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ELLE

Martine Gutierrez Is Rethinking Beauty, Identity, and Visibility

The artist reflects on the stories we're told about beauty.

Patricia Reynoso | October 1, 2026



Courtesy of Martine Gutierrez

Martine Gutierrez has spent her career examining the forces that shape how we see ourselves: Who gets to define beauty? Who gets to claim identity? And how much of what we desire is shaped by the images we're taught to admire? Her landmark 2018 project, Indigenous Woman—a meticulously produced fashion magazine starring

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Gutierrez as every model and as editor-in-chief, stylist, and creative director—centered Indigenous and trans identities rarely seen in mainstream media. It later became a solo exhibition and was acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute.

In August, Gutierrez starred in Marina, a new live performance co-conceived with writer, director, and comedian Julio Torres that was commissioned as part of the 2026 Whitney Biennial. She spoke with ELLE about why beauty has become a focus in her work, what she learned after stepping inside the glamorous world she once idolized, and why she's now embracing the creative possibilities of letting go.

When did your Maya heritage become such an important part of your artistic language, particularly in Indigenous Woman?

Indigenous Woman happened as a question for me. When you're a kid, you question who you are. And when you're of mixed heritage—my mom is American, my dad is from Guatemala, and his mother is Maya—that question becomes: Can I claim this? Can I claim either word? Can I claim being a woman, and can I claim being Indigenous as someone who was born a little boy in America? I never seem to be Indigenous enough, and I never seem to be American enough.

What drew you to magazines as a storytelling format?

I've seen more magazines than museums. The arts made me feel estranged. There's something precious about art. You can't touch it—you need a certain distance from it. When I made Indigenous Woman, it wasn't something you had to visit in a museum. It was meant to be flipped through and held. There is also a similarity between a gallery and a magazine. There's a pacing. It's an art show without a white box.

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Courtesy of Martine Gutierrez
Film stills from Valenstein (2004).

Your 2022 "Supremacy" billboard depicted you reclining in white lace lingerie while surrounded by Barbie-like dolls. Upon closer inspection, it's clear that the dolls are trying to pin you down. How intentional is that split

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second when someone mistakes one of your works for an ad?

That feels like a win. That feels like winning the World Cup. But I never know if it's going to happen. Some people don't look. Or they look, but they don't see. I look like so many people who already fit a certain beauty standard—and because I'm making myself look like them, there's this moment of recognition. The references feel familiar, too: "I've seen this before…but I haven't." Hopefully that's why people do the double take. They catch a clue that something is a little different. I don't think we're taught to read images critically.

How did you learn what beauty meant?

I didn't grow up with people telling me I was beautiful. It's so corny, but your flaws are your flaws, and accepting the things that make you different is what makes you beautiful. Recently, my mother said something that really stayed with me. She told me it was the person I was—not my physicality—that allowed me to do all of this. I think that's partly why beauty has become such a focus in my work. Even when I photograph other people, I'm looking for that unexpected thing that makes them beautiful. My friends will often say, "That's the best I've ever looked." I think I've trained my eye to find beauty where people don't always expect it—and to help the viewer see it, too.

What does glamour mean to you, and how has that changed?

I believed there was something glamorous about being draped in a designer dress. I believed I'd finally be beautiful if Pat McGrath did my makeup. Then she did do my makeup. It was for a Club Glam event, when her brand finally launched at Sephora. But when it was time for my scene, I couldn't stop crying, because it was my turn and I flopped. I didn't have what it takes. The more that I was in the fashion world, the more I felt critical of it. There is a meme of a girl auditioning for America's Next Top Model who walks into the casting and then says, "I just don't think this is right for me. I don't want to do it. I want to go home." Then she shuffles out before they can even judge her. That's who I identify with.

You've begun expanding beyond photography into performance, film, music, and theater. What has stepping beyond the still image opened up for you?

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I don't know. And I think it's the not knowing that's really exciting. It feels like anything is possible. So much of my work has been me sitting in front of my own camera. It's also my inability to give up control. It's an Achilles heel as much as it's been a strength. I'm trying to get over standing in my own way. I don't want it to become a crutch. I'm not really interested in having a career. I'm interested in living a life that's interesting.

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HYPERALLERGIC

"Marina" Dares You to Laugh at Technology

Julio Torres and Martine Gutierrez's new performance is a grotesque parade of visual delights that defangs our toxic relationship to our screens.

August 31, 2026



Martine Gutierrez in Marina at Little Island (all photos Nina Westervelt, courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art)

Artistic attempts to contend with technology's ever-tightening grip on our attention, institutions, and social abilities too often take the form of post-human fever dreams of the *Black Mirror* school — works that, while intended to be critical, easily devolve into discursive, cyborg-filled feedback loops. Julio Torres and Martine Gutierrez's *Marina*, which premiered at Manhattan's Little Island last week as part of the 2026 Whitney Biennial program, opts for a radically different tack: laughing at technology instead of fearing it, and winning our hearts rather than rotting our brains.

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The air is humid with a storm that never materialized as audience members stream into The Amph, Little Island's open-air amphitheater, on Thursday, August 26. Onstage, a figure in a burgundy pinstripe suit mouths wordlessly into a payphone set on a wooden dock suspended above a vaguely apocalyptic underwater mise-en-scène. Framed video screens playing water-wave patterns rise from coral outcroppings encrusted with rubber-tire bits, junk, and debris.



Spike Einbinder as a narrator and detective on the stage of Marina

Down in the murky waters of the Gowanus Canal, we learn, reside a sea wench named Marina (played by Gutierrez), her overprotective older sister, and an anglerfish named Nano. They lead a parasitic existence, accruing the trash that sinks to the floor to reinforce their shells. No one seems to question their lifestyle until a distracted construction worker, barking his insecurities to his AI girlfriend while pacing the dock above them, drops his smartphone into the water. ("Is this a rectangle?" Nano asks, unironically.) Entranced by the device, Marina is drawn into a world of endless scrolls and highlight reels, where influencers peddle the familiar doctrine that a woman can find self-worth only through a man's validation. If this is all sounding very truth-universally-acknowledged so far, that's because the plot of *Marina* is Frankensteined from paradigmatic tales of women scorned, from Homer's Odyssey to Euripides's *Medea* to *Jennifer's Body* (2009).

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River L. Ramirez plays Mound, Marina's sister, in *Marina*.

Our protagonist sets out with good intentions at first, snapping a candid selfie atop her garbage pile and uploading it to OkCupid, a platform that feels as dated a reference as the payphone. But no one swipes right, so she does what we all do online, to some degree or another: She pretends to be someone else. Marina finds her perfect alter-ego in a more conventionally attractive sea dweller, Ariel of Disney's The Little Mermaid (1989), whose wide eyes and frizz-free red mane lure thirsty suitors like Jared, a "man of faith" who swears he's 6'5 and a CEO but "will not be tasked with the emotional labor of dealing with your trauma." In other words, they are not exactly a catch. When they realize they've quite literally been catfished and grow aggressive, they face the homicidal ire of Marina, their Apple Watches and motorcycle jackets becoming absorbed into her ever-growing junkyard ecology.

Back on terra firma, our pinstriped narrator, a detective, is determined to crack the case of the fuckboys going missing down below. She recruits a randy garbageman named Dino to go undercover ("I'll make it worth your while, but not by a lot — I'm solving this case on spec," she tells him.) But as the saying goes, there's a lid for every pot, and in a twist of fate, Marina turns out to be exactly Dino's type: large claws, "kinky," no interest in deodorant.

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Throughout this journey, Marina is faced with one of the greatest challenges of becoming oneself. She must learn to locate a sense of identity in her own existence, not in the men she kills or in the man she falls in love with, and certainly not in the carefully constructed chaos of the screen.

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V MAGAZINE

How Martine Gutierrez Became a 'Wunderkind'

The lauded artist opens a survey of her life's work in Amsterdam

Elyssa Goodman | June 26, 2026



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The first photograph that caught my eye was the refrigerator. It was laden with images from Martine Gutierrez's youth, drawings scrawled with "I Love You Mommy" and mermaids upon mermaids, hearts and happy birthdays. A ghostly cat snuck past the frame, an indigo sequin dress rested on a bed nearby. It was a moment I knew from my own past–different fridge, different drawings, different cat, fewer sequins, but still. As the complexities of our own lives increase with adulthood, returning to a time when creativity and love were so easily expressed is a gift on its own.

"Mom's Fridge" is one of many images Gutierrez created for her new exhibition *Wunderkind*, a survey of work from her entire life on view at Amsterdam photography museum Huis Marseille from June 27 to October 18.



© Martine Gutierrez, *Mom's Refrigerator*, 2026, from the series Still Life. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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Gutierrez sees *Wunderkind* as a salute to her mother, who saved much of Martine's work from childhood, thereby making the exhibition possible. She sees her successful magazine/artist book *Indigenous Woman*, centering her Mayan Indian background–images from the series were acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in 2024–as a project for her dad, who recently passed away. In fact, it was in part because of his passing that the exhibition came to be, she says. She had always wanted to collaborate with her mother in some way, and you know what they say about time and the present.

After a fruitful spate of acting work–most notably *Fantasmas, Problemista, and Los Espookys* with comedian and writer Julio Torres–Gutierrez sought to refocus on her own artistic practice. Her work had previously been shown at the Venice Biennale, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and more. It's also forthcoming at the Whitney Biennial. Gutierrez won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2025 and began work on the show that became *Wunderkind*. While Gutierrez regularly uses her own face and body to explore identity in her artwork, she sees Wunderkind as her most personal project yet.

V spoke to Gutierrez about childhood dreams, *The Little Mermaid*, artmaking, and what it means to become a swan after feeling like an ugly duckling.

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© Martine Gutierrez, *Dress Up 5*, 2026. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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V: How did this show come to be?

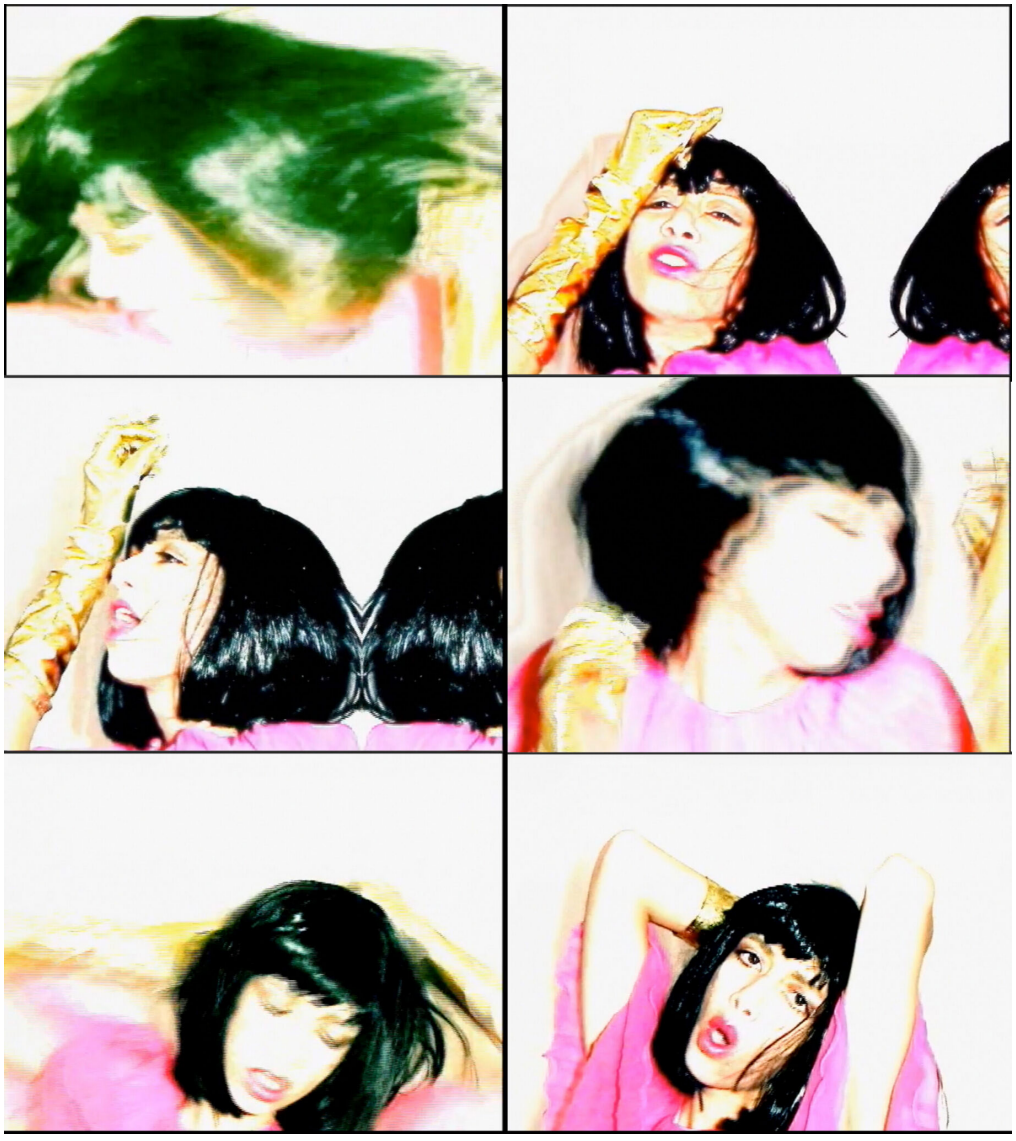
Martine Gutierrez: This is the biggest show I've ever had. It's been a real undertaking. It started as the seed of an idea without a root system or a home. I visited Amsterdam. The [museum] director, Nanda [van den Berg], is amazing, and she kind of twisted my arm and said, you've got to do something here. I had nothing to give–this was after Fantasmas and I had done all this acting and TV. You don't understand until you do that stuff that your life becomes about promoting these projects and being on these red carpets for these awards. It's all this fanfare, and it's so not art–the art world, I guess they have their galas, fundraising–but I felt really spent. Nanda said, "Well, what if you could do anything?" Well, when you put it like that. I got the Guggenheim Fellowship, and that whole period of time I was already working–I was going to do this either way. It gave me wings. I got this gorgeous studio space in Chelsea, and I locked myself away in my tower like Rapunzel, and I played with dolls. I had the promise of this venue. It was a secret, and now it's real, and we're down to the wire. The exhibition feels like such a big share because I understand that I have a certain mystery around me, and it's so personal.

V: What made the show such an undertaking?

MG: It was digging through my archive of everything I've made since I was born. There are works I've chosen not to share, because we only have so many rooms, but my life has been recorded. The 21st century child. My birth was filmed by my father on VHS, and my mother used to watch it on my birthday every year. I didn't even know it existed. It's been this onslaught of media for me to decide what is mine, what do I keep as personal and interpersonal, and what can I share that can inspire people to support their children. I had such a beautiful childhood, and I want other people to have that. I wanted to invite people inside my doll house. It's an introduction for all the people who don't know me. Now they will, and it feels a little daunting, but art has always served me by bringing me out of my comfort zone. My art taught me to accept myself before the world could.

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© Martine Gutierrez, *Valenstein (film stills)*, 2004. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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V: In a lot of your work you talk about the importance of control, of total authorship and possession of your image. At the same time, there also seems to be this intense vulnerability, especially here where you talk about your childhood and your beginnings. How do you employ control and vulnerability together when you're crafting your work?

MG: Control came from feeling like I wasn't seen. I also think of seeing my image, an image of myself that other people take, whether it was the school yearbook or modeling when I moved to New York, that was my first job here. I always had such a strong opinion about what needed to be different–"This could be better this way, I should not be wearing that. I would never wear that. This isn't me." I think most people, whether they're trans or not, have this idea of self-image when you feel the world doesn't see you how you see yourself. It makes you go inside yourself, whether you become a loner, an incel, or a cosplayer, a performance artist [laughs], you're looking for an avenue in which people recognize you, you feel recognized. Often that means finding community, finding people who are like-minded, and whether they share this struggle or experience, or sometimes it's as simple as they also believe in mermaids.

V: You mentioned the show is a big share–why is that, and why did you want to share that way now?

MG: I was always going to make this show. I'm a huge fan of Mom. I'm obsessed with Mom. She really has been my lifelong cheerleader, number one fan since day one. She's the reason this archive exists. She saved everything I made her. She's a collector, like Ariel. I have the task of deciding what it is we keep and what it is we let go of in general. I knew this would be something that would happen after she passed–I was gonna have to endeavor this, it would be cathartic, and it would be celebrating her. Then my father passed away before Christmas this past year, and I didn't want to wait, I wanted her to be there for this. I wanted to collaborate with her, and I wanted to feel it. With death, we have to contemplate our mortality, and everyone grieves so differently. It has offered me perspective about my apprehension of things I put on the back burner in my personal life, thinking I have all the time in the world, and that I'm gonna be forever young.

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© Martine Gutierrez, *Under the Sea*, 2026, from the series Mother of Dolls. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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V: How was the show collaborative with your mom?

MG: I have to go to her house constantly, and there's images that are from our home. Her refrigerator was my first gallery show, and I photographed that. It's been hanging as a proof [in the museum], and it's a big crowd pleaser for moms. There's other images of my nursery, costume box, visual landmarks for us and drawings I made for her. She's present everywhere, and yet physically, it's so funny, she's so shy, and she doesn't want to be on camera, but she's coming to the opening in Amsterdam. I'm so excited to see her light up, and hear her memories, and for her to share them with other people. She was always my audience. She loved being that support, being kind of unseen. I've tried to make the show in a way that still gives her all that privacy. It's shifted my work too, because I feel like I'm known for self-portraits, and I would say there's still self-portraits in the show, but I physically am not in many of them.

V: What were some other ways the show affected how you look at your own work?

MG: Whatever I make, I'm sick of it by the time the world sees it. My obsession, my limerence, passes and then it has a life of its own. I only understand the thread once I look back. Oh, you're unwell. Oh, you're really over sharing today. And it's easier to do when I'm not there. I'm much more comfortable with photography over performance because you don't have to be there. I don't know if it's more honest, but it feels like less of a performance, even though it maybe it's more of one. Because I don't have to feel the projection of someone else. It's just me and the eye of the camera. What makes that different than being an ingénue, trying to dig up an authentic emotion or ask? I'm much less self-conscious because it's just me in a room with my dolls.

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© Martine Gutierrez, *Nursery*, 2026, from the series Still Life. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

V: What did you see in work you made as a child that's in conversation with work you make now?

MG: There's the same narcissism [laughs]. Martine, Martine, Martine, pages and pages of what Martine did today and tomorrow. And the mermaid. I still am obsessed with mermaids. I didn't even know I was obsessed with The Little Mermaid. I've never known a world without it because the film came out the same year I was born. Ariel is such a companion, and she's also such a narcissist. She just wants more. The longing. I identified with that feeling of being an outsider. I was always a foreigner because Mom and I moved around so much. That's why I really do feel like a citizen of the world. In a way, that's part of the identity crisis, where do I belong. I'm definitely a consumer, which makes me an American, like I love bottled water. I had to do that when we lived in Latin America. There's just these funny little perspectives, and I guess that's what happens when you are at a distance.

V: You've talked about identity as performance–are there aspects of identity you're performing in these new works that are influenced by your experience as a young person?

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MG: There are definitely archetypes, which you could argue was brain rot from Disney. I was so Disney-pilled. There was no getting away from the princess, but then you get to choose what princess you are, and that has everything to do with physicality, right? I wouldn't say there's a princess that's an anarchist, but the girls that push back, the princesses that have "a mind of their own," those were always the girls I was excited about–Mulan, Jasmine, Pocahontas. I guess they all have black hair and brown eyes, that's also part of it. But the lineage of fairy tales is a better way to talk about it. Writers like Hans Christian Andersen–I'm a huge fan of "The Ugly Duckling." I think that's partly why I'm interesting–I had to manifest the swan. She wasn't going to have it on her own, I had to show people I was one. To this day, when I meet people and they tell me I'm beautiful, I have to remember to say thank you. I don't handle it well. It becomes really awkward. I'm somehow triggered. I trigger myself. I sit down with so many dolls, friends who have gone through the same experiences I have–we have to be mirrors for each other to be like, girl, you are calm, you are so powerful and so smart and stunning and embodied. It's so crazy that we can recognize that in other people, but to recognize that in ourselves is such a challenge. That's why mermaids gotta stick together.

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© Martine Gutierrez, *Goldfish*, 2026. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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V: You often talk about the nature of self-invention in your work, and in this show I noticed it in relation to toys as avatars. I wondered, what doesn't become a toy in crafting identity as we age: beauty products, clothes, everything is an object that lets us play out some kind of fantasy or identity. Do you see the concept of the toy as avatar extended throughout your life as a way to continue building narratives for yourself?

MG: I think it's the same as searching for some semblance of physicality that is me. It's as simple as long dark hair, or a personality trait, or the region of ancestry. A lot of these toys belonged to members of my family. I've inherited dolls from my mother, and she from her mother, and her mother. I'm a steward. I think part of that comes from really not looking like my mother. I mean, really not looking like either of my parents. I'm this Amazon, I'm taller than both of them. My mother has bright blue eyes, and was blonde as a child. I am an only child from her, but I have step-siblings with different mothers and we look more alike than our parents. Growing up, people used to think my sister was my mom, that I had one of those hot teen mothers. She's 16 years older than me and would come to pick me up after school, nose piercing, dyed hair, different colors, belly button ring. Very alternative. There was a boyfriend on a motorcycle at one point, of course, then I had to have a boyfriend on a motorcycle. She was a leading punk force, also an artist, a painter. My mom was an art historian and an architect. My dad worked in construction, and they used to build stuff together. Life is what you make it feel like, that's a big takeaway. I've also been listening to the Go-Go's a lot–that one song, "Beautiful,"–there's the second verse, "My life is really quite simple / My life is just what I make it / I think you think I'm seeing / Only things I want to see / The truth is that I'm being / Who I wanna be." It really is that.

V: Was this self-invention something explored more in this show than your past work?

