



SÉISSMO



Séissmograph 2007

Men and their Aging Bodies: A Dialogue with the Deaf

Report of Fundamental Research



The Idea of this Séismograph

Within the context of our annual research reporting, we are interested in investigating what kind of challenges “aging male bodies” in Germany pose to the products and services aimed at them. In order to do this, we will have to understand how men accept and experience their aging, that is ...

- ▶ *What does it mean “to age” to a man?*
- ▶ *How does the stronger sex act and react to the transformational process of aging?*
- ▶ *What signs or symptoms of aging make men suffer?*

This investigative report pairs a semiotic vision with a psychological analysis to uncover the implications at the developmental level and the issues in terms of strategic marketing.

Contents

1. Semiotic Analysis:
Men Confronting the Signs of Aging P.4

2. Socio-Psychological Analysis:
Men's Relationship with their Aging Bodies P.40

3. Implications:
Which Questions to Ask P.79



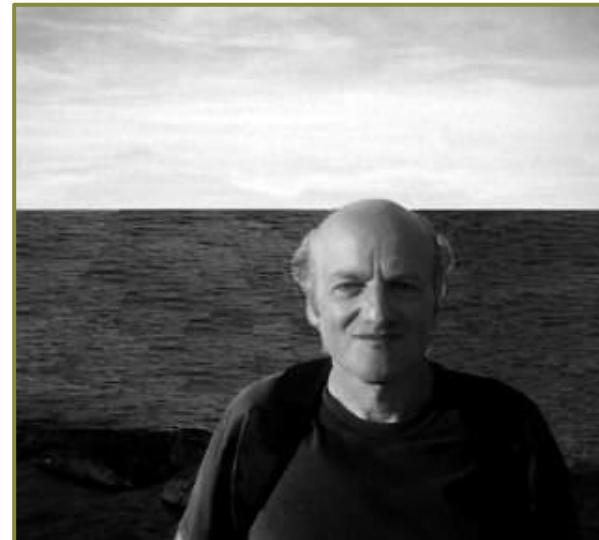
1. Semiotic Analysis: Men confronting the Signs of Aging

Semiotic Analysis

Etienne Dobiacki

- ▶ semiologist who is himself affected by aging,
for whom time went by very fast while conducting
research of the following topics:

- design, ergonomics, distribution architecture,
cosmetics, fragrances, textiles
TV-programms and sender identity,
discrimination, social rehabilitation



- ▶ He was introduced to semiotics by Jean-Marie Floch at Ipsos Sémiotique in Paris.
- ▶ Séissmo met him during a research concerning the design of writing utensils.

Semiotic Analysis

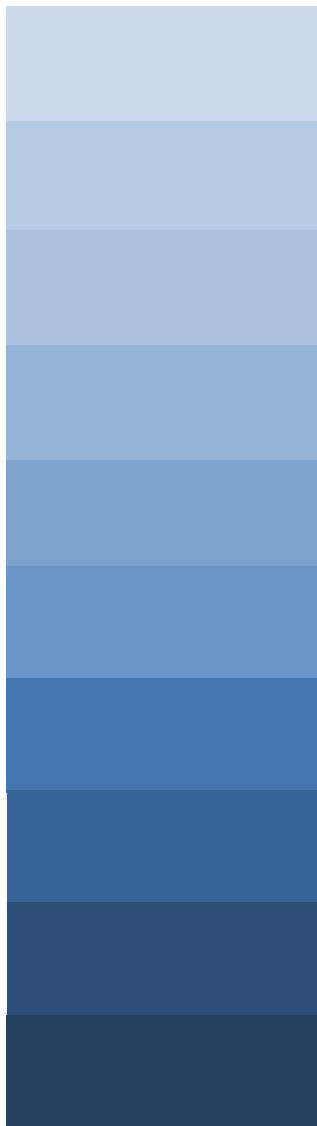


The design of this question mark matches the shape of the population pyramids in Germany.

Maybe it is a question about our future.

There are some links in Europe, and particularly in Germany, between individual aging and the aging of the whole society.

Semiotic Analysis



Population pyramids tend to be slim.

Like in weather reports,

like in stock markets,

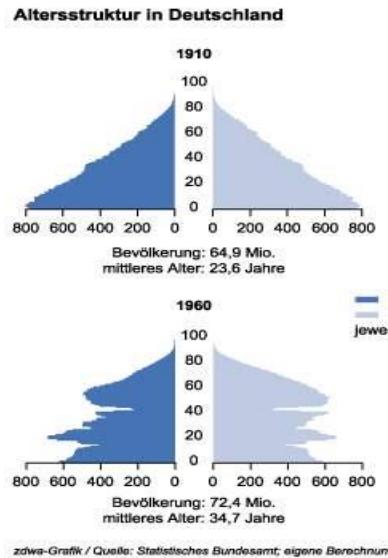
high pressure creates streams and trends.

Rarity creates value.

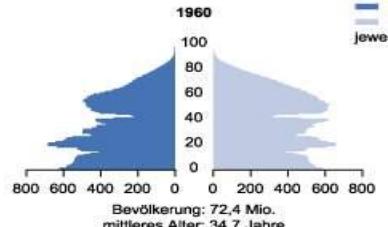
➡ Youthfulness was always desirable,
today more than ever.

Semiotic Analysis

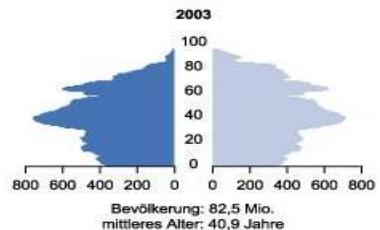
1910



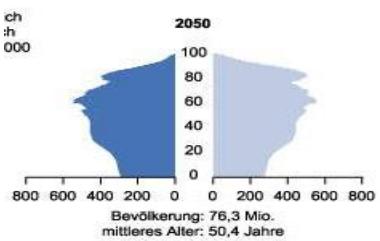
1960



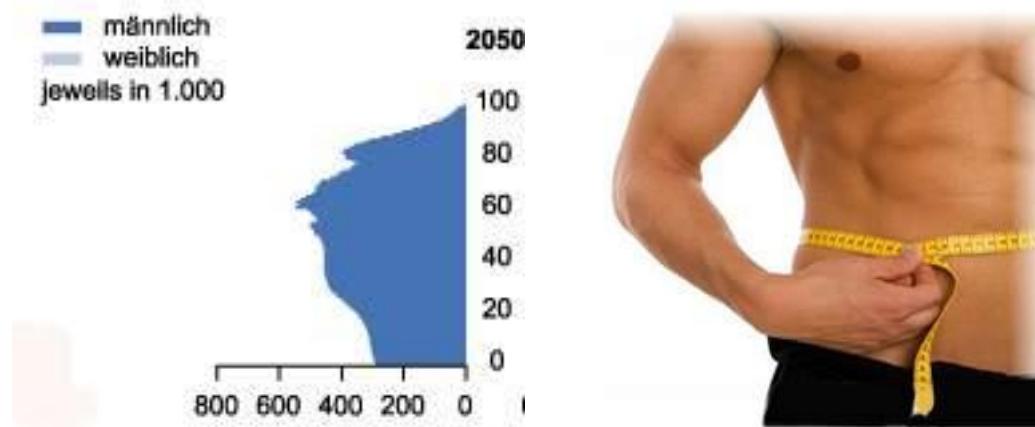
2003



2050



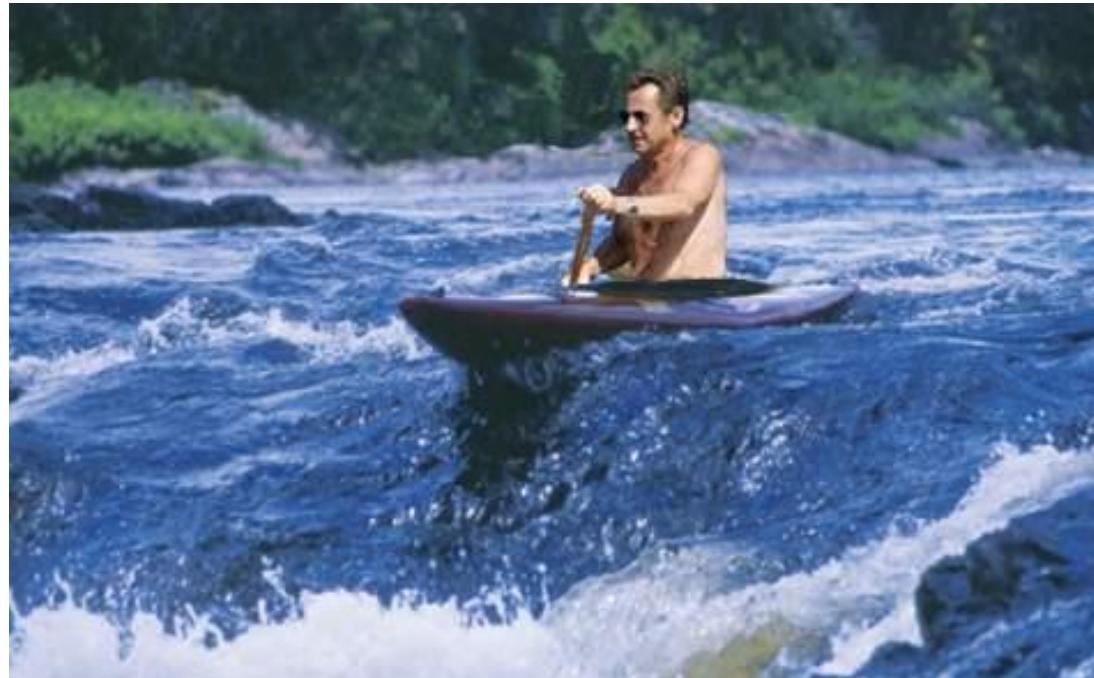
Semiotic Analysis



The shape of this pyramid is just like the profile of a man who wants to keep slim.

Maybe it's the main purpose of semiology to reveal some links between separate phenomena, since signification is based on links.

Though some people try to fight against the current... SÉISSMO



Signs of aging can become political stakes

- Here you can see how some journalists spontaneously use Photoshop TM to idealise the president's body...
...and protect his street cred(ibility)



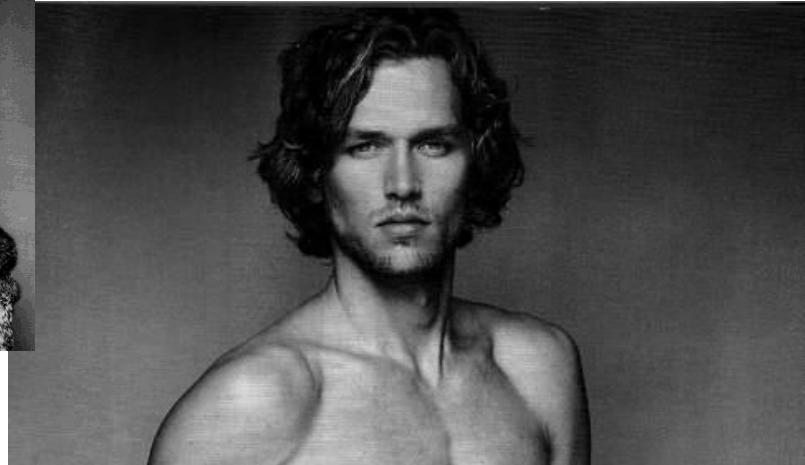
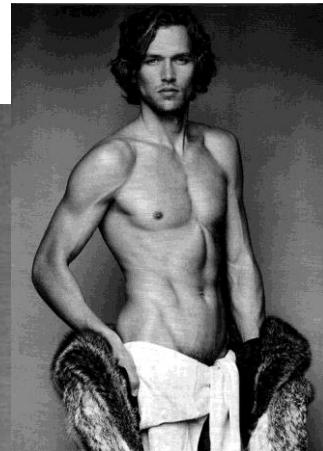
Seduction of the river



Wladimir Putin

This picture seems to say “this is a long lasting body”.
Be ready to see me for a long time.

The rule

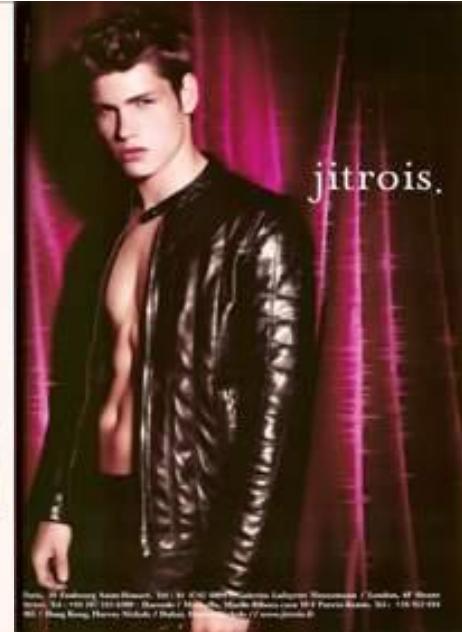


be slim

/

don't smile

Younger than young



Young and bearded



A beard offers the means for controlling and tuning your mask.
You can choose to look older.

