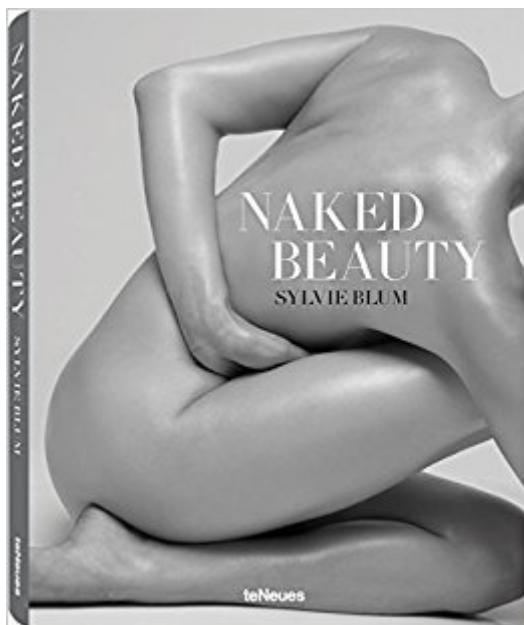


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# **Naked Beauty (English, English, German, French, Spanish And Italian Edition)**



## Synopsis

Steeped in photographic tradition, Sylvie Blum has worked as a model with such iconic artists as Helmut Newton, Andreas H. Bitesnich, and Gunter Blum before trying her hand at photography herself. As she works, she bathes the studio in a gentle glow with an exacting attention to lighting; yet, her endearing and fun-filled personality sets her subject at ease. Blum brings not just perfection but passion to her work--though her technique and composition are remarkable--because both as a woman and artist, Sylvie Blum is able to offer a unique perspective on the female form. She simply 'gets' how important the subject is to the creative process. Each impeccable image transcends sculptured form to convey the true essence of a beautiful and confident woman.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"...the beauty of naked bodies that capture our attention." ~Harper's Bazaar "Sylvie Blum rose from model to master of nude photography. Included in this book are poses that will appeal to all of our senses. Uniquely, they are a woman's poses, as seen by a woman--and a woman who happens to be the most promising nude photographer today." ~Foto Magazin Germany "With an eye for forms and lines, Sylvie Blum encompasses the perfection and strength of the female body. Her models are not just naked, they resemble a masterpiece of a sculpture." ~Digital Photo Magazine "Naked beauty will inspire you with these sensual and sensitive perspectives. Bodies, perfectly displayed under lights and shadows, command the viewers' trust and respect--delicate, graceful, and grandiose."

~Der Standart

Women's figures offer endless variation, not just between individuals, but within the individual herself. Lighting shifts to emphasize different curves and contours. Her body shifts, too, showing grace, softness, broad planes, complex details, and flexing muscles. So, when Blum takes this marvelous material and abstracts it into form and composition, the result gives multiple layers of meaning. The first, of course, is simple love of that form, in all its variations. The women themselves carry their native beauty effortlessly. Then at another level, Blum uses women's figures for plays of shadow and light. Skin tone changes the meaning of chiaroscuro: her paler models reveal their form in the shadows, but the darkest tones glisten with highlights that trace out the feminine structure. And, between those extremes, some women of middle skin tone combine the two, defining their shapes as much with the high notes of brightness as with their deeper tones and shading. The next layer of each B&W photo truly sets Blum's work apart, though. That human material, with its complex play of light, carries the visual composition and abstract forms that Blum coaxes from these gorgeous models. Angularity and curve, plane of thigh or ridged landscape of hand, defined shape of muscle or suspended softness of breast - each has its part in some photographic construction or other. It's this sculptural use of form, while retaining each model's unique character and grace, that I find so compelling in Blum's work. It's gratifying to see such a wide palette of human coloring in this collection, with a matching range of features and personal details. The models all fit the toned, slim, twenty-something mold. It's an easy look to like, but sometimes too easy. If Blum could do as much with different curves and with the differences of a woman's ages, this would be a landmark work. But, even with that limitation, it's still a beautiful collection. This large, well-printed and well-made anthology has a place in any collection of figure photography.-- wiredweird

Interesting work by Sylvie Blum. As an artist, the line, form and grace is captured in her photos. Had the opportunity to have Brooke LaBrie model for a workshop. Sylvie's photos captured her amazing poses.

