

Brooklyn Museum

A YEAR OF YES

Press Release

September 2016

***Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty* Traces Three Decades of the Artist's Work**

On view from November 4, 2016, to April 2, 2017

Exhibition Part of *A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum*

For more than four decades, Marilyn Minter's sensual paintings, photographs, and videos have vividly questioned the complex, often contradictory perceptions of beauty and the feminine body in mainstream culture. *Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty* is the artist's first retrospective, highlighting her technical virtuosity and examination of some of our deepest cultural impulses, compulsions, and fantasies. Now widely considered an iconic feminist artist noted for her brave and bold representations of desire, Minter was criticized in the 1990s for her pornographic and taboo-challenging imagery.

The exhibition is part of *A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum*, a yearlong project celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art and a decade of feminist thinking at the Brooklyn Museum.

Co-organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, *Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty* will be on view from November 4, 2016, to April 2, 2017. The Brooklyn Museum presentation will be the final and only East Coast venue on the exhibition's tour, marking a homecoming for the New York-based artist. The exhibition features more than 45 paintings, three



Marilyn Minter (American, born 1948). *Blue Poles*, 2007. Enamel on metal, 60 x 72 in. (152.4 x 182.9 cm). Private collection, Switzerland

videos, and over a dozen photographs made between 1969 and 2015, spanning a range of visual strategies including stark documentary photography, feminist reinterpretations of photorealism, and unabashed sexual appeal.

Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty begins with the artist's earliest artworks, from 1969 through 1986, including a rarely exhibited series of photographs that intimately capture her troubled mother's faded glamour. Pop art-inspired paintings from the mid-1980s offer a critical look at representations of the female body and celebrity, and works from the late 1980s and 1990s examine visual pleasure in visceral depictions of food and sex. The retrospective culminates in Minter's ongoing investigation of how the fashion and beauty industries expertly create and manipulate desire through images. *Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty* presents the evolution of Minter's style and technique, tracking her progress from concerns with the domestic landscape to her monumental and media-savvy images that simultaneously define and critique our times.



Over the course of her career, Minter has never shied away from debates over the relationship of her art to feminism, fashion, and celebrity. These vexed cultural intersections are apparent in her subjects and her unflinching approach to them; her work can appear as effortless as a mirror reflecting today's obsession with luxury and the "bling" lifestyle. Yet Minter's work is not merely a reflection of our culture, as her critical eye brings into sharp focus the power of desire, magnifying and celebrating the flaws behind superficial exteriors.

"Marilyn Minter brings her decades-long engagement with the cultural politics of feminism uniquely to life through her virtuosity as a painter and photographer. With an unflinching gaze and a sympathetic sense of humor, Minter lays bare the often ridiculous cultural norms we so often take for granted," says Catherine Morris, Sackler Family Curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art.

Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty is presented as part of *A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum*, which celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through ten diverse exhibitions and an extensive calendar of related public programs. The project recognizes feminism as a driving force for progressive change and takes the transformative contributions of feminist art during the last half-century as its starting point. *A Year of Yes* imagines next steps, expanding feminist thinking from its roots in the struggle for gender parity to embrace broader social-justice issues of tolerance, inclusion, and diversity. The Museum-wide series starts in October 2016 and continues through early 2018.

Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty is co-organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. Exhibition co-curators are Bill Arning, director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and Elissa Auther, Windgate Research Curator, Museum of Arts and Design and Bard Graduate Center. The Brooklyn presentation is organized by Catherine Morris, Sackler Family Curator, and Carmen Hermo, Assistant Curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum.

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The accompanying book is published by Gregory R. Miller & Company, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. It contains essays by the organizing curators, Bill Arning and Elissa Auther, an interview by Linda Yablonsky, and additional essays by Eileen Myles, Nick Flynn, Jenni Sorkin, Colby Keller, Neville Wakefield, K8 Hardy, Richard Hell, and Catherine Morris.

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