Young and bearded



The black colour highlights the lines and reinforces the slenderness

Must have's must be slim



Some contrasts

real people

most models

become older

become younger

Some contrasts

the sportsman

becomes old at 27
sometimes earlier

(and maybe becomes rich before he plays)

the artist

becomes young at 42
maybe later

writers, painters, film makers, singers...
(and becomes rich after he dies)

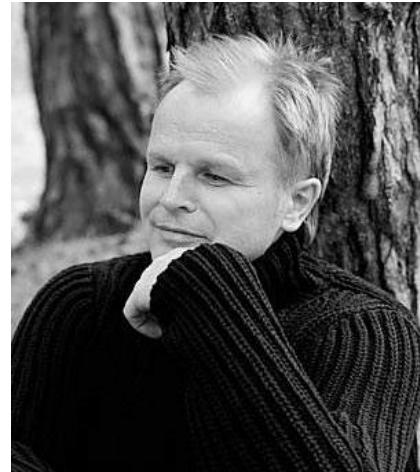
Some contrasts

the sportsman



Bastian Schweinsteiger
Footballer of the German national team

the artist



Herbert Grönemeyer
songwriter, singer and composer, celebrated a big
comeback

Some contrasts

the sportsman

the artist

the body

the physical energy tends to decrease

the spirit

the mental energy tends to increase

choose your way (out)...

Some contrasts



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men	women
chronometer on hand fighting with the sun thinking about how he performs projecting his body into space obsessed by approaching the extreme dreaming that there are no limits most centered on his action	an internal clock, biological according to the moon 28 days 9 months and round about 50 years the end of possible motherhood the sense of organic boundaries most centered on her sensations most conscious of her body
one day afflicted when his own son runs faster than he does	dreaming to keep close to her daughter

Some contrasts

men



women



The wannabe young



SÉISSMO

for every one

you forget you're becoming older
you believe you can escape
from the passage of time

you won't look like your parents
or grandparents

actually you stay rooted in your 501
and in your MiniCooper

you dream you're eternal

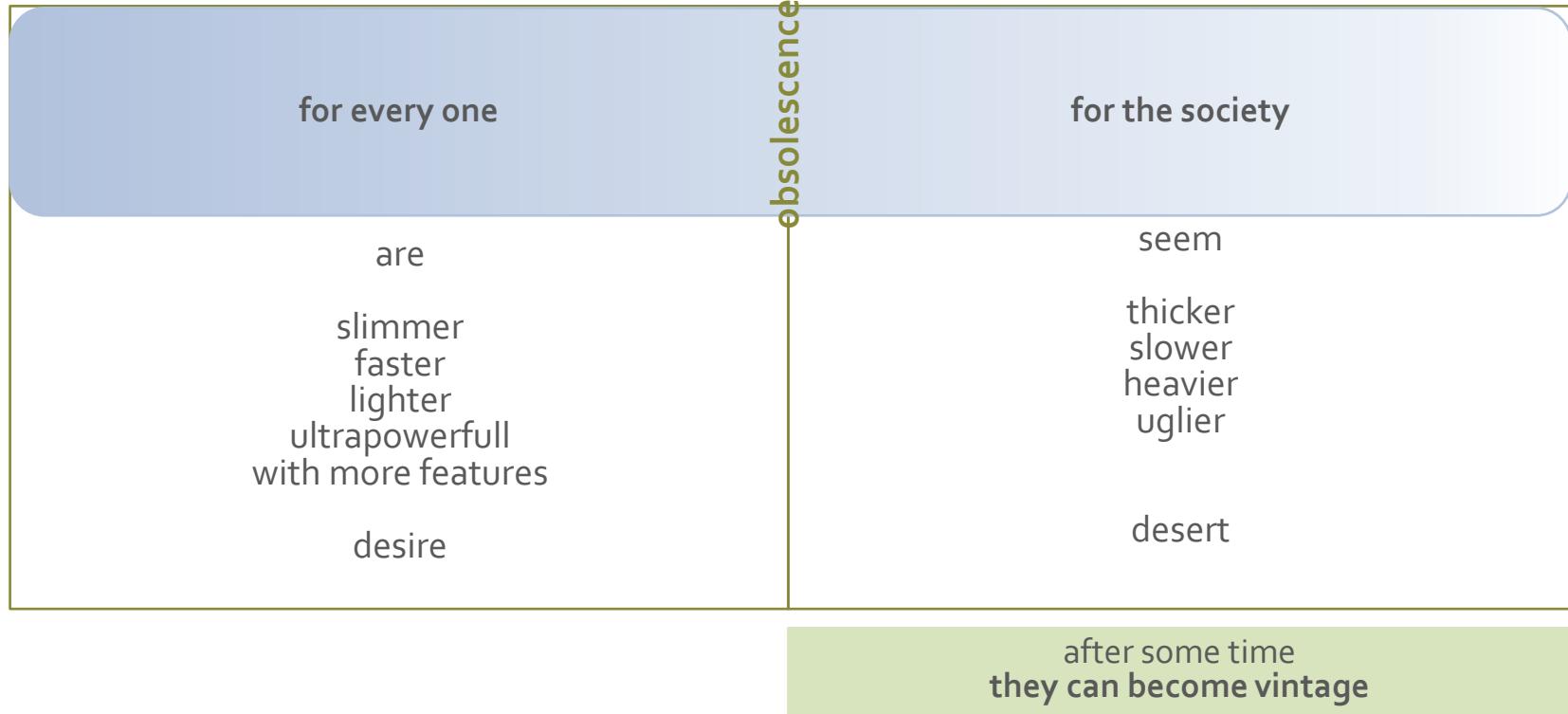
for the society

giving value to the newcomers
seeking some fresh people
and new faces

with an effect of escalation
younger and younger

an endless need of freshness
until when?

The wannabe young



The core of the aging process

Loss of elasticity
with a long-term double effect

softening

- loss of hardness
- more wrinkles
- facility to fold
- more cushioned
- new padding
- settling

hardening

- loss of flexibility
- more straightness
- difficult to bend
- squeak and creak
- split and cleft
- dryness

less reactivity
less speed

The internal signs

pain

suffering

moaning

some moves and gestures become sometimes painful,
so we invent some new movements,
severely downsizing our playing field

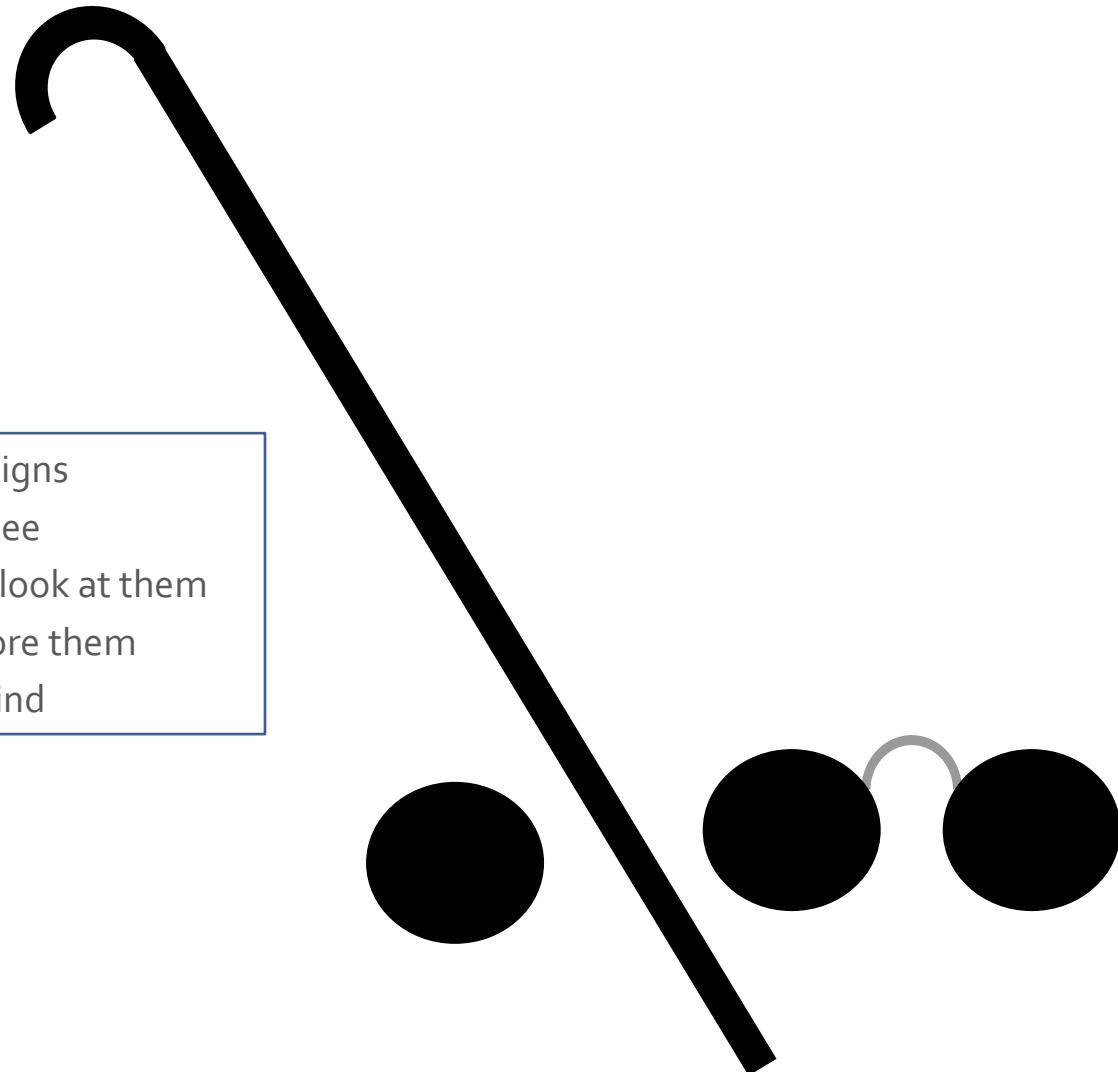
back to no smile

Some pains generate wrinkles



On this sensitive picture,
you can see the cycle of generations.
The new design pushes out the old fashioned product..

Semiotic Analysis



these are some signs
we don't like to see
we prefer not to look at them
we prefer to ignore them
we become ... blind

Semiotic Analysis

we hope
our children
will be
more conscious and aware...

...but we have no children





The smiling old man

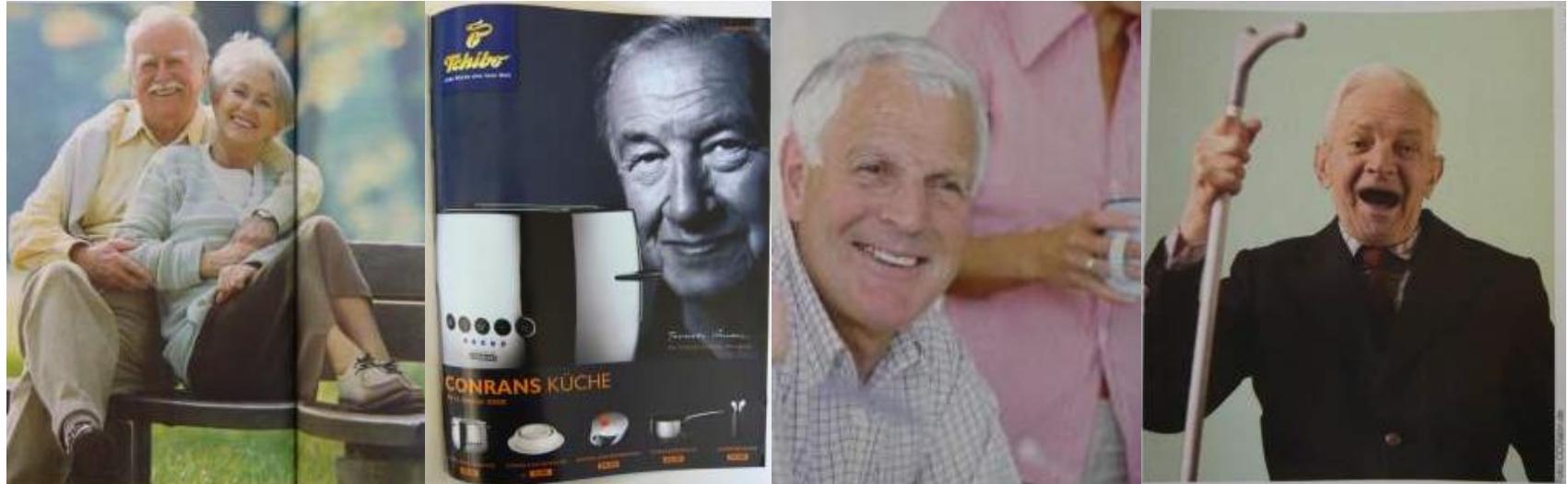
In advertising the aged man often appears to be smiling.
Whatever the problem so solve, smiling is always the mood.

⇒ In Advertising, aging seems close to happiness.

Therefore, here the smile does not necessarily express satisfaction, but just acceptance.
Maybe, the smile is just a wrinkle.
In oriental culture, smiling expresses embarrassment or confusion.

⇒ Are we under oriental influence?

The smiling old man #1



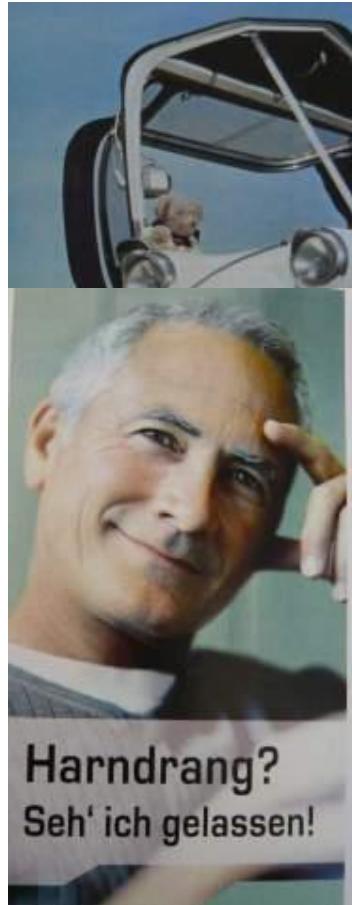
peter bächler

Der Begriff „Wellness“ ist in aller Munde. Ob Mineralwasser, Socken, Müsli oder Ferien – Wellness gibt es überall. Schriftsteller Peter Bächler fragt sich deshalb, wo bei all dem Balance-Bestreben von Körper, Seele und Geist noch Zeit für das eigentliche Leben bleibt.

Wellness-Wahn:

„Um den Tod zu vermeiden,
nehmen sich Leute das Leben“

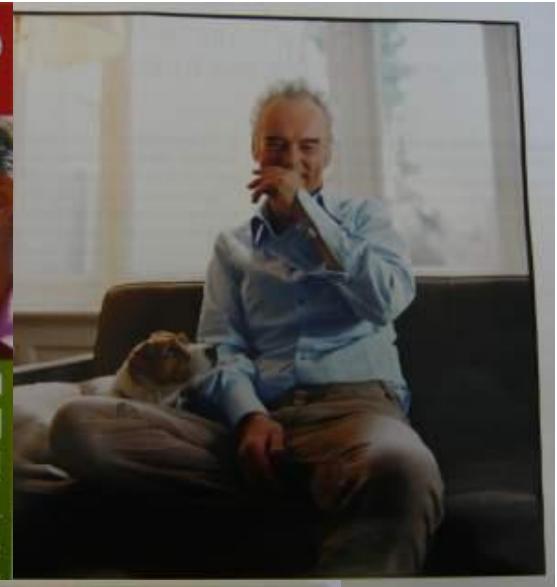
The smiling old man #2



Diabetes?



an
Magnesiummangel
denken!
Diabetiker leiden oft unter
Magnesiummangel:
Wadenkrämpfe und neuromuskuläre



Anzeige

RATGEBER:
BESSER HÖREN

„Mein unsichtbares Geheimnis:
Ich trage ein Hörgerät!“

Andrew Lucchesi, Fotomodell

The imperfection

Some physical imperfections, like narrow shoulders, lack of muscles, fatness, obesity or baldness are perceived as strictly linked with becoming old.

Although this flaw can exist among young or very young men,

the imperfection of the body is considered as an effect of aging and expression of age.

So aging is simply considered as an imperfection.



Test the last imperfection

After aging, the real imperfection for every man, the worst imperfection to experience: dying.

Then, your potential of seduction tends to severely decrease, your vital energy drops dramatically.

And you look so tired, now you are beyond oldness.

No more wrinkles, you're free.

The sliced woman, some new multiple boundaries

Nowadays women use a sliced mirror with separate strips for each so-called period of life,
based on a decimal classification, just like in music charts

The magazines and the main brands like L'Oréal or Clarins, show us the striped target.

Actually, in the real life, steps and states of being, are more erratic and irregular depending on many different factors.

But the trend is to look ten years younger than you really are.

So in matters of aging, understatement is the rule.

The sliced mirror



L'ORÉAL PARIS PARCE QUE VOUS L'AVEZ
SÉLECTION BEAUTÉ ▾ PORTE-PAROLE ▾ EXPERTS ▾ SOIN DE LA PEAU ▾

Une belle peau à tout âge



mc
beautébook

SÉLECTION

ON VEUT TOUTES UNE PEAU NICKEL

On rêve d'un teint clair et lumineux avec un grain de peau régulier. C'est possible, à condition de choisir le bonheur formule. Par Isabelle Gérard



20.

La promise : « Mes cheveux bruns sont toujours les plus beaux, mais je n'arrive pas à faire tenir ma peau de l'été tout l'hiver. La peau déshydratée crée des rides et des boutons. »



30.

La promise : « Je hais la peau de l'été. Je préfère être mince avec du fond de teint. Mais j'apprécie avoir une peau saine et éclatante. »



40.

La promise : « Je veux que ma peau soit douce, sans rides, mais aussi sans boutons. J'apprécie que mes soins soient efficaces et apaisants. »



50.

La promise : « Je veux que ma peau soit douce, sans rides, mais aussi sans boutons. J'apprécie que mes soins soient efficaces et apaisants. »

La magie : agit dès l'application pour hydrater la peau et réguler le sébum.

Le produit : Baume à l'argan et huile de camomille (15 €). L'Oréal, 19, rue de Sévigné, Paris 75001. 01 40 50 20 00.

La magie : agit dès l'application pour hydrater la peau et réguler le sébum.

Le produit : Baume à l'argan et huile de camomille (15 €). L'Oréal, 19, rue de Sévigné, Paris 75001. 01 40 50 20 00.

Les gâteaux : riche en minéraux et vitamines, ils sont bons pour l'énergie pour réhydrater l'épiderme et donner à la peau une belle couleur.

Le produit : Crème Baume à la poudre d'avoine (15 €). Nuxe, 19, rue de Sévigné, Paris 75001. 01 40 50 20 00.

La magie : favorise la régénération cellulaire et aide à détoxifier la peau sans l'assécher.

Le produit : Elixir Purifiant Ceramide 2 (25 €). Purifying Botanical Serum. Académie Bio-éthique, 17, rue de la Motte-Picquet, Paris 75016. 01 45 60 00 00.

La magie : agit dès l'application pour hydrater la peau et réguler le sébum.

Le produit : Kit Peeling Régénérant (15 €). L'Oréal, 19, rue de Sévigné, Paris 75001. 01 40 50 20 00.

La magie : agit dès l'application pour hydrater la peau et réguler le sébum.

Le produit : Kit Peeling Régénérant (15 €). L'Oréal, 19, rue de Sévigné, Paris 75001. 01 40 50 20 00.

Bravo ! Vous avez choisi la meilleure crème de jour à la couleur de votre peau.

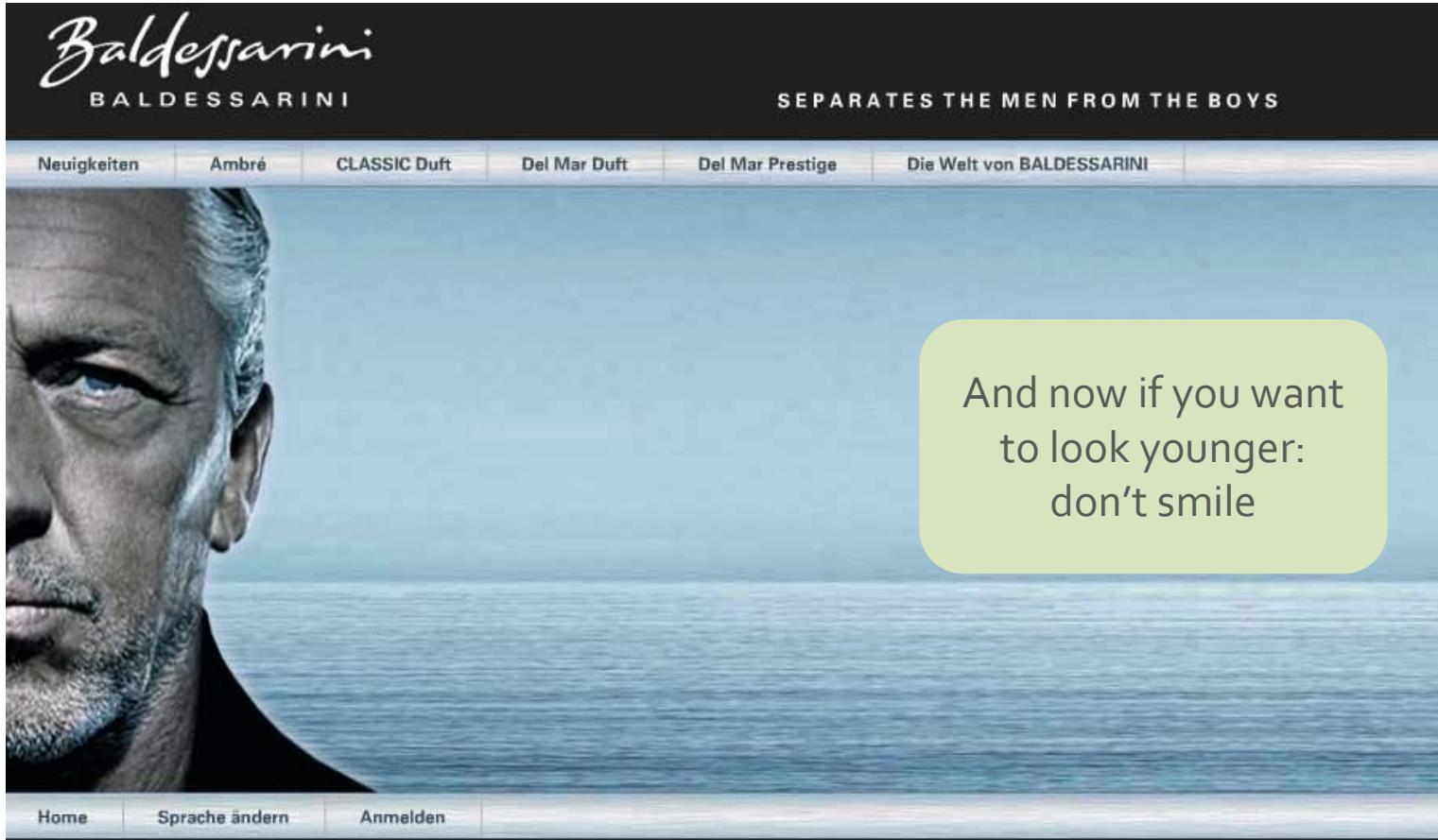
Happy End

- ▶ For an observer, the incredible power of denial of age is an enigma. The issue: is this force of denial the same in the whole occidental area or particularly strong in Germany for specific reasons?

- ▶ Probably this force of denial is working everywhere, but at a different degree. It will be interesting to proceed with the same survey in different states of Europe. To be continued...

- ▶ Some therapists attribute the discrepancy in male and female life expectancy to the lack of awareness for aging among men, coupled with their tendency not to take the best care of their health. So take care of yourself.

The never smiling old man



Baldessarini
BALDESSARINI

SEPARATES THE MEN FROM THE BOYS

Neuigkeiten Ambré CLASSIC Duft Del Mar Duft Del Mar Prestige Die Welt von BALDESSARINI

And now if you want
to look younger:
don't smile

Home Sprache ändern Anmelden



2. Socio-Psychological Analysis

Men's Relationship with their Aging Bodies



Methodological Approach

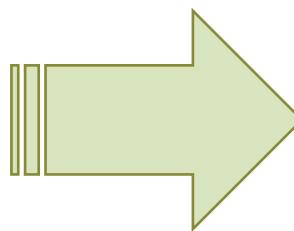
Methodological Approach

The initial idea...

- ▶ After having focused on German women and their relationships with their bodies throughout 2006, this year we are dedicating the Séissmograph to men.
- ▶ The initial departure point for this investigative report lies in the desire to discover what images men have of aging and to understand how they approach the changes related to the physical aging of their bodies.
- ▶ In order to do this, we conducted dozens of exploratory interviews as well as day-long workshops over the course of the year during which men related their thoughts and concerns in response to creative and projective techniques.
- ▶ The results have been cross-checked and validated with our experience accumulated over the course of the year through studies conducted with men, focusing on cosmetics, hygiene, life styles and automobiles.

Methodological Approach

In order to understand how **men apprehend their aging** of their bodies, we had to overcome some significant obstacles...



Obstacles...

- ... the existence of **mechanisms** that **block out** the process of aging
- ... the **trivialising** of the changes and transformations of the body
- ... the diminishing of symptoms with the assistance of **compensatory strategies**
- ... **depression**, triggered by the anticipation of aging

It was not easy to expose the stronger sex. We (men and women, wrinkled or not) took several approaches and tried different strategies during the empirical phase before finally being allowed to see beyond the façade originally offered.

Finally, however, as a result of numerous detour techniques (by definition creative, projective and playful), and patience, empathy and humour – our discussion partners “delivered”.

Methodological Approach

Our tools...

► Regression through role play / identification...



The men had to choose a figure from a set representing masculine archetypes. This helped us to understand the person's relationship with his body.

► The power of the non-verbal...



The drawn images of themselves at different stages of life served to trigger representations and fears associated with the aging of their bodies

During a workshop, the participants created a graphic representation, in the form of a collage, of the transformations a body undergoes over the course of a lifetime

Poses that emphasised the images (and the associated feelings) about an aging body.

► Provocation and projection...



With the assistance of a set of photos with images of men's bodies, we were able to go deep into the signs of an aging and the associated issues.
The set was validated by our semiologist.



Insights

Insights

1

The age implies the recognition of one's mortality; it brings one closer every day to a state of dependence and petrifaction linked to imminent death; it is to accept the loss of control of one's own body, and the inability to perform

2

Men approach aging as a (late) state and not as a process.

3

The state of loss inflicted by aging is hidden. Men age according to the principle of compensation:
“nothing is lost, everything is changed”.

4

Aging occurs in space, and is felt as a loss of mobility.
Aging is the inability to interact with one's entourage/ environment.

5

Different coping strategies are employed as a way to control, master, tolerate or even diminish the impact of the aging of the body.

To confront one's own aging is to envision one's own death.
The acceptance of aging is really to accept one's own mortality.

For men, accepting their impotence (in the face of the inevitable...) remains very difficult.

Visions of the future

(the interviewee had to choose the projected age himself)

Best Case

- at age of 35 -

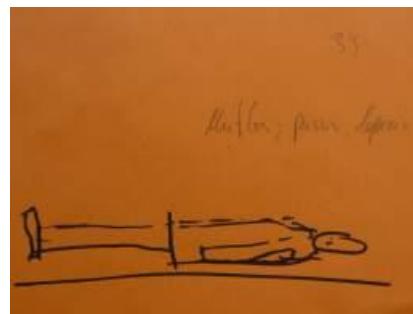


Forward movement

"active, mobile – a bag full of good ideas"

Worst Case

- at age of 33 -



"discouraged, passive, depressed"

- Death is the climax, the end of aging. Petrification then begins. This is synonymous with the loss of movement, or immobility, but also with the inability to interact with their environment.
- For the participants, the most traumatic aspect of aging is the symbolic death of the body, or senescence (a wheel chair, confinement to bed...).
- This latent worry derives from a fear of the loss of control of the body and therefore to be dependent on the help of others.

Men approach aging as a (late) state and not as a process.

Quote from a workshop

"one is old as soon as we reach statistical middle age – yes, that is when you've reached the life expectancy, then you're old, at about 75 – yes, if you're not dead you're old"

To truly understand the feelings of men concerning aging,
the following **bipolar ideas** emerge:

Life *versus* death

Youth *versus* age

Sound body *versus* defective body

A **Manichian view** of aging:
Black or white – with no grey area!

**Thus, the process of aging does not exist.
It is the denial of aging.**

The system of loss inflicted by aging is hidden.
"men do not age, they mature"

Aging in men is subject to the physical law of conversion:
"nothing is lost, nothing is gained, all is transformed"

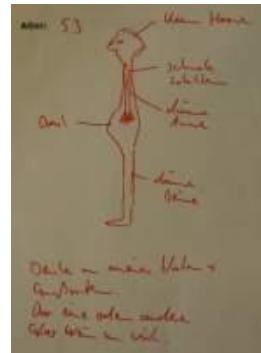
The process of loss is not felt as such. The body does not suffer loss, but rather is transformed:

– at age of 35 –



"broad shoulders – very large biceps, flat stomach – not bad this guy, he made it"

– at age of 53 –



"narrow shoulders, skinny arms, thin legs, belly"

- The hair lost on the head migrates (as if by magic), and continues to grow elsewhere on the body (nose, ears, chest, etc.)
"air which was just there yesterday disappears and then reappears in my nose and ears"
- Muscle mass developed at a younger age also migrates and settles in the area of the abdomen, introducing itself as a man's new pride and joy, his beer belly.
"the muscles move from the shoulders to the belly in a type of relocation"

Beyond the physical, the whole being transforms. As the body begins to fail, the mind develops and grows. A gain in experience and maturity, or even material wealth itself, compensates for the loss of physical performance!

As opposed to women, for whom aging is chronological, aging in men is spatial. Aging is synonymous with a loss of mobility. Aging is the inability to interact with their entourage.

- In the image of aging, men fear immobility. Men carry with them a need to be able to move around freely in their environment. Once again, aging is felt as an interference in, or as a suppression of freedom of movement. The failing body no longer responds as before and is no longer able to take them where they want to go.
- A functional body is one that is actively mobile, a body that responds to orders to move. An old body is this same body which in its dysfunction no longer interacts with the world around it.

"it's awful when daily activities become impossible as a result of pain or even because of immobility/ it is also the accumulation of physical dysfunction, a wheelchair, or incontinence – yes, it is the inability to not longer be able to leave the house, no longer spend time with others, no longer attract"

From the passing lane...



...to the emergency stopping lane!



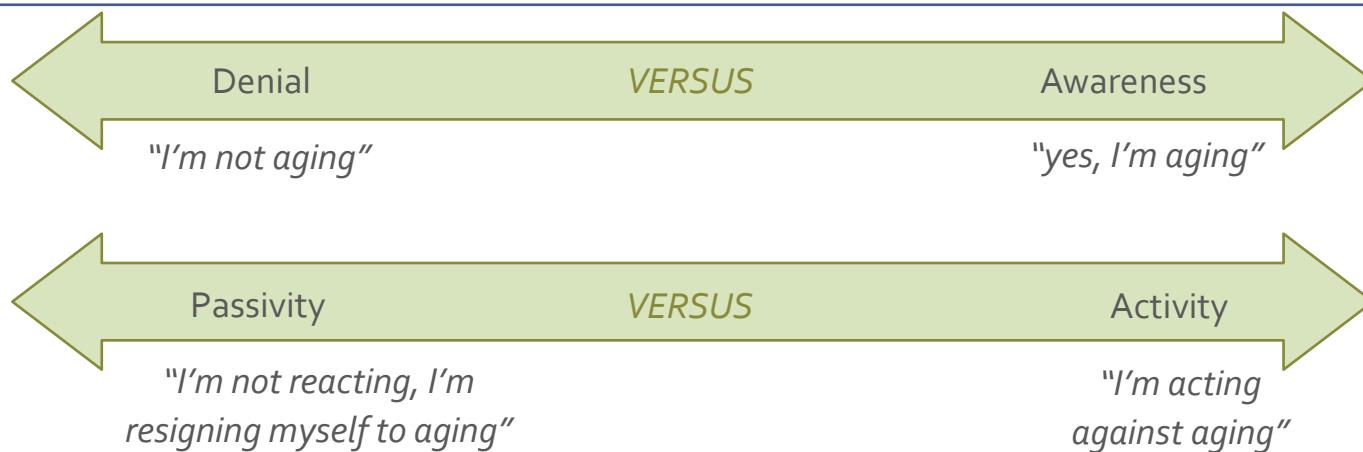
"in a sprint, I can hold my own for the first 50 meters, but the kids soon realized that after that, I would no longer be able to keep up"

Insights

5

Different coping strategies are employed as a way of controlling, mastering, tolerating, even diminishing the impact of aging on the body.

- During this study, we have been able to uncover different strategies for coping with the aging body. Men must find a way to accept the inevitable, in particular the shift of the field of performance, where they see themselves: the physical aging of the body is like a terrifying amputation, cutting off the identity of the man himself. It is really only the use of coping strategies that allow men to live with, and see this loss imposed upon them in a positive light.
 - The different strategies form around the following mechanisms provoked, or even requested by the confrontation with the physical aging of the body:

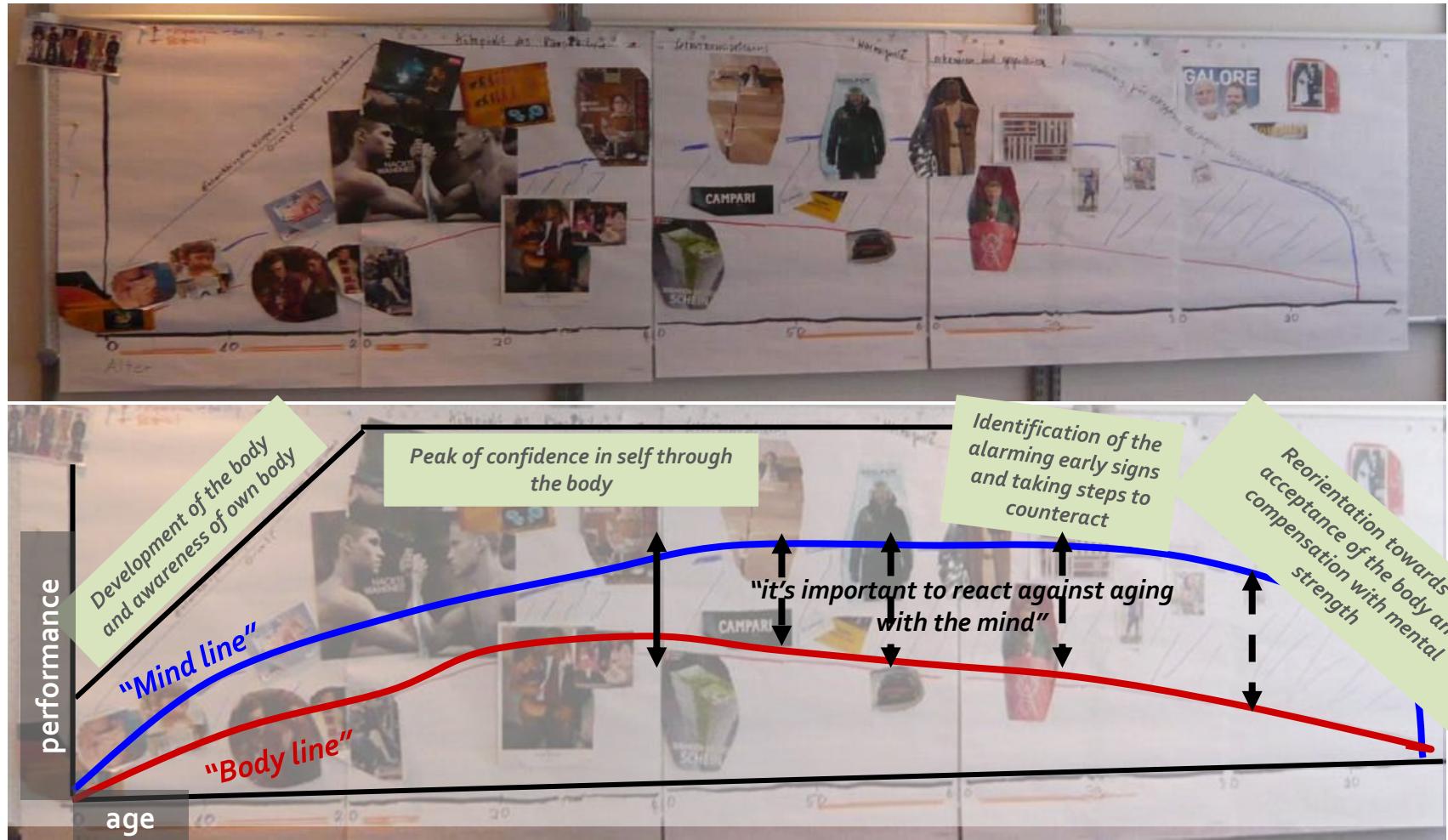




Mental Images of Aging

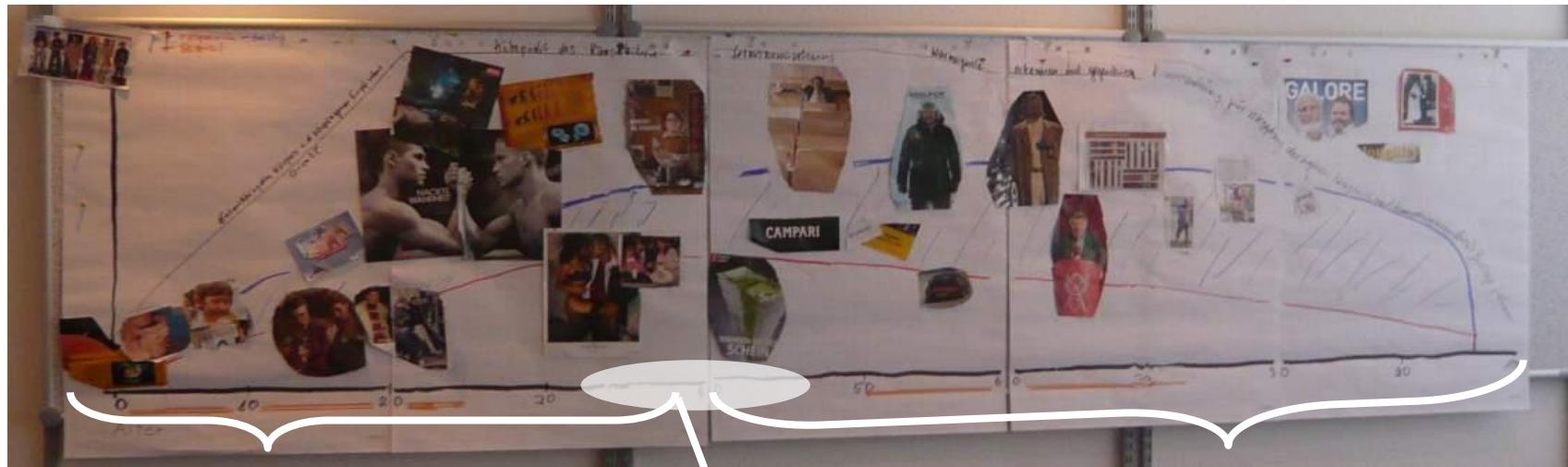
Mental Images

Collage about men's bodies and the changes and transformations they undergo



Mental Images of Aging

Mental images associated with the different phases of life



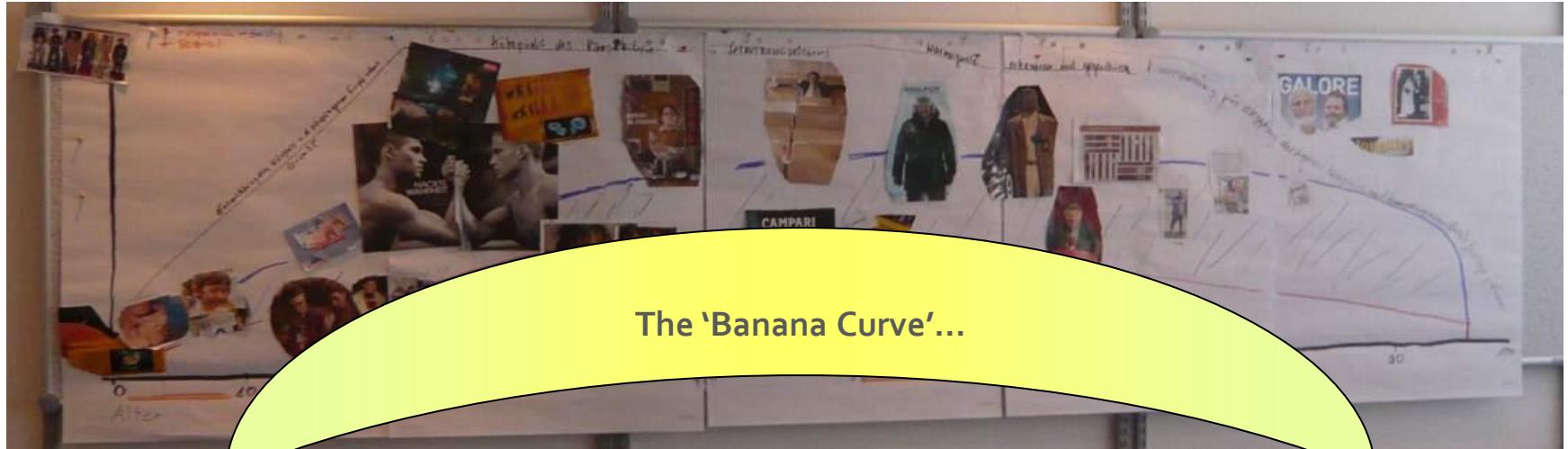
Youth remains positive and linear on a global level:
Men would like to be born as adult men... and die in a man's body. A body, then, would perform well over the course of an entire lifetime, socially, privately, and professionally...

Average age of the participants:
25 – 50 years old
"between 25 and 40, the body does not really change"

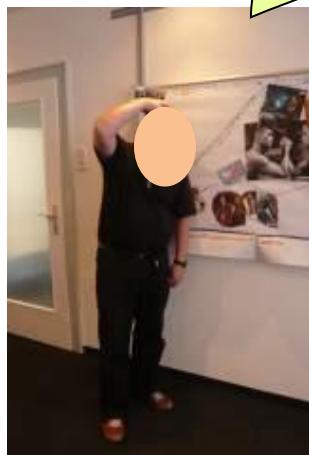
An ever expanding vision emerges as time goes on. The images chosen become increasingly distant from the physical body (wasn't the task to show the changes the body undergoes?) and replaced by compensating status symbols (cigars, sports cars, money...). The stiffness begins to make an appearance, and the images increasingly begin to take the form of coffins.

Mental Images of Aging

The mimic portrayal of the different phases of life



The 'Banana Curve'...



Orientation



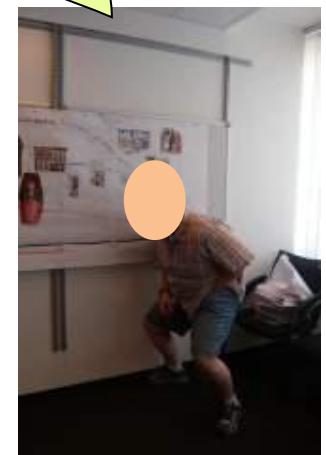
Competition



Self Confidence



Self Awareness



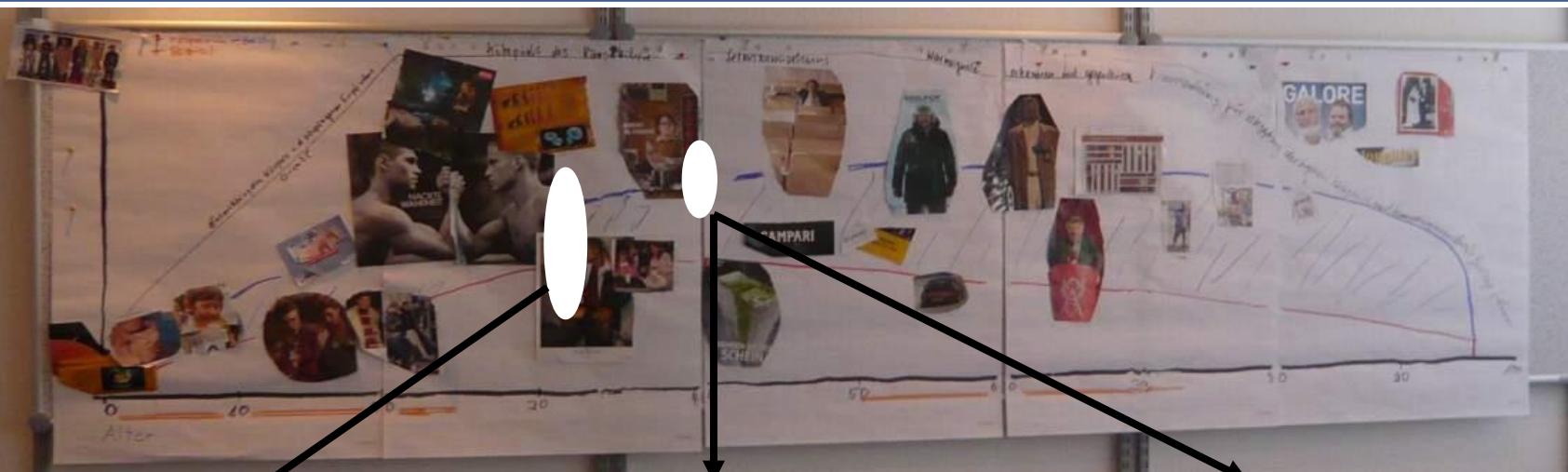
Decline

Mental Images of Aging

Key Moments

With the appearance of the first signs of “wear and tear” associated with aging, we noticed a separation of the body and mind lines. As the separation becomes wider and wider, the mind allows compensation for the deterioration of the body. This separation of the lines symbolises the need to compensate for the loss of the physical performance in order to maintain self esteem.

“the development of the mind does not stop/ there is really nothing that can be done against the deterioration of the body, but we can do something against the deterioration of the mind”



“the mind line rises as the body line descends”

“in the past, we could go all night long. Now that is not longer the case”

“at age 40, we are so self confident, that we think that nothing could ever happen to us, then we discover our limits/ we are no longer able to make muscle as fast”

Mental Images of Aging

Construction Areas of the Images of Self during Aging



At the height of physical strength, the body is used as a tool to impose oneself into the heart of society:

"until we are 25, we earn points, we get bigger, stronger, we feel good, we become adults, we are more competitive, high performing"

After a certain age (in the 40s), aging and its symptoms begin to affect men. Amputated by the loss which is imposing itself, men compensate and interpret these signs as a way of maintaining control. Finally, he allows himself pleasures reserved for "his age":

"this is the phase when men feel like they need to lengthen their penises [...] we realize we are not as potent [...] that we don't have the same physical confidence and that all of that is in the past because the era of ascension is over [...] we concentrate on other things so we do not see our hair turn grey [...] it's the age when we do crazy things... motorcycle licenses, bungee jumping [...] the midlife crisis, it's like the menopause in women, the oops, I might have missed out on something"

The last phase is the most traumatising. It is characterised by loss on all levels. This phase often coincides with retirement, the symbolic end of personal and social performance. Compensation is thus not as easy, and men must learn to reorient themselves, to perform in a different way.

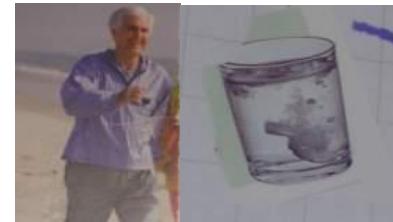
Mental Images of Aging

Aging in brief...

Loss of...



Fear of...



Compensation via...