MG: *Indigenous Woman* was for dad, and *Wunderkind* is for mom. Especially as *Indigenous Woman* took off, she was like, where am I, what about everything that I've done? Mom, you're here too. My dad just couldn't handle how fabulous I was. I think somehow my daddy issues are part of why I felt like sharing in that way, being like I'm an art star, let me convince you, and it was to convince him. My sister told me that he had a copy of the magazine, and he would show his friends and was so proud but he wouldn't tell me. After he passed, there's so much I've had to resolve on my own. Psychologically, anyone who has beef with their parents, it's about being at peace with whatever baggage or burden you feel you gotta carry around. My dad gave me my first video camera. He loved the new thing–the new stereo system, the new camera, the new car, very machismo. Mom was like, what do you want to do? You want to take a dance class? I'll drive you there. You want to be in the school band? What instrument are we getting? Whatever after school program, she found a way to put me in a carpool if she couldn't do it, she made it happen. I think that's why we moved: she understood that I was bigger than our little town, and she took me around the world. I think that's also

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why she left her little town in upstate New York, a middle child, the only girl. She went to school in Paris. She saved up money babysitting, bought the Vogue patterns, and sewed her own clothes, and I got the benefits of all of that.

Keep an open mind–people can live in a third space, which is childhood. Self-image is something we all contended with before we were reading this article, before we were going to work, before we decided that's the box we're in now. I'm usually so indirect–I love misdirection. It's part of my magic trick, it's how magic works. But this show is so not that, it's so direct, it's so open. It's causing me to feel like it's new territory. Which is why I guess why you do it.



© Martine Gutierrez, *The Search for True Beauty* (film stills), 1999. Courtesy Huis Marseille.

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INEZ & VINOODH
Styling
XENIA MAY SETTEL



Artists are born, not made, they say, and Martine Gutierrez is a prime example. Her survey show in Amsterdam this summer features video art she shot when she was eight. Made a centennial Guggenheim Fellow last year, and with her artist's magazine in MoMA's collection, the New York-based Martine, at 36, is entering her third act.

MARTINE

Interview
MICHAEL BULLOCK

Michael Bullock: I learned a new word reading about you: transdisciplinary.
Martine Gutierrez: What'd you call me?

MB: Did you coin it?
MG: Someone wanted to call me – what's the one that's very popular right now?

MB: Multihyphenate.
MG: Yes. I said, "No thanks. Let's not use that one."

MB: You're one of the centennial group of Guggenheim Fellows, the cohort of writers, scholars, scientists and artists appointed every April. I am glad that they continue to exist.
MG: Yes. I had just applied for a residency that I didn't get, and I was with Miranda July in LA. She urged me to apply for this, though she said you might not get it the first time, and that she was applying but in a different category, fiction. So I said OK. And we both got it!

MB: Amazing. On its website it says it gives you time and freedom. How has the year gone?
MG: Well, it also allowed me to afford a gorgeous studio in Chelsea, in that big building with all the artist studios. I love it; there's a huge freight elevator and there's always someone around.

MB: The right studio is a type of freedom, and you need it considering how many shows you have coming up this year.
MG: Actually, I've dedicated myself to a show that is happening in Huis Marseille, in Amsterdam, this summer. I'm having a full survey of my work that shares the genesis of my journey as an artist, including many works that my mother has saved since I was born.

On page 226, Martine is wearing a black silk crepe-de-chine shirt by GUCCI with black denim jeans by A.P.C. and a vintage gold Superette necklace from New York Vintage. The felt hat by LAURENCE BOSSION is in the shade chocolat. Délicieuse!

MB: Really? How did that come about?
MG: Nanda van den Berg, the director, found me on Instagram years ago. She put me in a group show, *Infinite Identities: Photography in the Age of Sharing*. She gave each artist a room. Then it was exhibited the year that Covid happened, so no one really saw the show. But Nanda was like, "When you can travel you have to come here." So I did, in April 2024, and it turned out to be like a surprise site visit, because she offered me a solo show.

MB: So has it been strange going through the archive?
MG: Well, what I realised looking through the archive is that I'm obsessed with love.

MB: How so?
MG: There's all this work for Valentine's Day – cards that I made for my mother, drawings. And I found a film that I made as a Valentine's Day gift for a school friend I was in love with. Insane. For context, I was making movies all the time. I'm showing the first one in the show – it's 20 minutes long – along with the Valentine's Day one and several others.

MB: What kind of movies? Narrative?
MG: This first one is before I knew how to use any kind of software; it's all filmed sequentially in camera. And there's a lot of narration! You can tell I'm just standing behind the camera talking, because you can hear me lose track of my thoughts, and you can hear the wind. But the intention is so serious. I forced my babysitter into the ingenue role – I'm like, 'Do your job; you're here for me, aren't you?'

MB: What did you make it on?
MG: The family's Super VHS. The Valentine's Day film is different because it's on MiniDV, which was mine. And you can tell I am now editing – it was an iMac computer in that era, 2004. Every filter you can imagine is over the thing, and I'm, like, lip-syncing to a song on the kitchen floor thinking I'm sexy, but with no idea what that is! I don't even think I understood what drag was. *RuPaul's Drag Race* hadn't happened yet; that didn't start until college.

MB: I never saw it.
MG: The first season was incredible. I remember seeing season one and thinking: This show is amazing. All the early seasons are incredible. People were

honing in on a skill set and interfacing that with a vision of this woman to bring to life. And also, the structure of the show was just solid, because it was taken from *America's Next Top Model*. TV was definitely my education.

"Miranda July urged me to apply for a Guggenheim Fellowship. And we both got it!"

MB: What was your social life like when you were growing up?
MG: I was not popular, but I had very intense one-on-one friendships that were in many ways romantic friendships, some of which still exist to this day. But it really felt like a risk to let someone into my world.

MB: Did making these films feel like an escape? Were you only comfortable inhabiting spaces you created for yourself?
MG: Completely. There were no roles for me. In school plays and musicals they never knew what to do with me. They'd always cast me as an animal. In my freshman year at high school, I auditioned for Jack in *Into the Woods*, and they made me the cow that dies.

MB: I see why you became your own muse. Although today you seem to be in disguise.
MG: I am! I love a white jean – winter white. But what I look like is something that I am grappling with constantly. That's partly because when I was growing up it was always questioned by other people. For some reason, I'm confusing.

MB: That's brutal.
MG: It's very alienating. You have to make core decisions; you couldn't be transdisciplinary. But we didn't have a lot of the language that exists now. It wasn't in the zeitgeist.

MB: You graduated in printmaking from Rhode Island School of Design in 2012, at a moment when identity politics became unavoidable in mainstream culture. It must have been exciting to be making images that have contributed to that conversation. There seems to be a strong demand for your voice.
MG: Well, art is culture. And the artist is no longer just an artist. You simultaneously have to be out in the world talking about what you do; you have to manage a brand. If you don't, you get overlooked.

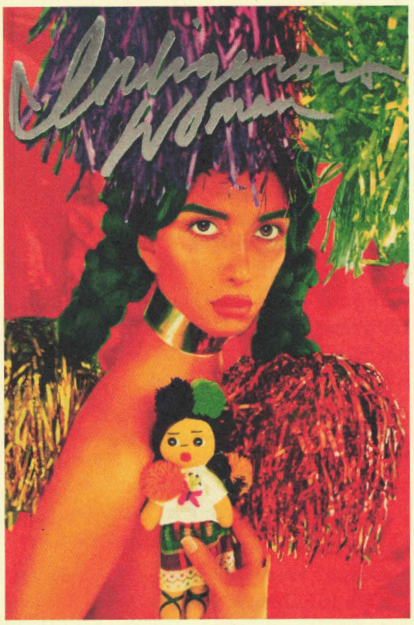
MB: Can I buy Martine Gutierrez merch?
MG: Do you wanna buy merch?

MB: Yes!
MG: And that's the problem: now I have to make it. But every year is somehow bigger. Every year I think I'm gonna take a break. And then somehow my venue is bigger.

MB: Well, today it was announced that you've been selected to present your work in the Whitney Biennial, and you have work in an upcoming show at MoMA, *Taking Back Our Space*, which is inspired by Marianne Wex's 1970s study of how different genders occupy space. It's an amazing body of work.
MG: MoMA didn't buy Wex's series originally but has since. And they're doing a show now that pays homage to it, pulling contemporary artists who are in a dialogue with her. It is really cool because they are showing select works from *Indigenous Woman* acquired for the collection.

MB: Is this the first work that MoMA has of yours?
MG: They gave me this little moment. They acquired several works in the summer of 2022: an autographed copy of *Indigenous Woman* as well as three photographs. It is these that will be part of *Taking Back Our Space*. They showed them before, in 2024 – by the elevator. And I felt kind of disappointed by that.

MB: Well, it's a good placement, because everyone's going to see it. ▸



▸ MAGAZINE
The model, photographer, stylist and editor-in-chief of the 2018 publication *Indigenous Woman* is Martine Gutierrez. A collection of images from the magazine were acquired by MoMA in 2022.



MG: People were really excited, and everyone saw it. Obviously, I'm gagged; I am in disbelief.

MB: This is from *Indigenous Woman*, yes? How did that start?
MG: It came out in 2018, but I started it about four years earlier, when I was in my first studio at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Bushwick. In a way, it began similarly to the billboards and fake products I was making at the time, like my photo performance *Supremacy*. I shot every image myself. I felt like a chameleon, moving through all these different photographic styles. I was borrowing from the fashion photography I grew up looking at. That was part of me coming into my own, trying to understand my identity as a photographer. There's something in it that feels akin to the *Anti-Icon* series.

MB: That's the images that were on bus shelters around New York?
MG: Yes, Boston and Chicago as well – a public art commission to run in bus shelters. I didn't tell them I was shooting nudes for them. And they said no. Absolutely no. So I shrouded them in fabric, but you could see the silhouette, which honestly made them sexier. To me, a nude body is just like a classical reference that isn't erotic. And for some reason, once you start imagining what's there, it's like...

"For one film, I forced my babysitter into the ingenue role – I'm like, 'You're here for me, aren't you?'"

MB: Seduction needs some mystery.
MG: Exactly. Anyway, I wanted to be on the cover of a magazine. This was the era of representation in bold – you know, where representation matters. And there were landmarks. Hari Nef, Caitlyn Jenner – that was huge.

MB: And how did it make you feel?
MG: I think of it as asking, "Can I be defined this way?" Could I be defined as either of those words, *indigenous* or *woman*? Although lately I'm in an identity burnout, where I'm just like: We don't need to define anything for anyone any more. Let's just look at what we have in common.

MB: I agree. That said, I'm curious about your own relationship to ancestry.
MG: The way I grew up was very much as an American, but I do think we define ourselves by our ancestry and who our parents are. It has everything to do with who we are, whether we like it or not. And not just what ethnicity your parents are but also where you grow up. Because if you are an indigenous person among indigenous people, then you're accepted, you know, but if you have an indigenous identity in a suburban American town, then you're considered a real outsider. And my identity changed a lot depending on where we lived.

MB: You mean whether it was Oakland, California, or Vermont?
MG: That, but also my parents separated, and my mom and I were on a European getaway for a few years. One year we went to England, Ireland for my 16th birthday, and Wales. I was in Verona for my 17th, and I spent my 18th birthday in Turkey, with belly dancers. And when we travelled everyone always thought I was from where we were. When we were in Spain everyone thought I was Spanish. And when we were in Turkey everyone thought I was Turkish. I am permanently a foreigner.

MB: So you're never fully a part of anything, and you're a part of many different things. That seems like a pretty good position for an artist.
MG: Yeah. It's very buffet. I'll text you the menu. ◆

Hair: Jawara at Art Partner. Make-up: Francelle Daly at Bryant Artists. Manicure: Sonya Meesh at Forward Artists. Lighting: Jodokus Driessen. Digital operation: Brian Anderson. Photographic assistance: Pat Roxas. Styling assistance: Natalya Clarke, Elizabeth Vianale. Hair assistance: Yeye Egunjobi, Marvin Tarver. Make-up assistance: Madrona Redhawk. Post-production: StereoHorse. Production: VLM Productions. Special thanks to Marc Kroop.

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CULTURED

Artist Martine Gutierrez on Staging the Most Provocative Performance of Her Career

In the most meta of interviews, Gutierrez quizzes herself about the transgressive Paris Photo performance she recreated in a show this spring at Ryan Lee Gallery.

Martine Gutierrez | April 7, 2026



Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 417, "Look strait into the camera, no emotion," 2026.

Martine Gutierrez is an enigma, a shape-shifting artist. Her recent show "Lottery" at Ryan Lee Gallery in Manhattan chronicles a performance she staged at Paris Photo just last year, where attendees were asked to "dom" Gutierrez by telling her what to do. The photos that resulted were displayed alongside a video installation recreating a waiting line. I met up with Gutierrez a few weeks ago to see the stunning show afterward. She created a meta conversation where she acts as both the interviewer and the interviewed, drawing on elements and inspiration from our talk. Below is the text she created.

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"Martine Gutierrez: Lottery," installed at Ryan Lee Gallery.

I love the "waiting line" you recreated in the gallery. Talk to me about that choice and why it felt important to include alongside the photos.

The red blockades are actually the same ones used in Paris—they are very expensive. I hope it felt like you were VIP. I like the gallery to feel active, like arriving at an airport.

The entire exhibit feels a bit like a tease. Even as we wait for the video to finish counting down, you show us your arrival at the Grand Palais, but do we ever get to see Lottery take place?

It's true, I am edging New York. They need it—New Yorkers are so spoiled. At the opening I think it was expected that Lottery would happen again. It didn't—blue balls for sure.

Yes, and you only exhibited 17 photographs, how many in total were taken during the performance? Was there a reason you chose not to share them all?

755 photographs were taken in Paris. I only chose to show the images that were

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compelling. What's left out of the time line a viewer has to imagine.

How did you come up with this concept—the performance itself? What did you want to convey?

I was thinking about what it means to be a muse—what a muse is to others, but also what it requires.



Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 672, "Try to slowly take off your bra," 2026.

Were you thinking of specific artists or specific dialogues performance has had?

Yes, and no. Marina [Abramović] would say, performance exists in the memory of those who witness it. I like that. For Yoko [Ono] it's a practice to engage people, and spark collective responsibility, which is very Lottery. Regina [José Galindo] might conjure violence or spark activism, more like Faith [Ringgold]. Needless to say, the body is central material. Who the individual is contextualizes how an audience interacts with them.

So you are mostly looking at artists who are women, performing in the '60s and '70s?

Yes, I'm in that camp, but it's also up for debate because of my background. And it feels

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a bit like who cares, we've seen it all before—it's hard for anyone to make anything not in direct reference, because everything echoes something else.

But that's part of the conversation, right?

Yes! Performance is always in conversation. It thrives on the personal and the present moment—which made Lottery into a wild card. There were stakes to be raised. Initially I was invited to the Grand Palais to speak on what I do… I muse.

True. You are a well-known muse, and mused on by many. Some might say you're an ingénue, especially for a film maker—Julio Torres continues to put you in everything he directs.

I love Julio [Torres], he has taught me so much about colors. I feel I know him intimately, but the challenge is letting him know me. A muse is unknowable in a way, it can be anything.



"Martine Gutierrez: Lottery," installed at Ryan Lee Gallery.

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You are a bit of an enigma. It's hard to predict what you'll choose to do next. Why choose the camera as your tool?

Believe it or not, I have an aversion to my picture being taken. I'm always trying to escape a camera, unless it's mine.

Really? But isn't being on camera your job? You are known for taking self-portraits.

Yes, but when I take pictures of myself it's different—I have control. It's the only time I'm free in front of the camera. When it's my camera, my image, it's no longer about what the world projects onto me. I get to choose.

How are the images in Lottery different from images you would usually take of yourself?

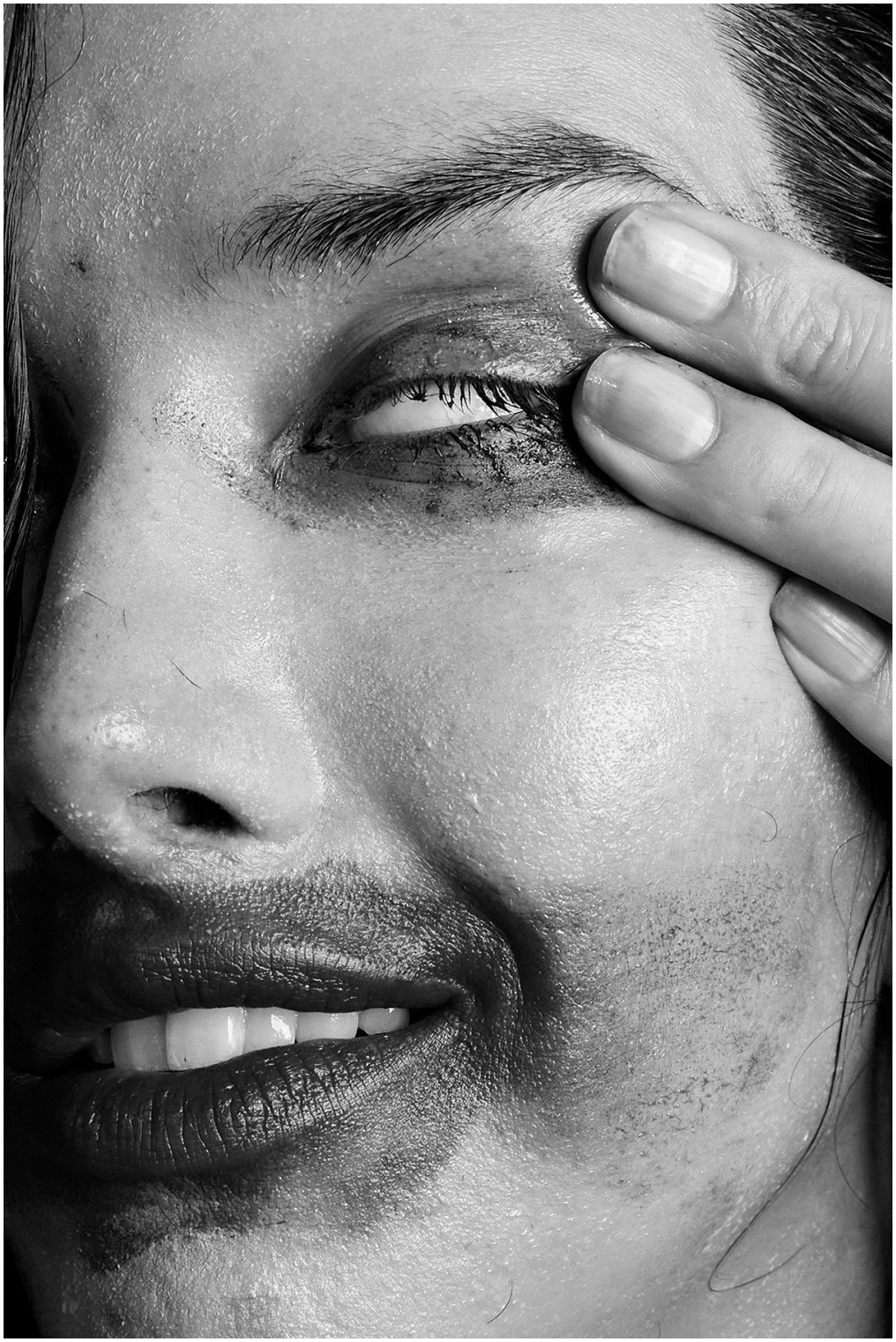
For starters, I'm not alone. I muse for whoever is behind the camera. Every image is a new request, made by someone in the audience playing the Lottery. I state that I'll do anything they ask if they agree to take the picture.

Was the audience at the Grand Palais all strangers? Did that make it easier to give up control?

There were a few familiar faces, which was reassuring—but my invitation was part of Paris Photo's lecture series, so the audience was very international. Foreign. The further Lottery went, the more demanding it became—each round the stakes raised and got more chaotic.

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Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 545, "Lipstick on the eyes," 2026.

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Other than documentation, what did the camera become during the performance?

The camera became a witness, it made visible the public's continence. Giving power to a stranger puts them face to face with a moral temptation. It's a test. How far will you go? When I look at the photographs they reveal more about the person behind the camera.

How far did you go?

Lottery played as far as it could before Paris Photo pulled the plug.

They stopped the performances. Did it stop because something bad happened? How long did it take?

About 60 minutes in Lottery was interrupted. I think there was concern for my well being.

It only took an hour to escalate that much? Why?

Um, because I didn't bring the rope.

Rope!? Can you describe what was happening when you were interrupted?

There is a photo of it. I chose to show it—the last photograph taken before security stepped in.

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Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 755, "Surrender," 2026.

Yes, I heard security whisked you away. What had been asked of you just before?

By this point, I had been asked to remove almost all my clothes, and had been tied up on the floor, with my hands behind my back. But I also think collectively the room felt the echo—foreshadowing what would come next.

Of chores, the performance is already in reference to collective responsibility. I think of Yoko's Cut Piece. I also think of [Harvey] Weinstein's victims, and the images of sex trafficking currently in the news cycle. We are inundated with images of violence against women, in cinema, in fashion, in pornography, etc.

Absolutely. And we've been overexposed to images so frequently that they no longer shock us.

How had you originally planned for the performance to end?

I didn't get that far. My concern was, how do we play Lottery? How do I get strangers to play with me? Because of cancel culture or whatever, I had hoped we learned something from the past. Instead it all went the same way.

It's so discouraging. Maybe the audience was re-enacting what felt expected, because

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they knew the references. This was after all, an audience of art lovers—these were your fans! How did you feel? It must have been very difficult.

That's a secret I'll never tell.



Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 022, "Can you spank yourself," 2026.

Well then, what was the easiest request made by a Lottery photographer?

To shave off my eyebrow.

Shave off your eyebrow?! Where did the razor come from?!

My purse. Sometimes I have to shave my face! And he knew that—we had history. The request did not come from a stranger.

How did you know him?

I used to be in love with him. It was years and years ago. It's all very Marina [Abramović].

Very Marina [Abramović]—the echo continues! Did he know you were in love with him?

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If he didn't, he does now.

Talk to me about the other citations you're drawing on in this body of work?

You know the story of the magic lamp? Well, I'm the genie of the camera, and your every wish is my command. But once my camera is in the possession of another, all your power over me is gone.

Why go through all this? Are you searching for something specific?

A diamond in the rough.

