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Cross-references in the Biographies
of Modigliani's Models are indicated
by an asterisk (*).

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Carnal Knowledge

Emily Braun

45

This only – of that moment – can I tell:
that even as I gazed at her, my soul
was free from any other need as long
as the Eternal Loveliness that shone
on Beatrice directly, from her eyes,
contented me with the reflected light,
But, conquering my will with her smile's splendour,
she told me: 'Turn to him and listen – for
not only in my eyes is Paradise.'

The most startling aspect of a Modigliani nude, what makes it immediately identifiable, is the way in which the female body is literally in your face. A more delicate way of putting it is not possible, nor would it do justice to the manner in which the bodies languish parallel to the picture plane and then sprawl into the foreground (cats 18, 21 and 23 and fig. 31). The torso rotates so that the pelvis twists up, tilts back and pushes the hips and thighs into the viewer's proximity, disarmingly so, since the perspectival distortion makes the pubic area loom overly large by comparison with the rest of the body. The models lie with their shoulders back and arms raised, their round abundant breasts echoing the undulations upward and out. The women's bodies flow expansively beyond the edge, as if to emphasise that the bounded plane of the canvas cannot adequately encompass the swell and stretch of line and muscle. Modigliani's compositional strategies draw attention to the physicality of the human form and to a female sexuality that exceeds the 'normal' confinements of the nude in painting. Although his canvases are only average size, these images often take up the entire room. Long before Helmut Newton, Amedeo Modigliani did *big* nudes, big in presence, sexuality and historical ambition.

The seductive quality of Modigliani's nudes presents a problem: are they compelling experiments in modernist form, or kitschy images of women putting on the look of sexual desire? Are they art, or are they soft pornography? The aesthetics of high art tease out the perceptual capacities with the aim of transcending the material everyday. Vulgar and demeaning by definition, soft pornography plays on our 'base' instincts. But perhaps the two are not such strange bedfellows here. What may begin as disinterested formal analysis or salacious curiosity turns into an engagement of the senses and the mind, not only with the female as sex object, but also with the pictorial embodiment of carnality, with the unadulterated truth of the body. Canonically beautiful bodies, true, but here and there an ungainly limb or wayward breast, a sag or protuberance aggresses in visceral plenitude, distant antecedents of Jenny

Fig. 22
 Erotic postcard, late
 nineteenth century
 Hand-coloured photograph
 Unknown photographer
 Private collection



Saville's gorgeously painted grotesques. Modigliani unites the flesh of the model and the pictorial surface into something sentient and alive.

It is often observed that a Modigliani nude resembles a *Playboy* centrefold, but it is really the other way around:¹ Modigliani initiated the compressed view and rectangular format whereby nudity unfolds before the eye. He was the first to represent a female (or any) body in this manner and, in doing so, upset the conventional relationship between the viewer and the flesh and genitalia on display. As with Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* (c. 1510) or Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), the unclothed woman normally reclines in the middle ground; a distance of decorum protects the viewer from a potentially unsettling confrontation with nakedness, or, alternatively, bestows a more commanding vantage point. Though the bare body is 'natural', its natural condition is not one of public display. Distance also brings with it the space necessary to fill the scene with other information, such as the allegorical realms and attributes that situate the nude as a figure both of nature and of culture, a symbol of biological destiny and creative inspiration. Modigliani's nudes, by contrast, lie in a restricted visual field that allows for minimum allusion. The broad areas of colour and shape designate the background wall, the surface of a couch, a blanket and a pillow, but their identities are almost unimportant, as the luxuriant hues serve only to accentuate the bodies' curves and highlight the glow of skin, to force the viewer into close encounters of an overly familiar kind.

The frankness of Modigliani's bodies collapses the distinction between naked and nude, and follows from the invasive and liberating 'honesty' of the camera. By the late nineteenth century, naked bodies were being seen aplenty in snapshots and postcards in the pornographic image trade. Despite the harsh realism of photography, conventions still distanced the figure by placing it in the middle ground or seeing it from behind, with the face hidden.² Pornography as a genre of visual representation originated with reproductive print technologies, but it exploded with the invention of photography and its promiscuous traffic of images: what was once reserved for a select few in private became vulgar through public dissemination.³ Through the ubiquity of the postcard, collectors could even own a series of striptease images with the same model in a series of progressive undress (fig. 22).⁴ These aptly named 'nudie shots', diminutive and diminished in their attempt to mimic high art, copied the poses of famous paintings, or included 'classy' accoutrements in the attempt to give respectability to the prurient. Those who

Fig. 23
Paul Outerbridge, Jr
(1896–1958)
Reclining Nude, c. 1937
Carbro colour print
31.1 × 46 cm
Phillips de Pury and
Co, New York

Fig. 24
Lee Friedlander (b. 1934)
Nude, 1980
Photograph
Courtesy of Fraenkel Gallery,
San Francisco, and Lee
Friedlander



– then and now – deem Modigliani's nudes trashy use the same reasoning: the tradition of the nude and the designation of 'high art' are merely covers for ogling the female body.

Yet photographic images of naked female bodies before Modigliani do not come close to his compositional daring. Instead it is in 'art' photography after Modigliani (photography of the nude) that we see his singular influence. In the anatomical twists or exaggerated close-ups by Paul Strand, Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Weston, the subtle stylisations of Modigliani's forms become exercises in sculptural rhythm and riveting defamiliarisation. Other photographers, such as Paul Outerbridge, mimicked the effects of Modigliani's carnal verisimilitude in the use of painterly colour, light and texture (fig. 23). Lee Friedlander's series of nudes from the 1980s represent a direct homage to Modigliani's modernist legacy of formal innovation, right down to specific poses. The body presses up against the plane and occupies the entire spatial field. Friedlander indulges in the same elongations and linear sweeps of the torso, the same compressions of the bent leg or elbow that result in weird, abstracted shapes of what remains recognisably the body (fig. 24). For these images, like those of Strand, Stieglitz and Weston, distinguish themselves from the violent distortions and fragmentations of Surrealist trick photography. This is the body whole and photography straight, as Friedlander seizes precisely on the visual edge between naturalism and formalism first articulated by the Modigliani nude.

When photography usurps Modigliani's viewing position, it trumps him in raw explicitness. Photography cannot compete, however, with the actual sensuality of the painterly medium, no matter what pose the model strikes. The disembodied transparency of the photograph is sensorily deprived, as the eye comes into contact with a reflected or imprinted surface, not actual texture, with light, not material substance. By contrast, Modigliani's brushwork acts like touch: it dabs, with the pressure of a finger against the epidermis, or strokes with the motion and feel of a caress. (Although all the clichés of the male artist's possession of the female form in creative delectation come to the fore in this description, here the pleased viewer is a woman.) Colour does not work alone. Line, for its part, grabs the edges of skin pulled over bones, or feels the weight of fatty tissue. The senses are intensified as sight couples with tactility.

Modigliani's ability to create a visual and textural analogue to the plumpness, softness and sheen of real skin deliberately rivals that of Titian, but from his pearlescent hues of pink and gold, Modigliani visually raises the temperature of the body with

Fig. 25
 Lisa Yuskavage (b. 1962)
Beads, 1999
 Oil on linen
 50.8 × 35.6 cm
 Courtesy of the artist and
 David Zwirner, New York



post-Fauve red, apricot and deep rose (see cats 18 and 21). He often applies a red aura at the contours of the figures to force the association of a body flush with desire. The viscous medium of oil adds to the affinity between paint and skin that goes beyond mere cultural convention. Varnish can further the visual effect of sheen after the paint has dried. Modigliani applies the layers to the surface so one perceives the oily shine of the hair, the slightest perspiration of a moist and breathing skin. The surface appears more translucent where flesh merely covers bone, becomes thicker over areas of corpulence and the occasional scabrous patch at knee or elbow acknowledges that skin has a life of its own.

As David Rosand has observed, the perception of sensual beauty 'traps the gaze', channels the other senses through the eyes – 'touch above all' – and 'enlivens' it.⁶ The 'danger' this power of arousal may create, the crossing of the line between the erotic and the pornographic, depends on who is viewing what, and where. Obscenity is defined by what certain groups deem offensive to common decency (and not only in the realm of sexuality). In his 1927 monograph on Modigliani, Giovanni Scheiwiller admitted that he chose not to reproduce some of the artist's nudes, so 'as not to run the risk of being fined according to the statute in Article 339 of the Penal Code'.⁷ Modigliani's 'sumptuous' images had already caused a minor scandal in late 1917 when exhibited at Berthe Weill's gallery in Paris, in his first and only one-man show. One nude, visible through the gallery window, drew a crowd that gathered to leer at, or be shocked by, the glorious expanse of unrepentant flesh. The local police chief (whose offices were located across the street) sent an officer to order that the nudes be removed, and the exhibition was temporarily disrupted.

