

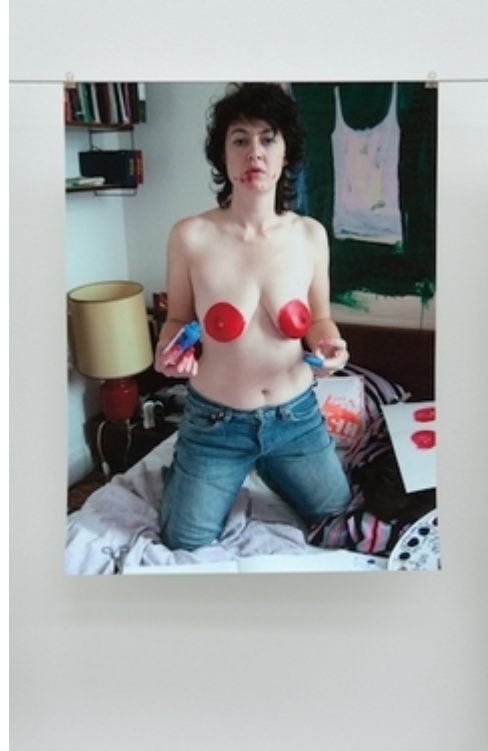
# ARTFORUM

## A.L. Steiner

**BLUM & POE | LOS ANGELES**  
**2727 S. La Cienega Boulevard**  
**July 2–August 22**

A. L. Steiner's first solo effort at Blum & Poe makes a formal presentation of the personal photo archive she has exhibited, in parts, for years. Meanwhile, a projection on the far back wall shows a website tracking deforestation, pollution, and other dire metrics of the world's collapse. Clearly there is no more time for bullshit—except, maybe, that most exquisite bullshit of love. *Love Changes the Lover*, 2015, a big, framed digital collage, unites a ravaged ATM and bales of iridescent e-waste with the prosaic warmth of people gazing at the ocean or out windows. On a long wire, two cliché views of ocean bracket several unframed portraits of the artist's coterie (*Highlites: Week 1*, 2005–14) in poses from candid to confrontational, graphically nude to all dressed up. Even the most unguarded moments feel curated: one friend's breasts tipped with paint echo another's FTM top-surgery scars.

Steiner's "confessional" documents of her circle refuse gloss and deny sleaze; and ignore photographic tradition. Instead, her photos take up space—gallery space, conversation space, mind space—representing, and producing, the artist's community. Grounding the more exhibitionist work is an elegant birchwood desk and set of drawers filled with 4x6 photos (*Selexxx: 1995–2025, with Shin Okuda*, 2015). Courtesy of a librarian, visitors can select from dozens of categories ("Scars/ bruises" follows "Ryan's Wedding LA") then flip through stacks of prints on a brass tray. This mediated, fetishized, yet unculled version of Steiner's archive runs contrary to the relative permanence of the collages—and the relative frailty of digital images—while reiterating the artist's simple insistence that her experiences have value. Such intimacy appears without trying to please. Yet there's also something powerful about all these glorified snapshots of someone else's friends: They're not for you.



**A.L. Steiner, *Untitled (Melissa with lipstick)*, 2007, color pigment print, 24 x 18".**

— Travis Diehl

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