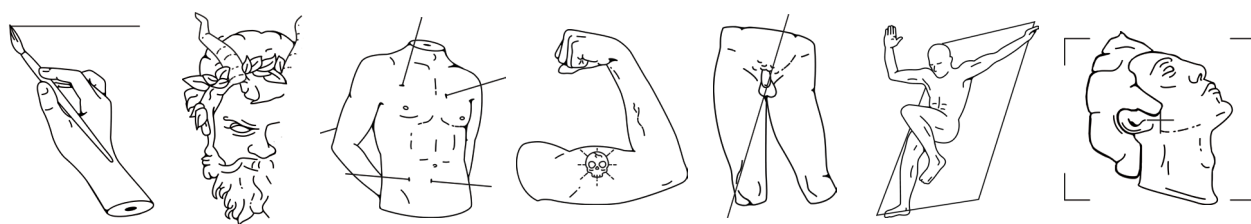


L'HOMENU

TOT DESPULLANT ELS ARQUETIPS DE LA MASCULINITAT



The Naked Man. Undressing the Archetypes of Masculinity exhibition seeks to undress the notion of maleness breaking free of myths and views that have traditionally kept men imprisoned. It challenges gender binaryism and proposes a diverse view of gender identities as seen from a more egalitarian position. The exhibition proposes a tour of the male nude in the collections of the Local Museum Network of the Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona province authority). The tour will start by looking at the self-censoring of museums whose male-nude works remain hidden in storage boxes, while the women displayed are relegated to being passive objects of male heteronormative fantasies. Through the mediation of contemporary art, it will also explore what it means to be a man in the 21st century, from a diverse, egalitarian and intersectional perspective, while avoiding binaryism, showing us that identities are just as varied as people.

Historically, nude representation in art has reflected the gender stereotypes and clichés that society has attached to the biological sexes of male and female: while woman is the subject of passive desire –as well as a “sexual temptress”–, man is almost consistently depicted as a display of strength and power. Many of the roots of these and other visions of masculinity can be found in classical culture –in the myths and archetypes it defined. On the other hand, religious

iconography has abundantly and generously resorted to the male nude, although it has often done so through the sieve of modesty and censorship that each context required. In some cases the nude is a symbol of innocence; in others, of sin, pain, heroicness or glory. Interestingly, some of these representations have in time become homoerotic icons. The canon of male beauty that originated in antiquity remained almost unchanged for many centuries and kept a ban on other, more realistic bodies that are now more present in art expression. As of the 19th century, a change started to take place which then took root in the avant-garde movements: these artists broke away from the classical conventions and depicted the diversity of bodies, as well as of identities and options. Gradually, the male figure became an object of desire and, throughout the 20th century, cinema, comics, music, and even the perfume and fashion industry, have been constructing and deconstructing a very kaleidoscopic and diverse image of masculinity.

In a historical moment like the present, with its new wave of feminism, the role of women, their visibility and their demands, are decisively brought into public debate. The struggle, however, has now gone further, and new trends encourage the dismantling of sex and gender categories. Here, the feminist struggle joins the LGTBIQ+ movement. By breaking these categories, it also becomes a struggle to liberate man.

#01

INTRODUCTION

«To see you naked is to remember the Earth».

Federico García Lorca

This exhibition seeks to undress man from an egalitarian position, breaking free of myths and views that have traditionally kept him imprisoned. It challenges the binary view of gender and proposes a very diverse view of identity.

In a historical moment like the present, with its new wave of feminism, the role of women, their visibility and their demands, are decisively brought into public debate. The struggle, however, has now gone

further and new trends propose the dismantling of sex and gender categories while advocating gender performativity. Here, the feminist struggle joins the LGTBIQ+ movement. Breaking away from these categories is also a struggle to liberate man from the traditional conceptions of masculinity, manliness and power. Looking at male bodies in various museum collections and through Catalan art of the 19th and 20th centuries, the archetypes traditionally associated with masculinity become evident, as well as the clichés that contemporary artists, both male and female, have set out to break down. The exhibition wants to take a step in this direction, deconstructing stereotypes and getting rid of those beliefs that limit us. This present-time look becomes even more apparent through the contemporary works shown alongside the historical ones.