Modigliani's painting of a nude, displayed to every passer-by on the pavement, threatened civic order and affronted public morality. It had the power to draw a crowd, incite a fracas, but, according to Weill, the grounds for censorship were specifically the 'indecent' depiction of pubic hair.⁸ The conventions of visual representation in early twentieth-century art had not yet admitted this degree of explicitness, especially in public, and even in a house of art. Despite the standard association of woman with nature, this depiction was evidently much too natural, down to Modigliani's ability to evoke the assortment of lifelike textures – furry, bristly and wiry – with the hair of the paintbrush.

By today's standards, of course, Modigliani nudes seem tame. Compare them with Lisa Yuskavage's *Beads* (1999; fig. 25), with

its lurid colours and blatantly smutty scenario. The spectator is inextricably put in the position of the voyeur, that is, the model is supposedly unaware that she is arousing the male viewer. But because the image is photographically derived – in source material and airbrush effect – we know that she knows that we know she is posing for the viewfinder, while pretending to unselfconsciously fondle herself. The nudes of Yuskavage, a woman artist, can be taken as ironic riffs on the degrading conventions of media representations of women.⁹ Some of her images exaggerate the breasts and buttocks to the point of absurdity and evoke discomfort or pain. Like most pornography, the blatant realism, the ugliness, repels. It actually fails to arouse, unlike a Modigliani. Yuskavage, like Jeff Koons before her, challenges the distinction between art and pornography – traditionally held to be aesthetic and moral opposites – by simply applying Marcel Duchamp's principle of the readymade: can you make a work of art out of something that is not a work of art? If *Beads* had been painted by a man instead of a woman, the argument for its being a critique of humiliating representations of female sexuality would have fallen by the wayside. In the same way that the nude in high art can be a cover for nakedness, gender fallacy can accommodate – and intellectualise – bad taste and bad painting.

Are Modigliani's nudes guilty of what Yuskavage critiques, of being party to an exploitative viewpoint by fiat, gendered male and inherently lascivious? Theorists of the male gaze collapse Kenneth Clark's original distinction between the naked and the nude into a series of binary opposites that expose the unequal power relations between nature and culture, passive object and active creator, female and male.¹⁰ But perhaps the ladies and gentlemen do protest too much. The presumption of a typecast, prejudicial beholder forecloses contextual interpretation, denies the role of a female viewer (as well as the allure of images of men), while ignoring crucial distinctions in the construction of subjectivity, such as class, education, sexual orientation and religion. Emphasising the literalness of looking blinds one to the complexity of metaphor; it also ignores the potential for mediating gender difference, as the beautiful thing perceived returns the gaze with the 'aliveness of the person's own consciousness'.¹¹

That blatant desire is projected onto the nude is now a given; more critical is whether that desire is inspiring or repressive, and how it relates to an understanding of human sexuality, gender and aesthetic discourse in a specific historical culture. Modigliani's nudes are uniquely poised to take centre stage in

the debate on looking because they are both 'sexy babes' and an exegesis on the equivalence of female and artistic beauty. In the context of the modernist avant-garde, where the aesthetic notion of the beautiful is vanquished by the sublime, Modigliani's nudes bravely, or naively, proffer seductive beauty. They self-consciously refer to the idealist tradition of the Renaissance, while being painted in the historical moment of 'love for sale'. A connoisseur of Dante as well as of women, Modigliani understood the subtleties and variations of Beatrice's gaze after the glare of Zola's Nana.

The link between his nudes and those of the Italian Renaissance was paramount to Modigliani, as a proudly Italian artist and émigré in Paris, where he moved in 1906 from his native Tuscany. Immersed in the art of Florence and Venice, he would have been well aware of the age-old *paragone*, the rivalry between sculpture and painting and the primacy of sight over the other senses in the perception of beauty and creation of desire. His peers in Montparnasse always perceived the literate Modigliani as the sophisticate *à part* in bohemia, 'a pig and a pearl', as his former lover Beatrice Hastings confirmed.¹³ Artists and critics in Montparnasse testified to his affection for early Renaissance art and his deep familiarity with the poetic conventions of chivalric love in *The Divine Comedy* and Petrarch's sonnets.¹⁴ He had reproductions of the Old Masters in his studio, in particular, works by Botticelli, Titian and the consummate painter of sensuality, Correggio. Modigliani aimed at revitalising the Italian humanist tradition of the nude, in which ideal female beauty, and hence art itself, embody 'all sensuous pleasure, including sexual pleasures of the flesh'.¹⁴

Several of Modigliani's compositions emulate the archetypal poses of the Renaissance nude: the raised arm of the sleeping Venus or abandoned Ariadne; the at-ease demeanour of the reclining, open-eyed Venus propped up triumphantly on her pillows. His *Reclining Nude with Loose Hair* (1917) quotes Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538; fig. 29) – and in turn, Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* – with the left arm emerging narrowly from under the left breast, widening slightly as it rises alongside the abdomen to end with the hand falling over the pubic area in the gesture of the Venus Pudica (fig. 29). Yet Modigliani's women are hardly modest – how could they pretend to be or want to be? Bashfulness runs contrary to all the libidinous associations evoked by Modigliani's enlivening touch and to the images of women depicted by his artistic forebears. Certain gestures betray his implicit understanding of venerable iconographic devices: fingers curled at the pudenda denote the self-pleasure allowed

Fig. 26
 Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962)
Caryatids
 Plate V from *Ivan Meštrović:
 A Monograph*, London, 1919
 The British Library



to the female sex, by sixteenth-century theology and medical science, for procreative purposes.¹⁵ Moreover, in his beloved Renaissance prototypes the artist found many examples of visual pulchritude stimulated by a female gaze, where women gloat over their conquests, punish illicit looking with merciless regard, or are bestirred by male beauty. To perceive the sexual confidence of Modigliani's women as exclusively modern is to misunderstand the power afforded them in Renaissance images. Titian's nudes, or works such as Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* (c. 1485), embodied a powerful female sexuality, one established in mythology and theology and keenly attuned to the lively gazes of goddesses and brides – proud, retributive, tender, confident or attentive – anything but passive.

Modigliani's first concerted efforts at the nude were conducted in sculptural form. Between 1909 and 1914 he experimented in direct carving, tutored by his neighbour Constantin Brancusi and under the influence of Cycladic art and African sculpture. His series of limestone heads, hieratic and totemic, reduce the facial features into a graceful and contemplative symmetry. Yet with one exception, a carved caryatid, Modigliani drew his sculptures of the female body. His numerous watercolours, pencil drawings and gouaches of load-bearing caryatids articulate the body in rhythmic volumes, abstracting the swells of breast, thighs and abdomens in formal unison. Though they would ostensibly have been carved out of limestone, Modigliani coloured them for the most part in red and rose. Occasionally one finds a voluptuously open mouth, thrown-back head, or surreptitiously brazen pose; otherwise sexuality is sublimated by the ornamental fringes of hair and almond-shaped eyes, notably orientalist in flavour.

