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12 Famous Drawings Reveal How Artists Interpret The Naked Human Body

The Huffington Post | By Katherine Brooks



Posted: 08/25/2014 8:44 am EDT | Updated: 09/08/2014 1:59 pm EDT



For as long as human beings have set pen to paper -- or, drawing utensil to wall -- the body has served as a special kind of muse. More specifically, the naked body.



Stewart Helm, The line and the lust, 2011, Ink on paper, 50 x 70cm, Courtesy the artist, Photo Peter White

From the Renaissance to Romanticism, the details of naked limbs and torsos served as spaces for artists to explore aspects of sexuality and desire, reality and imagination. And as artists began drawing, painting and sculpting in more sophisticated ways, the universal obsession with nude curves seemed only to intensify.

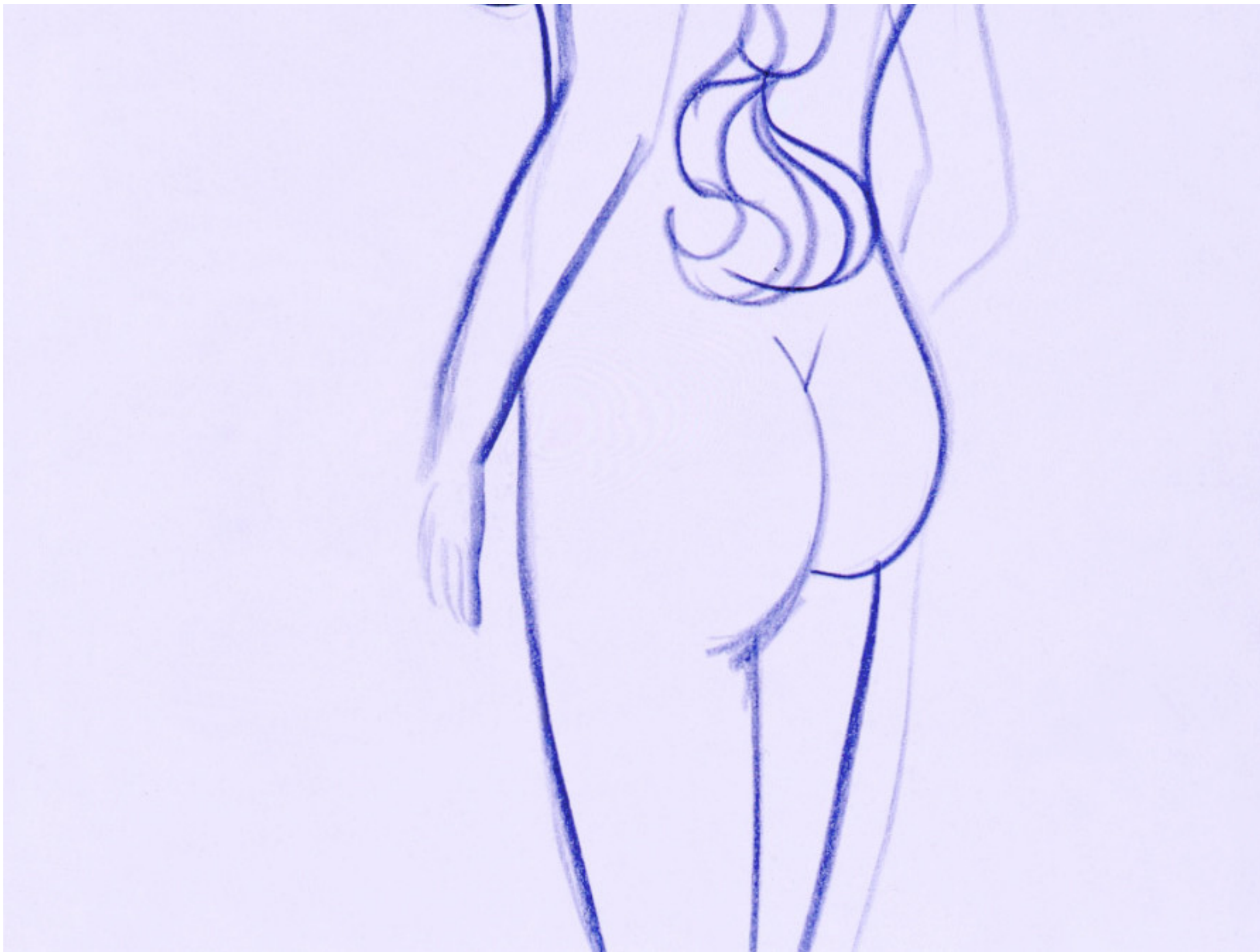


Maria Lassnig, Woman in the Bed, 2002, Pencil and watercolour on paper, 50.2 x 64.1cm, Private collection, New York.

Come the age of modern and contemporary art, the renderings of nude figures veered in every which direction. Egon Schiele twisted lines into beautifully grotesque creatures, while Andy Warhol cut, pasted and printed bodies from popular culture. Marlene Dumas stretched and contorted shadowy figures, while Rosemarie Trockel disembodied her naked subjects. Be it some version of the feminine form or the male physique, artists masterfully blurred the lined between art and pornography.

"The representation of the nude in art is a victory of fiction over fact," art historian Frances Borzello declares in the book *The Naked Nude*. "Its great success has been to distance the unclothed body from any uncomfortably explicit taint of sexuality, eroticism or imperfection."





George Condo, Nude Study (i), 2007, Blue pencil on paper, 30.3 x 22.8cm, Courtesy Simon Lee Gallery, London. Private collection UK.

An upcoming exhibition at London's Drawing Room is set to display a short history of the art world's obsession with our birthday suits. The show launches off from the grandfather of contemporary nudes, Schiele, tracing his drawings of the "single figure." From there, the aptly titled "Nakeds" moves to the sketches of Louise Bourgeois, Paul McCarthy, Tracey Emin, and Chris Ofilli. The collected works reveal isolated images of nude forms from the post-war period to present; beings that both dominate the blank spaces of a page and elevate the possibilities of two-dimensions.

The exhibition officially opens on September 25, but we have a preview of the show below. Feast your eyes on 12 famous drawings of the nude that break open the historical treasure trove of naked art.





