

**Why do we continue to be fascinated by representations of the body?** Does the contemporary climate alter our response to images of the body? You may use examples from art history and/or theoretical debates as well as images from contemporary art practice to build your discussion.

**Stripped bare : the body revealed in contemporary art** / edited by Marianne Karabelnik. Explores the naked body in contemporary art and photography, presenting a powerful selection of works by many of the most highly acclaimed artists of our time, including Cindy Sherman, Nan Goldin, Jeff Koons, Gerhard Richter and Araki. Many of the works have never previously been published and the forceful and often erotic images are accompanied by insightful essays that elucidate the complex and ongoing relationship between the body, the artist and the voyeur. This stunning and highly original book will appeal to anyone interested in contemporary art and culture.

**Obituary: Maria Lassnig: Austrian artist with a fascination for the naked human body, particularly her own** / The Guardian (London), May 13, 2014

Tuesday, GUARDIAN OBITUARIES PAGES; Pg. 33, 965 words, Christopher Masters  
The imagery of the consumer impressed [Maria Lassnig] even more deeply after her move to New York in 1968. Modern society's ubiquitous plastic wrapping is visible in a still life with fruit as early as 1971, but soon afterwards Lassnig transferred it to an altogether grander subject: the body itself. The Self-portrait Encased in Plastics (1972) was the first of the material's many ambivalent appearances with the human figure, as an image of preservation or suffocation, an ornament or a barrier representing isolation. These "body-awareness paintings" transformed figures into expressions of the artist's physical sensations - "the only true reality is my feelings, played out within the confines of my body". The type of distortion varies greatly: limbs are elongated; noses turned into pigs' snouts; mouths pulled into shocking grimaces. On other occasions Lassnig's own strong features are recognisable, as she stares at us, while brandishing a pair of revolvers, or gapes blindfolded, with a cooking pot on her head. Domestic implements are not the only instruments of oppression in Lassnig's work. The 16mm films that she shot in the 1970s often explore feminist issues, including the conventional relationship between the male artist and the female model, wittily reversed in Art Education (1976). Perhaps Lassnig's most eloquent statement about herself was the semi-animated film Cantata, made in 1992. In this feature, she tunelessly sings her way through an amusing autobiographical ballad while donning a succession of outlandish costumes. As Lassnig puts it, while miming her favourite activities of skiing and biking: "I just don't feel my life has nearly ended . . . I know it's art so dear that keeps me young and clear." She remained vibrantly active for another 22 years and in 2013 was awarded the Golden Lion lifetime achievement award at the Venice Biennale.

**The Body In Contemporary Art** / Sally O'Reilly

In recent decades, the body has moved from being the subject of traditional portraiture to become an active presence in live and participatory events. Art historical, socio-political and cultural developments, from radical feminism in the 1970s to contemporary scientific

breakthroughs, have all had a profound influence on artists' attitudes to, and representations of, the human form.

*The Body in Contemporary Art* presents an international survey of art made since the early 1990s that has the body as its focus. It examines such areas as nature and technology, the grotesque, identity politics and the place of the individual in society.

From painting and sculpture to installation, video art and performance, *The Body in Contemporary Art* reveals the myriad ways in which the body has inspired a generation of artists. Featuring the work of both renowned and up-and-coming figures, including Francis Alÿs, Marlene Dumas, Matthew Barney, Oleg Kulik, Rineke Dijkstra and Ernesto Neto, this book shows how the body continues to be pivotal to our understanding and expression of our place in the universe.

### **Art and Obscenity** / 24 Nov 2006 by Kerstin Mey

Explicit material is more widely available in the internet age than ever before, yet the concept of 'obscenity' remains as difficult to pin down as it is to approach without bias: notions of what is 'obscene' shift with societies' shifting mores, and our responses to explicit or disturbing material can be highly subjective. In this intelligent and sensitive book, Kerstin Mey grapples with the work of twentieth-century artists practising at the edges of acceptability, from Hans Bellmer through to Nobuyoshi Araki, from Robert Mapplethorpe to Annie Sprinkle, and from Hermann Nitsch to Paul McCarthy. Mey refuses sweeping statements and 'knee-jerk' responses, arguing with dexterity that some works, regardless of their 'high art' context, remain deeply problematic, whilst others are both groundbreaking and liberating.

### **Art and Sex** / 20 Apr 2008 by Gray Watson

In this 'no-holds barred' volume Gray Watson surveys the vast array of images of sex and sexuality in contemporary art. He finds sex in some surprising places and draws some fascinating conclusions. His initial consideration of contemporary art's focus on the body leads to an exploration of the important contributions made by the feminist and queer movements. He uncovers sex in the city, sex in nature, and the intimate relationship between sex and the sacred. Looking into representations of 'taboo' sexualities including sado-masochism, voyeurism and exhibitionism, Watson argues that such images offer clues to an understanding of much more than just sex. The art discussed ranges from the playful to the dark, from the shockingly overt to the poetically allusive, and includes work by artists such as Marina Abramovi, Nobuyoshi Araki, Louise Bourgeois, Gilbert & George, Jeff Koons, and Carolee Schneemann.