Performance Strength



Solitude, Illness,
Dependence



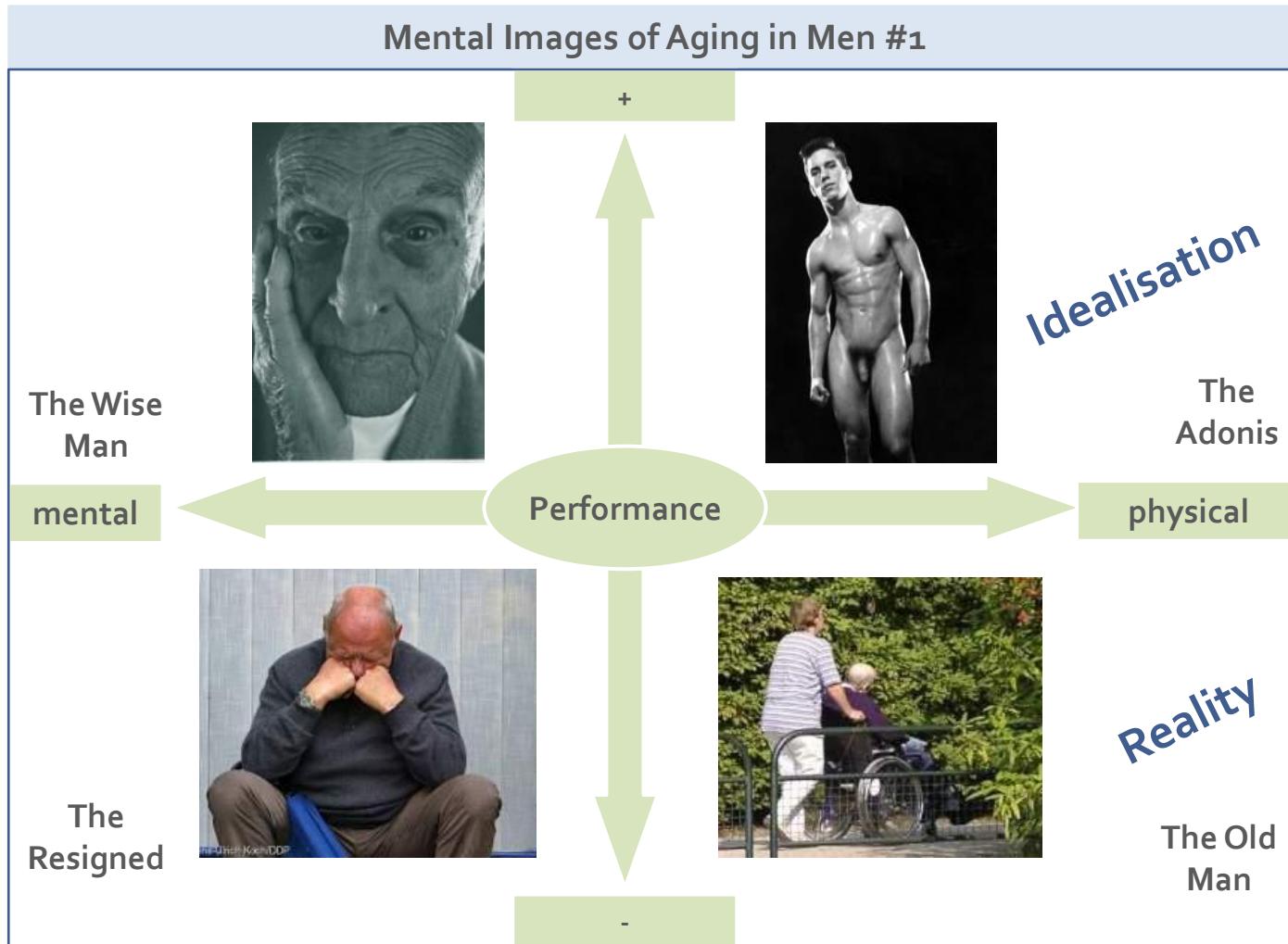
Death

Objects implying increase
in status or performance
Selfish pleasure

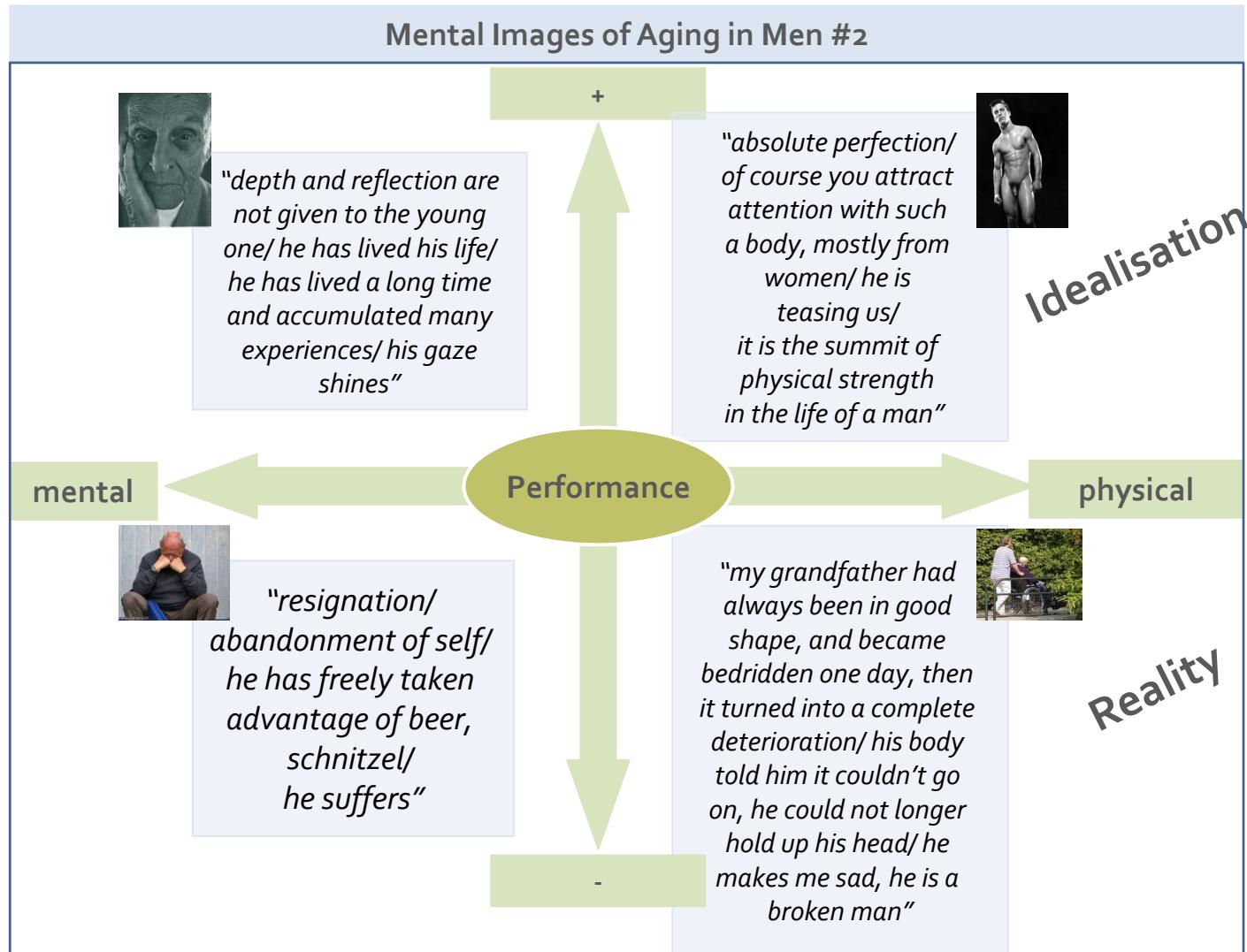


In order to understand this **decoding** of aging, it is important to take a detour to explore the mental images of aging in our culture.

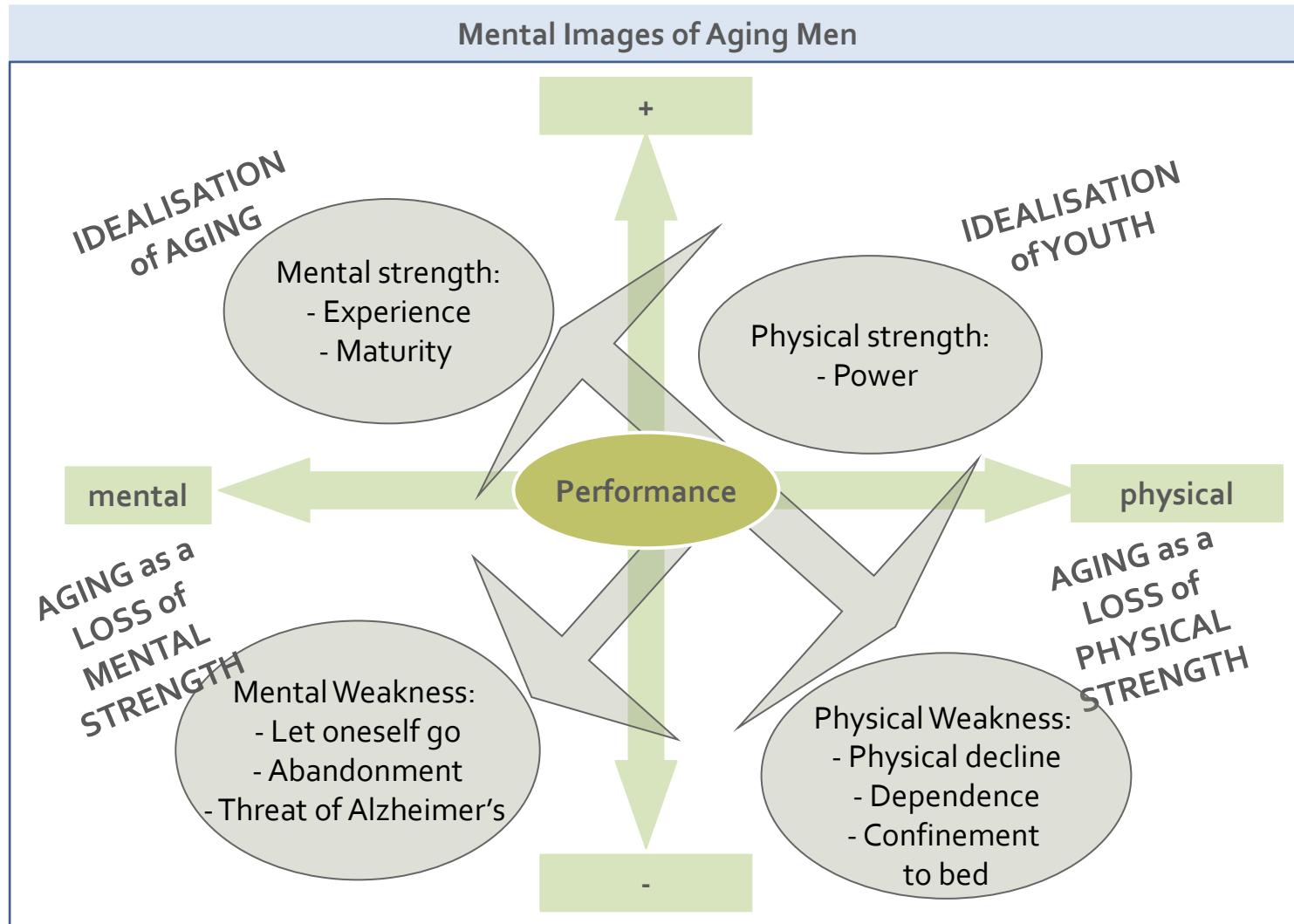
Mental Images of Aging



Mental Images of Aging

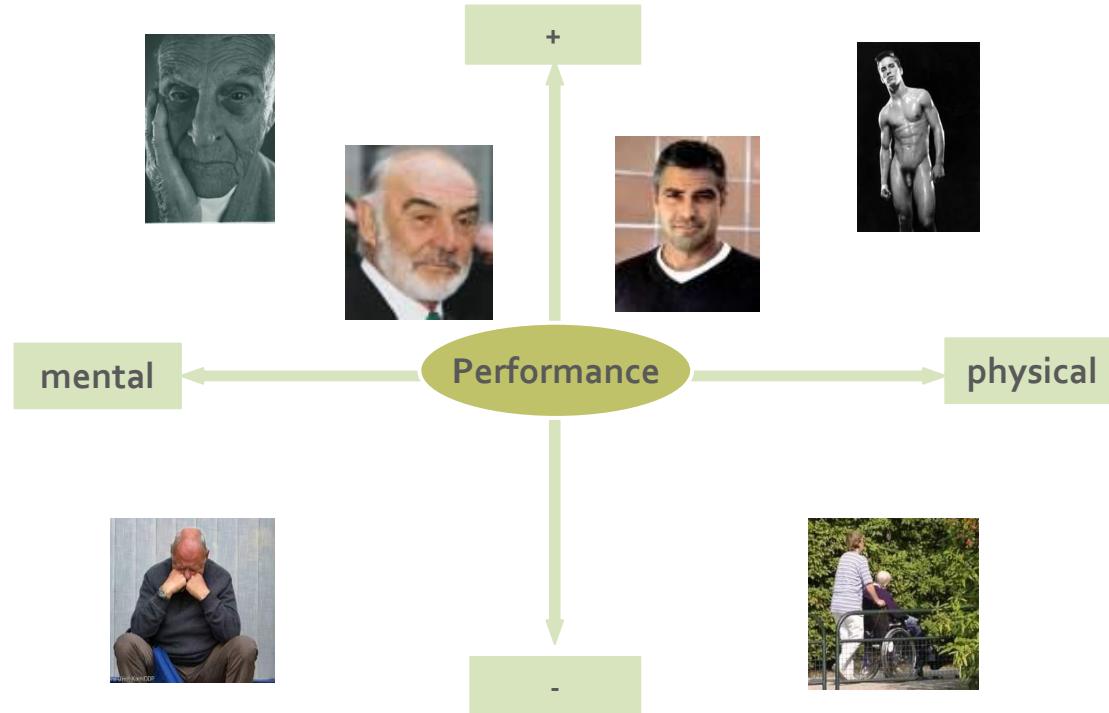


Mental Images of Aging



Mental Images of Aging

Certain exceptions motivate



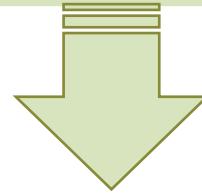
Sean Connery and George Clooney symbolise aging in its ideal form. They manage to unite the strengths of both ages: the physical strength of youth and the mental strength reserved to experienced men. The successful span between physical and mental vitality has raised them to the level of being a “sex symbol” for men.

“ he (George Clooney) is funny, cool and has the rakish smile of a young wolf, but also a certain maturity”

Mental Images of Aging

The Concomitant Signs of Aging

Devaluating signs



- Eyeglasses
- Hairpiece
- Cane and walkers
- Hearing aid
- Dentures
- Wheelchair

...

Valuating signs



Luxury items and ostentatious signs of wealth / success / performance:

- Cigars
- Sports Car

...

Compensation via the principle:
"the shinier the lacquer, the more wrinkled the bugger"



Mental Images of Aging

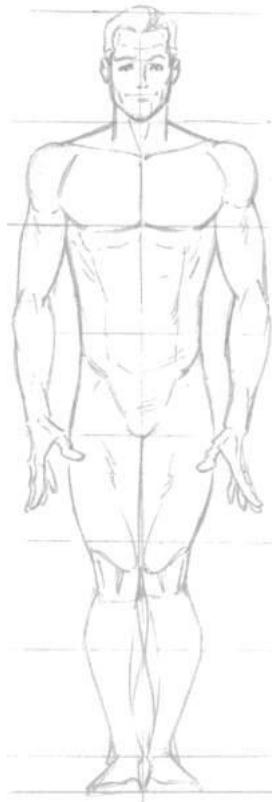
An inventory: Signs of Aging



Hair thins
and turns grey
The Forehead creases
Tear sacs and wrinkles around the eyes
The chin become a double chin
Age spots appear on the skin and become more numerous
Pores remain dilated
“Migration” of the hair growth (nose, ears...)
The scalp becomes more prominent
From six-pack to beer belly
The hips build up
The bottom yields to gravity
The body bents
The chest closes in...
Desire reduces and becomes more infrequent
Vital energy diminishes
The eye loses its gleam – the look is less determined
Incontinence, prostate, erectile dysfunction,
arthralgia, disturbance of memory...