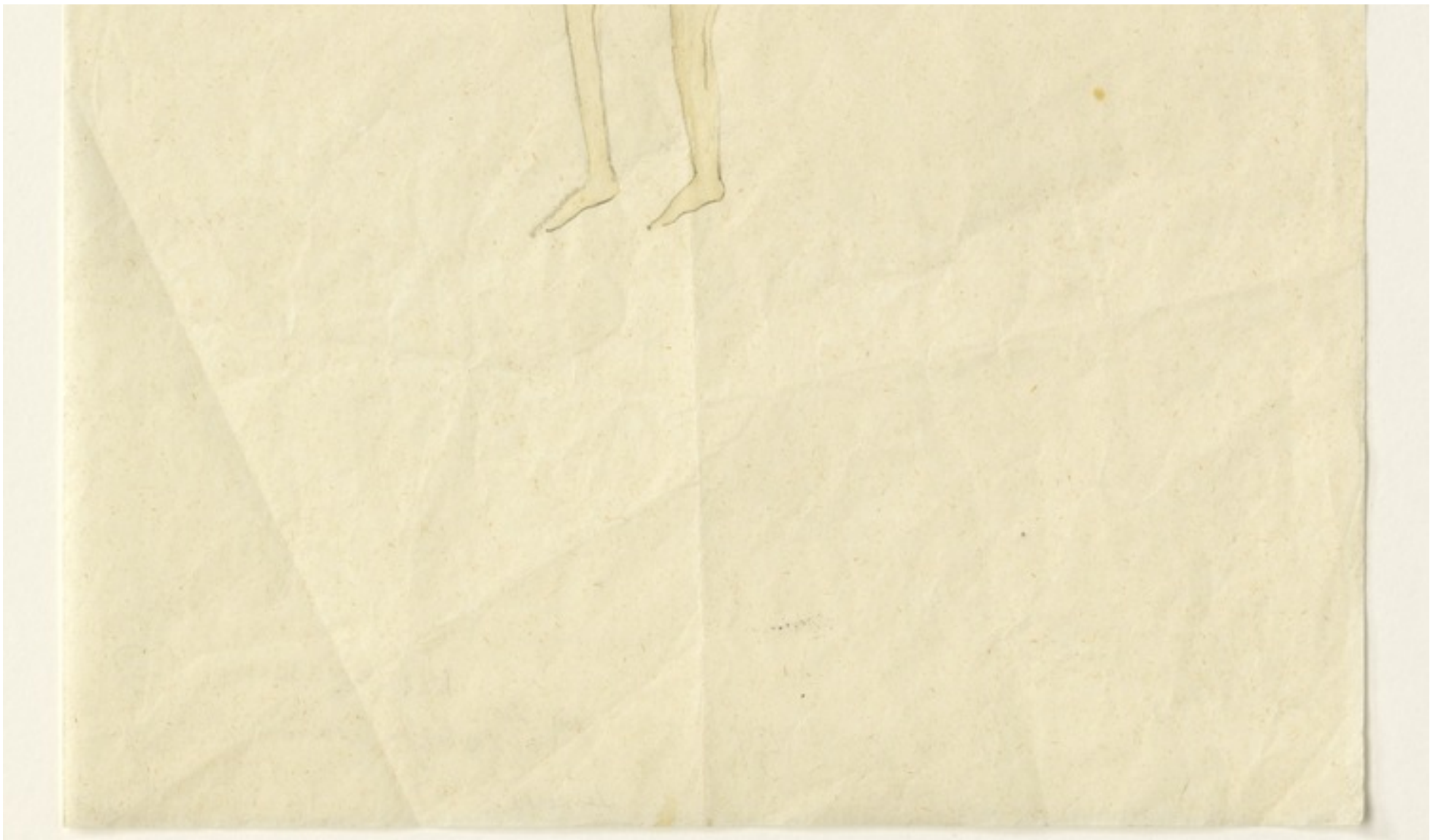
Egon Schiele, Self portrait, 1917, Lithograph, 42 x 21cm, Courtesy Richard Nagy, London.



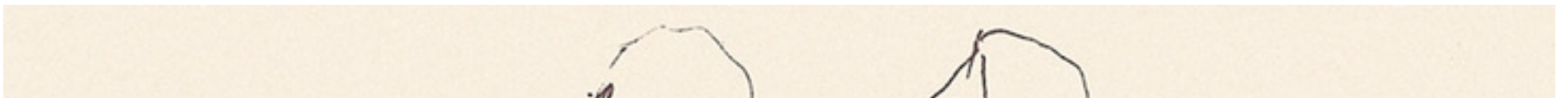


Chris Ofili, Untitled (Afronude), 2006, Watercolour and pencil on paper, 63.5 x 43.2cm, Private collection, London.





Joseph Beuys, Girl with Apple, 1954, Pencil and watercolour on paper, 29.5 x 21cm, Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, © DACS 2014.







Alina Szapocznikow, Bust-Length Figure of a Woman, Headless 2, c.1971, Felt tip pen on perforated paper 32 x 23.4cm, Private Collection, Paris Courtesy The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow / Piotr Stanislawski / Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris © ADAGP, Paris. Photo Fabrice Gousset







