



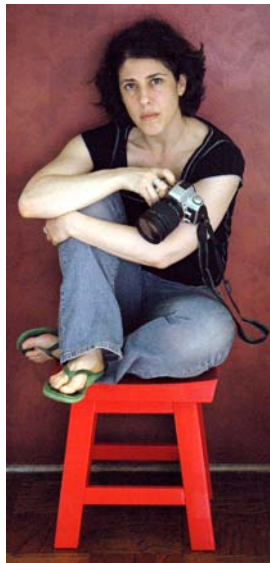
## Celebrating Our “Down There” Diversity

For the past nine years, artist Alexandra Jacoby has been photographing women’s most private selves. So private, she says, that most women haven’t even seen their own, much less others. Vaginas, that is.

The mission statement of Jacoby’s project, *vagina vérité*®, is as much to overcome women’s fear and loathing of their vaginas (and vulvas) as it is for Jacoby to investigate and interrogate society’s erasure and commercialization of women’s sexuality. Jacoby believes the “pornification” of our society has negatively impacted the way women feel about themselves.

Thus far there are 107 v-portraits, as the artist refers to the striking close-ups,

adorning the walls of her Manhattan apartment. They feature women, ranging in age from 19 to 60, of various ethnicities. Jacoby has put out a call for survivors of female genital mutilation as well as transgendered women to participate in her



project because she wants to document the broadest range of female experience and beauty possible. She is still surprised at the lack of hair “down there,” so she circulated a request for women with hairy cha-chas to participate.

“I’m here to document, not to promote any particular point of view,” says Jacoby. But, clearly, her intent is to make a statement.

“A statement about what is in the eye of the beholder,” she says ironically. Jacoby also indicates that every vagina she has photographed is unique. “That point is most surprising to the women I’ve worked with because I don’t think any of us look that often.” ([vaginaverite.com](http://vaginaverite.com))

[Stephanie Schroeder]