Nudes for the 21st Century

Photography and commentary by L. Egon Schiele
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I. Introduction

A. What is new?

To create the nude for the 21st Century, I have experimented with style to reflect the aesthetic and societal evolution that accompanies the new Millennium. I present the outcomes using black-and-white photography. This medium is inherently more abstract than, for example, color photography; and, as such, it provides a surreal means to represent the nude.

Because the nude is the longest enduring theme in the history of art, depicting the nude to represent new aesthetic values requires innovation. Thus, the *sine qua non* of this work is that the 21st-Century nude differs in its visual impact from the nudes of earlier epochs. Before describing the features of the 21st-Century nude that are evolutionary, I mention some aspects of the nude that reflect the tenor of earlier epochs.

B. What is old?

The Greeks of the 5th Century BCE were prolific sculptors of primarily male nudes. Their subjects were anthropomorphic gods and goddesses and sports figures. Thus art glorified the beauty of the human body and was not associated with any religious proscriptions.

In Biblical times, based on the content of the Old Testament, the Jews proscribed both public and private nudity. Over more than two millennia, these proscriptions arising from the story of Adam and Eve evolved into an intricate and convoluted set of religious laws that is still operative in contemporary Orthodox Judaism. Because the Jewish dogma strictly forbade creating and worshiping idols, until modern times, Jews generally tended not to create visual art. Thus, these religious prohibitions of creating representations of nudity indirectly affected the evolution of Western art.
As Christianity arose and developed, becoming a world religion, the taboos associated with viewing the human body evolved with it. And they remain operative today. Likewise, in Islam, related taboos evolved, which also have their origins in the Old and New Testaments and in the Koran. These taboos strongly influenced the evolution of Western art, both directly and indirectly.

The direct influence meant that artists were not allowed to create paintings and sculptures of actual, nude people. Until the mid 19th Century, both religious and secular authorities enforced this proscription strictly through the threat of severe sanctions. By the mid 19th Century, censorship and legal sanctions were still operative, but their effectiveness had diminished. Until recent times, the churches, the art academies and the governments focused their authority on attempting to enforce which elements of the nude should be more taboo than others. For example, many paintings of Victorian nudes show females having voluptuous breasts but having no pubic hair or genitalia.

The indirect influence was that artists created images of nude, ostensibly “non-human” figures that they depicted as humans. These anthropomorphic figures represented gods and goddesses from Greek and Roman myths and characters from Biblical myths. Thus artists, such as Michelangelo, Titian, Rubens, Raphael, and many others, were able to create images of nudes that the observer could appreciate as representations of humans without either the artist or the observer openly violating the taboo.
C. What is myth and what is real?

When artists depicted nudes as real people instead of as mythical characters, they could create new messages on various themes instead of reiterating the theme of the ancient myth. The distinction was often subtle between the image of a human and the image of a mythical figure. We consider several examples.

Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (ca. 1538) was and is a well known depiction of the Greek goddess *Venus* as a reclining nude. Whereas, in 1863, Édouard Manet painted *Olympia*, in which the primary figure superficially resembles Titian’s *Venus*. However, Manet’s *Olympia* represents a prostitute who appears to look directly but indifferently at the viewer. Although the distinctions between *Venus* and *Olympia* may have been subtle, the exhibition in Paris of Manet’s *Olympia* created a taboo-breaking scandal, perhaps because some of the viewers may have known the model professionally. Moreover, Manet’s purpose was to create awareness of and condemnation of the Victorian double standard and hence to offer a new message to the viewer. The ensuing scandal represents his success.
In 1863, Manet painted *Le déjeuner sur l’herbe*, which he may have based on several Renaissance paintings that show nude female and clothed male figures from myths. In *Le déjeuner sur l’herbe*, Manet painted a nude woman accompanied by two well-dressed dandies who are enjoying a picnic in a park while another woman bathes in the background. Manet leaves the subject of conversation between the three main figures to the imagination of the viewer. A traditional interpretation is that the park shown in the painting represents a Parisian park used by prostitutes to meet clients and that the figures are discussing an associated business arrangement. A contemporary interpretation is that Manet presents a patriarchal view of a woman, in which the clothed dandies represent controllers of the woman’s sexuality. Manet presents a limited view of the woman’s body, and that limited view reflects the control of her sexuality.

