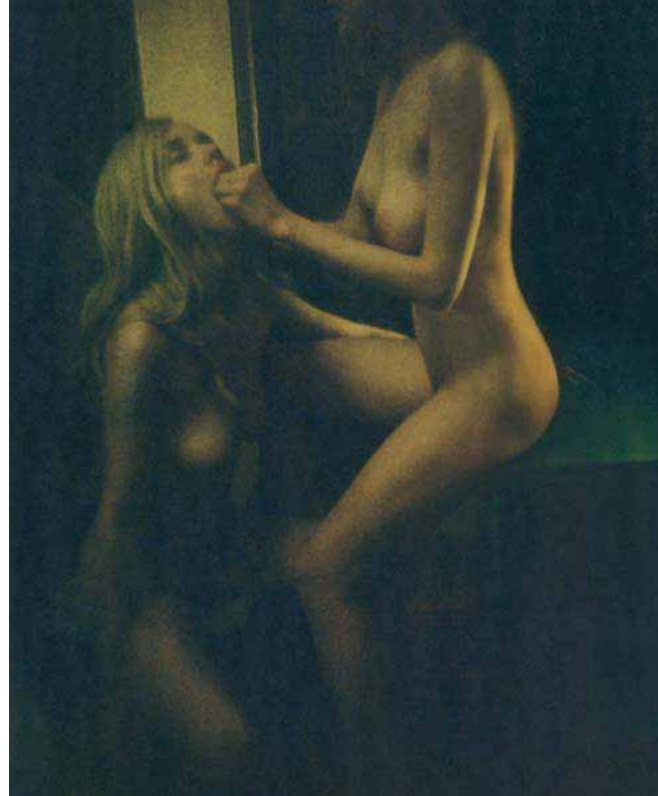


## GIRLS ON FILM

Four naked Eastern European women with cameras may sound like a plot for pay-per-view porn, but it is in fact the concept behind an art collaboration. For the past year, the young artists Aneta Bartos, Elle Muliarchyk, Yana Toyber, and Martynka Wawrzyniak have taken provocative, lusty, surreal, violent, and tender photographs and videos of one another in the nude. “The work is powerful, both culturally and aesthetically,” says curator Anne Huntington, who is collaborating with the group on an exhibition this month. (Go to [amhindustries.com](http://amhindustries.com) for more information.) “It’s beautiful, raw, and human—almost like a purge.” To the artists, the project is a deeply personal exploration of sexual identity and relationships. The women expose themselves and each other with the kind of abandon that rarely exists outside a closed bedroom door. JOHANNA LENANDER



**ANETA BARTOS**

“This project was originally about sex and spirit, and how it plays a role in shaping cultures and religions and taboos,” says Bartos, an art and fashion photographer who was born in Poland. Her darkly romantic images are shot on Polaroid film in seedy hotel rooms and have the look of sinister erotic tableaux. Bartos says that the work has helped her shed some of her Catholic baggage and embrace the power of female sexuality. “As I started feeling these amazing connections with the other women, I introduced new issues about freedom and dominance.”



**MARTYNKA WAWRZYNIAK**

“I find the petty, competitive female nature very challenging. This is the first time that I have had a close working relationship with a group of women,” says Wawrzyniak, a Polish-born photographer and video artist who explores femininity with both brutality and warmth. One of her pieces is a split-screen video of the four artists emphatically smearing their faces with lipstick. “I wanted to challenge the whole idea of the beauty shot,” she says. “It’s interesting to see someone destroy their face with something that is supposed to beautify you. But it’s also about being bare—we just let go of all insecurities.”



**ELLE MULIARCHYK**

A model who became an artist by taking guerrilla fashion pictures of herself in boutique dressing rooms, Belarusian Elle Muliarchyk has an unsentimental approach to female physicality. “I’m fascinated with a woman’s body, but I see it more as a material—totally raw and foreign and pregnant with fantastical possibilities,” she says. It seems fitting, then, that she used her partners’ naked bodies to re-create her own “very sexual, visual, and weird” dreams. One of her photos features a (taxidermied) wolf hovering over Aneta Bartos’s crotch, and another shows Yana Toyber with a fire-spitting vagina. “A friend said that picture is very religious,” says Muliarchyk. “It’s a burning bush!”



**YANA TOYBER**

“I hadn’t done any nudes until now,” says Toyber. “I have photographed a lot of girls in the sex industry, but I always had them dressed because they’re always exposed and I wanted to show their faces.” The Ukrainian artist and fashion photographer shot her fellow collaborators underwater to give the images a dreamy and tender quality. “It feels a little embryonic and evokes birth,” she says. The photos also symbolize a more global form of nurturing. “Water is a resource that we need to protect. Its future scarcity threatens our survival.”