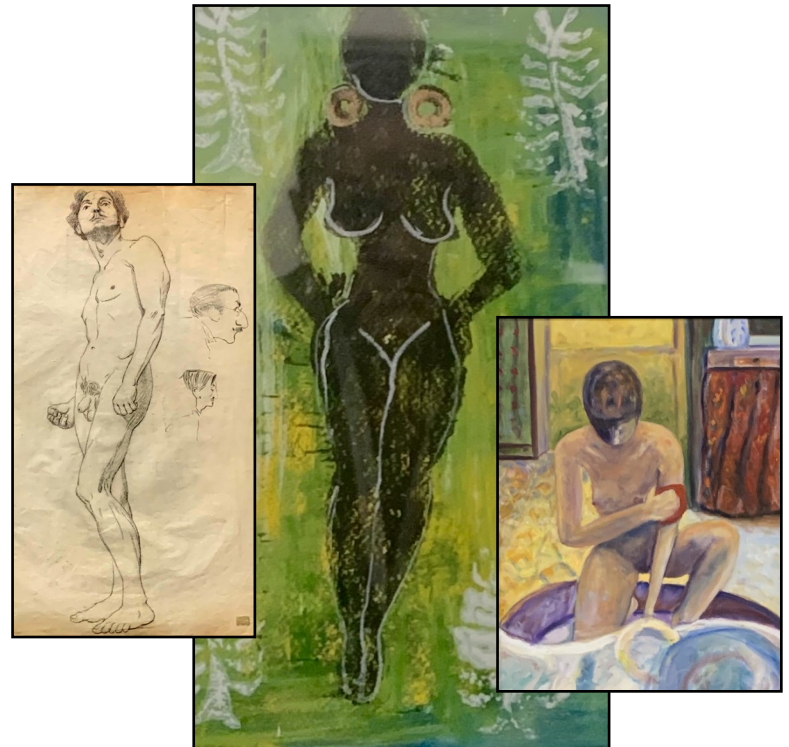


# *Nude or Naked?*

## *Perceptions of the Human Form in Art*



UCO Archives and Special Collections

Max Chambers Library

University of Central Oklahoma

Edmond, OK

September 2020

Cover artwork:

*Three Graces* by Suzanne Thomas-Justice, *Standing Man Study* by Gregory Gerrer, and *Bather* by Steve Goetzinger



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nude or Naked? Perceptions of the Human Form in Art	
Kristi Kohl.....	4-5
What Do You Think?.....	5
Artwork & Artists	
First Floor — Gallery Wall.....	6-7
Second Floor—Display Cases.....	8-10
Selected Bibliography .....	11-12

**NUDE OR NAKED?**  
**PERCEPTIONS OF THE HUMAN FORM IN ART**  
by Kristi Kohl

The nude has been the subject of art for centuries and continues to be a defining feature in art today. Early representations of the female nude probably had a religious function and served as a symbol of fertility. The idealized male nude that emerged in classical Greek sculptures (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century BC) memorialized real men and portrayed gods. Female nudes that emerged in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC often depicted a modest representation of Aphrodite, the female goddess of love. After the rise of Christianity, the most accepted representation of the nude was in religious art such as the biblical story of Adam and Eve. With the rediscovery of Greco-Roman antiquity in Italy in the 13-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the growing interest in human anatomy, nudity (and drawing nudes from life) became a respectable theme in visual art and science. Although nudes continued to be depicted in historical and mythological scenes, the 17<sup>th</sup> Baroque artists depicted more sensual nudes in naturalistic settings, and 18<sup>th</sup> century Rococo artists portrayed nudes in more frivolous surroundings. The female nude became a strong tradition for 19<sup>th</sup> century Impressionists illustrating modern life settings and for Post-Impressionists using new techniques and non-representational color.