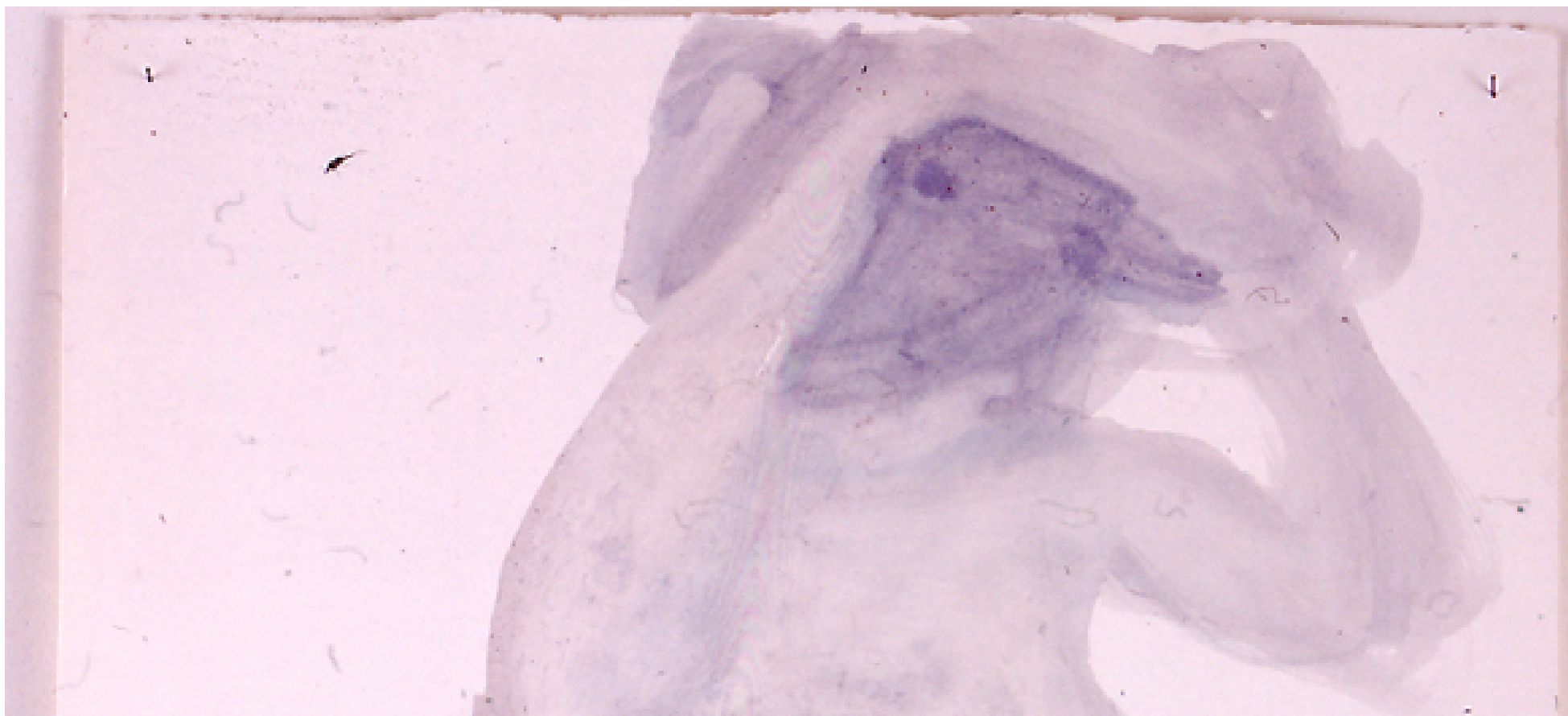
George Condo, Couple, 2007, Pencil on paper, 45.1 x 43.1cm, Courtesy Simon Lee Gallery, London. Private collection, UK.



