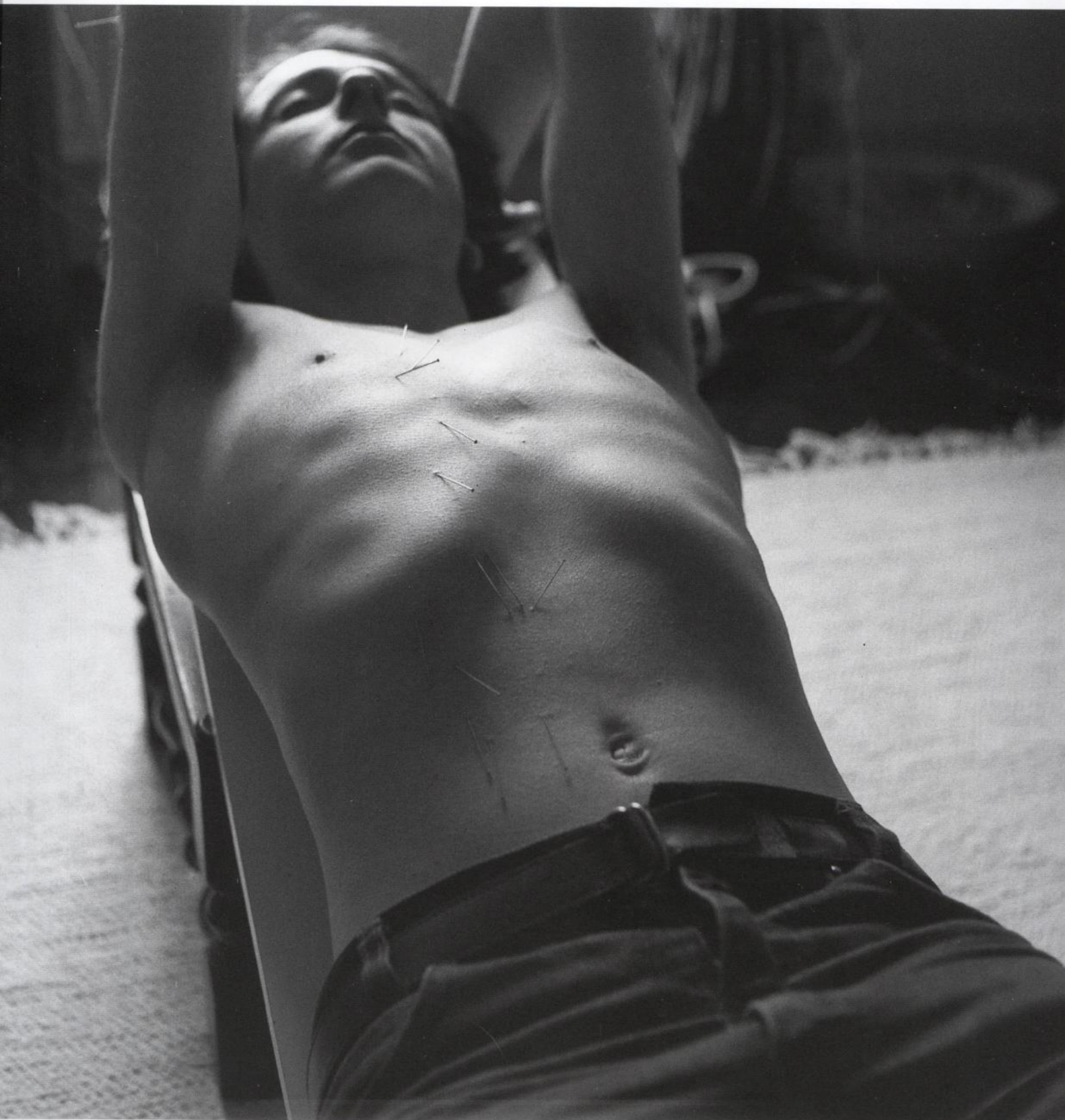














