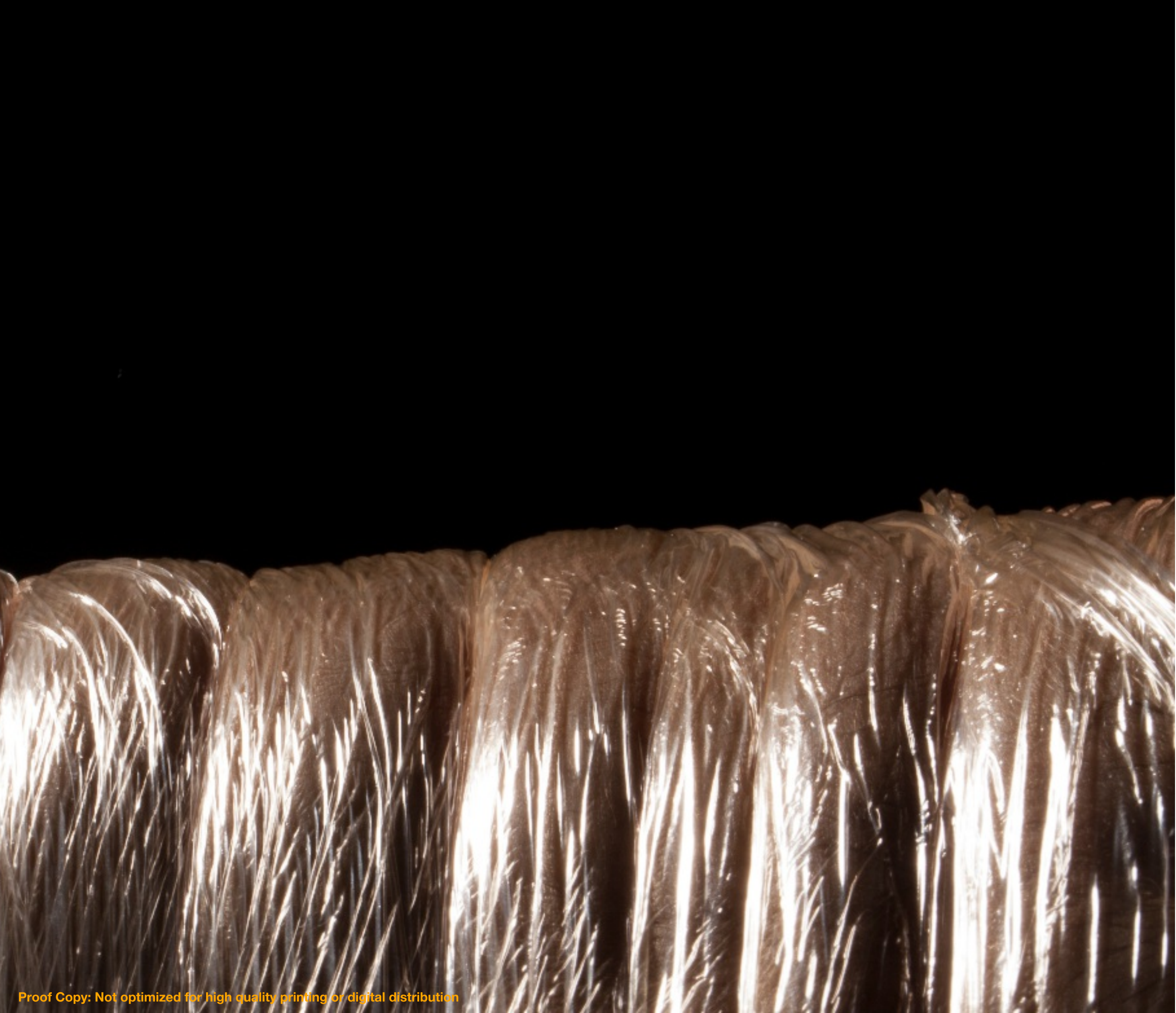




# MEAT MARKET



















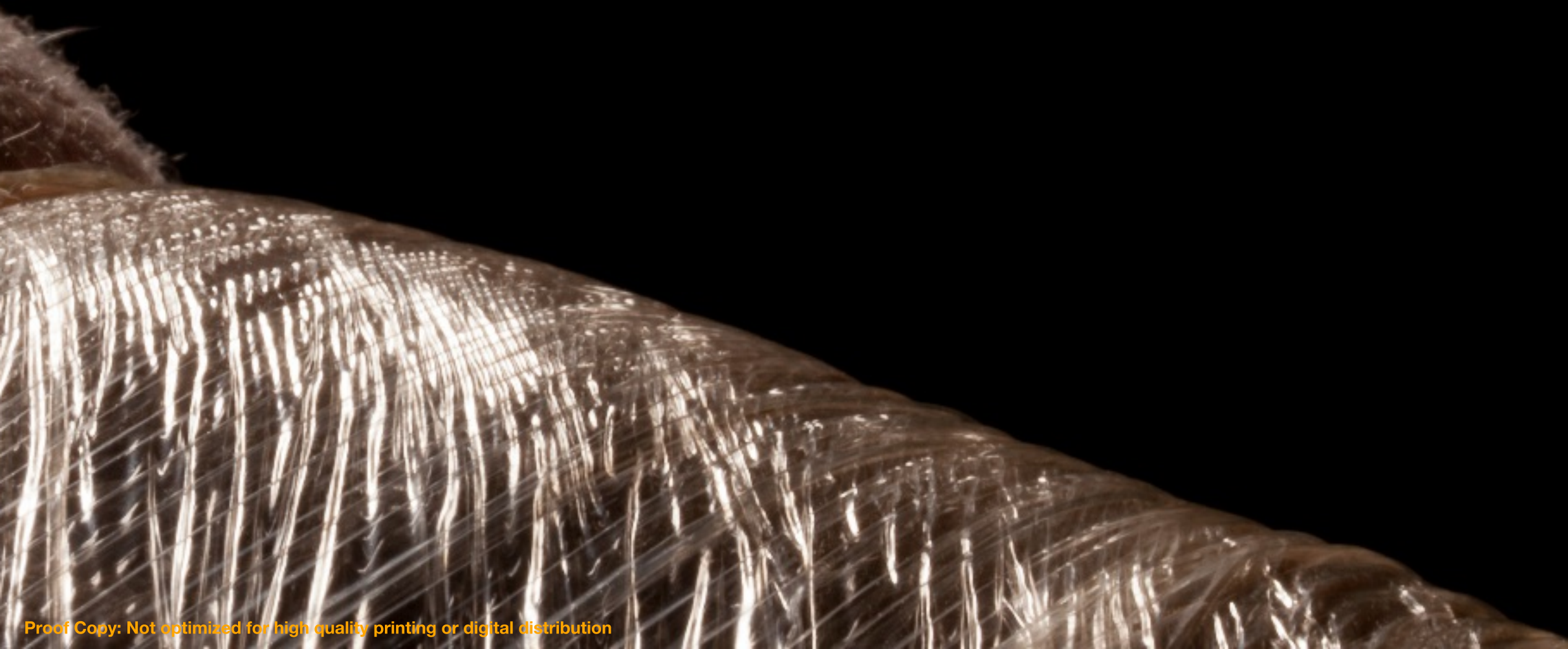






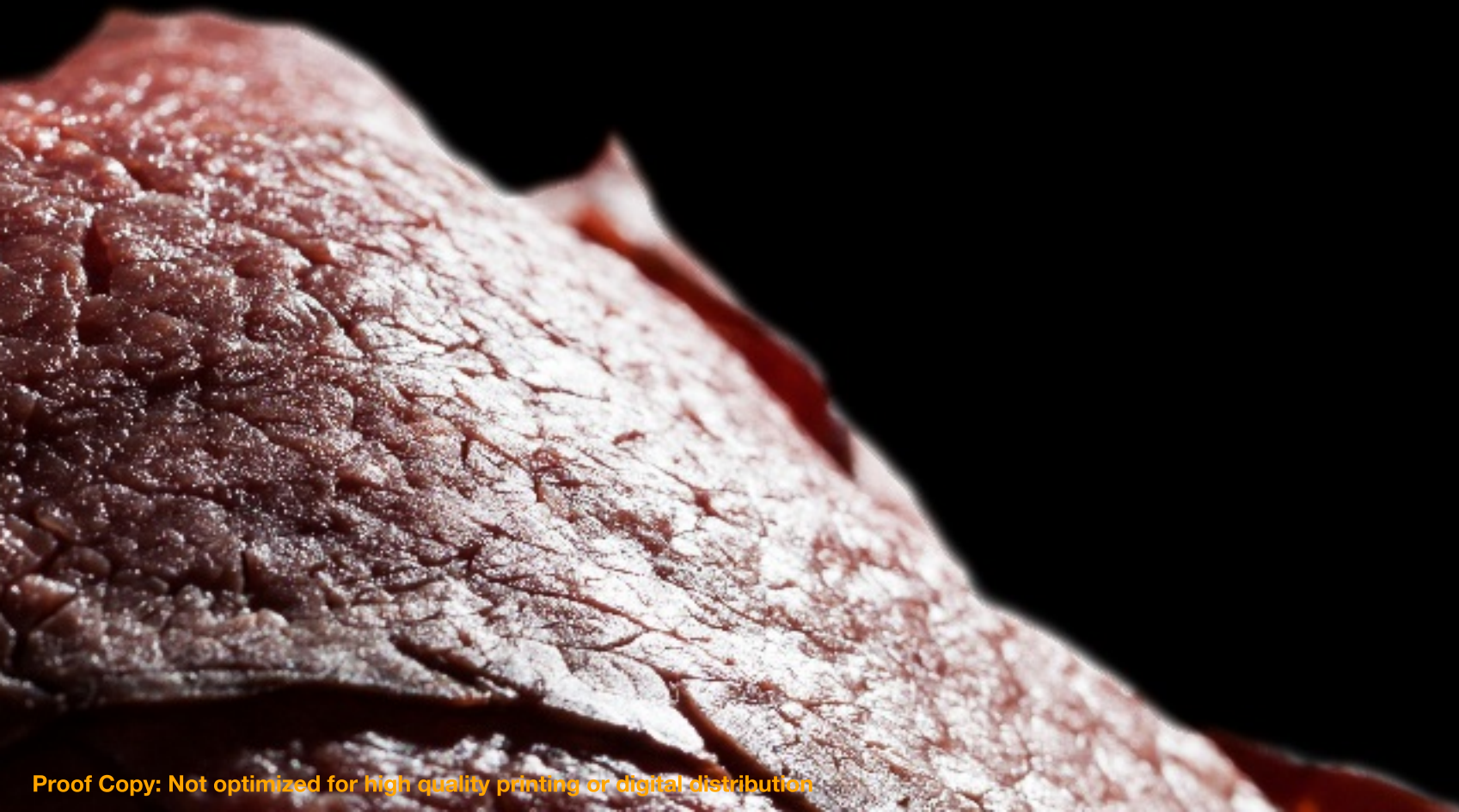














## Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Beauty

By reading Amelia Jones, *Feminism, Incorporated*.  
Reading “postfeminism” in an anti feminist age - I am hoping to explore the death of feminism and how it is now being portrayed in the media within the last decade. I am hoping to gain knowledge that will help me better understand in what way I can execute my photography project without being a part of killing feminism.

The human body has been used in art since the very beginning, especially the female form which represents fertility. Women has been looked at as a more natural, biological beings than men. In the modern society, femininity has become an