A NETWORK OF NUDES

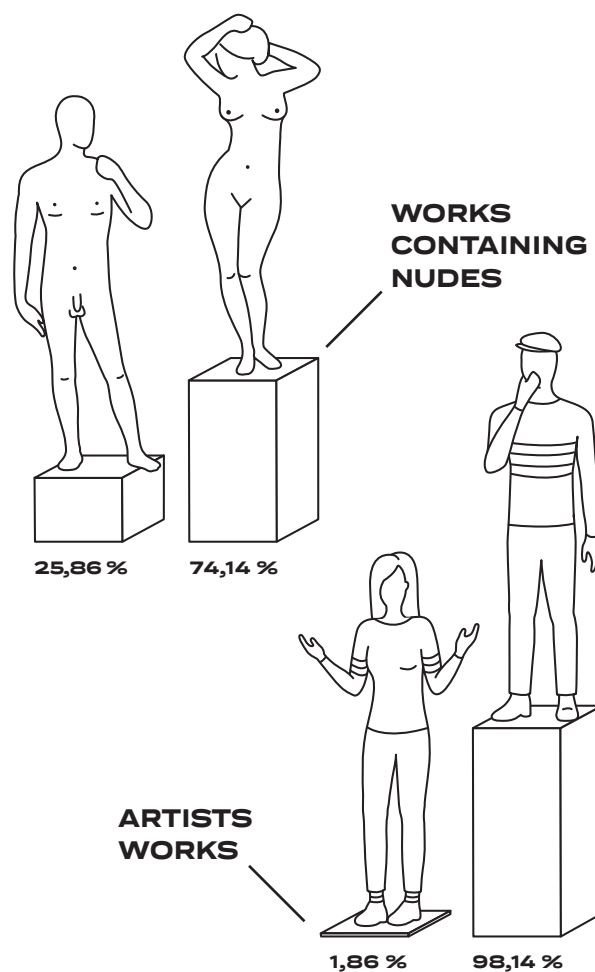
«Do women have to be naked to get into the Met?».

Guerrilla Girls

The exhibition proposes a tour of the male nude in the collections of the Local Museum Network of the Diputació de Barcelona. The tour will start by looking at the self-censoring of museums where male-nude works remain hidden in storage boxes, while the women displayed are relegated to being passive objects of male heteronormative fantasies.

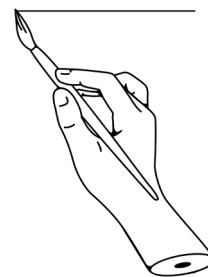
Male nudes exhibited in the museums included in the selection for this exhibition account for 25.86% of the works, as compared to female nudes, which reach 74.14%.

In contrast, the presence of women artists is inversely proportional: a mere 1.86% of the works are by women, as compared to 98.14% by men.



#02

ACTIVE MAN / PASSIVE WOMAN



«They will teach you to see your body not as the whole that you are yourself, but as if you were seeing it from the outside. Your self-image will come from the male that has been watching you for centuries».

M. Aurèlia Capmany

Historically, representation of the nude in art has reflected the gender stereotypes and clichés that society has attached to the biological sexes of male and female: while woman is the subject of passive desire – as well as a ‘sexual temptress’ –, man is almost consistently

depicted as a display of strength and power.

Works in this section illustrate this depiction of the male figure as a representation of strength and struggle. It is in the depiction of couples where this notion of active man versus passive woman becomes most apparent.

This iconography comes from the perpetuation of classical themes that were embraced in antiquity. One of these themes is the image of the male artist and the female model, as is the representation of lovers, always a depiction of a resting, passive and serene woman next to a man in a more active stance. This polarity is yet further evidence of the association between a given role and a gender, which has led to the formation of binary archetypes that are still very much alive today, although not necessarily valid because of that.

#03

THE MYTH OF MASCULINITY



«So many men, so many opinions: to each his own way».

Publius Terentius (Terence)

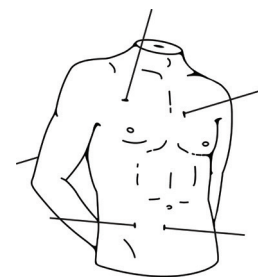
Male nude representation is very common in mythological scenes and historical and allegorical representations, from antiquity to the present day.

Gods, athletes, heroes –idealized and muscled bodies as a symbol of physical and moral beauty, but also of strength and power, only in contrast to the also physical and moral imperfection of fauns and satyrs that represent the most animal antihero, but which are ultimately more human.

In our culture, archetypes of hegemonic masculinity are often defined by these heroic characters, with extraordinary strength and moral values, which have been imitated over and over again in art schools. This constant repetition has ended up turning a classic canon into an archetype that determines our aesthetic taste and imagination in such a way that we probably continue to associate them with perfection, beauty and morality. In Greek society, these heroes and gods provided a pattern for perfection, and were also carriers of *aristeia*, or excellence. They were the model to follow for warriors and athletes. But we often forget that the Greeks not only valued a good physique sculpted in the *gymnasium* (*gymnos* means, incidentally, nudity), in the arena or in battle. For them, beauty was also an intellectual and moral affair, very much tied to words, which had the power to persuade –a great way to prevail: Troy was not won through Achilles’ strength but through Ulysses’ cunning.

#04

HERO AND MARTYR



«Passion does not know when necessity ends».

Saint Augustine of Hippo

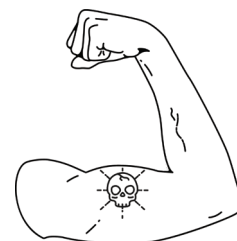
Quite contrary to what may be assumed, Christianity has a rich and generous tradition of depicting male nudes, even if often run through the sieve of modesty and censorship. In some cases it is a symbol of innocence, as in the representations of Adam, of souls and angels. In others, it clearly refers to Christ's human dimension, as in the representations of Baby Jesus with exposed genitals.

