Information Sheet

THE NAKED MAN

26 October 2012 to 17 February 2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Facts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Text</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Texts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Booklet</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Images</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exhibition Facts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exhibition Title</strong></td>
<td>THE NAKED MAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exhibition Period</strong></td>
<td>26 October 2012 to 17 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening</strong></td>
<td>Thursday, 25 October 2012, 7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Press Conference</strong></td>
<td>Wednesday, 24 October 2012, 10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venue</strong></td>
<td>LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz, whole first floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curators</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Sabine Fellner, Dr. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Dir. Stella Rollig</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Exhibits</strong></td>
<td>More than 300 exhibits – loaned works from the USA and all over Europe, as well as more than sixty works from the museum’s own holdings – by over 200 artists form 12 chapters: Nude, Me, Age, Boy, Adam, Gay, Undressed, Pain, Pose, Biceps, Penis and Authority.</td>
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<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>The exhibition developed in LENTOS will be shown in an adapted form from 21 March to 30 June 2013 in the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest.</td>
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<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>The exhibition is supported by Linz AG, Oberbank, Oberösterreichische Versicherung, Sparkasse Oberösterreich, Wiener Städtische Versicherung and voestalpine.</td>
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Exhibition Booklet is available in german and english. Edited and texts by: Dr. Dunja Schneider, Nina Kirsch

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Opening Hours Tue–Sun 10am to 6pm, Thur 10am to 9pm, Mon closed
The LENTOS is closed on 24 and 25 December as well as on 1 January. On the 31 December it is open form 10am–4pm.

Admission € 6,50, concessions € 4,50 (valid until 31.12.2012)

Press Contact Nina Kirsch, Tel. +43(0)732/7070-3603, nina.kirsch@lentos.at

Available at the press conference:
Stella Rollig, Direstor LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz and Curator
Dr. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Curator
Dr. Sabine Fellner, Curator
The naked man is invisible. Does the male body have nothing to say to us? On the contrary.
This exhibition tells how man has been re-inventing himself since the last century – and how he faces his nakedness. With courage and doubts, with a joy in new ways of living. And how self-confident women artists have conquered a motif that was long forbidden to them.

For centuries, the naked man could only be depicted as a mythological hero or Christian martyr. Around 1900, the first major crisis of male identity changed the view of the male nude. For the artists of Modernism, the naked body, divested of every role, became a means of self-questioning and signifier of socio-political renewal. From this point on, the exhibition follows the naked man through the 20th and 21st century – through crises of identity and phases of selfconfidence, tracing attempts to deconstruct traditional images of masculinity and a search for alternatives, showing the engagement with weakness and vulnerability, illustrating the gaze of desire and the erotic pose.

The scope of artistic positions ranges from Egon Schiele to Ron Mueck and Lucian Freud, Lovis Corinth to Matthew Barney and Artur Źmijewski, Erich Heckel and Robert Mapplethorpe to Keith Haring and Eric Fischl, Paula Modersohn-Becker to Maria Lassnig, Louise Bourgeois, Katarzyna Kozyra and Elke Silvia Krystufek, Oskar Kokoschka to Gelatin, from Edvard Munch and Károly Ferenczy to David Hockney and Andy Warhol, Gilbert & George, Pierre et Gilles and Gil & Moti – to name only a few.

More than 300 exhibits – loaned works from the USA and all over Europe, as well as more than sixty works from the museum’s own holdings – form twelve chapters of a show that investigates the role of the male body across more than a century, in a way that has not been seen before.

The exhibition developed in LENTOS will be shown in an adapted form from 21 March to 30 June 2013 in the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest.

*The Naked Man* marks the start of the anniversary year 2013, in which LENTOS celebrates its ten years of existence.
Artists

ME
Around 1900, artists began to subject their perception of man to a radical revision. In an age where all societal certainties are beginning to fade away, the nude self portrait becomes a medium of self-exploration: modernist artists put together takes on their own naked, defenceless bodies, devoid of any of the traditional heroic or mythological connotations and disguises. From this point, the nude self portrait establishes itself as the preferred format for self-positioning in all artistic media. Artists face up both to concrete societal constraints and to the sensitivities specific to their existence as artists. Turning the mirror on themselves, a perspective exclusively reserved for female subjects until then, some artists practised self-observation in the literal sense of the word. The self portrait however is not restricted to the here and now, it opens itself to the acknowledgement that existence is finite. Artists confront their own transitory nature and unsparingly record their own bodily decay.

NUDE
Nude Figure Study was an obligatory and advanced part of the training of artists down the centuries. What students were expected to learn from it was a sense of proportion, articulation and posture.

The German technical term for the nude, Akt, which is derived from Latin actus/agere, has been in use since the 19th century. Academic Nude Figure Study, conceived as a study of human anatomy, was long considered to be a prerequisite for “high art” (History painting and Portraiture). The sitter had to remain motionless. To ensure they remained in the same position sticks were often used. Only men were eligible as sitters. The “lewd” overtones of Nude Figure Studies made it advisable in the eyes of the authorities to ban women from attending academies of fine art (as was the case in Vienna until 1918). Female artists could only take lessons in Nude Figure Studies in the privacy of their teachers’ studios.

Nude photography, a new art medium, was used as a teaching aid at academies from 1860 onward. Nude studies were socially acceptable and were circulated at industrial and world exhibitions in the 19th century.

In modernist art, the nude serves many different purposes, ranging from self-discovery, the portrayal of beauty and symbolism to destruction and the indulgence of excess and eroticism.
According to the philosopher, writer and painter Etel Adnan, “painting a man means turning him into a woman”. This chapter directs the gaze of desire at the male body. The traditional relationship between painter and model is reversed: Sylvia Sleigh and Bernadette Huber depict their men in erotic poses of the kind traditionally associated with female models. Male artists also take up the theme of the desirous gaze directed at a man and demonstrate the irrelevance of the effective ban on such a practice that had been in force since the 19th century. Erotic curiosity is celebrated in its own right, independent of the sexual orientation of artist and viewer. Men either pose as models themselves or make others pose and let their pleasurable gaze rest on their own naked bodies – a gaze that is still tabu in a heteronormative praxis that posits heterosexuality as the norm and homosexuality as deviant.