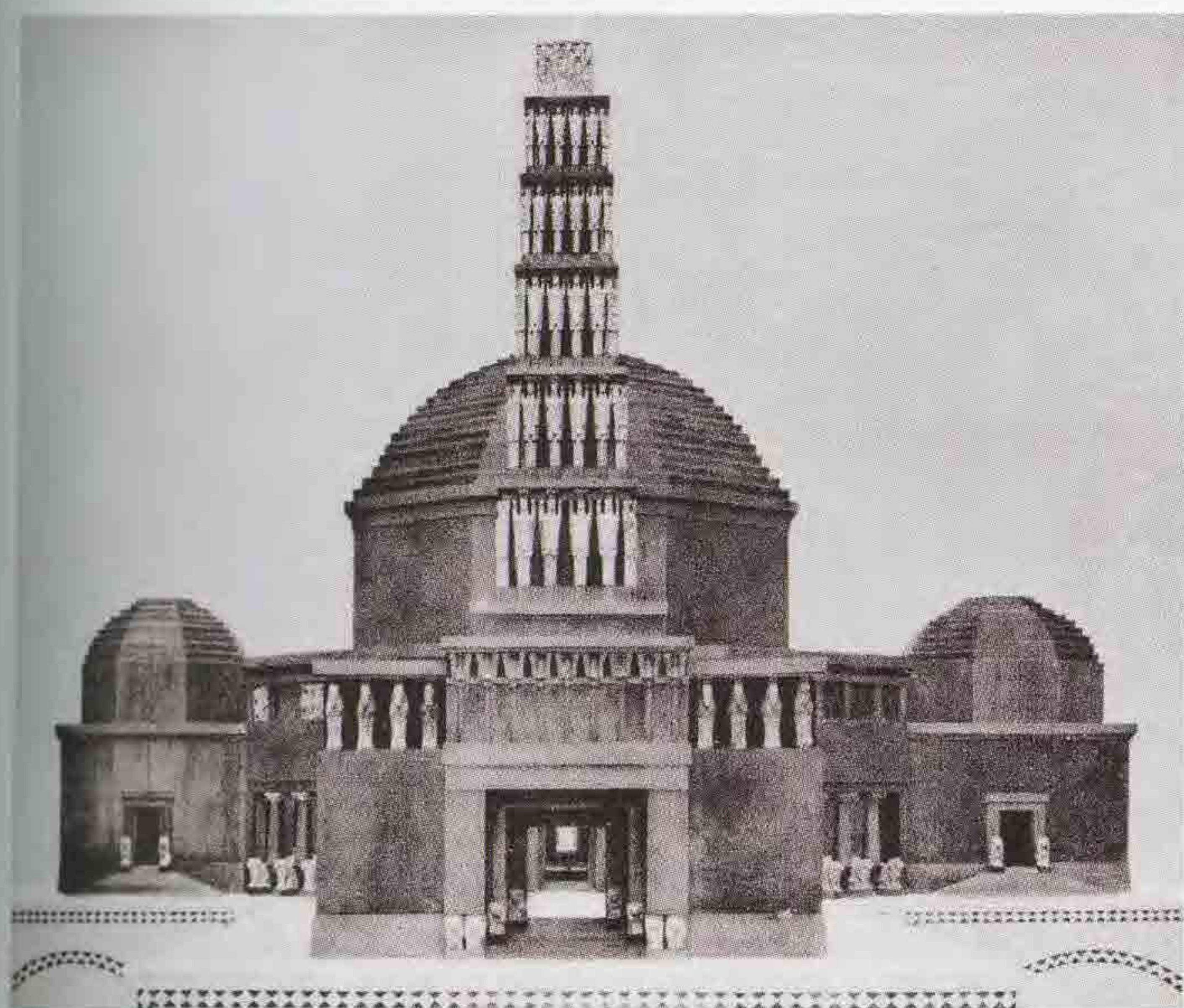
Modigliani intended his standing and kneeling figures to be architectural elements, 'columns of tenderness' in a 'Temple to Beauty'.¹⁶ He exhibited the carved heads as a 'decorative ensemble' in the 1912 Salon d'Automne. Scholars cite Brancusi as a major influence on his sculpture, but Modigliani's idea to create an edifice of worship undoubtedly owed much to a widely exhibited project by the sculptor Ivan Meštrović for his *Temple of Kosovo* (fig. 27). A Croatian and Yugoslavian nationalist, Meštrović conceived his memorial to the fourteenth-century defeat of the Eastern Orthodox Serbian kingdom by the Ottoman Turks as an overt call for independence from Austria-Hungary in the years before the First World War. Meštrović maintained a studio in Montparnasse in the impasse du Maine from 1907 to 1909, and exhibited numerous works in the Salon of 1908, including figures of

kneeling and crouching women carved in stone and wood. Encouraged by Auguste Rodin, he showed eighteen sculptures in the 1909 Salon d'Automne, among them 'fragments' and caryatids from the Kosovo series. Modigliani's caryatids – otherwise an aberration in contemporary Parisian sculpture – can be explained by Meštrović's functional use of such figures in the loggia and tower of his monument.¹⁷ Not only the temple idea came from Meštrović: Modigliani found an affinity also with the Croatian artist's stylised figures and surface patterning, full of references to Egyptian art and Assyrian reliefs.

More thematic fantasy than architectural reality, Modigliani's 'Temple to Beauty' nonetheless revealed his desire to worship on the altar of visual pleasure, to revive a humanist theme in a secular age and still keep it sacred. The idea of a profane temple was a contradiction in terms; better to treat the live and present body as something to revere in itself. He could not revive the Renaissance tradition of the sensual nude without turning to the carnal verisimilitude of paint. In the *paragone* of the arts, painting triumphs over sculpture because it simulates the perception of touch, despite the actual three-dimensionality of the carved or modelled form. At a time when lifelikeness in art determined artistic greatness, Renaissance artists engaged in a debate over colour versus line, the feminine versus the masculine art of representing nature. In this contest Modigliani sided with Titian over Michelangelo. Moreover, the modernist distillation of pure form, the process of abstraction epitomised by Brancusi, ran counter to Modigliani's interest in the human comedy, as manifested in his lasting fame as a portraitist. Yet his work with sculpture inevitably left its mark on his painted depiction of the body, in the incised quality of the outlines, the internal arabesques and inscribed volumes. The visual tension between painting and sculpture, flatness and rotundity, the eye and the hand, only adds to the efficacy of perception in Modigliani's work.

Like the caryatids, the nudes were the result of a concerted effort. He completed 35 between 1916 and 1919 (the majority in 1917) on commission from the Polish expatriate and dealer, Léopold Zborowski. Modigliani painted the live models in a makeshift studio, a room in Zborowski's own apartment at 3 rue Joseph Bara. He continued in his new dwellings at 8 rue de la Grande Chaumière – also found for him by Zborowski and his wife, Hanka. Zborowski supplied the materials as well as the models, and paid Modigliani fifteen francs a day against his cumulative production. Apparently the models received five francs per sitting.¹⁸ The artist demanded isolation and was

Fig. 27
Ivan Meštrović
Temple of Kosovo
Plate II from *Ivan Meštrović:
A Monograph*, London, 1919
The British Library



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furious when Zborowski once interrupted him to steal a glance at a particularly attractive blonde model.¹⁹

Modernist artists work in series to reduce and extrapolate an overriding abstract principle, yet Modigliani's nudes reveal as much about the idiosyncrasies of individual anatomies as they do about the constancy of pure form. Knowing them to be a group obliges us to consider the individual in relation to the larger whole, and the minor variations from one to another are as telling as any one painting. Of the 35 nudes, some two-thirds feature models reclining along the horizontal axis, while the remaining stand or sit in a vertical format. The artist's fully nude 'grand horizontals' are far more successful than the upright figures, whose bodies appear stiffer in pose and pictorial handling, and are often semi-draped, their facial demeanours less at ease (cats 17 and 36).²⁰ Dark-haired, naturally voluptuous, with sun-imbued skin, most of Modigliani's models conform to the ethnicities of many professional, paid models in turn-of-the-century Paris: Italians and Jews.²¹ Their specific type and their stereotyped carnality are borne out by comparison with the thirteen paintings in which Modigliani depicts the thinner, pale-skinned Parisian grisette. Distinctly less sensual, the fair-haired models consistently appear in the less satisfactory, vertical paintings. That Modigliani painted for the most part *la belle italienne* or *la belle juive*, and made her all the more appealing, begs the question of his identification with them as others, like himself, in a foreign land. Sexual difference may well be mitigated here by commonality of other kinds, which partially explains the pointed lack of misogyny in his images.

Modigliani had to revive the sensual nude after its artistic decline in the late nineteenth century, for under the aegis of an outworn neoclassicism, it had become little more than a genre of trite dishabille in mythological or biblical guise. Works such as Alexandre Cabanel's *The Birth of Venus* (1863; fig. 28), the archetypal example, relied on slick props and surfaces to offset the scurrilous pretext of leering at a passive or coy femininity. Typically, the female deflects her own gaze or bats a *faux-moderate* eye in a staging of the voyeuristic act introduced by photographic theatricality: the *pretence* that the model is unaware of being seen – though she may or may not be. The instantaneous image, unlike the painted one, can be taken furtively. (That an image is 'taken', and not rendered, is instructive here.) Because the eye behind the lens is hidden from others' sight (the observed cannot judge exactly where the gaze rests) and, as the camera can be wholly concealed, photography reproduces the conditions of the peephole, the

Fig. 28
 Alexandre Cabanel (1823–89)
The Birth of Venus, 1863
 Oil on canvas
 130 × 225 cm
 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

pornographic view. Whether the model was actually aware of being photographed or not, the ontology of the photograph also tells us that the image is a real person, not a potential figure of the imagination. The realism of being 'caught' (feigned or actual) constructs a new, unequal power relation of viewer and subject, and sets in motion the dehumanising process of routine appraisal. Like the provisional gaze of the *flâneur*, with which it is often conflated, the camera eye roves; it shuns mutuality and empathy. Aware that everyone is looking, the model now performs for an audience: she is no longer the *femme honnête* but a *fille publique*. What was once intended for a single viewer as the beloved's gaze becomes a come-on available to all.

