



Teaching the Nude in Art

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Lesson Plan

September 2010

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Why the Nude?

The nude figure in art is one of the oldest subject matters. It is found throughout the world and throughout time, and yet it is also one of the most controversial subjects when teaching students about the history of art. This lesson has several goals to help teachers when tackling this subject:

1. To show that nudes are an important part of art and should not be censored in the classroom.
2. To give teachers ways to use nude art in the classroom.
3. To give teachers strategies to deflect censorship and to include the community, school, and parents.

Nudity is an important part of our history, sociology, tradition, biology, art history and religion. It is crucial that students are introduced to this very significant art form in order to be well-educated art literate people.

History of Nudes

The representation of the nude in art should not be seen as being produced outside or apart from the social and sexual relations of a given society in any period. So what is nude art in our society and time? In Western culture, it is an art form invented by the Greeks in the fifth century. Nude was not the subject of art, but a form of art. To the Greeks the body expressed above all their sense of human wholeness. Nothing that related to the whole man could be isolated or evaded. In varying cultures around the world, nudity becomes a means for telling a story or to symbolize an idea. There are many reasons artists paint or draw or sculpt nudes. Below is just a few examples of the range of meanings the nude figure in art can have:



Fertility

The Venus of Willendorf
c. 22,000 BCE



Perfection

The Discus Thrower
Myron
(Roman Bronze
Reproduction)
2nd century CE



Beauty

Grande Odalisque
Jean Auguste
Dominique Ingres,
1814



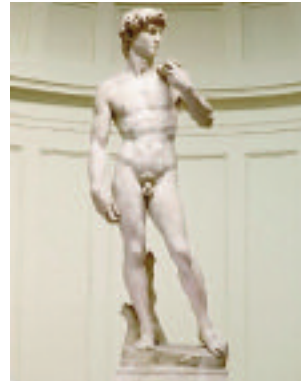
Aesthetics

*The Good Reputation,
Sleeping*
Manuel Alvarez Bravo,
1938



Heroism

Liberty Leading the People
Eugène Delacroix,
1830



Symbolism

David
Michelangelo,
1504



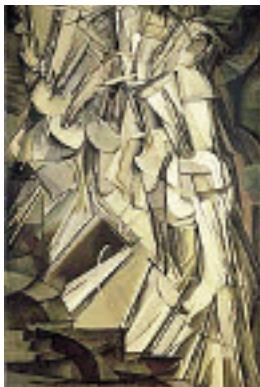
Eroticism

Miss Fruit Salad
Mel Ramos, 1989



Artistic Tradition

Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub
Edgar Degas,
1885



Artistic Tradition

Nude Descending a Stair
Marcel Duchamp, 1912



Religion

The Fall of Adam
Hugo van der Goes,
1470



Emotion

Puberty
Edvard Munch, 1894-5



Religion

The Gopis Beseech Krishna to Return Their Clothing
India, probably Delhi-Agra area, 1560-65



Timelessness

Woman Brushing Her Hair
George Segal, 1965



Not Timeless

Tourists II
Duane Hanson, 1988



Social Statement

Just What Is It that Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?
Richard Hamilton, 1956



Social Statement

Philip Golub Reclining
Sylvia Sleigh, 1971



Practice

Vitruvian Man
Leonardo da Vinci, 1485



Practice

Nude Study
Annibale Carracci, 1560-1609

Many artists depict nudes in art for practice. Indeed most art programs at universities require students of art to learn to draw nude figures. Studying and drawing nudes helps the artist understand muscle structure to be able to portray the body accurately. Drawing the nude is one of the greatest challenges. If an artist can paint the nude he or she can paint almost anything. Being able to draw the figure well improves an artist's skill in depicting a landscape, portrait, or other still life.



Because of this, artists throughout the Western history of art have sketched the human body. During the Renaissance artists sketched corpses. Live models were used in the 1800s but traditionally men could only sketch men and women could only sketch women. Even the most accomplished artist cannot depict a figure accurately without drawing and studying it. For example, Michelangelo depicted the male nude flawlessly but he was not as practiced with the female nude.

Michelangelo, *The Medici Tomb*

Today, American society including schools tend to focus on the erotic reasons that artists paint the nude and censor the rich tradition of nudes from their learning and curriculum based on that one reason. But artwork does not have to be nude to be erotic. See some examples below housed in museums around the world.



