

REGEN PROJECTS

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COOL HUNTING



The Hollywood gallery showcases paintings, photography, and film by the NYC-based artist

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by Kyle Raymond Fitzpatrick

For her third solo show at LA's Regen Projects (open now through 23 June), NYC-based artist Marilyn Minter is again exploring dichotomies—from the beautiful and the grotesque to glamour and grit—the show is seductive and repugnant at once. Traditional concepts surrounding gender and sexual identity, power and desire are dismantled, rearranged and reimagined.

Minter—as she is wont to do—provokes viewers into thinking about their (oftentimes unquestioned) beliefs surrounding women and beauty, without telling them what to think. Of her familiar (literally) steamy imagery of women in showers, Minter tells us, "They're images that exist in life. You know what it looks like to take a shower in a steamy room but no one ever makes a picture of it."

REGEN PROJECTS



“They never have shower scenes,” she says—discussing art history and noting that she’s hoping to create the 21st century equivalent of the bather. “Mine is sort of about obstructing the female form, turning it into metaphor so that you can bring your own history, your own trajectory into the image.”



REGEN PROJECTS

The new body of works sweep through Minter's disciplines. The show starts with a collection of large paintings—works created with enamel on metal that took years to complete—before moving onto a small selection of photographs. These images were, in some cases, the basis for a few of the photorealistic paintings. The show's climax, and conclusion, is the looping 10-minute film "My Cuntry, 'Tis of Thee." The work allows Minter's subjects to function on their own, behind the safety of a screen. Using various techniques, Minter transforms this screen, creating melting façades on film, where the models spell out what their "cunt" means in this day and age—personally or politically.

There is a defiant pleasure to each of the works; with the theme investigating and ripping apart what Minter calls a "pathology of glamor." When in front of her painting "Cornucopia," she asks us, "Who knows what that is?" Laughing, she answers for us, "You must know what I do... It's a woman with a bush." Originating from Minter being confused about women lasering their pubic hair, the piece is personal, public and ultimately beguiling. It inspired her 2014 book "Plush"—a work including "70 luscious color photos" of female pubic hair—and reflects her message for women to try to ignore the demands the outside world places on their bodies. "Dye it green, groom it, cut it, shave it," Minter says. "But don't laser!"



While of course Minter wouldn't place demands on other women's bodies, she does question the beauty industry, while also still finding it complex. Of course, there is power in beauty, sexuality and glamour that Minter embraces in a way that is as complicated as the concept itself. "I look at the world of glamour and beauty and there is a huge contempt for it," she begins. "But, at the same time, everyone gets an enormous amount of pleasure from it. At the same time, it creates body dysmorphia... But then, it's one of

REGEN PROJECTS

the few places in the world where women have real power... and also it makes you feel like shit.”

“I’m interested in the things that are these giant industries of the culture that everyone has a contempt for”

This duality, confusion and complexity, is what has attracted Minter to the subject for so long. “I’m interested in the things that are these giant industries of the culture that everyone has a contempt for. I don’t know why, but that’s who I am. I can’t help it,” she tells us.



Minter's knack for tension manifests from her works wandering between abstraction and realism, employing both primary and digital colors to create an unexpected harmony, to do her job as a “photo-replacer.” Similarly, a tiny plaque at the gallery’s entrance functions similarly in its out-of-place-ness: it features Donald Trump's face and his infamous, despicable "grab them by the pussy" speech. In true Minter style, it's engaging and distressing at once. (That said, all proceeds from the work will go to Downtown For Democracy, a group that taps fine art to donate to progressive candidates in 2018.)

REGEN PROJECTS



Between the political and personal, the show has a universality of experience. Despite how complex many of the concepts are, Minter explores them via an act as simple and common as taking a shower. "It's really about breathing onto glass," Minter explains. "The breath of life... This is my interpretation of it."

All images by Brian Forrest, courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles