



Nan Goldin & Jenny Holzer feature in new exhibition about women's pleasure

'In art, the unruliness of women's sexuality blooms': A Woman's Right To Pleasure features work by 30 artists exploring their desires

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A Woman's Right To Pleasure

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"If we could truly depict women's desire, we might come to understand how it secretly rules the world," writes novelist Erica Jong, author of the seminal feminist novel, *Fear of Flying*. In a world that still privileges male pleasure, female desire remains a threat to the status quo. "Men despise women's sexuality because it is so different from their own," Jong continues. "So men make rules about it – rules that make no sense to women. But, in art, the unruliness of women's sexuality blooms."

A Woman's Right To Pleasure (published in 2020 by [BlackBook](#)) anthologised some of the world's most potent artworks by women explicating, reclaiming, and asserting their sexualities. [Nan Goldin](#), [Jenny Holzer](#), [Carrie Mae Weems](#), [Carolee Schneemann](#), [Vaginal Davis](#) and [Kathy Acker](#) are among the 77 featured artists and writers all exploring this "unruly" realm and, as Jong says in the foreword, the notion of "pleasure as a metaphor for so much more" ... an expression of subjectivity, a declaration of power.

The acclaimed book was followed in 2021 by an eponymous [podcast](#) which continued to examine these themes. Co-hosted by porn actor and author [Stoya](#), including conversations with guests such as artist Marilyn Minter, [Pussy Riot](#)'s Nadya Tolokonnikova, and LA punk legend, [Alice Bag](#), the podcast touched on ideas of sex education, emancipation, subjugation, and unbridled desire, creating a space for discourse and exchange around all aspects of female sexuality and pleasure.

Now, *A Woman's Right To Pleasure* has opened as an exhibition. Held across [Sotheby's LA](#) and on [Sothebys.com](#), the show encompasses 104 works by over 30 artists, including [Tracy Emin](#), Georgia O'Keeffe, and [Louise Bourgeois](#). Continuing in the spirit of the original publication, the exhibition examines expressions of female sexuality over the last century. [Alexandra Rubenstein](#)'s celebratory cunnilingus series imagines famous men, such as Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio, and the Pope, in the act of giving head. [Judy Chicago](#) finds labia-like forms in flora and delicate butterfly-like shapes, while Penny Slinger's "Read My Lips" (1973) is an erotic visual pun of parted lips within parted lips. Marilyn Minter takes a more explicit approach. Her photographs "Plush #2" and "Plush #24" are gorgeous portraits of vaginas, each with a perfectly manicured hand resting proprietorially on the abundant pubic hair.

Take a look through the gallery above for a glimpse of the work featured in this pioneering exhibition.

BlackBook Presents: *A Woman's Right to Pleasure* is at [Sotheby's Los Angeles](#) until August 12 2022

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A Woman's Right To Pleasure

Penny Slinger, Puss in Boots, 1973-74

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Penny Slinger, Read My Lips, 1973

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