Authority and domination instrumentalize male bodily strength. The pictures of these “top performers” testify to ideology-driven, pitiless exploitation in the world of work and in war: Alfred Kubin shows us man as a war machine, others show him under torture, being forced into leather corsets, in captivity, deprived of the last shred of dignity. In the Nazi era the male nude is at the centre of idealizing mise-en-scènes derived from classical antiquity and is stylized into a “racial prototype”: “Here,” according to social and political scientist Paula Diehl, “the nudity we see is in fact an exoskeleton advertising its invulnerability, strength and willpower and indicative of a body that is not only totally closed off from its environment but even evinces downright hostility towards it.” A painting by Gerhard Keil and photographs of sculptures by Arno Breker are graphic illustrations of man’s renewed “dehumanization”: all “soft spots”, all deviations from the norm of the healthy strong body are tabu.

Gazing on the male body with open desire was a conceit originally restricted to homosexual art. This is demonstrated by Guglielmo Plüschow and Wilhelm von Gloeden’s photographs of handsome naked youths in idyllic settings. These visions of an earthly Arcadia took shape in Sicily, at a time and place where homosexuality was not punishable. The official role these pictures were allowed to play was that of teaching aids at Europe’s academies of fine art. They were also reprinted in academic art journals. But this part of the exhibition does not confine itself to the attractive body as an object of desire. Gay art also addresses the socio-political provocation of lived homosexuality. The artist duo Gilbert & George depict themselves unsparingly as old and naked. Their “Art for All” seeks to include as many aspects of human existence as possible and does not
balk at such themes as AIDS. Gil & Moti, another artist duo / couple, similarly focus not only on desire and sexuality but also on the challenges that day-to-day life in a heteronormative society has in store for gay love and partnership.

**BOY**

Innocence, vitality and unbounded idealism are the privileges of youth untouched by role-related expectations. Erwin Lang depicts a nude boy, raising his arms to the sky, in harmony with nature and exulting in his simple existence. Many pictures of adolescents convey intense joie de vivre, curiosity and joyful anticipation. There is however another side to youth. It can be blighted by premature suffering and constraints imposed by duty and role expectations. Bernhard Prinz and Collier Schorr for instance show demystified versions of the supposedly untouchable ideal of youthful innocence and freedom from care.

In Prinz’s case there is a handsome young man whose adolescent body is disfigured by a scar. Schorr captures on film the smile of a young man before he is forced into a uniform; in her second take, a pencil drawing, the smile has frozen on his lips.

**ADAM**

The story of the nude begins with Adam and Eve. When our first parents discovered Good and Evil, nudity emerged as a problem even in Paradise: being naked already meant being exposed and in need of help. This accounts for a basic perception of nudity that is associated to this day with shame, sin, helplessness or even the loss of innocence.

For artists such as Edvard Munch, Károly Ferenczy, Anton Kolig and Erich Heckel the nude was a manifesto; for Gelatin it provides the stuff for provocation. Nature and men are as one: whether in an idyllic valley, on the beach, at the riverside – the order of the day is painting, drawing, taking photographs, celebrating and making love. Free from bourgeois constraints, the backdrop of nature, bathing in the nude and Eros are leitmotifs in carefree bathing scenes.

“Seeing that God created it that way, the human body can remain nude and uncovered and preserve intact its splendour and its beauty.” (Pope John Paul II)

**UNDRESSED**

Artists such as Matthias May, Siegfried Anzinger and Moni K. Huber depict naked males untainted by role expectations and in moments of great intimacy without ever impinging on their sense of shame. The subjects are seen as wrapped in contemplation. The gaze directed at the naked male is free from bias. What these artists are aiming at is doing justice to their subjects as individuals, refraining all the time from tendentious comment.
and an imposed sexualization.  
At the same time these renderings of men who are so visibly withdrawn into themselves and apparently far remote from traditional male posturing address another crucial aspect of lived masculinity: their inarticulateness. Their inability to put their weaknesses or failures into words is contrasted with the need for communication traditionally ascribed to women. Man remains isolated and left to his own devices in paintings by Eric Fischl and others.

**BICEPS**

Behind the façade of the muscle-bound hunk, the traditional role model of the strong man reveals hidden constraints and experiences of abuse. It is apparent that control of a perfect body and its conditioning through sports and exercise are not only the expression of male willpower but signal also control of primal drives. The bodybuilder’s constant honing of his masculinity is predicated on the overriding male imperative not to look womanish. Male power is traditionally experienced in competition with other males; strength and performance become most apparent when men pit themselves against other men. The theme of the athlete, the wrestler and the muscleman is ideally suited – in the hands of artists ranging from the photographer Eadweard Muybridge in 1887 to Lovis Corinth and the Blue Noses Group – to showcase male power, to celebrate it – and to shine an ironic light on it.

**AGE**

A face whose lines and wrinkles mirror the many ups and downs existence has brought reveals a person’s character and provides a chart of that person’s life history. The portrait of an old person has always been a special challenge for artists. Old age was associated with notions of dignity, experience and respect. Gustav Klimt’s cold-eyed depiction of a naked, frail old man scandalized the public and the critics in 1901. A privilege reserved to youth, male nakedness was to be contemplated, if at all, only in ideal athletic male bodies brimming with life. Goethe called old age a “gradual stepping away from appearance”, but frailty and weakness are not the only characteristics of old age. There is also experience, selfreflection and retrospection. Being old can also be a triumph over shame and social conventions: Sepp Dreissinger and Josef Kern show men whose selfconfidence remains unimpaired even though they are in their underpants or indeed stark naked (and toting a sousaphone).
**PENIS**

The definition of masculinity is closely linked to sexual performance. “The penis is the axis round which the male body and personality revolve,” says the urologist Dudley Seth Danoff.

Feminism equated the penis with a threat or even a weapon: Florentina Pakosta created a series of male genitalia in 1970s, whose very exchangeability served to ostracize their power.

The penis is invested with sexual desires and anxieties; it is a symbol of man's claim to grandeur and omnipotence and at the same time a highly sensitive “organ of the male psyche”. This ambivalence is reflected in the treatment artists accord to the penis: it is portrayed as an idol and put at the centre of elaborate stagings or treated with criticism and irony. Franz Kapfer for instance examines in a pictorial analysis fantasies centring on an omnipotent giant penis that forces its bearer to his knees.

