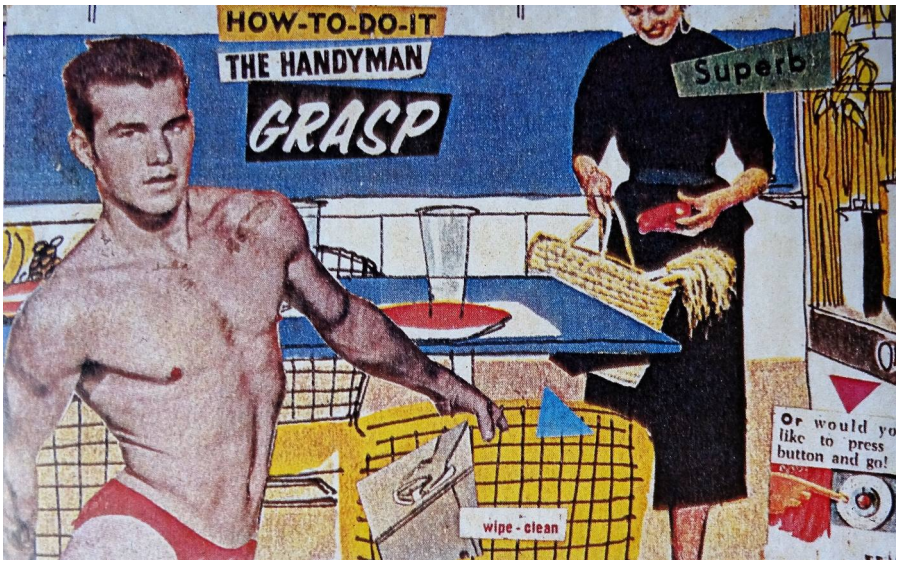
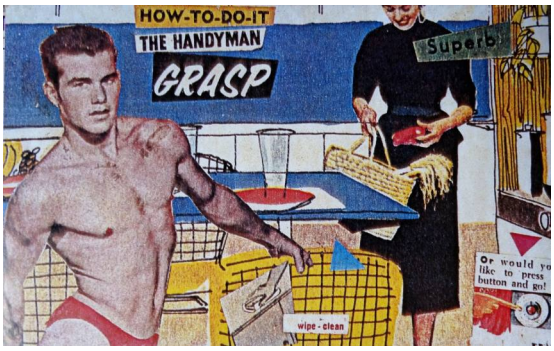
Man About The House



Man about the House (how to do it) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce

Shoalhaven Regional Gallery
2023

Man About The House



Man about the House (how to do it) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce

Man About The House: A Series of Ultra-Mundane Postcards was created by Robert Pearce around 1980, an extension of his art and a part of artistic movements, such as Billboard Utilising Graffitists Against Unhealthy Promotions, (B.U.G.A.U.P), which started in Melbourne in 1979. The movements used “pre-digital” popular means of mass communication such as postcards and billboards to communicate their subversive messages. The twelve postcards in this exhibition were acquired by Max Dingle in 1982 and are the only complete example of this series currently in existence.

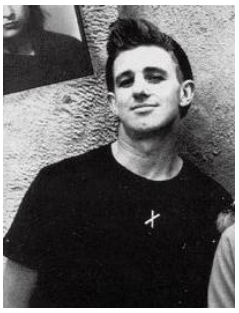
In these works, images of hyper-masculine, scantily clad men are playfully collaged into domiciliary, “traditionally feminine" domains, upending and re-defining heteronormative gender roles and honouring Queer identity. The use of punchy graphics with new-wave aesthetic influences are a firm nod to pop art predecessors, with a distinctly Queer milieu.

The works were created in Melbourne during the early 1980s: a time where LGBTQIA+ people were still living on the fringes of society, during the infancy of the first Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras and emerging amongst the ever-so-slow decriminalisation of homosexual acts across the states.

To celebrate Sydney WorldPride 2023, Shoalhaven Regional Gallery commissioned six queer contemporary artists from the South Coast and beyond to respond to these works from within their own context and practice.

