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What Do You Hear When You Step Into The Dressing Room?

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"You shouldn't have eaten those Cheetos."

"Do I need more Botox?"

"It must be the lighting in here."

Sound familiar?



Artist Rachel Lee Hovnanian's latest exhibition, "Power and Burden of Beauty," opens tomorrow at a [pop-up Jason McCoy gallery here in NYC](#) and examines the emphasis we place on striving for beauty and the damage we do to ourselves in trying to get there. One of the coolest pieces in the exhibit is the dressing room installation, pictured above, complete with an

unflattering fun-house mirror, intentionally terrible lighting, and an audio component that spits out all of the little phrases we women tend to use to beat ourselves up when we step inside the dressing room: "You shouldn't have eaten those Cheetos," and "Do I need more Botox?" being two of my favorites.

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So just how did Rachel find herself examining the power and burden of beauty inside a dressing room, of all places? "We torture ourselves and we can be tortured," she told me when we spoke on the phone earlier today. "It's just about perfection and trying to measure up to those ideals. Everyone has to go shopping to buy clothes and you go into this small room by yourself to try things on and it's a very intimate experience. All of your insecurities really come out when you're there."

She spent time listening to what real women, including her own friends, had to say when they came in and out of the dressing room and turned that into The Fun House Dressing Room, a place that brings our attention to the unattainable standards so many women are unfairly focused on. Rachel (along with Nicole Miller, body image therapist Donna Fish, and a few other guests) will discuss the topic tomorrow night in a panel discussion in NYC, so head over to her website to find out more if you're interested.

And then tell me, ladies...what do you hear when you step into the dressing room? Is it "You shouldn't have eaten those Cheetos" or "Damn girl, you look great!" Is it a place fraught with body image issues and insecurities for you? Do you dread going shopping because you hate the trying-on part? Or do you feel comfortable enough in your own skin to embrace the dressing room? Do you agree with Rachel that it's a place filled with *impossible standards*? *Please dolls, SHARE!*

Check out "*Power and Burden of Beauty*" from tomorrow until December 22 at the Jason McCoy gallery, 520 West 20th Street, followed by an installation at 41 East 57th Street. More info at www.jasonmccoyinc.com

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by Tracey Lomrantz

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