**PAIN**

The martyrdom of St Sebastian is an ideal theme for artists wishing to articulate their aversion to generally accepted images of virility: the saint’s boyish, non-athletic body, a staple of Christian iconography, is helplessly exposed to the “penetrating” gaze of the viewer. Sebastian is first “feminized and then cast in the role of a fetishized icon of homoerotic desire” (Peter Weiermair).

Today the figure of the martyr has found its way into the work of heterosexual artists. Though Sebastian’s vulnerability and defencelessness are still in the foreground, erotic connotations are strongly in evidence in the antimasculine stance of the victim. The broken male body and the destruction of virility – a no-no in traditional art – are dominant themes in Wiener Aktionismus.

Works by Georg Baselitz and Jaan Toomik address the mental anguish caused by the feelings of impotence and shame that attend unbearable role constraints and societal conventions and by the realization of one’s own mortality.
Exhibition Booklet

Introduction
A man’s nakedness is tabu.
Why? Does the male body have nothing to tell us? On the contrary. This exhibition is about how Man has reinvented himself since the turn from the 19th to the 20th century – and how he has learnt to face up to his nakedness, guided by courage, doubt and the pleasurable anticipation of new life designs. And about how self-confident woman artists have taken possession of a subject that had been off limits for them for a long time.

For centuries, Man could be rendered in the nude only as a mythological hero or a Christian martyr. Around 1900 the first great crisis of male identity changed the way people thought about the male nude. For modernist woman artists, the male nude, having shed the last trace of its traditional roles, becomes a medium for self-questioning and a harbinger of societal renewal.
The exhibition traces the development of the male nude from this point through the 20th and 21st centuries – through crises of identity and phases of autonomy.
More than 300 exhibits – on loan from the United States, from all over Europe and from the LENTOS’ own holding – are arranged into twelve chapters:
Nude, Me, Age, Boy, Adam, Gay, Undressed, Pain, Pose, Biceps, Penis and Authority.
The Art Education Exhibition booklet contains a selection of these works, which are marked in the exhibition with this symbol ;; artists’ names are arranged in alphabetical order. This booklet is designed to provide assistance for your own personal approach to the works of art.

Richard Avedon
b. 1923 in New York City, USA; d. 2004 in San Antonio, Texas, USA

Rudolf Nureyev, 25.7.1961
Collection Stephane Janssen, Arizona, USA
His outstanding fashion photography and the portraits of international celebrities made Richard Avedon famous. This is Rudolf Nureyev, the world famous ballet dancer of Tartar descent. The photo is part of a series that shows this icon of classical ballet performing virtuoso figures in the nude. In this take, Nureyev stands still and self-confidently presents his well-toned body to the camera.
Avedon’s black-and-white portraits, usually set against a plain white background, are almost as much about the sitters’ character as they are about their outward appearance.
Nureyev, who revolutionized the conception of male ballet roles also as a choreographer, adopted Austrian nationality in 1982 and died of Aids related complications in 1993.
Georg Baselitz
b. 1938 in Deutschbaselitz, Germany; lives near Bavaria’s Ammersee and in Imperia, Italien

Hommage à Wrubel (Michail Wrubel – 1911), 1963
Collection Froehlich, Stuttgart

When Hans-Georg Bruno Kern was expelled from the University of Fine and Applied Arts in East Berlin in 1957 because of his “gesellschaftspolitische Unreife” [societal immaturity], he continued his studies in West Berlin until 1963. From 1961 he changed his second name to Baselitz in accordance with his birthplace.

The painting is dedicated to the Russian painter Mikhail Vrubel, as its very title proclaims, an artist who would have been accorded the character of a model in the East German art academy. The painting’s subject is a masturbating man, a deliberate attempt to shock viewers, according to Baselitz; in 1963 depicting a penis in a painting was indeed still considered shocking. Reducing the painting to its provocative intention would however be a grave mistake. There are many other dimensions to it such as loneliness, vulnerability, shame and weakness.

The Blue Noses Group
founded in 1999; Viacheslav Mizin, b. 1962 in Novosibirsk, lives in Novosibirsk and Moscow, Russia; Alexander Shaburov, b. 1965 in Berezovsky, lives in Yekaterinburg and Moscow, Russia

Vogue of Labour, 2004
Knoll Galerie, Vienna

Three professional bodybuilders and two artists flex their muscles. They pose in front of machines, in wheelbarrows with shovels and, wearing flip-flops and a forced smile, they sweep the floor of a derelict factory building. The Siberian group Blue Noses has staged Vogue of Labour as a clownesque, ironical photo shooting. Is this supposed to protest dismal working conditions or is it a tongue-in-cheek take on the Russian cult of masculinity? With their penchant for “outlawed art,” the duo have been a constant source of shock and provocation since 1999. “A disgrace for Russia”: this is Culture Minister Aleksandr Sokolov’s verdict on the works of the artists. Court convictions and heavy fines accompany exhibitions by the Blue Noses. As the court case resulting in the conviction of the punk band Pussy Riot demonstrates, life in Russia is still very much of an uphill struggle for provocative artists. Where authoritarian regimes are in power, artists often have to put their lives on the line for freedom of expression.
Lovis Corinth
b. 1858 in East Prussia, Germany; d. 1925 in Amsterdam, Netherlands

*The athlete*, 1903

In private Austrian ownership

*The athlete* is one of the most forceful paintings from Corinth’s Berlin period. A self-confident muscle-bound hunk, his arms and legs covered in tattoos, the athlete is rendered with almost savage brush strokes in a posture presumably specified by the artist; in a sparsely lit environment, he appears to be almost naked. The naked male body as an object of study was of greater interest for Corinth than for most other painters of his time and his interest in “strong men” far transcends traditional academic studies. The painter’s subjects – models, artist friends, saints, fighters, his wife, even Christ and he himself – were rendered as nudes in a strikingly candid manner. His particular mise-en-scène of the nude resonated powerfully with the public and owes some of its strength to Caravaggio.

