

contemporary 2005

SAN FRANCISCO: MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MARILYN MINTER

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www.sfmoma.org

New York-based artist Marilyn Minter uses highly polished photorealist approaches to create enamel-on-metal paintings, and painterly techniques in photographic works. Exploring the reciprocal relationship between the two media, the paintings and photographs are almost indistinguishable. They are all high-gloss, hyperreal and engrossing, brashly encouraging scopophilic desire.

Many works mimic fashion advertising with a defiled twist. *Strut* (2004–5) depicts a jewel-encrusted Dior shoe, glistening with perfection, but with the wearer's cracked and dirt-blackened heel showing flecks of water and grease. *Bullet* (2004) oozes dirty sexuality, erotic and repulsive: gleaming pearls spill out of a huge red mouth, a globule of make-up on a tooth and spit glinting across the pearls, sweat glimmering above the upper lip catching in the fine hairs. *Quail's Egg* (2004) portrays another red mouth, the teeth biting into a tiny raw egg, the shell painted metallic white gold, bright yellow yolk dripping across the lips and down the chin, the skin wet with excessive sweat. These mouths endlessly recur in Minter's work, compulsively spewing jewels and matter, scarlet lipstick smearing teeth.

Treasure Trail (2003) focuses close-up on a belly button, black pubic hairs protruding above the trouser line and the all-pervading sweat or water shimmering in huge globules across the hyperreal flesh. *Pit* (2004) conveys a slightly ambiguous vision of another fetishistically segmented body part. A fine line of hair runs across the armpit, looking strangely like a sewn up wound with protruding thread. *LA to NYC* (2003) takes an oblique look at an eye, with thick black mascara-encrusted eyelashes, a mass of scarlet glitter eyeshadow and a vacant pale-blue iris. The image is both luscious and abject, seductive and repellent.

Minter's oeuvre is a compelling take on the feverish obsessions with body, perfection, femininity and surface in the fashion and beauty industries, pornography and erotica. She deftly infects these images of flawlessness with the more sordid details of reality beyond the glossy pages of a magazine. Gaze and drool.

ROSIE SPENCER

