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CLARION

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Brush and Palette: Marilyn Minter's erotic 'Pretty/Dirty' by Kate Rogers



Marilyn Minter's exhibit showcases different parts of women's bodies.
Photo courtesy of Marilyn Minter

"Pretty/Dirty," a solo exhibit that dominates two floors of the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, follows the artistic evolution of photographer and painter Marilyn Minter.

Several of Minter's past projects are strung together, and the result is a plethora of different mediums: photography to painting to video. Her work illustrates the recurring themes of material behavior, sexual self-expression and gender roles that she continually questions in her pieces.



"Pretty/ Dirty" is made up of a series of photos exploring sexual behavior.
Photo courtesy of Marilyn Minter

On the first floor, one can find some of Minter's photography: a series of large-scale pictures that showcase different parts of a woman's body. In some, eyes are covered in dramatic eye makeup and look seductively at or away from the camera. In others, lips smeared with lipstick eat jewelry or lick what appears to be the camera lens. Legs covered in glitter dance in pools of paint with feet dressed in playful high heels. Each art piece feels as if the subject indulges in a lavish lifestyle and are extremely decadent by nature.

As one walks up to the second floor, he or she is greeted with Minter's paintings. At first glance the work looks exactly like the preceding photography. The difference is that they are enamel and metal renderings of the

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pictures themselves. These hyper real paintings look so much like their originals that one has to look to the sides and see the metal covered canvases to realize they aren't what they seem.

Near the back of the second floor the last room suddenly gets dark. Projected on the wall is Minter's video "Green Pink Caviar". In the short film her photography and paintings come to life and a series of lips take turns licking colored paint off of a glass plate. After the lips is a pair of legs spinning in high heels, paint flying everywhere.

Minter's work verges on the uncomfortable as she explores the advertisement and porn industries in her art. Her narrative mimics the entertainment and fantasy aspects of people's lives that they tend to over engage in.

Minter acts as a critical watchdog who sheds light on the cultural backlash of images produced by these industries—industries who churn out eye-candy campaigns ready for consumer consumption.

In a society dominated by visual modes—computers, cameras, televisions, billboards, ads—Minter's realization of the eyeball overload people face everyday couldn't come at a more prevalent time. Visit "Pretty/Dirty" before Jan. 31 to get her take on some of the most engaged in facets of human lives.