Manfred Erjautz
b. 1966 in Graz, Austria; lives in Vienna, Austria

*Shelter (White Zombie)*, 2003

On loan from the artist

Shop window mannequins represent ideal-typical bodies. “Female” mannequins are equipped with breasts almost by necessity but there is no call for any of these dummies to have sexual organs. It is therefore all the more surprising that this mannequin should have an erect penis. The testicles however have gone altogether and this is not the only source of irritation about this otherwise androgynous figure.

Mannequins featuring textiles and all kinds of logos play a prominent role in Manfred Erjautz’ artistic output. Casting everyday objects in an unfamiliar light is an essential part of the artist’s intention. The human body, in this case more specifically: the male body, is revealed as an empty husk and as a mere screen for projections in *Shelter (White Zombie)*.

White Zombie, incidentally, is the name of a US heavy metal band. The band borrowed the name from the 1932 eponymous horror film.

VALIE EXPORT
b. 1940 in Linz, Austria; lives in Vienna, Austria

*Cutting*, 1967/1968

Courtesy the artist and Charim Galerie, Vienna

The creation of this work coincided for the artist with her creation of VALIE EXPORT as the name of her public persona, a name that was inspired by her given name, Waltraud, and the name of an Austrian brand of cigarettes. EXPORT’s work has a powerful feminist
component. She analyzes roles that today’s media reality has in store for women. Cutting belongs to a group of works that go under the generic name of Expanded Cinema. This art genre focuses on film as a medium in which “cuts” are required to enable the film to tell its story. EXPORT uses the body of a man (Peter Weibel) as an instrument for her presentation.

Károly Ferenczy
b. 1862 in Vienna, Austria; d. 1917 in Budapest, Hungary

**Batting boys (Summer),** 1902
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

The beginnings of modern painting in Hungary date back to around 1880 and are intimately connected with the foundation of the liberal-minded, cosmopolitan artists’ colony in Nagybánya, a village in today’s Romania. Ferenczy, who had studied in Naples, Paris and Munich, became the dominant figure of this group. Here in the country, plein air painting along the lines indicated by French artists came into its own. During the summer months hundreds of artists flocked to the village and planted their easels under the open sky. It was in this genial and open-minded climate that this representative painting with its modernist flair came into being. The pastose application of the oil colours and the style of painting in general are reminiscent of late Impressionism. The shimmering sunlight and the oscillating blue of the shadows floating on the river carry the promise of a fine summer’s day.

Rainer Fetting
b. 1949 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany; lives in Berlin and on Sylt, Germany

**Marcus,** 1992
Kunsthalle Emden / Stiftung Henri and Eske Nannen and Donation Otto van de Loo

Rainer Fetting was one of the co-founders of the famous Galerie am Moritzplatz, established in 1977 as a “self-help gallery” in protest against what passed as the traditional art scene in Berlin, and a leading figure of the “Neue Wilde” movement in Berlin. The gay movement of the 1970s would be unthinkable without the painter and drummer Rainer Fetting, who came out as gay soon after moving to the German capital. Cityscapes, landscapes and male portraits make up a large part of Fetting’s work. Some of the artist’s numerous self portraits have been painted from the nude. Both Fetting’s motifs and the expressive painterly technique with its specific colour palette are reminiscent of Expressionism.

What distinguishes the men in his paintings is their aura of mystery. This is also true of the decidedly erotic Marcus whom we get to see from behind, posing on a terrace. The painting dates from Fetting’s years in New York.
Eric Fischl
b. 1948 in New York, USA; lives in New York, USA

_Frailty Is a Moment of Self-Reflection_, 1996

On loan from the artist

An old man, tottering down the hall naked. Is he walking in his sleep or is he demented and unable to find back to bed after his night-time visit to the bathroom? What is obvious is the impact of old age on his body. He has been caught in a moment of extreme weakness, as is already apparent from the painting’s title. It has been a long time since men were depicted in art in this manner.

Fischl is famous for portraits depicting unflattering everyday situations. In the States his nudes, especially his male nudes, were often greeted with dismay. He has made them his hallmark nevertheless and today, Fischl is one of the most important figurative painters in the United States.

Alex Flemming
b. 1954 in São Paulo, Brazil; lives in Berlin, Germany

_Attack on Baghdad_, 1997

Teutloff Photo + Video Collection

A picture-book torso and the most impeccable abs in really loud colours: it is features such as these that lure the viewer into considering the work’s critical content. A map of the Gulf region, projected onto bare skin, and a quotation from the Bible show the way: at first sight at least, this is all about an _Attack on Baghdad_. On 17 January 1993 the then President of the United States, George Bush senior, ordered an attack on Iraq’s capital city and his successor, Bill Clinton, followed suit shortly afterwards with a rocket attack on Baghdad.

The several aspects that Flemming combines in this work, which is part of his _Body-Builders_ series, are the Biblical story of Cain, who kills his brother Abel; his critical take on the Gulf War; and the male body as a projection surface for armed conflicts.

Lucian Freud
b. 1922 in Berlin, Germany; d. 2011 in London, England

_Leigh Bowery_, 1991

_Tate_

Freud portrays Leigh Bowery (1961–1994) as probably only a few people ever saw him: his facial expression completely relaxed, almost as if he felt unobserved or had just chanced to nod off during the sitting. Bowery, the Australian all-rounder – artist/designer/actor –, used to appear in wildly extravagant outfits, wearing almost clownesque make-up and getting involved in all sorts of antics.
Bowery and Freud were friends and Freud used him repeatedly as model, sometimes in the nude. This portrait is one of the most intimate, as Bowery appears to be completely himself. One gets the impression of coming face to face with his true personality. It is above all this quality that distinguishes the realistic portraits of Sigmund Freud’s British grandson: the portrait renders not only the outward appearance of the sitter but also his or her character.

**Gelatin**

Ali Janka (b. 1970), Wolfgang Gantner (b. 1968), Tobias Urban (b.1971) and Florian Reiter (b. 1970), all live in Austria

From the series *Ständerfotos – Nudes, #57,#58,#60*, 2000

Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

The four artists united under the Gelatin brand pose in T-shirts or cowboy hats, exposed and excited below the waist. Gelatin, the “bad good guys” in the tradition of the “art of artlessness” (Werner Hofmann), can be counted on to cause a stir wherever they turn up in the international art scene. They take photos of each other on hiking tours in Monument Valley or in other well-known regions. These interventions can be secretive and casual or they may involve audiences and the media in settings such a rock concerts, films, performances and happenings.