The development of photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century greatly aided artists in their depiction of figures. Photography enabled artists to do away with lengthy modeling sessions and allowed them to portray less idealized and more inclusive portrayals of the human form. Given the rise of photography and more realistic representations of nude figures, the line between art and pornography became more obscured. In 1956, art historian Kenneth Clark offered his theory on the difference between nudity and nakedness: "...nudity refers to a culturally transcendent and virtuous depiction of an unclothed body, while nakedness refers to an exposed, vulnerable, and embarrassing image of an unclothed body."

The current exhibit, which includes more artwork on display on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, offers varied representations of the nude male and female figures in numerous mediums including paint, ink, crayon, pencil, print, mixed media, and photography.

Using Clark's definitions of *nudity* and *nakedness*, would you characterize some of the unclothed portrayals as nude and others as naked? Do some of the artists portray the classical idealized form? In your opinion, do any of the images border on pornography? Please answer these questions and offer your feedback about this exhibit by scanning the QR code below or using the provided link.

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Archives & Special Collections  
Max Chambers Library  
Edmond, OK

## **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JM6BVKQ>

## ARTISTS & ARTWORKS

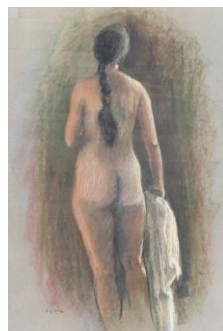
### First Floor — Gallery Wall



*Standing Man Study*

**Robert Francis Xavier Gerrer** was born in France in 1867 and immigrated with his family to the United States to escape the Franco-Prussian War in 1872. Twenty years later, Gerrer received his Benedictine habit and the religious name “Gregory.” His drawing *Standing Man Study* offers a glimpse into the artist’s creative thinking on paper. Artists began exploring ideas for paintings and sculptures by preparing quick sketches during the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. However, it wasn’t until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century that the first graphite sticks encased in wood appeared.

Trained in the traditions of the American Impressionist, **Susan Goetz’s** *Standing Nude* reflects the style’s focus on color and light. Pastel became a popular medium in French artist Edgar Degas’ famous depictions of dancers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and became one of American artist Mary Cassatt’s favorite mediums for its vast array of colors, ease of use, and painterly handling when portraying her mother and child themes.



*Standing Nude*

The traditional Three Graces of Greek mythology, representing fertility, charm, and beauty, have been depicted in art and literature throughout history. Working with this age-old story, **Suzanne Thomas-Justices’s** modern portrayal of three African-American goddesses emphasizes their feminine power and beauty. The figures stand apart, demonstrating their own independence and individual strength.



*Three Graces*

**Steve Goetzinger's** *Bather* depicts an anonymous woman in the intimate act of washing herself. While the female nude has long been an important subject in artistic expression, in the late 19th century artists began to represent real life moments such as women bathing indoors with modern plumbing. The flexibility of painting with oils allows artists to blend colors in thin, luminous layers or to apply thick, descriptive brushstrokes of impasto.



*Bather*

**George Oswalt's** *Seated Nude* is more realistic than his other paintings which often portray abstract, somewhat unsettling depictions of nude figures wearing masks or clown faces in dreamlike settings. In this example, the woman's serious gaze with the viewer is softened by the smooth blending and shading of the chalk pastels. Unlike 19th century portrayals of real-life moments, such as a woman bathing, this portrayal lacks any context allowing the viewer to simply appreciate the artist's technique and the female form.



*Seated Nude*

**Doel Reed**, a master printmaker, is best known for his expert use of light and shadow in his aquatints. Aquatint is a printmaking technique that produces tonal effects which look like ink or watercolor washes, often used to produce shaded areas in an etching. While invented in Amsterdam in the 17th century, aquatint was most elaborately employed by English etchers in the 18th century and most famously used by the Spanish painter Francisco Goya.



*Reclining Nude*



## ARTISTS & ARTWORKS

### Second Floor — Display Cases



*Seated Nude*

**Edith Goetz** grew up on her family's estate in Bedford Hills, New York where she became consumed with drawing at an early age. After one year at Smith College, Goetz moved to New York to study at the Art Students League and National Academy of Design. Upon graduation, she worked as a fashion illustrator for an ad agency.