The Women of Algiers, 1834
oil on canvas
Eugene Delacroix



The Swing, 1767
oil on canvas
Jean-Honore Fragonard



Lippenkreuz (Lip Cross), 1967
photograph
Tilko Keil

How to address opposition to teaching with nude artwork

Although there are individual valid reasons that parents and teachers have for not teaching about nude art to children, teaching about nude art is still very important for a well rounded education of not just art but society. It is important not to censor or if you do make sure of the reasons you are censoring. Throughout history, works of art that seem innocuous to us today have been censored: the Impressionists, Michelangelo, Greek art, etc. This art and these artists are very important to a well-rounded education today. Evaluate what you are censoring for your students today and ask if it is just your opinion or is the art truly harmful to the students.

Nude artwork is a fundamental part of our history, sociology, religions beliefs, and art. To censor it from our curriculum would present to students an incomplete snapshot of history. The art students see in school is sometimes their sole access to great works of art. Without understanding the history of nudes, a whole language of history, emotion, religion and symbolism would be gone from student's vocabulary.

Why shouldn't students see nude art in a supportive classroom environment where they can learn to respect art and culture? Censoring nude artwork confuses students about the acceptability of certain art forms and hinders the learning process for other student artists. It is a teacher's duty to show students and teach them how to look at art including nude art. Break the chain of censorship and ignorance of some schools, administrators, and parents. Ignorance prevents people from seeing anything more than nudity in artistic pieces.

Censorship in its basic form is an attempt to control thoughts of others. The beauty of art is that it challenges us and sometimes scares us. If we let any single viewpoint choose which art to show or have, we would never be challenged. Art would be non-confronting, non-challenging and bland.

Charles Montpetit, author of children's books, said: "It has never been demonstrated that a glimpse of skin-or even a straight talk about sex- leads to a life of depravation and promiscuity. In fact, the evidence tends to run in the opposite direction: well-informed kids do not need to make reckless experiments of their own."

Perry Nodelman, author said: "We usually don't want them to know on the basis that it will harm or pervert them - that knowledge of evil will make them evil. That ignores one salient fact: our own knowledge of evil has not made us evil."

Current State of Censorship in the Classroom.

In addition to a growing number of complaints, studies show that censors are becoming more successful in having materials removed from libraries and classrooms. People for the American Way, a 300,000 member nonpartisan constitutional liberties organization did a study in 1995. They found a fifty percent removal rate - the highest rate reported in their thirteen years of documenting censorship. Another study found when a parent or community member complained less than half of the challenged materials were removed, but when a teacher, administrator, or school board member complained, four out of five times the material was removed. A study in 1992 that examined censorship of school libraries in both Canada and the United States, found that violence was one of the leading causes of censorship in Canada, but near the bottom of concerns in the United States.

Getting Started: How to help students become comfortable with nude artwork

To use nude art in the classroom, teachers should be careful and choose the nudes that would have meaning to children or will help them learn. Start small, get them past the tittering stage of looking at nudes. Treat the students like adults - after using the nude in the classroom they will get past the tittering stage and really learn about the art. An occasional encounter with an offensive or innocuous image is a small price to pay for

artistic freedom, especially when one considers the alternative - succumbing to the blandness of “non-offensive” art.

See the strategies included in this packet for preventing censorship and to include the community, school, and parents in the curriculum decisions. George Bernard Shaw said: "It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it."

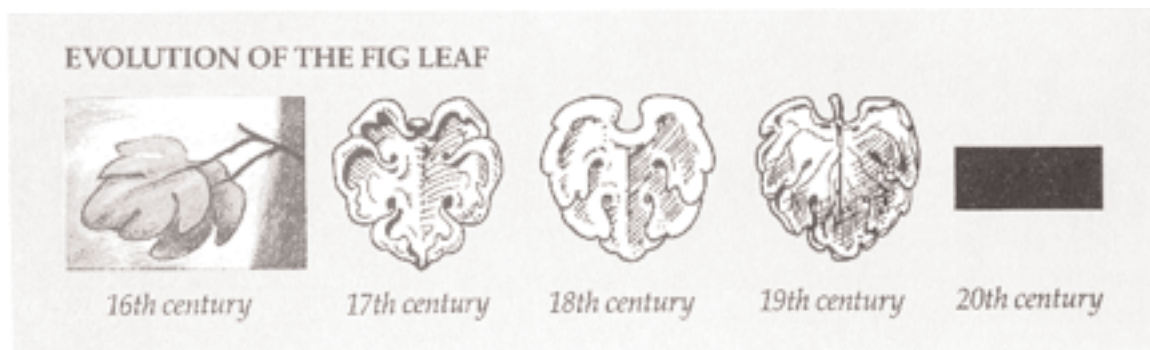
There is no easy solution to the challenge of providing students with the best educational opportunities possible. Teachers must protect the student and teacher's rights to intellectual freedom, and at the same time, respect the values of parents and the community. By understanding the issues of censorship and preparing a defense for them, a teacher can confidently choose course content that meets the need and interests of her or his students. The following lesson plans can help teachers begin to introduce nude art into a classroom setting.