In the *Ständerfotos*, the forlorn artist offers his erection to mountain peaks and meadows in the role of an apostle of nature or a hermit. Are the four self-exposers in reality loners or misfits? Surely nudity is not a problem these days – or is it?

**Gilbert & George**

Gilbert, b. 1943 in St. Martin in Thurn, Italy;
George, b. 1942 Plymouth, England; they live in London, England

*Spunk Money*, 1997

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg

Gilbert & George are dropping their pants. George provocatively sticks out his bum, while Gilbert looks dreamily out of the picture in his birthday suit. In the background, aggressively red banknotes are putting in an appearance. The large bubbles are sperm samples seen through the microscope. The provocative, saucy title, *Spunk Money*, allows more than one interpretation. The large-format picture has been put together digitally from component parts and resembles a kaleidoscope image. Reminiscent at first sight of medieval stained glass windows, it is nevertheless concerned with crucial questions of human relationships.

The artists Gilbert und George are an eccentric couple who have lived in London since 1967. As “living sculptures” they often take the roles of protagonists in their art. Having
adopted “Art for All” as their motto, they do not shy away from red-hot topics such as Aids and homosexuality.

Félix González-Torres
b. 1957 in Güaimara, Kuba; d. 1996 in Miami, Florida

„Untitled” (Go-Go Dancing Platform), 1991
on permanent loan from private ownership
The raised dancing platform is empty nearly all the time, only the light bulbs are on. Once a day, without further notice, a male go-go dancer steps on it. Wearing silver briefs and sneakers, he dances for exactly five minutes to music only he can hear through headphones; he then disappears as abruptly as he came on. Love, memories, longing and loss are dominant themes in the oeuvre of this artist who died of AIDS related complication. Harking back to conceptual art, his works are enriched with emotional and interactive components.
Sometimes the audience are welcome to help themselves, as was the case when the work consisted in a mound of candy. What remains, as in “Untitled” (Go-Go Dancing Platform), is emptiness.
What we get is an image, a situation, an experience of longing, desire and the play of imagination. Of course the dancer embodies self-confident homoeroticism for González-Torres. The chances to actually see him in action are small but this is exactly what the work is about: it is symbol of desire that is destined to remain at least partially unfulfilled.

Keith Haring
b. 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania, USA; d. 1990 in New York, USA

The Great White Way, 1988
Keith Haring Foundation, New York

The Great White Way is a nickname for the section of Broadway otherwise known as the Theater District. The term was coined in 1902 by a journalist who was inspired by the many electric signs and billboards.
Haring, who was claimed by AIDS in his early thirties, became famous through his cartoon style art, with its key themes of social criticism, politics and (homo)sexuality. Motifs such as the penis or sexual intercourse are rendered in matchstick style. A case in point is this giant penis with a “comic strip” inscribed on it. For Haring the penis represents the male sexual organ as such and is free from the power connotations of the phallus. While the size of the sculpture is still reminiscent of the symbolic power of the phallus, Haring undercuts the association with his simple, humorous visual language.

Erich Heckel
b. 1883 in Döbeln/Mittelsachsen, Germany; d. 1970 in Radolfzell/Bodensee, Germany

Badende am See, 1925
Collection Würth, Künzelsau

As an alternative to the studies from the nude demanded at the Academy that featured professional models in artificial poses, the young “Brücke” artists frequently preferred to paint their own friends. In a relaxed “naturist” atmosphere they spent the summers of 1907 to 1911 on the shores of the Moritzburg ponds near Dresden, dividing their time between painting, drawing and love making, “en plein air”.

In this late Expressionist work the predominant colours are somewhat muted but still brilliant. The spontaneously rendered men appear calm, almost elated. The painting conveys a leisurely idyll in untouched nature. The emphasis on nudity and on freedom from restricting conventions, which led to the local police repeatedly being called in, was part of a life concept pointedly at odds with the bogus morality of philistines.

Volker Hinz
b. 1947 in Hamburg, Deutschland/Germany; lives in Hamburg, Germany

Pelé and Franz Beckenbauer in the shower, Fort Lauderdale, 1977
Teutloff Photo + Video Collection, Bielefeld

The emperor without clothes! Two soccer players, each a world star in his own right – Franz Beckenbauer and Pelé – in their birthday outfit in the men’s shower room. The German and the Brazilian had played together in the 1977 finals on the side of Cosmos New York against the Seattle Sounders, with Pelé putting his team in the lead, to the delight of the team’s 35,000 fans.

What are the two talking about? An especially clever move in the match? Or are they telling each other jokes? They are in visibly high spirits and appear to be totally relaxed.

The presence of the journalists, who were allowed into the player’s cabin ten minutes after the final whistle, does not seem to put them out in the least. Stern photographer Volker Hinz may claim credit for this peek behind the scenes. The photo, an instant stern classic, immediately went viral.

“Kaiser Franz” and “paparazzo” Volker Hinz have cultivated a friendly relationship to this day.
Karl (Carl) Hofer
b. 1878 in Karlsruhe, Germany; d. 1955 in Berlin, Germany

*Joseph and his brothers*, 1943
Collection Hartwig Garnerus, München

In 1943, when he painted this picture, Hofer was sixty-five. Earlier in the same year, his Berlin studio was destroyed in an air raid. Reacting to the loss of many of his works, the artist painted roughly 200 pictures within a very short time, including this version of *Joseph and his brothers*. In 1933, Hofer, who was considered “degenerate” by the Nazis, was dismissed as the director of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts. Hofer’s visual language frequently cites Christian iconography, as in this painting. Joseph, distinguished by a white cloth, is standing to the right of his three jealous brothers. Legend has it that they first threw him into a pit and then sold him as a slave. The artist transfers the legend of Joseph to his own times. He identifies with Joseph, who suffers a great deal from others. But why did he paint all the figures in the nude, given that nudity is an attribute of innocence? Are all of these figures innocent? The attribution of the roles of victim and perpetrator remains open.

