

Suggestions to Museum Curators and Educators Working with Sexual Imagery

1. Be aware that when you show sexual imagery in a public space, you're taking a risk. If you make the commitment to show it, make it an informed commitment.
2. Remember that self-censorship is the most effective way of preventing sexual imagery from being shown to the public.
3. Encourage debate; channel it in constructive, educational ways. Sexual imagery can raise the emotional pitch of an educational climate. Prepare for this.
4. Expect promises of support made prior to the exhibition to be kept.
5. Seek out support from local facilities and organizations, and offer your own to others.
6. Educate yourself on the issues. The sexuality portrayed in the images will likely have its own culture, its own networks, its own body of literature.
7. Know the arguments of the opposition and the defense on showing sexual imagery.
8. Know the laws involved in showing sexual imagery.
9. Know your own stand on the sexuality portrayed, on the portrayal of sexuality, and on the public presentation of sexual material.
10. Educate staff members and docent guides using the research you've done on portrayed sexuality, the portrayal of sex, and the exhibition of sex in museums.
11. Frame the sexual material in the show so that viewers are prepared to see it or prepared to make the choice not to see it.
12. Stimulate education and debate amongst viewers on the artistic and art historical values of the images – these are important aspects of sexual art.
13. Provide public programming which makes use of the range of expertise available (e.g. art, legal, and sexual).
14. Educate the public on the roles of art and museums to show society the norm and to subvert or challenge it. Provide outlets for visitors' reactions, written and verbally.
15. Know that there is only so much you can do to prepare for the showing of sexual art, and to facilitate its exhibition and interpretation. It is a powerful issue with which individuals interact on many different levels; what people bring to the exhibition is informed by personal experience, judgement, and knowledge.