In 1899, Gustav Klimt, who was a leader of the counter-academic-art movement, *Wiener Secession*, painted *Nuda Veritas*. This 2.6-meter-high painting of a female nude, which has red hair, provoked and shocked Viennese society, in part because Klimt included pubic hair in the depiction. With this taboo-breaking painting, Klimt assaulted the hypocrisy of Viennese society.
During this period, the University in Vienna commissioned Klimt to paint murals for the large lecture hall on the themes of philosophy, law, and medicine. Unlike the triumphant idealism of philosophy, law, and medicine that those academicians who commissioned the work desired to see expressed, Klimt used erotic depictions of nudes in these paintings to express antithetical ideas, namely, the rise of existential philosophy, the dismal state of the system of justice, and the powerlessness of medicine. These works triggered a scandal in which Klimt was labelled as a pervert and a pornographer. Gilles Néret, author of Gustav Klimt 1862 - 1918 (Taschen GmbH, Köln, 2003), describes the painter’s viewpoint: “...Klimt is determined to demolish the pillars of the temple and to offend the prudes by the representation of sexual archetypes.” Klimt used the artistic representation of the nude to attack the hypocrisy of the era.

As the Modern era waxed, the nude of yesteryear, which was an image of a god or goddess that reminded the viewer of antiquity, had evolved into an image that carries a message about the present. For the artist, the nude has evolved from a form with which to voice traditional themes from Classical and Biblical tales to a form with which to voice new and contemporary ideas and values.
D. What is seen, \textit{scena}, and obscene?

Because of its history, depicting the nude often requires distinguishing between three categories of expression, art, pornography, and obscenity. In this context, I use the term “art” to refer to visual representations of the nude, namely drawings, paintings, photographs, and sculpture, in which the artist expresses an abstract idea through these media. The expressed idea may have an erotic element, but the erotic element does not negate the aesthetic value of the work. Moreover, the erotic element violates another ancient taboo, namely, that viewing a nude should not promote sexual arousal. In his seminal work, \textit{The Nude: A study in ideal form}, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1956) Kenneth Clark expresses the modern view: “no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling....” Likewise, in 1908, in his well known essay, \textit{Ornament und Verbrechen}, the Viennese architect, Adolf Loos, states: \textit{Alle Kunst ist erotisch} (all art is erotic).

The distinction between art and pornography is that pornography refers to a work that primarily serves to arouse sexual desire; whereas, (non-pornographic) art must go beyond being only an instrument of sexual arousal. Obscenity is a type of pornography that is “non-art.” Most likely, the term “obscene” originates from the Latin term \textit{obscena}; \textit{scena} refers to the backdrop of a stage, and \textit{obscena} refers to that to one side or off stage. In other words, the term obscene refers to that which shall not be shown. Pornography is not necessarily obscene, as the distinction between pornography and obscenity remains controversial and unresolved in both art and legal circles.
Despite the ambiguity, I can offer an operational definition. In contradistinction to art, the work in pornography shows people who are degraded into sexual objects (or victims of violence). When the degradation becomes more extreme, the work becomes obscene. According to this definition, photographs of nudes that include a view of the genital region are a priori neither pornographic nor obscene. A non-inclusive but simple rule is that, to be obscene, a work generally must show more than one figure, otherwise showing this “degradation” may not be possible using conventional methods.

For adults, the First Amendment protects creating and viewing art and pornography, but it does not protect either obscenity or child pornography.
E. What is the impact of photography?