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Martine Gutierrez, *Lottery*, image 626, "Toys'R'Us," 2026.

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I thought you were going to say S&M.

Well, yes! And the performance continues to draw criticisms for its depictions of bondage, spanking and sex—but you know what? You can't exercise submission without domination. I'm not a victim. People don't realize the submissive has just as much power, without them there is nothing to be dominated.

I see, it's a contract of consent. What do you think Lottery says about power?

Everything! Everything is about power and our proximity to it.

You spoke a little when we first met about different ways femininity traffics and filters in different countries. How much do you think beauty played a role in the audience interacting with you?

When I muse on femininity it transforms the genie—I am made into a wonder woman. And like all women, especially the most beautiful, we are made targets of violence—by men but also by other women, who ridicule beauty for what it elicits.

Martine, you are Wonder Woman. But for the sake of the argument, I'll agree the construction of femininity is something that's applied, what then is underneath? Who is Martine? Are you the genie or the muse?

Both. The muse is the genie—the genie is the muse, she is your ingénue. She is an idea, a projection made true through a wish.

I see. Before the performance was put to an end, do you think it was your beauty the audience was after––or the power you have to wield beauty?

Beauty makes an almighty prisoner, it puts the genie in the lamp—so to speak. During Lottery, I was treated the way society has always treated women, as an object. The experience was the closest I may ever come to truly understanding womanhood.

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Interview

Milk, Razors, Scissors: Martine Gutierrez on Her Paris Photo Meltdown

By Mel Ottenberg
Photographed by Martine Gutierrez
February 25, 2026



Last November, the artist, actress, and photographer Martine Gutierrez was invited to give a lecture at the esteemed Paris Photo fair. No stranger to spectacle, Gutierrez opted instead for a performance which quickly turned into a scandal. The premise of *LOTTERY* was simple: the subject, Gutierrez, gifted each audience member an envelope. Those with winning tickets were then invited to take control of her camera, directing the artist to pose in whichever way they saw fit. Naturally, the stunts grew more and more promiscuous and, after 60 minutes of snapshots that left the artist milk-soaked, semi-eyebrow-less, and semi-nude, fair security draped a trench coat over her bare shoulders and escorted her off the stage. So how is she feeling about the work ahead of her forthcoming show at Ryan Lee Gallery? A little turned on, and perhaps a little

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emotionally burdened by the 700 images the audience captured. As she told Interview's Mel Ottenberg last week over eggs, it was all about the thrill of losing control.

MEL OTTENBERG: It's so cold, Martine. What are you wearing today?

MARTINE GUTIERREZ: Ripped Margiela, ripped Versace, ripped—oh, we're on the record.

OTTENBERG: Yeah. This sweater is insane.

GUTIERREZ: For our readers, you're just grabbing your stomach. I don't mind.

OTTENBERG: This is 50.

GUTIERREZ: And it looks great.

OTTENBERG: The problem is that I haven't been working out.

GUTIERREZ: I saw a picture of you younger recently and I actually think you're sexier now.

OTTENBERG: Thanks, babe. Appreciate that. You have a beautiful foot.

GUTIERREZ: Where'd you see that?

OTTENBERG: In the video that you sent me from the show in Paris. I think you have a sandal on. Am I wrong?

GUTIERREZ: It is quite, yeah, open. I need an open toe.

OTTENBERG: Do you think that women will catch onto the way that you're dressing?

GUTIERREZ: Old Hollywood? I personally just think it's what works for me.

OTTENBERG: Yes. It's daytime old Hollywood too.

GUTIERREZ: Right. It's a little Hasidic.

OTTENBERG: It's like Hasidic femme fatale. So Martine, my fellow RISD graduate, when does your show open?

GUTIERREZ: What have you heard? You asked for pictures.

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OTTENBERG: You showed me pictures. Can you explain the story? We want the monologue.

GUTIERREZ: But I want to know what you've heard because maybe there's some records I need to set straight.

OTTENBERG: I've only heard—hey, are you having lunch? We should eat something.

GUTIERREZ: Yes. I think I'm going to do the breakfast egg thing.

OTTENBERG: The omelet? Do you want to try my order? I think it's really a good idea.

GUTIERREZ: Yes. Okay.



SPEAKER 3: You guys are still deciding, right?

OTTENBERG: No, I know. She's going to have an omelet with onions, peppers, and mushrooms. An English muffin, extra crispy, and a side of bacon and a side of avocado. No potatoes. And I am going to have…

GUTIERREZ: Figure it out.

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OTTENBERG: I'm trying to think. I'm going to have…

GUTIERREZ: A stroke.

OTTENBERG: I'm going to have a literal stroke. I guess I'll have the same thing because I can't think of what I'm going to have. So we'll just have two. Okay. So what I know about the show is that you did this thing at Paris Photo where the audience was involved and it was great, but then it got out of control and you had to be pulled away by security.

GUTIERREZ: Do you like that movie *Crash*?

OTTENBERG: I do. I just rewatched it. I have the DVD.

GUTIERREZ: So you have a thing for collisions—because that's what it felt like. I was turned on. I was turned on by how out of control it was. I tend to find myself in chaotic spaces like at the club. It felt like being young at the club again and the black swan of it all, head rolling back, making out with someone that you don't really want and then you're like, "Oh, I don't want this." When you talked about security, it was that feeling. I was so—I don't even know how to tell this story.

OTTENBERG: What was the premise of the performance?

GUTIERREZ: So Paris Photo is the biggest, most prestigious art fair for photography. And my gallery, Fraenkel Gallery, they always get this big gorgeous booth in the middle of the fair. This year they arranged for me to have a lecture and my lectures tend to be these performative, wild-card events. And so I made it very vague. "This is a once in a lifetime experience called *Lottery*." I think it weeded out anyone that was not game and opened up the floor for some real freaks and fans. Some friends came, but it wouldn't have happened the way it did if it happened in New York.

OTTENBERG: So the lottery was what?

GUTIERREZ: It was essentially a situation of me playing dominatrix and asserting this authority that I have in my practice onto the audience. Everyone who came in the door was given an envelope. I watch a lot of TV, so I think there was an amalgamation of Willy Wonka, *Oprah*, and *America's Next Top Model* where I'm your host, like, "You get a car, you get a car, you get a car." I was like, "Open your envelopes, in your envelope is a number. If that number is called, you will come down to the front and we are going to collaborate on a portrait of me."

OTTENBERG: Okay.

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GUTIERREZ: I set it up like, "Tonight we discover the next great photographer from Paris Photo." This kind of folk prestige thing that I think everyone knew was satirical. And I had this kind of flirty, funny mistress vibe. I was trying to make the audience feel at ease about their surrender to me since they didn't know what they were walking into. It was in an auditorium upstairs above the art fair. I just had my coat, my purse, and a glass of milk, and there was a giant LED wall behind me that was connected to my camera and a remote control. The camera was on a tripod, so anyone that came down that was a winner of the lottery was given the remote. And anything they wanted me to do, I promised I would do it. Then they chose when to hit that remote. I was thinking about access and control. I felt like I had hit a wall and that this idea of control was stifling creativity or some kind of advance into the next chapter of how I make stuff.

OTTENBERG: Right.

GUTIERREZ: I don't want to be beholden to a three sentence description of what my practice is for the rest of my life. I want to get out of my comfort zone. For example, I've only really acted in things with friends, where I know I have control because I'm either writing the role with them or I know them well enough that I can say, "I don't want to do that." But I feel like this performance was what every actor does, turned up to the max. You're asked to have trust in this other person who's behind the camera and they're asking you to do this thing and you have to kind of give it your all. And it's embarrassing and humiliating but I was so turned on by the humiliation.

OTTENBERG: Oh, wow.



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GUTIERREZ: I was like, "Oh, wow. It took me being a dom to make everyone else play the dom so I could be the sub."

OTTENBERG: Right.

GUTIERREZ: I was worried that it was going to be boring and that, because of who I am and the era that we're in, everyone was going to be afraid of the Me Too of it all, of being canceled.

OTTENBERG: What were they asking you to do?

GUTIERREZ: I thought it was going to give what we do with our friends. When we take pictures it's like, "Your neck doesn't look long enough." I thought, "You're a sexy animal on the farm," was going to be the worst of it. Although I did put scissors in my purse.

OTTENBERG: In case of a haircut?

GUTIERREZ: Yeah. In my mind, I was like, "The worst thing that could happen is bangs." I was willing to go full *Girl, Interrupted*.

OTTENBERG: I could see that. That could look great.

GUTIERREZ: It would look fierce. But then the first woman that came down said, "Spank yourself." And we did that for five minutes.

OTTENBERG: To get the shot?

GUTIERREZ: I just was like, "Girl, anything else you want to try?"

OTTENBERG: Wow. Okay. There's also a picture where you're lying down and your tits are out.

GUTIERREZ: Yeah. That was good. It was a lot of, like, "Can you take off your bra slowly?" And then someone had me do push-ups and then I got all sweaty and then they had me take my sweater off. Someone asked me to call my mom and tell her I was kidnapped.

OTTENBERG: Oh god. Did she pick up?

GUTIERREZ: Yes.

OTTENBERG: Your poor mother.

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GUTIERREZ: I know, but I did warn her. I said, "Mommy, I'm doing a performance. I just want you to know I'm in total control. Everything is fine. Whatever you hear or read or see, I'm safe." And she said, "Sweetie, just don't bring any guns to Paris."

OTTENBERG: You don't have a gun?

GUTIERREZ: I have guns. I'm not an idiot. I didn't bring any, but I did bring the scissors. I brought a razor. I brought lipstick.

OTTENBERG: Was the kidnapping picture good?

GUTIERREZ: I look really nervous. There are a few pictures where I'm really connecting with the camera through whoever's behind it, but for the most part, it does really feel like it's a fly on the wall or something. I've never been so unaware in front of a camera. There was too much to process.

OTTENBERG: How long did it last for before it got too rowdy?



GUTIERREZ: It lasted about 60 minutes, and then Paris Photo stepped in and said, "That's your last one." And then security took my coat, which is my mother's, that cream trench, and they put it over me. My tits are out and I'm missing an eyebrow, someone had me shave it off, and then there's makeup all over from the milk that someone had

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me pour on my head. It's also probably also all over my chest because someone had me go down on the floor and lick it off… I think that's one of the images in here. [She shows Mel her selects]

OTTENBERG: Oh, wow. That one's great.

GUTIERREZ: But it's interesting to see my composure go.

OTTENBERG: Sometimes you just want to create a different image, right? I think it's fun to be a sub sometimes.

GUTIERREZ: I hadn't really experienced it before. I loved it, but everyone was so worried.

OTTENBERG: The people?

GUTIERREZ: Yeah. The audience was very divided. A lot of people didn't like it. The curators kept being like, "I did not feel comfortable. Are you okay?" I just kind of sat in the office and didn't know what happened. There was a bit of PTSD, maybe.

OTTENBERG: Rough.

GUTIERREZ: I don't know. I really don't want to talk about my feelings. I feel like it's not relevant. I think it's much more interesting for a viewer to—

OTTENBERG: When you were sitting in the office, were you like, "Okay, at least I got these fucking pictures."

GUTIERREZ: Oh no, I didn't even want to have possession of them. I felt burdened by them. And even coming back to the States, I didn't travel back with the camera or any hard drive or anything. I just sat on the plane and was like, "Should I shave off the other eyebrow?"

OTTENBERG: Did you?

GUTIERREZ: No. It's drawn on. You can't really tell anymore. It was right before Christmas.

OTTENBERG: Do you have a favorite image from the series? And if so, what was the prompt?

GUTIERREZ: The last one. Because it feels like we were in the midst of something and

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then—

OTTENBERG: You were rudely interrupted.

GUTIERREZ: Yeah. But I didn't have any kind of stopping point. I didn't even think about how it would end. There was maybe no other way besides someone calling an ambulance or something. And then it makes me think of Marina [Abramović]—I think that's why my mom said don't bring a gun.

OTTENBERG: Right.

GUTIERREZ: I just thought we weren't there anymore. I was like, that couldn't happen. That was the seventies, it's all different. And yet it all went down the same way. What does that say about humanity?

OTTENBERG: Humanity is not looking so good right now. Who was hating on you? Were they, like, hating on you for who you are?

GUTIERREZ: Who am I? Gorgeous, talented.

OTTENBERG: Gorgeous, talented—how's your lunch?

GUTIERREZ: I love it. I'm just having trouble eating it because you keep talking to me.

OTTENBERG: I know. I love talking to you. So wait, how many pictures are you showing at your show?

GUTIERREZ: So at first I was going to do a flip book and show all of them, because you get the sense of her demise that way. I changed my mind.

OTTENBERG: You don't want to show all of them?

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GUTIERREZ: That's a lot of labor, and I also wanted to continue the cuckold, especially for New York, my favorite city. I don't want to give them everything. New Yorkers are too spoiled.

OTTENBERG: Yeah.

GUTIERREZ: So it's staying in the vault. I've decided they're going to see 16 images of 700 and something. And I'm going to show the last one, my favorite one, and I'm going to show something from the beginning, and then I've picked highlights in between, so you get the sense of how we got there.

OTTENBERG: Can you tell me about any particular people that issued prompts? Were they French?

GUTIERREZ: It was very global. There was something kind of UN about everything.

OTTENBERG: Okay.

GUTIERREZ: I know the first woman was from Mexico. There were a lot of French people.

OTTENBERG: Any fans?

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GUTIERREZ: Yeah. There was some trade. The men all wanted me to be sexy.

OTTENBERG: Right.

GUTIERREZ: Of course. That's that one where I'm on the ground. "Can you sing for me a little in French?"

OTTENBERG: Oh.

GUTIERREZ: So I tried to do that. I sing that song, "La Mer, do-do-do-do." You know the one about the sea?

OTTENBERG: No.

GUTIERREZ: I don't really either. I made up a lot of words. "Do-do-do-do-do-do."

OTTENBERG: Is it Françoise Hardy?

GUTIERREZ: Yeah. It's puss.

OTTENBERG: I was into the puss, Françoise vibes. She just died.

GUTIERREZ: Should I get bangs in her name?

OTTENBERG: I don't know. I think her hair was boring.

GUTIERREZ: I'm just looking for any excuse, someone tell me to do it.

OTTENBERG: If you had gotten bangs at that moment, during the performance, it would've been amazing, but bangs aren't as main character as you want them to be.

GUTIERREZ: They are very actress. You kind of have to have them if you're an actress. Any red carpet, it's like a gown with bangs.

OTTENBERG: Oh my god. You're right.

GUTIERREZ: Maybe I'm ready to star in a movie. I've only really acted in things where I have control because I'm either writing the role with friends or I know them enough that I can say, "I don't want to do that." But I do feel like this show was what every actor does, turned up to the max. You're asked to step in, you're asked to have trust in this person behind the camera, and they're asking you to give it your all.

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OTTENBERG: Yeah, yeah, yeah.



GUTIERREZ: Maybe it's time for a big director. But all my favorites are dead now.

OTTENBERG: You're like, "Antonioni, call me."

GUTIERREZ: From the grave. Or we're learning terrible stuff about them. They're Nazis. They're on the Epstein list.

OTTENBERG: I know if Woody Allen called tomorrow, I'd be like, "Unfortunately, no." Wait, is this show opening in Venice?

GUTIERREZ: No, it's opening here in New York. It's the last Thursday of the month.

OTTENBERG: I'm not here. I'm going to be working in London.

GUTIERREZ: Are you acting?

OTTENBERG: No. I'm styling Lily Allen's tour.

GUTIERREZ: She's gorgeous.

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OTTENBERG: Yeah, she's fabulous. I'm very excited to do it. Anyway, I won't be here, but I hope everybody comes.

GUTIERREZ: I just want a few close friends. And then I can cry, finally. Relinquish control and show vulnerability.

SPEAKER 3: Everything alright?

GUTIERREZ: Yeah, thank you.

OTTENBERG: I'm sorry this is so long, but it was just so fun to talk to you, Martine. Will you ever go by just one name?

GUTIERREZ: I think I should.

OTTENBERG: You should. You're very *Martine*.

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The New York Times

Whitney Biennial Names 56 Artists to Unwind These 'Weird Times'

The 2026 exhibition focuses on how artists measure American influence and their relationship to a country whose role in the world is changing.

By Zachary Small | December 15, 2025



Left to right, Marcela Guerrero and Drew Sawyer, curators of the Whitney Biennial 2026, and some of the artists in the exhibition: Agosto Machado (standing); Kamrooz Aram (standing); Samia Halaby (seated), Jonathan González (standing), Precious Okoyomon (seated), Emilie Louise Gossiaux, who is blind. Marcus Maddox for The New York Times

There were beers in Honolulu and coffees in Vienna; lengthy drives across the southwestern United States and repeat visits to Los Angeles on a countrywide journey. Eventually, the airports to gain access to faraway cities like Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates, and São Paulo, Brazil, started blurring together.

After a year of constant traveling and more than 300 studio visits, the curators Marcela Guerrero and Drew Sawyer have assembled 56 individual artists and groups for the 2026 Whitney Biennial, a survey of American contemporary art scheduled to open on March 8.

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The exhibition — the 82nd biennial — will include a geographically diverse set of artists such as Gabriela Ruiz, born in Los Angeles; Kamrooz Aram, from Iran; Jasmin Sian, born in the Philippines; and Sung Tieu, originally from Vietnam. (You can find the full list of artists on the museum's website.)

"There will be new discoveries, even for art-world insiders," Sawyer said, noting that many of the artists have not frequently been shown in New York.

Perhaps the most recognizable name on the list is Julio Torres, the actor and comedian who previously wrote for "Saturday Night Live" and recently had a show called "Color Theories" at Performance Space New York. He is collaborating with the artist **Martine Gutierrez** on a new performance work.

The majority of artists are millennials; about 60 percent were born after 1980. Most have primary residences in New York or California, and nearly a third self-identify as queer

"What Marcela and Drew have put together doesn't try to simplify the strangeness of our times,"



Agosto Machado, "Ethyl (Altar)," 2024, a New York-born visual performing artist working in mixed-media, created an assemblage from jewelry, matchbooks, textiles and original artworks by Peter Hujar, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt and Uzi Parnes. Agosto Machado

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said Scott Rothkopf, the museum's director. "It allows visitors to encounter the world as artists are sensing it, structurally unstable and emotionally charged yet also full of possibility."
Guerrero said that the exhibition will help audiences see how artists are living and working today. "Expanding the notion of what American art is — or even what America is — was fun," she said, "and not typically part of what we do."

The curator explained that the biennial would explore themes including infrastructure and kinship to understand how artists connect with the world and sometimes reject it, questioning the role that the United States has in global affairs. She said that artists felt like they were living in "weird times," observing the shifting nature of American politics and the scale of recent environmental disasters like the Los Angeles wildfires.

Although the Whitney Biennial typically focuses on artists born and based in the United States, some of the most interesting additions to this year's exhibition come from artists whose lives have only been touched by American influence.



Mao Ishikawa, "Untitled," from the series "Akabanaa (Red Flowers)," 1975-77, taken in Okinawa where she photographed American soldiers. Mao Ishikawa, via POETIC SCAPE

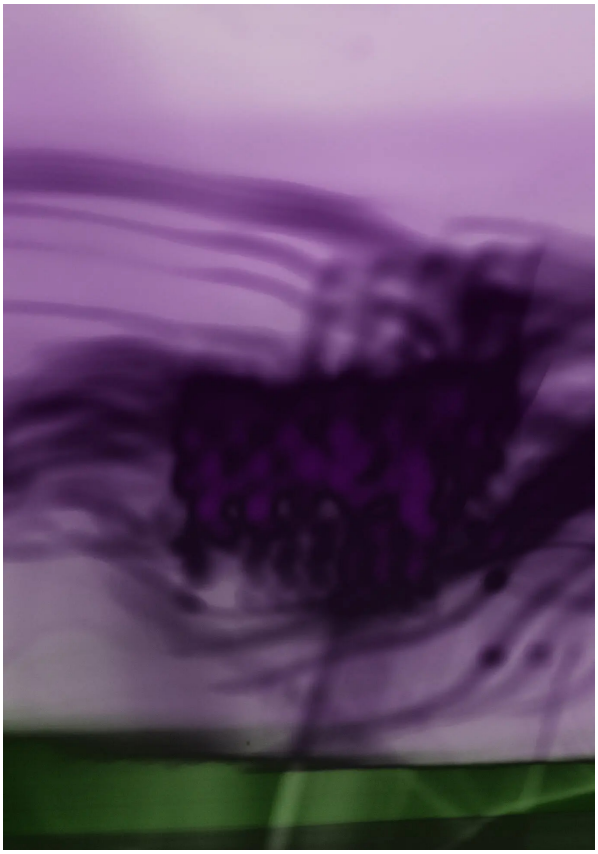
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The photographer Mao Ishikawa, 72, was born in Okinawa, Japan, when it was occupied by American troops, and she later documented the lives of Black soldiers stationed there in the 1970s, while also working as a bartender and photographing her female colleagues.

Aziz Hazara, 33, an artist from Afghanistan, created a continuing project called "Coming Home" about the presence of the American military in his country, shipping several tons of garbage from a former air base outside of Kabul to the United States. Because of the Trump administration's recent ban on travel to the United States by citizens of Afghanistan, it's unlikely that Hazara will attend the exhibition when it opens.

For decades, the Whitney Biennial has functioned as a cultural barometer, raising the profile of participating artists and sometimes provoking controversies that speak to larger tensions in American society. The last edition included the message "Free Palestine" in the blinking letters of a neon sculpture by an artist, surprising curators who nevertheless decided to keep the work on view. Earlier versions have spurred national conversations about racial sensitivity and the ethics of museum philanthropy.



Aziz Hazara, "Moon Sightings," 2024 (detail), from a series shot through night vision goggles, depicts a distorted landscape of his native Afghanistan. Aziz Hazara, via Experimenter Kolkata/Bombay

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In his catalog essay for the biennial, Sawyer noted that curators organizing the 2026 biennial encountered "a terrain of hesitation and wariness toward the institution" by artists concerned with the Whitney Museum's suspension in June of its Independent Study Program after students tried to stage performance art in support of the Palestinian cause. Administrators said the event would have violated the institution's community standards.

