



Ratio 3 Images

Unsubtle message, unapologetic artist

Marilyn Minter's provocative videos explore the place of women in society

By Charles Desmarais

At age 70, it would seem, Marilyn Minter is more fired up than ever about the place of women in American society, and she's using a word much discussed in recent days to express that feeling. "My C—ry, 'Tis of Thee" (2018) is the most recent

work in a presentation of three of her seductive videos, "Channel 3: Marilyn Minter," at Ratio 3, on view through July 7.

Minter has skirted the edge of appropriate in her art for decades. Her 2005 exhibition of paintings and photographs at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which I did not see, introduced her to the Bay Area and was the New York artist's first solo museum show of substance. There have been many since.

The work examined, curator Joshua Shirkey wrote in a brochure, "unruly bodies that cannot fit within our culture's carefully drawn lines: greedy, excessive bodies that ooze and leak and are marked by too much sweat, too much makeup, too much hair, too much grime."

The new video has a lot in common with earlier work, especially 2009's

Minter continues on E3



Top: A scene from Marilyn Minter's video "My C—ry, 'Tis of Thee" from this year. **Above:** A still from 2014's "Smash." Both works, plus a third video, are on view at Ratio 3 through July 7.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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A still from Marilyn Minter's 2011 video "I'm Not Much But I'm All I Think About," silver tarnished to pewter gray, serves as a sort of self-portrait by the artist. Below: Minter's "My C—ry, 'Tis of Thee" from this year is the most recent work in the exhibition.

Consideration of glamour and power

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"Green Pink Caviar," which famously served as the backdrop for a Madonna concert tour. A woman in conventionally come-hither makeup is separated from the camera lens by a sheet of glass, which becomes a kind of reverse canvas for marks and smears she makes with her body.

Models in the 2009 video devour the picture plane in suggestive licks and kisses. The new piece confronts us with a translation of such obvious tropes of submission into a plain English. The Chronicle chooses not to use, as women spell out a series of words and phrases that play on a single-root vulgarity.

It's an unsubtle work, and one that likely preaches to the choir. Yet in its brazenness it reclaims for the artist, and perhaps for women in general, the power to name their own terms.

For "My C—ry, 'Tis of Thee," the models draw on glass in mist and water, as if from within a shower stall. It

is a purgatory, almost antiseptic image. The other two works on view are oily, cast as silver but tarnished to a pewter gray.

"I'm Not Much But I'm All I Think About" (2011) is a self-portrait, of sorts. The letters M and E, then a pair of M&M candies, fall from camera height into a roiling liquid, then slowly sink from sight.

"Smash" (2014) records a frantic, futile dance from ankle height. Big-boned feet in chunky platforms, dripping in costume jewels, splash and splinter gem-like drips of silvery liquid in a forced display of glamour. There is a moment in the video loop when a foot breaks the fourth wall, smashing a sheet of glass. It's a symbolic breakthrough we don't quite buy because nothing changes, as the marathon dance goes on.

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Channel 3: Marilyn Minter: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Through July 7. Free. Ratio 3, 2831A Mission St., S.F. 415-821-3371. www.ratio3.org