So far, I have discussed the nude in the context of painting and sculpture, as these media span the historical epochs. As a relatively new medium, photography differs from these older media in several salient ways. Although it was invented in the mid-19th Century, at least half of a century needed to pass, before photography “came of age” as an art form in the early 20th Century, photographers were creating images associated with several genres, of which Pictorialism and Straight Photography are most worthy of note. Likewise, the technology needed to execute photography required many decades to develop. Specifically, starting during the latter part of the 19th Century, the dry-plate process, roll film, highly corrected and sensitive lenses, and smaller formats provided the technical means for the art of photography to advance. However, practical materials for recording high-fidelity color photographs did not became readily available until the late 1930s.

In contradistinction to painting, photography can be used to record images very rapidly and with an extremely high degree of spatial resolution, and photographs can be reproduced in arbitrarily large numbers with no loss of quality. Likewise, using digital representations of photographs and the Internet, photographers can display images worldwide. This technology has given rise to a rapidly increasing inventory of photographs of human figures, which are available in a variety of formats and are accessible by many audiences. In the context of the nude, the potentially high spatial resolution of photography means that the model may be readily identified in a photograph and that, for practical purposes, the level of detail presented in a photograph is limited by the photographer’s artistic judgment and taste.
F. What is the 21st-Century nude?

To characterize the 21st-Century nude, I describe a non-exclusive group of features, which may differentiate this nude from nudes of earlier eras. In the chapters that follow, I present many examples.

Until recently, artists have presented a patriarchal view of the female nude. Because most artists have been men and because Western societies have been dominated by men, artists have rendered the female nude devoid of either pubic hair or genitalia. This restriction symbolizes control by men of the sexuality of women. The nude of the 21st Century represents a rejection of this control and consequently an expression of female sexuality.

A related patriarchal force is creating an arbitrary standard of beauty, which has changed over the centuries in Western cultures. During the latter part of the 20th Century, in US print media, film, and especially advertising, the commercial artists have created the image of a beautiful woman as Caucasian, blond, and very thin, perhaps emaciated. In the 1960s, the “Barbie Doll” emerged as a commercial icon of this image. Likewise, many talented women who want to model but whose body morphology deviates from this image have not been able to express their talents commercially as models. This nearly anorexic image represents an ideal that most women cannot and should not achieve; and, as such, it also serves as a male means of control. Thus, the models who become the nudes of the 21st Century represent a broad variety of body morphologies.
The photographic representation of the 20th-Century nude often exhibits the recrudescence of the ancient taboos, namely, covering or obscuring the genitalia, which the photographer can execute using a variety of modern techniques, e. g., air brushes. Another manifestation of this taboo arises when the photographer either poses the model or edits the photograph so that the face is not visible but the genitals are visible. A variation of this approach is to remove the head in the image, either while composing the photograph or while editing the image. And many photographers do record photographs of torsos and other body parts, and they call them compositions in light and shadow. However, depicting the human figure as an isolated, separated, and abstract part of the human body, e. g., as a headless torso, reduces the model from a person to an object or thing. To represent the 21st-Century nude, the photographer does not record images of only body parts, which degrades a person into a thing or object. The 21st-Century nude is a complete person whose identity is neither truncated nor otherwise obliterated.
II. Portraits of the sitting nude

To the viewer, the portrait presents two types of information, which are not always mutually exclusive.

Firstly, the artist can provide an objective expression of the appearance of the subject. Examples of this type of portrait are paintings created using the style of Realism and most commercial photographic portraits.

