

The Village Voice, November 16, 2016

the village
VOICE

Marilyn Minter's Dirty Pretty Things

By Lilly Lampe



"Pretty/Dirty," Marilyn Minter's retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum, begins with a series of photographs that has haunted her career. "Coral Ridge Towers" was created in 1969, when Minter was an undergraduate at the University of Florida, Gainesville. The images feature her mother, a beautiful Southern belle turned drug addict, insolently smoking and primping her striking yet ravaged features. It's a far cry from the powerful, outspoken feminist nature of Minter's work from recent decades, though not a complete deviation. Minter is best known for pieces that visually thrust together adjectives that seem oxymoronic — shiny, grotesque, glittering, filthy — paintings and photographs featuring blurry female parts, coated with dirt, makeup, and other substances, cropped close to show pores, freckles, and flaws. It's easy to see where a vain yet crumbling mother fits in. But Minter comes across as expert witness rather than victim. "Pretty/Dirty" is the rare retrospective that also acts as an engrossing biography, skillfully revealing the key shifts in Minter's career, the points where the green artist transformed into skilled provocateur, the path that made her a star.

We see Minter as a young pop artist in New York City, playing with found images of women and Benday dots (in *Big Girls*, 1986, an iconic image of Sophia Loren eyeing Jayne Mansfield's rack is cropped and layered with an image of young girls looking at one another — the downside of the female gaze, if you will) and dipping a toe into photorealist painting. At the press preview, Minter laughed when speaking of these works. "I thought I was so smart," she said. "Photorealism was everywhere, and I thought I'd just paint

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pictures of photographs." They certainly lack the riveting power of her later output, and art dealers deemed the paintings boring; the debt they owe to Warhol, Lichtenstein, and Rosenquist is hard to ignore. Yet these rather traditional oil-on-canvas paintings of photographs, spills, and aluminum foil on the linoleum floor reveal an obsession with materials that becomes instrument rather than subject in her later paintings.

In the late Eighties, Minter made porn paintings: "Food Porn," 1989–90, using images lifted from food magazines, and other works featuring sexually explicit acts in 1989, a year before Jeff Koons's infamous "La Cicciolina" series, starring the male artist and his porn star partner. Both series were reviled at the time, but where Koons subsequently went deeper into high-gloss pop, Minter veered toward the transgressive. "I was called a traitor to feminism [at the time], yet I was going to abortion clinics," she says of the porn paintings. "I think most people don't know anything about the porn industry, [but] artists have to shine a light on the world around them." The lasting byproduct of this period was the way Minter harnessed marketing to promote the work, subverting the form and subsequently catapulting herself to success.

Minter took the money she might have spent on an Artforum ad and spent it on television, airing thirty-second commercials for the "Food Porn" show during Letterman and other late-night programs. "Pretty/Dirty" shows excerpts on a loop. Amid commercials for peanut butter M&Ms, Minter appears like a shock, painting, leading assistants, edgy music in the background. It's the first indication of her intuitive sense of provocation and understanding of media, as well as how her work acts as foil against marketing images (M&Ms have never looked so disturbingly pornographic). "Food Porn" sold well, and Minter began to make paintings from self-made images, creating the original material in studio, distorting, and layering to make composites of female bodies and substances in close-cropped perspective.

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In these fresh, confident enamel-on-metal paintings, female mouths, eyes, and feet seem almost to emerge from the ether. The links to her previous works are there, but her assumption of large-scale painting — panels extending upwards of nine feet tall — her ease and skill at directing and composing her own images, and the blurry photorealism that characterizes these pieces both stun and command. In *Blue Poles* (2007), glittering eyeshadow casts a woman's face aquamarine; her abundant freckles and a noticeable pimple stand out just as vividly. From mood to material, there's much Minter keeps ambiguous. Her latest creations have her layering photographs against glass, which is then subjected to frost or mist, adding an extra veil to both image and process (it's easy to mistake these paintings for photographs). The results surprise, confuse, and awe.

Still, Minter's work is most arresting when it's a surprise. Take the video *Smash*, originally commissioned for the Brooklyn Museum's 2014 "Killer Heels" exhibition. In an otherwise predictable array of towering stilettos and architectural platforms, *Smash* landed like a bomb. In this silver-screen-slick video, the feet of a large woman bulge through teetering, jewel-embellished platforms, splashing and stomping in chrome puddles as baubles drag and flop off. The close-up view renders things grotesque — chipped toenail polish horrifies; the silver paint appears toxic — yet the film dazzles.

Earlier venues for "Pretty/Dirty" used billboards to advertise the show, mimicking Minter's collaboration with *Creative Time* in 2006, when four billboards featuring her images were prominently placed around Chelsea. In its own stroke of marketing genius, the Brooklyn Museum has partnered with Barclays Center this month to advertise the exhibition. An adapted version of Minter's video *Green Pink Caviar*, from 2009, which features a lush, bulbous mouth licking and pressing against bright fluids, will play on the arena's massive oculus screen at various points of the day. At 6 a.m. last Tuesday I happened to catch the film, or rather it caught me, its engorged mass of flesh and tongue lolling in the air and glowing in the sky, the mouth filling the height of the seventeen-meter pit of the irregular screen. I stopped, transfixed, and watched the world turn fuchsia, lime, and back again. I wrenched myself away to continue to my polling place after a few moments, returning to the world as abruptly as I'd left it.

New York Times, November 10, 2016

The New York Times

A 'Nasty Woman' of Contemporary Art Fearlessly Renders the Body

By Roberta Smith



After a presidential campaign that underscored various women's rights issues, what better art exhibition to review than one devoted to provocative images of female independence at its most intimate, centering explicitly on the body.

"Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty" is part of "A Year of Yes," a series of exhibitions on trailblazing female artists at the Brooklyn Museum. Ms. Minter, 68, has been exhibiting in New York since the early 1980s, and is increasingly admired by younger generations for her fearless renderings of both the mechanisms of beauty and its dark underbelly.

Over the last three decades, Ms. Minter has operated in the gap defined by feminism, painting and popular culture, carving out a place as one of contemporary art's bad girls. There aren't many, and she is one of the few who are primarily painters. Along with Joan Semmel and Betty Tompkins, she appropriated for painting the provocative use of the female body that is usually limited to performance artists, including Carolee Schneemann and Valie Export in the late 1960s, and Vanessa Beecroft in more recent times.

New York Times, November 10, 2016



While pushing the often denigrated 1960s style of Photo Realism to new extremes, Ms. Minter's paintings invite us to consider the ways women do and do not own their bodies. They contrast their private ideas of pleasure with the external cues — played out in fashion, advertising, burlesque or pornography — that set stereotypes of beauty, behavior and sexuality.

Originated by the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, this show contains 44 paintings on canvas or metal, four stunning videos and sundry occasionally interesting photographs — all spanning peripatetically from 1969 to the present. It regularly fulfills its contradictory "Pretty/Dirty" subtitle, sometimes within the same work. Many efforts are ravishingly, if confusingly, beautiful. A few are definitely for adult audiences, which is why you'll find a parental warning at the show's entrance.

In Ms. Minter's best-known works, images are rendered in extreme close-up, embedded in lush surfaces that border on abstract and establish a winking, parodistic relationship with formalist painting. They are usually flooded with ambiguity, leaving us to our own devices, juggling not always pleasant meanings. A painting of a tightly framed, gaudily made-up eye has an undeniable reptilian mien in its carefully detailed sheen and wrinkles. In a mesmerizing billboard-size video, a pair of ruby red lips and tongue twist and turn through a scarlet sludge; we might be watching a deep-sea creature sopping up dinner.

New York Times, November 10, 2016



Back on canvas, a seemingly bejeweled orb pushes forward, evoking ancient treasure in Hollywood Technicolor (“Raiders of the Lost Ark” crossed my mind); actually, it is a glittering glob of gold liquid being expelled by a mouth edged in blue lipstick. Ms. Minter’s images possess a disorienting doubleness that forces you to examine them with extra care; they put you on intimate terms with the motif, the painted surface and your own suggestibility.

Ms. Minter was born in Shreveport, La., in 1948 and grew up in South Florida. Her childhood seems to have been challenging. She remembers her parents, who divorced when she was 8, as glamorous and unreliable. Her mother vacillated between drugs and alcohol; her father was a drinker, a gambler and a womanizer. Part of their legacy to their daughter would be later problems with drugs and alcohol (since overcome), and perhaps an enduring attraction to glamour as a female preoccupation that is part curse, part pleasure, part impossible fantasy. The show opens with a series of hazy black-and-white photographs from 1969 that capture the artist’s reclusive mother in a frothy negligee, moving about a dim, somewhat bedraggled bedroom, curling her hair, putting on makeup, posing before a mirror. Silent, atmospheric, these images attest to the hypnotic pull that mothers can exert on daughters, portraying their subject as both powerful and passive.

Throughout her childhood, Ms. Minter had one guiding light. She knew early on that she possessed an unusual skill for copying images, which coalesced into the ambition to be an artist. She left home at 16 to study art at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and went on to Syracuse University for her graduate degree. By 1972, she was in New York City, initially eking out a living as a plumber’s assistant.



New York Times, November 10, 2016

By the mid-1970s, Ms. Minter was deep into Photo Realism, converting photographs into paintings. She followed in the footsteps of other female artists like Vija Celmins and Sylvia Plimack Mangold, who were among the first to suggest that, contrary to the work of its flashier male adherents, Photo Realism had a striking potential for quiet, deadpan enumerations of the everyday. (Old art movements never die; with luck, they fall into more talented hands.) The first group of paintings here are wonderfully restrained little canvases whose subjects include frozen peas defrosting in a kitchen sink, or curls of paper scattered on a linoleum floor whose generic pattern is depicted in quick smears of paint. They could be said to describe the domestic realm, while other paintings of photographs on the same linoleum conjure a working studio.

Ms. Minter came of age in the East Village of the 1980s, when misbehavior was the norm, and she wanted to be part of it. In an interview in the show's catalog, she recalls asking herself, "What is the subject matter that women never do?" Her answer: pornography. One result was "Porn Grid" of 1989, four small paintings whose images are lifted from men's magazines, aided, abetted and partly obscured by salacious drips of paint. Ms. Minter first showed these in 1990 at Simon Watson's gallery in SoHo, her second solo in New York, to harsh criticism from anti-pornography feminists.

This is not a conventional, step-by-step retrospective, so it is a little hard to see how Ms. Minter progressed from her rawer, pornographic paintings to those of this century, which trade on suggestion more than on sex and are more imposing in terms of size and color. By the late 1990s, she had a studio of assistants trained in her technique, which included finishing her enamel surfaces with soft pats of the fingers, not the brush.

Although it's from 2007, "Blue Poles" seems to exemplify the transition. First, the title, after one of Pollock's masterpieces, indicates a greater attention to abstraction. It is an exacting image of the eyes (roughly shadowed with sparkling blue) of a young person, including straggly eyebrows and a prominent pimple. Does this depict a bit of human reality behind the beauty, of, say, a stage show, or is the subject too young to be doing this?

In the show's final gallery, a complex blur descends. Ms. Minter paints sheets of glass between her subject and us. Sometimes the glass is cracked, dripping with steam or liquid or scrawled with graffiti. These layers further complicate the reading of the images while visually punning on painting. The glass becomes a sarcastic evocation of the cherished "picture plane" of formalist abstraction, while the watery drips refer to the painting process of an artist whose technique is all but invisible. It is as if we were seeing how advertisements fare out in the city, vulnerable to taggers. Welcome to the real world, they say. Don't let it stop you.

New York Times, November 11, 2016

The New York Times

Lush Morsels From an Artist's Erotic Imagination

By Nancy Princenthal



"If I paint a glass of water, people think it's erotic," the artist Marilyn Minter said during a recent visit to her studio in New York's Garment District. She laughed ruefully, but they'd have reason. Outrageously beautiful and irresistibly disturbing, Ms. Minter's increasingly monumental paintings invoke a spectrum of human desires: for sex, food, affection and, hardly least, for being seen.

Tall and stylish, with a ready wit and an open manner, Ms. Minter works from photographs reconfigured in Photoshop, creating illusionistic canvases of body fragments awash in bling. Jewels and liquid gold spill out of open mouths. Lips and tongues press against image surfaces. Silver beads morph into droplets of water that are sprayed across paintings as big as billboards — a format she has used twice. Upping the game, a fragment of a 2009 Minter video, "Green Pink Caviar," will soon light up the Jumbotron screen on the interior facade of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. It focuses on an enormous, disembodied mouth slurping up variously colored goo. Eros is definitely on hand.

Although she has said that she is in many ways an abstractionist, and insisted to me, "I never tell people what to think," the pleasures of Ms. Minter's work are grounded in the bodies of women. And many in pop culture are cheering her on. Madonna used "Green Pink Caviar" for a projection in her recent concert tour. When the survey exhibition now at the Brooklyn Museum opened in Houston, Beyoncé tweeted about it.

New York Times, November 11, 2016



The attention is reciprocal, if wary. Earlier in her career, Ms. Minter drew from commercial print sources, including pornography, and some of her work has gone back into the mass media. She produced a 30-second television ad for a 1990 gallery exhibition (it ran on “Nightline” and the David Letterman and the Arsenio Hall shows), and, more recently, she accepted commissions from Playboy magazine and the fashion designer Tom Ford. The last two didn’t really work out; as much as she is interested in such crossovers, her purposes are those of an artist. She likes things that are disfavored. (Ms. Minter, 68, said she took on the Playboy project as an opportunity to celebrate pubic hair; which, she was disheartened to learn, a number of young women were lasering away. Her enthusiasm wasn’t fully shared by the editors.)

Although she treats some of her photographs as free-standing artworks, Ms. Minter’s primary mode, and strength, is painting. Working with a half-dozen assistants, she applies layer upon layer of thinned enamel paint, which is daintily swept with brushes and patted with fingertips onto metal support surfaces using the “cobbled” Photoshopped images as guides. It is a process that takes up to two years — and, she notes, involves no airbrushing. Bill Arning, the co-curator (with Elissa Auther) of the survey, is the director at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, where it originated, and recalled that during its run there, a Rubens exhibition was on view at a museum nearby. “If I wanted to explain Minter’s studio practice,” Mr. Arning said, “I could point across the street.”