object of discussion, especiall in the visual arts - this has created and destroyed the feminist movement. In today's society the word feminism has become a bad word - a word that has become about man hating instead of equality. In Amelia Jones - *Feminism - Incorporated* ‘Reading post-feminism in an anti-feminist age’, she discusses Susan Faludi’s book (1991), which points out that in the last 10 years we have experienced a feminist backlash and is exploring the death of feminism, so-called post-feminism. Jones is discussing how post-feminism has been promoted through photography and written texts - that photography is a ‘truthful’ medium and is widely spread through magazines and advertisements. These ads and magazines are setting the standard view of male/female truth when it comes to limits of gender, race, sexual and class differences. She is claiming that photography has been a part of this execution of feminism. Jones is using one such example - “Basic Instinct (1992) by Paul Verhoven, where the ‘strident lesbian’/bisexual becomes a man-killer with an ice pick/phallus. These narratives produce the necessity of annihilation the non-domesticated contemporary woman in bloody orgies of human destruction, or reinscribing her into the family structure. With the termination of the contemporary professional woman comes the termination of feminism and its threatening anti-patriarchal goals.” Here Jones is saying that Hollywood was in one way trying to do something different and make the woman the powerful one but failing to keep her femininity in the process. Not only that but creating this stereotype which states that lesbians/bisexual women are batshit crazy and has no femininity at all.

Thereby being incredibly destructive to feminism and its message, this movie in particular is saying that lesbians are psychopaths. In many different mediums like photography, film, writing there is a lot of this anti-feminism where they are trying to empower women but utterly failing at it. Further, I will explore my way of using the photograph to represent the human body in a way that is not defined by gender, sexual preference, class or race. I will explore the subject of how the human body, which we objectify and confine to the rules of society. It will be portrayed as something visually beautiful yet dark and disturbing. To me, beauty is not just something you see, it is something you feel. Something that inspires you, makes you addicted, something you can never have enough of. In my art, I explore the human body, its shape, texture and context within the world. This obsession has been a form of therapy, and exploration and acceptance of my own body. Exploiting the raw truth within others selfishly helped me. The idea that beauty is a fetish, in a way that we depend on it, we are forced to see it in certain things, objects or places such as a symmetrical object or face. I don't think I have ever heard anyone say 'that was a ugly sunset', or had a discussion of how the sunset could have been better if you moved one cloud a little to the right. If this feeling is a subjective one or an objective one I can not answer you, although I believe it is a little bit of both. There are things that are more objective in the form of beauty such as a sunset, and then we have The Mona Lisa, which people find beautiful and others might not agree. Is beauty a feeling we have romanticized?

The more we obsess with our bodies, they become more or less beautiful. Either beauty is a feeling which blinds us of seeing the truth or it helps the truth. Yet, Jones quotes Mulvey "It is said that analyzing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it." (Mulvey), and I find this sentence to be true, if you are analyzing your body you will discover what you can change to make it better. You can do the same with a sunset, analyzing the weather for that day, that this particular could was like a wrinkle in the sky that didn't need to be there. By analyzing it - you destroy the pleasure and feeling you got from it. "According to Mulvey's argument, the construction of woman as objectified other through visual representation is inevitable, and feminist must work to refuse this objectification. Woman, Mulvey argues, stands "in patriarchal culture... as bearer... not maker of meaning," becoming object of scopophilic and inexorably male desire or the fetishizing male gaze, serving to palliate the male viewer's fear of lack.", what Jones and Mulvey are discussing is how we have to refuse something that is only natural - the male gaze.

I am all for not objectifying women, although it is in our nature to find pleasure in others. Instead of denying it, rather find the feminine side and portray it - this goes for men and women or all sorts and shapes. I do not believe in singling out anyone, who is to say that women do not find pleasure in looking at men? I am partially agreeing with this quote, instead of neutralizing the female body I will explore all kinds of body, and finding pleasure in them.

In my work, I will try to package and distort what I find beautiful, my obsession, the human form and texture. I am not analyzing the beauty or pleasure it gives me, rather observing it and making it come to life creating a new language. Society today is like a meat market, you can choose whatever you might desire, height, what type of cut and what kind of flavour you want. This fascination with beauty and how it makes us feel is an ongoing project for many, getting more fit, slimmer, better health and feeling better has an underlying tone of wanting to feel beautiful. This obsession can be just from our own visuals of our body, social pressure, or health issues. No matter what the reason might be, it is this fetishism with beauty, this addiction to feel good, about ourselves or in society - to be a part of this meat market. By portraying this concept I want the viewer to feel the beauty yet understand the consequences of neglecting our own beauty.

These are some of the lengths people go through to achieve beauty. I am exploiting this idea within my art by photographing the human body for what it is, it's natural and unnatural, whatever that might be, and comparing that with different kinds of meat that have various texture, color, look and shape. This metaphor is meant to both find beauty and the scary truth of how we treat our bodies. With this process I am learning how to see beauty in my body, my flaws, and how I should accept me for me. A beauty that will not be analyzed, but rather enjoyed for what it is.