The debasement of the Salon nude in the later nineteenth century results from the absorption of the voyeuristic theatricality of photography and, with it, the performative role of the model (as opposed to the rhetorical role of the earlier nude in painting). *Olympia* could have been conceived only post-photography. The confrontational comportment of Olympia – the stunning force of her ocular retort – was a realignment of what had recently become a parsimonious and exploitative



Fig. 29
 Titian (c. 1487–1576)
Venus of Urbino, 1538
 Oil on canvas
 119 × 165 cm
 Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



beholder's share. Not by chance, the theory of the objectifying male gaze that took hold in art-historical studies as a universal condition of viewing (paradoxically, given its critique of Kant's universalising aesthetic of beauty) originated in the domain of cinema and photography studies in the mid-1970s.²² As an interpretative tool, it has had valuable currency for late nineteenth-century art, where 'the relations and disjunctions of the terms "woman"/ "nude"/ "prostitute" were obsessively rehearsed'.²³ The view from *Olympia*, however, must not prejudice our eyes to an understanding of the gaze in earlier centuries. Made for private beholding and often for the purposes of symbolising the conjugal compact, paintings of the nude were proprietary but not improper. The little dog, symbol of fidelity in Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538; fig. 29), the painting on which Manet's exposé turns, reveals all: unlike the startled cat belonging to the prostitute Olympia, the dog sleeps, because the one who has just entered the room to admire and be admired is the husband and master of the household.²⁴

Damaged goods, the nude could never be looked at again in the same way after Manet's candid irony, and as if to underline this fact, he rendered the female figure in a distinctly uncorpulent, unsensual way. Nor could modelling be easily distinguished from whoredom. It would take decades, until Modigliani, for the woman-goddess to be made beautiful again, and then merely as human flesh, not divine substance, formal experiment or diseased body. After Manet, the next step in decontextualising the nude was to paint the model at work, the sociological reality of ordinary, money-earning women, as in Georges Seurat's *Poseuses* (1886–8).²⁵ Here is the raw material of art – mundane, bored, and mute – Seurat seems to say, as he even debunks the potential erotic frisson of undress in the studio by having the models perfunctorily place their clothes, rather than strew them with zest. In these same years Edgar Degas observed the female model with unprecedented proximity and intimacy. He avoids depicting their faces, as if to protect their privacy as he scrutinises the body as specimen, in all of its awkward physiognomy.²⁶ As close as he is, Degas allows enough space for the viewer to understand that these women are going about the daily ritual of the bath, lest the strange contortions of their bodies suggest that he is up to something deviant. In Degas, we have the beauty of the body as line, form and colour, beauty uncoupled from carnality of sexual desire.

The erotic nude fought back, though, with new strategies to recuperate it from the realist assault. Artists once again removed woman from everyday life and immersed her in the unspoiled

Fig. 30
Paul Gauguin (1848–1903)
Manao tupapau (Spirit of the Dead Watching), 1892
Oil on canvas
72.4 × 92.4 cm
Albright-Knox Art Gallery,
Buffalo, New York

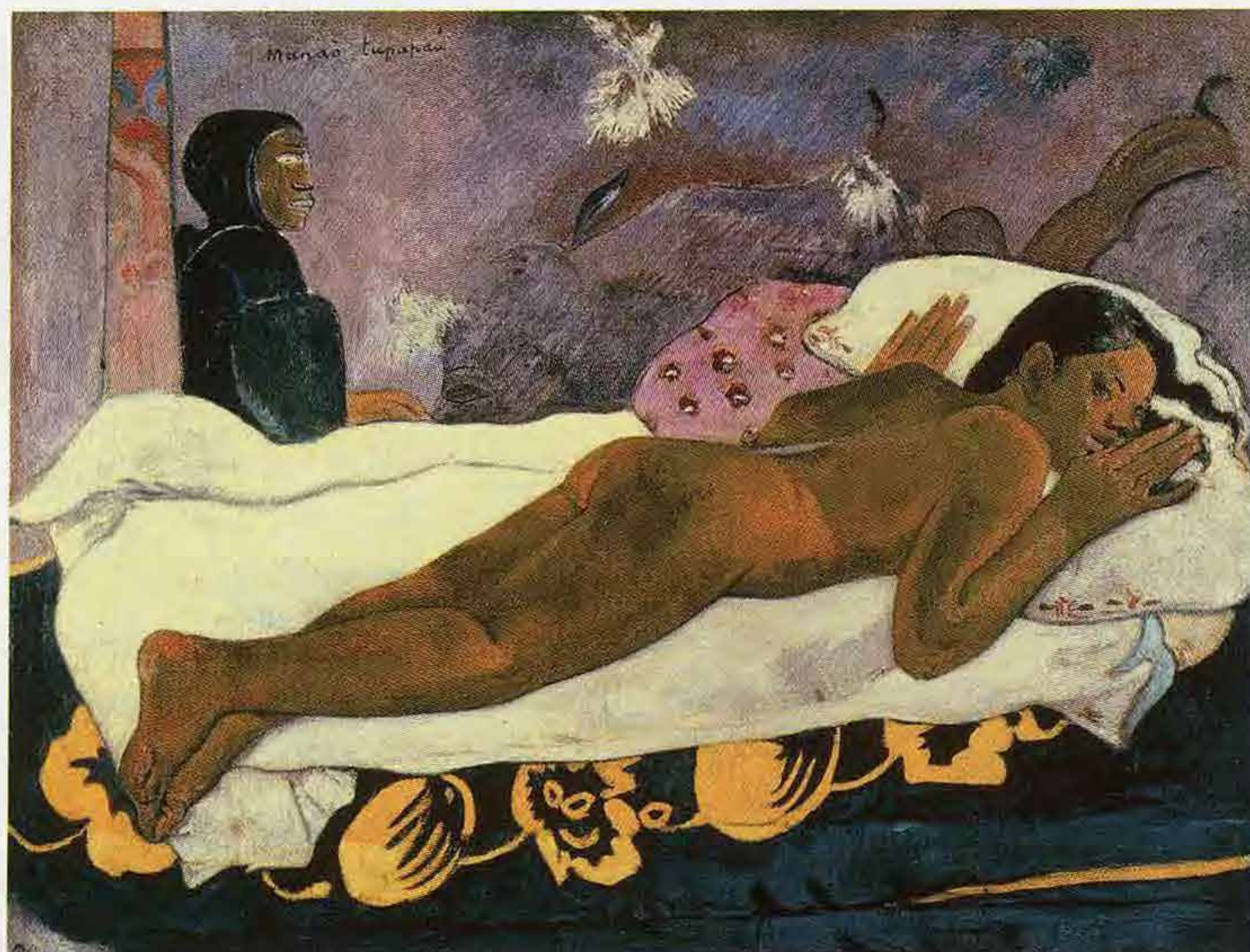
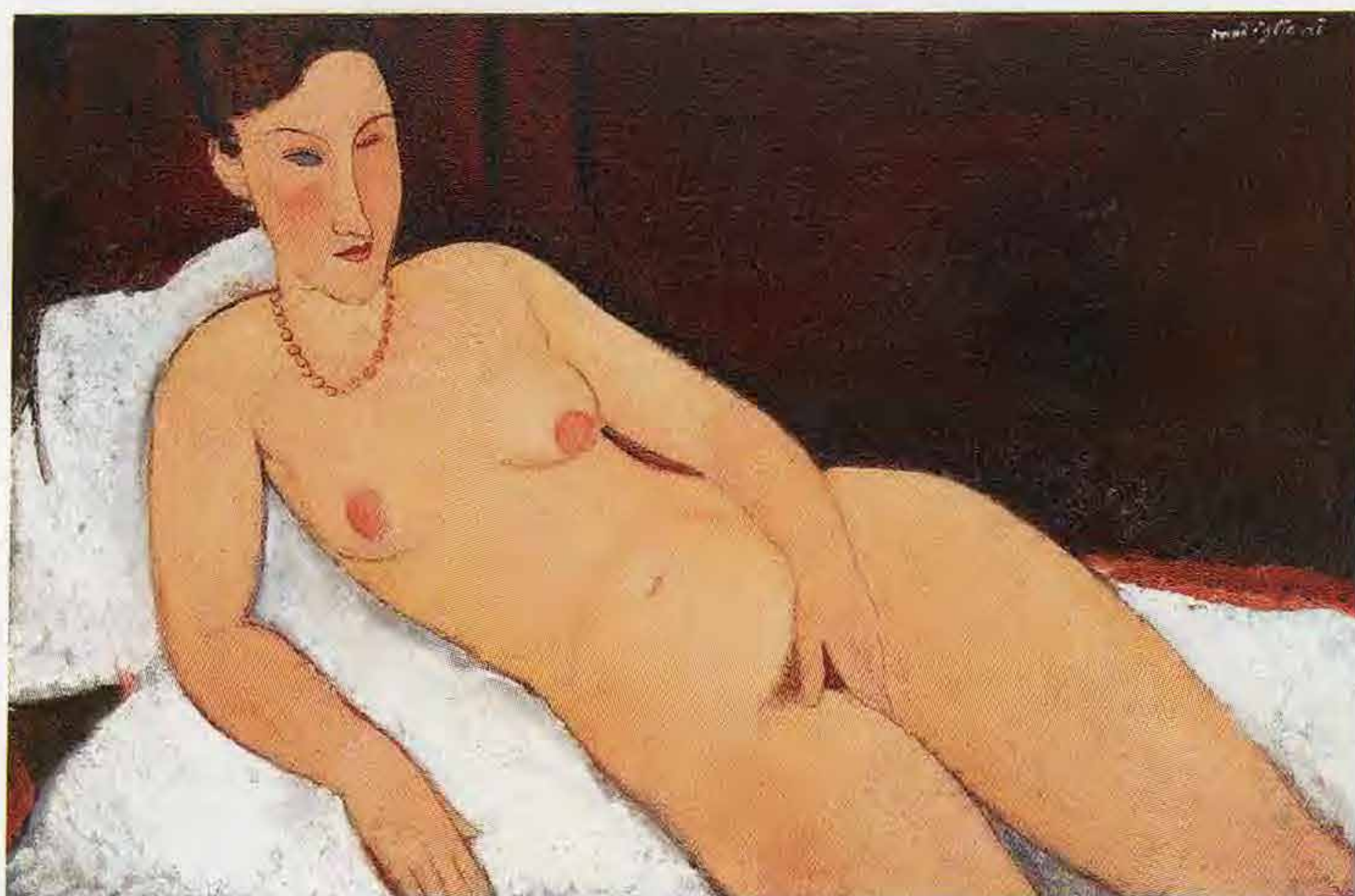