An early supporter of Ms. Minter’s work, he noted that a great deal had changed for gender politics since the show was conceived, when “young women thought the questions Minter’s work raises” — about women taking control of how their bodies are seen — “were academic, art-historical issues that had been worked out.”

The recent presidential campaign has helped move feminist concerns into mass culture — and, it seems, generated new enthusiasm for the license she takes.

New York Times, November 11, 2016



The earliest works in the survey at the Brooklyn Museum are a series of noirish black-and-white photographs taken by Ms. Minter when she was still in school. They show her mother smoking in bed, or seated at a vanity applying makeup; in all, she either looks at herself in a mirror, or straight at the camera (and her daughter behind it). The artist, who was born in Shreveport, La., in 1948 and grew up in Louisiana and Florida, describes her mother as a drug-addicted Southern belle and her father, who left the family when she was 8, as a gambler and compulsive womanizer.

But she is leery of being seen in light of her background. "Everyone likes the idea of dysfunctional families," she said, "especially for women artists." She didn't exhibit these photographs until 1995. Still, she said she accepts the enduring importance to her work of themes they introduce: grooming and preening, glamour and its fault lines.

From the late 1970s come photorealist oil paintings of linoleum floors; chaste though they are, they, too, hint at things to come, with spilled fluids, shiny bits of foil, and canny alignments of subjects with the image surface. Other early paintings are based on photographs of young girls and starlets, seen through hand-painted dot-screens of the kind used in offset printing. Faux dot-screens also appear in the small enamel paintings of the "100 Food Porn" series (1989-90), which feature ostensibly aphrodisiac or otherwise suggestive foods — an artichoke, an ear of corn, the pink-fleshed belly of a gutted fish — being cracked open, knifed or peeled apart. The gestures, depicted and painterly, are aggressive; flesh is torn, drips happen. The only works in this exhibition based on hard-core pornography were made at roughly the same time, and are also small. A quartet of paintings mostly frame women's brightly lip-sticked mouths and erect penises. Two paintings depict women's genitals. In one, the subject touches herself.

Ms. Minter didn't linger on this material. Shortly after, she began to shoot her own photographs. As her work's size and degree of enlargement grew, the imagery slid past raw candor to the edgeless realm of libidinal imagination. Digital manipulation allowed for further departures from the real.

New York Times, November 11, 2016



As before, only fragments of bodies are shown; Ms. Minter pointed out that she has never pictured a full figure, or a clothed one. Nor does she depict outright violence or abjection. Lipstick is vivid, eye shadow lavish and abundant. But so are blemishes: freckles, pimples, stray hairs. Armor-thick toenail polish is chipped; feet are wet and dirty. The way the models are staged and shot challenged commercial photography and also circled back into it. “We didn’t know — this was back in 1993 — that the fashion industry would put jewels very delicately into the models’ mouths,” she said. “I would cram them in until they started gagging, and that’s when I started shooting.”

In the video “Smash” (2014), a pair of feet strapped into jeweled, silvery high-heeled sandals stomp their way through viscous silver liquid and shattered glass to a percussive soundtrack. This appalling, mesmerizing production required cutting-edge (and expensive) equipment, and it paid off. Mr. Arning explained, “She’s always aware of what time it is in the culture.”

New York Times, November 11, 2016



A series of new paintings at Salon 94 is based on photographs of women behind steamed or frosted panes of glass, some beaded with water. You can practically feel them sweat. In bringing us close enough to see these details, she makes us engage intimately — maybe uncomfortably so — with her subjects. It's a lesson in private pleasure and public display.

In the 1970s, when Ms. Minter's career began, a great many feminist artists were taking their clothes off — for photo-based activist and conceptual work, for performances and for paintings. When women got dressed again in the following decade and turned to the cooler modes of image appropriation and media critique, Ms. Minter instead raised the heat. In the splintering women's movement of the 1980s, "sex-positive" feminists — those who believe that women's sexual practices and fantasies, in all their variety, should be celebrated rather than policed — tangled with a wave of antipornography activists.

At the same time, as Mr. Arning noted, the culture was being ravaged by AIDS. "The question was," he recalled, "how do you continue to have an erotic life during an epidemic and not die? Minter's work offered a strong feminist voice leading the way." But her work was polarizing. As Mr. Arning put it, "People in the art world she really cared about hated those paintings."

New York Times, November 11, 2016



Ms. Minter has become a paragon for younger artists who came up with internet pornography and naked selfies circulating on social media. They also have had the benefit of work by Hannah Wilke, Carolee Schneemann and A. L. Steiner — all models for taking control over their bodies, and having pride in them.

Men come into this picture too, as Ms. Minter was quick to point out. She cited — perhaps surprisingly — Jeff Koons (“he’s a great artist!”) along with Robert Rauschenberg and Gerhard Richter, Mike Kelley and Richard Prince. “These are people that moved the dial,” she said.

But she also hastened to credit female peers: Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, Rosemarie Trockel, Sarah Charlesworth, Louise Lawler. She might have added, for their gender-bending and boundary-crashing as much as their materials, the glittery sculptures of Lynda Benglis and Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, the sequined paintings of Mickalene Thomas, Catherine Opie’s photographs of Elizabeth Taylor’s jewels and makeup. Welcoming all earnest attempts at perfect bedazzlement, and embracing, with fanfare, the effort’s futility, Ms. Minter insists only on taking the risk.

The New York Times



From left, Marilyn Minter's "Wangechi Gold 4" (2009), "Blue Poles" (2007) and an enamel on metal from 2006.

From left: Marilyn Minter, via Salon 94, New York and Regen Projects, Los Angeles. Marilyn Minter: Marilyn Minter/Collection of Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn and Nicolas Rohatyn, New York

ART & DESIGN

Marilyn Minter's Take on Sexuality, Dirt, Pimples and All

By RANDY KENNEDY OCT. 26, 2016

"I'm trying to say it's time to look at who we really are," the painter Marilyn Minter once said. And for more than 40 years, her gorgeous, grimy, sexy, icky, sparkly, sweaty work — the subject of her first New York retrospective, "Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty," opening Friday, Nov. 4, at the Brooklyn Museum — has held an uncomfortable mirror up to our culture's obsession with a sensuality that seems to deny the human body. In Ms. Minter's paintings, based on exuberantly composed photographs, fashion tropes appear as if hauled under a truth-telling microscope, where hairs and pimples and dirt hold equal sway with makeup and bling. Her

interest in pornography, and what Holland Cotter in *The New York Times* called a "pathology of glamour," made for tough going in the 1990s, when she was criticized by some feminists as a sexualizer for its own sake. But at 68, she is seeing history come around to her way of thinking. In a video interview for the retrospective, she says: "My side won, basically." (brooklynmuseum.org)

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New York Magazine, The Cut, November 7, 2016

THE CUT

A Controversial Artist's Take on Sex, Beauty, and Consumption

By Anna Furman



In *I Love Dick*, Chris Kraus writes, “Why does everybody think that women are debasing themselves when we expose the conditions of our own debasement? Why do women always have to come clean?” The artist Marilyn Minter’s provocative, sex-positive work, which was misunderstood in the ‘90s as un-feminist, serves as a living testament to this idea.

Minter, whose first retrospective just opened at the Brooklyn Museum, repurposes imagery from beauty ads, fashion editorials, and porn, adding a layer of grit to criticize a culture that puts a premium on how women look. Scintillating photo-realistic paintings reveal rainbow-colored nails lined with dirt and diamond jewelry that drips with body fluids. Video works capture tattooed feet shoved into muddied heels and glossy lips that curl into a snarl. In the show, titled “*Pretty/Dirty*,” the subversive underbelly of Minter’s work is revealed in all its shimmery, gritty glory.

Minter teases out an exaggerated picture of femininity in which lips and nails are saturated with color and skin emits a supernatural glow. In 1992, Elizabeth Hess of *The Village Voice* criticized Minter’s work, writing that unlike Cindy Sherman, Minter “turns the volume down on her sexual rage” and reinforces the male gaze by copying degrading images from porn. In the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, this was a popular read. Today, Minter is recognized as a trailblazer who celebrates women’s sexual agency and unashamedly takes pleasure in making sensual images. The “porn and fashion industries are engines of the culture,” she says, “so why not examine them?”

The poster-child painting for the exhibit, *Blue Poles* (2007), is a tightly cropped rendering of a young model with bushy, caterpillar-like eyebrows and dramatic, blue eyeshadow-flecked eyes. Instead of blurring or editing out her pimples and freckles, Minter embellishes them with intensified color contrast. “I like my models to have a strong feature, whether it’s large lips or freckles or a big nose or dark eyebrows and blonde hair,” she tells me. “I’m not interested in making another pretty face.”



New York Magazine, The Cut, November 7, 2016

These splashy, large-scale paintings of disembodied mouths, eyes, and toes provide a nice antidote to quieter meditations on domestic work and Minter's family life. A series of small, black-and-white photographs of Minter's mother are both poignant and clear-eyed, captured with the filmic quality that permeates her oeuvre. During a walk-through for the exhibit, Minter called her mother — an addict who wore a wig to conceal her hair loss — a "Southern belle who was thrown away," "an ancient beauty, [and] an off-kilter beauty." And in the "Pretty/Dirty" monograph, the poet Eileen Myles describes the photos as intimate "portrait[s] of the subject's daughter" — self-portrait disguised as family history.

In the mesmerizing video *Smash* (2014), a dancer wearing gaudy, bejeweled stilettos descends from a trapeze to move in slow motion to a thrumming beat. With the exception of red nails and jewel-toned rhinestone fringe, the frame is overwhelmed with a metallic silver color (created from a mix of vodka and food dye). As the music intensifies, her feet go from playful dancing to fierce stomping and then violently shattering the glass pane separating the subject from the camera — sending glittery shards covered in the viscous liquid flying in every direction. If not for the model's unkempt toes, deteriorating shoe sole, and the overall garishness of it all, *Smash* could conceivably be a high-fashion film.

"The mainstream fashion world hates me," Minter tells me, but "fashion is not my livelihood." When she works on commission for a fashion project, it's an editorial shoot that involves setting fire to luxury handbags, or an advertising campaign where \$15,000 loafers are shot dripping with mud. I ask about the response to her Tom Ford campaign in 2007 and she laughs and shares that his team was "unhappy" with many of the photos. "We don't share an aesthetic," she says. Minter's more at home working on editorial shoots, anyways — shooting gutsy, sensory-rich series for magazines that afford her creative freedom, like *W* magazine and *Purple*.

When I ask Minter about her studio, she explains that they operate with "a lot of double-doers" — painters who build sets and photographers who work interchangeably on assorted projects. "It's like a Rembrandt studio, except it collides with Silicon Valley" because everyone is wearing earbuds while they work. "I hire people that are labor-intensive and get some kind of therapeutic pleasure" out of making this sort of repetitive, detail-oriented work. "We call it the knitting gene."

Johan Olander, Minter's studio assistant for the past 25 years, sees himself as a facilitator of her vision, and tells me that they "joke about how irritating it is when you actually have to verbally communicate ideas instead of just transmitting telepathically."

Perhaps the most provocative work in "Pretty/Dirty" is *Bring Back the Bush*, a series of close-up photos made on commission for *Playboy* in 2014. In the photos, fingers stroke untrimmed pubic hair and crotches are punctuated with sadomasochistic accessories like coiled chains and tautly fastened belts. (The project was edited out of the issue and never published.) Installed in a sort of purgatory space in between two rooms of her recent work, the series demonstrates Minter's creative range. Not only can she translate Photoshopped pictures into compelling enamel paintings on metal canvases, but she can also transform oily, tattooed navels and pierced genitals into abstract, almost cosmic topographies.

"There are as many feminists as there are women," Minter tells me as she adds my email to a listserv for "Bad Bitches," a group of millennial women who drink and network at her studio after-hours. "You know," she says, "you can be a pro-sex feminist [and] you can be a porn star and be a feminist. To try and make [any] model of a Good Feminist is a crock of shit."

"Pretty/Dirty" is on view at the Brooklyn Museum from November 4, 2016, to April 2, 2017.

Dazed Digital, October 29, 2016

DAZED DIGITAL

Why Marilyn Minter is more relevant now than ever before

Once dubbed an 'anti-feminist,' since the late 60s Minter's art has challenged our fetishes, secrets, and the impulses we repress. Here she talks frankly about censorship, sex, art, and fashion.

By Dalya Benor



Self-proclaimed “bad bitch” activist artist, Marilyn Minter has had one hell of a year: Fresh from touring her retrospective around the US to Texas and California, her exhibition *Pretty/Dirty* culminates at home in New York, at its final stop at the Brooklyn Museum.

For four decades Minter has shaken up the art world and become known for her hyperrealistic portrayal of the excesses of glamour, decadence, and sexuality. Her artworks look at the superficialities of fashion and beauty culture through a sociological lens - taking a deeper dive into aesthetics. Minter's art zooms in close, enabling microscopic introspection at the physicality of materialism while conjuring an ethnographic perspective of our modern-day “Garden of Earthly Delights”.

Historically championing women's rights and censorship in her work, Minter has always been something of an art world maverick. She made waves early in her career for depicting the sex industry and was consequently accused of glorifying misogyny through her work. Although she was rejected by her community at large and called an “anti-feminist”, Minter's art continues to rebel against the system and fight the media's underlying agenda of “policing women's bodies.” Existing in something of a paradox, she's used misanthropes to ignite her crusade and turn these so-called labels into a reputation notorious for ignoring the status quo.



Dazed Digital, October 29, 2016

Pretty/Dirty is Minter's first retrospective, exploring our fetishes, our secrets, and the impulses we repress – ultimately manifesting themselves in deeper, darker ways. Taking us on a journey through the faults of misogyny, as an artist, she remains fearless against the omnipresent patriarchy. Minter's moisture-laden images flip the male gaze on its head, reclaiming the female gaze by shifting perspective onto the minutia of intimacy. Ahead of the show's opening on 4 November, we phoned her up to talk frankly about censorship, sex, art, and fashion.

Your work explores these themes of abundance, glamour and female identity under the male gaze. How do you feel about also addressing subject matter that is typically labeled as “superficial?”