Secondly, the artist can provide a subjective expression about the nature of the person who is the subject. This expression may arise from the representation of physical features, of which the caricature is an extreme example. Alternatively, the artist may create this expression either by deviating from reality or by strongly emphasizing reality. For example, in some of the portraits painted by the German Expressionists, the artists used colors, shapes, facial expressions, and poses that cannot correspond to reality. Instead, to the viewer, these features express some abstract idea about the subject.
In contradistinction to the painter who may use technique to deviate from reality, the photographer may use posing (including props), lighting, and technical adjustments to emphasize reality. For example, Edward Steichen created portraits of many famous people. He emphasized certain features that suggest the origin of the person’s fame. In Steichen’s portrait of the great dancer, Fred Astaire, a larger-than-life shadow of Astaire holding his hat and cane is cast onto the backdrop. The hat and cane, i.e., “tools” of the dancer, emphasize Astaire’s proficiency as a dancer.

The photographer does not have as many means as the painter, with which to express a subjective idea. For this purpose, the photographer can use posing (including props), lighting, and the technical options associated with creating the photograph, e.g., focal length of the lens, depth of field, type of film, and so forth. The viewer sees the results of posing and lighting directly, but the effects of the myriad of technical considerations remain obscure.
The photographer can use posing objectively. For example, a pose in which the model arches her back allows the photographer to emphasize objectively the beauty of her breasts. Likewise, for a model whose breasts are sagging, this pose allows the photographer to offset the sagging to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the model.

As a pose, the sitting nude offers a variety of opportunities to express ideas. Using relatively uniform lighting, the photographer may make the physical features visible, which can create a mood of openness and which can provide a means to emphasize the beauty of the model. Alternatively, using high-contrast lighting, the photographer can create other moods such as uncertainty by leaving part of the image in shadow. Likewise, the shadows obscure details that leave part of the image to the viewer’s imagination.

Mikki: Contemplating
Alternatively, the photographer can use posing subjectively. When the model's hands are holding her legs, while she is sitting on the floor, she may appear relaxed. Thus, the model may create correspondingly a relaxed mood, which she can enhance by smiling and looking toward the camera. Alternatively, the model may appear tense, when, for example, she is balancing herself, while she is sitting on a stool with her leg extended. The photographer may want to create a tense mood, for example, because, the pose could be either a parody or an improvisation based on another work. In addition to the articulation of her body, the model's facial expressions may suggest actions such as thinking or flirting. In the context of lighting and posing,

I have mentioned a few examples. They serve as a guide for viewing the 21st -Century, sitting nude.
Sara: Rotating
Trish: Smiling and thinking
Trish: Relaxing and contemplating
Jodi: Relaxing and contemplating
Jodi: Reclining and contemplating
Melissa: Contemplating
Leslie: Stretching
Leslie: Relaxing
Trish: Remembering Marlene
Cassie: Remembering Marlene
Mikki: Remembering Marlene
Mikki: Remembering Marlene
Mikki: Remembering Marlene
Jodi: Fantasizing
Jodi: Secretly contemplating
Trish: Contemplating play time
Jodi: Contemplating play time
Sara: Reclining and contemplating
Jess: Contemplating the next move
Katie: Relaxing, contemplating, and reclining
Diane: Straight ahead
Alana: Chairman of the board
Alana: Bored of the chairman
Kristy: Sitting on the ball
Kristy: Stretching on the ball
Alana: Crossing X
Alana: Triangles
Alana: Right triangle
Alana: Right triangle
Alana: Contemplating the upstairs
Alana: Machine without the machine
III. Olympias, Odalisques, and other parodies

A. Olympias

Titian’s Venus of Urbino (ca. 1538) and Monet’s Olympia (1863) appear superficially to be similar images, as Manet based the latter on the former. Titian’s Venus is a Classical depiction that had not confronted the viewer as an expression of power. Moreover, in 1863, Alexandre Cabanel painted The Birth of Venus, in which he rendered Venus in the Classical style, as a goddess. Although Cabanel painted this Venus anatomically accurately and very erotic in appearance, the image was exhibited in the Salon in Paris, where it represented a mastery of academic art of the era. The viewer may have appreciated the eroticism of this Venus, but was not confronted by the sexuality of the image. And Napoleon III bought the painting for his private collection.

