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Manufactured Desired: How Social Media and Influencer Agencies Sexualise and Monetise Pregnant Influencers

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Abstract

This article examines Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, and how female and pregnant influencers are deconstructed into machine-like components by influencer agencies and social media's monetisation policies, turning them into objects. Social media, influencer agencies, and influencers mutually reinforce and constrain each other, creating a "world of desire" and a "factory of desire" focused on body objectification. Despite Mainland China's strict censorship, social media evades scrutiny through an "Underwater Policy," subtly manipulating body exposure into data and monetising it. Female influencers, under Chinese "abstinence" content policies, increasingly become carriers of soft pornography and erotic fantasy, whether actively or passively.

Keywords: influencers; douyin; social media; sexualisation; pregnant beauty