Marilyn Minter: There's a lot to do with that. I've always been interested in things that are considered shallow or debased or not important. I say this a lot, but I think these are things of the culture that we pretend aren't important. There would be no internet without pornography. There's so much hatred for fashion and glamour, and it's considered so shallow, yet this is one area that gives so many people pleasure and power.

The collective consciousness exists in a state of dichotomy – your work ranges from commentary on beauty (“Rouge Baiser”, 1994) to stylised female nudes (“Thigh Gap”, 2016). Should society be able to dictate what is “important” in terms of high or low culture?

Marilyn Minter: It's all aesthetics. We've pretended that we dismiss it. It's somehow such an important part of the culture. It causes a lot of pain and it causes a lot of pleasure. That's where I've always worked with paradox. Women are meaner to each other in fashion than any other place, but at the same time, it's a power base. They have very powerful women designers and editors. This is a power place for women. It's a way to describe your tribe, you know exactly who you're dealing with by the way they present themselves. These are critical parts of being a human. We give so much contempt for it because it's “shallow”. I just think that's crazy.

How does it feel to finally have a retrospective of your work?

Marilyn Minter: I love working with the Brooklyn Museum – they really are a dream. I did billboards at the other museums and for Brooklyn, I'm doing the Jumbotron at Barclay's Center. We're doing a really cool talk in January with Madonna. She's a collector of my work, that's how we got to know each other. She's got work going back to the 80s from Basquiat and Keith Haring. Madonna's always been an activist. Same with Miley Cyrus, that's why I love her. There are so few celebrities that are willing to be activists – I'm an artist who's always been an activist. I was always just another marcher, only in the last ten years have I had any public presence. I've always been doing defense of abortion clinics and marching for civil rights.

Do you try and address social or political issues in your work?

Marilyn Minter: I make a picture of the life and times I live in my work. I've been making a big support statement for Planned Parenthood and raising money for them as much as I can. I've done whatever I can since I've been able to generate any money from my work, I will donate it for causes I believe in. I can't donate \$150,000, but I can donate work which generates that income.



Dazed Digital, October 29, 2016

What do you think is going to happen in the election?

Marilyn Minter: If we're lucky, the Democrats will win the House and the Senate and get some things done that the Republicans have been opposing for the last eight years. They opposed the economic recovery because that would mean they were supporting Obama – and that was for the whole country! Isn't that amazing? Where is your citizenship? You go into politics supposedly to do good. It's supposed to be a "give back" job and now it's in opposition. It's made everyone crazy. I don't believe in a two-party system. I have no sympathy for the Republican party.

What do you think of the current state of arts and the current support in America? Do we still have a long way to go?

Marilyn Minter: I think it's the same. I know everyone says the art world's changed. The only way I can see it's changed is that it's much bigger. There are a lot more artists and galleries. It always comes down to the same thing – some people buy art because they love it, but most people buy art because it's a way to generate income later – and that's always going to bite you in the ass. That's just never going to work and people have to learn every generation.

A lot of your work explores themes of sexuality, feminism, and censorship. Do you think that we are in a state of over-censorship?

Marilyn Minter: I have a real problem with censorship. Unless it concerns children or animals, I feel like if you want to fight bad speech or hate speech, fight it with good speech. I think we are only as sick as our secrets, censoring people just represses them and then there's a huge return of the repressed; it causes distortion, it turns whatever your fetish is, against you. I believe that information is good. If it's factual, it's all healthy.

You see it in every country. I really think it is all about policing women, everything is – repression is. We own sexuality too, and we're just too powerful. One of my girlfriends (Aida Ruilova) just made a t-shirt that reads "Pussy stronger than god."

Censorship for art is disastrous. I've never met anybody that hasn't been sexually abused in a sense – male or female. Why is that? I think you can't create safe spaces in terms of art. Art isn't about creating safe spaces. Art is about making a picture of everything.

I think it's up to each artist individually and their duty to portray their idea of reality.

Marilyn Minter: They have to create their vision. And if it's offending somebody then walk away. I can't stand that guy Milo Yiannopoulos, who writes for Breitbart. He attacked Leslie Jones, the comedian and got all the Breitbart people to torment her because she wasn't his idea of "what a comedian should look like" or whatever his reasoning was – that she was black and outspoken and funny. He did a politically offensive show in Chelsea – I wouldn't stop that. Let him do it, just don't buy it, don't go in it or look at it and laugh at it.



Dazed Digital, October 29, 2016

It's wrong for society to dictate what is baseline "normal," when there are millions of individuals with just as many tendencies.

Marilyn Minter: Or what is morally correct, exactly. Everybody is different. I learned this when I started working with sexual imagery in the 1980s. I saw that if you try and program sexuality, you're going to get ass-kicked. There are so many variations, it's not even close to simple. There's a self-hatred from the popular culture telling you you're wrong and bad.

Do you think we're moving in the right direction towards a more open and democratic landscape of equality and acceptance?

Marilyn Minter: Just the fact that there were all these trans people out there, there was no word "trans" ten years ago in the vernacular. And now there are all different sexual identifications. This is all healthy and good. There were two genders a minute ago, and then there were three.

That's why when I did the work I did back in the 80s, I thought everyone thought like I did. And at one time, what I was doing seemed to be unfeminist and that I was glorifying misogyny. The whole idea I guess was that they were frightened. I know where it comes from – there was a really abusive history (of pornography) and there became this idea of what was a good feminist or a bad feminist. And that's just wrong.

It goes back to society attempting to dictate the "norm," whatever that may be.

Marilyn Minter: And policing women's bodies, which is a form of ownership and power. You can't dictate or police women's bodies. You can't police their agency either. You can try, that's what the whole Republican party is about policing women, as far as I can tell. They want to say it's about money and taxes, but really it's about policing women. All the evangelicals are voting for Trump like crazy. "Don't let them (women) get abortions for God's sake and how dare they become president!"

Does your art have a mission to put women at the forefront and break through the glass ceiling?

Marilyn Minter: I think that art can't have mission statements. Art has to be about the artist's vision. As soon as you have mission statements, you make illustrations. Art's really about multiple readings, as far as I'm concerned. There are certain people that are visionaries, that are poets, that should be making art, that have a message. Like Barbara Kruger or Jenny Holzer, they're gifted – they're poets. I think it has to be your organic vision as an artist. Artists are real good at translating the world, shining a light on life, basically. That's all art can do.

What do you think of the fashion industry?

Marilyn Minter: It's much harder to be a fashion photographer than an art photographer because they have to come up with an idea in a week. Everyone gets thrown away so fast. Art has a bit more staying power. And people constantly get rediscovered in art. It's hard for artists to hear this, but it's something that moves the dial and gets seen even if the artist is dead. Artists have a really tough time during their lifetime, the ones that are important.



Dazed Digital, October 29, 2016

Do you subscribe to the “15 year rule” where aesthetics trends and mindset become relevant again every 15 years or so? Do you think we adopt trends again in a new way and recontextualise them?

Marilyn Minter: Yeah, I know about it, I'm a culture vulture. It makes a lot of sense. I like to think that I'm an outlier and I'm one of those people who gets rediscovered all the time because that's what seems to be happening. I've noticed that the work I did in the 70s seems to resonate much more today than it did in the 70s. Same with the 60s.

Does the revival of the decadence and glamour of the 90s strike a chord with millennial interest in your work?

Marilyn Minter: Your generation can see me. My generation really dismissed me. I'm not bitter about it, but it's really lovely to be accepted. You guys have so much information. What I do doesn't seem out of the ordinary. When I was showing it, it seemed shocking to people, even though I had no idea that was going to be the response.

How can females succeed in the art world? Is it possible to ever reach the success level of males?

Marilyn Minter: I'm lucky that I live long enough as a female artist. Joan Mitchell was gifted, but who gets all the credit? Willem De Kooning. Women artists always get their due late in life. But that might change because the millennials are so much nicer to each other. I have these “Bad Bitch” parties that I host in my studio. The last one I had, the youngest person was 13 and the oldest was 45. It was just a place to network and get to know one another and work as a team. You see how women turn against one another. We all know that girl who's so much cuter and so much smarter and so much more brilliant than us. We have to fight that instinct. Instead of acting on that, I go up to them and say, you're such a good artist, let's keep in touch. Even going up to another person and saying, “I really admire your work” takes the poison out, because we're all so jealous. And then you actually become friends.

It's really hard to stay nice to each other. I've watched the male artists work as a team until they get to the top. We don't even get to the top.

What would your tagline be?

Marilyn Minter: “Nobody has politically correct fantasies” I've been saying that for years!

[Pretty/Dirty opens at Brooklyn Museum runs 4 November 2016 – 2 April 2017](#)

office

Digging Into Marilyn Minter's First Retrospective Pretty/Dirty By Jocelyn Silver



On Wednesday, November 2nd, artist Marilyn Minter took various members of the press on a tour through her first-ever retrospective: Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty, opening today at the Brooklyn Museum. For decades, Minter has been challenging our most commonly held preconceptions about beauty, feminism, and what it generally means to be a woman. To put it mildly, the lady's important. But unlike so many in the art world—usually dudes—Minter doesn't take herself too seriously. "You guys connect the dots," she said to a group of writers. "I just pair it with whatever you say."

Minter's retrospective comes at a time that's almost too perfect; it's part of A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum, and the official opening comes four days before we vote in an election more focused on gender politics than any that have come before. And of course, Minter has always been focused on gender politics, on subtle misogyny, on the joys and horrors of desire. The exhibition tracks her years of grappling with portrayals of female beauty and sexuality, beginning with portraits of her mother, an addict, in 1969, and concluding with her most recent body of work, which coincides with yet another Minter exhibition at Salon 94.

The work, which yes, is both "pretty" and "dirty" in every iteration of both of those words, tends to zero in on the parts of women that society would rather ignore or toss out. Minter described her mother as "a Southern belle who refused to be thrown away;" and works like "Blue Poles" and "Dirty Heel" purposefully glamorize imperfections that most would Photoshop out (Minter uses Photoshop in her work, but for artistic purposes rather than airbrushing ones—she calls the program "manna from heaven.'). She reminded us to check for the chipped toenail polish in her video "Smash." It is beautiful.

Office Magazine, November 4, 2016



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None of Minter's work embodies the *Pretty/Dirty* idea more than her infamous "Porn Grids," which inspired an outcry from mainstream feminists and horrible reviews when she first showed them in the early '90s. She was inspired by Mike Kelley's 1990 show at Metro Pictures, in which he played with the iconography of an adolescent girl's bedroom, thinking she could mine imagery of something that wasn't meant for her, and thus change its meaning. It's a concept that certainly translates in 2016, but not one that went over well during the height of the Culture Wars. "Here I was, going to an abortion clinic defense," said Minter. "And I'm a traitor to feminism?"

Office Magazine, November 4, 2016



"Pornography and the fashion industry are engines of the culture," she said a few minutes later. "So why don't we, as artists, examine them?"

Today, Minter is considered a feminist icon, the opposite of toxic. "The millennials don't even know why I got any pushback at all," she told me. "You guys saw porn by the time you were eight years old." Fair enough. "I love the millennials," she continued. "I think they're the most tolerant of any age group. I think I made my work for them, and the art world was just catching up." She really always was ahead of the curve.

Text by Jocelyn Silver

Image credits, from top: Marilyn Minter in her studio, 2015, photo by Nadya Wasylko. All other images by Marilyn Minter: Coral Ridge Towers (Mom Making Up), 1969. Gelatin silver print, sheet 16 x 20 in. Blue Poles, 2007. Enamel on metal, 60 x 72 in. Rouge Baiser, 1994. Enamel on metal, 48 x 48 in. Still from Smash, 2014. HD digital video, 7 min., 55 sec. All images courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

Time Out New York, November 2-8, 2016



Nasty woman

Marilyn Minter brings her sex-positive brand of feminism to the Brooklyn Museum.
By Paul Laster



A PAINTER, PHOTOGRAPHER and video artist, Marilyn Minter freely explores sexuality in ways both celebrated and condemned. She moved to New York from Florida in 1976 and became a fixture on the downtown art scene. In the '90s, she began using hard-core pornography as her subject matter, a move that didn't play well with the art world (she also advertised her work on *Late Night with David Letterman*). Starting with the 2006 Whitney Biennial, her stock began to zoom upward as she switched to deconstructing fashion tropes and conventional notions of beauty. With her retrospective opening at Brooklyn Museum, Minter spoke with us about her interest in porn, feminism and bringing back pubic hair.

The earliest works in the show are black-and-white photographs of your mom in her negligee, putting on makeup and admiring herself in the mirror. They seem both harsh



Black Orchid

and voyeuristic. What made you do them?

They were just something I shot one weekend when I was home from school at University of Florida. I didn't even think the pictures were interesting. But when I got back and printed the proof sheets, people were aghast, and I had waves of shame coming over me. I hadn't realized that this was not what other people's mothers looked like. Why would I?

In the late '80s, you created what you called the "100 Food Porn" painting series, which featured close-up shots of food. Then you ran commercials of them during David Letterman's show. Were they meant to be art or advertising?

Both. I wanted to have the first commercial gallery art ad on television. At the time, it was only \$1,800 for a 30-second spot on Letterman, while Artforum charged \$5,000 for a full page ad. But the paintings were also inspired by the fact that I watch a lot of Letterman, and back



Orange Coast

then, late-night television was filled with phone-sex ads.

Was that what led you into using actual porn?
As a feminist, I wanted to reclaim those images from their abusive history.

But that work received a tremendous amount of flack.
Yes. I was trying to be sex positive, but it was a very anti-sex, politically correct moment, and I was being unorthodox. My side ultimately won the debate, though.

You recently created photos showing women caressing their pubic hair. Are you back to toying with taboos?

It's not taboo; it's natural. Many men under 40 have never seen female pubic hair, so I want to make it beautiful enough to put in your living room. I also think young girls should stop lasering. You can trim your pubic hair into a question mark if you want. Just don't laser, because it won't grow back, and you'll be sorry!