Fig. 31
Nude with Coral Necklace, 1917
Oil on canvas
66.5 × 101.1 cm
Gift of Joseph and Enid Bissett,
1955. Allen Memorial Art
Museum, Oberlin College,
Ohio 1955.59



nature of field and jungle. Though painters such as Paul Gauguin and Pierre-Auguste Renoir rebelled against the academic tradition in their depiction of the female body, they subscribed to the official view of female sexuality (imparted by evolutionary theory and medical anthropology) as atavistic and animalistic. Lounging and preening in the woodland glades, Renoir's nudes play the role of fecund nymphs bathed in the mythic glow of lubricious ease. The posturing of an unfettered sexuality for the male viewer meets its match in the dreamy (read: vacant) looks of the women. Modigliani's reputed disgust over a conversation with Renoir about painting 'buttocks' warrants belief.²⁷ For Gauguin, an artist whose work Modigliani did admire, the nude is naked savage draped in otherness and superstition. In *Manao tupapau (Spirit of the Dead Watching)* (1892; fig. 30) the nubile young woman cowers provocatively from the gaze of the menacing eye of the idol behind her, embodying Gauguin's fantasy, as he put it, that women 'long to be "taken", violently'.²⁸

What is immediately apparent by comparison with these predecessors is how naked Modigliani's models, and the paintings, really are. He dispenses with the tease of partially clothed bodies, and even the realist trope of depicting the model's unworn street apparel. In four images the models wear jewellery: in *Nude with Coral Necklace* (1917; fig. 31), it functions equally as a formal device and an erotic enticement, the loop and coral colour echoing the curves and palette of the body. Red lips abound, but the faces are not heavily made up in a masquerade of femininity or in allusion to the meretricious profession, nor are there mirrors or other articles of the feminine toilette to impugn the narcissism of the female. There is, notably, a pointed lack of rhetorical gestures of feigned modesty (a few do look dubious), mock terror or self-adoration. Distanced from exotic or Arcadian locales, the images are likewise denuded of any narrative – anecdotal, erotic, melodramatic, or moralising – and this bareness allows the eye to concentrate on the senses. There are no episodic events save painterly ones: corpulent strokes that burst through the inscribed volumes of a limb, areas of impacted brushwork, the stain of pigment in the aureole of a breast.

Yet the mannered visages and honed undulations of Modigliani's nudes point to a new development in the Parisian avant-garde. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the relatively benign South Sea idylls of Gauguin were replaced by a ferocity and fetishism directly inspired by African sculpture. The competition for artistic greatness again took place over the

Fig. 32

Henri Matisse (1869–1954)

Blue Nude (Memory of

Biskra), 1907

Oil on canvas

92.1 × 140.4 cm

Museum of Art, Baltimore.

The Cone Collection, formed

by Dr Claribel Cone and

Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore,

Maryland, BMA 1950.228



body of women, but this time in daring pursuit of pure form and wanton experimentation.²⁹ Henri Matisse's *Blue Nude: Memory of Biskra* (1907; fig. 32), like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's *Girl Under a Japanese Umbrella* (c. 1909), aggressively presses the nude into the foreground plane like a Modigliani, but intimacy is, paradoxically, withheld by the dehumanising mask and pictorial violence. What Wendy Steiner has termed the 'prostitutional sublime' – the estrangement of beauty in favour of the monstrous pleasure of otherness – culminates in Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907).³⁰ By affixing tribal masks onto the faces of his whores, Picasso made explicit the prevalent association of the atavistic female with promiscuity, savagery and black skin. Marriage to Venus now implied cursory, adversarial and sadistic coupling, filled with mortal danger and sexual deviance.

Modigliani's style reflects the linear schematisations and formal reductions of the masks and carvings he saw in the collection of Frank Burty Haviland or filtered through the work of Picasso, Brancusi and others. However, in his case, modernist devices compete with the influence of Trecento and Quattrocento Italian primitives, with the rudimentary features and asymmetrical eyes of Simone Martini's Madonnas and the elongated bodies and unquiet torsions of Botticelli. Italian critics between the First and Second World War were quick to point out the 'spirituality' and 'chasteness' of his nudes as a result of these sources.³¹ To be sure, elements of the non-Western primitive add to the heightened sense of eroticism in Modigliani's work, for it connotes a sexuality free of Christian Puritanism and guilt (in contrast to his Jewish heritage, which had a less fraught attitude toward carnality).³² Most important, unlike his avant-garde contemporaries, Modigliani does no harm to the female person: he shuns the representation of disjointed body parts, lacerations or scarification of the flesh or the projection of pain. Ultimately, his stylisations, the formalist curves, bends, protrusions and cavities, are the means to an end of an intense tactile sensation, a more naturalistic sensuous experience. Precisely because his gentle modernism (too elegant for some) is much less 'advanced' than the radical deformations of his Parisian peers, it relinquishes the expression of misogyny. Likewise, his evocation of lifelike flesh poignantly reminds one of the carnality of any body, female or male, and eliminates the distance between self and other.

Instead of degradation and fear, Modigliani's nudes display a comfort with the female body – on the part of the artist and the model – a comfort that comes forth in the here and now of the

practical, protected environment of the studio. While other modernist nudes did not need a real person for their abstracted, corporeal fantasies, Modigliani's subjects, as the viewer has no doubt, were live and lively. We presume them to be neither goddesses nor whores, but simply women; and the artist does not intimate that their work entailed sexual favours. Modigliani apparently did not mix work and romance; the women with whom he conducted long-term affairs do not feature as painted nudes.³³ A viewer can fantasise about Modigliani's relationship with his models: a vision of fleeting consummation perhaps, or, given the long hours of posing and painting, a fantasy of conversation between them – dialogues about Italy with the Italian models, or about being Jewish with the Jewish, or gossip about personalities in Montparnasse. In the workaday tedium and concentration of their tasks, one can imagine them breaking for a cup of tea or coffee or, as was Modigliani's wont, a smoke of hashish. Amid this conjecture, the fact of their equal status is clear. Some of the models may or may not have worked as prostitutes, as the professions often crossed over, but Modigliani's position was just as ambiguous and commercially driven. Destitute and desperate, hardly the master of his own genius, he worked for hire, obliged by Zborowski to paint nudes because they were easy to sell and to use his seductive artistry for predetermined financial gain. Under the circumstances, these women 'sold' themselves no more or less than he did.