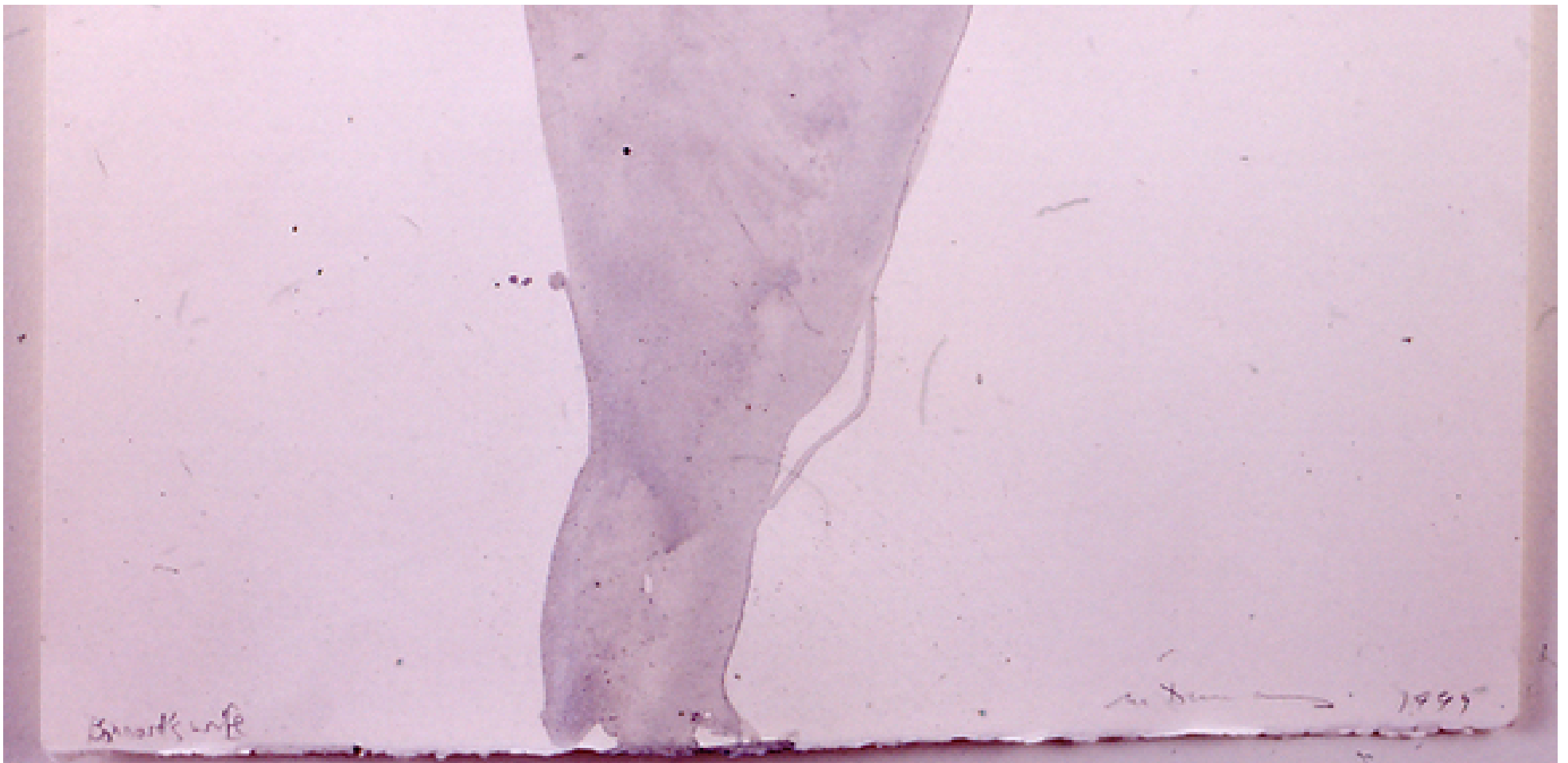




Rosemarie Trockel, I feel something, 1995, Pencil on paper, 31.4 x 21cm, Courtesy the artist and Sprüth Magers.



