

THE NAKED TRUTH



A no-nonsense guide
for addressing nudity in
the art museum



Acknowledge Discomfort

Seeing nude bodies may make some people feel uncomfortable. Some of us, depending on our lived experiences and cultural or religious backgrounds, may prefer to spend time studying other artworks in the exhibition instead, and that's ok.

However, if you'd like some general tips for addressing nudity during your visit, this brochure can help you take a measured, no-nonsense approach.

Establish Vocabulary

In an art museum, we don't use the word **"naked"** to describe people who aren't wearing clothes.

Instead, we say **"nude,"** a special art word that reminds us it is nothing we need to feel embarrassed or shy about.

Nudity has been part of art history for as long as humans have been making art!



Contextualize

Artists have always been interested in representing the human body, because it's something we all have!

Artists use nudity for a variety of reasons beyond creating something "naughty."

These reasons might include:

- ✧ Showing off their skill at capturing a realistic-looking person
- ✧ Because it makes sense given what's happening in the artwork (i.e., a mother nursing a baby, someone taking a bath)
- ✧ Illustrating scenes from ancient texts that described people as unclothed
- ✧ Referencing art history and the artists who came before them
- ✧ Trying to shock us or make us question our expectations

IMAGE CREDITS

COVER *j2020!*, 2020. Einar de la Torre (American, born Mexico, 1963), and Jamex de la Torre (American, born Mexico, 1960). Mixed-media, blown-glass, and cast resin. Collection of the Cafesjian Art Trust Museum, 2024.370.3.

INSIDE *The Mexican Government*, 2015. Einar de la Torre (American, born Mexico, 1963), and Jamex de la Torre (American, born Mexico, 1960). Blown-glass, mixed-media. Courtesy of Bryan Scrivner.

This Exhibition

In *Collidoscope*, much of the nudity comes directly from art historical sources, including paintings that illustrate stories from the Bible (like the Last Judgement) or Greco-Roman mythology (like Venus and Cupid).

In other cases, the artists use nudity to express their own ideas about current events or politics. For example, in *Mexican Government*, the nude figure brings to mind the story of the emperor who had no clothes. It also alludes to being "caught with your pants down."

The exposed body in this sculpture helps reinforce the artists' message.