Liam Benson, Max Dingle, Daisy Farnham, Matt Kilby, Kim Leutwyler and Natalie McDonagh have each responded to these works in their own way. Each artist has taken something from the works that resonates personally with them, resulting in a diverse and exciting exhibition reflecting on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ artists working today.

The Man about the House postcards in this exhibition are from the Dingle Hughes Collection, a bequest to the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery Collection. As far as can be ascertained these are the only complete set of 12 postcards still in existence.
The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, the Powerhouse Museum (MAAS), Sydney and the RMIT Archives, Melbourne also hold art by Robert Peace in their collections.



Robert Pearce

b. 1954 d. 1989

Robert Pearce was an artist, illustrator, designer and change-maker. Living in Melbourne throughout his life, he was at the heart of the ambitious avant-garde fashion scene, working with collaborators Kate Durham and Robert Buckingham to establish the Fashion Design Council (FDC) in 1983.

The FDC emerged out of two art-fashion events put on by Party Architecture, Fashion 82 and Fashion 83. Party Architecture consisted of Julie Purvis (presenter at Melbourne radio station 3RRR) and emerging music journalist Jullian Burt. Pearce was integral to the first event, designing the collateral and working as part of the team. To Pearce, the event was about 'looking at fashion as the most confrontational of the artforms: you wear it, you have to confront it'

Following the success of Fashion 83, the FDC was established and achieved funding from the Victorian Minister for the Arts to 'act as a lobby group for the [independent] designers and provide a unified voice with which those designers could address the *straight* forward fashion world'

The FDC was deliberately provocative, supporting and empowering designers whose aesthetic leaned into the underground and street art of the 1980s. Pearce curated exhibitions that took fashion beyond the catwalk, displaying it in contemporary art spaces around Melbourne and touring to regional galleries. The "punk" aesthetic incorporated make-up artists, hairdressers as well as musicians, such as Nick Cave. and gave rise to designers who are now household names, such as Jenny Kee, Fiona Scanlan, Peter Morrissey and Leona Edmiston.

Two examples of Pearce's fashion illustrations have been included in this exhibition, and this along with the portrait of FDC members helps to showcase the aesthetic the council was championing.

Pearce's legacy is tied to the FDC, but his own art practice extended well beyond the bounds of fashion and considered social issues and queer culture from his own unique style.

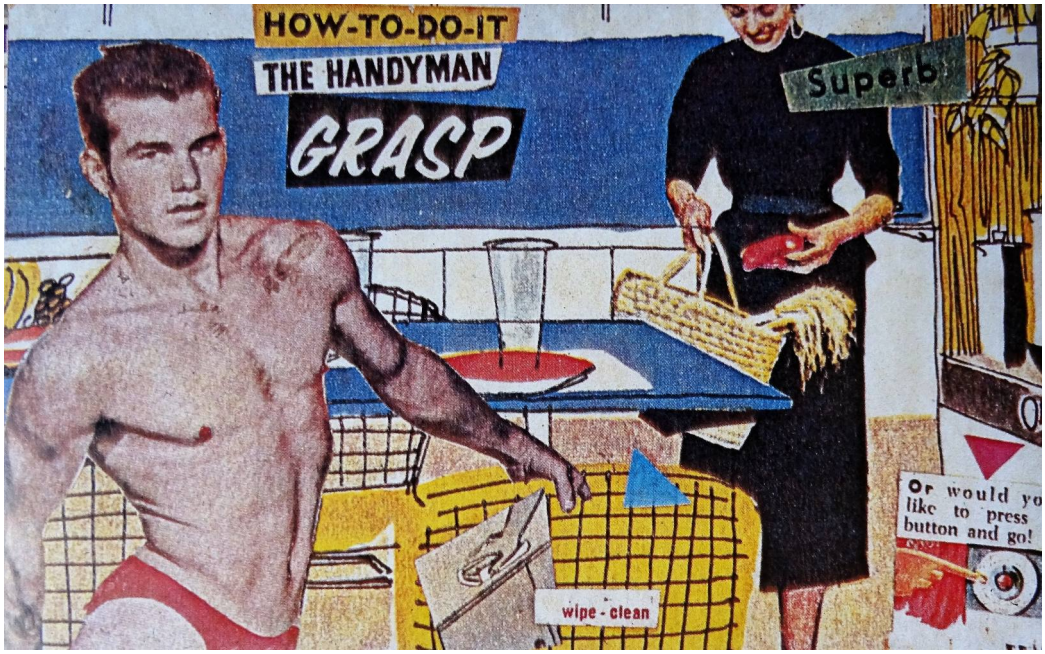
Pearce worked for architects Peter Corrigan and Maggie Edmond, creating images for them that took their irreverent approach to architecture and combined it with his strong design aesthetic. These images ran counter to the socially accepted conventions of architectural drawing and took a larrikin approach to the form.