### **The Body: Photoworks of the Human Form** / 26 Sep 1994 by William A. Ewing

The sensual curve of the hip. The disturbing pucker of a scar. The magnetic pull of the lashed eye. In this book, William A. Ewing presents an archive of over 360 photographic images of the body - beautiful, bizarre, sometimes brutally revealing - reflecting many years research and selection in museums, libraries and private collections throughout North America, Europe and Japan. Photography has intensified our obsessive attraction to images of the body for at least 150 years. This book reveals a long tradition of photographing the nude, looking at the many different ways it has been depicted in the photographer's art: the

full figure nude; the body in fragments; the body as an object of sexual desire and in the realm of dream, fantasy and obsession. Also included are bodies scrutinised by medical and anatomical photographers, and those celebrated by photographers of sport, dance and fashion. Most of the greatest names in photography are represented here: Nadar, Muybridge and Roger Fenton from the earliest days of the medium; later Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Weston, Imogen Cunningham and Man Ray; and from our own time John Coplans, Robert Mapplethorpe, Barbara Kruger, Pierre Radisic and many others. Today, in the age of the supermodel and the super-athlete, consciousness of both the private and the public body has never been greater. From 19th-century erotica to the sexual politics of the 1990s, this book in a special slipcased edition provides a rich archive of bodily forms, male and female, and a record of the camera's infatuation with the human figure. William A. Ewing is a renowned authority in the field of photography. His many books include "The Fugitive Gesture" (1987), "Flora Photographica: Masterpieces of Flower Photography" (1991) and "Breaking Bounds: The Dance Photography of Lois Greenfield" (1992) - all published by Thames and Hudson.

**Love and Desire: Photoworks / 20 Sep 1999 by William A. Ewing**

A sequel to "The Body", this volume contains over 300 images, discovered during a lifetime's discriminating research into a century and a half of photography. They represent love and desire in all its many forms: the love of parents for their children and vice versa; the love between men and women; between men; between women. There is forbidden love. There is love as a saleable commodity and love as a symbol of absolute generosity. There is love of the body and love of the divine. Sex, affection, adoration, adulation; all these words have their visual equivalents in these images.

**The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality / 3 Dec 1992 by Lynda Nead**

Anyone who examines the history of Western art must be struck by the prevalence of images of the female body. More than any other subject, the female nude connotes 'art'. The framed image of a female body, hung on the walls of an art gallery, is an icon of Western culture, a symbol of civilization and accomplishment. But how and why did the female nude acquire this status?

*The Female Nude* brings together, in an entirely new way, analysis of the historical tradition of the female nude and discussion of recent feminist art, and by exploring the ways in which acceptable and unacceptable images of the female body are produced and maintained, renews recent debates on high culture and pornography.

*The Female Nude* represents the first feminist survey of the most significant subject in Western art. It reveals how the female nude is now both at the centre and at the margins of high culture. At the centre, and within art historical discourse, the female nude is seen as the visual culmination of enlightenment aesthetics; at the edge, it risks losing its respectability and spilling over into the obscene.

**Bodies and culture: discourses, communities, representations, performances / by Damon Talbott, Marike Janzen, Christopher E Forth**

Bodies and Culture is a collection of contemporary interdisciplinary research on bodies from emerging scholars in the humanities and social sciences disciplines and addresses

issues relating to a range of historical and contemporary contexts, theories, and methods. Examining the diversity and capabilities of bodies, this volume focuses on the role of culture in shaping forms and conceptions of the corporeal. In particular, these essays interrogate the role of the body in articulating and reinforcing social differences, especially the effects of racist, colonialist, and other hegemonic ideologies on the agency and diversity of bodies. *Bodies and Culture* also considers the place of the body in forming identities, images, and narratives of individuals, and the practices of modifying bodies and social roles through physical activities from exercise to artistic performance. This collection will appeal to scholars in a wide range of areas, including literature, anthropology, sociology, art history, cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, and fat studies.

**A Lifelong Fascination with Flesh: Jenny Saville's sensational paintings of the human body belong to a tradition that stretches back to Titian, says Martin Gayford** by Martin Gay Ford

The thickness, viscosity, translucency and texture of pigment suspended in oil somehow makes it an unmatched vehicle for evoking skin and the underlying layers of fat, muscle and bone. [...]her pictures of people blurring into one another.

**The History of Sexuality: an Introduction** / 31 Dec 1990 by Michel Foucault

**The History of Sexuality: An Introduction (also known as) The Will to Knowledge** / by Michel Foucault

The author turns his attention to sex and the reasons why we are driven constantly to analyze and discuss it. An iconoclastic explanation of modern sexual history.

**The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure** / by Michel Foucault

In this sequel to *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, the brilliantly original French thinker who died in 1984 gives an analysis of how the ancient Greeks perceived sexuality.

Throughout *The Uses of Pleasure* Foucault analyzes an irresistible array of ancient Greek texts on eroticism as he tries to answer basic questions: How in the West did sexual experience become a moral issue? And why were other appetites of the body, such as hunger, and collective concerns, such as civic duty, not subjected to the numberless rules and regulations and judgments that have defined, if not confined, sexual behavior?

**The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self** / by Michel Foucault

*The Care of the Self* is the third and possibly final volume of Michel Foucault's widely acclaimed examination of "the experience of sexuality in Western society." Foucault takes us into the first two centuries of our own era, into the Golden Age of Rome, to reveal a subtle but decisive break from the classical Greek vision of sexual pleasure. He skillfully explores the whole corpus of moral reflection among philosophers (Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca) and physicians of the era, and uncovers an increasing mistrust of pleasure and growing anxiety over sexual activity and its consequences.

Goldin, N., *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, New York, Aperture, 1996.

Goldin, N., M. Heiferman, M. Holborn and S. Fletcher, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, New York, Aperture, 2012.

<http://www.jeffkoons.com/artwork/made-in-heaven>