

## **Afraid/Not Afraid**

*Afraid/Not Afraid* examines how women live with an ever-present threat of violence and the feeling of being unsafe in their world. Gender violence, sexual stereotypes, and the portrayal of women in the media and popular culture feed and perpetuate this fear in our society. The installation looks at how these forces shape the lives and behavior of women, often in subtle ways, that become ingrained and normalized as part of our worldview. The images reflect the relationship between being watched and objectified and how women present their identities to the world. In creating this work, the artists are confronting this underlying fear to call attention to and to create discussion and change around these issues.

Jan and Pamela's own experiences with safety and consent propelled them to create a body of work that looks at the emotional side of this subject. They are white cisgender women who grew up during the period of change created by the women's liberation movement of the 1970's. As young women, they saw new possibilities in female gender roles, with opportunities to become stronger and more independent. This grew their expectations of equality between the sexes, which did not always play out. Although recent generations have seen rapidly expanding views on what it means to be female in America, there are still problems today. The "Me Too" movement shows us that unwanted sexual advances, sexual harassment, discrimination and assault are still issues that women currently face. These gender related experiences cross the boundaries of age, class and race. This installation provides a place to consider one's own relationship to the objectification of women's bodies, the male gaze and female empowerment.