Collage was a long-standing part of his practice and in the *Man About the House* works displayed here we see his many influences come together in pieces that poke fun at traditional narratives of domesticity, gender roles and advertising.

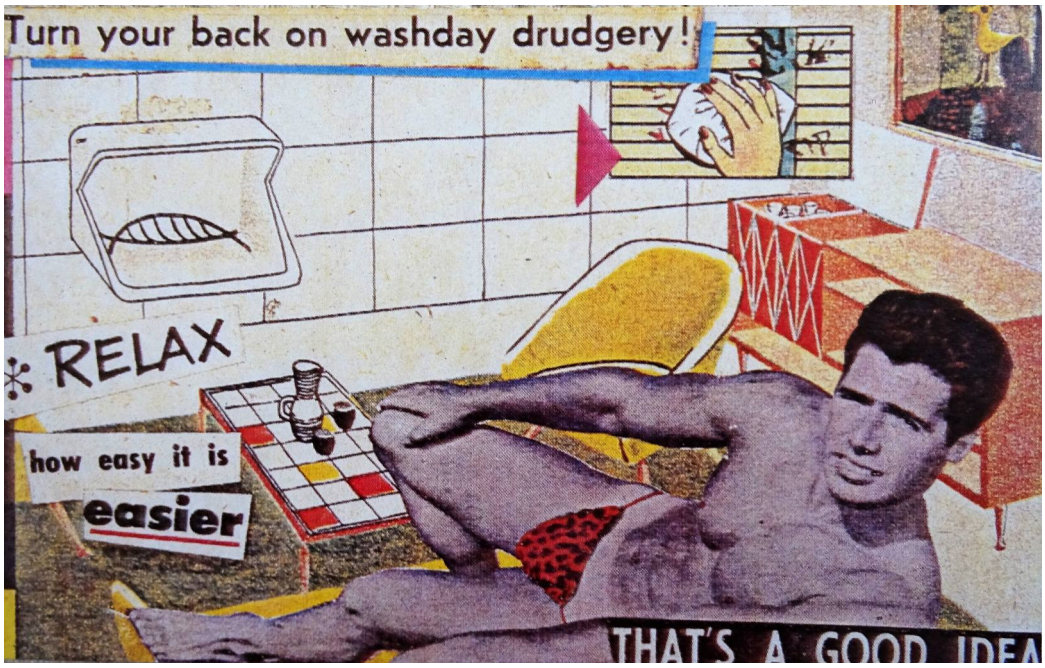
Max Dingle OAM