All told, the demeanour of the nudes reverses the usual power relations of domineering artist and passive model, accentuated under modernist primitivism, to one of reciprocity. The faces of Modigliani's nudes are not portraits, but neither are they standardised. The mask works both ways: it can intensify desire by suggesting the illicitness of the unknown, or protect the individual from full exposure. Modigliani's reliance on a masklike visage exempts him from a descriptive realism, as the face becomes congruent with the overall seductive schema of the tactile body. Even then, individuals emerge, and we can thus ascertain that some of the women posed for the artist more than once, and that some were quite plain, their homely features breaking through the stylised mould. Nor do the masklike inflections prevent the variety of countenances one would expect from the comings and goings of different personalities, the initial awkwardness, subsequent indifference and fatigue of endless looking. Most have direct contact with the artist and the viewer: some faces are a little bored, a few look querulous, and others throw off a come-hither invitation. Several of the images do attend to the slumbering female, yet even here Modigliani

Fig. 33
 Lucian Freud (b. 1922),
Nude With Leg Up
 (Leigh Bowery), 1992.
 Oil on linen
 182.9 x 229 cm
 Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase
 Fund, 1993 (93.7). Hirshhorn
 Museum and Sculpture Garden,
 Smithsonian Institution,
 Washington DC



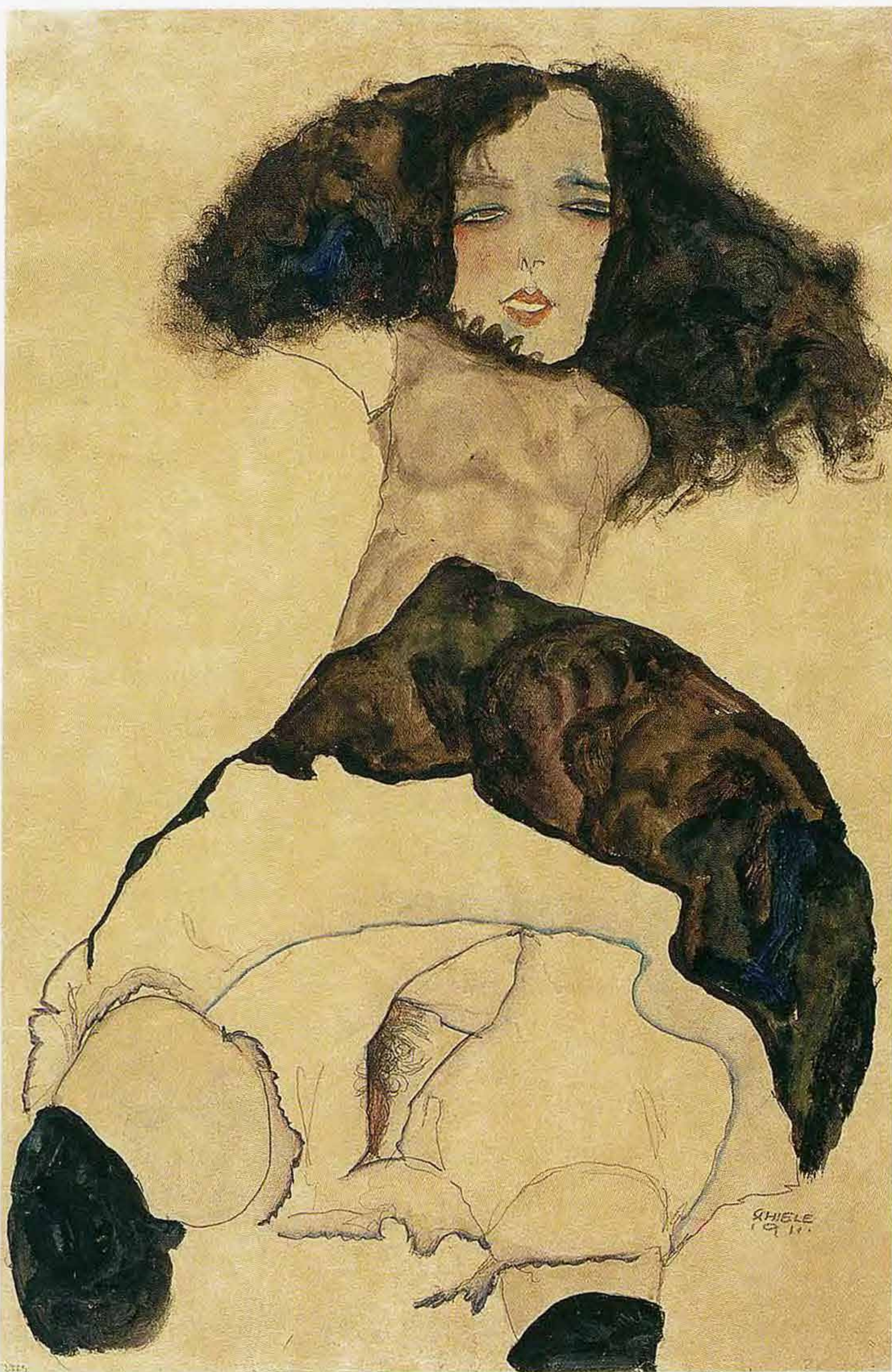
makes the body tensile, not supine, in its languor. Confidence, ease and self-possession rule. The women of Modigliani's nudes are actively and pleasurably looking too, and why not?

Modigliani was a famously beautiful man, the constant object of covetous gazes, a man as deeply aware of observing as of being observed.

No wonder André Salmon declared Modigliani 'our only painter of nudes', the sole 'painter of women from life'.³⁴ The naturalism of the models' nakedness and their comfort with it, as evidenced by their gazes, distinguished them from the kickers and screamers of Kees van Dongen, the sentimental, domestic nudes of Pierre Bonnard (namely, his pictorially concealed wife) and the later sloe-eyed odalisques of Matisse. The fact of the matter is that Modigliani was a loner, because the nude had reached a dead end by the beginning of the First World War. With Cubism, the nude became a ghost of its former self or a series of non-sentient body parts geared to mechanistic dynamism and simultaneity. Carnality was at furthest remove from the high-modernist project. In their 1910 manifesto of painting, the Italian Futurists, Modigliani's compatriots, banished the female nude, declaring it a symbol of all that was abject and enervating. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti produced his fantasy of a non-organic, self-procreative male out of his frustration with the sexual allure of women and the inevitable decrepitude of the body. According to the sublimated desire of his machine aesthetics, the invincibility of a speeding car proved more seductive than the delicacy of the Winged Victory of Samothrace. Modigliani must have realised that the sensual nude was taking its last breaths, and his was the last attempt to revive it.

The lack of conviction in the modern nude becomes immediately apparent in the work of his followers, in the school of the wooden dolls (André Derain) or vacuous Barbies (Moïse Kisling). Women artists did not yet have the opportunities, social permission or sexual confidence to paint the nude in this sensual way, the exception being the bisexual Emilie Charny, whose paintings of the pleased female body from the 1920s have clear affinities with Modigliani's style.³⁵ Only with Lucian Freud several decades later does the carnal nude show its skin again, with men seen in the same close-ups and angled views that Modigliani had reserved for women (fig. 33). If Degas had uncoupled beauty from carnality, Freud now unleashed carnality from beauty. In this unforeseen mating of Venus and Marsyas, flesh appears flayed and overly bountiful, at times hideously alive.

Fig. 34
Egon Schiele (1890–1918)
Girl with Black Hair, 1911
Watercolour and
pencil on paper
56.2 × 36.7 cm
Gift of the Galerie St Etienne,
New York, in memory of Dr
Otto Kallir; promised gift of
Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder;
and purchase. Museum of
Modern Art (MOMA), New
York. Drawing 626