In 1942 she met another young and talented artist, Richard Goetz, who had just moved to New York from Oklahoma. The two married and moved to Oklahoma City where they raised six children (3 of whom grew to be professional artists, too). The couple owned and operated art schools in Oklahoma City, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Malden Bridge, New York. In the late 1970's, Edith moved back to her family home in New York where she continued her art career primarily drawing pastel portraits. In 1986, the Grand Central Art Galleries assembled an exhibition of her life's work. Six months later, Goetz died of cancer.



*Birth of Spring*

**Doug Hyde** was born in Oregon of Nez Perce and Assiniboine background in 1946. He studied at the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe and at the San Francisco Institute of Art. Hyde then served with the army in Vietnam during which time he was gravely injured during a grenade attack in Saigon.

Upon his return, he moved back to Santa Fe where he continued his work in sculpture. He served as a faculty member at the Institute of American Indian Arts from 1972 until 1974 after which time he devoted himself full time to sculpting. For decades, Hyde has been a recognized leader among Native American artists. He is known primarily for his sculpting and artistic representations of Native American lore and heritage. In *Birth of Spring*, Hyde depicts the beginning of the tribal new year with the rebirth of plant and animal life.

**Dee J. Lafon** was born in Ogden, Utah in 1929. He received both his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1960 and his Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Drawing in 1962 from the University of Utah. He worked as an illustrator and taught painting and drawing before assuming the Chairmanship of the Art Department at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma in 1964. Following his retirement in 1984, Lafon established a studio in Norman and devoted himself to his artwork. Lafon was the recipient of many honors and awards including an Oklahoma Governor's Arts Award in 1992.



*Sleeping Nude*

LaFon's drawing of *Sleeping Nude* portrays an anonymous woman, a common depiction of the female figure during the sexual openness of the 20th century. Whereas the popular subject matter of the idealized female figure in the 19th century was often represented within the context of mythology, LaFon's modern drawing lacks any such context.



*Creatures*

**John Seward** was born in Oklahoma City in 1950. He graduated from Oklahoma City University with a major in psychology. In 1971, Seward co-founded Hobby Lobby Stores. Although he painted occasionally and exhibited in local art events through the 1970s and 1980s, it wasn't until his retirement from Hobby Lobby in 1994 that Seward was able to pursue his interests in painting and photography full time.

In 1998 in Oklahoma City, Seward premiered "Deux Fois," a portfolio of 10 double exposure photographs. *Creatures* is an example of double exposure photography by which two or more images are combined into a single frame. Seward continues to create complex imagery and is represented by galleries throughout the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

**Andre Tutak** is best known for his Impressionist style of painting in which he gives light a prominent role. Similar to the way Tutak captures the warmth of light in his paintings, he creates delicate shadows and highlights in his drawings. Employing an old drawing technique from the 15th century, Tutak drags a 24k gold rod across the board's surface slowly building up subtle tonal values that reflect metallic gold in certain angles.



*Nike*

Tutak was born in Wroclaw, Poland, and received his Associate of Science in Architecture from Wroclaw Architectural College in addition to completing his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. Tutak lived in Berlin, Germany for several years after his graduation before moving with his family to the United States in 1986. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Art and Design from the University of Central Oklahoma in 1991. Tutak's artwork has been featured in galleries and exhibitions across Oklahoma and in China, Poland, Germany, and Morocco.



*Female*

**Trent Lawson** has shown in juried and invitational shows throughout the state of Oklahoma since 1998. In preparation for some of his paintings (including *Female* to the left), Lawson lays string in wet gesso on canvas, studies the lines made by the string until a composition comes to mind, and then works to bring out the image. Lawson uses the application of gesso to create texture and depth. Historically, gesso was used as a primer that would be applied with a brush and finely sanded in between applications to create a smooth final surface on which to paint the work.

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