→ Marilyn Minter: 'Pretty, Dirty' is at Brooklyn Museum (p. 4-Apr. 2)



Vanity Fair, November, 2016



FEATURING: LUCIAN *and his LOVERS*, by GEORDIE GREIG; I *was* PICASSO'S MUSE, by LYDIA CORBETT; THE MUSE (ANCIENT), by TOM HOLLAND; THE MUSE (MODERN) —KATE MOSS—by WALDEMAR JANUSZCZAK; THE SCIENCE OF INSPIRATION, by DR DANIEL GLASER; *and SO MUCH MORE!*

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHRISTIE'S

Vanity Fair, November, 2016



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER STURMAN

Vanity Fair, November, 2016



PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Marilyn MINTER

By DORIAN MAY

Hey kids!” Marilyn Minter calls as she enters her Midtown studio in New York, where her longtime “family” of assistants is putting the finishing touches on large-scale paintings that are anything but child’s play. Hallucinatory and hypersexualized images hang on every wall. Juicy parted lips, steamy toned torsos, fleshy breasts and glimmering gold-tinted bush: it is female beauty on steroids, one magnified body part at a time. For the past three decades, Minter has produced paintings, photos and videos that explore erotic subject matter in a manner that cunningly illuminates that the voyeur need not be vulgar.

“I love that my subject matters are considered debased but they are really the engine of our culture,” Minter explains, with a hint of a Southern twang. She seems to have a Midas touch, creating appeal where other photographers find flaws. The spotted, sweaty, smudged or soiled takes centre stage in her most illustrious images. “I stop people on the street because I know what I want to shoot when I see it,” she says. And while she has also photographed the fetching and famous, including Pamela Anderson and Miley Cyrus, Minter stresses that they are icons, but not her muses.

While her glossy, lifelike paintings appear to be reproductions of original photographs, they are actually composites of numerous images which blur the lines between realism and the abstract. In the age of the edited image, Minter could be called the godmother of this cultural phenomenon. “That pubic hair is from one negative; the thigh gap from another; and the drips a different one; they are all made with Photoshop,” she explains of her process. After the virtual components are perfected, layer upon layer of translucent enamel is applied to create a depth and richness that cannot be achieved with oil paint.

Madonna and Beyoncé are merely a few of Minter’s famous fans, and her work has been featured in collections around the world, but it was only after the Whitney Biennial in 2006 that Minter says she felt she had found real critical success. “I was struggling until I was about 53. I don’t think any artist really thinks they have made it because we are too insecure, you know?” This year, Minter’s first major museum retrospective, aptly titled *Pretty Dirty*, toured the United States. Currently, she is collaborating with Planned Parenthood to fight for reproductive rights and gender equality. “Look, I’ve been a feminist all my life, but why would I deny what it feels like to look at glamorous images? It’s so easy to criticize the fashion and beauty industries, but I take pictures of the times I live in. In the art world, people hide their fashion magazines because they think they are superfluous—except they are dressed head to toe in Prada at these art fairs!” Minter exclaims, as she flashes her wide crimson smile. □

i-D Magazine, October 28, 2016

i-D

Marilyn Minter and the Importance of Porn and Glamour

The legendary artist has a new exhibition, in which she continues to explore her favorite topics – “things that culture thinks of as shallow and debased.”

By Clementine de Pressigny



Speaking to i-D for The Female Gaze Issue, feminist artist Marilyn Minter said that she's drawn to "things that culture thinks of as shallow and debased, like pornography and glamour. I'm interested in exploring the things are considered so worthless." It's the tension between the lack of reverence given to female-focused industries like fashion and beauty, and their undeniable importance on an cultural and economic scale that fascinates the artist. "These are billion dollar industries — fashion and glamour," says Minter. "It's just amazing to me that these industries drive culture and yet at the same time they're so easy to kick in the teeth, and it's a way to shame women, because if you're interested in fashion and beauty you're a shallow person. I feel like I get questioned because I won't condemn fashion and beauty and glamour, and why would I? there are very few industries that women have any power in."

In her upcoming exhibition at Salon 94, will show new paintings that take as their starting point the images from her 2014 book *Plush*, which celebrates the beauty of the bush. The images in *Plush* — close-ups of women's long and luscious pubic hair; un-retouched — were originally taken for *Playboy*, but unsurprisingly, the magazine known for its unrealistic portrayal of women's bodies prefers the shaved look.



i-D Magazine, October 28, 2016



Playing with the sexy cliché of the shower scene, Marilyn re-shot the women from *Plush* behind steamed-up glass, then instead of using Photoshop to erase blemishes, used it to play up the unique human elements even more. This imagery then became the foundation for her enamel on metal paintings. The works conjure both private moments alone — time taken during beauty rituals perhaps — and acts of voyeurism that are invited, the women in charge of their own sexuality, assertive with their bodies and enjoying being watched. The artist subverts the usual power roles of porn, exploring self-determination rather than titillation.

Marilyn has long been a self-described pro-sex feminist, and when she was younger was shocked to find that her liberated view wasn't universal. "I just assumed everybody I knew thought like I did, I thought all the new feminists thought like this," she said. It wasn't the case, and for many years she had a hard time from other feminists who felt that her art was glorifying porn at the expense of women. "I had a real pushback from working with sexual imagery. I was pretty young. I really saw there was just so much fear attached to the idea of a female repurposing images from an abusive history, it was just unheard of. It's one of those things that just made sense to me. It wasn't like I had a choice in the matter, this is what I had to make."

With the saturated color and reflections of advertising that Marilyn is known for, the works are entirely modern, while simultaneously reaching back to impressionism as well as the realist works of 19th century painters Édouard Manet and Gustave Courbet, who caused shock and horror with the unvarnished honesty and direct sexuality of their works.

Marilyn Minter at Salon 94 is on view through December 22, 2016.



The Observer, October 27, 2016

OBSERVER

Marilyn Minter: 'It's Not My Goal to Criticize'

The New York artist gives pubic hair the spotlight in her new show at Salon 94 Bowery

By David D'arcy



At the Salon 94 gallery on the Bowery, past a video in the window that spells out the letters in Marilyn Minter's name and down a staircase from ground level, seven new paintings by the artist are on view, all enamel on metal. On the far wall was Thigh Gap, a picture whose title was unambiguous about its subject.

"You know what you're lookin' at?" asked the friendly, mischievous Minter. "It's pubic hair."

If that tactile view of private parts was the practice, then came the theory.

"There's no pubic hair in the culture anymore, so I made a picture of the most beautiful pubic hair that I could think of. It's so beautiful that you could put it in your living room," she said, mentioning Gustave Courbet's notorious and unforgettable *Origin of the World* from 1866 at the Musee d'Orsay—the world's most famous painting of pubic hair. Courbet was the only artist Minter could name who chose that subject.

Equal time for pubic hair? Works in Minter's eponymous show at Salon 94 (open through December 22) are priced between \$150,000-\$350,000.

On the adjoining wall was Ginger, another view of pubic hair at eye-level named for the color of the hair inside the frame. "I wanted a redhead too," Minter said, her deadpan expression easing into a grin.



The Observer, October 27, 2016

Then came the pivot. Once Minter started discussing the work in her first gallery show in two years, the artist in her late 60s sounded more traditional than transgressive. This wasn't exactly the bomb-thrower whose four decades-worth of work deploying discomfort (and much more) goes on view November 4 at the Brooklyn Museum in the exhibition "Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty."

Sexual defiance was out front in her newest work, but Minter was talking about materials. Enamel has been her medium since 2009. "I could get that human skin much more with these layers of enamel," she said, "I've always been interested in surface. Clearly, I'm a detail-oriented person."

Exquisite details that have become her signature over the years include water drops and wet surfaces. "People always call me a photo-realist, but I really work in these tiny areas and stitch an image together," she said, explaining that her sketches for the paintings involve photo-shopping multiple photographs into preparatory sketches before she begins painting.

"There's layers of art history in this, too," she noted. "It's almost pointillism at this point," directing my view to the skin tones in *Ginger*.

"You get all these colors from the dots, so it's more Seurat than it is anything else," she said. "I think of my work as abstract realism."

On the wall across the room was *Big Breath*, a hyper-close-up of a mouth licking the frozen glass through which the model is observed. It's a clever take on Gustav Klimt, and heir to Minter's oozing 2009 video, *Green Pink Caviar*.

In earlier years, when Minter showed no mercy skewing media culture and its own skewing of women, the conventional wisdom was that her influences were Andy Warhol and Pop Art (Tom Wesselman comes to mind) and the broad phenomenon of photorealism. All those influences will be on view at the Brooklyn Museum, in a show that began its travels at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in April 2015.

Yet at Salon 94, Minter's confrontational images have a surprising intimacy. "I'm always working in terms of paradox. Everything is a paradox. Lots of times we talk about how glamorous images give us so much pleasure, but at the same time no one really looks like that," she said.

"So I like the idea of having two opposing ideas in the exact same image," she noted, "I don't want to be told what to think. I don't want an illustration," she said.

"It's too easy to kick the fashion industry in the teeth, when it causes a lot of harm, but it gives people so much pleasure," she said. "It's not my goal to criticize. My goal is to make an image of the times we live in. This is our lives."

Minter has surveyed her own times in photographs (of her mother), oil paintings, on video, and now in enamel on metal. "Technology doesn't frighten me at all. I like it," she said, calling herself an early adapter.



The Observer, October 27, 2016

"I use everything that's going to enhance my vision. I sort of feel like information is power—the more information you have, the smarter you are. More information makes people more tolerant," she said.

Let's hope so. Now that Minter's work will be on view at the Brooklyn Museum, it will also be on the jumbotron at the Barclays Center—an affront to some everyday commuters, no doubt, but an affirmation of the encroaching culture of hipster Brooklyn.

The young audience that sees clips from *Green Pink Caviar* up there is unlikely to be aware that, back in 1990, the enterprising Minter filmed a commercial and bought a 30-second ad on the David Letterman Show to promote her exhibition *100 Food Porn* at Simon Watson in New York. The TV ad was more affordable than an ad in *Artforum* at the time, she said.

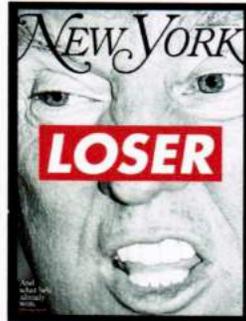
The ad was all the more brazen because Minter was a woman. She shrugged when asked about feminism. "A feminist? Yeah, but I don't know of anybody who isn't one in the New York art world. It's just part of a vernacular. It's like saying that I'm a woman, or tall, or a redhead. It's endemic to who I am," she said.

"I think it's part of the popular culture, except for [George] Baselitz and, you know, a handful of old white men on the wrong side of history," she noted. "Maybe it's aspirational, but it's definitely in my genetic make-up, and it always has been."

Still, the recognition of a traveling museum show in the U.S. came to Minter in her late 60s. She has been around and working since the late 1960s. "It seems typical for a woman artist," she said, "woman artists get a lot of attention when they become old ladies. The art world loves young bad boys and old ladies."

"Marilyn Minter" is on view at Salon 94 Bowery through December 22.

New York Magazine, October 31 - November 13, 2016



THE APPROVAL MATRIX

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to who falls where on our taste hierarchies.

		HIGHBROW			
DESPICABLE	 <p>There's so much fear out there about killer robots and Skynet," says a Pentagon deputy of its plans for new AI weapons. That's not the way we envision it at all. Well, that's good, right?</p>	<p>Trump's voter-data operation is called Project Alamo. They know what happened at the Alamo, right?</p>  <p>According to Arrest, there's an M.F.A. bubble with too many programs producing too many wannabe zombie robotic artists.</p>	<p>The Ward Series of the underdogs.</p>  <p>It's fall, time to hit those museums you forget to go to the rest of the year. See the majesty of Kerry James Marshall at the Met Breuer.</p>	<p>The Alan Booker rewards its first American novel: Paul Beatty's wicked satire <i>The Sublime</i>.</p> 	BRILLIANT
	<p>How do we keep the things of the Internet of Things from destroying everything on the internet?</p> 	<p>Reckless Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte makes Trump look like well, Obama.</p> 	<p>In their eagerness for relevance, the Nobel folks found the one person who didn't care about being a laureate: Bob Dylan.</p> 	<p>And the glitter-sweat of Marilyn Minter at the Brooklyn Museum.</p> 	
	<p>Twitter can't find a buyer, plans to cut its workforce another 5 percent.</p> 	<p>The sickening rise of Obamacare voters.</p>  <p>While Antip's CEO says young, healthy people would rather buy beer than pay the premiums.</p>	<p>Adam Bock's A Life at Playwrights Horizons, starring David Hyde Pierce, a play with a surprise that's actually worth it.</p> 	<p>The majestic bloom of <i>Human Requiem</i>—an adaptation of Brahms's <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i>—at this year's White Light Festival.</p> 	
	<p>The Walking Dead returns, with its usual nihilistic elan.</p> 	<p>Unrelated (maybe): The CDC reports that STDs in the U.S. have reached a record high.</p> 	<p>Philip Roth donates his personal library to the New York Public Library. Is he feeding the mind of the next Nathan Zuckerman?</p> 	<p>The heartbreaking <i>You Will Not Have My Hate</i>, a memoir by Antoine Leiris, whose wife was killed by terrorists in Paris last year.</p> 	
<p>People who say gifting when they mean "give a gift."</p> 	<p>... And blockbuster ratings. If only we had built that big, beautiful wall to keep out the zombies.</p> 	<p>Joe Ciber to create a remake of <i>Oliver Twist</i>—yes, a musical—and star as Fagin.</p> 	<p>SNL's Pete Davidson loves Kid Cudi saved his life.</p> 		
<p>The East Village's comic-themed apartment building Red Square is sold, and the new owners have reportedly cut the staff's salary by 50 percent. Workers of the world.</p> 	<p>The fact that this is still the Cleveland Indians logo.</p> 	<p>Summer Moon's bouncy "With You Tonight" (but why is it dropping in November, when it's useless for convertible driving?).</p> 	<p>The Netflix series <i>Black Mirror</i> returns with the spot-on "Hatedrive." We give it a 4.5.</p> 		
<p>The not-so-inspiring love story between Khloé Kardashian and Lamar Odom is officially over as they sign divorce papers.</p> 	<p>High Times has a clothing line. It already smells like bong water!</p> 	<p>Hi-yah! Donna Murphy will play <i>Hello, Dolly!</i> on Tuesdays, giving Bette Midler a night off.</p> 	<p>This newfangled foldable bike helmet (which bungee-rides—just like you!).</p> 		
<p>NBC decides to run its Trump-inspired <i>SVU</i> episode after the election.</p> 	<p>Lady Gaga condescends to Madonna's musicianship on Apple's Beats 1 radio interview.</p> 	<p>But she was adorable on <i>Carpool Karaoke</i>.</p> 	<p>Zella Day's "Man on the Moon" wraps around vinyl like a big blissful hug.</p> 		
<p>The flat-on-his-back Berber restrooms.</p> 	<p>For your twitchy brain, up-all-right playlist: "Sam" from <i>NYDES</i>.</p> 				

Washington Square News, November 8, 2016

WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

NYU's Independent Student Newspaper, est. 1973

Marilyn Minter Turns Beauty Conventions on Their Head

By Christina Cacouris



"Nobody has politically correct fantasies," said Marilyn Minter as she stood in front of "Porn Grid," a series of four pornographic stills with paint drips splattered across. The series is part of "Pretty/Dirty," a retrospective of Minter's work, which just landed at the Brooklyn Museum for its final leg. "I was thinking, can I reclaim images from an abusive history and own the agency of them? But I was considered a traitor to feminism."