Gerhard Keil
b. 1912 in Dresden, Germany; d. 1992 in Dresden, Germany

*Gymnasts*, 1939
Galerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

These four men are too perfect to be real. Steeled, muscle bound, keeping their eyes fixed on joint victory, they provide an object lesson for a close study of muscles. We find ourselves looking up to them. They in turn look imperturbably ahead. These energetic barefooted competitors race towards us in their white shorts, past a monumental columned hall in the background. The hall is reminiscent of Albert Speer’s model of the Deutsches Stadion in Nürnberg, which was not realized. The Dresden painter Gerhard Keil was not among the artists who were classified as degenerate by the Nazi regime. On the contrary: his *Gymnasts* fit in perfectly with the standardized, faultless body template provided by the Nazi ideology. The painting was also reproduced on postcards and contributed in this form to the dissemination of the idea of the »Aryan« ideal body.
Max Koch & Otto Rieth  
b. 1854; gd. 1925 and b. 1858; d. 1911  

*Male nudes, Academy*, 1893  
Münchner Stadtmuseum  
The two male nudes belong to a series of 100 photos exemplifying interaction between male and female nudes on the one hand and architectural structures on the other. The somewhat bizarre series represents the joint efforts of the German photographer Max Koch and the Berlin based architect and sculptor Otto Rieth. The male nudes, who are in a majority in the series, were photographed in expressively contorted postures on the ledges of buildings, draped round columns or arranged on half overturned chaise-longues. This approach to nudity is informed by a distinct sense of humour, as opposed to the then prevalent academic nude photography.

Katarzyna Kozyra  
b. 1963 in Warsaw, Poland, lives Warsaw, Poland and Berlin, Germany  

*Men’s Bathhouse*, 1999  
Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw  
The artist stops depilating her legs for half a year and has a fake penis made. She gives herself the appearance of a naked man, covering her breasts with a towel and wearing a false beard, and enters a public bathhouse for men in Budapest. Two male assistants document all this on film, using hidden cameras. Four screens in a walk-in octagon show the videos taken on the occasion, perfectly matter-of-fact takes on naked men in a sauna. The artist’s gender remained undiscovered. Gays showed interest in the person, who to all intents and purposes was a slender young man. The performance was designed to examine differences in the behaviour of the sexes: in 1997 Kozyra had made the hidden-camera video *Women’s Bathhouse*, which did not necessitate a disguise.

Elke Silvia Krystufek  
b. 1970 in Vienna, Austria; lives in Vienna, Austria und Berlin, Germany  

*hescape*, 2009  
Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna  
The acrylic painting *hescape* was part of *TABOU TABOO*, the room installation created by Elke Krystufek for the Austrian Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. The artist, who is well known for her feminist stance, addresses in this painting the rare phenomenon which is also of key importance for the exhibition *Der nackte Mann*: a heterosexual female artist paints a male nude. Who is the addressee of this motif? Other women, who are given the – rare enough – pleasure of being able to view a male nude?
Or is it addressed to men to alert them to the fact that often enough it is only their curiosity that is satisfied? And if these obviously stereotypical role models are deliberately made to change places, does this have an impact on the behaviour of (male and female) viewers?

**Maria Lassnig**
b. 1919 in Kappel am Krappfeld, Austria; lives in Vienna, Austria

*Entomologist I*, 2003

How can you look so unperturbed, so strangely matter-of-fact when a strange animal perches on your bare arm? This thickset elderly gentleman appears largely oblivious both to his creepy-crawly visitor and to his own nakedness. With *Entomologist I*, Maria Lassnig returns to the theme of the impact natural phenomena have on human life, a theme already important in her early work. The artist lived in Paris in the 1960s and later in New York, where she frequently portrayed herself in the company of animals in surrealist paintings. Her body-awareness paintings depict bodily sensations. Lassnig’s preferred colours are her hallmark pastel tones. She consistently eschews including spatial references in her work. In 1980 Lassnig returned to Austria and represented Austria at the Venice Biennale together with VALIE EXPORT.

**Paula Modersohn-Becker**
b. 1876 in Dresden, Germany; d. 1907 in Worpswede, Germany

*Standing male nude from in front, with torso bent forward*, 1898

In 1898, the year Paula Becker made this study, she already had a course at the Drawing and Painting School of the Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen to her credit; the Art Academy did not yet accept women as students at the time. This study from the nude does not display the genre specific interest in the detailed plastic rendering of the body’s musculature. The model’s unusual posture makes for a closed contour and far-reaching formal simplification. Executed in charcoal and making bold use of white heightening, the nude points forward to Paula Becker’s work as a painter. As is well known, her paintings did not sit comfortably with the then prevalent styles and the works she contributed to an exhibition in 1899 were savaged by the critics accordingly. Today she is considered to be one of the most important exponents of Classic Modernism.
Koloman (Kolo) Moser
b. 1868 in Vienna, Austria; d. 1918 in Vienna, Austria

*Self portrait*, um 1916
Belvedere, Vienna

The *Self portrait* belongs to Moser’s last phase. Using a reduced, cool colour palette, the artist has depicted himself bare-chested, with his eyes fixed on the viewer. What is striking is the black contour encircling the body. His right hand points towards the naked upper part of this body. Moser consciously aligns himself in the *Self portrait* with the traditional portrayal of the Suffering Christ: he knows that he is terminally ill. He unsparingly confronts his own vocation as an artist. By the same token he also confronts his critics, whom he chastised in *Mein Werdegang*, an essay published in 1916. Moser died two years later of cancer of the larynx.

Ron Mueck
b. 1958 in Melbourne, Australia; lives in London, England

*Untitled (Man in blankets)*, 2000/2001
On loan from Sammlung Simone and Heinz Ackermans, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf

The naked *Man in blankets* is smaller than life. What is fascinating is the precise rendering of the details. Every single hair is visible and the man’s skin, with its red patches and wrinkles, gives away his age. Even though he is wrapped in blankets, the sleeper is totally exposed to our gaze. Would you like to be scrutinized like that in your sleep?

Mueck was made famous as a sculptor in the mid-1990 by hyper realistic figures like this one, which show human beings in all their foreloreness and vulnerability. The son of toy makers, he started out as a creator of models for the film and TV industry, producing puppets for *Sesame Street*, *the Muppet Show* and for ad campaigns. His first experiments with fibreglass resin, which is still his preferred material today, also date back to the 1990s.

