

BEAUTIFUL

just the way you are

www.bjtwya.com

BEAUTIFUL Just The Way You Are (BJTWYA) is an art action to protest the relentless objectification of girls and women throughout our culture. Launched on May 30, 2009 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, BJTWYA takes place at any magazine rack. Anyone, in any location, can participate. This is the action: You walk up to a magazine stand and place one of the BJTWYA posters over every stack of magazines that uses the female body to sell something - to sell the magazine, to sell an article, to sell a product, to sell a lifestyle, to sell a promise, or to sell the idea that you need to match your body to the picture. You decide which covers qualify. You place a poster over them. Then you walk away.

You can do the art action anywhere - at supermarkets, bookstores, doctors' offices, hotels, convenience stores, newsstands, libraries - any place you see the opportunity. You can place the poster in front of a stack or behind the first or second magazine in a stack, to be revealed later. You can put them inside the magazines, or give them to others. All you need is a supply of the *BEAUTIFUL Just The Way You Are* posters, available online at www.bjtwya.com.

BEAUTIFUL Just The Way You Are comes out of a deep disturbance at the ease with which our culture robs our humanity through such common mechanisms as education, media, and fashion. In spite of major 20th Century advances of the women's movements in critical areas such as suffrage, labor, and education, the last thirty years have seen persistent devaluing of women that is supported, promoted, and disseminated by an exploding infrastructure of media and technology. Violence against women and distortions of body image are not abating. Glaring inequalities between men and women persist, yet "feminism" is a word avoided by many. The pressure for girls and women to make themselves into sexual objects for consumption by others is stronger than ever, with a growing list of methods to achieve it. Pornography has become mainstream while becoming increasingly degrading to women. Self-objectification is construed as empowerment. Self-degradation is confused with self-determination.

BEAUTIFUL Just The Way You Are takes advantage of the power of a graphic image and repetition as well as the power of collective action. The magazine rack is only one of many locations where we are taught the lessons of our culture, but it is one that is ubiquitous throughout our towns and cities and reaches every stratum of the population. At the magazine rack words and pictures work together seamlessly, like a good children's book, to teach and tell a story of who we are. Before girls are ten, and then without pause throughout their lives, they internalize the lesson that their bodies are how they will be first judged, and that there is a body type that they must attain to be judged worthy of attention. We learn that the female body can be used to sell anything - tangible or intangible - to women, men, and children. The use of a motorcycle, a deodorant, a vacation, a necktie, or a beverage implies ownership of the woman's body pasted into the advertisement. Although all humans are born with beauty and power, our early unquestioned self is quickly corrupted. We adopt an anxiety while navigating a path towards a culturally dictated state of beauty and power.

BEAUTIFUL Just The Way You Are seeks to intervene in the space between all who stand before the magazine rack and the engine of advertising and mass culture. In that space of daily life it places an alternative. BJTWYA is an invitation to act.

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