During an interview, Sawyer said that curators navigated these conversations with participating artists. And there are a few artists included in the Whitney Biennial with personal connections to Palestine, including Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, who collaborated on a multichannel video called "Until we became fire and fire us," which reflects on Palestinian erasure. Curators have also selected a series of 10 digital artworks by Samia Halaby, the 88-year-old abstractionist who had a major exhibition canceled at Indiana University in 2024 at a time when several institutions were canceling Palestinian artists.

"The show, my dealer tells me, is an important one," Halaby said in a phone interview. "The pieces are all from the late 1980s when I purchased my famous, little, sexy Amiga computer and started programming like a fiend who was lost in the world of numbers."

Sawyer observed that the New York art scene had overlooked Halaby, even as she maintained a TriBeCa art studio and expanded her reputation overseas.

"We are giving platforms to artists that we felt were making major contributions to the field," Sawyer said.



Kimowan Metchewais, "Untitled," from the series "Self-portraits," 1998. Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) and adhesive tape. National Museum of the American Indian

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Another artist included in the show is Kimowan Metchewais, from the Cree and Cold Lake First Nations, who died more than a decade ago, at 47 years old. His photography was highly influential among Native American artists, and a recent publication by the nonprofit Aperture Foundation raised his profile among curators. That book of photographs led Sawyer and Guerrero to the National Museum of the American Indian's storage room in Washington, where they were able to source a collection of Polaroids including self-portraits, landscapes and fragile paintings for the Whitney Biennial.

The oldest artist included is the 92-year-old painter Carmen de Monteflores, who, curators said, was one of the most surprising discoveries in their research. She is the mother of the conceptual artist Andrea Fraser, 60, who is also included in the exhibition.



The Biennial is a discovery moment for Carmen de Monteflores, 92, the mother of Andrea Fraser, who abandoned her art practice after facing rejections from museums and galleries. "Four Women," 1969, acrylic on canvas. Carmen de Monteflores; Photo by Philip Maisel

Guerrero said she received an email from Fraser saying, "'My mother is an artist. Here are two PDFs about her.'" She was surprised to find a trove of psychedelic artworks made in the 1960s of nude men and women. Over the last few years, Fraser, known for institutional critiques, which she performs as different personas, had started connecting her own practice with the rejection her mother had experienced as a young artist.

"My preoccupation with value probably goes back to my experiences in my mother's studio," Fraser said during an interview. "When I became a conceptual artist, I saw my mother making all these objects that nobody wanted, and she had to store for decades."

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Andrea Fraser, "Untitled (Object) IV," 2024, (detail), from a series of wax toddlers. Andrea Fraser, via Marian Goodman Gallery and Nagel Draxler Gallery; Photo by Rebecca Fanuele

By the 1970s, after facing rejections from museums and galleries, her mother abandoned her art practice. "That informed Andrea's relationship with the art world," Guerrero said.

But Fraser's confidence in her mother's painting grew, and she plans on exhibiting her own quintet of wax toddler sculptures to evoke her earliest memories inside her mother's art studio.

These images of kinship in the 2026 Whitney Biennial sometimes collide with the harsh realities of living in the "weird times" that curators are using as shorthand for political and economic disruption. The museum awarded another Biennial artist, the sculptor Kelly Akashi, $150,000 in fabrication costs to create a monument to victims of the Los Angeles wildfires. Akashi, 42, is recreating her chimney — the only part of her home in the Altadena neighborhood left after the fires — with glass bricks and mortar. Her artwork will be part of the museum's Hyundai Terrace Commission.

"When I remember that time, I remember all my neighbors' chimneys standing as markers to our homes and lives," Akashi said. "It's a really big honor to do this project because the museum is giving me and my whole community a platform to be seen."

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Forbes

Latin American Art And Fashion On View At Southampton Arts Center

Latin American art scholar Estrellita B. Brodsky has curated an exhibition called "Second Skin," showing 30 works of art from 1950 to know, highligting how fashion is a form of storytelling.

By Nadia Sayej | November 26, 2025



Felix Beaudry Fire Feet, 2024, Machine knit fabric; Bury me in his tits, 2020, Hand-tufted fabric.
Courtesy of the Artist and SITUATIONS, NYC

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Fashion and style are our 'second skin,' in a way. It's how we present ourselves to the world. But more than just peacocking, it's also how some of us camouflage ourselves, too.

One fashion-focused exhibition is now on view at the Southampton Arts Center, Second Skin, which runs until December 28. The curator, Latin American art scholar Estrellita B. Brodsky, has chosen over 30 artworks from 17 international artists showing how clothing, fashion and textiles are a powerful tool for identity and cultural differences. Artists like Joiri Minaya, Martine Gutierrez, Felix Beaudry, Sylvie Fleury, Raúl de Nieves, and artist duo, Antonio (Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos) from Puerto Rico, are on view.

"The field of fashion plays into our ideas of identity; cultural identity, gender identity, and also sometimes political activism," said Brodsky. "I thought it would be a good way of taking a more global look at those issues."

Felix Beaudry's "Fire Feet," made from machine knit fabric is a colorful piece on view. "He has worn them as part of a performance, his art is really about this idea of how you can't identify people's gendered ideals and the absurdity of clothing as markers of identity," said Brodsky.



Felix Beaudry Bury me in his tits, 2020 Hand-tufted fabric
Courtesy of the Artist and SITUATIONS, NYC

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We see a masculine-like yarn overcoat with oversized pink feet on view in the exhibition. "Felix uses humor and also likes to have this relationship with the idea of commercial industry of clothes making with a very personalized way of creating these formless figures; he uses humor and distortion to do that," she adds. "So, it's really these exaggerated muscular male physiques, but then becomes a parody of what the ideal of masculinity should be. So, he's exploring that kind of vulnerability and fluidity."

Other Latin American artists use clothing or fashion to focus on the theme of camouflage and protection. "They associate clothing as a form of armor or protection," said Brodsky. "But then you have somebody like Milagros de la Torre, who photographs these bulletproof t-shirts and clothing that look commonplace. She comes from Peru, where people use these clothes daily. And some artists like Joiri Minaya looks at how, through different patterns, the fashion industry can make their own sort of colonial practice that appropriates and exoticizes patterns. It erases the individuality of the cultures that they come from."



Joiri Minaya, Container #5, 2020, Archival pigment print
Courtesy of the artist

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Martine Gutierrez has several works in the exhibition, too. The prolific art star has always had a footing in the fashion world, and we see that in several works in this exhibition, including some works from her "Neo-Indeo" series, the fashion editorials featured in the artist's magazine *Indigenous Woman* from 2018.

"She created an artist magazine that is a play on fashion magazines called Indigenous Woman, which she published in 2018, and she identifies herself as a model," said Brodsky. "She questions how we envision beauty, gender and ethnicity, and how they are represented. Her other series in the show, *Body En Thrall,* is very much a take on Hollywood beauty and how she wanted to be a fashion model."



Martine Gutierrez Queer Rage, Swimming Lessons, p75 from Indigenous Woman, 2018 C-print Martine Gutierrez.
Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

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Brodsky, a New York City-based curator has Uruguayan and Venezuelan roots, and has previously curated exhibitions, like Argentina-born abstract artist *Julio Le Parc: Form into Action* at the Pérez Art Museum Miami, and co-founded Another Space, a non-profit program created to show artworks by Latin American and Latinx artists. "We just had our tenth anniversary," said Brodsky. "I think it's a good way of exposing the American public to some of the common interests and sometimes themes that are not necessarily common to all people."

Brodsky's goal with the *Second Skin* exhibition, above all, is to give credit to artists who Latin American artists. "My focus is always for people to understand the impact of these narratives that we take for granted," she said. "These are rich cultures and traditions that we should be lauding and not challenging. And so, it's a difficult time for everybody. I mean, I think all of us have our own cultural backgrounds that we want to be proud of."

Southampton Arts Center is located at 25 Jobs Lane in Southampton, NY and the gallery is open to the public from 12pm – 5pm, Friday through Sunday.

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ARTSY

7 Artists to Follow If You Like Pedro Almodóvar

By Alina Cohen | July 18, 2025



Pedro Almodóvar, still from Volver, 2006. © Sony Pictures Classics. Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics/Photofest.

Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar masterfully couples melodrama with equally intense visuals. Across his extensive filmography, twisting plots full of sex and violence coalesce with high-contrast sets and vibrant costumes. A woman in a red sweater holds a knife covered in her husband's blood (*Volver*, 2006). A man in a tiger suit binds and rapes a woman in a bourgeois home (*The Skin I Live In*, 2011). A vengeful drag queen performs in a sequined dress adorned with fake pubic hair (*Bad Education*, 2004).

Such images help elevate Almodóvar's soap opera–worthy material into high art. If interpersonal scandal is usually at the heart of his films, it's often paired with larger societal issues, from the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War to sexual abuse within families or the Catholic Church. Expansive ideas about gender and sexuality are often central to his work.

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The following artists are similarly bold in their visual imaginings. They rethink subjects as wide-ranging as geometry, aliens, and fashion editorials through a queer lens as they create works that alternately glimmer, seduce, and repel.

Martine Gutierrez

B. 1989, Berkeley, California. Lives and works in New York.
Known for: centering the trans and Indigenous self in fashion-inspired photography



Martine Gutierrez
Masking, Green-Grape Mask, p51 from Indigenous Woman, 2018
RYAN LEE
Sold



Martine Gutierrez
Demons, Chin 'Demon of Lust,' p93 from Indigenous Woman, 2018
RYAN LEE
Sold

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Martine Gutierrez repurposes the visual language of advertising and editorials to tell new stories about gender and indigeneity. The trans artist casts herself in glossy images that look torn from a fashion magazine; in various series, she may pose with a doll, or pretend to be one herself. In her series "Indigenous Woman" (2018), the artist wears outfits and headdresses that reference her Mayan heritage. Other images mock self-care culture, featuring a model with oysters, eggs, or enormous kiwis over her eyes, and grapes or fish in place of a necklace.

Throughout all this work, Gutierrez uses humor and surreal glamour to undermine our entrenched notions of beauty. Her work encourages us to look more closely at the images made to stimulate our desires, and what their objectification has to do with gender and race.

Gutierrez stretches the boundaries of fashion and beauty as she reconceives the larger sociopolitical forces that make a fashion icon. Throughout his own career, Almódovar has worked with actresses who aren't traditional Hollywood types. His leading ladies have ranged from Tilda Swinton and Rossy de Palma to more conventional beauties like Penelope Cruz, and he's given meaty roles to actresses at middle age, including Julieta Serrano and Marisa Paredes.

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INTERNATIONAL EDITION
THE ART NEWSPAPER

Artists including Theaster Gates, Miranda July and Martine Gutierrez receive Guggenheim Fellowships

Around 50 artists working across disciplines including photography, video, sculpture, painting and installation received the coveted fellowships

By Benjamin Sutton | April 15, 2025



The Guggenheim Fellows for 2025 include the multidisciplinary artist Theaster Gates (left) and the author and artist Miranda July (right)
Gates: © Theaster Gates/Sara Pooley, courtesy of White Cube; July: © Hugo Glendinning © Artangel

The recipients of the 2025 Guggenheim Fellowships, revealed Tuesday (15 April) by the board of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, include 32 visual artists—among them Theaster Gates, Sara Cwynar, Lauren Bon and Lucas Blalock—and more than a dozen artists spread across other disciplines from fiction (Miranda July) to film and video (Mungo Thomson) and photography (Farah Al Qasimi and Martine Gutierrez).

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The fellowships come with largely unrestricted monies (reportedly ranging from around $30,000 to $45,000), allowing recipients to continue pursuing their work. The 2025 fellows' announcement comes at a time when such private sources of arts and humanities funding in the US are all the more precious as US President Donald Trump and the Department of Government Efficiency cut and attempt to eliminate federal funding agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

"At a time when intellectual life is under attack, the Guggenheim Fellowship celebrates a century of support for the lives and work of visionary scientists, scholars, writers and artists," Edward Hirsch, a poet and the president of the Guggenheim Foundation, said in a statement. "We believe that these creative thinkers can take on the challenges we all face today and guide our society towards a better and more hopeful future."

The Guggenheim Fellowships, which were awarded to practitioners in 53 disciplines this year, launched in 1925 and have disbursed more than $400m to more than 19,000 fellows over the past century. That history will be the subject of an exhibition at the New York Historical museum, opening later this year.

The 2025 Guggenheim Fellows in fine art are: Lynne Allen, Kamrooz Aram, Teresa Baker, Emily Barker, Lucas Blalock, Lauren Bon, Daniel Anastassov Bozhkov, Katarina Burin, Tom Burr, Carolyn Castaño, York Jiann Chang, Coleman Collins, Sara Cwynar, Azza Elsiddique, Josh Faught, Theaster Gates, Raul Guerrero, Marc Handelman, Hong Hong, Mildred Howard, Jilaine Jones, Selena Roy Kimball, Anna Mayer, Kathleen Marie McShane, Ulrike Mueller, B. Ingrid Olson, Ester Partegàs, Maryam Safajoo, Kyungmi Shin, Molly Springfield, Julie Tolentino and Charisse Pearlina Weston. Fellows in photography are: Marzena Abrahamik, Farah Al Qasimi, Nina Berman, Phil D. Chang, Sabiha Çimen, Denis Defibaugh, Eli Durst, Martine Gutierrez, Tommy Kha, Dionne Lee, Mikael Levin, Miranda Lichtenstein, Justin Maxon, Accra Shepp, Richard Turner Walker, Shoshannah White and Carla Janine Williams.

In all, 198 individuals received Guggenheim Fellowships this year—in a range of disciplines that include biology, climate studies, music composition, physics, religion and more—from among nearly 3,500 applicants. Last year's fellows included the artists Anna Betbeze, Nicholas Galanin, Park McArthur, Lorraine O'Grady and Dyani White Hawk.

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THE GEORGIA straight
VANCOUVER'S NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

In "Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis", Martine Gutierrez models the malleability of self

by V. S. Wells | July 10, 2024



Maria from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS © Martine Gutierrez

It's only three words: Anti. Icon. Apokalypsis.

But trailblazing transdisciplinary artist Martine Gutierrez—or, as she mononymously prefers now, Martine—has put a world of meaning into the title of her latest exhibition, which opens at The Polygon Gallery this week.

"'Icon' is a word that gets thrown around a lot, especially in queer and trans communities, and so is 'iconic,'" says Elliott Ramsey, curator at The Polygon Gallery, over video. "But if we really take 'icon' back to its root in the history of visual culture, icons were how you could depict a saint or a deity or an angel without it being blasphemous."

Through a series of self-portrait photographs, Gutierrez transforms herself into 17 different figures from across cultures and religions. It's a dizzyingly broad pantheon: from ancient Greek Aphrodite and Egyptian queen Cleopatra to Chinese folklore warrior Hua Mulan and three different understandings of the Virgin Mary.

They are, no doubt, icons: figures who have been revered.

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But the contemporary understanding of the word also undergirds the project. Gutierrez's work has long been fascinated with seeing and being seen. Her core drive is how identity is both innately felt and externally, socially constructed.

Her first major art exhibition, *Real Dolls* (2013), received huge art world buzz for its risque premise: a series in which she portrayed human-sized sex dolls. Five years later, *Indigenous Woman* (2018) was an art book dressed as a glossy fashion magazine, in which she designed, modelled in, photographed, and styled an entire 124-page publication.

Now, she's venturing into acting—co-starring in Julio Torres's HBO comedy *Fantasmas*—playing a performance artist turned agent. It makes sense. Gutierrez's body is, itself, a body of work.

"Something that is thrown into stark relief, living in a patriarchal system, is that women and men are looked at very differently," Ramsey says of the artist's work. "What it means to be a woman as an icon is a very different set of circumstances than what it means to be a man as an icon. You have these centuries of being looked at, and scrutinized, and judged, and fetishized, and desired, and scorned."

So, what of being an "anti-icon"? While the prefix suggests opposition, it might be more accurate to think of it as a subversion. What happens when women transgress against the ideas laid upon them? In some ways, Gutierrez's choice to embody different real or mythical women is a transgressive act by itself: as a transgender woman with Indigenous ancestry, she's not who many people would imagine when you think of these figures.

Some of them are interesting choices, too. In her self-portrait as Ardhanarishvara—a form of Hindu deity Shiva where he is combined with his consort Parvati, often depicted as half masculine and half feminine—she covers her body in paint and inks six additional pairs of arms onto the wall behind her. It's a refutation of strict binaries, gender or otherwise.



Cleopatra from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS
© Martine Gutierrez



Cleopatra from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS
© Martine Gutierrez

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That renegade streak runs through her choice of venues, too. While The Polygon Gallery's exhibition is the first time all 17 images of *Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis* will be displayed in the same place—and mark her first major Canadian exhibition to boot—originally, the works were displayed on bus shelters across US cities.

But Gutierrez adds another part to that, too, with an artist definition of "anti-icon": "a representation of both the beginning and the end, prophesied as an omen of rebirth associated with the apocalypse." And then, of course, there's that tricky third word: "apokalypsis." Is a trans woman dressing up as the Virgin Mary, like Fox News hosts will no doubt insist, a sign of the end of times?

The Greek word, originally, has two parts: *apo-*, meaning away, and *kalýptein*, meaning conceal. In other words: a reveal. A revelation.

Perhaps, in *Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis*—comprised of portraits which are minimal yet lush, shot during lockdown in an abandoned New York swimming pool, with everyday items like zip ties and trash bags transforming into clothes and sets—the point is not to become someone else. Instead, through referencing other people, Gutierrez suggests, perhaps we can uncover ourselves.

"Martine is taking all of these stares that have been thrown at these women over time," Ramsey summarizes, "and she is looking back."

Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis
When: July 12 to September 29
Where: The Polygon Gallery (101 Carrie Cates Court, North Vancouver)
Admission: Free

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THE CUT

Martine's Latest Performance? Hollywood Actor.

BY: HARRON WALKER | JUNE 20, 2024

In a meta turn, the shape-shifting artist is playing one on HBO's Fantasmas.



ALAÏA cap, bodysuit and trousers. Photo: Ashley Peña

White jacket, black briefcase, white jacket, black briefcase …

I'm roving the expanse around the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, scanning the enormous, greenhouselike gallery space for someone — anyone — who matches that description. The day prior, I had received an email from the artist Martine, who recently decided to drop her last name like Cher and Madonna before her: "I'll be in the white jacket, black briefcase." But there's no one here with either item, much less both at once. I begin to wonder, could the artist — whose work deals so heavily in shifting personae, using herself as a canvas to slip into other forms — be testing me? Perhaps she has disguised herself, hiding in

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plain sight like Tom Cruise in Mission: Impossible, delighting in babushka drag as I try and fail to find her.

And then I spot her by the temple looking like herself, or at least a version of Martine that I would have been able to recognize before finally meeting in person. She's wearing a white jacket and carrying a black briefcase, just as she'd told me she would be. We take a seat beside the moatlike pond in front of the temple. "I'm always in costume," she says, laughing. Today's look is very "Spy vs. Spy," with Martine in all black except for her oversize white translucent raincoat. "If I say the designer, I'm going to sound really bougie. It's a new purchase, okay?" she says, faux defensively, as if she were on trial for the garment's acquisition before contradicting herself. Then, "It was my mom's," she adds in a hushed, wistful tone, trying on a new character for whom that might be true. Martine's narrow cat-eye sunglasses came from a Canal Street vendor. "They look very expensive, but they don't even have a brand," she explains. "They're brandless, like me!" She flips over her briefcase to find a small circular sticker that reads "6" stuck to the bottom of it: "This is a 6. Or maybe a 9. I really want a silver bulletproof one in case I have to block something. Imagine, the chopper pulls up here." She points to the gallery's glass-paneled wall. "We backflip toward the window, get the amulet, and we're out."

Martine loves slipping into playful bits like this, where she poses a hypothetical and dons a new voice on a whim — though not to the same degree as Vanesja, the character she plays in Julio Torres's new show, Fantasmas. A performance artist, at least in theory, Vanesja — the j is silent — has been acting as Julio's talent agent as part of some unexplained "piece." But she's been doing it for so long that she's actually just become his agent, and a cynical, money-driven one at that, who pushes him to pursue such blatantly exploitative projects as a "Gaytinx"-themed credit-card commercial and "a Zappos original" called How I Came Out to My Abuela. Martine,





ACNE STUDIOS dress. Photos: Ashley Peña.

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the actor behind the character, on the other hand, is less eager for mainstream success, despite having achieved a lot of it as a multidisciplinary artist whose work blends photography, sculpture, costume design, film, modeling, music, and other media, with all of that labor performed by Martine herself. "A lot of the reason I was working alone as an artist was because I was objectified in so many venues that pretended to be an opportunity," she says — not just in the art world but in her media coverage as well. "There was a loss of so much control. Especially if you have, you know, dysphoria about yourself, putting your image in the hands of someone you don't even know can be really jarring." Torres, to whom Martine cedes control in this project, has proven to be a worthy collaborator. She's relieved, I surmise, which makes sense: A bit is always more fun when someone else plays along.

Born and raised in Oakland, California, and then later in Vermont, Martine has been making art for as long as she can remember. "Art was my tool to make sense of my life and how I came to understand myself," she says. A Rhode Island School of Design graduate who has now shown work everywhere from the Venice Biennale to bus shelters across America, she first caught the art world's attention in the early 2010s with her still and moving self-portraiture. Her work explores the ways in which, as women, we make ourselves legible for all manners of consumption, or else find ourselves packaged into consumable goods. Dolls and mannequins often figure into her pieces, recalling, though distinct from, the ways in which earlier artists like Laurie Simmons and Greer Lankton had used such props to examine womanhood and misogyny. Cindy Sherman, Frida Kahlo, Nash Glynn, and Nina Arsenault also come to mind, given that Martine plays dual roles as artist and muse, and her body often serves as her canvas.



