

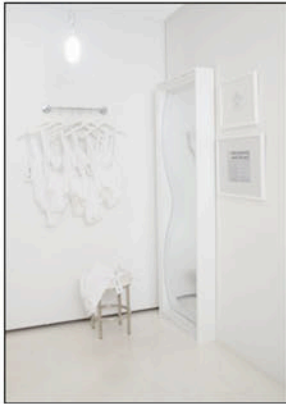
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## Artist Rachel Hovnanian Takes a Look at the Power and Burden of Beauty

Posted Nov 6th 2009 at 7:00AM by [Melissa Schweiger](#)



The dressing room of our nightmares. Photo courtesy of Rachel Hovnanian

Shopping for [bathing suits](#) is something that practically every woman dreads (though we can't really image [Gisele](#) having a panic attack as swimsuit season approaches, but hey, you never know).

In her latest exhibit, "Power & Burden of Beauty," artist [Rachel Hovnanian](#) taps into that defeated feeling women get in the dressing room and the immense pressure that women put on themselves to look beautiful.

As soon as you enter the exhibit, there is an installation of a fitting room with a fun house mirror, and audio that says "You need more [Botox](#)," and "You shouldn't have eaten those Cheetos."

Another provocative installation is a baby's nursery that contains wallpaper depicting [beauty queen](#) trophies, while another is a cold cast marble sculpture of a bathing suit, which is entitled "Body Armor."

"If you look amazing in a bathing suit, it becomes a powerful tool," Hovnanian explained to StyleList on opening night.

Our favorite part of the exhibit is what looks like an oversized medicine cabinet filled with jars of beauty cream, called "The Wall of Confidence."



Cream to "make your boyfriend's jaw drop." Photo: Rachel Hovnanian

Each jar of "Texas Beauty Cream" has a label making outlandish claims, including: "Look hot while [protecting the planet](#)," "Virtually eliminate the depressing feeling of looking older than you are," and "Make your boyfriend's jaw drop."

Sounds ridiculous, right? "These are actual sayings I found in advertisements for cosmetics," the artist says. Wow!

Hovnanian grew up in Texas, land of the beauty queens, but her parents never put emphasis on outer beauty. "They told me to feed my soul and my intellect and taught me never to judge myself," she says.

Hopefully, this thought-provoking work will help others to do the same, especially considering a recent study which revealed that [95% of young women want to change something about their bodies](#).