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Art & Design

Cinematic Nudes and Post-Feminist Ideologies at 'Pheromone Hotbox'

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So often we view female sexuality through the male gaze, but *Pheromone Hotbox*, an exhibition opening tonight at New York's Steven Kasher Gallery, aims to change that. The show features the work of five young female photographers who capture females in that unabashedly sexual, sensual and vulnerable way only women can.

At *Pheromone Hotbox* one finds Amanda Charchain's cinematic nudes, taken in exotic locales while travelling with her girlfriend, Marianna Rothen's playful narratives based on the films of screen icons like Bridgette Bardot and Faye

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Dunaway as well as Shea DeTar's pop dystopias, achieved by adding paint and color.

As a whole, the show explores both "post-feminism" and "post-selfie" ideologies. I think we're far too deep in selfie culture to comment on it meaningfully (though god knows many have tried), but post-feminism – now there's an idea worth exploring. It seems quite trendy for young female artists, particularly the kind who post hyper-sexualized selfies on Instagram, to declare themselves "post-feminists." I tend to disagree, nor do I think that their barely-conceived selfies should ever be looked at as "art."

Contrastingly, *Pheromone Hotbox* presents work that celebrates and challenges notions of femininity, using our sexuality (as the exhibit's title suggests) to create visually stunning, sometimes troubling, images. If this is art by women in a post-feminist world, we're wholeheartedly behind it.