CHECKLIST

Nobuyoshi Araki, Japanese, born 1940
Untitled, Kinbaku (Bondage), negative 1998; print 2005
Gelatin silver print

Otto Dix, German, 1891–1969
Matrose und Mädchen (Sailor and Prostitute), 1923
Four-color lithograph on wove paper
Purchased through the Robert J. Strasenburgh II 1942 Fund; 2006.14

François Edmond Fortier, French, 1862–1928
Afrique Occidentale—Jeunes Femmes Arabes (Western Africa—Young Arab Women), about 1900–1906
Photo offset lithograph
Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; 2006.18.6

Guerrilla Girls, American, founded in 1985
Do Women Have to Be Naked?, 1989
Offset lithograph
Purchased through the Anonymous Fund #144; 2006.83.7

Mel Ramos, American, born 1935
Manet’s Olympia, 1974
Color collotype on wove paper
Gift of Ernesto Ostheimer; PR.980.286.1

Francois Vanloo, French, 1708–1732
Reclining Female Nude, 1727–32
Oil on canvas
Purchased through the Mrs. Harvey P. Hood W’18 Fund; P.988.30

Unknown photographer;
Publisher: J. S. Nahon, Paris
Au Harem, Tanger (In the Harem, Tangiers), about 1910
Photo offset lithograph postcard
Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; 2006.18.17

Unknown photographer;
Publisher: Collection Idéale P. S. (P. Satragno), Algeria
Mauresque couchée (Reclining Moorish Woman), 1906
Photo offset lithograph postcard
Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; 2006.18.16

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Designed by Christina Nadeau
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from tradition to convey new messages through the undressed female
established, there has been space for artists to adapt the nude and deviate
more recently, since a canon of the reclining female nude has been well
and being seen shared solely between the viewer and the nude. But
the female nude has largely been scopophilic: for the pleasure in looking.
Because
implied. The nude, on the other hand, is comfortable; it is a confident
state of being without clothes in which there is a sort of embarrassment
explained the distinction between nakedness and nudity, the former is a
common subjects in Western art. As art historian Kenneth Clark
Venus, Odalisque, Olympia, goddess, lover, prostitute—the reclining
female nude has many names and many faces and is one of the most
common subjects in Western art. As art historian Kenneth Clark
explained the distinction between nakedness and nudity, the former is a
state of being without clothes in which there is a sort of embarrassment
implied. The nude, on the other hand, is comfortable; it is a confident
body and an aesthetic object on display for the viewer’s gaze. Because
defined and given special status. Women and men were considered
objects of art, beginning with the Venus of Willendorf of about 28,000–25,000
BCE. But, the earliest known reclining nude was Giorgione’s The Sleeping
Venus, painted in 1510. In this work, the reclining female nude is shown as a
sensual goddess, a timeless, exquisite ideal. Her recumbent body is
revealed for the male viewer’s consumption and enjoyment. The female
nude also appears in figurative studies by artists in European academies
who worked from naked models to learn how to draw and paint the human
body. François Vanloo’s Reclining Nude Female, 1727–32, belongs to
this tradition. His passive Rococo figure does not look at us, so we are
free to look without being confronted by her gaze. Vanloo’s painting is
also a beautiful study of the human form, and scholars have speculated that
Vanloo used this painting as practice for accurately representing human
anatomy. The work’s purpose is both practical and pleasurable.

While many nudes depicted European women, nudity was not
typically viewed as a part of Europeans’ natural state, and such images
might be deemed inappropriate. Western nudes were therefore presented as
goddesses or prostitutes. But as Europeans colonized and interacted with
what was considered the Orient (the Middle East, Asia, and Northern Africa), artists found a new way of depicting the female body that sidestepped social taboos regarding nudity and European
women. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Europeans
fetishized Eastern cultures; they saw these places as exotic, primitive,
and mysterious. Westerners considered “Oriental” cultures, often
countered through tourist destinations that emphasized stereotypes,
to be less civilized than their European counterparts. One aspect of these
“inferior” cultures was their supposedly looser morals surrounding
women’s modesty and sexuality; women in these regions were seen as
more sexually available. This attitude informs the postcard Mauresque
couchée (Reclining Moorish Woman), from around 1900–25, in which the
Orientalized female nude is already reduced to a tourist attraction. She is
dorning with exotic fabrics and accessories, and her breasts are exposed, which
would be inappropriate for a European woman of status. Her gaze
into the distance is common among classical European nudes, however,
and the viewer has the same visual access to her female nude as he
might to a European counterpart. But in the context of Eastern culture as
imagined by Western artists, this woman’s lack of clothes is seen as
more acceptable, rather than taboo. Her status as a North African or Middle
Eastern woman subject to colonial rule emphasizes her role as a passive
object for the viewer’s pleasure. In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the nude
was transformed again: the Guerrilla Girls politicize the nude, and Nobuyoshi
Araki does more with the nude’s sexuality. In Do Women Have to Be Naked?, the Guerrilla Girls appropriate a revered Romantic painting and alter it to address gender inequality in art. Araki, in his Kinbaku series,
trades to show the sexual agency of the nude woman and uses bondage to
heighten the eroticism of the subject.

Sixty years later, Otto Dix extends the depiction of the reclining
female nude as a prostitute beyond Manet’s Olympia. In Matrose und
Mädchen (Sailor and Prostitute), 1923, Dix’s nude is also a prostitute, as
noted in the title, but she does not appear alone. She is being pawed
and leered at by a male customer. Dix created this work at the end of the
Weimar Republic in Germany (1919–1933). In the aftermath of the First
World War there was political and social unrest, and the country saw
a rise in prostitution. Dix wanted his art to reflect the grittiness of real life,
so his characters are depicted in muddy colors, purposely bleak and
unattractive. Rather than hint at sensuality, this image frankly
acknowledges the act of sex and the woman’s profession. Her stockings
highlight her nakedness, and the way the sailor grabs at her signals the
beginning of a sexual encounter. Dix takes the traditionally elevated and
refined reclining female nude and reduces her to a low-class prostitute,
emphasizing the crudeness of her position and highlighting her role as an
object for sex, not just for the gaze.

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