FINDING 1: Ratings of Face Attractiveness and Body Attractiveness are Correlated

As expected on the basis of previous research, ratings of women's face-only attractiveness were positively correlated with ratings of women's body-only attractiveness (Study 1: $r = .86$; Study 2: $r = .89$). Women's faces and bodies both provide valuable, non-redundant pieces of information about women's health, age, sexual attitudes, femininity and kindness, whereas their bodies appear to provide more time-sensitive information about their current fertility and ability to support fetal development.

Although both face and body predict women's overall attractiveness, women's faces are a better predictor of overall attractiveness than their bodies are. One potential explanation is that the face offers more information, or more important pieces of information, about a woman than does her body, perhaps because it is a primary vehicle for communication and social expression. Another non-mutually exclusive possibility, as noted by Peters et al. (2007), is that cues displayed in women's bodies may be masked, highlighted, or deemphasized by women's choice of clothing. In the current set of studies, we attempted to avoid previous work by comparing the relative importance of face versus body by producing overlapping attractiveness ratings under conditions that differ in the degree to which bodies are masked.

FINDING 2: Ratings of Body Attractiveness Predict Ratings of Full-Body Attractiveness, Especially when Women's Bodies are Visible

In Study 1, when women were clothed, ratings of women's body-only attractiveness were positively correlated with ratings of their overall attractiveness ($r = .46$, $p < .001$), but that association was reduced when we controlled for ratings of their facial attractiveness ($r = .23$, $p = .041$). In Study 2, when the women were unclothed, body ratings were highly predictive of their overall attractiveness ratings ($r = .72$, $p < .001$), even after controlling for ratings of their facial attractiveness ($r = .61$, $p < .001$).

METHOD

Women came into the lab as dyads as part of a broader study on women's friendships. When we recruited participants, we intentionally did not tell them that they would be measured and photographed because (1) we did not want women to select into the studies or select a friend into the studies based on their willingness to be measured and photographed, and (2) we did not want us to select different photos from female or male sitters in an effort to separate information about the woman from information about the clothes she was wearing. Upon their arrival to the lab, we told women that we were interested in measuring their bodies and photographing them for research purposes only. Each woman was photographed from a set distance under constant lighting and was asked to retain a neutral expression. In Study 1, each woman was photographed in her original street clothes. In Study 2, each woman was photographed with her hair pulled back, wearing a two-piece, royal blue swimsuit that we explained was being used to make other men appear more attractive. After the photographs, we took women's height and weight and measured their body fat as a percentage of body weight (at the point where women wore their bikinis). When they returned to the lab, they were measured for a second time and photographed in a swimsuit. In the current set of studies, we attempted to examine previous work by comparing the relative importance of face versus body by producing overlapping attractiveness ratings under conditions that differ in the degree to which bodies are masked.

As expected, women's WHR and BMI were positively correlated with each other in both studies (Study 1: $r = .74$; Study 2: $r = .80$). Furthermore, WHR and BMI were both negatively correlated with ratings of women's body-only attractiveness as well as with ratings of women's face-only attractiveness and overall attractiveness (Study 1: $r = -.72$ to -.87; Study 2: $r = -.72$ to -.87; all associations statistically significant). That is, women with larger WHRs and larger body mass were rated as less attractive. Note that the correlation between WHR and body-only attractiveness was stronger among women in estimates ($r = .99$) than among women in their original clothes ($r = .93$). Similarly, the correlation for BMI and body-only attractiveness was stronger among women in estimates ($r = .99$) than among women in their original clothes ($r = .93$). Women with larger breasts tended to have larger WHRs and BMI (all $p < .05$). In Study 1, when women were measured and photographed in their street clothes, women's waist-to-hip circumference was not associated with judgments of their attractiveness ($r = -.13$ to -.11, all $p > .10$). Similarly, cap size in Study 1 was not associated with ratings of face-only attractiveness ($r = -.20$ to -.19, all $p > .13$). Although women who reported a larger bra cup size received lower ratings of full-body attractiveness ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$), and women with larger cup sizes received lower ratings of face-only attractiveness as well as overall attractiveness ($r = -.35$ to -.70, all $p < .05$), and women with larger breasts were rated as less attractive.

FINDING 3: Women's Body Shape, Body Mass, and Breast Size Predict Ratings of Their Body Attractiveness

As expected, women's WHR and BMI were positively correlated with each other in both studies (Study 1: $r = .74$; Study 2: $r = .80$). Furthermore, WHR and BMI were both negatively correlated with ratings of women's body-only attractiveness as well as with ratings of women's face-only attractiveness and overall attractiveness (Study 1: $r = -.72$ to -.87; Study 2: $r = -.72$ to -.87; all associations statistically significant). That is, women with larger WHRs and larger body mass were rated as less attractive. Note that the correlation between WHR and body-only attractiveness was stronger among women in estimates ($r = .99$) than among women in their original clothes ($r = .93$). Similarly, the correlation for BMI and body-only attractiveness was stronger among women in estimates ($r = .99$) than among women in their original clothes ($r = .93$). Women with larger breasts tended to have larger WHRs and BMI (all $p < .05$). In Study 1, when women were measured and photographed in their street clothes, women's waist-to-hip circumference was not associated with judgments of their attractiveness ($r = -.13$ to -.11, all $p > .10$). Similarly, cap size in Study 1 was not associated with ratings of face-only attractiveness ($r = -.20$ to -.19, all $p > .13$). Although women who reported a larger bra cup size received lower ratings of full-body attractiveness ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$), and women with larger cup sizes received lower ratings of face-only attractiveness as well as overall attractiveness ($r = -.35$ to -.70, all $p < .05$), and women with larger breasts were rated as less attractive.