

## **Marilyn Minter's provocative new works re-imagine classic female bathers**

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"Nebulous" (2018) Marilyn Minter and Salon 94

"There would be no Internet without pornography," proclaimed New York-based Marilyn Minter, whose art has challenged notions of femininity since the 1970s. "And (porn) is one of the huge engines of the culture."

It's the sort of outspoken opinion one now expects from 70-year-old Minter, an artist long at the forefront of conversations around the depiction of women in art and media.

Her latest exhibition, now on show at Hong Kong's Lehmann Maupin gallery, is typical in its raw portrayal of women. Focusing on what Minter describes as "21st century bathers," the show brings traditional imagery of women bathing and grooming themselves from art history into the present.

"We're used to seeing an art history of bather...women in nature, Greeks, all the way to the Expressionists and Impressionists, women constantly grooming themselves," said Minter during an interview at the gallery.

"And I wanted to bring it into the 21st century. So I have the bather in the shower."



"Indigo" (2018) Marilyn Minter and Salon 94

The hyper-realistic works depict women showering behind steamed glass (which they have drawn on or are in the midst of licking). The glass acts as a "metaphorical" boundary between the image and the viewer.

According to Minter, each painting takes around a year to create. She first shoots a photo, which provides a starting point for the painting, and then applies layers of translucent enamel paint to achieve a sense of depth.

"(It) was a way for me to play around with surfaces and create this illusion of depth," Minter said of the dark colors used to bring the steam to life. "It's about desire, it's about breathing, breath of life."

## Of women, for women

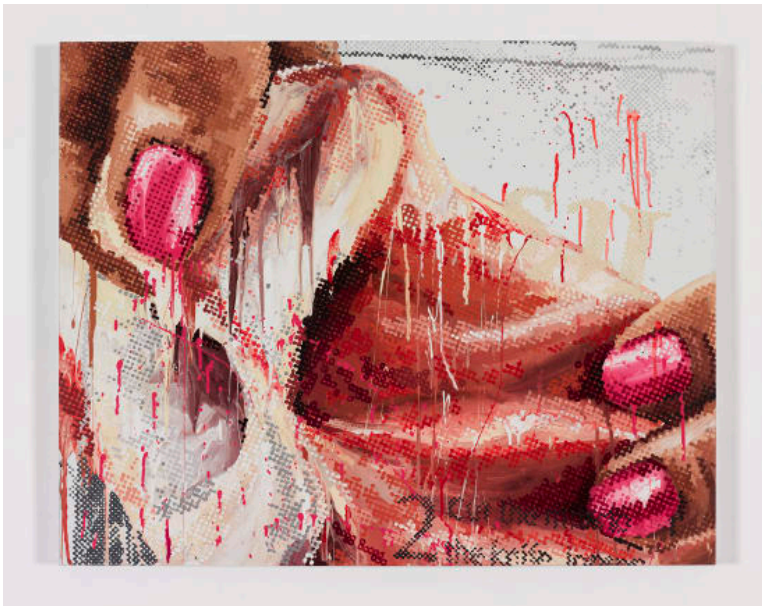
The images in the exhibition, most of which were created between 2016 and 2018, continue the American artist's exploration of women and how they are portrayed.

"I wasn't interested ever in trying to just make another pretty face," Minter said of her earlier works, where she would do models' makeup herself.

"I didn't really *do* it," she explained. "I was thinking in terms of the makeup (that) was just left on. I liked (the) model sweating under the light. I liked to see it run because that's intervening.

"There are no perfect moments."

These earlier works found inspiration in both pornography and advertising. Some of Minter's most provocative paintings were based on images from hardcore porn movies.



"100 Food Porn" (1990) Marilyn Minter and Salon 94

"I was trying to make a case that there are no politically correct fantasies," she said.

"I thought it was time for women to own sexual imagery and make sexual imagery for their own pleasure and for their own amusement. And at that time I was picking images from abusive history and repurposing them."



"Satiated" (2003) Marilyn Minter and Salon 94

Minter recalled being branded "traitorous" by some feminists, who at the time considered her bold paintings to be counter-productive. But she maintains that her art is empowering -- especially in the age of #MeToo.

"I was always interested in women owning sexual agency and their own power, creating the images."

*Watch Marilyn Minter describe her works from her new Hong Kong exhibition in the video above. The show will be on at Lehmann Maupin until Oct 27, 2018.*