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The Da Vinci Questionnaire®

Marilyn Minter

Paying Homage to Art Historical Conventions of Portraiture
and Representation



New York-based Marilyn Minter – whose work both resonates and repels, and who balances between exquisite material execution, personal homage, and art historical excavation, and who has exhibited in museums around the world, including at the Guggenheim Bilbao, the Kunsthaus Zürich and the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, TX – plumbs her own psychological depths only to discover what makes her love work and life.

What historical art figure would you like to have lunch with and why? It's not my goal in life to have lunch with a dead person, but if I had to pick someone it would be probably **Philip Guston** or **Joan Mitchell** because I admire their work so much. Or maybe **Warhol** for the gossip.

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What did you purchase with the proceeds from your first sale? The first thing I bought was a **Cady Noland** from **America Fine Arts**.



Marilyn Minter: *After Guston, #16 (Mouth)*, 2024, Enamel on wood

What words or phrases do you overuse? *“Let me think about it...”*

How do you know when a work is finished? When I can't find anything I have to fix. I look at every square inch, and I know it's done when there's nothing that bothers me.



Marilyn Minter: *After Guston, #25 (Shoe)*, 2024, Enamel on wood

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When and where were you happiest? In the 80s, on major drugs, floating on a raft off the coast of **Ibiza**. Or, in the 90s when my now husband told me he was in love with me.

What is your most treasured possession? My most treasured possessions are my friendships.

Where is your ideal escape destination? My studio.



Marilyn Minter: *After Guston, #18 (Shoe)*, 2024, Enamel on wood

What's the worst survival job you've ever had? It was probably when I was a substitute art teacher in the **New York City** public school system. They called me at 6 in the morning to tell me which school to go to by 8am.

What TV series from your youth best describes your approach to life? **The Dick Cavett Show**, or **David Letterman**, because I'm a sponge for information.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? My posture.

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Marilyn Minter: *Lizzo Odalisque* 2023–2025, Enamel on metal

What is your most treasured memory? All the times my husband has made me feel loved.

What makes you smile? The right-wing imploding, and goofy jokes.

What makes you cry? Cruelty to animals and children.

What is your go-to drink when you toast to a sale? A Diet Coke.



Marilyn Minter: *Jane Fonda*, 2024, Enamel on metal

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After an all-nighter, what's your breakfast of champions? Lots of coffee and pastries.

Who inspires you? Really talented female artists.



Marilyn Minter: *Nick Cave, 2024*, Enamel on metal

What's your best quality? Tenacity and a good eye.

What's your biggest flaw? I have trouble listening sometimes. I know it's true, though, so the minute somebody says it, I immediately start paying attention.



Marilyn Minter: Installation view, *After Guston*,

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What is your current state of mind? Dread of what he's going to do next.

What do you consider your greatest achievement? Staying clean and sober for 40 years.



Portrait of the artist by Xi Liang

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what would it be? One of my beloved pets.

Cover image: Marilyn Minter, photo by Thea Traff. The exhibition, *Marilyn Minter*, is at Regen Projects, November 6 – December 20, 2025. For information on the documentary, *Pretty Dirty: The Life and Times of Marilyn Minter*, [click here](#). Visit the artist at her [website](#).