Robert Pearce, Kate Durham, Robert Buckingham c.1984 image Ashley Jones-Evans

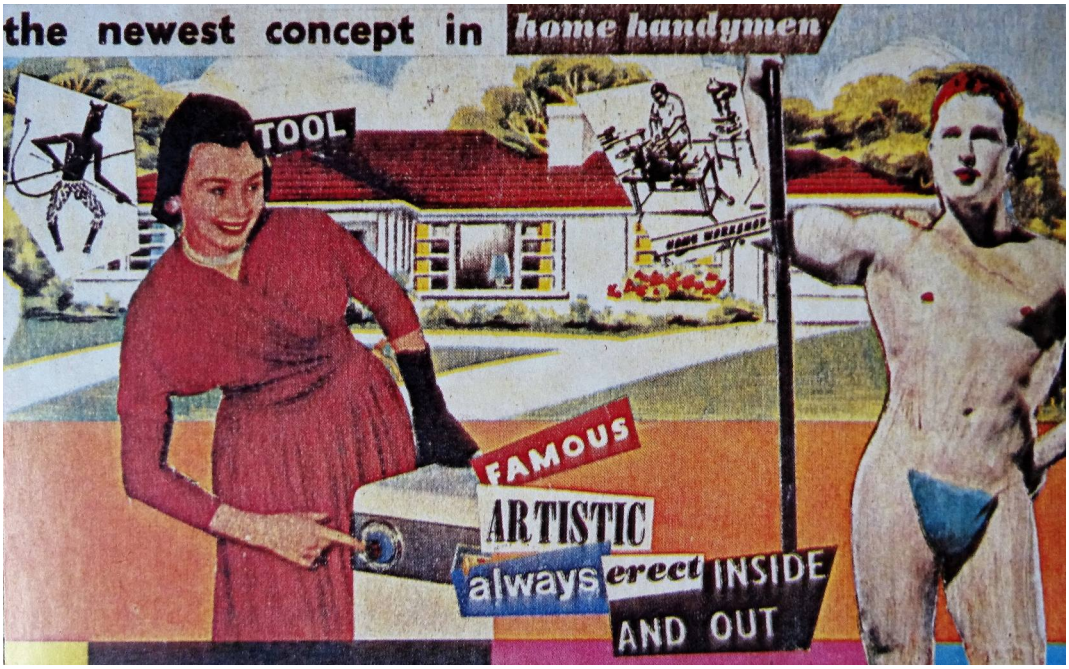
Mimi on Catwalk and *Untitled* c 1983 ink pencil on paper Robert Pearce



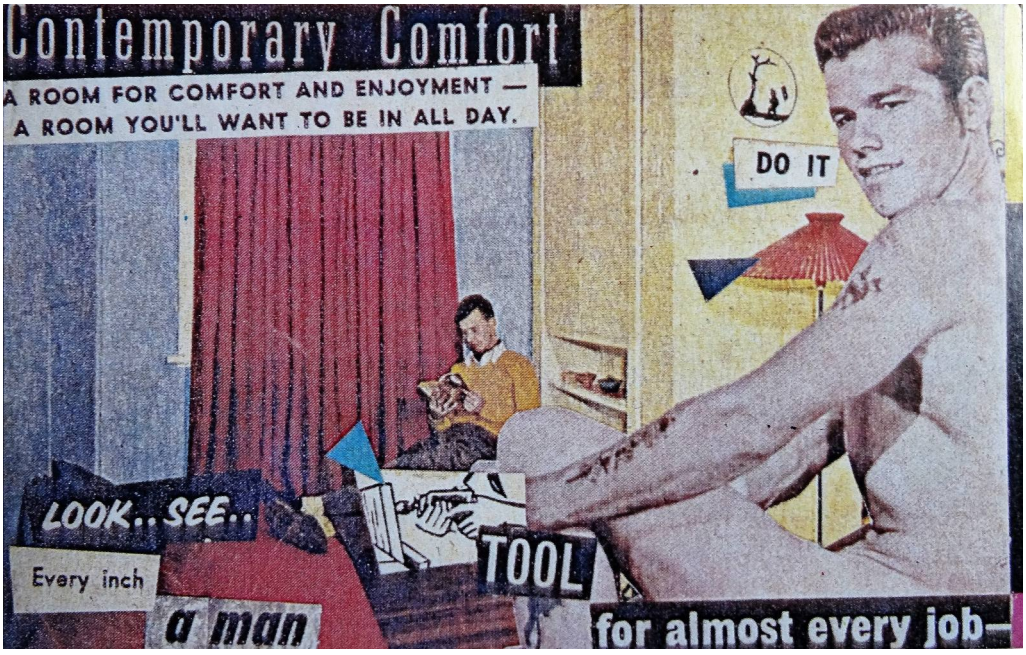
Man about the House (how to do it) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



