



Petra Collins: Discharge

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In her highly anticipated book *Discharge*, Canadian-born, New York-based artist and photographer Petra Collins (born 1992) presents images of self-discovery and femininity that explore the emotional, complex intersection of life online and off. Responding to the ubiquity of social media, Collins offers images of unflinching honesty--girls on the brink of adulthood taking selfies, applying lip gloss, pleasuring themselves, or lounging in childhood bedrooms amid piles of stuffed animals--which explore the private and public aspects of growing up as a woman at a moment when female bodies are ubiquitously hyper-mediated by Photoshop and social media. "I'm used to being told by society that I must regulate my body to fit the norm," Collins writes in her introductory essay on censorship and social media. From there, the book deconstructs that norm through her intimate photographs of friends--photographs that, rather than counter the male gaze, document female subjects processing it. The young Collins uses film, lending her photographs, in spite of their inclusion of iPhones and laptops, a 70s aesthetic, a romantic nostalgia. *Discharge* includes a discussion between Collins and her friend, *Rookie* blogger and founder Tavi Gevinson, moderated by artist K8 Hardy. The photographs and discourse around them are part of a contemporary girl power revolution, proving that feminism and sexuality aren't mutually exclusive.

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