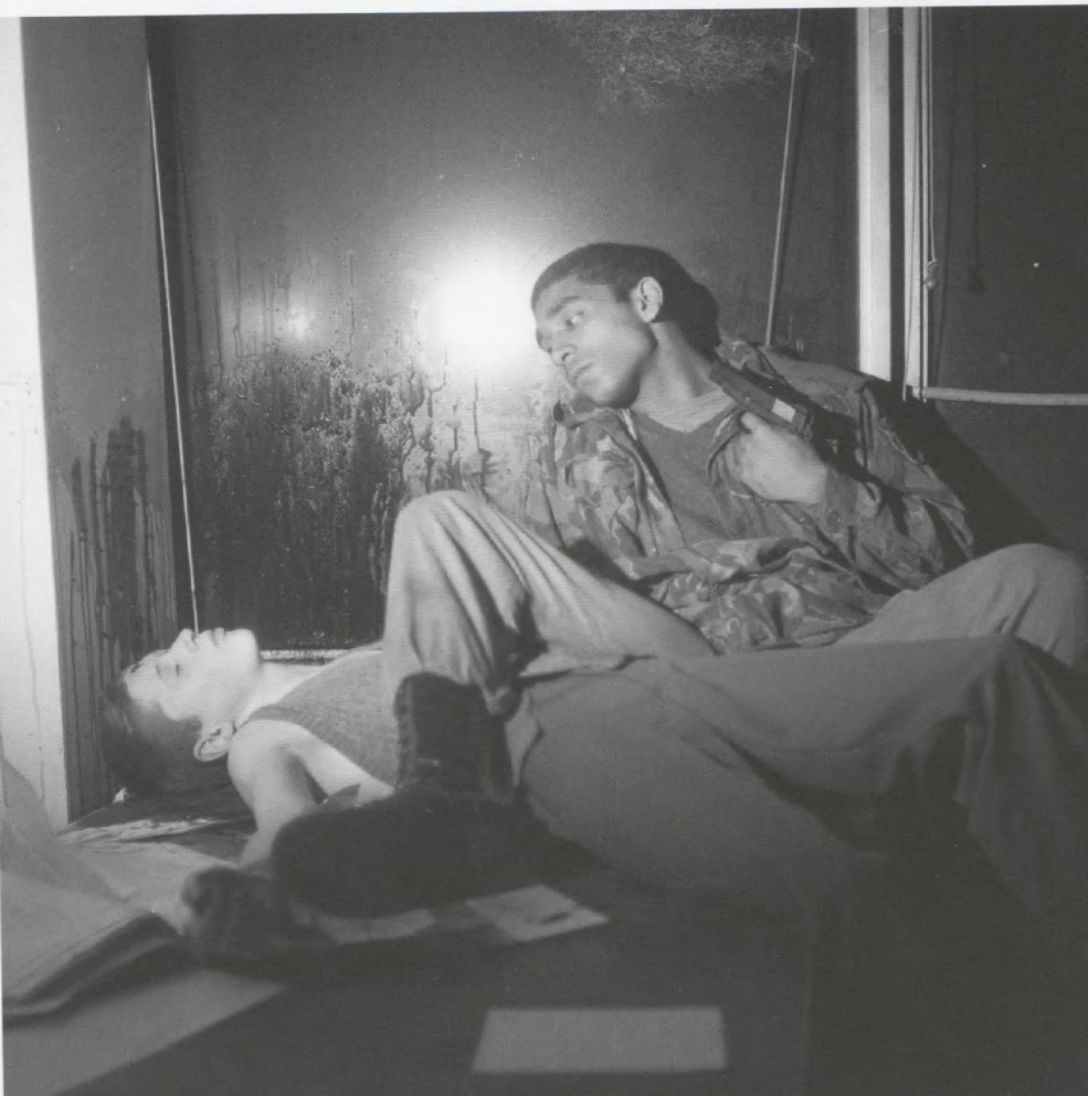


















Dad.