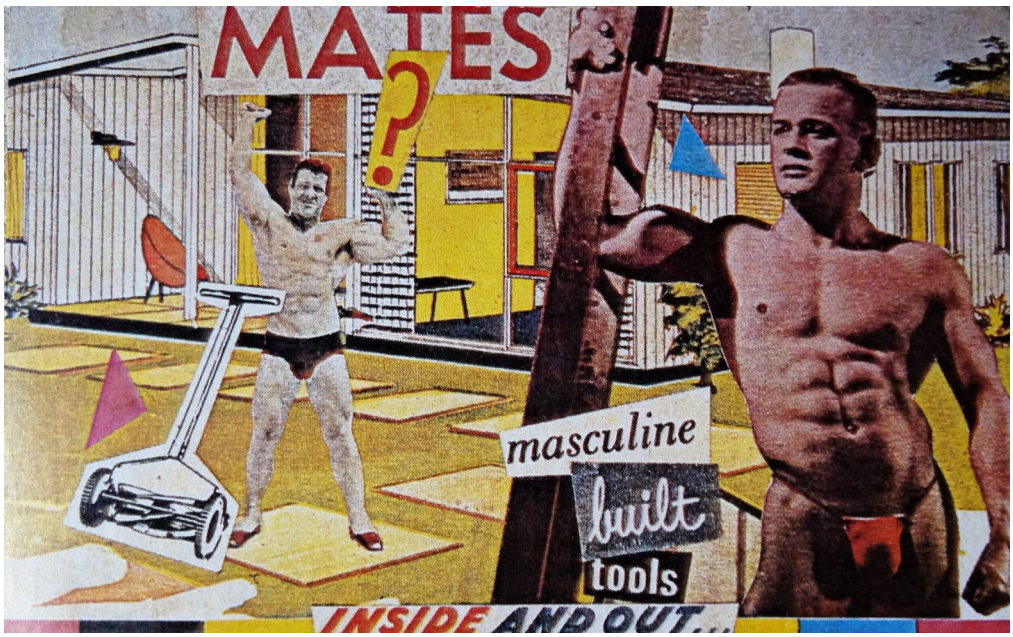
Man about the House (thats a good idea) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



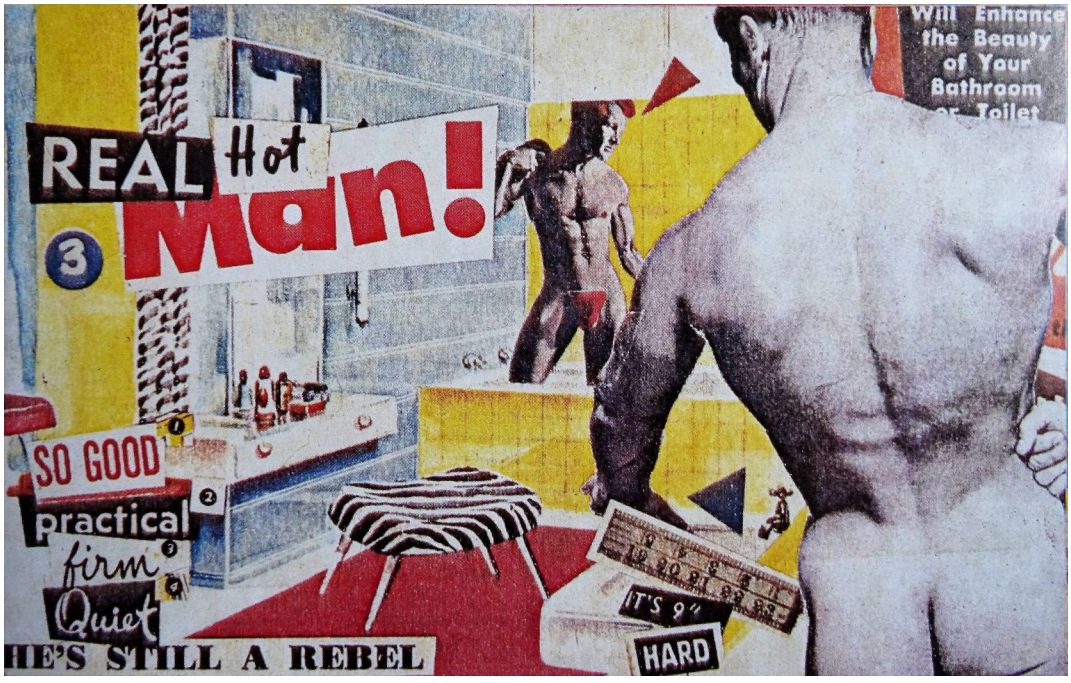
Man about the House (home handymen) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