Edvard Munch
b. 1863 in Løten/Hedmark, Norway; d. 1944 on Ekely in Oslo, Norway

*Men on the beach*, 1908
Belvedere, Vienna

Munch’s *Men on the beach* celebrate a new attitude towards life. Harmony between man and nature epitomizes the new Expressionist conception of man. In 1907 the artist takes up residence in a fisherman’s house in Warnemünde. He photographs himself and others in the nude. The nude photos served as the basis for a series of paintings that
duly provoked a scandal: a city council employee, who had volunteered to serve as a model, was suspended from his job, and gallery owners in Hamburg refused to exhibit Munch's nudes for sale. The artist, failing to see why male nudes should be any more objectionable than female ones, sadly noted: "This is a terribly bourgeois city; it is simply not congenial to me." (Siegfried Wittenburg/Solveigh Grothe, Kunstgeschichten: Munch und die Nackten. In: SpiegelOnline, 6.12.2010)

Felix Nussbaum
b. 1904 in Osnabrück, Germany; 1944 Verhaftung, Deportation, arrested, deported and murdered at the Auschwitz concentration camp, Poland

**Self portrait with easel, 1943**

On the evidence of the French inscription on the stretcher frame of the painting on the easel, Nussbaum painted this self portrait in August 1943 in his Belgium exile a year before he was murdered. In the same year, the parents and the brother of the Jewish painter were arrested in Amsterdam. Nussbaum lived in constant fear up to the point when he was betrayed and deported.

The labels on the small bottles in the painting provide the key to his condition: nostalgie, humeur (mood) and souffrance (suffering). The label on one bottle displays a death’s head: Death is everywhere. As if the artist wanted to reassert his identity just one more time, he presents himself self-confidently, the upper part of the body naked, attentively looking at us. At Nussbaum's arrest, the self portrait was left behind in his last studio in Brussels.

Pierre et Gilles

Pierre b. 1950 in La Roche-sur-Yon, France; Gilles b. 1953 in Le Havre, France; have worked together since 1977 and live in Paris, France

**Apollo, 2005**

Galerie Jérôme de Noirmont, Paris

Gilbert & George, Gil & Moti and Pierre et Gilles are the three gay artist couples represented in this exhibition. The two French artists practise a clear division of labour: photographer Pierre takes the pictures, and Gilles, who trained as a painter, creates the settings and touches up the photos.

Their renderings of Catholic saints made the duo famous. Here their subject is Apollo, the god of light, the arts and moral integrity. Pierre et Gilles select their predominantly male models at random and cast them in specific roles. In most cases they answer to the modern Western ideal of beauty, which is usually enhanced by the setting and the touch-up process. It is not uncommon for their art to be compared to kitsch. What Pierre et Gilles are after however is a deliberate escape from reality.
Bernhard Prinz
b. 1953 in Fürth, Deutschland/Germany; lives in Hamburg, Germany

*Untitled (Injury)* from the series *BLESSUR*, 1996

Bernhard Knaus Fine Art, Frankfurt am Main and Produzentengalerie, Hamburg

One of the specially prominent areas in Prinz’s oeuvre is portrait photography; the format preferred by the artist is the theme centred series. For the series entitled *BLESSUR* he chose persons with injuries, scars and piercings. All subjects are rendered from in front and down to the waist. They present themselves full of self-confidence, looking steadfastly into the camera.

This young man may not correspond to the classic ideal of beauty but the impression he gives is one of serenity and dignity and not one of vulnerability. We are told nothing about his scar or the story of his life. What we get is a staged momentary picture that is held up to us as a mirror: does not every one of us have bodily defects with which we have learned to live?

Leni Riefenstahl
b. 1902 in Berlin, Germany; d. 2003 in Pöcking, Germany

*Spear thrower, Standing athlete*, from the Olympia film 1936, print 2012

*In the sauna, Steam bath, Power (Discus thrower), Across the Pass of Thermopylae (Torch bearer)*, Orig. 1936–37, from: ed. Leni Riefenstahl (print 2012)

Leni Riefenstahl-Produktion, Pöcking

*Beauty in Olympic struggle*, 1937

Sammlung Thomas Hackl, Linz

*Olympia*, the film Riefenstahl made during the XIth Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, is considered to be her most important work. It coincided with the publication of *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf* [Beauty in Olympic Contests], a photo book documenting the contests of the Olympic Games. Before *Olympia*, Riefenstahl had already directed propaganda films featuring Nazi Party Conventions in Nürnberg.

What is characteristic of Riefenstahl’s films are new film techniques and, above all, the aesthetization of the naked male body in motion in line with the Nazis’ ideology of the body: a specific outward appearance is canonized as ideal and the value of the body is defined by its sport induced fitness and strength. The idealized body image of ancient Greek sculpture and of Academic Classicism serves as a point of reference, as is shown by the photo of a discus thrower. In cross-fades with Myron’s discus thrower in *Olympia* it is made to embody the Olympic idea itself.
Egon Schiele
b. 1890 in Tulln, Austria; b. 1918 in Vienna, Austria

*Nude self portrait with red headband*, 1909
Leopold Museum, Private Foundation, Vienna

In 1909, when this drawing was made, Schiele took part in the *2. Internationale Kunstschau* in Vienna, which was organized by Gustav Klimt. At the time, the 19-year-old artist was still a student at Vienna’s Academy of Fine Arts. He had accepted Klimt’s invitation in contravention of the Academy’s explicit regulations, which forbade students to contribute to exhibitions – and risked being expelled. (He pre-empted expulsion by leaving the Academy on his own accord.) At the *Kunstschau* he met members of the Wiener Werkstätte, whose aesthetic is apparent in the fashion details of the drawing.

Around 1900, Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis was becoming socially acceptable, bringing with it a rediscovery of male nudity and sexuality. Not a trace of shyness is visible in the way Schiele bares his slender body and looks at us with raised eyebrow.