AREA hood, CARVEN dress. Photo: Ashley Peña

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In 2018, Martine exhibited Indigenous Woman, a 124-page issue of a fictitious fashion magazine complete with ads and editorials that make explicit what is usually left ignored or at best unspoken: The product is colorist beauty ideals; the product is authentic indigeneity; the product is patriarchal self-abnegation; the product is buying your way into a self. (One of my favorite pages is a retro-mod shoe ad, in which Martine looks reminiscent of Goldie Hawn on Laugh-In. "WHO R U?" the copy reads. "IDENTITY BOOTS." Her humor shines through.) The piece, like Martine's greater oeuvre, reveals a fluency in various consumer dialects: advertising, fashion imagery, music videos, erotica. "I was raised on Making the Video," she says. "America's Next Top Model, Antiques Roadshow. That Making the Band show with the creator of the Pussycat Dolls, what was it called … The Search for the Next Doll!"

She laughs after hearing those words tumble out of her mouth; what a prescient title for the 2007 reality competition, given the whole "tipping point" moment that followed. "We all became pick-mes after that," she says jokingly.

Both Indigenous Woman and Supremacy, a billboard first shown at the Whitney in 2022 that features Martine in lingerie as she's besieged by a dozen Barbie dolls — think Gulliver's Travels by way of the pink aisles of an Aryan Toys "R" Us — complicate the idea that simply finding and claiming one's identity from some endless taxonomy of labels is always going to be a liberatory act. Finding the right words to describe yourself is important, even necessary, but in a world in which corporations will always discover those words, and with them a new demographic, how revolutionary is the act of self-identification alone? Like Río Sofia's Forced Womanhood! series, Martine's work exposes how, under capitalism, escaping one such trap usually just leads you right into another.



AREA hood. Photo: Ashley Peña

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The characters in Fantasmas, most of them creatives, find themselves mired in similar questions as they struggle to survive by selling their art without destroying themselves in the process. Vanesja, Martine's character, is one of the few who seems to have solved that puzzle: She simply gets other people — her clients, like Julio and a former teen idol played by Teen Wolf's Dylan O'Brien — to do her dirty work for her. "I don't want to be the spokesperson for a product or a brand, which is, I guess, the parallel between me and Vanesja," Martine says. Except instead of saying "no" to "the machine," as she calls those nebulous powers that be, "Vanesja's like, 'You do it. You do it, and make me money.' She's like a house mother. That's what a PR person is. She's like, 'You make money,' so she makes money. There's a parallel there to a lot of things. A record label. A gallery. They are putting you forward, and if you don't make money, they don't make money." Beneath Vanesja's heavy transatlantic accent — a choice that Martine brought to the role, Torres later tells me by phone — lies a hilarious but incredibly bleak critique of contemporary culture industries. While Vanesja has found financial success and stability as an artist, it's only because her performance art is just being a literal businessperson. In Fantasmas, the easiest way to make money as an artist is simple: Don't be an artist.

"The part was 1,000 percent written for Martine," says Torres, a former Saturday Night Live writer whose debut film, Problemista, opened in theaters earlier this year. In fact, the character began years before as an inside joke between them. She would call him up and start pretending that she couldn't talk, that she had "big names" in the room with her like Jake Gyllenhaal or some other A-lister and that she had to go. "Without Martine, there would be no Vanesja. We would have had to come up with something else," adds Torres.

The two met in 2016 when Martine was cast in a series of sketches that Torres had written with the comedian Max Wittert for Más Mejor's YouTube channel. In them, she competes in "the Pre-Fall Fashion Olympics," sweeping such categories as "feigning surprise when finding out a dead relative left her everything in the will" and "storming into a room, knocking everything off a table, snatching a necklace off her neck, collapsing to the ground, and screaming 'GET OUT!!' at her teammates." Then, as now, Martine is a natural in a cast of working comedians, which includes frequent Torres collaborators like River L. Ramirez and Ana Fabrega, both of whom also pop up in Fantasmas. "She really reminds me of Tilda," says Torres, referring to Tilda Swinton, his Problemista co-star. "The brilliance of their physicality, just how invested they are in having fun and the work being good. It was such a joy to think about the hair, the voice, and the clothes and then see Martine fill in the gaps of this character. In any other hands, she would not have been as fully realized as she was."

With roles in all of Torres's recent work, including his previous HBO comedy, Los Espookys, and another forthcoming project that she's not able to discuss yet, plus Sebastián Silva's Rotting in the Sun, Martine's IMDB credits grow longer with each passing day. She calls Silva's film "guerrilla," adding that "it felt less like acting in a movie and more like living with a camera in your face." Plenty of "firsts" happened on set for the actress. "I had never been in an orgy before, let alone surrounded by naked men every day. There sometimes wasn't clarity between filming on set and life on a nude beach," she says. "This is essentially Method acting, right?"

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AREA hood, CARVEN dress. Photo: Ashley Peña

There is a bit of espionage in Martine's Hollywood turn, given that she's interested in becoming a filmmaker herself. "In a lot of ways, taking on this subservient acting role is teaching me how to become a director," she says. "It feels like data, like I'm a mole on the inside learning how to operate as I venture deeper into Hollywood." Once again, our conversation has wound its way back to spies. She explains why she'd asked me to meet her by the Temple of Dendur. "Remember when that diamond necklace forgery was dropped into the pool?" she asks at one point, referencing Ocean's 8. "That's America's history! This is where Hollywood made Ocean's … 15, I believe? 16?"

"17," I correct her, not daring to decline her invitation to the bit.

Although Martine has shifted her focus from the gallery to the screen, she's careful to note that this pivot of hers isn't zero-sum. "I've always been a side-hustle girl, whether it was a modeling gig here or there or dancing at nightclubs or hosting some party," she says. "Acting is kind of supplementing my work as an artist in a funny way, but now people seem to believe that that's the career I should pursue. Do you think so?"

"They don't feel that dissimilar," I tell her. "Acting feels like a natural extension of the work you've been doing as an artist. You've always been playing roles, slipping into characters."

"I think so," Martine says. "I just didn't call it that. I needed it to happen in a room with only

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BALENCIAGA dress. Photo: Ashley Peña

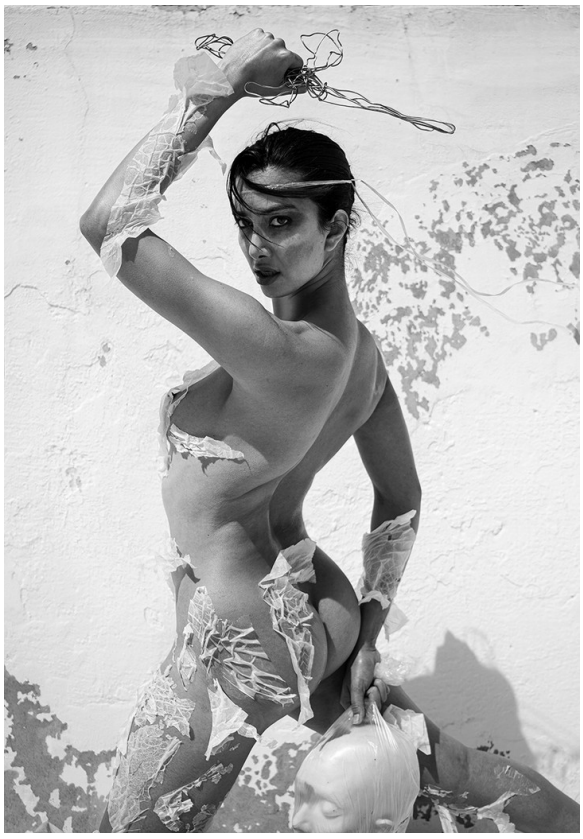
mannequins and a camera on a timer so I could channel that sexy girl or that powerful, that elusive — whatever it was I was trying to embody. I had all the time in the world. I guess Marina would call that process," she says, referencing Marina Abramović. The pace of shooting television, trusting an entire cast and crew to create something together that she won't get to see until it airs a year later, has obviously been quite a different experience. "I have no idea what this content is that is about to drop, and it is using my image. I guess that wouldn't be such a big deal if my image wasn't the tool that I use to make all of my work. But it's meta. I do play an artist trying to make it in New York."

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Martine Gutierrez Shatters the Patriarchal Paradigm with "ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS"

By Sahir Ahmed | June 15, 2023



In a world where patriarchal language and determinative frames still prevail, artist Martine Gutierrez emerges as a disruptive force, smashing the boundaries of womanhood and challenging the categorization of icons. In her latest body of work, *ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, Gutierrez takes aim at the oppressive constructs that have shaped our understanding of power, identity, and spirituality.

Gutierrez's captivating series comprises 17 new works that explore the intersections of gender, race, and celebrity across diverse cultural landscapes. The artist becomes a catalyst for change, transforming herself into a multitude of idols that reflect a dystopian futurism upon the symbols of our past. With each metamorphosis, Gutierrez reimagines a radical canon of heroines who

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have left an indelible mark on art history and pop culture throughout millennia.

Gutierrez's groundbreaking three-gallery exhibition spanning three continents is on view until June 30th. RYAN LEE Gallery in New York, Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco, and Josh Lilley in London will host distinct selections from the series, providing audiences with a glimpse into Gutierrez's artistic vision. Accompanying the exhibition is the artist's new book, *APOKALYPSIS*, published by RYAN LEE, offering an immersive experience into the rich tapestry of Gutierrez's artistry.

Gutierrez takes on the monumental task of portraying all 17 revolutionary figures herself, transcending conventional gender and cultural boundaries. From Aphrodite, the ancient Greek goddess of love and beauty, to Hua Mulan, the famed warrior of Chinese folklore, each character represents a powerful archetype that challenges established norms and offers a fresh perspective on the human experience.





Through her thought-provoking series, Gutierrez confronts us with questions that dig deep into the essence of power, symbolism, and truth. What is an icon, a cult image? What gives a symbol its power? How does culture influence and perpetuate systems of domination? These inquiries compel us to examine the historical context and the figures who have stood in opposition, shaping our understanding of the world.

While icons have traditionally represented humanity's spiritual ideals, Gutierrez's anti-icons defy the delusion of an inflated self-conception, refusing to conform to the limitations set by society. The anti-icon embodies unobfuscated femininity, revealing an encounter with genuine authenticity that transcends the superficial. In shattering the illusions perpetuated by icons, Gutierrez offers a revelation — a proclamation of clarity and truth that strips away the veneer of deception.

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In a world that seems on the brink of collapse, Gutierrez's *ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS* emerges as a powerful artistic statement. It reminds us that the world has ended before and will do so again, and within this cycle of destruction and creation, a new image of what the world truly is can emerge. Gutierrez's work resonates with the ethos of resistance, as creation becomes a powerful act of challenging the status quo and reimagining the possibilities that lie ahead.

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artnet news

Wet Paint in the Wild: Artist Martine Gutierrez Films a Secret HBO Show and Holds Court at Her Exhibition of 'Empowered' Self-Portraits

By Annie Armstrong | June 8, 2023

The artist takes us through a week in her life.



Martine Gutierrez.

Martine Gutierrez is the consummate multi-hyphenate. The performance artist, writer, and photographer is on a secret mission to add another honorific to her title, one that includes producing something for a top television service. On top of that, Gutierrez is opening her new solo show at Ryan Lee titled "ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS," so I thought I'd try to see what a week in her busy schedule looks like. Without further ado…

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BROKEN FLOWERS AND IPHONE CHARGER. Art is everywhere. Art is unapologetic.



MARTINE'S TRAILER AND MASK FOR WOMAN. Less aesthetic facade, more self-erasure. Less popular, more polarity. Less in dialogue, more out of the office.

RYAN LEE

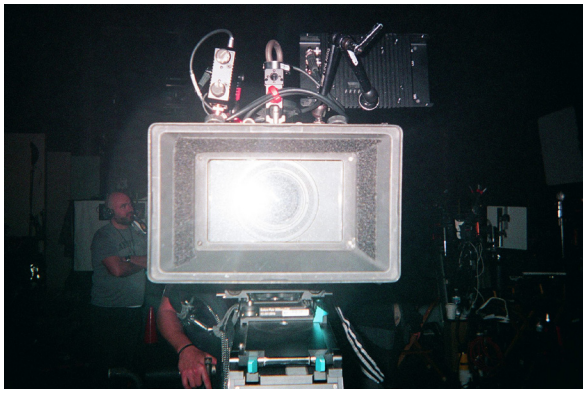
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FAKE WOUND.



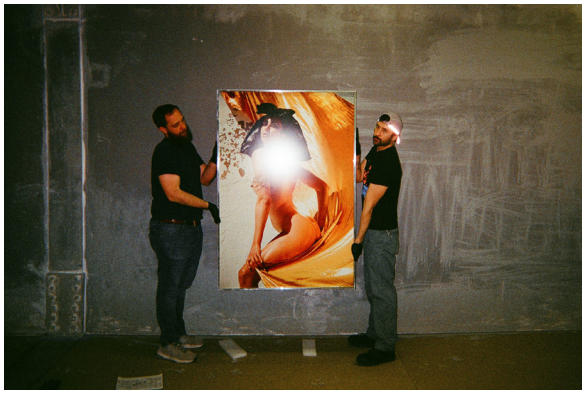
AMBER, MARTINE, AND RASHIDA.



SAM OPERATING CAMERA I'm very excited about collaborating with friends. I now feel secure enough to step in front of someone else's camera—it marks performance coming to the forefront of my practice.

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JOHN AND MAURI HOLDING MY PICTURE. What is punk anymore? People take naked pictures of themselves all the time. I photograph myself to feel empowered. I'm not concerned with how my body is perceived. I'm hot right now. Pop culture will always reflect the changing political arena, and art is the emotional synergy.



PAINTING THE GALLERY. We feel alone because humanity is the most insecure species on the planet. Be alone.



PHOTO OF SELF-PORTRAIT. What is an icon, a cult image? Rather, what is an image? What brings a symbol to power? Culture is history's political influence, a pendulum of domination. What is power without resistance? The historical moment, and the figure that stands in opposition.

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CAMERA PHONE PHOTO OF SELF-PORTRAIT. Been leaning into the idea of images that don't circulate well; almost makes an image precious again—to sabotage its accessibly or notoriety. Like a forgotten ruin only to be stumbled upon in person. Degraded by time—to entomb image in storage like a stolen museum artifact.



GROUP SELFIE BY NASH.



DEVAN AT THE ANTI-ICON BOOK PREMIER. The muses of New York come out at night.

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MARTINE WITH GRAPES. I make no sense with a boyfriend.



FRIENDS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JEFF, DARA, MARTINE, MAX, NASH, BLAKE, ELLIOTT, FERN, SONNY, AND DEVAN. We were the center of the world.

RYAN LEE

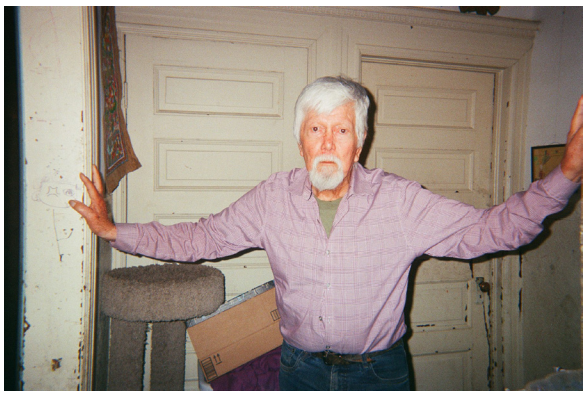
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ELEVATOR HIDDEN CAMERA. Still a patriarchal language, a determinative frame.



TIRED FLOWER WITH MATTRESS. What is a revelation? A proclamation of clarity, a veneer stripped away, a shattering. It feels like the world is ending, because it did; it has before, and it will again end.



WITO THROUGH HALLWAY.

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COLLECTOR DAILY

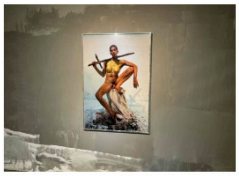
Martine Gutierrez, ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS @Ryan Lee

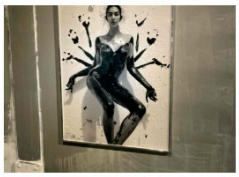
By Loring Knoblauch | June 6, 2023

JTF (just the facts): A total of 8 large scale black-and-white and color photographs, framed in hand-distressed welded aluminum and unmatted, and hung against roughly painted grey walls (with linen curtains) in the back gallery space. All of the works are c-prints, made in 2021. Physical sizes are either roughly 55×38 inches or 43×65 inches, and all of the prints are available in editions of 7. (Installation shots below.)

This body of work is also concurrently on view at Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco and Josh Lilley in London. The full collection of 17 portraits will be presented in its entirety for the first time in a traveling museum show, organized by Polygon Gallery, slated for 2024.

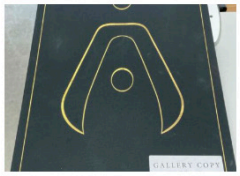
A monograph of this body of work has been published by the gallery. (Cover shot below.)







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Comments/Context: In our current cultural moment, it would be hard to miss the shift that is taking place toward the broader acceptance of fluidity in gender and identity. And of course, as such cultural shifts gather momentum, they start to brush up against a range of "traditional" beliefs, and the friction gets amplified as the challenge to those ideas becomes more widespread. For those choosing a non-binary identity or making a change or transition from one gender to another, the entrenched images and language that rigidly define "man" and "woman" inevitably feel restrictive, those labels, boundaries, and divisions not offering enough room for alternate lives and experiences.

In just a handful of years, Martine Gutierrez has quickly positioned herself as one of the key contemporary photographic artists actively wrestling these issues. Gutierrez first began to attract attention with a series of staged black-and-white images where she posed herself in fashion-styled setups with various mannequins (both male and female); Gutierrez is a transwoman, and these early images played with a deliberate sense of androgynous glamour, leaning into the complexities of beauty and desire. She followed this up with a powerhouse gallery show in 2018 (reviewed here), where she layered parts of her Guatemalan/Mayan heritage into an evolving exploration of identity, in a multi-faceted project titled *Indigenous Woman*.

Gutierrez' most recent efforts continue this upward artistic trajectory with another knockout project, this time centered on spiritual ideals and heroines. The series *ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS* originally took shape as a commission for Public Art Fund, with her photographs posted on bus shelters in New York, Chicago, and Boston. Gutierrez made seventeen images for the series, each one a role-playing exercise in transformative (and often nude) self-portraiture, with the artist variously portraying notable heroines from across the ages. In taking on the personas of specific goddesses, queens, warriors, saints, and spiritual figures, Gutierrez has repeatedly chosen figures who have stood in opposition to a male-centered world, or refused to acknowledge or adhere to limiting feminine roles or ideals. Her "anti-icons" reveal a reality beyond a simplistic one-dimensional feminine stereotype, where symbols of female (or non-binary) strength, courage, and power come in many forms.

It seems altogether appropriate that a transwoman like Gutierrez would find affinity with figures who have have been composite male-female figures, either as hybrid gendered deities or as women who played the roles of men. Her image as Ardhanarishvara (the Hindu combination of Shiva and Parvati) uses simple black paint as the transforming element, her sinuous body covered and slicked, her hair in a loose twirl, and an array of extra arms taking shape as imprints on the white wall behind her. Her portrayal of Joan of Arc features roughly cut short hair, spray painted golden armor, and a sword made from sticks, her bluntly androgynous bravery presented unflinchingly. And her representation of the Chinese warrior Hua Mulan (who famously disguised herself as a man to fight in battle) uses a plaster cast to re-imagine her body, once again leading to an identity with combined male/female attributes.

This resistance theme is then amplified by two other self-portraits were female beauty is balanced with dominant power. Gutierrez' image of the biblical Judith, complete with a wire knife stand-in and decapitated head in a plastic bag, matches seduction with aggression, making a boldly sensual statement against the tyranny of the patriarchy. Gutierrez finds a similar tension in her self-portrait as the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, her transformation completed by a trash bag

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headpiece, a wire arm band, and a sweep of metallic copper drapery; in this image, her nudity is one more a source of commanding power and influence, as is her disdainful glance downward.

The rest of the works included in the show depict more spiritual subjects. Gutierrez as the Virgin Mary riffs on the traditional motif of the cloaked head, wrapping her body from head to toe in glossy black folds. The Syrian fertility goddess Atargatis is recreated with much less modesty, Gutierrez' nude body covered in shimmery silver and posed as though protectively emerging from a watery void. And her version of Our Lady of Guadalupe features a spiky halo made from plastic zip ties, which bind her nude body while sparkling with lines of light against the darkness.

The larger theme of crafting identity comes through strongly in all of these works, with Gutierrez trying on personas and improvising aspirational looks that amplify certain characteristics of identity. Like Zanele Muholi's recent self-portraits made from a dizzying array of everyday materials, Gutierrez builds up her radical heroines from modest trappings, each one given life with just a few simple stylistic ingredients or essences. But Guttierez then fills out the presence of these portraits by printing them at near life-sized proportions, rebalancing the relationship between viewer and viewed.

It's clear that the strongest of these new images (including *Cleopatra*, *Judith*, and others) have brashly tapped into the larger movement of gender recalibration taking place around us, and that Gutierrez is cementing her place as a prominent artistic voice for this more inclusive redefinition of self. These works consistently find a seductive sense of dissonance, where femininity and masculinity are elegantly interwoven, opening up more artistic white space for personal identities that don't adhere to any one set of rules.

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MUSÉE
VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

MARTINE GUTIERREZ | ANTI-ICON APOKALYPSIS

By Wenjie (Demi) Zhao | June 5, 2023



Martine Gutierrez
Judith from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, 2021*
C-print mounted on Dibond, hand-distressed welded aluminum frame, optium plexi,
55 x 38 1/2 inches, Edition of 7
© Courtesy of RYAN LEE

As the summer of 2023 unfolds, the acclaimed trans-Latinx artist Martine Gutierrez, known for her fearless exploration of identity across the vast cultural landscapes of gender, race, and celebrity, has unveiled her latest exhibition, *ANTI-ICON: APOKALPSIS* at three esteemed venues — RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; and Josh Lilley, London. These geographically diverse exhibitions will culminate into a comprehensive artist book, *APOKALYPSIS*, published by RYAN LEE, with the show running from May 18 to June 30, showcasing 17 stunning new works.

