

# CHEIM & READ

## ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS: NEW YORK

### “The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men”

**CHEIM & READ**  
547 West 25th Street  
June 23–September 2

In a curatorial move akin to a Sadie Hawkins dance, this exhibition asks women to flex their female gaze and depict men. Thirty-two artists present varying perspectives on the male form—from neutral, detached portraits to ones steeped in obvious desire. Many offer up their sitters in attitudes historically reserved for female subjects, as come-hither nudes or odalisques. Others catch them in private moments of sleep or self-love, both literal and figurative, as in Grace Graupe-Pillard’s painting of a young artist mid iPhone selfie, hand curled in a manner that recalls Dürer’s *Self-Portrait in Fur Coat*, 1500.

The phallus persists throughout, though this emblem of masculinity is recast in the service of female pleasure or made delicate, even feminized.



Celia Hempton, *Ben*, 2015, oil on polyester, 20 x 24”.

Celia Hempton haloes supple, skin-toned paintings of erogenous zones with pale blues, and Louise Bourgeois’s 1964 sculptural ode to male anatomy is cheekily titled “little girl,” or *Fillette (Sweeter Version)*, 1968–99, a joke Lynda Benglis takes further in *Smile*, 1974, a smirking double-sided bronze dildo. Who needs men when we’ve already manufactured their replacements? Benglis’s comment on female self-sufficiency is echoed in Jenny Holzer’s marble bench, the sole nonfigurative work, engraved with “Men don’t protect you anymore.”

But hewing to gender roles can sometimes be fun. A 1965 Diane Arbus photograph brilliantly captures a teen couple in gendered self-fashioning playing at man- and womanhood. The girl raises dark, heavily penciled lids at the camera. Her boyfriend looks sidelong in studied aloofness, his hand on his belt loop and legs splayed in what this generation of female observers would unhesitatingly dub a manspread.

— Hannah Stamler