Now, Minter is regarded as anything but. This year she launched a tripartite collaboration with Miley Cyrus and the nonprofit Planned Parenthood. She photographed the music superstar and fellow activist behind frosted glass and sold the nebulous prints to raise money for the organization.



Washington Square News, November 8, 2016

While “Pretty/Dirty” includes many of Minter’s more provocative pieces, it charts back to her humble beginnings, opening with a series of intimate black and white portraits of her mother, taken while Minter was an art student at the University of Florida. They depict a woman completely preoccupied by her quest for glamour, but whose drug-fueled compulsions physically deteriorated her as she tore out her hair, ultimately succumbing to wearing wigs.

This paradox of the ugliness that accompanies the quest to attain beauty permeates Minter’s work. Seen through this lens, “Pretty/Dirty” might be best characterized as a study in glamour, as Minter fetishizes the imperfections rejected in traditional art and fashion photography. One of her most famous works, the photorealistic “Blue Poles,” shows the closed eyes of a freckled face, with pimples sprinkled across the bridge of the nose between the glittery, glossy blue that covers the eyelids.

“At that point in time, Photoshop was erasing all the freckles in all the pictures I was seeing commercially,” she said. “I’m covered in freckles, so I was thinking that if you took freckled models and you actually used them in advertising, it would be this really fresh vision!”

Photoshop plays a large role in these pieces, however. Minter explained that, in order to achieve this photorealistic quality, she pieces together several images to create a composite and edits colors to create a reference image, which she then recreates with paint. She smooths the final layer of paint with her fingertips to erase any brushstrokes, giving it the hyper-glossy quality of a printed photograph, adding to the illusion.

Through all the grit and grime, one piece hangs meekly at the end: the soft and hazy “Black Orchid.” A precursor to her work with Cyrus, it shows a serene face with closed eyes and a slightly parted, rouged mouth shot from behind a foggy glass. There’s a sentimentality to it that sets it apart from the harsh quality of some of the surrounding works.

“Pretty/Dirty” does not present the antithesis of beauty, but rather mirrors the dictates of “jolie laide,” the French expression for “beautiful-ugly,” in which unconventionality has its own kind of beauty. Minter shows us her visions of beauty, turning imperfections into aspirations.

“Pretty/Dirty” will be on display at the Brooklyn Museum at 200 Eastern Pkwy through April 2.

Dazed Digital, October 28, 2016

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Sex-Positive Artist Marilyn Minter Celebrates Glam, Glitter And Gunk

In "Pretty/Dirty," Minter shows us the paradoxes of beauty.
By Maddie Crum



Miley Cyrus gazes out from behind a wall of glass, drops of dew festooning her features: her platinum bangs, her sculpted brows, her glossy, made-up lips. The foggy vision makes her look like a dream, inaccessible to mere fans.

The portrait was taken by Marilyn Minter; an artist whose photorealistic paintings center on glamour, fashion and femininity. Since the 1980s, Minter's work has depicted both the allure of magazine-touted beauty and the grimy realities that lie beneath it. She captures polished toenails and muddy feet, glittery lips and slurping mouths.

Decades' worth of her work is on display at The Brooklyn Museum starting Nov. 4 in an exhibition called "Pretty/Dirty." There you'll find portraits she took of her mother — a glamorous addict who embodied the paradoxes that Minter has come to represent. You'll find videos of tongues brushing against some kind of goopy green product, commentary on consumption in all its forms.



Dazed Digital, October 28, 2016

But you won't find her most recent work — the portrait she took of Cyrus looking misty and contemplative, taken for a project to help raise funds for Planned Parenthood.

"[Miley] is one of the few celebrities to back Planned Parenthood. Most of them won't touch it, because they don't want this very small but vocal minority to troll them," Minter said. "I don't care. You know, what are they going to do? Not buy my art? Artists are pretty fearless when it comes to that. But people can boycott a celebrity. They can make life uncomfortable."

Minter's admiration for Cyrus is clear: "She's an activist. She's an animal rights person. And these are all things I am, too," she said, adding that millennial feminists are "totally aware" of the importance of reproductive rights and sex-positivity.

The latter point is an important one for Minter, whose work wasn't embraced by feminists in the '80s. She was rejected by the art world as unserious, rejected by the fashion world as too grotesque, and rejected by feminists for her portrayal of pleasures that might be considered oppressive or unsavory.

In 1989, Minter began her "100 Food Porn" series, consisting of over 100 paintings of hands working to prepare drippy, buttery meals. She wanted an artistic endeavor that had some financial promise. "I needed something to bargain with, because I didn't have any money," she said. Eventually, she purchased 30-second ad spots during commercial breaks for "Late Night with David Letterman," "The Arsenio Hall Show," and Ted Koppel's "Nightline" to promote the paintings.

But what began as a bid for commercial work resulted in a project that subtly worked to promote equality. "I went through cookbooks and most of them were male hands, and I turned half of them into female hands by putting long, red fingernails on them," Minter said. "No one's ever noticed that. It's all female hands tearing food apart."

This idea of inserting feminine pleasure into popular imagery is common throughout Minter's work, including a 1992 painting of a woman touching herself through lace underwear, and another from the same year of a woman taking a disembodied penis into her mouth. They're undoubtedly scenes drawn or directly culled from porn, a medium of sexual expression dismissed wholesale by feminists at the time.

Minter says her aim with these paintings was to ask whether it was possible for women to "recapture images from an abusive history, and claim them and make images for their own amusement and pleasure," adding that, "nobody had politically correct fantasies."

Minter says her work better reaches contemporary viewers, because the internet has de-stigmatized pornography, revealing it to be a complicated medium that can both oppress and empower.

"Feminists were pretty isolated when it came to sexuality. And there was such an abusive history, they had such an adamant anti-sex point of view. And I wasn't that kind of feminist," Minter said. "Of course, my side won, so it doesn't really matter. But I was ostracized at the time. It was really painful. Everyone wants to think that they're communicating, and here I was making people run out of a room."

Now that explicit portrayals of feminine sexuality aren't automatically considered derogatory, Minter's work confronts another stigmatized medium of expression: the worlds of fashion and glamour. A series of paintings from the aughts picture close-ups of women's eyes and lips, doused in paint, glitter, and imperfections.



Dazed Digital, October 31 - November 13, 2016

"Everything I do, I'm hoping that there are multiple reads. I'm never trying to tell you what to think as much as making a picture of that paradox," she said. "I think what I do is just take what's already there and push it to the extreme. Like with Tom Ford, he had \$16,000 alligator shoes, and I just had him splashing in mud, because that's real life. Even with very expensive shoes, you're going to get them dirty on a rainy night. Everyone gets rained on."

Minter says the dueling imagery of glamour and gunk is captured by contemporary artists she admires, too. She cites K8 Hardy and Petra Collins as women whose aesthetic works with the same paradox.

"It's a backlash to this robotic, Photoshop bullshit. I love Alicia Keys not wearing any makeup on 'The Voice.' I love that there's a backlash. I don't think there's anything wrong with trying to make yourself look as good as you can, but this constant grooming is just so time-consuming," Minter said. "The models now, it's so sad. They're all anorexic. Or 15. Just these gawky, adolescent little babies. That kind of imposition, it's so unhealthy. No pores. You can't have any pores. Everyone has pores!"

"Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty" will be on view in the Brooklyn Museum's Morris A. and Meyer Schapiro Wing from Nov. 4, 2016, through April 2, 2017.



Broadway World, November 4th, 2016



Brooklyn Museum Presents MARILYN MINTER: PRETTY/ DIRTY, Today



For more than four decades, Marilyn Minter's sensual paintings, photographs, and videos have vividly questioned the complex, often contradictory perceptions of beauty and the feminine body in mainstream culture. Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty is the artist's first retrospective, highlighting her technical virtuosity and examination of some of our deepest cultural impulses, compulsions, and fantasies. Now widely considered an iconic feminist artist noted for her brave and bold representations of desire, Minter was criticized in the 1990s for her pornographic and taboo-challenging imagery.

The exhibition is part of A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum, a yearlong project which celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through ten diverse exhibitions and an extensive calendar of related public programs.

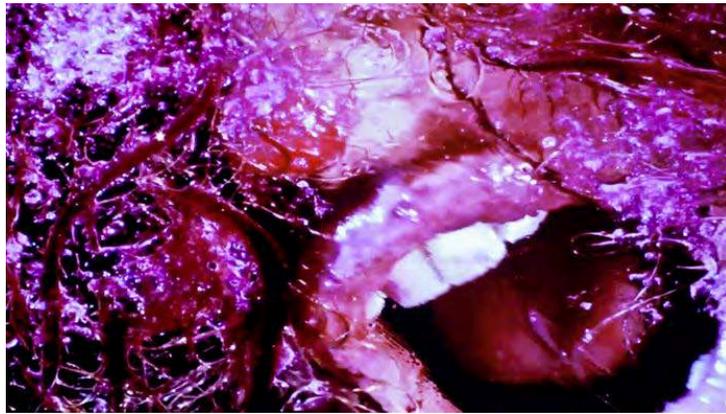
Co-organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty will be on view from November 4, 2016, to April 2, 2017. The Brooklyn Museum presentation will be the final and only East Coast venue on the exhibition's tour, marking a homecoming for the New York-based artist. The exhibition features more than 45 paintings, three videos, and over a dozen photographs made between 1969 and 2015, spanning a range of visual strategies including stark documentary photography, feminist reinterpretations of photorealism, and unabashed sexual appeal.

ARTNEWS, February 4, 2016

ARTNEWS

'I WANT WOMEN TO LOOK LIKE THEY CAN'T GET THROWN AWAY': MARILYN MINTER ON HER RETROSPECTIVE, 'PRETTY/DIRTY'

by Hannah Ghorashi



Marilyn Minter, *Green Pink Caviar* (still), 2009, HD digital video.
COURTESY THE ARTIST, SALON 94, NEW YORK, AND REGEN PROJECTS,
LOS ANGELES

When I walked into Marilyn Minter's studio late one afternoon last fall, she and her assistants had just completed a painting—a foggy, steamy image streaming with water droplets, behind which you could see the misty blur of pink lips seemingly post-exhale, with two gleaming white front teeth visible that were doll-like, but also vampiric. Like all of Minter's more recent enamel paintings, it's difficult to believe that they aren't the original photographs upon which the works are based. "Everything you see is behind glass," Minter told me, as we watched her assistant add painstaking brushes of paint to another, similarly condensation-heavy painting.

Minter began her career as a photographer as a student at the University of Florida in Gainesville, where she created a black-and-white series of her drug-addicted mother under the mentorship of Diane Arbus, began collaborating with German Expressionist painter Christof Kohlhofer upon moving to New York in 1976. She earned notoriety in the late 1980s and 1990s with heavily excoriated porn paintings, a series of decidedly Pop art dot paintings depicting pornographic scenes embellished with pixelated streaks of paint that foreshadow her signature fluid aesthetic. Around this time, in 1990, Minter also became the first artist to eschew traditional print advertising for her exhibition at Simon Watson Gallery in favor of buying a television ad—\$1,800 for 30 seconds—during *The Late Show With David Letterman*, a video titled *100 Food Porn*.

Since then, Minter has become synonymous with her slick, hedonistic, instantly recognizable enamel works—ones that drip with pearls, glitter, paint, sweat, and dirt—which she bases on hyperrealist photos taken on a macro lens and later Photoshops together. In these works, the images are seemingly captured in medias res of erotic motion, a voluptuously suspended moment in time.

Currently, Minter is the subject of her first major museum retrospective, a traveling exhibition perfectly titled "Pretty/Dirty," which began at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, and just finished its stand at the



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Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. It will open at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California, on April 2, before it reaches the Brooklyn Museum in the fall.



Marilyn Minter in her studio.
NADYA WASYLKO

In her studio, Minter and I sat down with a book of photos from Gordon Parks's "Segregation Story" show, which she saw at the High Museum in Atlanta in 2014. In late 2015, she co-curated an iteration of the show at Salon 94, the gallery that represents her in New York. Our interview, which has been lightly edited and condensed, follows below.

...

Marilyn Minter: I saw this show in Atlanta, and I came back and said, "These pictures will just rip the back of your head off. They're so powerful." And everyone went, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." And then all these people started getting shot. Ferguson happened, and then I think the most recent incident was [Sandra Bland] in Dallas, who went to jail and died.

ARTnews: What do you think happened in Sandra's case?

I don't know. It's always so complicated. Maybe she committed suicide, but she never should have been put in jail. She never should have been arrested. And then there was the police officer who slammed a student's head against a desk...

I grew up in Louisiana, and this was my life. I saw all of these things. It was so painful. Virtually, I was the eight-



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year-old white child in the playground and these kids would be watching us. This scene [in Gordon Parks' photo] never happened to me but the scene just tears my heart out, [flips the page] and this one, [flips the page] and look at this one! It kills me.

I was a little girl when I saw the white entrances and the black entrances. When I went to school up north—at Syracuse University—people would say it's just as racist up here. And I would say, "No, it's not!" [laughs] Nothing looked like that.