Man about the House (contemporary comfort) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce

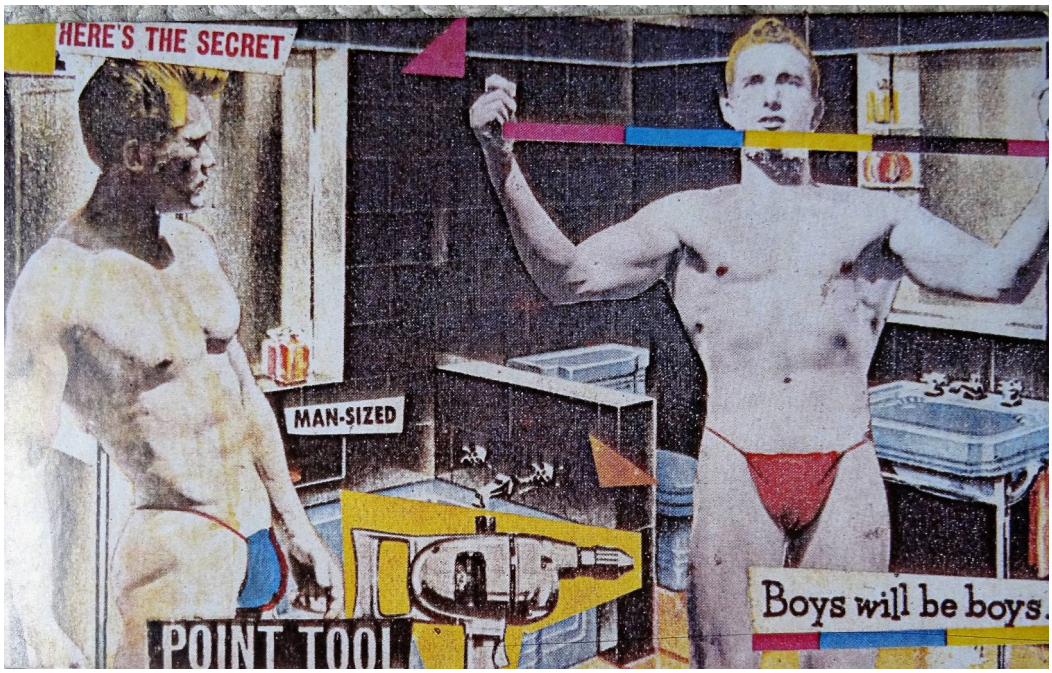


Man about the House (mates) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce

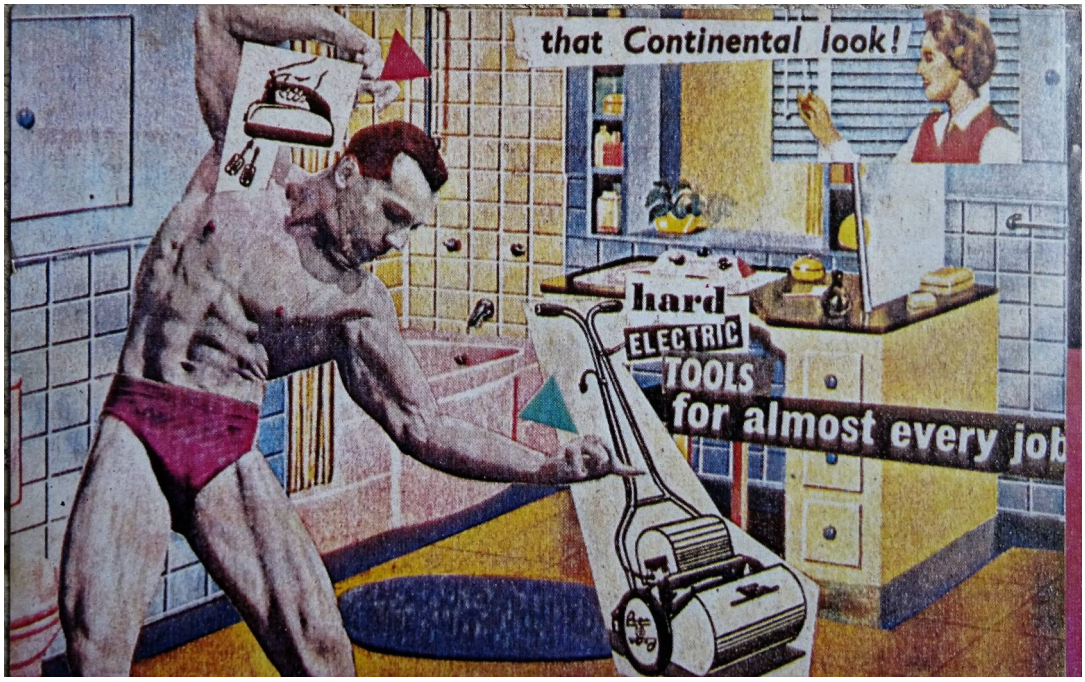


Man about the House (real hot man) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce

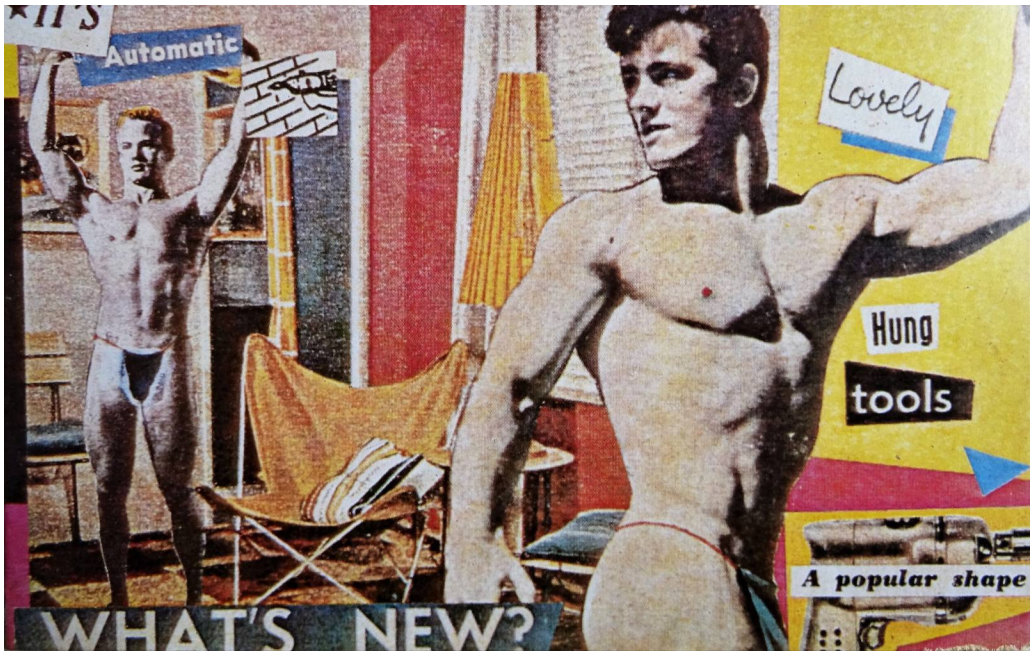
Man about the House (beauty in your dream home) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