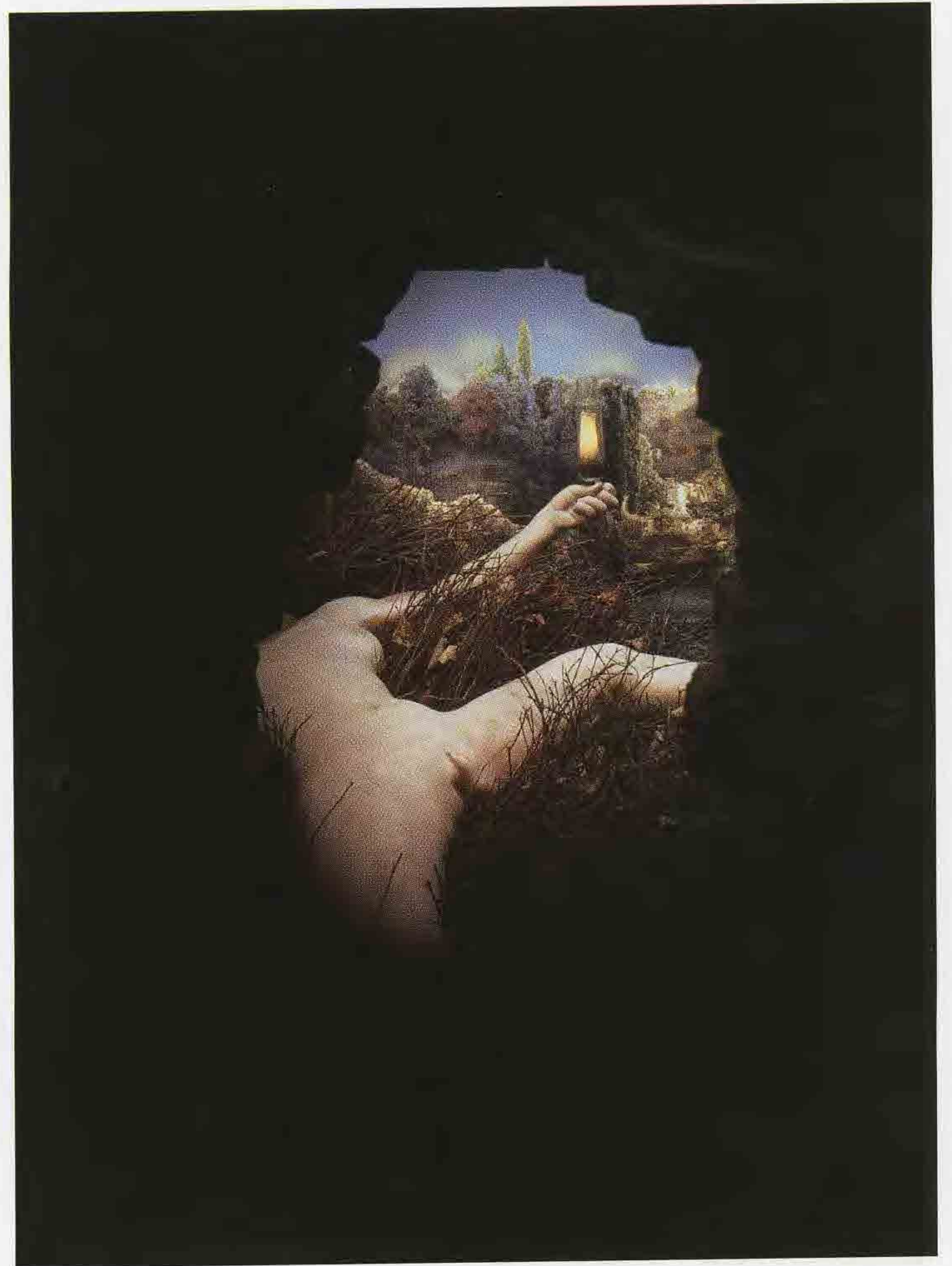


In the midst of the First World War, Modigliani was the last practitioner of the sensual nude; but this is not to say that the nude was not concurrently being pursued in other ways – primarily two. With Egon Schiele, the models open their legs to the unconscious and a probing exploration of human sexuality, to the eyes of the clinic and psychoanalysis (fig. 34). Schiele's images of men and women, with their lacerating line and cool pallor, frequently sick-coloured or decaying with green and black wash, flirt with the strange beauty of abjectness. Schiele's naked self-portraits announce a new genre – body art, no longer the nude – with its attendant sadistic motions and narcissistic self-regard. The modern psyche's traffic with perturbation and titillating disgust in these still, patently, carnal bodies rendered Modigliani's vision anachronistic.

Yet Duchamp made both their approaches to the nude simultaneously irrelevant, when, in *The Large Glass* (also known as *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*; 1915–23) he stripped the bride of art bare altogether. The nude in modern times had become mere fetish, he opined, reducing the heights of aesthetic pleasure to the depths of sexual gratification. In the logic of his neo-Kantian project to return art to the pureness of the mind and divorce it from the senses, Duchamp extirpated the nude by refuting painting. He devoted his intellectual energies to *Etant donnés* (1946–66), which enshrines the painted mise-en-scène of illicit looking presented in Manet's *Olympia*. Peering through two holes in a wooden door, we are taken aback by the shocking sight of a three-dimensional cast of a naked, hairless, lifeless female body (fig. 35). Duchamp ritualises the dehumanising experience of the onanistic disembodied eye, by arresting our gaze and projecting it violently back at us.³⁶

Duchamp's apotheosis of the desensitised male gaze, child of the camera, is woefully inadequate for the viewing experience of a Modigliani nude, which demands a long and deep engagement of the eye and the other senses: these were the conditions of their making, and their present-day beholding substantiates the reciprocity of the original exchange between artist and model. In a daily professional relationship with a flesh-and-blood woman about the representation of carnality, the gaze is anything but voyeuristic, because there is no pretending or hiding of sight. Nakedness, defined by Kenneth Clark as the body 'huddled and defenceless',³⁷ reveals itself to be a body unashamed, filled with the humility, pride and sensual delights of carnal

Fig. 35
 Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968)
 The peephole view of *Étant donnés*. (1. *The Waterfall* 2. *The Illuminating Gas*), 1946–66.
 Mixed media assemblage
 Approx. 242.5 × 177.5 cm
 Philadelphia Museum of Art



knowledge. That Modigliani's nudes are visibly pleasurable is undeniable, but since when is the perception of loveliness harmful to the thing perceived? More often than not, the confrontation with beauty can decentre, disarm and overpower, making the viewer vulnerable. As Elaine Scarry has written, beauty can move one to empathy and insight, and it creates the desire to protect, not destroy, to please the other, not degrade. Far from being injurious, the gaze here instils a longing for social equality through the aesthetics of fairness – fair play and fair countenance – that animates the beholder's senses *and* the sense of being just.³⁸

Finally, we should ask, just who is gazing at these pictures from 1916 to 1918? Where are the men supposedly enjoying the female sex of Modigliani's big nudes? Most young men of procreative age were away fighting in the war. While he painted in relative comfort in his studio, drugging his already tubercular

Fig. 36
Blinded gas casualties of
the 11th Brigade, Australian
Imperial Force, lying out
on the Casualty Clearing near
Bois l'Abbée, 27 May 1918.
Photograph. Unknown
photographer
Imperial War Museum, London,
E (Aus)4852



self to death, one and a half million Frenchmen lost their lives in the trenches, and three times as many were brutally and forever injured. The male gaze in these years is bandaged, face down in the mud or obstructed by mustard and tear-gas (fig. 36). Loss of sight – actual or as a metaphor for the total darkness of death – fills the literature of the war years: in the fragmentary sensations of *Notturmo* by Gabriele D'Annunzio (1921), written on thousands of strips of paper to guide his fingertips during a temporary loss of vision; or in the British poetry of the trenches, 'blind with blood', in the words of Siegfried Sassoon.³⁹ Many soldiers lived to hear, but not see, the women teaching them Braille. Men cannot gaze when they have no sight.

Herein lies the offence of Modigliani's nudes, their affront to common decency. What is truly obscene is that Modigliani painted such gorgeous female bodies, whole and sensual, flushed rose by the vitality of a beating heart and pumping arteries, while several miles away the limbs of men were being blown to bits. That marks their gender difference in 1917.

I am grateful to Simonetta Fraquelli for inviting me to write about Modigliani's nudes, to my sisters Marta Braun and Anita Agar for their comments on the manuscript and to my editor, Anna Jardine.