Everyone's all like, "Kumbayah, there's no racism anymore" but I say, "Well, all of this was only 60 years ago. You can't just pave over this as if this didn't happen." Those days are over, but I wonder how much they're over?

Do you think they can ever really be over?

Yeah, for your kids. My assistant Johann has kids who go to school with all races and all colors and Muslim kids and a little girl who used to be a little boy, and it's no big deal.

What was your childhood like?

Well, my mother had a nervous breakdown. My father always cheated on her, and he was a compulsive gambler and an alcoholic.

What did he do for a living?

As far as I know, nothing. He was very good at it, though. He was to the manor born, and he was a really good golfer. All I know is that he played 18 or 36 holes of golf a day at country clubs. They split when I was eight and he left my mother for a friend of hers. It really did my mother in, and she became a drug addict.

What was she addicted to?

Pharmaceuticals. Opiates and uppers, but I really don't know exactly because I didn't even know she was a drug addict. She was in bed all the time, fucked up, so I basically grew myself up.

How did you finagle the technicalities?

Oh, I would just go into her wallet and take the money.

So, your mother had a nervous breakdown, and then what happened? Did she have to go to a mental health facility?

She never did. She had a nurse come and stay at our house for awhile. My brothers left for college when I was really young, and then it was just me. I had to figure everything out for myself.

Then you went to college—

Yeah, in Florida.

And that was fine?

Never came back.

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Marilyn Minter; Big Breath, 2016, enamel on metal.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK

You never saw her after that?

Well, I saw her; but it wasn't fun.

Beauty was her thing, right?

She was a beautiful woman. She was always grooming herself. She had me late, at 40. By the time I was paying attention, everything was all wrong, off somehow. She would wear these acrylic nails and there would be fungi underneath....So it's not a big surprise, the tangential threads you see in my work, but I never think of it as "off" beauty. I just think of it as, "That looks interesting to me."

Did you start to develop an interest in beauty as a result?

A 14-year-old never wore so much makeup. I had it all in a trowel. Turquoise eyeshadow, turquoise mascara.



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That's great. Why don't you wear those colors now?

Oh, I hate makeup.

But you're wearing [red] lipstick.

Well, if you wear lipstick, you don't have to wear makeup. If you put lipstick on, you look like you're wearing a ton of makeup.

That's true! [laughs] There's definitely a sense of humor that comes through in your work.

I hope so!

Do you feel like you developed a sense of humor when you were younger, as a child?

I've always been sort of goofy. As a child, I always had this idea that there was something wrong with the whole picture. I just didn't see things the way other people saw things.

My brothers and I are really radical liberals in a really racist family. We don't know how that happened. [Our parents] were anti-Semitic, racist. . . . They weren't homophobic, though, because they were genteel. My mother knew decorators; she liked gay people.

Where did you move to in Florida?

We went from Louisiana to Fort Lauderdale. Fort Lauderdale was the land of no parents. We were just a bunch of kids that ran wild.

Speaking of which, your work is very hallucinatory.

My paintings are so pleasurable, but that's just a picture of the time we live in. There's multiple levels: the glamour is infused with knowing you're never going to look like that, infused with the shame of even wanting to look. We're supposed to be reading Proust, you know.

It does [give me pleasure], but I don't feel guilty about it.

Now, it doesn't. I remember back in the '80s, my friends who were writers for Artforum would hide their Vogues and put their Octobers out on the coffee table, and all the dealers would dress in head-to-toe Prada, but nobody would talk about fashion. I've always been interested in elements of our culture that are considered shallow and debased and uninteresting, because they really are the engines of our whole culture.

People forget that, for a long time, these "shallow" interests were the only ones women were allowed. Why shouldn't we be proud of our varied talents?

Exactly. I've been saying that all along, but look how they shame young girls if they work with any kind of sexuality. [Women] already have so much sexual power that if we actually start owning it, my god, we're ferocious. [to an assistant] Put her on the list!

What list?

We're having a networking party. We're going to get all the young girls who think like this—we know tons of them, and they're from different strata and don't know each other: the Bruce High Quality girls, the Minerva



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cult, the Adult girls... It's all about getting the young power-mover girls to know one another, because your age group is the first I've ever seen where the girls aren't trying to kill each other. I mean, we need to work to build each other up and then kill each other off.

And then, men are just as fucked up as we are. They have to worry about being the breadwinners and/or not being weak, and then there's the whole thing of girls not liking guys who are like them. I don't know how your age group feels about this, but there's always that primitive thing of liking the caveman, the bad boy. The guy that's going to treat you like shit. Or the one who can bring back the most buffalo. [laughs]

I've seen people change, though. I saw my first husband turn into a feminist.



Marilyn Minter, High Gap, 2016, enamel on metal.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK

How did that happen?

Well, [our situation] didn't make sense. Back in the '70s, I was working and I came home and made dinner and did the dishes. And he couldn't get a job, so he said, "Let me do the dishes." Then he said, "Well, I should probably do the laundry too," because I was working—I worked as a display girl at a department store.

This is what someone told me about how racism changes: White people have to feel the same agony looking at these [Parks] pictures, for example, as black people have to feel.

And that's how people change. You don't yell at them; you don't shame them. You have a conversation in a really calm way. This is what I do with my own husband, who is a super-liberal. Well, I'm much more of an aggressive liberal than he is, but he went on equal rights for women marches with me in Washington [D.C.].

Do you think you've changed?

No, I haven't really. The difference is that people can hear me now. I've been communicating my whole life but no one could hear me until recently. I've never had any trouble communicating with your age group.

I have a more difficult time talking to older people.

I know, me too! [laughs] They're my age group, but they say things like, "Remember the good old days?" And I'm



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like, "Not really, they weren't good!" [laughs]

I have to force myself to be kind, to not challenge them. One of the few women who didn't get old in their head was Mary Heilmann. I'm actually going to her opening tonight. She's one of the few that aren't "old school." I can't stand that. It's so much better now!

It's always better now!

Always! It's called progress. It's always two steps forward, one step back. Well, I think it's this: Yeah, you have these, like, urges, but you just have to rewind them. You can have terrible thoughts—everyone has terrible thoughts—but you don't have to act on them. Then you're the best person you can be.



Marilyn Minter; *Smash* (still), 2014, HD digital video.
COURTESY THE ARTIST, SALON 94, NEW YORK, AND REGEN PROJECTS,
LOS ANGELES

Why do you think people were so upset with your work earlier in your career? Do you think you hit a nerve, secret urge-wise?

The fact that I even used sexual imagery was itself just so threatening. I scared people and I think the fear came from repurposing images from an abusive history. They didn't know if that could be done. And then, I was asking questions without having any answers myself.

How upset were you at the time?

I was devastated. I had my best friends turn on me. I had artist friends.... Well, I'm not going to name names because they feel bad now. A critic who was one of my biggest supporters came into my studio and said, "You really can't show this, you'll ruin your career."

He was trying to protect me. Other artists that I respected got it, and that's why I was able to keep going.

Are people still saying things like this to you?

Always. When a work of art upsets you, it's probably good. These young girls I'm so supportive of right now—Sandy Kim and Petra Collins—they're reacting to robotic, Photoshopped perfection. They're working with the feminist grotesque.

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What do you think caused the reception to change?

I don't know. I think the Internet, maybe. I also think that my work isn't as challenging to younger people. My husband and I talk about this a lot. I would always say, "Well, all my friends talk like this," and my husband would say, "All your friends are isolated in SoHo. They never go out. They're in their studios all day long by themselves. Except for a handful who were pro-sex feminists, they don't know what sexual images even look like." I thought, for some reason, that because I had this handful of pro-sex feminist friends, that everyone was a pro-sex feminist. I thought everybody felt like I did, and it was a big shock to me.



Marilyn Minter, *Torrent*, 2013, enamel on metal.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK

Right, you think your world is the whole world. A lot of your images aren't technically sexual, though.

If I paint a glass of water, people are going to say it's sexual, just because I made sexual imagery back in 1989. And then, I guess since I made the *Bush Plush* series last year, everything I do is considered sexual! [laughs]

I recently discovered that you came up with the term "food porn."

I did. I've [done] a few things like that, pop culture-wise. Nobody used to shoot freckles, for example. They didn't shoot dirt or sweat or water either.



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What caused your style to change throughout your career?

I've always had a skill level where I could copy anything. I used to be in this collaboration team with Christof Kolhofer; back when we were druggies back in the East Village. That's the way he works, so when I went to rehab and started working again on my own I wanted to make something that looked nothing like what we did. So, I went to enamel paint. Once I started doing drugs, I just fucked up. I made all of these black-and-white photos which are in [the retrospective] and there are actually a lot more of them because we keep adding them in because every time there's another iteration [of the show]. At that time, all imagery was a dot screen, and I made the hard-core porn that got me into so much trouble. Eventually, I started not putting in the dots at all, only putting them in the metal. But I was getting beat up [by the critics], so I started beating up the paintings. I started taking a belt sander to the paintings because I was getting beat up and that just happens to be there, but it morphed into what I'm doing now.

Were you always attracted to a wet aesthetic?

Yeah, always wet things. I don't know why.

Wetness is the essence of beauty.

Exactly. [laughs] I make everything wet and I've always done it. There's no rhyme or reason. There are some [works] that are dry, but I don't want them to be.

How quickly do you shoot these?

Well, when I do photos, I'm always shooting to make a painting, and I don't even really remember shooting them. I'm in the zone. I don't even think about it. [Flips to a photo of Wangechi Mutu] That's a photo I took when she was pregnant, and the one next to it became a painting. She styled herself. I got five paintings out of it, and six photos.

You've said that because people were rejecting your painting work, you began to explore photography.

That's when I was an undergraduate. Everyone in my school was painting Abstract Expressionism, because that was the thing at the time. I was doing Pop, and they hated it, so I got a C in painting, but I got an A in photography.

Even though Andy Warhol was blowing up at that time?

But I was in Florida! I was in Nowheresville. We got the art magazines and I was reading them voraciously, but no one else really was. I mean, this was the same school that told us women that there weren't any good women artists, telling us women. I was one of 17 men when I went to graduate school, and about the same when I went to undergraduate. By the time I was a senior there weren't any girls. I don't know what they thought I was.

What's your relationship to Photoshop like, by the way?

I love it, but I don't like Photoshop as popular press. I think that's terrible. I hate that they make everybody thinner. It makes them look robotic and not real and not human. I don't give a shit about "aspirational." I don't care about taking pores out and I don't like taking wrinkles out. I want women to look like they can't get thrown away. We've got to be able to look at people with wrinkles. That's why I started doing my wrinkle paintings. What are we doing to 12-year-old girls? I really do think we're in such a sick place right now. Like, how little can [women] eat? And how high can their shoes be? Why do we have to torture ourselves?

ARTNEWS, February 4, 2016



Marilyn Minter; Big Breath, 2016, enamel on metal.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK

And bras.

Yeah. I didn't start to wear one until I turned 50, because I didn't need to. [laughs] I had no boobs, and I really hated to wear bras. It was a feminist statement when I was a kid, and I stopped wearing them in college. But your boobs get bigger as you get older. At least, mine did. I also started getting shorter.

This is what I have noticed: I've always been tall and thin. I've been a size 12 since I was in 8th grade, but the sizes that are getting bigger, because now I'm still a 10 or a 12. I remember trying to get into clothes that were a size 12 in the '60s, which would be a 0 or a 2 now. Women are so much bigger now; nobody was fat when I was growing up.

When I was at the School of Visual Arts in the '80s, a neighbor brought in a book of Truffaut photos—of his actresses—and they all looked fat to me. I thought, "There must be something wrong because these are beautiful women." Why did I suddenly perceive them as being overweight when they were actually the epitome of great beauty in the '60s? Twenty years later they looked overweight, which is impossible.

Are you content making art? I'm thinking of your mentor, Diane Arbus, who unfortunately killed herself...

She was one of my teachers. Well, not really, but I met her. She was unlucky in love, though; she was in love with a married man. She was on hardcore [antidepressants]. Her biography is really interesting. She's one of the great artists of our time.

But you've never been depressed?

I don't have depression.

That's good. It seems like most people do...

Or they have an addiction. To drugs and alcohol. [laughs] I don't know anymore, though, it's been so long. I'm not without my demons, though! I drink coffee the way I used to do coke. I can't operate without it. But I feel like because I abused everything for so long that it's like, so what if I drink coffee. I like sugar too!

ARTNEWS, February 4, 2016

Do your photos mean something beyond their aesthetic?

I like to make things that nobody else makes. And I want [the viewer] to be surprised, so I never do fashion. I've never shot a whole person, only parts. No one ever asks me to do anything but makeup [editorials] once in awhile, like I just shot for W—I put [the model] behind frozen glass, and I didn't know what was going to happen. It was fun. I just did it for fun.



Marilyn Minter; Deep Frost, 2016, enamel on metal.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK

Where do you think you fall in the annals of art history?

Sometimes I'm considered a Pop painter, but I'm so untidy next to the cleaned-up versions like Lichtenstein or Rosenquist or Warhol did. I'm way more untidy, because that's where I see the human element—where I sweat it up or make it messy.

And yet, they look perfect.

Yeah, well, my theory is that you can make pictures of anything as long as you make them beautiful. You've just got to take out the narrative and let people hear you. I'm making images of things that might be disgusting even, like strings of spit, but I'm trying to make them gorgeous. It's also sort of a way to be able to have a fiery red bush painting of mine in your living room.

But I do like disturbing imagery, but I also like things to be fresh. Like Sandy Kim [who is known for, among other things, photographing her period stains —Ed.]. I've been begging her to make prints of her images for me. Anyway, that's what I'm interested in, so when I do commercial jobs for magazines, I always hope that all the other photos in the magazine will look sort of the same, but then there's my page. I'm always looking for my page, but they always end up picking my boring photos. Now I've gotten to the point where I'm not going to give them choices anymore.

