

# Make the Nude Your Own

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By

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As the director of a nude themed art event, I have seen over the years, hundreds of submissions of nudes. I find artworks consistently fall into common categories. While each of these categories has a distinct place in the history of the nude, at the same time, their commonality of these nude themes can detract from establishing an artist's uniqueness.

The following is a list of common nude themes seen repeatedly in art portrayals of the nude human form. After considering each of these themes, also consider how you might create nude art "outside the box" to highlight your own unique art through the beauty of the nude.

1. **Nude and Mythology.** Nudes of antiquity dating back to the time of ancient Greece and Rome have portrayed the nude with mythological gods, goddesses and legends. Particularly common themes include nudes of Prometheus, nymphs and fawns, Venus, etc. Similar to the worship of mythological figures and their perfection, this format allows the nude to be worshipped in its perfection as well. Also included in this genre include angelic nudes. Mythological portrayals of nude figures with beautiful wings seem to be a natural inspiration for many artists.

2. **Adam and Eve Nudes.** Eve with the snake; Eve with an apple; Adam with an apple, Eve and Adam in the Garden; all of these themes are ubiquitous with numerous submissions annually portraying the nude, or nakedness, in relationship to the Original Sin. Being unique within this theme is a particular challenge for an artist.
3. **Classic Posing Nudes.** We have all seen these classic forms of a nude figure reclining on a chaise or sitting in a fixed posture. In these nudes, the primary focus is on the pose itself and how it accentuates the features of the nude human form. Less focus is placed on the model themselves and more on the actual positioning of the body.
4. **Nude Contrasts.** Whether it is guns, leather, machines or chains, contrasting the soft, beautiful nude form with hard, rough images is a natural focus of many nude artists. By contrasting the two together, the nude is elevated in its natural elements of shape, beauty and perfection. This method is commonly used by artists to deconstruct their perception of the perfect nude ideal.
5. **Nude and Nature.** A female nude along the soft dunes of a sandy beach; a male nude juxtaposed in a setting of brush and craggy trees; exposed human forms sprawled along jagged rocks; to an extent this is also a contrast of images, but also a theme that accentuates the natural state of the nude body. Nature and the nude share a “nakedness” and a beauty of creation that has made this theme universally common.

6. **The Nude Sketch.** Simple and often two dimensional, the nude sketch is a basic, beautiful portrayal of the nude. In addition, the nude sketch is timeless and routinely appeals to many. When you are at friends homes, you may actually notice how common the nude sketch is as well as its popularity. These are consistently easy pieces of art to sell when priced correctly.
7. **Black and White Nude Photography.** Black and white nude photography is also a popular choice among art viewers and often has a great chance of being sold. Black and white photography in particular is flattering to the human nude form and can be manipulated to hide flaws and present the nude in the best light. Proper lighting is critical when dealing with black and white photography, and settings can be used to emphasize exotic or other features an artist wants to portray. As digital photography continues to advance, these themes of the nude will undoubtedly remain common.
8. **Nude Portraits.** Finally, everyone is accustomed to seeing a nude portrait displayed. In its own right, these portraits can either portray a specific individual, or painted or sculpted anonymously allowing the viewer to envision themselves in the portrait. This concept of anonymity can pertain to other nude themes as well.

As an artist, the human body offers a beautiful subject to express your artistic talents as well as your inner emotions, thoughts and perceptions of the world. The nude has represented this for artists since the beginning of time. But

in choosing how you want to portray the nude, consider breaking new ground outside the common themes that are repeatedly seen at events, art shows and galleries.

Consider varying your textures, your lighting, your environment in relationship to the theme of your work. Decide what meaning the nude has to you as an artist and as a person; then express these meanings in your own unique way. By choosing alternative themes rather than the common, you will have greater success at demonstrating your specific talents to a larger audience. Allow your personality to speak to others through your own special theme of nude art.