However, religious iconography has also shown the beauty of the male body in a way that embraces the classical concept of glory, deity and heroicism. Crucified Christ perpetuates the classical canon of the naked body. Beauty and morality are intertwined with the exaltation of divine majesty and glory.

In other instances, the nude appears in a dramatic context to enhance its expressiveness, often as martyred saints in which classical, as well as moral, beauty merges with painful ecstasy, delivering images of latent, almost orgasmic eroticism. It is not surprising that figures such as Saint Sebastian have become gay icons.

#05

IDEAL BODY / REAL BODY



«Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he'll tell you the truth».

Oscar Wilde

Starting in Greek art, a canon of male beauty has been perpetuated and has remained unchanged through the various returns to classicism in the Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical periods.

Artists and apprentices copied old sculptures and works from the past and took them as a model. However, the evolution of academic education and the introduction of live models opened a door to the representation of more realistic bodies. The so-called male academies,

or nude drawing, were an essential part of artistic training where learners, besides copying the great masters of the past, also drew from live models, even if they often reproduced well-known classical patterns.

When the actual human body was introduced into the studio, its non-idealized reality also came into play. In the mid-nineteenth century, with the advent of Realism, male nude depictions showing diverse realities began to emerge. Along with the muscle-trained man, a bearded or hairy man, fat or scrawny, old and sick or even with ethnic traits from other parts of the world, began to appear with more frequency.

A mindset transformation was set in motion that would lead the avant-garde movements to break away from the classical canon to begin to depict a greater diversity of bodies, identities and options.

#06

MASCULINITY, EROTICISM AND THE OBJECT OF DESIRE



«There are two basic themes in life, and men keep turning around them like animals around a waterwheel. I am talking about sex and death».

Montserrat Roig

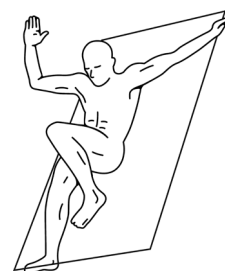
As we have already seen, images of maleness were mostly represented as a display of strength, power and aggressiveness, even when no woman was present in the composition. In theory, the only erotic object was a particular kind of female body. Man had a more restrictive role, and only on rare occasions did he become a distinctively passive object of desire.

Then, throughout the 19th century, and following the crisis of traditional society, a whole series of movements exploded in the Western world which, in one way or another, began to challenge gender stereotypes. It all became more visible with the onset of feminism, as well as dandyism, which advocated extreme refinement and a new model of ambiguity that brought about the triumph of androgyny. These were all reactions to the prevailing social rules.

With the advent of modernity and avant-garde movements, nudity and sexuality are depicted more explicitly. Genitophobia begins to give way and the male body slowly becomes an object of desire. The art world had already taken steps in this direction, but society at large chose to ignore them. The general mentality was still firmly bent on classifying sex and gender into two single and polarized categories, which would make an outcast of anybody who couldn't conform to them.

#07

THE LIBERATED MAN



«When we lose the right to be different, we lose the privilege to be free».

Charles Evans Hughes

After taking a tour of the exhibition's works with their traditional approaches, a young artist's proposal brings us a contemporary vision. Using mixed media, she offers us the chance to shake off the baggage that we may have accumulated since childhood, which promotes the kind of masculinity that has been imposed

by patriarchal society. This work is intended to be a reflection and a dialogue about diversity, and to sweep us away from the essentialist notion of gender that still limits us as people.

The «liberated man» cannot follow an exclusive and closed model within a binary mindset that oppresses him. Removing man from this pigeonhole, letting his body express itself and freeing his attitudes from the story created by power and from the hegemony of maleness as a symbol of strength, will be the path not only to find a new kind of man, but it will also make it possible for women to be liberated.

#08

THE IDEAL MALE QUALITIES



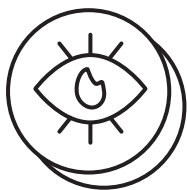
«It is very important to use vulnerability as our great power».

Clara Peya

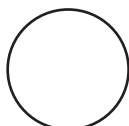
To help break preconceived ideas, we invite you to participate in this interactive work that creates real-time infographics based on «purchase tickets», to challenge what has been imposed on us regarding those aspects most valued in a man.

In your opinion, can you rank by order of priority the qualities that should define maleness in the 21st century?

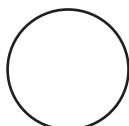
Your answers will help us to complete a potential image of a liberated man, shaking off preconceived patterns while also helping us to become aware of our own conditioning.



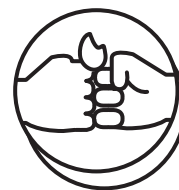
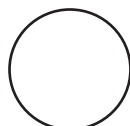
CREATIVITY



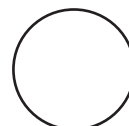
LEADERSHIP



EMPATHY



COMMITMENT



This exhibition has been organized by the Cultural Heritage Office of the Culture Department of the Diputació de Barcelona, the Cerdanyola Museum of Art and the Abelló Museum in Mollet del Vallès. Its touring has received support from the Local Museum Network, a joint initiative of the Diputació de Barcelona and the city councils which manage municipal museums.