Strategies for Dealing with Censorship

Excerpted from an Article by Lorrie Blair
Art Education September 1996

1. Celebrate your program and tell everyone about it. Promoting your program may be your best defense against those who attack it. Publicize your success stories and become visible in the community. By building a record of success, one challenge will not be blown out of proportion.
2. View censorship as an opportunity to communicate about your program. Welcome the media attention and view a challenge as a way to exhibit your entire program. Consider the attention as advertising.
3. Involve parents and community members in your program. Parents who feel they are a part of a school program are more likely to support it. Parents are your best public relations advocates.
4. Initiate a procedure to be followed when materials are challenged. Too often complaints are made through calls to the principal or school board member, and the teacher is the last to be informed of the charge. When there is a school policy, school administrators are not as likely to remove materials because someone has made a challenge. Parents who wish to make a complaint will feel more comfortable knowing there is an acceptable procedure to follow. The policy should describe the various steps in the review procedure and identify the people responsible at each state. Complaints should begin with the teacher, then, if not resolved, go to the principal. The school board should be the last resort.
Complaints should be made in writing. Provide a form that addresses the following questions: To what in the work or assignment do you object? What do you feel might be the result of viewing, reading or learning about this work? Did you view the entire work? What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this work? Is there a work of equal value that you would recommend which would serve as an alternative to the work in question? The form should state that materials will not be removed until after the review process has occurred. Materials are considered innocent until proven guilty.
Establish a committee that will review complaints in a timely fashion. Members might include a member of the school board, an administrator, a teacher other than the one involved in the dispute, a school librarian, a student, and a nominee of the complainant.
5. Last, empower your students. Controversial subject matter, when skillfully handled, seldom causes censorship problems. When carefully handled by the teacher it can empower students to think for themselves.

George Bernard Shaw said: "It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it."



Teaching with Nude Art in the Classroom

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Flight Aspirations

Trevor Southey



Born and raised in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Southey studied in England before immigrating to the United States in 1965. He received two degrees in art from Brigham Young University and was married to Elaine Fish in 1967. Their mutual vision for an idyllic farmstead in Alpine, Utah and their four children became a vital and critical part of his life and work. In the late 1960s, Southey co-founded and was a major influence in the Art and Belief Movement at BYU. His work during this period reflected his long-held preference for the expressive capacity of academic traditions, while

Trevor Southey, American
Flight Aspirations, circa 1982
Oil on masonite
gift of M. Ray Kingston
Museum # 1992.042.001 A-H

also embracing some aspects of modernism. It was, he said, a “reaction to the brutalizing elements of modern society and my own desire for internal peace.”

Southey’s acknowledgement of his homosexuality in 1982 instigated a radical rebuilding of his life. His divorce and relocation to California were the outward manifestation of an internal struggle – a struggle, he notes, that “can be traced through the dark undertones and repeating motifs of my paintings during this period.” The reconciliation of these experiences is evident in a more natural and open approach to representing the human figure, life’s conflicts, and the internal experience of being human.

Flight Aspirations was commissioned in 1980 by the Utah Arts Council for the Salt Lake Airport. Although Trevor Southey did a large watercolor design with draped figures which was approved by the council, he decided that the drapery was most inappropriate and did not work so he “blithely took off the clothes.” When the actual painting was done, Southey had the Arts Council committee convene to look at it and they all liked the painting and the nudity was not a problem for them. He was given the go-ahead to install the painting. As he installed it, the director of the airport came by and told him to cover it up with black plastic bags. His disgust was picked up by the press and made it into the evening news that night. The next day the controversy made it into 2000 newspapers around the country—many of them showing an image of the painting. Four years later the airport needed the wall for monitors. They tried to find another wall in the airport to put the painting, but none worked for the size and they gave the painting back to Southey. Ray Kingston bought it and then donated it to the Utah Museum of Fine Arts. Southey later painted a landscape for the airport, which is still on display.