Rudolf Schwarzkogler
b. 1940 in Vienna, Austria; d. 1969 in Vienna, Austria

2nd Performance “Untitled” *Summer*, 1965 &
3rd Performance “Untitled” *Summer*, 1965 (Photos: Ludwig Hoffenreich)
4th Performance, 1965 (Photos: Franziska Cibulka)
LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz

These photographs have as their dominant theme the vulnerability of the human body. What remains doubtful in Schwarzkogler’s performances is whether they are about injury or about healing. Materials such as gauze bandages and artificial cotton wool point towards medical treatment. The fear of injuries and castration is present. The Viennese performance artist led a secluded life and his performances took place in a circle of close friends. The performances represented here were staged in the flat of Heinz Cibulka, the model in the photos, in Vienna’s Kaiserstraße.

Schwarzkogler was a close friend of Hermann Nitsch and his art centred, rather like Nitsch’s, on elementary sensual experience.

Max von Slevogt
b. 1868 in Landshut, Deutschland; d. 1932 at Neukastel Castle near Germany

*The winner*, 1912
Donation Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf

Inspiration drawn from female models becomes increasingly important at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Modelling in the nude still retained some of its haut goût. In the majority of cases, professional models were Italians or Greeks. Their association with antiquity made moral questions a concern of secondary importance.
In the late 19th century, when colonialism was at its peak, artists like Slevogt were interested also in African models and instrumentalized them for their purposes, admiring them for their suppleness, which was remarkable for Europeans. Hassanó, a Somali, became the model for *The winner*, standing gracefully on one leg. Slevogt’s painting is a treasure trove of clichés. The painting’s subtitle *War Booty* supports the cliché of the dangerous black man holding white women captive.

**Jaan Toomik**

b. 1961 in Tartu, Estonia; lives in Tallinn, Estonia

*Father and Son*, 1998

Collection Hoffmann, Berlin

A naked man comes into view, skating slowly towards the viewer: it is the artist, Jaan Toomik. He does several rounds on the ice and then disappears again. What is remarkable is the soundtrack: a clear voice, singing a medieval requiem. The voice is that of the artist’s son, who was ten at the time. The background to many of Toomik’s works is a very personal, familial one. The artist lost his own father when he was only nine. Nakedness may here be associated with “naked” life, with loneliness and mental anguish.

**Spencer Tunick**

b. 1967 in Middletown, USA; lives in New York, USA

*Düsseldorf 5 (Museum Kunst Palast)*, 2006

Collection Stephane Janssen, Arizona, USA

While not being choosey regarding the gender of his subjects – he photographs women as well as men – Tunick certainly prefers them in the nude and in large numbers, sometimes even going into the thousands. For these “bodyscapes” Tunick is prepared to travel all over the world. In New York City he was repeatedly arrested for disturbing the public peace.

In 2006, the photographer was invited to Düsseldorf by the Kunst Palast Museum. In addition to three installations in Düsseldorf’s urban environment Tunick also arranged for photo shootings inside the museum whose results include this group of men in the nude in front of a landscape featuring a mountain peak. The American collector Stephane Janssen poses as a nude seen from behind in the middle of the group. The arrangement of his subjects in close proximity to each other has a powerful unifying effect and enhances the sculptural character of the motif.
Artur Żmijewski
b. 1966 in Warsaw, Poland; lives in Warsaw, Poland

**KRWP, 2000**
(Abbr. of Kompania Reprezentacyjna Wojska Polskiego, the Representative Company of the Polish Army)

The Art Collection of Erste Bank Group, Vienna

Polish guard soldiers performing military drill exercises in two different settings: on a parade ground under an overcast sky in full uniform; in a ballet studio, naked. By command they present arms. They sing, they march, they whistle the *Colonel Bogey March*, which was made world famous by the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*.

In the ballet studio, where the soldiers see themselves naked in the mirrors, the situation tilts: the military drill is beginning to look ridiculous and the soldiers start laughing about themselves.

Soldierly bravura has evaporated without leaving a trace. Żmijewski, curator of the Berlin Biennale 2012, represented Poland at the 2005 Venice Biennale and took part in documenta 12. His provocative, taboo busting works have frequently sparked controversies.
Press Images

Press Images available for download at www.lentos.at.

1. Curators of the exhibition THE NAKED MAN
Sabine Fellner, Stella Rollig and Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller
Photo: maschekS.

2. Bernhard Prinz
O. T. (Verwundung), aus der Serie Blessur, 1996
Bernhard Knaus Fine Art, Frankfurt am Main und Produzentengalerie, Hamburg

3. Josef Kern
Apotheose, 1994
Loan of the artist

4. Edvard Munch
Männer am Meer, 1908
Belvedere, Wien
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5. Elke Silvia Krystufek
Hescape, 2009
Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

6. Ron Mueck
Untitled (Man in blankets), 2000–01
Sammlung Ackermans, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf
Foto: Achim Kukulies, Düsseldorf

7. Robert Mapplethorpe
Thomas, 1987
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg

8. Louise Bourgeois
Arch of Hysteria, 1993
The Easton Foundation, New York
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9. David LaChapelle
Celebrity Gleam, 2002
Galerie Thomas, München

10. Annie Leibovitz
Keith Haring, New York City, 1986
Annie Leibovitz Studio, Inc., New York

11. Gil Shachar
David, 2001
Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Foto: Hubert Auer

12. Blue Noses Group
Aus der Serie Vogue of Labour, Blatt 1, 2005
Courtesy Knoll Galerie, Wien

13. Eric Fischl
Krefeld Project, Living Room Scene 1, 2002
Leihgabe des Künstlers

14. Franz Kapfer
An Druck auf die Eier, 1999
Leihgabe des Künstlers
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15. Alfred Hrdlicka
Gladiator, 1965–99
LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz

16. Pierre et Gilles
Apollon, 2005
Courtesy Galerie Jérôme de Noirmont, Paris
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17. Károly Ferenczy
Badende Knaben (Sommer), 1902
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

19. Maria Lassnig
Insektenforscher I, 2003
Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg/Wien

20. Sylvia Sleigh
Imperial Nude: Paul Rosano, 1975
Privatbesitz, Florida, USA

21. Volker Hinz
Pele und Franz Beckenbauer unter der Dusche, Fort Lauderdale, 1977
Teutloff Photo + Video Collection, Bielefeld

22. Lovis Corinth
Männlicher Halbakt, 1913
Landesmuseum Mainz

23. Giorgio de Chirico
Die Reue des Orestes, 1969
Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico, Roma