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Martine Gutierrez
Gabriel from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, 2021*
C-print mounted on Dibond, hand-distressed welded aluminum frame, optium plexi,
55 x 38 1/2 inches, Edition of 7
© Courtesy of RYAN LEE

Gutierrez's exhibition addresses the patriarchal language that shapes our cultural perceptions and definitions of icons. Gutierrez, renowned for her self-portraits, has pushed her artistic boundaries further by transforming herself into many idols, echoing across thousands of years of art history and pop culture. By leveraging the barest of essentials for costumes, Gutierrez's figure becomes the catalyst, reflecting dystopian futurism on the symbols of our past.

Each metamorphosis within this series re-imagines a diverse canon of radical heroines, each of whom achieved monumental cultural influence. The figures depicted span ancient civilizations to contemporary mythology, encompassing goddesses, monarchs, warriors, and saints. The artist identifies the icon as a 'perceived understanding of truth,' suggesting that an image can act as an instruction, a guide to societal norms and expectations.

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Martine Gutierrez
Ardhanarishvara from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, 2021*
C-print mounted on Dibond, hand-distressed welded aluminum frame, optium plexi,
55 x 38 1/2 inches, Edition of 7
© Courtesy of RYAN LEE

The series touches on the influential women of ancient civilizations, like Atargatis, the Syrian mother goddess, and Cleopatra, the infamous Egyptian ruler. Within the pantheon of these characters, Gutierrez portrays Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, desire, and beauty, and Ardhanarishvara, the androgynous fusion of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati. Also featured is Helen of Troy, the renowned beauty of Greek mythology.

Gutierrez also pays homage to revolutionary figures in history, such as Joan of Arc, the sainted French heroine known for her faith and courage, Queen Elizabeth I, who established England as a significant power during her reign, and Lady Godiva, a noblewoman who advocated for the rights of common people. Religious characters are also salient within the series, exemplified in her portrayals of Gabriel, an angel from Abrahamic religions, Mary Magdalene, a prominent figure in the Christian faith, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, a revered apparition of Mary in Mesoamerican Catholicism.

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Martine Gutierrez
Aphrodite from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, 2021*
C-print mounted on Dibond, hand-distressed welded aluminum frame, optium plexi,
55 x 38 1/2 inches, Edition of 7
© Courtesy of RYAN LEE

Other figures represented are from different corners of the world, including Hua Mulan, the warrior woman from Chinese folklore, and Sacagawea, the Shoshone interpreter who aided the Lewis and Clark expedition. Also, the Queen of Sheba, an Ethiopian queen known for her wit, power, and wealth, will be included. Through exploring these icons, Gutierrez reveals an 'unobfuscated femininity,' refusing the deception of patriarchal norms and inflated self-conceptions. She contrasts the roles of the icon and the 'anti-icon'; if the icon brings an image into reality, the anti-icon must shatter this image to reveal the truth beneath.

In *ANTI-ICON: APOKALPSIS*, Gutierrez positions herself as the solitary performer, portraying each iconic figure with intimate, careful respect. Her portrayal is a testament to her creative mastery as she becomes a conduit for these historical figures. Through her artistic exploration, she ignites a dialogue about the multifaceted aspects of identity and the intersections of gender, race, and culture.

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ELEPHANT

Martine Gutierrez Lifts the Veil on Her Series of Self Portraits

By Meka Boyle | May 18, 2023

New York - Martine Gutierrez is a visual poet, an auteur. Her photography (which she stages, models, and shoots alone) articulates the ineffable — the personal and collective truths that get lost in the black-and-white binaries of language laden with cultural undertones.

For the 34-year-old multi-hyphenate artist's current show at Ryan Lee Gallery, she lifts the veil on a series of nude self-portraits that she originally created as part of a commission from the Public Art Fund in 2021. The series, aptly titled "Anti-Icon," features Gutierrez channeling famous heroines spanning centuries, continents, and belief systems, including Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Sacagawea, and Aphrodite, from a pointedly modern, post-apocalyptic lens. She finds fertile ground in the paradox of myths: stories once believed to be true and now understood to be entirely or partly constructed, leaving space for projected fantasy.



Martine Gutierrez, Aphrodite from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery.

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Ten of these photographs were displayed across 300 bus stops in New York, Boston, and Chicago. Because of the public nature of the project, sections of the images were veiled: Gutierrez concealed parts of her naked body and rephotographed the images with swaths of fabric strategically draped over her figure.

Now, she is showing the complete series on her terms, without the veils and with an added seven photographs, as a travelling three-part exhibition titled "Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis" this summer, starting at Ryan Lee Gallery in New York from May 18 through June 30. The rest of the large-scale photographs will be shown between San Francisco's Fraenkel Gallery and London's Josh Lilley Gallery.

A new American mythology forms as the works in Gutierrez's series mingle together for the first time on gallery walls. If everything new is made of a composite of the past, then "Anti-Icon: Apokalypsis" gives hope that there are still new compositions to be made.

The artist, who identifies as a nonbinary trans woman, observes the world from a distance: she is a chameleon-like cultural anthropologist with a lifetime's worth of popular culture references from glossy magazines to science fiction films to repurpose. She has explored themes of identity and representation throughout her oeuvre, including her 2018 project Indigenous Woman, an art book depicting the dual celebration and exploitation of Mayan Indian heritage, and Girlfriends (2014), a series of portraits featuring Martine Gutierrez posing intimately with a mannequin. At a time when trans autonomy is being threatened across America, her photographs serve as a beacon of light, a symbol of beauty and agency amidst an ugly discourse.

Gutierrez took her self-portraits sequestered away, monk like at her mother's house in upstate New York, against the peeled paint of an empty pool, in the midst of a hot, dry summer; however, the location is not a focal point, and Gutierrez is hesitant to even mention it at all: it could be anywhere, she says. Like her photographs, she possesses a quality of timelessness.

When looking into which characters to depict, she tried to put together a cast that felt diverse. "Generally, I felt familiar with everyone," she says. "What I realized later was that everyone had one foot in a history book and one in the mainstream media market. She's in a movie by Disney, and she's also painted by someone famous, or there's a poem about her."

She was intimately familiar with each heroine. She knew their stories, the visual signifiers, and the cultural costumes associated with their names. "It felt important to me that we, for the most part, have an understanding of what this person looks like, the drag of this person, the way, you know, someone can dress up like Lady Gaga now based on the symbols that she adorns herself with big blonde hair and crazy glasses," she says, eschewing these symbols in favour of a more abstract, pared down, and open-ended interpretation — a futuristic, femmebot framing of the past.

"I wanted to offer an entry point: here's an introduction to someone that I grew up feeling inspired by, and if you're not acquainted, it's time to Google, girl," she says.

As the angel Gabriel, she dons cardboard wings, one arm resting on her head, delicately holding

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a twig against a backdrop made from black trash bags. As Helen of Troy, she exudes 1960s Italian glamour, seductively gazing out from behind a veil made of bird netting, a draped tarp clinging to her curves.



Martine Gutierrez, Gabriel from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery.

Pale blonde tresses cascade down her bare shoulders as Aphrodite and peonies grown by her mother are warped around her lithe figure with thin string. Mulan's shield is reimagined as a plaster cast formed from the figure of one of her male mannequins, moulded to have curves while still wet. Her hair is slicked back and "Hershey's kissed" with a blend of mud and white paint.

In other images, she uses tinsel, fake breasts, a mesh stocking, tissue paper, ribbon, wire, and paint (discarded objects and recycled materials foraged from her mother's house) to transform herself. The one constant: her steady stare that contains multitudes, a personal story of transformation wrapped up in stories of those who came before her. Now, two years after the images were taken, she traces this collective experience back to nature.

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Martine Gutierrez, Judith, from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery

"All of us are much more similar to trees," she emphasizes. "We've put so much emphasis on creating these hierarchies of beauty and perfection, but everyone's body is so different. We truly are individuals." She attributes this return to a primordial synergy with the land to a long, smouldering month in Southern Mexico last year, when she frequented a nude beach while shooting an X-rated film, "Rotting in the Sun", with the Chilean director Sebastián Silva, set to come out this summer.

Here, on the shores of Oaxaca, north of her father's ancestors in Guatemala (where she would visit her father's mother high in the volcanic mountains as a child), something was awakened in her as she gazed at the range of naked bodies against the blue skies and rocky coast, free of the capitalist gaze that forces our fleshy skin into fabric confines, waist cinchers, and cover-ups.

"What does it mean to be nude?" she asks. There is a difference in aspirational nudity and human nakedness, she observes. "I honestly felt liberated after filming. Seeing my own naked body around so many other bodies, I realized that I am just an organism."

With a new appreciation for "the body we all wake up with; the body we go to bed with" Gutierrez returned home from filming to revisit her works that had lay dormant, tucked away safely from the world.

"Initially, I never thought I would release these pictures as is, to be honest," she says. "I took them myself, alone, and because of that, I was less self-conscious. I knew that I could delete them

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or keep them on some hard drive forever. I was still in control of how it was going to circulate, who was going to see it — and even how much of my body I wanted to show in the end by veiling them."

Then, she had an epiphany that came in the form of liberated nonchalance. "I thought, what's the big deal? This is my body," she says.

Gutierrez never thought the project would have a second life until then.

In the days leading up to the opening, as she finalizes the installation, she takes a break to reflect on how far she has come. "It's strange looking at myself, knowing where I was at with my own confidence and seeing how far I've come already in my own journey," she muses outside of the gallery as the bustle of the city reaches a crescendo in the background. Only a few days later, the doors of the gallery will open to the public, inviting visitors to enter her world.

"What does it take for a belief system to be to be considered true or to be in power?" she asks. "Years and years and years and years of genocide, and war, and money," she answers, pausing before adding, "but also art. Whether it's painted on the ceiling or presented in stained glass or carved out of stone, you have these depictions that date back older than any of us, and it's nice not to feel so small."



Artist's self portrait, courtesy of Martine Gutierrez and Ryan Lee Gallery.

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Women's Health

Martine Gutierrez Approaches Her Art As Therapy–And Makes You Question Everything

March 8, 2023

"The less popular you are, the better. You don't need people to like your work."



Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; *Me, Myself, Myself, Myself & I (Page 98 from Indigenous Woman*, Independent Art Publication of Gutierrez's work)

Martine Gutierrez is a visual and performance artist who explores identity in a multitude of ways through various media, including billboard campaigns and films. Women's Health spoke to Gutierrez to get a glimpse inside the mind of the artist and to understand how she continues to generate creative statements about our culture that make you stop, think, and reassess your own relationship with the world around you.

WH: Tell us more about your background. Did you always know you wanted to be a professional artist?

MG: I struggled in school, academically and socially. I remember having so much frustration with authority figures. I would skip class to hitchhike, get in fights with students who harassed me because I dyed my hair and dressed differently. "Being yourself" often means being alone. The one place I felt accepted was in the arts. My mother understood how important it was for my confidence and put me in every arts program available.

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My adolescence was an Olympic renaissance; I studied everything from dance to painting, life drawing to darkroom photography. Art became the tool to articulate what language could never express, permission to cultivate my own definition of self. I didn't know being a fine artist was even a viable option—I thought art was something you died doing in destitution, like Vincent van Gogh.

WH: You're a first-generation American on your father's side, but your mother is from the United States. How did your heritage influence you artistically when you were growing up?

MG: My parents met in graduate school and worked together in Guatemala, where my father is from. My mother fell in love with the Guatemalan people and their culture, while my father embraced the American dream.

They divorced when I was young, so I grew up flying back and forth between their homes. Their social activism as well as their liberal political views brought them together, so of course my fascination with celebrity was seen as disgraceful. Pop culture was another world in which I was an outsider, curiously peering in. There was never a representation in the magazines to identify with. I was, and always will be, an antagonist to the mainstream.



Supremacy, 2021. Part of the Outside the Box programming at the Whitney Museum, it ran as a billboard installation in New York. Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

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WH: Where do you find ideas? And what is your creative process like?

MG: A friend told me they think of my work as responses to moments of social crisis. I like that. I suppose I never stopped watching the world from a distance; perhaps I don't know how to feel a part of it.

In terms of process, I obsess and obsess until the idea I've been grasping at is out of my head, and then I lose interest in it completely. Much like a lover. And just when I begin to doubt I'll ever have a good idea, a new one entangles my mind and the affair begins again.

WH: Are there any habits that help you stay inspired?

MG: Abstinence and isolation. When I get into a creative work flow, I turn into a monk. I'll even forget to eat or sleep. You enter a state of mind, quiet from noise and time. It's a meditative high.

WH: What do you do when you're in a creative rut?

MG: Indulge—I go to the movies, museums, galleries, libraries, parks. I reward and fill up on little pleasures.



Supremacy Collectibles, 2023. Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

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WH: What is your ultimate goal with your art? What messages do you hope to convey?

MG: I have no intention of teaching anyone how to see. Being critical of the toys we played with growing up or the countless Photoshopped images we scroll past every day won't stop any of us from aspiring for perfection.

In billboards like *Supremacy*, I provoke by using symbols that we understand as advertising as a means of confrontation—but my "products" aren't telling people what they need, how to feel, or who to be. We as a culture will always measure ourselves against our aspirations.

WH: Are there any particularly memorable moments in your career when your work resonated with others and you feel like they "got" it?

MG: My videos have become notorious, though most aren't available online. In 2012, I made a film titled *Clubbing*. Using a green screen, I choreographed an ensemble of dancers, some shy, some bold, some women, some men.

In the end, the dancers couple off, finding their partners, and the audience comes to the understanding that everyone on-screen is in fact the same person—me. When I made *Clubbing*, I was an undergrad at the Rhode Island School of Design and could not have imagined the film would one day be acquired by the Smithsonian.

New acquisitions will exhibit at the Smithsonian this summer, in the group show "Musical Thinking." For the first time, *Clubbing* will be interactive, with viewers able to dance along with me.

WH: What advice would you give to others who want to pursue art but feel it's too late or hard?

MG: Honestly, the less popular you are, the better. You don't need people to like your work —what you need is an opinion.

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Whitney Museum of American Art

Unspooled

By Marcela Guerrero and Jennifer Rubio | October 12, 2022



Martine Gutierrez, *Supremacy*, 2021. Collection of the artist; courtesy RYAN LEE Gallery, New York. © Martine Gutierrez

I'm hidden in the constant nostalgia of my references, archiving them into my history, countering my native fetish, living the cultural intimacies of mis-translation. We are screenshots of everything we've ever "liked." I am more interested in what a viewer sees than in my own illusions. The truest stories have no author, no single voice.

Every now and then I start falling for what an artist is supposed to be. For what? Recognition? Can someone have too much visibility? It should be a concern—putting forward the currency of qualifiers, the definitions of "self" cast for this year's campaign. To cash in, we must disclose.

We try to buy ourselves, in the belief that authenticity is a brand. Natured by the new millennium, nurtured by hours of reality tv, targeted by Barbie Dreamhouse and three easy payments of twenty-nine ninety-nine, captured by Gulliver's avatars with long yellow hair and big boobs—dysphoria was Victoria's secret. Miss

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independent, Miss gendered. We don't know how to be adults, but we do know who has been positioned before the children. Learning another dance in front of the phone, adding another filter, booking another surgery. We want to be her, and we want her to be our "yas queen," but Ariana Grande isn't even Latina.

—Martine Gutierrez

In 1989, as part of the exhibition Image World at the Whitney Museum of American Art, a show that explored the relationship between art and mass media culture, Jeff Koons created an outdoor billboard titled Made in Heaven.



Jeff Koons, Made in Heaven, 1989, installed as a billboard in lower Manhattan as part of the exhibition Image World: Art and Media Culture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1989. © Jeff Koons

The billboard had all the trappings of a film advertisement—a pithy title, a sexy scene, and the names of the two stars: Jeff Koons and Cicciolina (Ilona Staller). To unsuspecting passersby, the poster was that of a movie featuring two actors in a titillating pose; to those in the know, it was an artwork that cheekily toyed with the limits of art and signaled the birth of a celebrity artist. Koons understood that in order to reach that status, his art had to be adjacent to other "systems" or industries beyond the art world.

The artist as media mogul, albeit under different guises, is taken up again in a 2021 billboard titled Supremacy by Martine Gutierrez.

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Martine Gutierrez, *Supremacy*, 2021. Collection of the artist; courtesy RYAN LEE Gallery, New York. © Martine Gutierrez

It is important to distinguish that where Koons ends his quest to center himself in conversations on the limits of art and media, Gutierrez's self-exploration as artist-cum-star begins. Koons blurred the boundaries of art, awakening tired discussions about taste, but he did it by employing the ultimate "system" of supremacy: that of white, male, straight, cis-gender normativity. With his heterosexual, Adam and Eve-esque relationship on display, Koons poked fun at the art world, all the while perpetuating an image of patriarchal power and domination. In her billboard, Gutierrez upends these tropes and, in doing so, opens up the possibility of unspooling a whole gamut of normalized assumptions.

Juggling diverse visual references, Gutierrez packs things in with *Supremacy*, starting with the off-white lingerie worn by a brunette model played by the artist herself. With her mouth agape, as if in a sexual trance, the model's appearance is reminiscent of Cicciolina's, from her garments to her expression of pleasurable rapture. Differences start to unfold, however, most significantly through the fact that in Gutierrez's photograph there is no presence of a man. The attention falls on the woman on display, marking a clear difference in power dynamics at play in *Supremacy* versus *Made in Heaven*. Furthermore, the absence of a co-star means that the language (or "system" as Koons called it) operating in this advertisement is not that of film but of fashion. For one, there are no "stars" named in Gutierrez's billboard. Neither is there anyone staring back, daringly breaking

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the fourth wall, to suggest a narrative—in Koons's case, perhaps something salacious between him and the "actress" Cicciolina. Rather, Gutierrez's image is made up of elements that index fashion's fixation with clothing, beauty, and its own image as a progressive (read: "woke") industry.

In Gutierrez's billboard, the model lies on a saccharine pink shaggy rug. Her "broken doll" pose recalls the photo shoots of Tyra Banks's early-aughts show America's Next Top Model (2003–18). Scattered across her body are blonde Barbie-like dolls that echo her lingerie and pose. Closer inspection reveals, however, that these are not innocent dolls. In fact, the two dolls in the upper left corner are unspooling the white thread out of which the model's garments are presumably made. Another doll pulls the model's hair, while another pushes into her thigh. The expression one might have mistaken for that of pleasure now reads like one of pain. In this context, the model's pose resembles a chalk outline drawn at a crime scene. In this advertisement, Gutierrez is under attack by figurines representing sexist ideals of perfection. Here, *Supremacy* is both the name of the game and the brand on display.

Deciphering *Supremacy*'s multiple layers requires the viewer to draw on the visual vocabulary of advertising. For example, note the difference in body language between the brunette model and the blonde dolls pinning her down. She is outnumbered by pesky representations of the highest ideals of Western womanhood. The way they treat her body—biting, pushing, pulling, pinching—are analogous to the tweaking and editing that the model's image would be subjected to digitally. White, blonde, and cis, the dolls are avatars of what Gutierrez—a multiethnic, nonbinary trans woman—is not. The dream that the ad sells you, Gutierrez seems to be saying, is also the repressive force that mistreats those who do not fit into the industry's definition of "women."

In June 2021, when asked about what she had planned for the Whitney billboard, Gutierrez told an interviewer at Whitewall: "Picture if you can, Ariana Grande in a Victoria's Secret campaign, and then subvert it." Gutierrez invokes Grande and the lingerie corporation as metaphors of racialized and gendered beauty norms. In the case of Grande, Gutierrez is interested in popular perceptions of the pop star's identity and how they have defined our own as consumers. Grande (who is of Italian descent) is often perceived to be Latinx. But it is not the appropriation of a marginalized identity, whether deliberately or not, that interests Gutierrez as much as the apparatus behind the construction and our emotional investment

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in such perceptions. As a pop star with a highly curated image, the ambiguity of her ethnic background is undoubtably strategic. Creating such "confusion" has also benefited the self-branding of other celebrities such as Kim Kardashian (whom Gutierrez has also referenced in her work). The commercialization of such figures and their capitalizing on perceptions of non-Eurocentric ethnicities is the supremacist implication that Gutierrez wants to unveil.

In the case of Victoria's Secret, the brand has spent decades selling consumers mirages of high femininity in the form of their particular styling of supermodels—women like Tyra Banks and Gisele Bündchen were known for transforming sexy lingerie into an affordable commodity for the masses. The company's models—so-called "Angels," presumably made in the sexy heavens of capitalism—epitomized the feminine ideals of the 1990s and 2000s. It is against this template—unrealistic and oppressive yet seductive and aspirational—that Gutierrez positions her own body. "It's all so ingrained within cis culture," she explained in a 2016 interview, "that anyone who is Trans or non-gender binary is forced to maneuver though the Supermodel propaganda as well." The secret, the artist tells us as we peel back the layers of the proverbial onion that is her art, is that the supermodel is itself a version of the feminine in drag.

In the industries of fashion, merchandising, and advertising, the transformation of cis women into sexually objectified products has been paramount to the success of media campaigns. In fact, one of Victoria's Secret's brands, Pink, was built on a notably problematic concept. The line targeted young girls and women, aged fifteen to twenty-two, and featured merchandise with sexual innuendos such as "I Dare You" stitched across the backside of briefs. To be clear, it is not the sexual awareness of young women that creates uneasy feelings, but rather the marketing of trite and salacious phrases that center heterosexual male desire and leave no space for empowered, individually defined sexualities.

Gutierrez contends with these tropes while also commenting on the politics of autonomy and consent. Behind the glossy and almost bubblegum-esque aura of *Supremacy* is the intellectual and physical labor of an artist who has made branding central to her work. As with her project Indigenous Woman (2018), for which the artist created a 124-page magazine that both celebrated her Mayan heritage and navigated contemporary perceptions of Indigeneity, Gutierrez was the sole executant of *Supremacy*.