Nudity as a Symbol

Lesson Plan

written by Virginia Catherall

Objective(s):

Students will understand how nude figures in art can be used as symbols to give the art deeper meaning.

Students will debate the meaning of works of art employing nudes symbolically.

State core links:

Art History and Criticism (7-12 grade)

Standard 3

Visual Arts - Expressing

Students will discover meaning in art.

Objective 1 Perceive content in works of art.

Identify subject matter, metaphor, themes, symbols, and content in works of art.

Assess which works of art effectively communicate subject matter, metaphor, themes, symbols, or individually conceived content.

Interpret subject matter, metaphor, themes, symbols, or content through divergent, novel, or individually inspired applications of art media and art elements and principles.

Grade Level: 7-12 grade

Materials:

Images of art in the Utah Museum of Fine Arts Collection:

Flight Aspirations (1982) by Trevor Southey

An Allegory of Air (ca 1630-1635) by Brueghel and van Balen

Standing Woman (ca 300 BCE), Precolumbian

For the extension:

Leda and the Swan by Roulleau

Madonna and Child by the Studio of Rubens

Lesson:

Show the students *Flight Aspirations* by Trevor Southey. Talk to the students about Southey's history, style, and artwork (see information below). As a class discuss the content of this artwork and the idea of an allegory.

Allegory: The representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic, or pictorial form. Below are some sample questions to begin the discussion:

- Why is it titled "Flight Aspirations"?
- How does this qualify as an allegory?
- Why would Southey choose to have the figures nude?
- How does nature play into the symbolic representations in this painting of both flight and the nude?
- If these figures were clothed, how would it change the meaning of the painting?
- How would the painting read if there was only one figure?

After the discussion go to the activity below to reinforce the idea of nudity in art as symbolic.

Background Information

from the Springville Museum of Art (www.sma.nebo.edu)

Southey, Trevor Jack Thomas (1940)

Trevor Southey is a native of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Africa, born in 1940 of immigrant European ancestry. His interest in art developed at an early age when rheumatic fever confined him to bed for months at a time, and often, his only companions were a pen, pencil, and paper.

Southey attended art schools in England and South Africa before coming to the United States in 1965 to attend Brigham Young University (BYU). After receiving his degrees, he joined the BYU art faculty. While teaching there, he became a founding member of the highly significant Mormon Art and Belief Movement (1966-1976). Southey personally worked to establish a "Mormon Art" form through his use of Latter-day Saint theology. In 1977, he decided to dedicate his full energies to an art career, resigned from the faculty at BYU and, in 1982, established a studio in Salt Lake City.

As a Figurative-Realist, Southey, like the Renaissance painters, uses the physical body to portray the soul. Rather than merely depicting the figure, he unconsciously evokes the spirituality of the human form through his use of other-worldly, everyman figures, combining realism with personal allegorical content. Talking about his art and his life, Southey says,

"There is a strange element of surprise in suddenly finding oneself middle-aged, and internalizing the fact that one is perceived as an artist. There was not really any other natural thing for me to do with my life. . . . Certainly, the direction of my work was never planned. It is rooted simply in my being and my personal history. . . . Some artists are a little shy about such introspection; I rather like the inquiry, enjoying especially the increased perspective which others bring to the work. But I have become less and less sure of the answers. . . . I used to work more with answers; things as they should be tended to dominate my work. . . . I think my work these days is more inclined to ask questions."

Southey's decision to acknowledge his homosexuality in 1982, which coincided with the first major public awareness of the AIDS epidemic (the recognition was not a repudiation of his previous life, but a struggle to acknowledge his own identity); and the reconciliation of his decisions and subsequent expression reflected in his revised artistic approach to the human form. In 1983, Southey moved to San Francisco, where his work found critical and popular success. During the 1990s he commuted between San Francisco and Utah, working in both states. Over the past two decades he has become proficient in sculpture and printmaking as well as in painting.