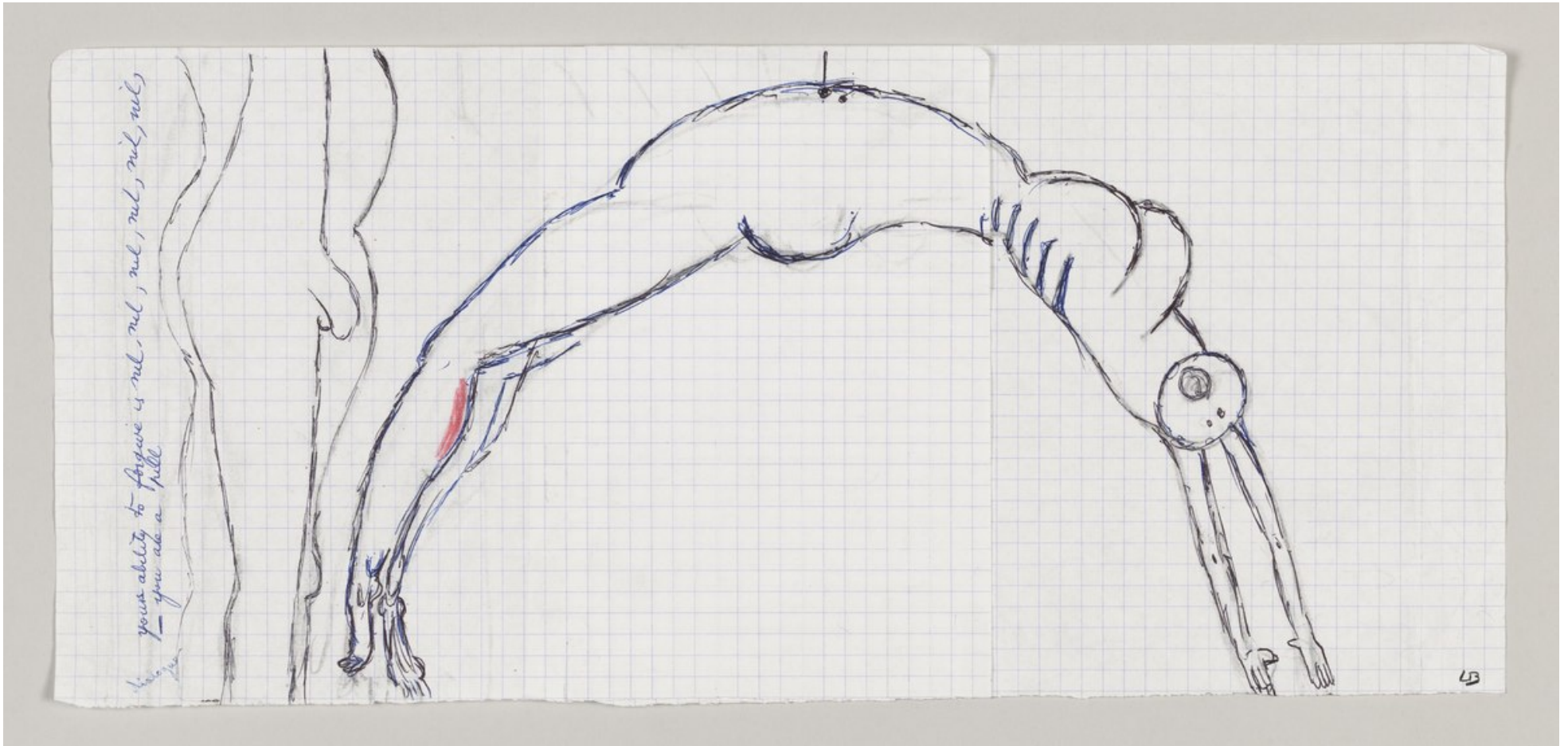




Marlene Dumas, Bonnards wife, 1999, Ink and acrylic on paper. 125 x 70cm, Courtesy the artist Private collection, London.



Paul McCarthy, Étant donnés White Snow Walt Paul Drawings, 2013, Pencil on paper, 45.7 x 61cm, (1 of 8 drawings), Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



Louise Bourgeois, *Arch of Hysteria*, 1992, Ink, pencil and crayon on graph paper, 20.3 x 43.2cm, ©The Easton Foundation/ DACS 2014.

"The NAKEDS" will be on view at the Drawing Room from September 25 to November 29, 2014.

Andy Warhol's Eye Candy (NSFW)