In contradistinction to the Classical Venus, Manet’s Venus provoked its viewers of the mid 19th Century, because the image confronted them with their own hypocrisy.

Several models improvised on Manet’s Olympia. The resulting parodies provide impressions of the Olympia of the 21st Century, which differ fundamentally from the Olympia of Manet’s era.

Alana: Olympia
Alana: Olympia
Melissa: *Olympia*
Lynn: Olympia
Lynn: Olympia
B. Odalisques

In 1814, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres painted the *Grande Odalisque*. The term “odalisque” refers to a female slave in a sultan's harem. Because Napoleon waged a military campaign against the British in North Africa, The French became aware of the harem as an institution. During and after the French Revolution, some French women united to demand equal legal rights, which did not happen until 1944. Some upper-middle-class European men may have viewed the harem as representing a movement counter to the recently formed women’s movement for suffrage and equal legal rights.

This background suggests why the odalisque became a subject of French painting. Moreover, the connection of the odalisque to the movement for women’s rights suggests why Ingres’ *Grande Odalisque* should be the basis for improvisation. However, some of the physical features of Ingres’ *Grande Odalisque*, such as the woman’s curving back, depart from anatomical reality. As such, pose is difficult to execute. Nonetheless, several models improvised on the *Grande Odalisque* to provide parodies that give impressions of the 21st-Century “odalisque.” These images represent in no way an odalisque, but they represent images of politically and sexually liberated women.

Leslie: *Grande Odalisque*
Melissa: Grande Odalisque
Cassie: Grande Odalisque
C. Edward Weston

During his long career (ca. 1903 - 1948), Edward Weston photographed a large variety of nude models. Especially in many of his earlier photographs, Weston shows parts of bodies, although in some photographs he does show recognizable faces of models who are posing nude. The tenor of the times probably influenced Weston’s style. Works that were exhibited, published, sold, or mailed were subject to the Comstock Act of 1873 (Federal Anti-Obscenity Act), which was enforced in an arbitrary and capricious manner, as no satisfactory definition of “obscenity” was operative. As a result, mailing a picture that showed, for example, pubic hair, could lead to Federal prosecution. Thus, we must consider the aesthetic elements of Weston’s compositions in the context of his perception, namely, that legal sanctions could be imposed arbitrarily.

In Edward Weston’s photograph, *Nude*, (1927), he shows a profile view of the lower part of a nude woman who is squatting. The part of the image the would show the woman upward from the mid torso is missing. Several models improvised to create their impressions of the missing part of Weston’s model.
Kristy: Improvising on a theme by Edward Weston
Nicole: Improvising on a theme by Edward Weston
Egon Schiele was a member of *Wiener Secession*, and he was, like Gustav Klimt, an opponent of academic art and its stylistic dogmatism. Schiele developed his style of drawing and painting using Klimt’s work as a model. His portraits of nudes are generally strongly erotic; and, as such, his depictions of nudes, including self portraits, were very much ahead of their time. Moreover, to mainstream Viennese art viewers during the first two decades of the 20th Century, Schiele’s nudes appeared provocative and pornographic. Today these drawings and paintings are widely exhibited, and they serve as models for contemporary artists.

In 1914, Schiele created a gouache-and-pencil drawing, entitled *Sitzender Mädchenakt* (girl posed sitting). We used this drawing as the basis for improvisation to create impressions of the 21st-Century nude posing for a contemporary Schiele.
Cassie: Sitzender Mädchenakt (girl posed sitting)
Alana: Sitzender Mädchenakt (girl posed sitting)
Diane: *Sitzender Mädchenakt* (girl posed sitting)
Diane: Sitzender Mädchenakt (girl posed sitting)
Jessica: *Sitzender Mädchenakt* (girl posed sitting)
Leigh Anne: Sitzender Mädchenakt (girl posed sitting)
Trish: *Sitzender Mädchenakt* (girl posed sitting)
In 1911, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, a German Expressionist, created the sculpture, *Die Kniende* (The kneeling woman). The work of the French sculpture, Auguste Rodin, influenced Lehmbruck’s earlier sculptures. In *Die Kniende*, which represents a departure from his earlier style, Lehmbruck elongated the proportions especially the neck. The elongation and the small, widely separated breasts allude to the Gothic style of depicting the nude. We used this sculpture to create an impression of how the 21st-Century nude would execute Lehmbruck’s pose.
Alana: Die Kniende  (The kneeling woman)
Jodi: Ladder-day saint
Jess: Ladder-day saint
Kristy: Ladder-day saint
Melissa:: Ladder-day saint
IV. Pyramids