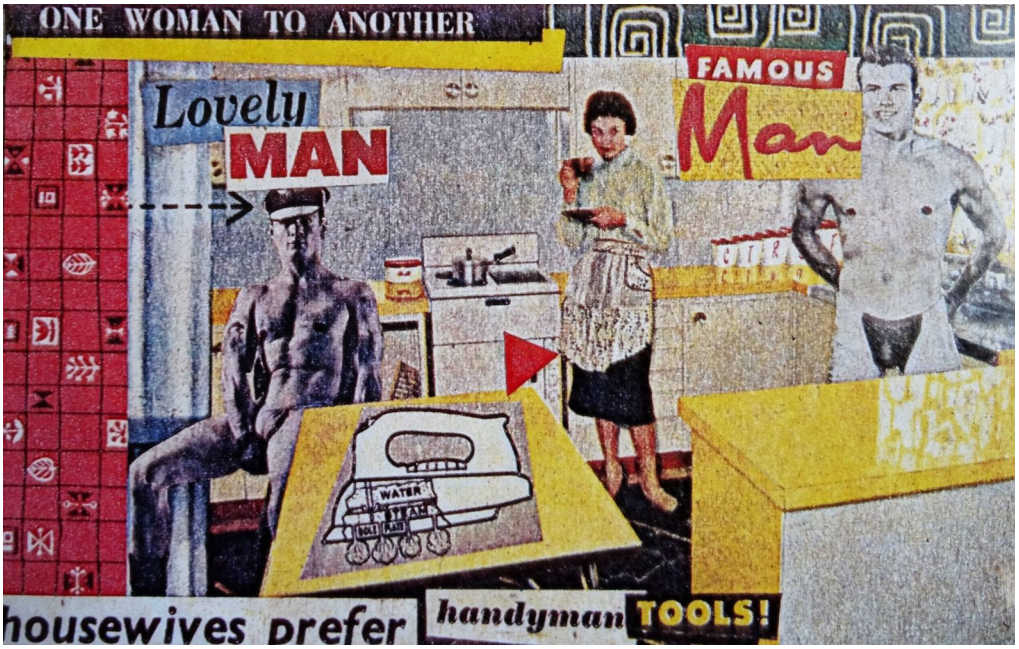
Man about the House (point tool) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



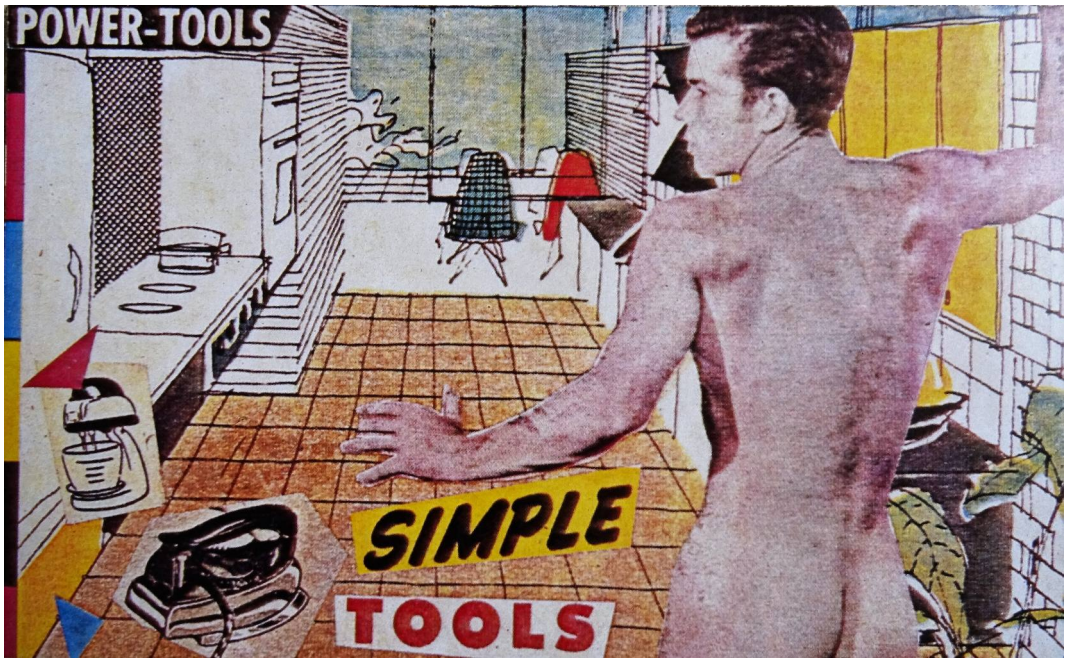
Man about the House (that continental look) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



Man about the House (what's new?) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



Man about the House (one woman to another) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce



Man about the House (power tools) print 1980 16x10cm Robert Pearce