

ART IN REVIEW

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By **Roberta Smith**

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Fredericks Freiser

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Marilyn Minter is one of several artists of the 1980's whose work is a link between the often-disparaged Photo Realism of the 1960's and 70's and the style's current stampede. Showing big color photographs that are almost as voluptuous as her canvases, as well as two paintings, Ms. Minter continues to emphasize the ambiguous. She does this with distortions of color, form and scale that push an image toward abstraction, and with exaggerated close-ups of faces that explore pornography and the construction of desire.

Her usual blurring of male and female, desire and exploitation, have been intensified with a sharper suggestion of youth and vulnerability, and therefore decadence and threat. In the photographs "Satiated" and "Stuffed," the moist, heavily rouged mouth holding a string of pearls could be male or female; either way, it is young, and its upper lip is covered with what reads as nervous sweat.

In a close-up photograph of a heavily made-up eye, titled "Peach Fuzz," face powder and light turn preadolescent down into a luxuriant silver fringe, a kind of fur. The painting "Clown" leaves nothing to chance: the pouting lips are flanked by tiny pimples and fledgling whiskers.

Somewhat more subtle is the painting "LA to NYC," which curves in under a half-closed lid to focus on a green eye with a deadened stare, while pink shadow and sparkle on the adjacent brow might almost be the alluring lights of Las Vegas, shimmering in the distance. It is a morality tale, or perhaps the cover of a pulp novel, with before and after neatly rolled into one. ROBERTA SMITH