The pyramid symbolizes strength and stability. For the nude of the 21st Century to evoke a feeling of strength and stability, I sought a pose that has the geometric characteristics of a pyramid. Thus, we developed the pyramid pose, in which the legs of the model form the base of a trigonal pyramid. The torso with the head at the apex corresponds to the edge formed by two of the three sides. The model can place the arms and hands to suggest where the three sides are located in space. Alternatively, the model can use the arms and hands either to gesture or to extend the height of the apex. I show a variety of examples that illustrate these ideas.
Leigh Anne: Truncated pyramid
Leigh Anne: Straight pyramid
Leigh Anne: Inverted pyramid
Diane: Extended pyramid
Diane: Stretched pyramid
Alana: Sensual pyramid
Jess: Contemplating pyramid
Jessica: Stretched pyramid
Kristy: Relaxed pyramid
Kristy: Twisting pyramid
Kristy: Extended pyramid
Katie: Relaxed pyramid
Leslie: Relaxed pyramid
Leslie: Stressed pyramid
Mikki: Oblique pyramid
Mikki: Extended pyramid
Mikki: Stretched pyramid
Nicole: Relaxed pyramid
Nicole: Sensual pyramid
Sara: Contemplating pyramid
Trish: Oblique pyramid
Cassie: Seductive pyramid
Cassie: Rotating pyramid
Cassie: Inverted pyramid
Generally, the term *Madonna* refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus; and, since the era of the Early Christian Church (ca. 30 - 325 AD) through to the present, many artists have depicted the *Madonna*. They include Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo during the Renaissance, Caravaggio and Rubens during the Baroque, and Salvador Dali and Henry Moore during the Modern. Literally, the term *Madonna* originates from medieval Italian, and it means a noble or otherwise important woman. In the historical context of these artists, the Madonna is a fundamental icon of Christianity, and it represents a chaste and mature woman who miraculously gives birth to Jesus.

In 1894-95, the Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch, painted several versions of an image of a sensuous, nude woman called *Madonna*. A well known interpretation of this *Madonna* is that the image represents a woman engaged in producing life during sexual intercourse. The *Madonna* of Munch represents a modern and sexually liberated view of a woman. For this reason, the *Madonna* of Munch became the basis for improvisations, in which the nude of the 21st Century expresses her sexuality.

Alana: *Madonna*
Alana: Madonna twisting
Diane: Madonna contemplating
Diane: Satisfied Madonna
Trish: Etherial Madonna
Jodi: *Madonna in thought*
Jess: Madonna watching
Jess: *Madonna watching and turning*
Jess: *Madonna thinking*
VI. Bodyscapes

In the bodyscape, the photographer uses light and shadow to accentuate the curves and contours of the body. The model lies on the floor of the studio and relaxes. The poses are generally sensuous and erotic. Often artists have depicted landscapes to emphasize the natural beauty of the features of the landscape such as vegetation, mountains, valleys, and rivers. Moreover, the tacit message of the landscape is that the landscape is not simply a collection of independent components such as vegetation, mountains, and rivers. Instead, the beauty consists of the integrated, whole segment of the earth’s surface pictured in the landscape. Likewise, the bodyscape presents the beauty of the model’s body as a person and not as a collection of body parts.