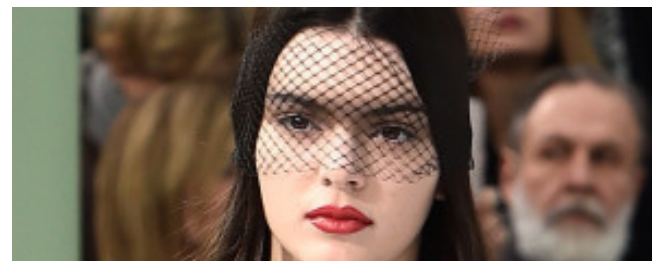
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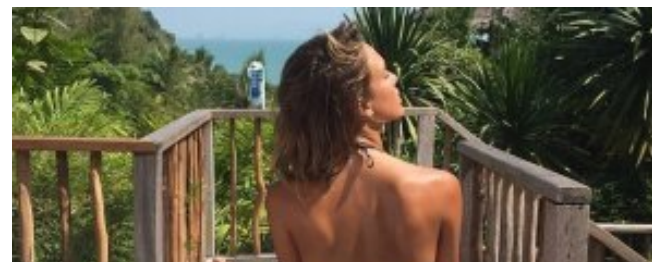
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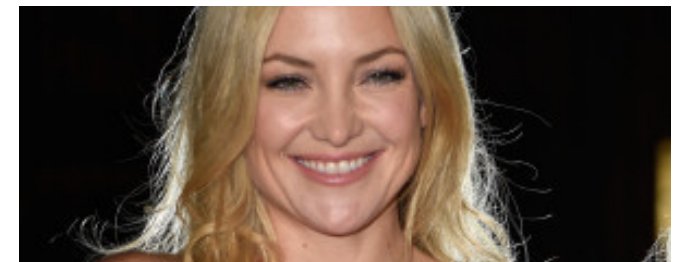
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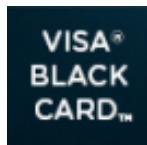


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Sean Stephane Martin · ★ Top Commenter · As shown at Illustrator and cartoonist

Well, based on the images, they dont portray it very well.

But hey, I guess the Arts section needed a little click bait, huh.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 5 · August 25, 2014 at 3:30pm



Darr Sandberg · ★ Top Commenter · Works at I am a self employed artist

That is the really tragic thing about this article. There are many truly moving, compelling and beautiful line drawings of the human nude -

none of which appear in the article. And the term famous has been used so loosely here as to have no real meaning.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · August 26, 2014 at 1:56pm



Sean Stephane Martin · ★ Top Commenter · As shown at Illustrator and cartoonist

Darr Sandberg Well, at least they didnt call these "iconic".

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · August 26, 2014 at 3:02pm



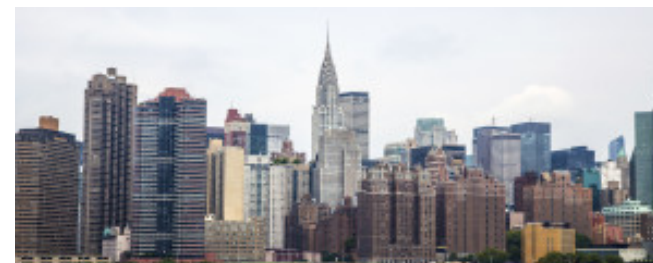
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Bp Laval · Los Angeles, California

Beautiful drawings Katherine! Here's a project along the same lines.
"An erotic drawing a day."
Tenting01.tumblr.com

Reply · Like · 2 · August 25, 2014 at 12:18pm



James Tarr · ★ Top Commenter · Merchandiser at Sears

I just don't get some of these as art. I could make better drawings using my left hand.
My question is, what constitutes as art and who decides?

Reply · Like · 2 · August 25, 2014 at 7:47pm



Sean Stephane Martin · ★ Top Commenter · As shown at Illustrator and cartoonist

These days? PR machines. "Professional art" has become almost as much a joke as "professional music" and "Hollywood films".

Reply · Like · 1 · August 26, 2014 at 4:52am



Mike Bell · ★ Top Commenter

Did they take mushrooms first?

Reply · Like · 2 · August 25, 2014 at 9:31pm



Marta Aleksandra Zboralska · London, United Kingdom

The exhibition will open at Drawing ROOM (in London!), not the Drawing Center!

Reply · Like · Edited · August 27, 2014 at 5:12am



Sara Louise · ★ Top Commenter

nude art.

Reply · Like · August 25, 2014 at 8:28pm



Paulina Penc

<http://p2phosphor.tumblr.com/>

Reply · Like · 1 · August 26, 2014 at 12:47am



Jim Davis · ★ Top Commenter

Thank you very much for sharing this beautiful link. I love it. (...that ice cream cone looks very good too...ha ha..)

Reply · Like · 1 · August 28, 2014 at 11:55pm

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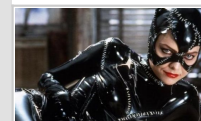
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