Mental Images of Aging

What kind of impact does this have on men?



Impairment
of self image – FACE

Impairment
of self image –
BODY

Impairment
of self image –
FITNESS

Less problematic

Wrinkles are like scars proving
that the man has lived a life...

Marks as...
credit, medals,
patina

Problematic

New silhouette
New body scheme
→ Reorientation

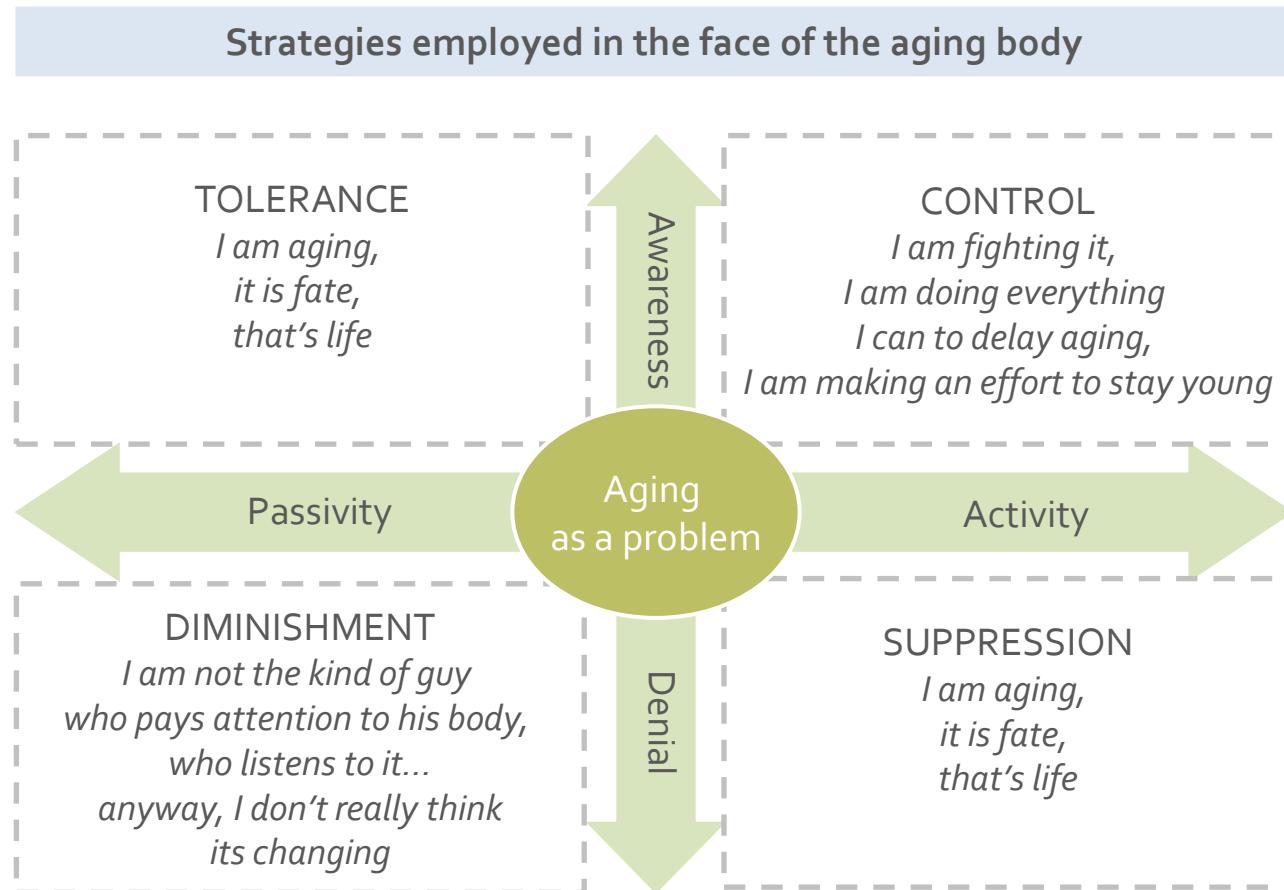
Very problematic

Loss of elasticity
Loss of mobility
... petrifaction



Typology

Typology



Typology

Typology of Men and their relationship with their aging bodies



Superman



Prince Charming



Vanity Smurf



Richelieu



Bidoche

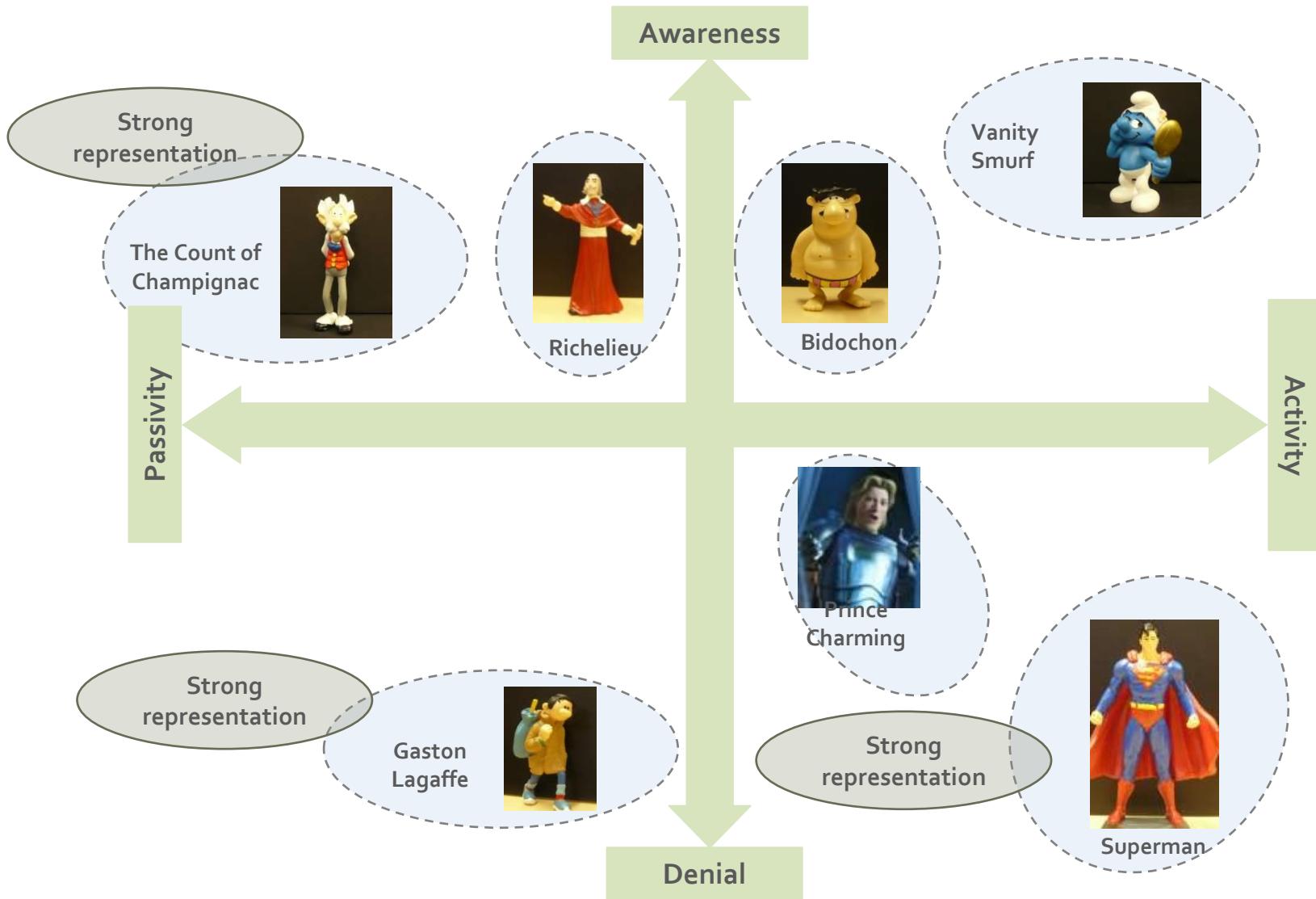


The Count of Champignac

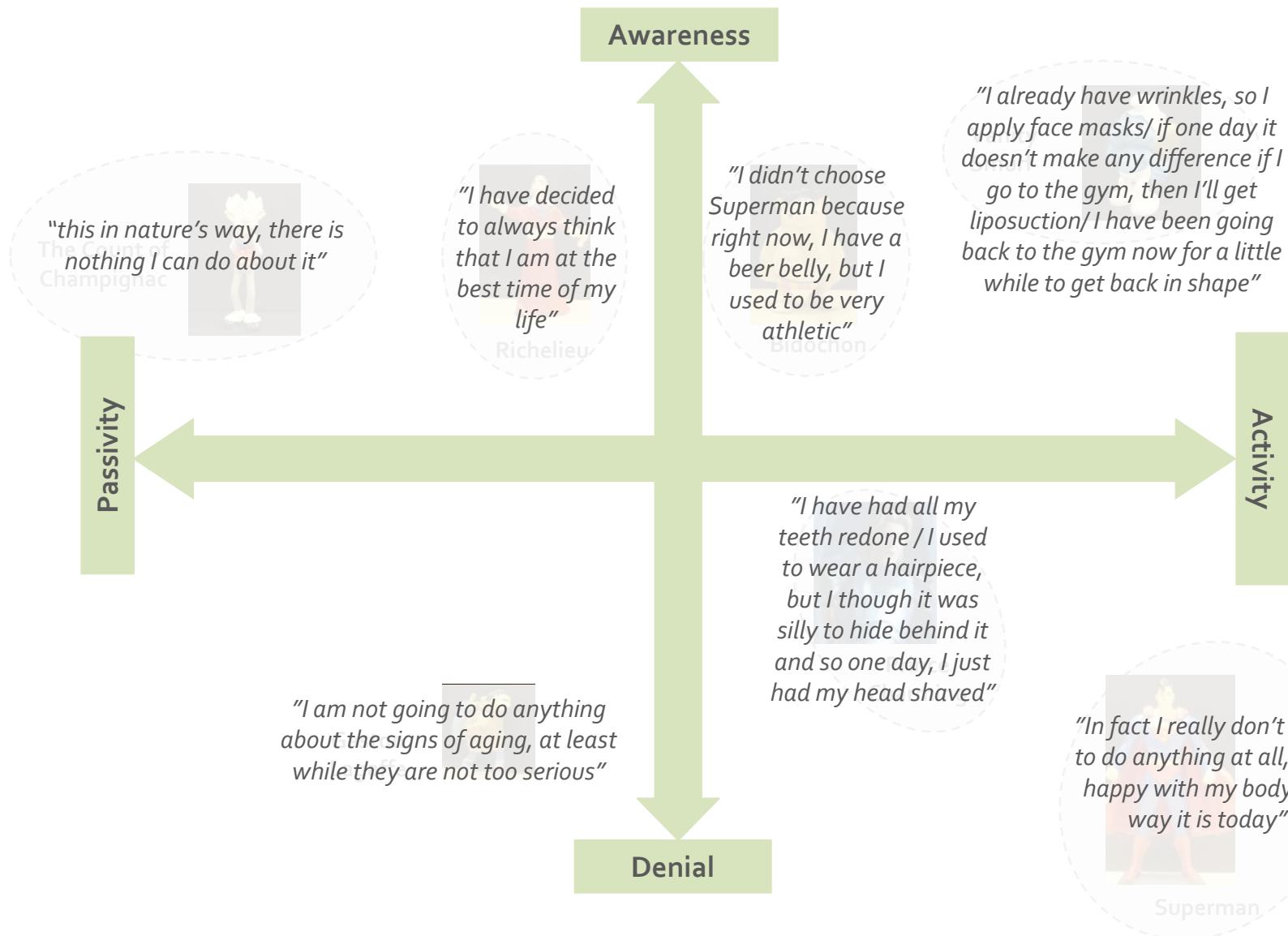


Gaston Lagaffe

Typology



Typology



Typology: Superman – “straight ahead”



There are a lot of Supermans. Superman is characterised by his active fight against aging, even if he is not aware of it.

- ▶ Even though he is engaged in active combat against the appearance of the signs of aging (primarily through sports), he does not admit his battle. How could he – this would mean to admit that he is aging, that he can no longer perform the way he used to.
 - *“I have to say, that physically, I haven’t really changed for the last 20 years (Andreas – 40)/ I have a lot of hair and I don’t think I’m going to lose it/ I no longer have a problem with hair loss – I used to wear a hairpiece, but now you can see I just shave my head!”*
- ▶ Superman is strong and his physical appearance should display this strength. He enjoys competing with younger men in order to prove to himself that he is still in the race – still young.
 - *“being young is more fun/ I play tennis with younger people, I’m rarely with men my own age”*
- ▶ For him, aging ties back to the way of life (smoking, lack of physical activity, poor eating habits), therefore, he persuades himself that he can control to what degree his body ages.
 - *“I’m pleased to see that my way of life has no repercussions, since I can still count myself among the young athletically/ I have a little bit of a belly now, because I don’t work out as often”*
- ▶ The ability to seduce women and satisfy them sexually also serves to assure him of his youth and therefore of his physical performance. For those more faithful men, they will find another material or physical release, but it will always concern performance and provide some kind of a challenge.

