

Marilyn Minter exhibit reason enough to check out CENTERpiece

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MARILYN MINTER

Marilyn Minter's "Splish Splash"

Calendar

- **What:** Marilyn Minter exhibit
- **Where:** CENTERpiece Gallery at CityCenter; 739-3314
- **When:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, through August 31
- **Cost:** Free

Tucked away near the main entrance of CityCenter, right across from the Mandarin Oriental, a little jewel box of a showroom awaits your discovery. Part art gallery, part high-end retail, CENTERpiece Gallery is a natural fit for CityCenter — and a must-see for thirsty art lovers. Since opening last winter, CENTERpiece has steadily found its footing in a tumultuous economy while navigating the unique circumstances of a once-polarizing Strip location. But a current selection of Marilyn Minter photographs, on view through August 31, promises to raise the profile of the space beyond that of the accidental tourist.

The crossroads of fashion photography and high art are well traveled, but no one does it quite like Minter. Work from the by-now-easily-identifiable "Heels" series features prominently. In photos like "Swarv," "Goldi" and the exceptional "Splish Splash," the narrative snippet plays like a broken record: A calloused heel in glimmering spiked stilettos splashes its way through oozing urban grit, glamour in all its imperfect glory. Add some pearls. Repeat.

Not that the work is repetitive — far from it. It's exhilarating. Minter's hyper-realistic images revel in obsession, possession, bodies and muck. Each is broken down to desirable and manageable components — puckered lips here and rhinestones there; feet teeter in satin Dior pumps as pink tongues lick silver poison — all magnified to operatic proportions and suspended mid-shimmer. We get to see all the bits we like, then we get to bask in the dirty humanity of our desire — a visual activity akin to fashion pornography, and way more fun than it sounds.

At an average of 62 inches tall, the c-prints could easily fall pray to the overwrought trend of immersive large-format photography. Instead, the prints offer intimate amplifications of vulnerable, messy moments in fractured color. There's an uncomfortable eroticism to Minter's prolonged gaze, particularly palpable in her video debut, "Green Pink Caviar."

Many of Minter's photographs are studies for large-scale enamel on metal photo-realistic paintings, an arguably more complex medium for the artist's viscous and obsessive themes. Truth be told, the paintings are more interesting, and transcend an easy fashion-based read. But the photos' dirty decadence has an undeniable appeal, particularly given the context here.

LAS VEGAS SUN



CENTERpiece is the current incarnation of MCQ Fine Art, the art advisory firm responsible for curating CityCenter's public art collection (among other notable projects across the Valley). Their gold standard is evident. Apart from the Minters, there are vibrant Warhol screen prints and a lovely triptych of Glen Golding woodcuts. The gallery's Locals Only Art Series also promises exceptional work (next up: Sush Machida Gaikotsu). So brave the heat and the Strip — CENTERpiece will surprise you.