Activity:

Divide the class into four groups. Have two groups choose the sculpture *Allegory of Air* by Brueghel and van Balen and two groups choose the Pre-Columbian sculpture *Standing Woman*. Have each group take a position as whether the nude figure adds to the symbolic meaning of the artwork or if the meaning could be conveyed without a nude figure; then debate. Have the class vote on who won each debate and why. Some questions to think about:

Allegory of Air:

- What does a woman have to do with an *Allegory of Air*?
- What impact does the nude figure have on the painting.
- Look closely at the body position of the figure in the painting. Does the position have a role in the meaning of the painting?

Standing Woman:

- Why are the woman's arms so small and her legs so big?
- Why would the Nayarit people depict her nude?
- How does her pose add to the symbolism of the sculpture?
- How would the symbolism and impact of the piece change if there were more color added to the terra cotta?

Background information



Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601 - 1678) and Hendrik van Balen I (1574/1575 - 1632) or Hendrk van Balen II (1620 - 1661), Flemish

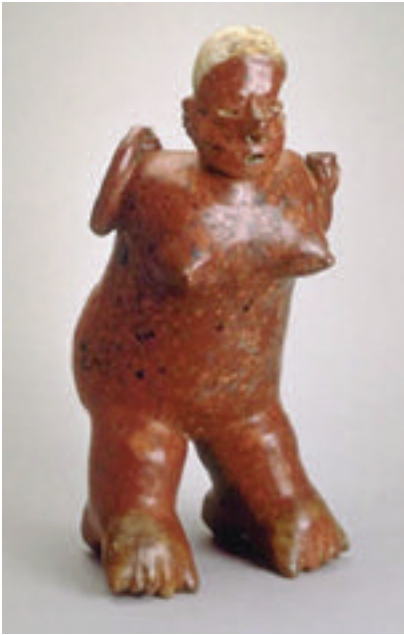
***An Allegory of Air*, ca 1630-1635**

Oil on panel

Gift of Val A. Browning

Museum # 1993.034.002

The UMFA's version of *Allegory of Air* is filled with references to the air and the sky. Urania, Muse of Astronomy, holds an armillary sphere. This ancient astronomical device consisted of seven interlocking, graduated rings that represent the fundamental circles of the heavens. It was used to calculate the position of a celestial body in convenient coordinates. The sun god Apollo is surrounded by light as he drives his quadriga across the sky and chases away his twin sister, the moon goddess Diana whose chariot is drawn by nymphs into the dark, swirling night clouds. Playful, winged cherubs try to catch some of the birds that are painted with careful attention to detail. Jan Brueghel the Younger gathered first hand information about birds and nature to make his paintings more accurate. The intellectual elite of the time were interested in the new scientific classification of the natural world. Although two-dimensional scientific illustration and desiccated specimens might be satisfactory for exchanging information about phenomena, they could not compete with the mimetic power of painting in making the study of nature's rarities sensually and intellectually pleasurable.



Mexico, Ixtlan del Rio region, Nayarit culture, Late Pre-Classic to Proto-Classic Period (300 B.C.-A.D. 300)

Standing Woman

Red clay, traces of black and white polychromy over red slip

Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum and the Herbert I. and Elsa B. Michael Foundation

Museum # 1977.093

The early peoples of west Mexico, who flourished before the more famous Aztec and Mayan civilizations, had a long and lively tradition of working with clay sculpture. The primary artistic themes were death and the world after death. Pottery figures of great variety and imagination were buried along with the dead to serve as protectors from evil spirits, as shamans (priests), and to participate in the activities of the next life. Bent forward from the waist, the Museum's *Standing Woman* is holding two bowls at shoulder height, suggesting that she is making a ritual offering. With her generous proportions and sensuous naturalism, the figure conveys a profound experience of the body with its powerful biological, cultural, and mythical meanings. As a symbol of fertility, her large legs connect her with the earth in a powerful visual metaphor.

Assessment:

Have the students write a synopsis of their own opinion about the debate and whether their opinion changed or stayed the same after the debate. This not only helps assess whether the students took part in the activity and understood the learning goals, but it also allows the student to express his or her own opinion regardless of what side they took in the debate.

Extension:

You can extend the lesson to talk about how nudes in art are not only symbolic, they can be used to tell a story. Below are two images that use nudes, not only symbolically, but also to tell a story.



