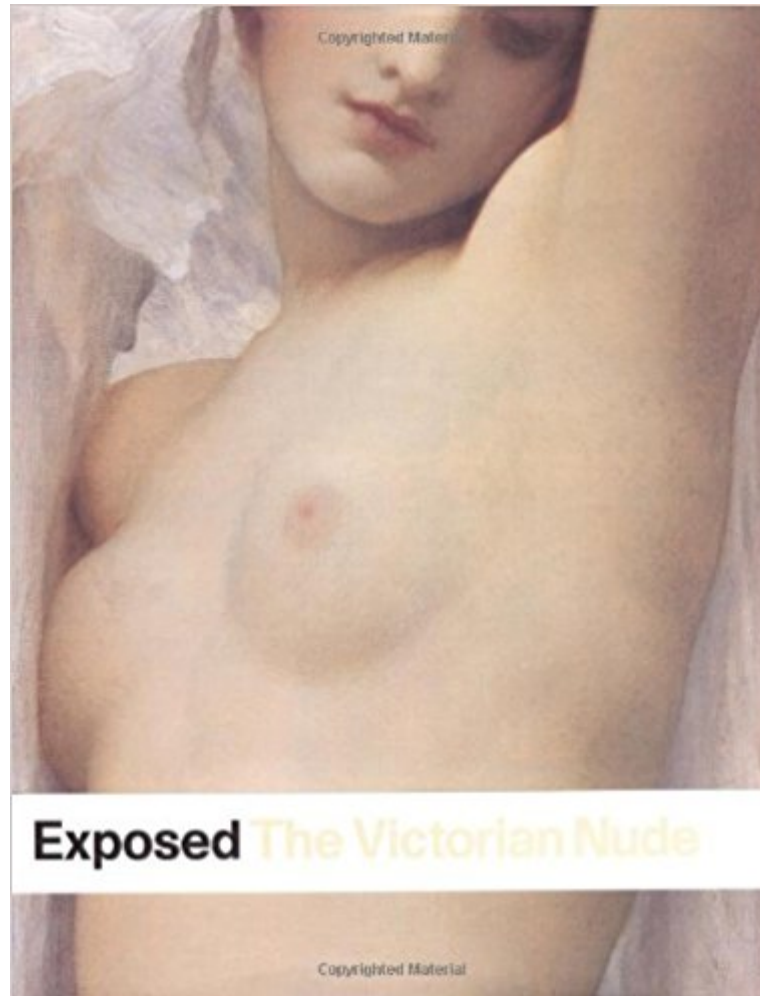


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# Exposed: The Victorian Nude



## Synopsis

The epitome of high culture or an assault on public morality? The nude figure was one of the most controversial issues in Victorian art. It was also one of the most conspicuous categories for the visual image at every level, from elite paintings for the Royal Academy to mass-produced photographs and magazine illustrations. *Exposed: The Victorian Nude* provides a fascinating overview of the nude figure—both male and female—and the intriguing role it played in Victorian art. While it concentrates on painting, sculpture, and drawing, this beautifully illustrated reference also explores the depiction of the body in other media—including photography, popular illustration, advertising, and caricature—and discusses the issues of morality, utility, and desire that are relevant even today. Since nudes were an important subject for most Victorian artists, *Exposed: The Victorian Nude* showcases dazzling artwork from such legendary masters as Millais, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Whistler, and Sargent, as well as pivotal figures of early English modernism. Cutting across the conventional categories of style and period, this guide offers a fresh, engrossing vision of Victorian art and culture unmatched anywhere else. • Beautifully produced and full of breathtaking artwork • Nudes are perennially popular with art lovers • Book serves as a catalog for a traveling exhibition from the prestigious Tate Gallery that will visit several US museums, beginning with the Brooklyn Museum in September 2002

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*Exposed: A beautiful and Informative Book about a Controversial Topic* What surprised and

delighted me most, by both the exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, and by this wonderful text that accompanied the show and is now available to purchase, is the unbiased historical approach to the theme of Victorian Nudes and Sexuality. Most museums and texts that dare to present 19th century Victorian and academically rendered art (art in the realist tradition taught by the academic art schools of the period) have accompanying text that is tongue-in-cheek or satirically critical of this artwork. But this book, as the exhibition (which was organized and sponsored by the Tate Britain museum in England) gives serious insight into the Victorian controversy of nudity and sexuality. "Exposed: The Victorian Nude" explains with respect, what the artists of that era were trying to do. It analyses the social climate of the time, the innovative and daring works of the period's masters, as well as lesser artists, and shows the influence this art had on popular trends and views. The book is also rich in color plates and is a visual delight as well as a wealth of historical knowledge. There are fine examples of paintings by Frederic Leighton, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Evelyn De Morgan, Herbert Draper, Anna Lea Merritt, Annie Swynnerton, John William Waterhouse, Philip Hermogenes Calderon, Edward John Poynter, Albert Moore, George Frederic Watts and Earnest Normand. There are also fabulous drawings by William Mulready, William Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, and John Everett Millais as well as photos of great sculpture of the period. This impressive book would make a wonderful holiday gift for anyone interested in the Victorian Era.

This is almost two books in one. The first book is just in the pictures, reproductions of paintings, photos, and even a few cartoons that celebrate the figure. The pictorial reading is hugely informative by itself. The authors place each picture in the historical or visual context that led up to it - showing related pictures that might have informed the one being discussed, or displaying cartoons that editorialize on the figure in then-contemporary art. One thing that's hard for a modern viewer is to see the pictures through Victorian eyes, with Victorian sensibilities. Nudity often represented innocence, invoking Edenic times before modesty (and immodesty, by implication) arose. This seems true, most often, when depicting youths and children. A modern viewer is free to wonder, though - weren't a few artists, Charles Dodgson included, just a bit shrill in protesting their innocent motives? The second reading of this book is in its explanatory text, an even partner with the imagery itself. This is what a picture book's text should be, but too rarely is. It really does add insight to the images. Sometimes the writing explains mythical references that are now obscure, sometimes it describes the artist and that artist's place in society, sometimes it explains how competing schools of thought created pictures with specific features of style. In every case, though, the reading is

worthwhile, if only because it invites the reader to linger just a little longer over each of the pictures shown. The artists represented here all honor classical human beauty in its many forms, male, female, and child. That explains one of two lacks I found in this book. First was the absence of mature figures, especially among the women.

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