In this context, I mention the 1866 painting of Gustave Courbet, *L’Origine du monde*, in which he depicts the genital region of a nude woman. In Courbet’s time, many viewers considered the painting to be scandalous. Today, as a very important contribution to the evolution of art, this painting belongs to the collection of the museum, *Musée d’Orsay*, in Paris. With this painting, Courbet broke a long standing taboo that proscribed creating images of female genitals and that still is operative among many groups of artists. Moreover, this painting and the works of Manet have contributed strongly to changing the way in which the nude is portrayed in art. Because of its importance, we used it as the subject of parodies. Unlike Courbet’s image from which he truncated the face and consequently obliterated the identity of the model, in these parodies, I show a complete image.
Leslie: Parody on Gustave Courbet’s *L'Origine du monde*
Leslie: Relaxing
Jess: Parody on Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du monde*
Alana: Contemplating
Mikki: Contemplating
Mikki: Shown in Chiaroscuro
Mikki: Smiling
Mikki: Imagining
Trish: Parody on Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du monde*
In ancient Greece, the male nude engaging in sport was a common theme of the sculptures, because the Greek athletic contest represented a religious dedication to physical perfection. For this reason, many sporting events required participating in the nude. And the athletes performed for their loves who were spectators, like the knights of the Middle Ages. Thus, the Greek sculptures captured and fixed the beauty of the male human body in stone or bronze. (The Greek athletes trained in a gymnasium. “Gymnasium” is derived from the Greek term, gymnos, that means naked.)

During the Renaissance, a variety of artists painted or sculpted the male nude engaging in combat. The subjects generally were either mythical figures such as Hercules or Biblical figures such as David. In contradistinction, from the period of ancient Greece until the late 19th century, artists generally depicted the female nude in a limited variety of static poses.

This distinction reflects the patriarchal view of the female nude, in which the female nude could represent a maternal figure such as the Madonna or an erotic figure such as the pre-Manet Venus. However, the male dominated Western society limited the types of poses for the female nude as a means to control the sexuality of women. Similarly, depictions of the female nude engaged in sports would have represented the female as a competitor to the male.
During the mid-19th Century, artists such as Gustave Courbet in *L'Origine du monde* and Édouard Manet in *Olympia* and in *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* broke the long-standing taboos by depicting the female nude provocatively. During the early 20th Century, artists such as Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele continued and amplified this iconoclasm. However, in fine art, the female nude generally remained either static or engaged in a non-competitive activity such as bathing.

Late in the 19th Century, the pioneering English photographer, Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904), developed a technique with which to investigate motion that pre-dated cinematography. Although initially Muybridge studied the motion of running horses, in much of his work, he investigated the movements of humans. For this purpose, Muybridge used nude and semi-nude male and female models.

Although he was not creating fine art, Muybridge was the first to depict photographically the female nude in sport-like activities. Nonetheless, until recently, the female nude in motion remained a rare motif. During the 1920s, the *Freikörperkultur* (free body culture) became an important movement in Germany. Men, women, and children could enjoy a natural environment of being nude that included sports. This movement, still active in Europe, provided the means for the participation of the female nude in sport but not necessarily for its recordation.
During the latter part of the 20th Century, the female nude has appeared in a plethora of still photography and cinematography, and the themes include sport and dance as well as sex. However very little of this enormous collection of images represents fine art. Most of it represents either pornography or popular culture.

Based on this background, to create new fine art, I explore depicting the nude of the 21st Century in primarily dynamic poses such as those associated with dance and sport.
Kristy: Arabesque
Diane: Jumping
Alana: Arabesque
Alana: Pirouette
Cassie: Jumping
Cassie: Karate kick
Cassie: Karate kick
Leigh Anne: Pointing
Leigh Anne: Stretching
Leigh Anne: Dancing
Nicole: Bending
Nicole: Cheering
Nicole: Cheering
Trish: Stretching