Typology: Prince Charming – “Body Modification” SÉISMO



Prince Charming is to be understood as a sub group of Superman. He is nevertheless motivated by the maintenance of visible youth of his body, rather than by performance.

- ▶ It is less athletics which allow him to delay aging. Prince Charming clings to restorative cosmetics to repair the visible signs of aging.
 - *"I didn't have a problem with balding, but I still wore a hairpiece when I worked with the Army; not some cheap thing, but rather of very high quality [...] I'm happier with hair/ I want to have the sacs under my eyes removed by laser, that's not plastic surgery, they threat the sacs with lasers"*
- ▶ Prince Charming remains in denial even while he focuses his attention on his body. He will never admit that the changes he sees are the result of aging – according to him, they are genetic.
- ▶ His primary motivation: look young, younger than his age, no matter the cost.
 - *"I shaved my beard, because having a beard made me look old/ the sacs under my eyes are so big that you would think I had been up all night; that's is really why I wear sunglasses – they hide my eyes"*

Typology: Gaston Lagaffe – “happy-go-lucky”



Gaston Lagaffe refuses to come face to face with his own physical aging.
He does not seem at all concerned by his age – but appearances are often deceiving...

- ▶ When it comes to talking about his age, Gaston Lagaffe is not very talkative, very simply put, because he avoids it.
 - *"I have never really thought about it/as far as age related illness is concerned, I really don't see anything/male menopause, no idea, I would have to guess"*
- ▶ When it comes to picturing the signs of aging, Gaston says there is nothing he would do about it.
 - *"the loss of physical strength, that's just part of getting old, you just have to get used to it/the drive to reproduce starts to decrease once a man reaches 50, yeah, at that point, it's OK"*
- ▶ The confrontation with aging is painful when it happens and leads to the valorisation of maturity achieved with age as a counterweight to physical aging.
 - *"you must let nature take its course, I don't think I would do anything to improve the situation, there are certainly other things (instead of physical aging) which play a role/ when I'm 80, I'll know more than at 40"*

Typology: Stroumpf Coquet – “Obsession with Beauty” SÉISSMO



Vanity Smurf is aware of his aging and watches himself to detect and fight the signs of time. He is part of the generation which grew up with new and multiple new aesthetic references to masculinity (culture of homosexuality, culture of metrosexuality, feminisation of the relation with the body...)

- ▶ **Vanity Smurf recognises the visual signs of aging and does not try to excuse or deny them.**
 - *“the metabolism slows down between 25-28, after that, we begin to notice that we age...the face gets a few wrinkles and the hands age as well/I regularly use a cosmetic mask on my face”*
- ▶ **Even though he fears the aging of his own body, he does not repress his worries, but rather tries to outsmart them by taking preventive steps against the appearance of these signs (and to overcome them). His tricks are the gym to work the body shape, and cosmetics, even plastic surgery.**
 - *“it's a decay, a normal decay, and there is nothing we can do to stop it/of course, we take care to use personal care products/if needed, I would get Botox injections”*
- ▶ **A youthful appearance is of paramount importance for this type. Vanity Smurf sees himself in constant competition with the other males, and wants to look the best.**
 - *“when I look at other men, I think I look pretty good for 33/ my brother, for example, is 5 years younger than I, but looks 10 years older/ one feels good at the gym, it helps to gain self confidence”*



Typology: Stroumpf Coquet – “Obsession with Beauty” SÉISSMO



Richelieu knows that he is aging, but instead of fighting it, he adapts and makes each stage of life his best. He thus transcends more easily the physical losses.

- ▶ Richelieu admits the signs of aging and does not deny them.
 - *“physicality has its limits, youth has its limits, and mobility has its limits/for me, aging means regular weight gain”*
- ▶ He is not completely inactive when it comes to aging, but he is not enslaved to the idea of youth. Aging is not something lived solely on a negative basis and because this type is motivated by personal development, particularly mental, accumulation of experience and increase in maturity. Time is an ally in this quest.
 - *“for me, the intellectual dimension is more important than the athletic, that is for certain/ what is important to me is the process of maturation and not the aging of the physical body which, in my eyes, is not particularly dramatic”*
- ▶ In some ways, he is opportunistic, since he manages to see only the positive aspect of each stage of life. Such a strong attachment to the present moment represents for him a way to let the past become the past, the future remain the future, without regret for the body of yesteryear, without concern for the body of tomorrow.
 - *“for me, the most beautiful moment of my life is always right now/ I have never felt as well as I do today”*
- ▶ The greatest threat associated with aging is the loss of mental strength and the ability to think.
 - *“the biggest problem for me is that occasionally, my memory fails as well as my speed of thought/ I am tired more often, and I feel an undeniable need to rest”*

Typology: Bidochon – “Primacy of Derision”



Bidochon is similar to Richelieu in his basic attitude towards aging, except that he uses humour to overcome and diminish the process. They both place value on the gain of personal experience thanks to aging: for Richelieu it is the increase in intelligence and maturity, while for Bidochon it is the experience, the confidence and the hindsight.

- ▶ **Bidochon knows that time leaves its traces with every passing day ...**
 - *"I always take things lightly, I laugh at everything, of course, I could have chosen Superman to represent me, but I stopped working out and now I have a belly"*
- ▶ **As aging is not projection anymore but already reality for him, Bidochon uses humour and irony in confronting the signs of aging in his own body.**
 - *"my daughter needs half the time I do to write an essay, it's really at 50 when things start to get downhill [...] you have to realise it and develop another relationship with your body, with a different kind of awareness/as long as you're not dead, you're old/ look, you poor little devil/ even if you shrink, it's still not too serious"*

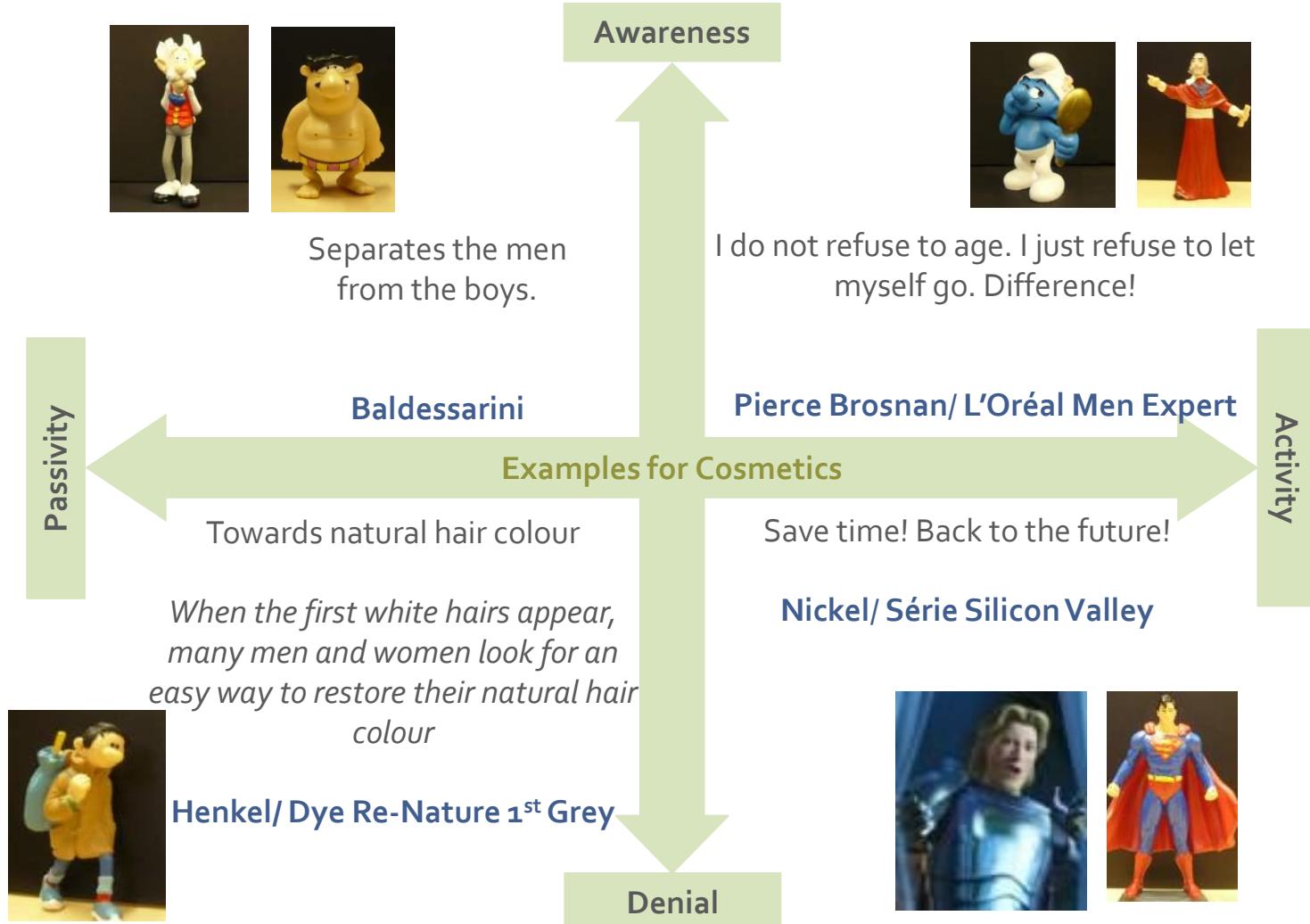
Typology: The Count of Champignac – “Wisdom” SÉISSMO



The Count of Champignac has reached a certain age and is comfortable with his state of physical decay. He has left the “process” behind and accepted his “state” (to be mortal). He exudes a certain serenity.

- ▶ The Count of Champignac is beyond the process of aging. Free to a certain extend, since he is already old, it is more important to him to age gracefully. He accepts his age and sees it as strength.
 - *“one day or another, we will all look like old men, body building is no longer of any use, and we see other more natural criteria for beauty/ every body, young or old, is unique, that is how we were conceived”*
- ▶ To age implies a certain intellectual benefit: good judgement, lessons learned, maturity, experience. This is a noble benefit that transcends the loss of physical strength, of power.
 - *“such an expressive face as on this old man, I personally find more aesthetically pleasing than the well defined muscles on a body”*
- ▶ He strives to remain dignified in his old age, in his appearance; in his bearing... he tries not to bend his back under the passing time and the difficulties that accumulate over the course of a lifetime. He faces the solitude of his age and his unavoidable death with dignity.
 - *“the wheel chair is a terminus – it’s not worth discussing/ never forget that, above all, you are a human being”*

Typology: Examples of adapted discourses





3. Implications: Which Questions to Ask

To better talk to men implies...

► To adapt the semantic discourses

- **Present performance challenges:** Men like challenge, the ability to overcome – present them new hand motions or new reflexes as obstacles to be overcome (example: tame the new fully automatic coffee machine that will enable them to make the most appealing and appreciated cappuccino in their friend group). and the graphic ones
- **Employ a game or derision:** This allows the removal of the drama (and addresses the need to trivialise) but also gives them the impression that they are in control of the sentiments in play, and enables them to laugh about them (example: Nickel's skin care products "morning after" or "hang over").
- **Avoid placing aging in a temporal axis, but rather in a geographical context:** Be aware that men are sensitive about their area of influence, the territory they can cover (example: talking about disability or dependence could imply more than just retirement or old age).

► and the graphic ones

- **(Ab)Use pictograms:** symbols of the conquering hero, pleasure for the one who can decrypt/decode... and who knows when to stop talking and start acting.

Implications

To better talk to men implies...

- ▶ also (most importantly), to transmit the messages subtlety through the other elements of the marketing mix



Der neue Tiguan.
Wild, wenn Sie ihn lassen.
The new Tiguan.
Wild, if you let it be.

- **High tech and masculine packaging:** Allow precise, simple and quick dosages; made of original, high quality materials, with colours tending towards the cooler end of the spectrum; contents that are more liquid than creamy, that are absorbed rather than caked on, and that disappear in the “blink of an eye”; dispensers that are activated by a “push” mechanism which imply a certain ingenuity.
- **Participatory distribution channel:** Treasure hunt with a well guided path (excellent signage is important to give the customer the impression that he is in charge of the navigation!), give them magnifying sunglasses to make the print on the labels easier to read, rest areas for guys (car and driver magazines, espresso bars)...
- **Communication:** Men like to build, convince, and argue... and are susceptible to ads that dare them to watch (implying a certain vague belligerence) and deliver proof.

Thanks to the whole team:

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and to reinvest into this research.