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Westfield



Marilyn Minter Kicks Off Video Art Project in the Oculus

With a new installation set for the Westfield World Trade Center, Marilyn Minter is creating all new work for a May show at Regen Projects.

By Rosemary Feitelberg | January 10, 2018



Marilyn Minter's video installation at Westfield World Trade Center.

With her latest art installation, Marilyn Minter wants shoppers at the Westfield World Trade Center to step outside of themselves.

Her video, "I'm Not Much but I'm All I Think About" debuts Thursday and will play out on 19 screens of varying sizes downtown and her work will also be shown at the Westfield Century Center. Presented by Westfield and the Art Production Fund, the public space project was a simple decision for Minter. "Have you ever seen The Oculus?" Minter said with a laugh. "I've never seen my work that big and the piece is about narcissism so it all made sense."

Noting how organizers selected her least provocative video, she said, "Narcissism is right now a national conversation. I like that moment when you see something you don't expect. It's sort of thrilling and it's not an ad. It's just two beautiful letters, two "M"s actually [for Marilyn Minter] but when one of the M's turnssideways, it spells 'Me' in slow-mo falling into this sort of liquid silver. It looks kind of spectacular." she said. "It's a fun thing. It's not anything really profound — it's in a mall."

The concept of art in shopping centers isn't new. "I think I read that in Japan years ago, art was in department stores — art galleries."

Minter's own run in retail — an Anger Management pop-up store featuring resistance-themed items from 70 artists that wrapped up at the Brooklyn Museum at the end of last year. It's safe to say she's not racing back in. "It overtook my life and my partner Andrianna Campbell's life. I have a show in May in California [at Regen Projects.] And she's getting an MBA. We've had offers from other museums. It's really time-consuming. We have a model in place if someone wants to take it over. We even have the artists creations. They can reproduce them. It just ate up our lives."

Despite selling a bevy of low-ticket items, the pop-up raised more than \$50,000 for the ACLU and Planned Parenthood. "On three-dollar, two-dollar and one-dollar items. People would buy 13 \$2 pens." Minter said. "I've always been an activist. I can do that in tandem with making art but this was overwhelming. We didn't know what we got into, basically."

Ten years have passed since Minter became the first female artist approached by Supreme to customize a skateboard, which sold out on Day One. The label's resurgence is news to her. "I thought it was always popular," she said.

Friendly with a few designers, Minter said she is not a shopper. Her trips to the Oculus are more just-passing-through-en-route-to-somewhere else. "If you look at me, you'll see I'm not a fashion person at all. Advertising plays into my work, not necessarily fashion. The way we present ourselves in media is my subject matter," Minter said. "Fashion is all-encompassing. If you know about fashion, it takes over your life. If you're in fashion, it's like being in art. It's overwhelming. You don't do it unless you have no choice, right? I'm not a polymath, I can't do both things."

Creating all new work for this spring's show, Minter typically spends one year making a painting. Once that untitled exhibition is squared away, another will be held in Hong Kong in September. "My shows are scheduled months in advance so I just have to work constantly. I took some time off in September to do Anger Management, the pop-up shop. I thought I could do it in tandem but I couldn't," she said.

The way she sees it, always being on the clock isn't a bad thing. "It's a luxury problem to have to constantly make art. At least there's demand. Believe me, I've been on the otherside for most of my life when there wasn't demand. Everything piled up in corners," Minter said.

In this age of activism, artists each have their own messages to share. Minter said, "You can't illustrate your activism with your art but a lot of art is political by its nature. It just depends on the artist. You can't conjure it up like, 'Oh, I'll make protest art here.' It has to be organic," she said.

"But I guess during the AIDS crisis artists did tailor their art towards activism and it was very provocative and very powerful. Also, during the French Revolution. It's an organic thing," Minter said. "Some of the most powerful art is illustrations for The New Yorker. Some of the covers this year have been so powerful. But you can't beat Barbara Kruger or Jenny Holzer. Jenny's work is more true now than ever."