If 2015 was the year that online feminism went mainstream, in 2016 we’re finally seeing beauty and fashion brands embrace the reality of the female body, full frontal. No longer are women politely asking for permission to be women—periods, breastfeeding, and all. Along with this shift, niche brands, activists, and visual artists are celebrating pubic hair without apology.

Online imagery is leading the discussion and pushing brands to respond. Seattle-based photographer and online gallerist Ashley Armitage curates an intersectional feminist space where the unretouched, unshaven look reigns. At “Into You,” an art exhibition at SXSW, Armitage showed alongside Molly Soda and Arvida Byström, selfie-made artists whose proud display of pubic hair is akin to a modern equivalent of Frida Kahlo's unibrow—their refusal to expurgate femininity as aesthetically captivating as it is culturally polarizing.
Image courtesy of @ladyist. asharmitage.com
As more women reject gender stereotypes online, products intended for female hair removal have given way to a new set of grooming products designed for growing, styling, and even coloring pubic hair.

**Fur**, an all-natural line of pubic hair oil and stubble cream, comes beautifully packaged in a chartreuse sphere, sporting the tagline “give your pubes a chance.” Intended for everyday use, Fur includes essential oils to soften pubic hair, and is inspired by the revolutionary notion that, like the hair on your head, your pubic hair can shine with a little TLC. In founding the brand, sisters Emily and Laura Schubert, joined by their childhood bestie Lillian Tung, set out not just to normalize and destigmatize pubic hair, but also to empower women with the tools to beautify and maintain it.

“Up until recently, the conversation around pubic hair has very much been around having it or not, with the emphasis on not,” says co-founder Laura Schubert. “We felt that this binary left out the idea of care, which is central to the way we think about the face, head hair, and every other part of the body. We wanted to create other options for women and men to care for their pubic hair beyond partial or total removal.”
UK-based Natural Spa Factory has also debuted its very own “Bush Oil” in a sleek black bottle—a refreshing departure from the emetic pink aisles that have become so synonymous with the patronizing marketing of feminine hygiene products. “We're big believers of the natural approach, but natural doesn't have to mean ungroomed. Men have beard oil to condition their facial hair; now it's time to introduce a product suited for being kind to your womanly attributes,” cofounder Emma Webber told Cosmopolitan.

Betty Beauty is a cosmetics brand specializing in “color for the hair down there.” Founder Nancy Jarecki initially created it for women who desired their pubic hair to match their head hair, but soon realized that women were experimenting with wild colors, not just the classics. She now offers aqua blue, hot pink, lilac, and ruby red, and boasts five-star ratings and hundreds of rave reviews on Amazon.

Despite the frankness around the pubic hair conversation—celebs like Gwyneth Paltrow, Cameron Diaz, and even the Kardashians have chimed in with their preferences—Ashley Armitage still thinks the ability to flaunt one’s body hair is rooted in privilege. “In many cases, when it is actually accepted, it's on white, thin, ‘attractive’ cis women,” she explains. “It is so much harder for a fat woman, or a trans girl, or a woman of color to grow out their body hair and have it be accepted by society.”

While we move to un-taboo pubes, it’s important to respect personal preference and give women unbiased options, not prescriptive or preachy mandates. “We are equally against pubic hair ‘having a moment’ as we are against a lack of pubic hair ‘having a moment,’” adds Fur’s Laura Schubert. “We want there to be no stigma around any habit—from completely natural, to trimmed, to completely bare—whether people use Fur products or not.”

Pubic Pampering

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