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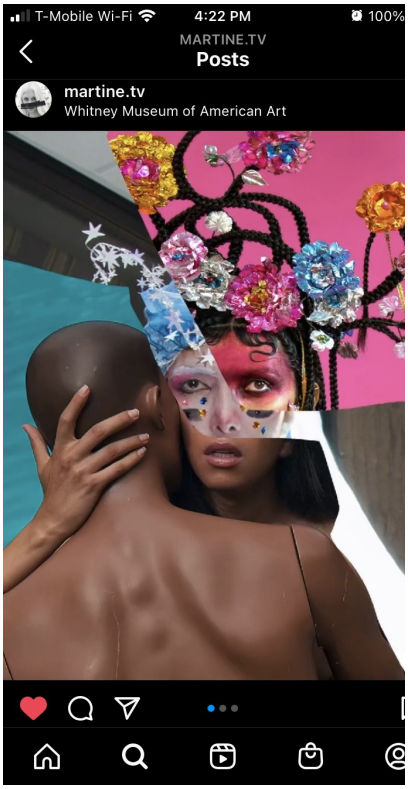
Martine Gutierrez, Demons, Xochipilli 'The Flower Prince,' p91 from Indigenous Woman, 2018, printed 2020. Chromogenic print mounted on board, with wood frame, sheet: 42 1/2 × 30 1/4in. (108 × 76.8 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Photography Committee and the Henry Nias Foundation 2021.25a-b. © Martine Gutierrez, courtesy RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

She was the photographer, lighting director, stylist, makeup artist, editor, set designer, and model. Beyond the need for creative control over her product, Gutierrez's purpose is to claim the agency that is seldom afforded to trans creators. Both the creation and the questioning of what she is (not) selling are done on her own terms.

Social media, specifically Instagram, is another tool Gutierrez uses to create her work. The artist's curated account acts as a perfect voyeuristic playground, where viewers can watch people watch her and witness the ways in which the artifice of perception plays itself out—her handle is, after all, @martine.tv. One could think of Gutierrez's Instagram as a virtual "insurgent museum," a concept that scholar Julia Bryan-Wilson coined in 2021 to refer to the ways that LGBTQIA+

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artists are queering museums' "hegemonic regimes, reinventing them as liberatory rather than confining." It is a fitting description, that of a virtual insurgent museum, in light of Gutierrez's recent additions to the permanent collection of the Whitney Museum. In a catchy yet moving Instagram post from May 30, 2021, the artist addressed the acquisition of her work (which includes four images from Indigenous Woman), writing: "I've wanted this. I've dreamed this the same way I've dreamed of my body, friends, and lovers. Now someone I'll never know will study my face, its likeness, to remain long after I'm gone, another Botticelli girl with and without consent, another object made into some symbol of theory, of 'first.'"



Martine Gutierrez (@martine.tv), "Six Would Have Been Too Many." Instagram, May 30, 2021. © Martine Gutierrez

The statement's ambivalent tone loops back to Supremacy's prophecy: as alluring as the white thread of perfection is, it can also pin us down. For Gutierrez, one of the most valuable currencies in the art world—having your work acquired by a museum—also implies the slow relinquishing of her image into the vaults of history.

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Gutierrez is right to ponder the ability of museums to care for and frame the work of trans artists in their collection. She is an artist with a penchant for unraveling the meaning of language, both visual and verbal, so it should be noted that here the words "care" and "frame" do not just apply to objects. They also apply to her as a person and a maker. The question then remains, how can a body of work that is profoundly about transformation, cultural perceptions, autonomy, and consent, exist in a space anchored by cornerstones of preservation, accumulation, categorization, and presentation? Like Gutierrez's practice—a porous arena that rejects any concrete answers—the point is not to find the truth but to begin unspooling its contradictions.

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THE CUT

The Rise of Fashion's Tumblr Generation They found themselves, and each other, online.

By Matthew Schneier
June 24, 2022



Front row (from left): Ethan James Green (photographer and director), Martine Gutierrez (artist), Peter Goldberg (archivist), Christopher Barnard (writer), Marcus Cuffie (stylist), Fernando Cerezo (artist), Stevie Triano (office worker), and Marcs Goldberg (art director). *Back row:* Iris Diane Palma (artist), Chuy Medina (studio manager and photographer), Dara Allen (fashion director and model), Devan Díaz (writer), Sonny Molina (hair artist), and Cruz Valdez (photographer). Photo: Cruz Valdez

The children of fashion Tumblr came to New York, as fashion strivers often do, from the less fashionable provinces: San José and Grand Rapids and Baltimore and Orange County and the Jersey Shore. Growing up far from the industry's enclaves, they obsessed over Balenciaga ads and *Vogue Italia* scans online, following along with the zeal of outsiders, and found their like-minded zealots to befriend. A decade later, they all live in New York, and they remain friends. They socialize together and party together, and now, having made it from the digital outside to the industry inside, they work together too. "The first time I met all the dolls, it was made clear, this was a tight group of ride-or-dies," says the artist Martine Gutierrez, who met her crew in the

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city following a *Candy* magazine shoot in 2016 and quickly fell in.

They've come a long way since they were on Tumblr, the image-centric blogging platform, in the 2010s as fashion-obsessed teenagers. Fluent in technology, controlling their own means of image production, distribution, and promotion: the Factory girls without the need for a Warhol, the Halstonettes if they dispensed with Halston, the unholy love children of Cleveland (Pat, not Ohio) and Vreeland. They've internalized Polly Mellen rhapsodizing about "weightless, pom-pom, powder-puff" *faux* furs in *Unzipped* and Donatella Versace making marble-mouthed pronouncements in a *Vogue* video interview ("What are you reading right now?" "Magazines!"). They live to be behind the camera and in front of it.

Without fashion school — in some cases, without even finishing high school, much less college — they educated themselves in the chapter and verse of the industry, its history and its archives as well as its lingua franca. Their styles were cooked in Tumblr's mix-and-match, endlessly referential crucible, and the most devoted could spend five or six hours a day on the platform, posting and commenting. "After midnight was the time to be on there," says Devan Díaz, a writer who left Tennessee for New York at 18 and started her Tumblr in 2009. "If you stayed up really late, then you could catch the European crowd waking up."

"If I didn't have Tumblr, I never would have gotten into fashion," says Marcus Cuffie, a stylist whose Tumblr, Dustulator (the name of a favorite Rick Owens collection), begun in 2011, became a touchstone for many fellow bloggers. "I wouldn't have known how to access it."

"I think we wanted to know why we liked the things we liked," says Hari Nef, who moved to New York from Massachusetts to attend Columbia and joined Tumblr in the summer of 2011, just before she arrived. "We wanted to trace a line through the past to figure out where it came from. Together, we were able to kind of thread that needle and string it along. It was about information, and it was about discovery — discovery that you couldn't achieve without community." Reblogs and comments led to chats and calls, and gradually a circle coalesced.

All the research paid off. Nef interned at cool fashion places like VFiles, although now she's better known as an actress; she spent this spring shooting the *Barbie* movie. (She deleted her Tumblr before her first film came out in 2018.) Cuffie now styles for *Harper's Bazaar*, *Dazed*, and a grab bag of indie mags. Cruz Valdez, who became Cuffie's partner and now collaborator, is a photographer who shoots for Marc Jacobs, Rihanna's Savage x Fenty, and Eckhaus Latta. "These kids *know* things," says Mel Ottenberg, the editor-in-chief of *Interview*, who hired one of them, Dara Allen, known professionally as Dara (Tumblr b. 2011), to be the magazine's fashion director this February. "They must really study."

For younger millennials and all of Gen Z, making friends online is just how you make friends. But eventually, this crew realized, you have to meet up in real life if you want to get anything done. Their Tumblr pals were their support system, and they flocked to the city in formation to live, work, and play together. "I always kind of wanted to come to New York, but I don't think I would have," says Allen. But goaded by fellow Californians Valdez and Iris Diane Palma, an artist, she bought a ticket with them (in tears) and moved to a flop in Bushwick. (Stevie Triano,

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another Tumblr friend, and Cuffie picked up the keys and met them there the day they arrived.) Valdez, who went to photo school, did her first shoots in their shared Brooklyn apartment with a seamless backdrop rigged up by a belt to their futon with Allen, who appeared in two Marc Jacobs shows before finally signing with a modeling agency, as her subject.

In New York, they met other Tumblrites, including Nef and Cuffie. "It really felt like we were all meant to find each other," Nef told me. "The word *manifesting* was really popular at that time. And that's what we felt like we were doing. Obsession alone wasn't enough for me, nor was it enough for Dara or Cruz or Marcus or Devan or any of us. It simply would have been a waste for us to do anything else but use all of those hours that we spent looking and listening and writing and sharing and not trying to make something with them."

They ended up friends with Ethan James Green, a model turned photographer, and the circle expanded. Green was a more casual Tumblr user whose runway career was cataloged *on* Tumblr — most exhaustively by Allen on her blog. His photography career was stalling until, inspired by his mentor David Armstrong, he began shooting black-and-white portraits of friends and friends-to-be, including every person pictured here, many of whom are featured in his first book, *Young New York*. "All these big fashion people that I'd been around for years all of a sudden were like, '*Oh*!' — it turned something on," Green says. "People started asking me to do my pictures. And because I was able to really create my world, I didn't have to compromise." These days, he shoots for *Vogue* and *W*, Louis Vuitton campaigns, and just closed his first solo show at Fotografiska.

Now they are members of fashion's next generation, landing big jobs. Green often works with Allen. Allen often works with Valdez. Valdez often works with Cuffie, who is also her partner. Their friends assist on shoots or do the hair or build the sets. Their work adorns billboards over Soho for Calvin Klein; they're booked by Bottega Veneta and Alexander McQueen. The line between work and life can be blurry. They don't work exclusively together, but they understand each other better when they do. "We all see it for each other. Our Grindr profile would say, 'Muse 4 Muse,'" Gutierrez says. "I bring friends into projects constantly, especially when there's a budget."

"There is a shared language for sure," says Marcs Goldberg, an art director who designs sets for photo shoots. "It's very much like a sibling relationship, where it can be very intense and extreme, but in the end, it's exactly as it should be."

They have come into their own individually and collectively, carving out space for themselves and their taste. Many of them have transitioned since their earliest meetings on Tumblr or embraced non-binary identities. "It's opened up so many possibilities," Valdez told me. "We all had such an instinct toward something," Allen says. "I think I've realized that it really becomes easier just to go with your gut — and your friends." This year, she worked with Green on an ad campaign for Walmart. "To think about someone in middle America seeing style from her perspective is really crazy," Green says proudly.

To hear them tell it, their work now is not so different from their Tumblr 'fit pics. "I think it's all just been about building and refining," Valdez says. "When I think about my older work, it's

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not like, it's so drastically different in ways, it's just more about how I've been able to articulate what I wanted to say and how to say it." "This was me on Tumblr," Allen cried as she struck a pose for the camera, swiveling her wrists outward and clamping her hands to her waist, a haute little teapot. Now their Tumblrs have mostly fallen away — although a few still post privately or occasionally — and the platform itself has faded from its former glory. The next generation is assembling itself elsewhere.

But if their medium has waned, the message hasn't. What would they do on their last day on earth? Probably this, they said, sitting for this portrait. There is no "cheese" here. "Everybody say 'cunt,'" Valdez said before the shutter snapped. "Cunt!" they all bellowed joyfully.

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artnet® news

How Martine Gutierrez Turned Herself Into Cleopatra, Mulan, and Other Historical Heroines for a Public Art Project in Bus Shelters Across the U.S.

By Osman Can Yerebakan | September 7, 2021

"I want to make something on my own terms," Gutierrez said.



Martine Gutierrez, ANTI-ICON, Gabriel (2021), New York City. Courtesy the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery. Photo: Nicholas Knight, Courtesy of Public Art Fund.

The artist Martine Gutierrez was just one locked door away from Madonna—the icon she'd love to photograph more than anyone—while the queen of pop was performing for a Pride celebration at the Manhattan club Boom Boom Room. Gutierrez had a ticket, but was running late from photographing a shoot for *Interview* magazine. When at last she arrived, bearing a bouquet of roses, she told the pitiless bouncer that she needed to give the flowers to Madonna. The bouncer, however, was too preoccupied with all the frenzied fans punching, pulling hair, and clawing to reach their queen.

Gutierrez and her friends gave up and sought refuge at the nearby piers. "We instead released the roses to the Hudson River and made wishes about what we want from New York," she told Artnet News. Commiserating helped the artist

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feel like she had met her icon. “Getting to know Madonna in person one day,” should Gutierrez ever be able to photograph her, “would shatter my ideal for who she is, and that would be healthy for me,” she said. Gutierrez has learned that it’s often less interesting to capture iconic figures in the flesh than it is to conquer their mythology from the inside out.

The multi-hyphenate artist’s sleek and mysterious photographs, in which she is both the subject and the photographer, have recently made star-turn appearances in the Venice Biennale, the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts, at London’s Hayward Gallery, and at the Australian Center for Photography.

Now, “Anti-Icon,” Gutierrez’s new multi-city exhibition on the streets of New York, Chicago, and Boston transfers her play between gaze and muse to the public realm. For a series of photographs lining 300 bus shelters, organized by the Public Art Fund, the Brooklyn-based artist reenacts 10 historical or mythological female icons.



Martine Gutierrez, Cleopatra (2021). Courtesy of the artist.

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"We know an icon like Madonna in her every form, but no one thinks of Aphrodite or Cleopatra as a child or as aged," Gutierrez said. "Once everything burns down, we will still run back to mythology because we need it to make sense of our lives—this annotation of storytelling is bigger than the internet."

Gutierrez, who is 32, shot her renditions of Cleopatra, Mulan, Queen of Sheba, Atargatis, Gabriel, Aphrodite, Lady Godiva, Helen of Troy, Queen Elizabeth I, and Judith last summer at her mother's house in upstate New York. There had been a drought that season, sapping the vitality of the usually lush landscape in a way that mirrored the pandemic's effect on Gutierrez's own creative spirit. But after searching for inspiration in mythology, she realized that she, too, could defy the limitations of her surroundings. The empty pool, where she had already moved a mattress to create a private room of her own, became her studio, while the materials she found around the house turned into her props. Then she clicked on the timer.

Gutierrez had initially envisioned the 10 icons wearing gaudy costumes; one idea was even to create a series of faux perfume ads for a fictional fragrance called Anti-Icon. "But it felt wrong to make something decorated during times of scarcity," she said. Instead, cuts of tarp became Helen's dress, inspired by 1960s Italy, and she hides her sultry expression in the photo behind a veil of bird netting. Meanwhile, the peonies Aphrodite clutches to conceal her breasts come from a surplus at Gutierrez's mother's garden. Mulan's body shield is made of plaster, while gauze, mud, sticks, trash bags, cardboard, and zip ties substitute for Elizabeth's crown, Gabriel's wings, and other markers of female deity.



Martine Gutierrez, (2021), Boston. Courtesy the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery. Photo: Mel Taing, Courtesy of Public Art Fund, NY.

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When we met in Brooklyn last month to visit some of the shelter images, which appear in JCDecaux ad spaces, Gutierrez donned a pair of *Tomb Raider*-esque shorts, a short shirt, and earthy sandals. "Don't I look like Lara Croft today?" she asked.

Seeing her Aphrodite in a Clinton Hill bus shelter, Gutierrez screamed, "Oh my god she's gorgeous!" The woman in the picture and the artist standing next beside her looked very different, I noted. Gutierrez agreed: "That's not me in there."

The grandiose femininity of the trans body in the image contrasted sharply with the ad for Clint Eastwood's new Western *Cry Macho* on the shelter's opposite end, which is why the commercial context for this work is so fitting. Beyond their gloss, the meticulously constructed images deconstruct female sexuality and defy the default male gaze—while penetrating into a space reserved for commercial beauty. For Gutierrez, the trappings of celebrity also represent a personal pain: "When I was younger, I thought if I were famous people would finally accept me," she said.

Born to a Guatemalan father and a white American mother in California, Gutierrez gradually transitioned to a female identity over the years. Her practice has continuously reflected this self-construction both as a woman and an artist through works that combine her make-do creative spirit with an innate urge for self-discovery. In *Girlfriends* (2014), her own image blends into frames with look-alike mannequins; for *Indigenous Woman* (2018), she stars in a 124-page fictional fashion magazine about Indigenous identity and attire. The images' polished veneers disguise the found objects and unconventional backgrounds within them as they orchestrate illusions of both reality and fiction. "There is nothing you see that is not true—as long as it's what you want to see," Gutierrez said.

The artist considers curator Ralph Rugoff's exhibition for the 2019 Venice Biennale a turning point in her career. It was also a time when she felt physically beautiful. Italians kept calling her Monica Bellucci, whose style in the 2000 drama *Malèna* ended up becoming an inspiration for her Helen. "Being a beautiful woman cuts you through wealth and class—you can be broke but people will pay attention," she said. "Men think I am there for them, and to be made an object is a corrupting feeling."

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Martine Gutierrez, Godiva (2021). Courtesy of the artist.

Beauty, as she learned by making "Anti-Icon," can also be triggering. The photographs' public presence forced her to shoot each image with her body parts strategically covered. "They're still nudes, but different kinds," Gutierrez said. She avoids using the word "censor," preferring "conceal" or "reveal" for a little more mystery.

"If Madonna had a penis, she'd definitely show it to everyone," she laughed. (The queen of pop's infamous Sex book of 1992 was in the artist's mood board for the project.)

Posing for a man's lens, however, is an experience Gutierrez avoids. "I'd critique myself to a degree of self-bullying," she said. On the other hand, Gutierrez's own relationship with using the camera is still a work in progress. She positions her body and expressions suggestively, somewhere between performance and acting.

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"I am not self-aware enough to control my expressions yet," the artist said. Experience has taught her to try to forget the lens and timer, and she reviews the results to find the moments of authenticity.

This month, another vision of Gutierrez will appear in public when the Whitney opens its commission of work by the artist for its billboard series across from the High Line. This time, Gutierrez is pictured looking away from the lens, dressed in colorful attire with Indigenous patterns and surrounded by collages of nature imagery. Like her other juxtapositions, the scene presents a hyper-stylized version of what could pass as an advertisement—the billboard is perched over Manhattan's posh Meatpacking District—as well as an overly performative display of a culture, presumably for the default white gaze.

"I've developed a sense of autonomy and confidence with safety of not having to barter my qualifiers for the sake of cashing in or relevancy," she said. "Moving through the world so intuitively, I want to be able to make something only on my own terms."

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CULTURED

Martine Gutierrez Lets Heroines Loose on City Streets

By Kat Herriman | September 1, 2021

In her new commission for Public Art Fund and JCDecaux's Partnership, the artist transforms herself into legendary historical figures and reimagines them as our peers.



Martine Gutierrez, ANTI-ICON, Godiva, 2021, New York City. All courtesy of artist and RYAN LEE Gallery. All photography by Nicholas Knight, Courtesy of Public Art Funcd, NY. Photographic work as a part of Martine Gutierrez: ANTI-ICON, an exhibition of 3000 JCDecaux bus shelters displayed acrosss New York City, Chicago, and Boston, August 25 to November 21, 2021

The last time *Cultured* checked in with Martine Gutierrez the New York-based artist was fresh off of her Venice Biennale debut and starring in the magazine's 2020 Young Artist List as a kind of contemporary Marie Antoinette. Today, I found her playing Cleopatra on the side of a JCDecaux bus shelter not far from Columbia University's move-in day. Amongst the throngs of self-conscious teens avoiding eye contact and accompanied by doting parents carrying arm-fuls of dorm life, this image of Gutierrez stands out. In the photograph, the artist stares unflinchingly out from under a trash bag wig. It is a far cry from Elizabeth Taylor's rendition of the Egyptian ruler and yet there is a glamour here even Liz would bow to. Mounted at eye-level on the station's lightbox bookend, Gutierrez conjures a movie poster come to life.

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A commission for PAF and JCDecaux's ongoing partnership, which places new contemporary art in the latter's advertising slots, "Anti-Icon," is a self-portrait series that reinterprets ten legendary leaders then redistributes their likenesses across the urban landscape of Boston, Chicago and New York. In Gutierrez's retelling, Cleopatra's peer group includes Angel Gabriel, Queen Elizabeth, Mulan, Helen of Troy and Aphrodite. "'Anti-Icon' alludes to the legendary status of these figures, but also tries to indicate that this is Martine's reimagination of who these speakers are," curator Katerina Stathopoulou explains. "In this series, she's tried to make these more universal figures that people can recognize and identify with. The way she put it to me recently was either take them off the pedestal or make the pedestals bigger. I think she really succeeds in doing both."



Martine Gutierrez, ANTI-ICON, Cleopatra, 2021. New York City.

I ask if one of the hazards of popping in and out of new identities, cultural appropriation, enters the conversation. "Martine is very sensitive about cultural appropriation," the curator says. "In creating these characters, she wanted to focus on the mythology rather than identities." She provides the Chinese legend of Hua Mulan as an example. Mulan cross-dressed to pass as a male warrior and take her elderly father's place in battle. In the artist's depiction, Gutierrez doesn't assume an Asian identity but instead wears a man's plaster chest as armor with a stoic gaze. It is a simple but effective gesture that feels particularly attuned to the life-size scale of the platform. You can't avoid sizing Gutierrez up as the other warriors might before a fight.

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Part of Stathopoulou's reasoning for selecting Gutierrez for this project is the artist's ongoing interest in advertising and the public sphere, inherent components to contend when dealing with JCDecaux's infrastructure. Stathopoulou remembers going to the 2018 exhibition "Indigenous Woman" at Ryan Lee Gallery where she saw Gutierrez's use a self-published fashion magazine as an artistic medium. "I thought it was such a clever format to create a publication full of self-portraits that echoed perfume advertisements and fashion ads," the curator says. "I think something really important Martine has done successfully is present an artwork without having to provide additional context. She is able to think holistically, which made her a good fit for this project."



Martine Gutierrez, ANTI-ICON, Judith, 2021. New York City.

The skills and lessons that went into creating the imagery for "Indigenous Woman" and then "China Doll," Gutierrez's 2021 summer show at Ryan Lee, are evident in the sleekness of "Anti-Icon." With minimal prop language and an empty swimming pool as a stage, Gutierrez completely transforms her appearance, calling to mind the work of shapeshifters like Gillian Wearing and Cindy Sherman but with less production and more imagination. The artist's body and face are hardly recognizable frame-to-frame even though most of the images tout the same basic ingredients: sheer sheets and repurposed trash rendered in black and white. The exceptions are Cleopatra and Queen Elizabeth whose cherry red pouts were too delicious to throw into grayscale.

