

# CONSIDER

## NUDITY IN ART

Every human has a body. In museums throughout the world, people encounter nudity in various forms, including paintings, sculpture, and photography.

The George Eastman Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits photography, film and video, and some of the imagery in the collection depicts nudity.

At times, objects containing nudity are exhibited in our galleries.

### **Question and Reflect**

- Nudity in art may create a situation where one needs to address their personal comfort level with the nude form.
- That comfort level can be impacted by an individual's background, profession, beliefs, or ideas of modesty and expression.
- The George Eastman Museum is accepting of all comfort levels and this reference has been created to act as a guide to explain why there is nudity in art, and perhaps help navigate the subject.

Please consider the various perspectives on the back of this card to understand why there is nudity in art.

**“He who does not master the nude cannot understand the principles of architecture.”**

—Michelangelo

Visit [eastman.org/Consider](http://eastman.org/Consider) for more resources.

## Historical Tradition

Nudity in art is an ancient concept, dating back to Greece in the fourth century BCE. The nude acted as a symbol used to portray an ideal form, or the hero in myths, sports, and war. In Western art traditions, the nude form appears in a variety of mediums.

## Training as an Artist

In art schools in higher education training includes life or figure drawing. In addition to being the historically accepted method of learning how to draw, it is also part of a long tradition for artists to gain experience with human anatomy, proportions, and flesh tones.

## Curatorial Perspective

Part of a curator's role is to ensure that a museum's collection and exhibitions reflect all aspects of our specific subject areas. The human form is considered a classic subject and artists continue to return to nudes to study light, shape, and form, but to also express themselves or to better understand how people express themselves.

## For Educators

If the museum has an encyclopedic collection, you may encounter nude forms throughout the galleries. We recommend explaining the historical context for nudity in art. Artists see the nude body as a three-dimensional form, to explore expressively.

## Talking with Children and Resources

In addition to explaining the historical tradition of nudity in art, also consider further resources:

- *Why is Art full of Naked People?* by Susie Hodge
- *It isn't Rude to be NUDE* by Rosie Haine
- *The Bare-Naked Book* by Kathy Stinson