Studio of Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish (1577-1640)

Madonna and Child

oil on panel

Gift of Mrs. Richard A. Hudnut

Museum # 1951.15

Peter Paul Rubens was one of the greatest painters of the seventeenth-century baroque style, a style marked by its richness and lavishness, its robust imagination and seemingly unbounded energy. Like other artists, Rubens understood that orthodox Christianity of the time declared Jesus to be both God and man. Displaying the Christ Child's naked body was a way of confirming his human-ness. Mary is depicted here nursing her son, which emphasizes her role as a human mother to a human son. But it is interesting that Rubens chose to show the Madonna feeding the Christ Child by squirting milk from her breast. This combines the Christian image of the nursing Virgin with a story from classical mythology, the Origin of the Milky Way. In this myth Hera, wife and sister of Zeus, is tricked into suckling Hercules, the offspring of an illicit affair between Zeus and the mortal woman Alcmena, so that

Hercules might be assured immortality. Traditionally, Hera's milk is shown spurting across the sky--and creating the Milky Way--because Hercules nursed so vigorously. Now-deceased Julius Held, an eminent Rubens scholar, identified seven other identical versions of this scene and suggested that the UMFA's painting, while not by Rubens's own hand, may well have been painted still "under his eyes."



Jules Pierre Roulleau (1855-1895), French

Leda and the Swan

Marble

Gift of Walker and Sue Wallace

Museum # 2002.6.1

The Musée de Picardie in Amiens, France, has in its collection a larger than life-size statue of *Leda and the Swan*, of which the UMFA's sculpture is a smaller, but exact copy. The legend of Leda and the swan is a popular story from Greek mythology that is told in several variations, depending on the writer and time period. But every version speaks of the swan as one of the many disguises Zeus, ruler of the Greek gods, assumed so that his wife Hera would not discover him when he had love affairs with beautiful women. In the case of Leda, wife of King Tyndareus of Sparta, Zeus's illicit love (and her having relations with her husband during the same night Zeus visited her) resulted in her laying one or two eggs—accounts vary—from which four children were born: Pollux and Helen, and Castor and Clytemnestra. Two of these children were immortals because they were offspring of Zeus; again, there are differences of opinion about fatherhood. All of them were destined to have lives as unusual as their birth. Pollux and Castor were famous for their gigantic stature and for being fearless warriors. They were immortalized by Zeus as the constellation Gemini. Helen married Menelaus, King of Sparta, but was so irresistibly beautiful that Paris, son of the Trojan king Priam, abducted her and took her to Troy. This led to the ten-year-long Trojan War, the subject of Homer's *Iliad* and the background of the *Odyssey*. Clytemnestra was married to the brother of Menelaus, the Mycenaean king Agamemnon who led the Greek armies against Troy. When he returned from the war, Clytemnestra murdered him with the help of her lover.

Below are more lessons designed for specific age groups that use famous international artworks depicting nudes.

Lesson Plan for K-3

Using Nude Art in the Classroom



Henri Matisse, *The Dance*, 1910



Henri Matisse, *Music*, 1910

Goal: The students will be able to explore a painting's theme of dance and music by looking at composition and line.

Materials needed: Slide or reproduction of *The Dance* and *Music* by Henri Matisse, a piece of written music as an example, two different kinds of music on tape, and some paper and drawing materials.

Lesson:

Show *The Dance* to the students and tell them the title. Ask some leading questions like:

Why is the painting called *The Dance*?

Do you think it is a slow dance or a fast dance and why?

Have you ever danced in a circle like these people?

What dance were you doing?

What kind of mood do you think the dancers are feeling?

Have the students look at the lines that are formed by the dancers' bodies and trace it with their hand in the air. Have the students stand up and move or dance like the dancers in the painting.

Show *Music* to the students. Ask them why they think the piece is called *Music*. Not only do the instruments tell us that these people are playing music, but the way the artist put them on the canvas also reminds us of music. Show the students a piece of music and ask them how the two are the same. They should notice that the people in the painting look like musical notes. Ask the students to imagine what kind of music the musicians are playing. Play some music while the students freely draw anything. After they finish, play a different kind of music and have the students draw again. Compare the two pieces and see how different kinds of music affect how a work of art looks.

Evaluation: Have the children explain why they think the two works of art are titled the way they are using examples of line and composition.

Teaching Art to Young Children: Some pointers

Do not stress that there are nudes in the works of art. Include nude works of art at an early age as illustrations for lessons on color, pattern, theme, etc. Students should realize at an early age that nude works of art are an accepted artform and should not be censored in class.

