

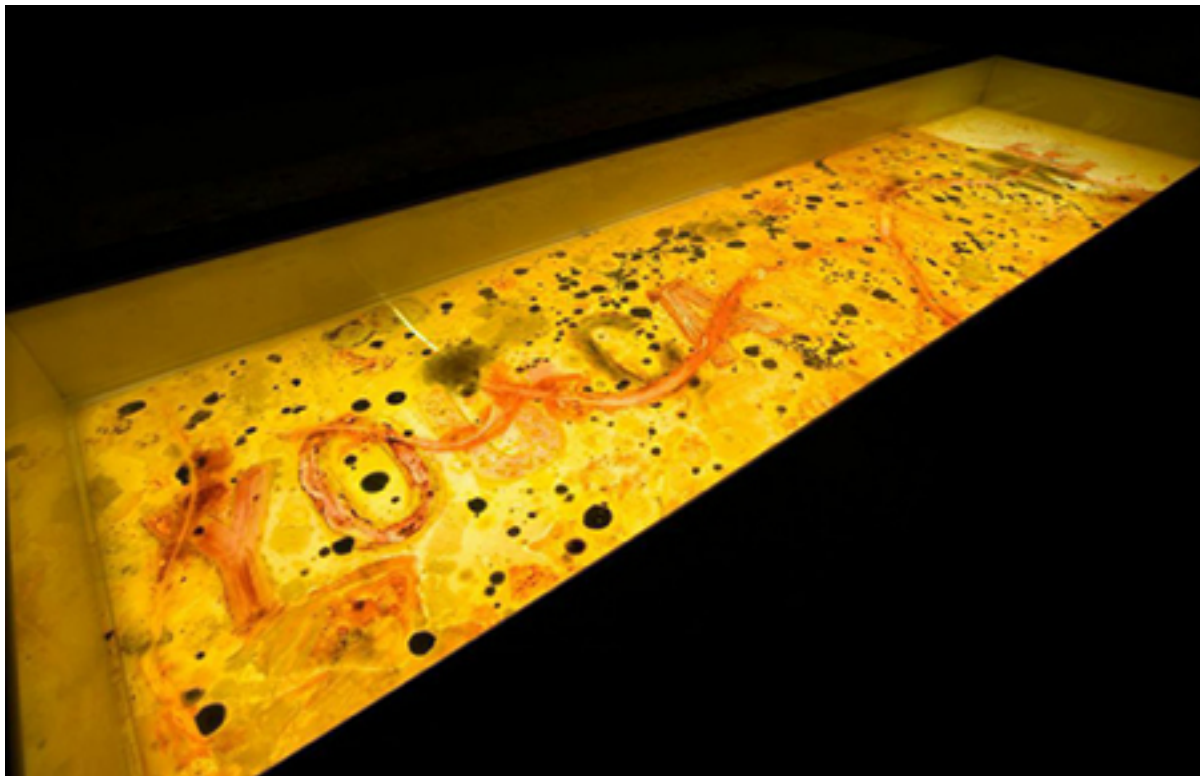
# ARTFORUM

## Anicka Yi

THE KITCHEN

512 West 19th Street

March 5–April 11



Anicka Yi, *Grabbing At Newer Vegetables*, 2015,

What do women smell like? In her latest solo exhibition, Anicka Yi pushes at the limits of our episteme and provides a whiff. It's not ready to wear; in fact, it reeks. One hundred women—primarily artists, curators, and critics (full disclosure: I was one)—were swabbed, and the resultant samples have been cultivated here in a moldy petri dish “billboard” that assaults visitors at the entrance to the show. The thriving bacterium, which Yi nurtured with the help of synthetic biologist Tal Danino, is a budding contaminant, a collective, germly growth. A strain from our culture as well as one captured from air samples in Gagosian Gallery were rendered into a chemical composite, and the ensuing scent is being discharged in a second, all-black room via three diffusers topped with helmets in transparent vinyl boxes (which strongly echo Jasper Johns's Duchamp-inspired sets for Merce Cunningham's *Walkaround Time*, 1968). If it sounds like a queasy blend, it is. It's also heavy on butyric acid—think Parmesan cheese, rancid butter—with a sour floral accord up top, and it's festering among all the other odors in the show: all that plastic for the boxes and the various organic sculptural assemblages therein, such as a flayed-skin-like array of kombucha scobies.

What does feminism smell like? The women Yi sampled don't come out of any particular wave, nor do they adhere to one mode or affiliation. Yet she seems to want us to inject new expressive and affective strategies into old issues that traverse all of society—namely, feminism, patriarchy, and capitalism. She wants us to make a stink if those exchanges—new terms, new smells—fall short. “You Can Call Me F” is the title of the show.

— Lauren O'Neill-Butler