Art F City, October 23, 2015

ART F CITY

Marilyn Minter is the Windowlicker of Representation by Paddy Johnson

Last week I had the good fortune of missing my plane out of Denver. The next available flight wasn't until the following morning, which gave me the extra time to check out the Marilyn Minter retrospective *Pretty/Dirty*, currently on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art. It's four floors and over three decades (1976 through 2013), of juicy painting, photography and video, the most well-known of which depict fetishized bejeweled body parts in provocative poses. Usually, they are anonymous and focused on a single area of the body; tongue, feet, teeth, dick etc.

The show is the visual equivalent of "Windowlicker" an album by the electronic musician Aphex Twin that Pitchfork describes as oscillating between "harsh, uncompromising noise and remarkably warm ambient texture." (The Aphex Twin video works off a similar contrast, but stands in opposition to Minter for its deeply misogynist bent.) In both cases, we are repelled by what we are drawn to—a tension that ensures you never forget the work. The term Windowlicker also evokes Minter's later work with glass, which includes a near 8 minute video of female mouths licking, spitting and swallowing goo off a sheet of glass.

Co-curated by Bill Arning, the director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and Elissa Auther, the curator for the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, the exhibition offers a not-quite chronological look at Minter's work, which is a 30 year plus study of the sexually aggressive female. Works range from a wall long photorealistic paintings of a jeweled tongue and heels with swirls painted over them to a suite of photographs in which women finger their wet pussy hair. That's just the recent work. The oldest stuff, a 1969 photo series titled "Coral Ridge Towers", pictures her drug-addicted mother. Her face looks hardened by age and suffering and often she is photographed while applying make up in her nightgown. The series kicks off the show.

The grittiness of that story sticks to the earlier work—black and white enamel dot paintings depicting girls, and the drippy explicit sex paintings made between the mid to late 80's. As I walked through this section, I wondered whether the techniques Minter used had a bigger impact on the viewer at the time they were made—were dots and drips more fashionable then? A grid of blow jobs and tit fucking drawn from magazines drove home this question. Rendered in thin dissolving sepia paint that gave the paintings an aged look, only the red nails and lips hinted at any glamor. The bodies looked like they had been soaked in cigarette juice for a couple years.



Marilyn Minter, "Blue Poles", 2007

Art F City, October 23, 2015

It's good, difficult painting, and hints at the kind of gripping imagery that will come to define her later work. By the time 2000 hits on the upstairs floor, we're full into spectacle-glam. Gone are the personal references, replaced entirely by the influence of commercial photography and fashion advertising. We see a photograph of apple green nail polish on soiled toes, a glowing enamel painting of freckled girl wearing blue eye shadow and a pimple, and a video capturing lots of liquid spitting and glass licking. They're like staring into the sun: You can't look away.

These paintings are nothing short of incredible and with only one or two exceptions create a body of work no one is likely to forget anytime soon. Oddly enough, it's the image most widely circulated in connection with this show, "Pop Rocks", that suffers from stiffness. The painting depicts a woman, tongue out and fully bedazzled with pearls, and unlike much of her other work, maintains no illusion of the possible. The pose is too extreme to hold. I thought of nothing more than how long it took to paint.



Marilyn Minter, "Pop Rocks", 2013

As I write this, though, I wonder if I'm being too harsh. Is it possible "Pop Rocks" is a good work that's simply overshadowed by better pieces, such as her 8 minute tour de force video, "Smash" (2014)? The show's curators smartly separated this work from the show by giving it its own floor downstairs—it would have taken over the show. In it, the feet of a woman in silver bejeweled heels, move in slow motion as silver mud splashes over her shoes. What begins as gentle feet shuffling becomes jumping and finally a full smashing of glass.

I could have watched that video for hours, and not just for its lush colors and hypnotic movement. The video perfectly captures what aggressive, powerful female sexuality looks like. It's seductive and beautiful. As I stared at the video, I found myself taken by how in control this woman was, and how rarely that's ever depicted.

The Los Angeles Times, April 25, 2016

Los Angeles Times

ART REVIEW

Minter toggles 'Pretty/Dirty'

A 32-painting exhibit spans 40 years in capturing the artist's polarizing intensity.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
ART CRITIC

Marilyn Minter's paintings are famously nauseating. "Orange Crush," 9 feet tall, 15 feet wide and painted in garish, glossy enamels on a billboard-size metal panel, blows up to monumental scale a still from her HD video projection "Green Pink Caviar." The slow-motion video is focused on a woman's probing tongue.

Backed by a sonically sliding soundtrack of languid chimes, the tongue licks up liquid candy and goey cake decoration smeared on a sheet of glass. The woman is mostly faceless. Instead, anonymous wet lips yawn wide as they slurp, the monstrous orifice and looming nose sometimes flattening into de-

[See Minter, E2]

E2 MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016

Los Angeles Times

A push, pull dynamic

[Minter, from E1] formity against the glass.

The painting is at the Orange County Museum of Art in "Pretty/Dirty," the New York-based Minter's aptly titled retrospective, which spans more than 40 years. The wall-size video plays on a loop in a nearby gallery.

They're among 32 paintings, a selection of photographs, three videos, a variety of small works on canvas (stretched and unstretched) and aluminum, plus ephemera — sketches, magazines, snapshots, etc. The traveling show was organized by Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver.

As revolting as the painting and video are, Minter's art is just as famously alluring. Drawing on devices familiar from Pop art, Photo-realism and commercial graphics, her work shamelessly captivates. Witnessing their clashing spectacle of attraction and repulsion upsets and confuses, like slowing to rubberneck an awful three-car smash-up on the Hollywood Freeway.

Her art's general style screams fashion-magazine cosmetics ad — Marilyn on steroids. L'Oréal gone wild. In all the laboriously painted glory of "Orange Crush," the action being depicted does look like it was a whole lot of fun — a Wham-O Slip 'N Slide for adults.

It looks like something else too. Shot by a camera facing up from beneath the glass, "Green Pink Caviar" recalls Hans Namuth's short film, "Jackson Pollock II."

In 1951, Pollock let Namuth film him making a drip painting on glass, a support the artist had never before used, to get a new angle on his radical work. While the painting evolved, Namuth shot through the glass from below. As the drips and splashes of paint piled up, Pollock's own image first merged with and finally was obliterated by his art.

Pollock found the whole experience unnerving.

That night he broke his already wobbly sobriety, beginning the emotional and psychological unraveling that would lead to his death at 44 five years later. Drunk and with a girlfriend and her pal in tow, he smashed his convertible into a tree. In the mythic narrative that has come to surround the artist, the filming represents the beginning of the end.

A still from the famous film graces the catalog cover for the Museum of Modern Art's 1998 Pollock retrospective. Minter's painting of course chronicles none of the specific events but just as clearly references the episode — as both banal history and burnished legend.

Pollock also turns up elsewhere. Another painting zooms in as a close-up on the freckled skin across the bridge of a woman's nose and between her closed eyes,



MARILYN MINTER'S "Blue Poles" (2007) is at once surprising and disturbing.

'Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty'

Where Orange County Museum of Art, 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach

When: Through July 10. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Info: (949) 759-1122. www.ocma.net

which are ringed with glittery blue eye shadow. Titled "Blue Poles," it is pointedly named after Pollock's final, monumental drip-painting.

The picture is surprising and disturbing, beautifully painted and viscerally off-putting. (Is that a pimple by hereyebrow or a sexy bead of sweat?) Minter shoots her subject right between the eyes. The photo-based composition melds sex and death in ways sophisticated and discomfiting.

The male-dominated mythologizing that has animated American painting since the end of World War II moves front and center as a subject. It's no wonder that, with Minter's frank, 1969 photos of her rather disolute mother in Coral Gables, Fla. Black-and-white portraits often show her out of focus from behind but crisply reflected in a mirror.

Through the looking glass — also a metaphor for the camera lens — things seem just fine.

It then moves to her wry Photorealist paintings — a block of frozen peas and a broken egg circling a kitchen sink drain, a sheet of ply-

wood juxtaposed with a linoleum floor, a puddle of Tab diet cola spilled on it. (The linoleum pattern is faux marble.) Giant half-tone dots emerge in a tabloid-themed painting of Jayne Mansfield and Sophia Loren.

Pornography enters the picture — first in lascivious paintings of food, where a filleted fish or a buttery ear of corn is suggestively displayed. Then graphic pictures from dirty magazines as models for paintings in runny pigment. Ew.

Artists as diverse as painter Betty Tompkins and photographer Robert Mapplethorpe had been merging art and pornography since the '70s. But these last works, made in 1989, caused a firestorm in New York (plus a few groves of academia), where arguments over women's subjugation were fierce.

Minter's work absorbs a glut of lessons from a variety of artists. There are the Photorealist fingerprint works of Chuck Close, Minimalist conundrums within Sylvia Plimack Mangold's figurative images, Bruce Nauman's video-clown having a temper tantrum, Sigmar Polke's half-tone hysteria, the hyperrealist razzle-dazzle of Janet Fish's still lifes, the feminine sentimentality of Mike Kelley's stuffed animal sculptures, Jeff Koons' cheerful vulgarity and more.

Andy Warhol of course lurks, most directly in Minter's virtual fetishizing of women's shoes. (From 1955 to 1960, Warhol was an award-winning designer of I. Miller shoe ads.) The show's last room features the recent video "Smash," in which a woman's feet shod in banded heels stomps around in puddles of silver paint.

Finally she kicks and shatters the previously invisible glass parallel to the screen's surface, like the one

in Namuth's Pollock film. For me, the breakage speaks to the dismantling of an entire postwar American aesthetic. She may be the first New York-based painter to have fully transformed Hans Hofmann's thinking, a generation after the fabled teacher's death, into an inescapably American idiom.

Hofmann, a German-born expatriate, was the only New York School painter whose work developed within the crucible of early 20th century European Modernism. He taught first in San Francisco and L.A. and then, starting in 1953, for a couple of decades in Manhattan. A generation of American artists took his teaching to heart.

His work elaborates what he called art's "push and pull." Hofmann's abstract paintings celebrate the vibrant tensions possible between color and form. Attention to that duality is how an artist could breathe the living magic of space into the flat, inert surface of an abstract canvas.

Minter, meanwhile, celebrates the figurative tensions between lusty human appetites and inevitable loss. "Push and pull" goes from being a formal property within a painting to a discomfuted emotional experience within a viewer.

"Orange Crush," "Green Pink Caviar," "Blue Poles," "Smash" — her best work pumps up the volume of glossy commercial advertisements to billboard dimensions. The colors are lush, the tactile surfaces shiny and the swirl of moist, organic forms orgasmic.

Usually they're exhausting. That's a benefit. When you slow down to catch your breath, you begin to see a lot.

KnightLAT@twitter.com

The Orange County Register, April 5, 2016

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Once-controversial artist Marilyn Minter is the subject of a career retrospective at the O.C. Museum of Art

by Antonie Boessenkool



Artist Marilyn Minter stands in front of her painting "Last Splash" (2012) Wednesday at Orange County Museum of Art. An exhibit of her work opened Saturday.

© Nick Koon, Staff Photographer

Artist Marilyn Minter says she's an old lady now, so perhaps she can get away with a little more than in the past.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Minter's art featured hard-core pornographic images dribbled with paint. She earned the scorn of feminists and critics and was, by her own admission, excommunicated from the art world for a time.

Nowadays, those works might not be so shocking. Everything and anything is online. "My theory is the Internet has broken this wide open," Minter said. "Imagery's not that threatening anymore. So the millennials don't even bat an eye. 'So what, this was scandalous?'"

Those works are a sliver of what's on display in her retrospective at the Orange County Museum of Art (and they're unobtrusively placed behind separate walls, so you can only see them on purpose). The exhibit covers the range of her art over five-plus decades, from melancholy photos of her mother to advertising and pop culture images painted in Benday dots to huge, hyper-real paintings that take layers and layers of thin enamel and a year to make. "Pretty / Dirty" opened Saturday and runs through July 10.

The themes of looking, and the repulsion, attraction and conflicting emotions it brings, are unifying, from those early photos to giant paintings of makeup-encrusted eyes. So is provocation, as Minter has taken on ideas like sex and porn, but also the perfection of bodies possible through Photoshop, gender roles and more.

"All my work is about how it feels to look," Minter said recently at OCMA. In another room, a team of assistants was hanging works for the show, which was last at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. "Glamorous



The Orange County Register, April 5, 2016

images give us (an) enormous amount of pleasure and also, at the exact same time, there's the idea that you're never going to look like that. And there's a little self-hatred involved. Why can't I look like that? Which is impossible. They don't even look like that. So there's a distortion here, and I'm trying to make a picture of that distortion."

It's not necessarily a critique of the fashion industry. After all, Minter has worked on advertising for designer Tom Ford and collaborated with brands such as MAC cosmetics and Jimmy Choo shoes. "Why would I critique what gives people so much pleasure? Who am I to critique what gives women, especially, so much pleasure?"

Instead, she's asking questions. "I try and talk about the constant paradox, the gray areas," she said. "I take things that already exist and just push them."

PHOTO PERFECT

One weekend in 1969, Minter was with her mother in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and shot a couple of rolls of film. These black-and-white photos, her "Coral Ridge Towers" series, are Minter's earliest works in the exhibit at OCMA.

In them, her mom, a pill addict and faded Southern belle, wears curlers and a robe while dyeing her eyebrows, puts on makeup in a mirror or smokes a cigarette in bed. Minter said she showed them to her art school classmates of the time, who were "horrified" that she'd display her mom in this way. This was in the days before Oprah Winfrey's talk show, "before people told on themselves," Minter said. Even so, "For my brothers and I, it's just Mom. We don't see what you see."

Minter is both a painter and a photographer, but with her large-scale works in the show, the photos and paintings are almost indistinguishable from each other. An extreme close-up of an eye and part of a face ("Glazed," from 2006), encrusted with pink glitter, is a painting, though it definitely looks like a photograph. The photo-realistic paintings are the result of a year, sometimes more, of layering thin coats of enamel paint. With her team of six other people, one of whom has worked with her for almost 20 years, she stages photographs, then cobbles together negatives to get the image she wants. That image undergoes many, many iterations in Photoshop before being projected on a support and painted. The photos, on the other hand, are "moments," unaltered for the most part.

Rather than perfecting an image like a photo editor for Vogue, Minter does the opposite. She emphasizes and adds freckles to skin, dirt to pedicured feet, lipstick to teeth. In "Smash," the eight-minute video that ends the exhibit, a dancer on high heels slides around in silver liquid, then kicks through a sheet of glass. Her toenails are chipped and her ankles festooned with what looks like cheap costume jewelry.