- 1 The *Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Paradiso*, trans. by Allen Mandelbaum, New York, 2004, p. 159, lines 13–21.
- 2 Kruszyński 1996, p. 96, compares some of the artist's nudes to Playmates.
- 3 As James Elkins writes in *Picturing the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis*, Stanford, California, 1999, p. 195, pornographic images without faces block the 'possibility of human discourse' and allow 'nothing further to be deduced about relationships'.
- 4 Lynn Hunt, 'Introduction: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500–1800' in Hunt (ed.), *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800*, New York, 1993, p. 13.
- 5 See Lynda Klich, 'The Female Nude in the Golden Age of the Picture Postcard', *Visual Resources* 17 (2001), pp. 435–48.
- 6 David Rosand, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago and London, 1989, pp. 349–61, and, especially, p. 354.
- 7 Scheiwiller 1927, p. 10.
- 8 Weill 1933, pp. 224–9. When she asked what was wrong with the nudes, the officer stuttered: 'These nudes! ... they have hhhair [sic]!'
- 9 Lisa Yuskavage, Claudia Gould (ed.), exh. cat., Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2000.
- 10 Sir Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, London and Princeton, New Jersey, 1956. For an excellent summary of the discourse on the nude and nudity and its relationship to the male gaze, see Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, London and New York, 1993, especially Part 1, 'Theorizing the Female Nude', pp. 5–33. An early critique of the overuse of the male gaze by the art-history academy is made by Marcia Pointon in Chapter 1, 'Reading the Body: Historiography and the Case of the Female Nude' of *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830–1908*, Cambridge, England, and New York, 1990, pp. 11–34.
- 11 Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999, and London, 2000, p. 89. A similar argument for 'the meeting of self and Other in a "beautiful we"' is proposed by Wendy Steiner, *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art*, New York, 2001, p. 93.
- 12 Hastings quoted in Düsseldorf 1990, p. 194. Hastings and Modigliani, by all accounts, had an abusive relationship, exacerbated by excessive drinking on both their parts.
- 13 As Jacques Lipchitz wrote in Lipchitz 1952, n.p., 'Even after I had known him a long time, Modigliani would surprise us often with his love and knowledge of poetry – sometimes at the most awkward moments.' Like Lipchitz and other biographers who knew him, Adolphe Basler in Basler 1931, p. 8, recalls that Modigliani specifically recited from Petrarch's sonnets and from Dante's *Divine Comedy* and *Vita nuova*, and was also enamoured of the French Symbolists, the Comte de Lautréamont, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mallarmé. See also Salmon 1926, p. 9, and Ilya Ehrenberg (cited in Düsseldorf 1990, p. 191): 'I don't think I have ever met another painter who loved poetry so deeply. He could recite by heart verses from Dante, Villon, Leopardi, Baudelaire and Rimbaud.'
- 14 Rona Goffen, *Titian's Women*, London and New Haven, Connecticut, 1997, p. 169. The Italian artist Osvaldo Licini recounted Modigliani's awareness of the long-standing aesthetic principle that the mastery of art meant the mastery of women: 'To draw is to possess', he cried 'an act of knowledge and possessing that is more real than sexual intercourse,' (cited in Düsseldorf 1990, p. 196).
- 15 See Rona Goffen, *Titian's Women*, London and New Haven, Connecticut, 1997, pp. 152–3. In the sixteenth century, the woman's 'emission' (orgasm) was considered essential for conception, and thus masturbation was tolerated under these circumstances and implicit allusions were made to it in certain representations of the female nude. On a different view of the 'pudicated' nude as a device of male mastery and power hierarchies, see Nanette Salomon, 'The Venus Pudica: Uncovering Art History's "Hidden Agendas" and Pernicious Pedigrees' in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, London, 1996, pp. 69–87.
- 16 Modigliani described his caryatids in this way, according to Ossip Zadkine and Paul Guillaume, cited in Düsseldorf 1990, p. 20. See also Werner 1962, pp. XXII and XXVI. Zadkine also reported that Modigliani painted some of his sculptures.
- 17 *Exposition Ivan Meštrović*, exh. cat., Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1933, p. 6; *Ivan Meštrović: A Monograph*, London, 1919, pp. 32–3 and 60–2; and *Société du Salon d'Automne. Exposition de 1909*, Paris, 1909, pp. 149–50. Modigliani would have known also that the *Temple of Kosovo* was first presented in full in Rome, in the Serbian pavilion of the 1911 Esposizione Internazionale in Rome, where it achieved widespread attention for its political message; see Emily Braun, 'Klimtomania/Klimtophobia' in *Gustav Klimt: Modernism in the Making*, Colin Bailey (ed.), exh. cat., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2001, pp. 49–50.
- 18 In 'Les Souvenirs de Lusia Czechowska' in Ceroni 1958, p. 20, the author states that Zborowski began his role as Modigliani's dealer with the commitment to earn an extra fifteen francs a day to put towards the artist's production and to supply him with materials. She does not state that this was only for the nudes. On p. 26, Czechowska recalls that, while Modigliani's friends posed for free when he did their portraits, the models charged 'five francs per sitting'. Francis Carco opined that the nudes were 'flung so thoughtlessly into the marketplace'; in 'Modigliani', *L'Eventail* (15 July 1919), cited in Düsseldorf 1990, p. 187.
- 19 The episode is recounted in 'Les Souvenirs de Lusia Czechowska' in Ceroni 1958, p. 30.
- 20 Ceroni 1970. The horizontal nudes are nos 131, 144–8, 184–6, 194–203, 323–5; the vertical, nos 187–93, 264–7, 271–2. The same model, Elvira, posed for nos 271 and 272, while Almaisa, the 'Algerian woman', posed for no. 131 and two portraits (nos 132 and 133). A reference is made to the nude no. 192 in a related sketch as 'La Belle romaine'. Other models appear more than once, as in the women posing for nos 188 and 190; nos 185 and 186; and the unfinished series of three, nos 323–5.
- 21 Marie Lathers, *Bodies of Art: French Literary Realism and the Artist's Model*, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2001, especially pp. 21–59.
- 22 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Harmondsworth, 1972. As Pointon notes in *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830–1908*, Cambridge, England, and New York, 1990, p. 4, Berger's proposition that 'women watch themselves being looked at' and 'the surveyor of woman in herself is male', insinuated itself into the art-historical academy (assisted by psychoanalytic theory). In his survey, Berger includes one image by Modigliani of a nude with eyes closed (p. 38), superimposed over a larger 'men's magazine' photograph of a naked woman, drenched in water and in the staged throes of erotic ecstasy. Besides Berger's work, which can be defined in the categories of visual culture and photography studies, the other key text in establishing the tyranny of the male gaze was Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', originally published in *Screen* (1975), reprinted in Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Basingstoke and Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana, 1989, pp. 14–26. Subsequently, one of the most influential art-historical texts implicating the voyeuristic beholder, T. J. Clark's 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of Olympia in 1865', was also published in *Screen*, 21 (spring 1980), pp. 18–41.
- 23 T. J. Clark, 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of Olympia in 1865', reprinted in *Modern Art and Modernism*, Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (eds), London and New York, 1982, p. 261. See also Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*, London, 1998, and Linda Nochlin, *Representing Women*, London, 1999. For a critique of feminist perspectives that focus more on the male gaze than on class differences, see Gen Doy, *Seeing and Class Consciousness: Women, Class and Representation*, Oxford and Washington DC, 1995.
- 24 Rona Goffen's superb study of the *Venus of Urbino*, and of its misinterpretation as 'pornography for the elite', is found in *Titian's Women*, London and New Haven, Connecticut, 1997, pp. 146–59.
- 25 Linda Nochlin, 'Body Politics: Seurat's Poseuses' in *Representing Women*, London, 1999, pp. 217–37.
- 26 The ambiguity of Degas's bathers in relation to his sexuality and alleged misogyny is analysed in a measured way by Wendy Lesser, 'Degas's Nudes' in Lesser, *His Other Half: Men Looking at Women Through Art*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991, pp. 53–80; and by Carol Armstrong, *Odd Man Out: Readings of the Work and Reputation of Edgar Degas*, Chicago, 1991.
- 27 E. Brummer, 'Modigliani chez Renoir', *Paris-Montparnasse* (February 1930), cited in Sichel 1967, p. 413. Modigliani met Renoir in 1918, while staying with the painter Anders Osterlind and his wife Rachel in Cagnes. As Anders Osterlind recounted, Renoir had some of his works taken off the wall so that he and Modigliani could view them together more closely, and the following conversation ensued: "'So you're a painter too then, eh, young man?' he said to Modigliani, who was looking at the paintings.... "Paint with joy, with the same joy with which you make love...." "Do you caress your canvases a long time?... "I stroke the buttocks for days before finishing a painting." It seemed to me Modigliani was suffering and that a catastrophe was imminent. It happened. Modigliani got up brusquely and, his hand on the doorknob, said brutally, "I don't like buttocks, sir." (Sichel 1967, p. 413.)
- 28 Stephen Eisenman, *Gauguin's Skirt*, New York, 1997, p. 330.
- 29 Carol Duncan, 'Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting' (1973), reprinted in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds), *Feminism and Art History*, New York, 1982, pp. 293–313; Modigliani's nudes are absent from Duncan's discussion. A similar argument is made by Wendy Steiner in *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art*, New York, 2001, where the modernist treatment of the female body is seen as a misguided triumph of the Kantian sublime over the beautiful.
- 30 Wendy Steiner, *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art*, New York, 2001, p. 75.
- 31 Scheiwiller 1927, pp. 10–12; Lamberto Vitali, *Disegni di Modigliani*, Milan, 1929, pp. 5–11; and Raffaello Franchi, *Modigliani*, Florence, 1946, p. 9. For an elaboration of the perceived religiosity of his work by Italian critics, see Emily Braun, 'The Faces of Modigliani: Identity Politics Under Fascism' in New York 2004, pp. 25–39.
- 32 David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, New York, 1992, and Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture*, Berkeley, California, 1993.
- 33 Griselda Pollock, 'Modigliani and the Bodies of Art: Carnality, Attentiveness and the Modernist Struggle' in New York 2004, p. 64, and see p. 222, note 25.
- 34 André Salmon, *L'art vivant*, Paris, 1920, cited in Ceroni 1970, p. 11. For a contemporary survey of the nude, see Francis Carco, *Le Nu dans la peinture moderne (1863–1920)*, Paris, 1924, where a Modigliani nude – *Standing Nude (Nu blonde)* of 1917, owned by Carco – is reproduced as the frontispiece.
- 35 Gill Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, Oxford, 1995, in particular the section 'The Female Nude: (De)Constructing a Feminine Body', pp. 118–36.
- 36 Amelia Jones, *Postmodern and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp*, Cambridge, England, 1994, pp. 191–204. See also Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp*, London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996.
- 37 Sir Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, London and Princeton, New Jersey, 1956, p. 3.
- 38 Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999.
- 39 Siegfried Sassoon, 'Glory of Women' (1917) in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, Jon Silkin (ed.), 2nd ed., London, 1996.