

FRESH PERSPECTIVES *on the Permanent Collection from* DARTMOUTH'S STUDENTS

A SPACE *for* DIALOGUE

CHECKLIST

Nobuyoshi Araki, Japanese, born 1940
Untitled, Kinbaku (Bondage), negative 1998; print 2005
Gelatin silver print
Purchased through the Anonymous Fund #144; Selected by participants in the seminar "Museum Collecting 101": Zachary P. Dorner, Class of 2008, Claire M. Dunning, Class of 2008, Celeste Griffin-Churchill, Class of 2007, Kathryn J. Hagy, Class of 2008, Gina Lee, Class of 2008, Lisa Moon, Class of 2008, Marissa A. Slany, Class of 2008, and Sherry S. Zhao, Class of 2007; 2007.35

Otto Dix, German, 1891–1969
Matrose und Mädchen (Sailor and Prostitute), 1923
Four-color lithograph on wove paper
Purchased through the Robert J. Strassenbruch 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 colotype on wove paper
Gift of Ernesto Ostheimer; PR.980.286.1

François 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

Araki, Nobuyoshi. *Tokyo Nostalgia*. Milan: Photology, 1998.

Araki, Nobuyoshi, and Jérôme Sans. *Araki*. Hong Kong: Taschen, 2007.

Bohm-Duchen, Monica. *The Nude*. London: Scala Books, 1992.

Guerrilla Girls website, <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/>.

Jacobson, Ken. *Odalisques & Arabesques: Orientalist Photography 1839–1925*. London: Quaritch, 2007.

Jones, Harvey. *Mel Ramos: Paintings, 1959–1977: The Oakland Museum, Art Special Gallery, September 20–November 13, 1977*. Oakland, Calif.: The Museum, 1977.

Leppert, Richard D. *The Nude: The Cultural Rhetoric of the Body in the Art of Western Modernity*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2007.

Letze, Otto. *Mel Ramos: 50 Years of Pop Art*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010.

Löffler, Fritz, and Otto Dix. *Otto Dix, Life and Work*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982.

Nead, Lynda. *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Ramos, Mel, Carl Belz, and Rose Art Museum. *Mel Ramos: A Twenty Year Survey, April 13–May 16, 1980*. Waltham, Mass.: Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, 1980.

HOOD
MUSEUM OF ART
www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu

A Space for Dialogue, founded with support from the Class of 1948, is made possible with generous endowments from the Class of 1967, Bonnie and Richard Reiss Jr. '66, and Pamela J. Joyner '79.

Designed by Christina Nadeau
© 2015 by the Trustees of Dartmouth College



Otto Dix, *Matrose und Mädchen (Sailor and Prostitute)*, 1923, four-color lithograph on wove paper. Purchased through the Robert J. Strassenbruch II 1942 Fund; 2006.14
© 2015 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

GODDESSES, MODELS, AND PROSTITUTES

An Exploration of the Reclining Female Nude



François Vanloo, *Reclining Female Nude*, about 1727–32, oil on canvas. Purchased through the Mrs. Harvey P. Hood W'18 Fund; P.988.30

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 male artists have dominated throughout the history of art, the function of the female nude has largely been scopophilic: for the pleasure in looking. Woman is image, presented for the enjoyment of the active male viewer.

In early iterations of this tradition, the reclining female nude is passive, idealized, and beautiful. She is usually an anonymous woman or generic goddess. She is typically depicted alone, the intimacy of looking and being seen shared solely between the viewer and the nude. But more recently, since a canon of the reclining female nude has been well established, there has been space for artists to adapt the nude and deviate from tradition to convey new messages through the undressed female

form. This exhibition examines some of these later incarnations of the reclining female nude.

The female nude has been a common theme almost since the birth 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 figural 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 then referred to as 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 encountered 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 adorned 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 this 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 typical, 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.

An early notable deviation from the tradition of the passive and elegant reclining female nude is Edouard Manet's *Olympia* of 1863. During this time in Paris, the Salon and the French Academie des Beaux-

Arts dictated art practices, and set strict guidelines for "good" art. The Salon, founded in 1667, was the official art exhibition of the Academie, where nudes must be depicted as idealized, anonymous goddess types in order to be accepted. And, much like Vanloo's *Venus*, the careful study and reproduction of human anatomy was emphasized. But Manet's nude rejected these conventions. Exhibited at the 1865 Salon, *Olympia* shocked the Parisian art world. The composition is borrowed from Titian's 1538 *Venus of Urbino*. But unlike the Venuses of the Old Masters, Olympia is not a goddess, but a prostitute, indicated by her accessories and the shawl on which she lies, symbols of wealth and sensuality. (Olympia was also a name commonly used by prostitutes in nineteenth-century Paris.) Rather than being a passive recipient of the viewer's gaze, Olympia defiantly looks directly at the viewer. She is not painted in a Salon-approved manner; the colors are flat, and purposely not anatomically accurate. Manet debased the idealized and renowned female nude, and left space for other artists to challenge and adapt 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 bloated 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.

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, tries to show the sexual agency of the nude woman and uses bondage to heighten the eroticism of the subject.

Olivia Field '15, Kathryn Conroy Intern



Unknown photographer, *Mauresque Couchée* (*Reclining Moorish Woman*), 1913, photo offset lithograph postcard. Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; 2006.18.16