

Exposé

The Naked Man (working title)

26 October 2012–17 February 2013

In the cultural public sphere, the viewer's gaze takes the naked female body as a given. The erotically staged female nude has been taken for granted as a pictorial theme for centuries. The nude male body was assigned the role of the hero from ancient mythology or Christian salvation history. In mythological or Christian garb, the perfect male body stands for the whole of male ideality.



Anton Kolig, *Die neugierigen Modelle*
Oil on Canvas, 77 x 77 cm, Private property
Courtesy Schütz Kunsthandel, Vienna

With the first major crisis of male identity, formulated by Jacques le Rider, the view of the male nude changed. The artists of Viennese Modernism began to declare their own bodies a field of public action and experimentation. Starting with Egon Schiele, Richard Gerstl, Kolo Moser and Oskar Kokoschka, the naked body was divested of any role, became a means of self-questioning. As is still evident today, the demythologization of the naked body enables self-questioning situated in the field of tension between eroticism, provocation, vulnerability and critical analysis.



Beginning with this caesura around 1900, the exhibition follows the disrobed male body through crises of identity and phases of confidence, traces attempts to deconstruct traditional images of masculinity and the search for alternatives, shows the confrontation with weakness and vulnerability, illustrates the gaze of desire and the erotic pose.

Robert Mapplethorpe, *Thomas*, 1987
Silver gelatine print, 50.8 x 61 cm (20 x 24 in), Ed. AP 1/2,
Courtesy Galerie Ropac, Salzburg

In seven chapters the exhibition offers access to a theme that has not as yet sought publicity beyond academic studies, which has even been virtually taboo. There are masterpieces in the depots of museums and collections that have never been shown, which enable a new view of man.

Nakedness as an unconstrained feeling of life, as a means of self-questioning, as a pose, as a moment of tremendous vulnerability, as a provocation, as a glimpse behind bourgeois facades, and finally as the garb of the hero: this is the central subject of both male and female artistic interest all across the 20th and 21st century.

The broad scope of artistic creativity dealing with the naked man over the course of eleven decades ranges from Egon Schiele to Ron Mueck and John Coplans, Lovis Corinth to Matthew Barney, Erich Heckel and Max Beckmann to Eric Fischl, Paula Modersohn Becker to Maria Lassnig and Elke Krystufek, Oskar Kokoschka to Gelitin, from Anton Kolig to David Hockney and Robert Mapplethorpe – to name only a few. Important loaned works from Hungarian and other Eastern European museums expand the list of exhibits.



Elke Krystufek, *hescape*, 2009
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 300 cm
Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

The exhibition is a production of the LENTOS Art Museum Linz and will be presented in cooperation with the Ludwig Múzeum, Budapest, where it will be shown in Spring 2013.

Exhibition Curators:

Dr. Sabine Fellner, Dr. Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, Stella Rollig