Tastefully curated images. There is a lot of nudity, as the title would suggest, but it is so clearly art. I am not ashamed to have it as a coffee table book.

Naked Beauty is the fine art of black and white photography, classic nude poses, and publishing. The photographs are almost all taken in a studio with a white background and white floor, or the negative of a black wall and black floor. Sylvie Blum has mastered the technique of high key

photography. The surroundings are a very light or dark gray tone, the subject has an amazing range of fine tones from perfect black to snow white. This is an almost impossible technique. Lighting and exposure are perfection in every single image. The book is laid out with absolutely no distractions from the images. There are no page numbers, no captions, simply a white border around the photographs. The book is an oversized 11 x 14 inches that shows off each image's high resolution and detail. Great care was taken to choose images that would face each other on two pages that the composition would flow from one image to the next. There is almost a two page pallet used to display the images. The rhythm of images facing each other is occasionally broken with only one strong image facing a blank page. The last pages of the book are thumbnails on the right-hand page, with the Plate list on the left-hand side. The list is sometimes a title, sometimes the model name, sometimes no title, but always followed by the year of the photograph. Seeing 20 of these images in smaller form all on one page is also an interesting way to view the photographs. Another rhythm shows up, one of tone, form, and series. The pictures are not erotic, but sensual in their flow. Unlike Mapplethorpe or Helmut Newton, these are pictures of women that happen to not have clothes on. It is a more organic pure study of form, light and shadow. The models are stunningly beautiful, all are thin, but not model anorexic thin. They have an athletic firm tone. It appears that Blum has posed each model to emphasize what is perfect about each woman's body. I was struck by how often the model's skin looks like a perfect fruit or vegetable, especially peppers. The printing, binding and publishing of this book is amazing. The subtle gradation of tone in Blum's photographs is the most difficult thing to reproduce in a printed book. The images in this book are virtually gallery images. The paper and book cover are of a satin finish that is as sensuous as the images. This is printing and binding at a very high standard. The book has 99 full page images in black and white. The book opens with an essay by Anne Wilkes Tucker, photography curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and closes with a brief biography of Blum. All text is presented in five languages. The only issue I take with this book is the essay by Anne Wilkes Tucker. The essay talks a lot about how Sylvie Blum is a female photographing nude females. It traces some of the history of women photographing women. The flavor I got from this was, somehow this is different or important and special in some way. I'm not sure I agree that this book has anything to do with that. I think this book stands on the gorgeous photography, perfection in technique, and magnificent printing. Whether it is a female behind the camera or not, makes no difference to me. What I care about is the feeling and results of the work. Blum has advanced nude photography with this book. She stands proudly on the shoulders of Ruth Bernhard, Imogen Cunningham, Sally Mann, Jock Sturges, and tangentially Diane Arbus; who all came before her. These are incredibly beautiful images, no matter the

gender. Naked Beauty is a beautiful volume of black and white photographs. The publisher provided me with a review copy of this book.

Former model Sylvie Blum switches to the other side of the camera and transforms her nude subjects into gleaming black-and-white puzzle-sculptures. Even though many of her photographs show only part of the female model's body, it is surprising how much personality is evoked in the compositions by a jutting shoulder blade or uplifted hands. Her full-body poses range from kinetic to fetal. The aggressively athletic postures are contradicted by the soft gleam of naked skin. To me, the most disturbing portraits involved a bald, ultra-thin model. Here, Blum tended to angle her camera upward from below, giving her subject the appearance of a Giacometti sculpture. This volume pays homage to the alluring, young, female form, sometimes vulnerable, sometimes athletically arrogant. Very few props were used, which is why the clenched circle of a nipple ring comes as something of a shock on the model named Vel. It somehow makes her seem even more naked. The only banal portrait was a pouty-lipped, head-and-breast shot of Ashley, which would have been more at home in a 'Playboy' magazine. The main body of this oversized (11"x13.5") book--99 full-page photographs--is followed by a plate list, where the author identifies the year the photograph was taken, along with a sometimes whimsical title. \*\*\*review copy supplied by publisher

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