"I like the moment when everything's falling apart, because it always does. And there's never any images of it. But it's all something everyone knows," Minter said. Eventually in "Smash," the dancer's high heels fall apart.

MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS

So what about those hard-core porn artworks? Admittedly, it's been a topic that's followed her since she made them in the 1980s and 1990s.

"I could paint a glass of water, and they'll say, 'It's so sexual,'" she said, laughing. It seems Minter has more than a small dose of mischievousness, and she laughs heartily and often.

A show of artist Mike Kelley's work sparked the idea for her. He'd used objects typical for the bedroom of a 13-



The Orange County Register, April 5, 2016

year-old girl: stuffed animals, a birds-and-the-bees-type book about sex. Minter thought about what it would mean to take on a subject matter female artists hadn't tackled before, and, like Kelley, use motifs from a subculture that inspires mockery. What if she could use it to reclaim women's sexual agency? she said. She certainly got a response.

"(I) got just myriad questions that I just didn't have answers for. And then I got crucified because I didn't have answers. I wasn't critiquing it. And I still don't have answers. I think there's still this huge glass ceiling for women owning sexuality. And especially young women. If you're an old lady, like me, I can do anything now."

Whether visitors to OCMA skip those works, like the 1989 "Porngrid" painting series, they'll still pick up on Minter's themes of lush imperfection, attraction, repulsion and decay. But, Minter said, she wouldn't want to prescribe a specific interpretation to any of her works.

"I believe in multiple reads," she said. "If it wasn't a lot of different threads, it would be an illustration. I want you to come to your own conclusions."

Contact the writer: aboessenkool@ocregister.com



Artist Marilyn Minter has an exhibit at the Orange County Museum of Art. From left, an enamel on metal titled "Big Bang" (2012), enamel on metal titled "Not in These Shoes" (2013), and enamel on aluminum titled "Public Eye" (2013).

© Nick Koon, Staff Photographer

The New York Times, June 25, 2015 (online)/ June 28, 2015 (print)

The New York Times

Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty

By Parul Sehgal



Marilyn Minter is partial to spit, spatter and redheads. Hers is a “Black Mass brand of femininity,” in the words of the poet Eileen Myles, and she’s become best known for candy-colored shots of dirty feet in designer heels, puffy pubic hair; navels ringed with beads of sweat; paintings and photographs that blur high art and high fashion, photorealism and abstraction. It’s a body of work that’s playful and nasty and full of surprise.

“Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty” has been published in conjunction with her first major retrospective, now at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. It contains her work from 1969 on, and encomiums from the likes of Richard Hell (“She is a filthy sensualist, just like God”); and it marks a career pocked by notoriety and periods of paralysis — elevated, now, in her 60s, by sudden fame. Excommunicated from the art world in the early ’90s for her cheerful paintings of hard-core pornography — Minter said feminists accused her of sexism — today she shows her work at the Venice Biennale; she’s collected by the Guggenheim and Jay Z and is a godmother to a new generation of artists experimenting with what she calls “the feminine grotesque.”

Like her images, “Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty” is seductive and glittery, an object of desire. It highlights what appears to be almost innate talent (Diane Arbus was a fan of her student work) and an equally preternatural ability to attract censure — as well as some faithful obsessions.

Minter taught herself to draw by tracing princesses and the comic-strip heroine Brenda Starr, a well-upholstered “lady reporter” modeled on Rita Hayworth. She’s always been moved and amused by the trappings of gender, its rites and representations in pop culture. In her 20s, she began to tap the seam central to her work, what she calls “the pathology of glamour.” As a student at the University of Florida, she took the photographs that would become the “Coral Ridge Towers” series (1969), featuring her mother, a Southern belle gone to seed, posing stoned and imperious as she freshens her lipstick and dyes her eyebrows. Minter took just 12 shots, six of which are included in this book. It’s astonishing to see her themes emerge so fully formed: the eroticism of the beauty ritual, the armature of glamour, the pathos and delicious anarchy that ensue when the mask begins to slip.

Minter’s classmates, however, were less entranced; they found the photographs cruel and unfeeling. She dropped the project in favor of more conventional feminist images in the vein of Laurie Simmons and Cindy Sherman — critiques of domesticity and consumerism, pointillist paintings of housework, a series of photographs of “female traces”: lipstick on cigarettes or napkins. To publicize an art show, she bought 30-second advertising spots during late-night television talk shows and produced a commercial called “100 Food Porn,” featuring her images of a woman’s hands suggestively fondling vegetables and cutting into meat.



The New York Times, June 25, 2015 (online)/ June 28, 2015 (print)

In 1989, Minter began her infamous pornography series, included in this book. The work seems surprisingly tame today, noteworthy only for the furor it once caused — and, oddly enough, for its humor: “Just people having a good time,” she would later wistfully recall.

A version of the feminist critique still dogs her. Many of her recent photographs of women could be advertisements or have been (she’s designed campaigns for Tom Ford, M.A.C. Cosmetics and Jimmy Choo). She’s frequently asked if she’s celebrating or condemning fashion, to stake her position more explicitly. She usually demurs. “I’m not trying to define or criticize culture,” she has said. “I’m trying to make you feel all these things when you look — the pleasure of looking but also the shame, because you want to look even though the images make you hate yourself.” She likes complicated ways of seeing, muddled messages. Her video “Smash” (2014) begins like a high-fashion commercial: A woman in stilettos poses for a moment in a silvery puddle of water — and then launches a terrific kick through the pane of glass separating her from the viewer. What seems coquettish at first turns into an athletic performance, full of fury. The model, the caged animal, strikes back.

Minter doesn’t denigrate fashion or porn; she harnesses their powers (just as she harnesses the powers of commercial mediums — television and print - advertisements, billboards). She’s interested, she says, in “debased” languages, in everything that excites the limbic system — shiny things, scary things, gold and babies and food and sex — and in confusing our networks of disgust and desire. She’s interested in the flinch; see “Green Pink Caviar” (2009), her funny and obscene eight-minute video (displayed, improbably, in the middle of Times Square), in which models smear candy and cake decorations with their mouths. Minter filmed them from beneath the glass on which the food was heaped; lips and tongues — so hugely magnified we can see every papilla — roving slowly, like dreamy, enormous eels. It triggers almost primal fascination, revulsion and laughter.

And multiple meanings and somatic responses are what Minter is after. Think of her photographs and paintings of women’s mouths, which make up the bulk of “Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty” (she rivals Francis Bacon in her fetishistic attention). She depicts her models at such close range we can’t read their expressions — are they baring their teeth in terror or delight? She shoots mouths dripping gold paint (“Cheshire”), stuffed with quail’s eggs (“Drool”) and gems (“Bullet,” “Deep Throat,” “Vampire”). In “Vomit” she plays with the fashion motif of having a model “kiss the jewelry very lightly” by having her subject gag on a string of pearls.

Bacon said he wanted “to paint the scream more than the horror.” Minter’s multivalent mouths manage to be both the scream and the horror; the laughter and the joke. “I’ve always been interested in things that drip, things that sweat, wet things,” she says. Her work celebrates this leakiness in self and sensibility, too, in pleasures that can’t be bound by ideology or taste. Everything runs in her work, everything runs free.

MARILYN MINTER

Pretty/Dirty

Illustrated. 175 pp. Gregory R. Miller & Company/Contemporary Arts Museum Houston/Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. \$50.

Parul Sehgal is an editor at the Book Review.

A version of this review appears in print on June 28, 2015, on page BR23 of the Sunday Book Review with the headline: Glitter and Grunge.



Artforum, April 17, 2015

ARTFORUM

Marilyn Minter

By Alex Fialho



Marilyn Minter is well known for her works that explore the intersections of desire, feminism, and representation. Her upcoming retrospective, "Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty," which is cocurated by Bill Arning and Elissa Auther, includes paintings, photography, and videos from the past forty years and will be on view at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston from April 18 to August 2, 2015, before travelling to the MCA Denver, the Orange County Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum.

I WANT TO SEDUCE MY VIEWER WITH PLEASURE. Art is most interesting when it's conceptually and visually provocative—disturbing, even! I experience a strong feeling of both pleasure and shame when I look at glamorous images in fashion magazines, and it's this contradictory moment that I find interesting. My work is invested in making an image of what all those different layers of reaction feel like. I'm interested in making the kinds of images that are sidelined or erased in our culture, and I like to push them a little further. When I'm shooting I look for that one errant hair, or the spit strands that form when you open your mouth, or hair on the top of your lip. I like freckles, sweat, pubic hair, pimples, and wrinkles, but these attributes are erased in magazines. We pay a lot of attention to the way we look and the way we present ourselves to others, and that's not a shallow endeavor. It's how we recognize each other. (Even not paying attention to these things is a way to show tribal belonging.) Fashion and beauty is a powerful, billion-dollar industry and we can't pretend it doesn't mean anything. Cocteau once said, "One must forgive fashion everything because it dies so young."



Artforum, April 17, 2015

When I made my "Porn Grid" series in 1989—for which I got half of my images from Bill Arning's porn collection—we had been through the first and second waves of feminism, and I took for granted that women could embrace our own images for our own pleasure. I was shocked by the negative reaction to those works at the time. I was accused of being complicit in sexism and was stunned by the idea that a woman owning sexual imagery could be taken so negatively. For me it was a way of empowering myself. Nobody has politically correct fantasies. I was a pro-sex feminist, and I assumed everybody thought just like I did. I understand where the fearful reaction to the work came from, though, because I was trying to reclaim and repurpose these images from an abusive and exploitative history. There is a history of this: If you're a young woman artist and you're working with sexual imagery, it makes people crazy. But they'll love it if you're old. When Tracey Emin showed her early sexually provocative pieces, academics were repelled by the work. Now that she's older, those same pieces are seen as powerful and she's been embraced by the art world. Another example is the Mapplethorpe photograph of Louise Bourgeois holding the giant phallus. If she had been young, I bet the reaction wouldn't have been so enthusiastic. Look at what happens when Miley Cyrus does that kind of stuff—she's slut-shamed. The double standard makes me sick.

I'm supportive of young women working with any kind of sexual imagery. Women deserve images for their own pleasure, and they should manufacture them themselves. I think the work of Sandy Kim and Petra Collins, as well as anyone else whose work is involved in the feminine grotesque, is a backlash to the cultural ideal that is foisted on women, especially young women. The culture industry creates these impossible robotic ideals through Photoshop and editing the human body. Kim's and Collins's work is an important counterweight to the images we're inundated with every day. It is a punk rebellion, and it's about time.



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KALEIDOSCOPE



MARILYN MINTER

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BY GIANNI JETZER

Some of the most striking features of Marilyn Minter's paintings are drops: gem-like beads shining in a state of weightlessness, drops of tears, drops of sweat, drops of mercury, drops of paint, running drops. At once stunningly beautiful and vaguely repellent, these effects of sprinkling and spattering form the foundation of a fluid iconography that is at once synthetic and subliminally sexual.

These drops contain *in nucleo* the forces that make Marilyn Minter's painting so appealing. It is the cohesive force that causes the molecules to stick together, turning liquids into drops. Thus not only the small parts are attracted to each other, but also there is the color of flesh, make-up and skin in extreme close-ups and angles that function like lures. Somehow more feminine *landscapes* than real bodies, they attract a viewer's gaze, only to leave them with the deadpan expressions of their own imagination. But it is a purely fictional space that opens up like a silver screen in front of their eyes, a space of suspended temporality, of slow or rather *no* motion. Aroused by the promise of some kind of explicit content, the excitement is contained, locked up in an eternally still picture. Cohesion and adhesion, attraction and rejection, movement and stagnation set the physical form.

Marilyn Minter's work, the recent subject of an artist's book by Fulton Ryder and soon to be exhibited in a touring retrospective across the US, has to be read in a wider context than that of the male-dominated domain of painting (and its looming end). Her contemporaries are artists like Sue Williams, or sexual performers like

Marilyn Minter (American, b. 1948) is an artist living and working in New York City. She is represented by Salon 94, New York, and Rogon Projects, Los Angeles.

Marilyn Minter's retrospective will be on view at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver from 18 September 2015 - 31 January 2016. Later in 2016, it will travel to the Orange County Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Gianni Jetzer is an independent curator and critic based in New York as well as Curator-at-large at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC.

Stress, 2014
Courtesy of the artist;
Salon 94, New York;
and Rogon Projects,
Los Angeles

Cosey Fanni Tutti and Annie Sprinkle. The latter famously pioneered new genres of sexually explicit film and video. Marilyn Minter's *Porn Grid* paintings from the late '80s took aim to deconstruct porn imagery. Her recent work, by contrast, enters a new era, beyond feminist porn to the use of the body itself as medium. This fractalized reading of the physique proposes visions of female sexuality that are radical in their lush and truly visual states of being.

Marilyn Minter's painting process, which she employs with breathtaking effects, is hence in total opposition to any notion of liquidity. Her favorite technique involves the application of enamel on metal. The enamel, which is toxic, dries to a hard, glossy finish. It's a material typically used for coating surfaces that are outdoors or otherwise subject to hard wear and variations in temperature. And, rather than canvas she paints on a sheet of metal, a repellant material that does not absorb a single drop of any liquid with which it is splattered. She uses her fingertips as finishing tools, leaving hundreds of imprints on each of the paintings' surfaces. This explicit, dry, and rational way of painting is astonishing in contrast to the pictorial effects provoked, and in the broader sense, to the dripping of Abstract Expressionism, that movement's supposedly meaningful gestures so much a part of their production. Marilyn Minter's drops however are highly elaborated icons, placed with the accuracy and precision of a special effects artist. Her paintings turn into screens. They are both still and obsessed with flowing movements, both literally digital and all the same untouchable. ☺

“FLUID ICONOGRAPHY
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HIGHLIGHTS



Other Links and Recent Press:



[W Magazine, A Look Back At All Of Marilyn Minter's Pretty, Pathological Glamour, November 1, 2016](#)

NYLON

[Nylon, Drinking Seltzer and Getting Life Advice from Marilyn Minter, November 4, 2016](#)