Studies have shown:

- Young children respond primarily to subject matter and color in artwork.
- Young children respond positively to patterned and nonobjective pieces which are brightly colored more frequently than they do to dark-toned realistic works.
- Children like artwork that depicts favorite or familiar subject matter; present a clear image; contain bright, highly saturated and contrasting colors; are simple in composition; and contain unambiguous spatial relations.

Young children's art programs must:

1. Be based on the child's interest and knowledge of the world.
2. Provide opportunities for the child to engage the works from an individual point of view.
3. Make art works a part of the child's everyday world.
4. Be based on the child's natural inclination to learn through play.

Charles Montpetit, author of Children's books, said: "It has never been demonstrated that a glimpse of skin-or even a straight talk about sex- leads to a life of depravation and promiscuity. In fact, the evidence tends to run in the opposite direction: well-informed kids do not need to make reckless experiments of their own."

Perry Nodelman, author said: "We usually don't want them to know on the basis that it will harm or pervert them - that knowledge of evil will make them evil. That ignores one salient fact: our own knowledge of evil has not made us evil."

Lesson Plan for 4-8 grade

Using Nude Art in the Classroom



Michelangelo, *Creation of Man*



San Vitale, Ravenna Mosaic, *Emperor Justinian and Courtiers*

Goal: Students will understand the importance of drawing the nude figure to gain a mastery of art and to show emotion, ideals, and ideas.

Materials needed: A slide of *The Creation of Man* by Michelangelo and a Medieval Mosaic *Emperor Justinian and Courtiers*, drawing materials and paper, a glove for each student.

Lesson: Most artists draw the nude figure, either as practice from a live model or from memory in their works of art. There are many reasons that artists depict figures without clothes. Some reasons:

- Clothes put a date on the work of art whereas nude figures are more timeless.
- The nude figure can show more expressiveness through position, muscles, and body type.
- Nude figures are important to the story i.e. Adam never had clothes before being created.

Show the slides *The Creation of Man* by Michelangelo and a Medieval Mosaic *Emperor Justinian and Courtiers*. The Medieval mosaic shows figures clothed, you cannot see any body movement or language. The figure of Adam in Michelangelo's work, on the other hand, is unclothed and shows more emotion through body language. His limp, lifeless hand is waiting for the touch of god to instill life in his powerful body.

Activity: Give the students a glove and have them draw their gloved hand. Then have the students draw their hand without the glove (nude). Which is harder to draw? Which is more interesting? Which has more texture, color, light and shadow, line, or shape? Which drawing is more expressive?

Evaluation: Ask the students why they think art students today take life drawing classes - drawing nude models. If they are able to understand that students need to be able to draw muscles, skin, and textures of the human form the lesson was successful.

Lesson Plan for 9-12

Using Nude Art in the Classroom



Edouard Manet, *Olympia* 1863



Sylvia Sleigh, *Imperial Nude: Paul Rosano* 1975

Goal: Students will understand how the depiction of nudity has changed throughout art history by comparing a traditional nude painting of a woman and a late 20th century nude painting of a man.

Materials needed: A slide of *Olympia* by Edouard Manet and *Imperial Nude: Paul Rosano* by Sylvia Sleigh, drawing materials and paper, a previously completed drawing by each of the students of one/several figures.

Lesson:

Nudes, especially nude women, in art bring up a lot of controversy today over the male gaze, women used in paintings to subordinate them and assert male power etc. But this is not an excuse to stop teaching and showing these paintings to students. Use this as a good topic for discussion. Discuss various social systems and feminist origins in 20th century.

Show the students *Olympia* by Edouard Manet and *Imperial Nude: Paul Rosano* by Sylvia Sleigh. Manet's piece is a very traditional composition. Almost every artist since the Renaissance has painted a nude woman in this pose. Sleigh has done a similar composition only using a male. Lead a discussion with the students asking questions: How has the feeling or undertones of the painting changed? There seems to be a reversal of power by simply changing the gender of the figure. Why is this? What attitudes do we as viewers have toward the woman laid out before us? Does this attitude translate over to the male nude? Why would a woman artist in the 1970s choose to paint a male nude in a traditional composition? Discuss how the feminist revolution might have had an impact on art.

Activity: Have the students choose a figural drawing they did before and draw a copy of the work but change the gender of all the figures. Does it change the meaning of their art? How is it different? Something will change even if it is a subtle shift in mood but the gender of a figure is very important to the final piece.