



ARTISTS SCREEN ARTISTS

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Curated by Émonie Fay Chetwin

## INTRODUCING BEAUTY IN 2024

As an introduction to the screening we look at a collection of advertisements and other videos that mark the absurdities of today's popular beauty industries. 2023 has been declared the year of net girification and marked a new milestone in the widespread aesthetic infantilization of society. We look at the booming of youth / child oriented cosmetic brands such as Drunk Elephant, Starface, TBH Kids, Petite & Pretty or Sephora Tweens that form the "child skin care market" which was estimated at a worth of \$280 millions in the past year. Besides from those cosmetic industries directed at children, we find a striking increase in plastic surgery. The global cosmetic surgery market was valued at \$57.67 billion in 2023; extreme beauty communities gain increasing popularity – with that comes the rise of new ideals and terminologies such as the uncanny valley faces or "cosmetic dept" along a variety of new procedures such as PRPs, Coolsculptings, BBLs, Lemon Bottles, buccal fat removals and many more. The third beauty market of significant investments comprises AI. We look at examples such as artist Arvida Byström's recent selling of AI nudes under her AI alter ego (ArvidAI<sup>2</sup>) or at the first ever worldwide AI beauty pageant "Miss AI" launched this month (April 2024) by Fanvue with a \$20,000 prize at stake.

Dress Tutorials Ylang Ylang, Tyler (2018), Her bed surrounded by machines (2018) – Women's History Museum, Daffy Scanlan

Dress Tutorials by Women's History Museum and Jack Scanlan revise the complex history of women's dress. The rescue of each garment or garment fragment is a personal rebirth – each dress an amalgamation of eras, purposes, codes, textiles. Napkin rings meet couture. Temporary tattoos accent fleece. Visibility and invisibility become muddled as each layer piles up; some garments protect as much as they excite. Well beyond cute, these garments are fantastic, guiding us to new fashion futures.

Fashion label Women's History Museum is here to (re)teach us how to dress as well as to create novel and previously unseen images of beauty. The label engages with fashion as a medium that has the potential to exist beyond regurgitative spectacle and the ability to change the fabric of reality. Their art practice, which includes sculpture, film, painting, drawing, photography, and performance, is dictated by meticulously sourced historical materials and close collaborations with other artists who often double as models in their fashion shows. In an effort to encompass the psychic reality of fashion and foster a creative community, they interrogate the idea of the museum and insist on alternative and inclusive methods of recording history.

### Up Next (2023) – Eva and Franco Mattes

Up Next by Eva & Franco Mattes is a silent montage of images and press clips that unwinds at an inconceivable pace, like a Roger Corman film shot by Jean-Marie Straub. It pulls you into that cadence, and you settle into it, though never at ease, until you find yourself in a Procrustean bed of questions and puzzles. A sentient bed, caring in its peculiar way, like the monstrous beds in which the characters in Cronenberg's *Crimes of the Future* sleep, continually shaken.

At the bottom of this story different powers fought each other, or sometimes just crossed paths, even entering into ephemeral alliances:

1. The algorithmic power of social media relentlessly pressing to transform persons into characters, imposing anorexigenic models of femininity of which the images created by Sahar Tabar are an undeclared parody. Like all parodies, in the current post-postmodern cultural climate, it has no real critical charge, it does not know what targets to hit, it is a jumble of bullets fired haphazardly. This story has become emblematic not because of the power of the images but because of the context, the fact that it took place in Iran, and the repression that it triggered.

2. Precisely, the powers of an oppressive and patriarchal state that intervenes in the algorithmic power when they become dysfunctional, when they give a woman a "wrong" protagonism, taking the female body away from the control of the authorities. Taking it away – this must be clear – without liberating it.

3. The power of the global media that turned the contradiction between state power and algorithmic power – contradiction played on a woman's body, or rather, on the assumed image of that body – into news, devoting themselves to the meanest exploitation and writing everything and the opposite of everything.

Up Next shows us Sahar in the condition of multiple victim of this web of micro- and macro power. And it is important to watch from beginning to end, never looking away, not even during the black inserts. These are the moments when thought can be exercised, until, in the end, one rises from that bed of Procrustes, aware once again that all those powers must be fought.

### HARDCORE FENCING (2023) – Luke van Gelderen

HARDCORE FENCING (2023) is a video work by Luke van Gelderen, utilising appropriated and artificially generated footage to explore the increasing difficulty in understanding oneself in a world dictated by endless streams of digital content. Motifs of spinning cars, masks, and extreme weather suggest the self-consuming loops of time spent online. Resonating at the intersection between celebrity culture, alienation, and violence, the piece points to the unrelenting pressure of performing personas and how vulnerability has become a marker of authenticity. In a space that commodifies all aspects of the self, a fragmented picture of contemporary masculine identity and its extremes is created and contrasted with a corresponding sense of loneliness and insecurity.

Luke van Gelderen is a visual artist based in Dublin. His interdisciplinary practice examines the performance and mediation of contemporary identities through technology. Converging celebrity culture, alienation, masculinity and violence, he creates immersive installations grounded in his own experience of recurring intrusive thoughts and images amplified by the internet.