Press release

Masculine / Masculine
The Nude Man in Art from 1800 to the present day

Level 0,
Main exhibition area
24 September 2013 – 2 January 2014

Pierre et Gilles, Mercure [Mercury], 2001
© Pierre et Gilles. Courtesy Galerie Jérôme de Noirmont, Paris

Jean-Baptiste Frédéric Desmarais, The Shepherd Paris, 1787
Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, Photo © NGC

While it has been quite natural for the female nude to be regularly exhibited, the male nude has not been accorded the same treatment. It is highly significant that until the show at the Leopold Museum in Vienna in the autumn of 2012, no exhibition had opted to take a fresh approach, over a long historical perspective, to the representation of the male nude. However, male nudity was for a long time, from the 17th to 19th centuries, the basis of traditional Academic art training and a key element in Western creative art. Therefore when presenting the exhibition Masculine / Masculine, the Musée d’Orsay, drawing on the wealth of its own collections (with several hitherto unknown sculptures) and on other French public collections, aims to take an interpretive, playful, sociological and philosophical approach to exploring all aspects and meanings of the male nude in art. Given that the 19th century took its inspiration from 18th century classical art, and that this influence still resonates today, the Musée d’Orsay is extending its traditional historical range in order to draw a continuous arc of creation through two centuries down to the present day. The exhibition will include the whole range of techniques: painting, sculpture, graphic arts and, of course, photography, which will have an equal place in the exhibition.

To convey the specifically masculine nature of the body, the exhibition, in preference to a dull chronological presentation, takes the visitor on a journey through a succession of thematic focuses, including the aesthetic canons inherited from Antiquity, their reinterpretation in the Neo-Classical, Symbolist and contemporary eras where the hero is increasingly glorified, the Realist fascination for truthful representation of the body, nudity as the body’s natural state, the suffering of the body and the expression of pain, and finally its eroticisation. The aim is to establish a genuine dialogue between different eras in order to reveal how certain artists have been prompted to reinterpret earlier works. In the mid 18th century, Winckelmann examined the legacy of the divine proporzioni of the body inherited from Antiquity, which, in spite of radical challenges, still apply today having mysteriously come down through the history of art as the accepted definition of beauty. From Jacques-Louis David to George Platt-Lynes, LaChapelle and Pierre et Gilles, and including Gustave Moreau, a whole series of connections is revealed, based around issues of power, censorship, modesty, the boundaries of public expectation and changes in social mores.

Winckelmann’s glorification of Greek beauty reveals an implicit carnal desire, relating to men as well as women, which certainly comes down through two centuries from the “Barbus” group and from David’s studio, to David Hockney and the film director James Bidgood. This sensibility also permeates the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries as it questions its own identity, as we see in the extraordinary painting École de Platon [School of Plato], inexplicably purchased by the French state in 1912 from the Belgian artist Delville. Similarly, the exhibition will reveal other visual and intellectual relationships through the works of artists as renowned as Georges de La Tour, Pierre Puget, Abilgaard, Paul Flandrin, Bouguereau, Hodler, Schiele, Munch, Picasso, Bacon,
Mapplethorpe, Freud and Mueck, while lining up some surprises like the Mexican Angel Zarraga’s *Saint Sébastien* [Saint Sebastian], De Chirico’s *Les Bains mystérieux* [Mysterious Baths] and the erotica of Americans Charles Demuth and Paul Cadmus.

This autumn therefore, the Musée d’Orsay will invite the visitor to an exhibition that challenges the continuity of a theme that has always interested artists, through unexpected yet productive confrontations between the various revivals of the nude man in art.

**Curators:** Guy Cogeval, director of the Musée d’Orsay and Musée de l’Orangerie  
Ophélie Ferlier, sculpture curator, Musée d’Orsay  
Xavier Rey, curator of painting, Musée d’Orsay  
Ulrich Pohlmann, director of the photography collection, Stadtmuseum, Munich  
Tobias G. Natter, director of the Leopold Museum in Vienna

The exhibition has been organised by the Musée d’Orsay in collaboration with the Leopold Museum in Vienna  
With the support of [Slendertone](#)  
[Francesco Smalto](#)  
[Tollens](#)

**Media partners:** Le Parisien, L’Express, Têtu, Marie Claire, ARTE, RTL

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### Around the exhibition

### Publications
- Exhibition catalogue, texts by Claude Arnaud, Guy Cogeval, Philippe Comar and Charles Dantzig, joint publication by Musée d’Orsay / Flammarion, approx. 304 pages, approx. 250 illustrations, 22 x 29cm, approx. €40
- *The Naked Man in Art* by Philippe Comar, Special edition Découvertes Gallimard, joint publication Musée d’Orsay / Gallimard, 8 modules, approx. 50 illustrations, 120 x 170cm, €8.90

### Guided tours
- **Masculine/Masculine**, 1 October – 28 December, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 11.30am and 2.30pm, Wednesdays at 11.30am and Thursdays at 11.30am, 2.30pm and 7pm
- **The War of the Sexes**, in October, Thursdays from 7.30pm and 8.30pm

### A day of guided tours
- **Masculine / Feminine**, two guided tours in one day  
  Thursday 17 October, Friday 8 November and Friday 6 December

### Lectures
- *Discussion based on the exhibition Masculine / Masculine*, Friday 22 November 2013 at 12 noon  
  with the exhibition curators and Philippe Comar, artist, writer, professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Art de Paris

### Literary café
- **19th century writers and homosexuality**, Sunday 17 November 2013 at 4pm

### Cinema
- *Nudes and men*, Thursday 19 December to Sunday 22 December 2013

### An Evening at Orsay
- *Laid bare*, Thursday 7 November and 5 December at 6.45pm and 8.15pm

### Ranc’arts
- *The Invisible Man?* for 12-15 year olds

### Practical information
- Open daily except Monday, 9.30am to 6pm Thursdays until 9.45pm.  
  Closed 25 December and 1 January.  
  Admission: museum entrance ticket: full rate: €12; concessions: €9.50  
  Access through the main entrance 1, rue de la Légion d’Honneur, 75007 Paris  
  Information and switchboard: [www.musee-orsay.fr](http://www.musee-orsay.fr) - +33 (0)1 40 49 48 14

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