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Up through the fall, "Anti-Icon" bus shelters can be found throughout New York City, though especially clustered by cultural institutions at the artist's behest. "She wanted to play with art inside and outside the museum," Stathopoulou says. This series is complemented by another outdoor project—a Whitney Museum of American Art commission to erect a mural at 95 Horatio Street. There is no specific connection between the two except their author who is always in the practice center as both subject and creator.

I remark to Stathopoulou on our Morningside Heights walk that it is impressive that the artist can seamlessly go from angel to movie star. I call her Tilda Swinton in the making. Stathopoulou laughs but corrects me: Gutierrez considers herself one of a kind. And this is the same commitment that she makes to the character she embodies. There is a purity in the artist's belief that imagination has the power to overthrow reality. Through her work, Gutierrez looks us in the eye and asks us to do the same.

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The New York Times

A Shape-Shifting Woman Plays All the Parts

By Hilarie M. Sheets | August 13, 2021

Across three cities on bus shelters and a giant billboard, Martine Gutierrez, the artist, performer and provocateur, asks what it means to be a woman in these times.



"I've navigated the world in a very gender-fluid way," the artist Martine Gutierrez said. "What does being a woman mean?" Credit: Camila Falquez for The New York Times

A cast of goddesses, queens and other powerful women from across history and mythology are landing on 300 bus shelters in New York, Chicago and Boston. Co-opting the space of luxury perfume and fashion ads, 10 colossal photographic representations of feminine idols, conjured by a single name — Cleopatra, Aphrodite, Godiva, Sheba — gracefully bare themselves. What exactly are they selling?

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Martine Gutierrez, the shape-shifting artist and performer who plays all the parts, is behind "ANTI-ICON," a Public Art Fund project. "These are all figures known for their beauty as well as their perseverance and ability to overcome obstacles," Katerina Stathopoulou, the show's curator, said of the star lineup, which is on view from Aug. 25 to Nov. 21. It also includes the Syrian deity Atargatis, Queen Elizabeth I, the angel Gabriel, the warrior Mulan, Helen of Troy and Judith (famous for beheading Holofernes), as reinterpreted by Gutierrez, who has seen these figures reproduced countless times and is testing whether she is "allowed" to represent them.

"My first question was, 'Am I a woman? What does being a woman mean?'" said Gutierrez, who identifies as a nonbinary transwoman. "It's probably something I'll never stop asking myself."



Martine Gutierrez as "Cleopatra," with a garbage-bag wig (2021). The giant photographs will appear on bus shelters in three cities. Credit: Martine Gutierrez



Martine Gutierrez

The 32-year-old artist, who lives in Brooklyn, has always controlled her image in front of and behind the camera, as model, costume and set designer, makeup artist and director, interrogating ideas about gender, ethnicity and how

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identity is constructed personally and collectively. Known for her sumptuous photographs and videos in which she performs a chameleon-like array of stereotypes culled from glossy magazines, Hollywood and the music industry, the artist here takes on the challenge of enacting personas spanning time and cultures.

Gutierrez uses a stripped-down body language (honed from years studying dance), strategically draped scarves and wigs fashioned from a black garbage bag, potting moss or party streamers that she found around her mother's house in upstate New York (she shot the images in an abandoned swimming pool).

Just which persona would show up for an interview at the Ryan Lee gallery in Chelsea, which represents her, was a bit of a mystery. Tall and lithe in a white tank top and jeans, makeup-free with long dark hair, Gutierrez could have passed for a contestant on "America's Next Top Model" (a show for which she once tried to audition). "I feel like that's my strength," she said. "I think confusion is delicious."



The real Martine Gutierrez, putting up her shape-shifting images in bus shelters in New York. Credit: Camila Falquez for The New York Times

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Born in Berkeley, Gutierrez described growing up as a "very femme boy" in an interracial family — her father from Guatemala, her mother from the United States. "I've always navigated the world in a very gender fluid way," said Gutierrez. As a child she was obsessed with Barbies, particularly princess dolls — Pocahontas, Jasmine, Ariel. Her mother, an architect, helped her make a life-size version of the popular three-foot-tall My Size Barbie that they called My Size Martine.

"I was a Disney queen," Gutierrez said. "Purging that brainwashing has been a priority, the inherent American dream of Disney that you can always have more."

From an early age, Gutierrez studied fashion magazines, popular culture, music videos, films. Jeff Lee, co-founder of Ryan Lee gallery, said, "She became so fluid in that language, exploring ideas of self, gender and identity through all those mechanisms about fantasy and storytelling." Lee was introduced to Gutierrez's work through her professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she received her B.F.A. in 2012. The gallery began showing her work right out of art school (Gutierrez said she arrived to meet Lee thinking she was interviewing for a job at the front desk).



Martine Gutierrez, "Girl Friends (Anita & Marie 3)" (2014) and a mannequin mirror each other. Are they lovers or friends? She welcomes the confusion.Credit...Martine Gutierrez and Ryan Lee Gallery

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In the early series including "Girl Friends" and "Line Up," both from 2014, Gutierrez created and photographed luxurious scenes with mannequins as archetypes of beauty, altering their appearance and her own to mirror each other in intimate hyper-feminine groupings. The illusions are so seamless, it's easy to mistake what is "real" and what is artifice.

"When I was in the gallery next to my work, viewers didn't recognize that I was the girl in the picture," said Gutierrez, who was then using male pronouns. She said it was her first realization that she wanted to transition and be seen as a woman by the world.

Works from these series are on view through Oct. 24 in a survey show at the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston titled "Martine Gutierrez: Radiant Cut." It also includes images from her 2018 project "Indigenous Woman," a 124-page art publication that appropriated the large format of "Interview" magazine in a provocation "dedicated to the celebration of Mayan Indian heritage, the navigation of contemporary indigeneity, and the ever-evolving self-image," as she wrote in an editor's note. As model, photographer, advertiser and editor in chief, she brought alive a panoply of tropes — sporting costumes from Guatemala in high-fashion spreads, spoofing beauty products in advertorials, playing roles from Latina maid to trophy wife in a psychosexual saga about the white man's "discovery" of the Indigenous woman.

"Martine has an incredible understanding of all the attributes of the cliché and how to represent it and twist it," said Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Haywood Gallery, who showed prints from "Indigenous Woman" in the 58th International Art Exhibition that he organized in 2019 at the Venice Biennale. Comparing her to Cindy Sherman, a pioneer of embodying female stereotypes in setup photos, Rugoff said Gutierrez brings different concerns to the equation as a transgender person with a mixed ethnic background.

"Martine's work asks you to suspend your belief in these categories of gender and race and to look at identity as something that's much more potentially open," Rugoff said.

Gutierrez acknowledges an undeniable adjacency to Sherman's work and points as well to the examples of Britney Spears, Frida Kahlo and Christina Aguilera.

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Martine Gutierrez from "Indigenous Woman," 2018. Credit: Martine Gutierrez and Ryan Lee Gallery



Martine Gutierrez as Neo-Indeo, from "Indigenous Woman" (2018). Her work tweaks stereotypes and tropes. Credit: Martine Gutierrez and Ryan Lee Gallery

The Venice Biennale brought Gutierrez to a much larger stage. Lee, her gallerist, has sold works to institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Selections from "Indigenous Woman" are also now on view in Chicago at the Museum of Contemporary Photography through Aug. 29. "Martine fights transphobia, she fights colorism in ways that are really serious but also with this kind of glamour and humor," said Asha Iman Veal, a curatorial fellow who organized that show. "She doesn't ask for permission from anyone else to center herself and she is not afraid to take up all the space."

For the new work in "ANTI-ICON," Gutierrez relied heavily on poses in her incarnations. Aphrodite demurely covers her nakedness with her hands in a serpentine posture evoking Botticelli's famous painting of the goddess of love. Gabriel, with wings of cardboard and arm extending a twig, recalls the stylized profile of countless biblical paintings of the Annunciation (not to mention a pinup girl).

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Martine Gutierrez, "Queer Rage, Growing Up Bites," from "Indigenous Woman," 2018. Credit: Martine Gutierrez and Ryan Lee Gallery

For her Helen of Troy, who incited a war with her beauty, Gutierrez channeled the actress Monica Bellucci. "This is the most womanly I think I've ever been in my life," Gutierrez said, appraising the image in which she pulled a piece of gardening netting over her face. "I thought, she's trapped by the gift or power to be sought after."

Given the very public placement of these images at bus stops and exposure to a broad audience, is it important to Gutierrez that the viewer know she is a transwoman? "Hmm, Martine licks her lips and thinks," said the artist, playfully appropriating the tone of a celebrity interview while deflecting the question.

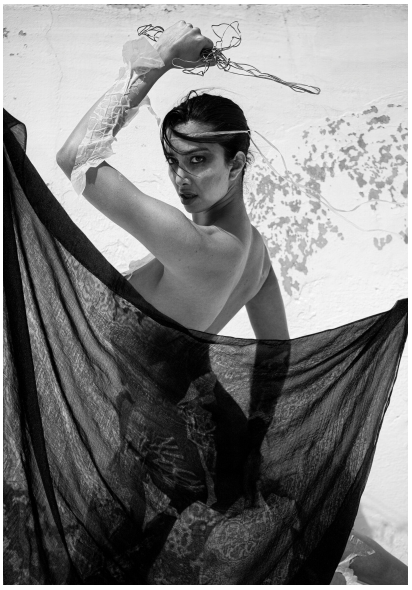
"I didn't want to hide in costume," she said finally. "I wanted to embody a figure. If I could make someone think of Cleopatra using some wire and a garbage bag, then to me that was successful — for all of them."

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Martine Gutierrez, "Helena" (2021), or Helen of Troy. "This is the most womanly I think I've ever been in my life." Credit: Martine Gutierrez



Martine Gutierrez, "Judith" (2021) .Credit: Martine Gutierrez

In a project for the Whitney in September down the block from the museum, a billboard above the women's clothing store Intermix will feature Gutierrez splayed out in white lingerie on a plush pink shag carpet as an army of Lilliputian-like blond Barbie dolls traverse her body, pulling her brown hair and unspooling white thread that spells out the title "Supremacy."

"This is the image that we're trapped by — little waist, peroxide hair, colored contacts," the artist said.

It's a commentary on "how women have been transformed, and are transforming themselves, in ad campaigns and fashion — and her being part of that from the position of a transgender woman," said Marcela Guerrero, an associate curator at the Whitney who organized the show. "There's always a level of self-critique but according to her own terms. Martine's calling all the shots."

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Interview

The Artist Martine Gutierrez Goes Blonde

By Blake Abbie | February 2, 2021



When Martine Gutierrez, the artist known for Indigenous Woman, a book produced by and starring herself, reached out asking to speak about her new film China Doll, I wanted to understand, "Why me?" In the film—the main feature of her latest show, CHINA DOLL, Rated R., a VR exhibition at Ryan Lee Gallery—Gutierrez once again plays the titular role. She is a blonde bombshell, the epitome of femininity and the product of Hollywood's highest ideals. A persona built to entice and intoxicate the audience, it's fantasy personified. So,

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why me? Having been through Idol camp in Asia, where Idols are manufactured through rigorous dance classes, singing lessons, and strategically styled outfits and hairdos, I am all too familiar with the transformative tools of flawless makeup and the perfect curls. Gutierrez and I are constructed from the same fantasy, just translated differently. So from this Idol to her Bombshell, speaking from two ends of the world, we discuss fame, celebrity, and the scandalous beauty of being blonde in the industry.

———

BLAKE ABBIE: You look radiant after last night's opening.

MARTINE GUTIERREZ: This digital exhibition feels like the closest thing to an opening I could create. Usually, it feels like a wedding, where I'm the bride and groom. I miss it very much. Anyway, I've stopped sleeping and went to bed at seven in the morning. Nothing else matters right now. What else do I have to do?

ABBIE: Time doesn't exist.

GUTIERREZ: I hate it. I've seen everything on Netflix. There's nothing left to see, Blake.

ABBIE: I consumed so much content last week.

GUTIERREZ: Everyone is this ripe sponge now. Do people want to listen to others say, "Wow, this is so weird, sad, and hard?" Or, do they want escapism? They want to believe in something. They want mythology.

ABBIE: So, you're Aphrodite. That's sexy. Aligned with the Bombshell.

GUTIERREZ: With who I am right now, perhaps.

ABBIE: The star.

GUTIERREZ: I don't know how this works. I'll have to ask my manager.

ABBIE: My team just does it all for me. We're at a place where we don't have to

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think.

GUTIERREZ: That's luxury. Luxury is the place where everything is done. It's relief, really.

ABBIE: So you're alone?

GUTIERREZ: I've been alone for several months. It's been fab.

ABBIE: You were filming and you've been alone this time. What's your sense of making something now? You've always worked alone.

GUTIERREZ: I have. I thrive in it. I was compartmentalizing to be like, "This is COVID and you're allowed to be this way, disappear and focus on asking 'Why?'" I love that question applied to anything. That's what made me an annoying child. We'd watch a movie and I'd be like, "Why did they do that?" It didn't make sense to me. If you really shed the hype, which is what this year forced everyone to do, you look at a character like Road Runner: Who is he, standing still? The character doesn't work. You have to rewrite and recast him.

ABBIE: Let's talk about the characters in your film.

GUTIERREZ: Well, I was locked in a pool with a few toys and had to entertain myself. There are three "actors." Two men and a woman; she's playing me. Or I'm playing her. That's unclear. It's funny when you don't have real actors, and you're the writer and the director, and you don't have to check in with your co-stars about what you're asking them to do.

ABBIE: Boundaries can be crossed.

GUTIERREZ: This experience was no doubt inappropriate because the intention was unclear, which is exciting because I'm not an actress. I just play one in the movies.

ABBIE: She says, throwing her hair over her shoulder with a little wink.

GUTIERRES: As she takes a sip of her Pellegrino.

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ABBIE: I have oolong tea, handpicked, hand-rolled. It's in my rider. So, she's an actor, dancer, artiste, model, singer, songwriter…

GUTIERREZ: Everything a true Caucasian needs to be. I am bred for greatness. I know how to set a table, but would never. I know how to use cutlery correctly, all those forks and spoons.

ABBIE: The tiny ones.

GUTIERREZ: The Barbie spoon. With the film, I want to believe in love and things that last forever, I just haven't experienced that. Trying to get my parents back together, very Parent Trap. Believing that maybe when I'm with my father, there's another me with my mother, and they think I don't know and can keep lying.

ABBIE: You're a true Lindsay Lohan.

GUTIERREZ: I'm the dark side of Lindsay, the underground fame. No one can dictate how we're famous and what for. It's less of a question of when, and obviously why. My favorite question, "Why are they famous?" At this moment, we all can be and are. We all are porn stars. OnlyFans has changed that. It's giving the platform of autonomy to everyone. Just how Hollywood doesn't work when Netflix can make Academy Award-winning movies.

ABBIE: Or doesn't work now that we can make our own movies.

GUTIERREZ: Exactly.

ABBIE: The glamour is gone.

GUTIERREZ: Glamour only works from a distance, from the outside looking in. It's like, "Well, now you can just do it." When everyone is Paris Hilton, no one is scandalous.

ABBIE: The tabloid scandal that came out before your film's release is shockingly hot.

GUTIERREZ: Is it? Thank you. I'm like, "What is infamous nowadays? Should

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that matter?" Being in the swimming pool felt symbolically correct, like a portrait of solitary confinement. A beautiful echoing prison. A chamber of light reflecting—probably terrible for my skin.

ABBIE: How about more SPF?

GUTIERREZ: I sweat it off! I do all my own stunts, even the lovemaking.

ABBIE: I was actually wondering about the sex scenes. They're un-simulated. Did you build intimacy between you and your costars, Rocco and Diego Carlos?

GUTIERREZ: We're actors. There has to be trust. It was easy because they're both attractive. But we're all playing a part. It's not real.



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ABBIE: Was it your first time having sex on camera? Maybe that's inappropriate to ask.

GUTIERREZ: No, it's not. It's funny because I think of Chloë Sevigny. "It was a subversive act. It was a risk," she told Variety about The Brown Bunny. I get confused sometimes objectifying myself. "Only I'm allowed to do it." It's very: "I say who, I say when." Vivian Ward, from Pretty Woman, she's our favorite prostitute. I find that poetic.

ABBIE: Do you use the mirrors in the film as a way to reflect on yourself?

GUTIERREZ: The mirror is interesting because it's truth, but not. It's a thoughtful place. It feels like an altar that asks you to check in with where you are right now. It sees everything.

ABBIE: And you are able to see everything, too.

GUTIERREZ: You can look at it, and hold yourself a certain way. But you know you're playing at it if it's not something you can comfortably face. And we need this counterpart. There's no real in-between. There is dark and light. The two need to co-exist. You can't just banish one, that's banishing both. That speaks to where we're at politically. If you make or invent a new thing, it will create itself because it exists. It's like relativity. It's very Marxist.

ABBIE: Understanding the light and dark, your manipulation of shadows in the film, is also interesting. You can't see a hand—you see the shadow and know what's there. I want to ask about the peach and the millipede. Why did you want to include that? We know what the peach means, we know what a millipede could represent.

GUTIERREZ: In my mind, when editing suggestively like you're describing, the shadow conceals who bit into the peach, so the action can become a symbol. Whether the symbol is knowledge, or corruption or innocence lost, it is vibrance in a new wound, a sparkling drip. To watch something be ruined is so beautiful. In the pool, millipedes wouldn't leave me alone. We would shoot a scene if they would let me pick them up, and I'd be like, "Okay, thank you." It feels biblical in a sci-fi way for an insect to give snake.

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ABBIE: And the peach gives apple.

GUTIERREZ: It was also summer. Peaches were ripe, a temptation even when not filming. Placing one in front of the camera became a character, undeniably. We live in an era where everything is a reference. Right? We can't refuse a reference now. And you can just co-exist with not knowing the reference—until someone educates you. That's the other place we're at, where everyone is educating each other, constantly. That's like what being is. Or something.

ABBIE: Post-art school, everyone wants to be enlightened. And also, everyone feels entitled to enlighten.

GUTIERREZ: Ew. Not perpetually in art school. I'm going to get water.

ABBIE: They should have just brought it to you. I want to ask about your evolution. You've said to me you're at the peak of femininity, that you don't get clocked. I think you meant you have less of a range of gender play and are more in your womanhood.

GUTIERREZ: The drag of my body has cast me as a woman. As someone who was writing about gender and has been critical in speaking about perception, it's astonishing to walk into privilege with the doors held open. The strongest parallel is in becoming blonde.

ABBIE: You look at our counterparts in the industry, and as soon as someone goes blonde, there's a shift. Or maybe it's even more noticeable when a blonde chooses to become not blonde.

GUTIERREZ: Scarlett Johansson becomes a brunette and you're like, "Oh no, who is this? What happened?"

ABBIE: There's almost this ownership of other people's blondness.

GUTIERREZ: Absolutely. It feels insulting.

ABBIE: Blondness being a construct, or even a tool people use to underscore this idea of femininity. Or even the word "blonde" having both a masculine and feminine spelling.

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GUTIERREZ: Blondness doesn't ever really exist, with or without the 'e.' She's still this thing that Marilyn puts on, Madonna puts on, Scarlett puts on. Different generations and demographics understand her as reality because they aspire to this thing. But she herself aspires to it too. It's so fixed by media, but it's so unfixed as a place to stay for anyone. It's beautiful, beautifully strange.

ABBIE: Why don't you go blonde?

GUTIERREZ: Because I like tactility. Sound and touch are the most sensual things. Sound, I can control. Touch, I can control by keeping things around me that are pleasant. I'm still imagining the mass of all this [hair] becoming a new material that will act differently. I'll have to cut it off, which is fine, but it will still feel disgusting. Like a scrubby sponge around my head. Though now, with science, who knows?

ABBIE: Maybe you want the choice to take off the blonde and that persona.

GUTIERREZ: I love taking off my wig and looking at it as a symbol. I'm literally still the girl in my movie. I guess I cast her for a reason. It's so weird making something that feels like an extension of reality, of who I am—but it isn't.

ABBIE: Maybe, as you said, it's the opposite of the reflection of your reality. Do you see this role in relation to those you undertook in creating previous works in the past, like Indigenous Woman?

GUTIERREZ: Yes, it's the mirror. It's the same frame of mind. This is Indigenous Woman's counterpart, a reaction still asking, "Is this real?" As an American, I was raised on Americana iconography, which China Doll embodies. She is the white woman other white women aspired to be. Her position points irrefutably back at herself. So, how do I tear her down? I have to kiss her.

ABBIE: And you do in the film. I want to understand your relationship with the Chinese language and cinema, which you use in your film.

GUTIERREZ: Text over moving image is so ugly but so nostalgic. I grew up

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on my dad's bootlegs. He watches everything with subtitles because audibly English is harder for him to understand, and riddled with homonyms. Dad says he learned English by reading the funnies and watching martial arts movies. He loved Jackie Chan because people said they looked alike. Growing up we saw Jackie Chan commercialize into Rush Hour. He was my J-Lo. I was like, "He did it."

ABBIE: This film has a poem.

GUTIERREZ: The poem in Chinese characters over music, and then spoken with subtitles. To me, it's very Star Wars.

ABBIE: It's also '90s new wave Chinese films; you probably recognize this. They have a text that establishes the scene, setting and background, which is what this poem does.

GUTIERREZ: Yes. There's so little going on. Everything is so still. It's not linear, yet feels like a loop. Which is what time kind of feels like. We keep doing laundry, somehow there's always more laundry. A woman's work.

ABBIE: Is it the reason you chose all white?

GUTIERREZ: It looks stunning when clean. But there's something about how it just never stays clean. That's why you wash. You're just getting it ready to be destroyed, again.

ABBIE: The essence of womanhood. Are you going to have a Blonde Ambition World Tour?

GUTIERREZ: I made so much music at one point, and then didn't release any of it. That's what happens when you are the producer of your own pop star. The issue is control, and learning to relinquish it.

ABBIE: What's the difference between that and having work in a gallery?

GUTIERREZ: Because that's when I've said, "I'm done touching. I'm done fondling it." There's something I enjoy about the space of clay. Nothing is hard yet. It's begging me to make up its mind: "Have an opinion." What a moment

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to be decisive.

ABBIE: It seems the natural evolution of an entertainer. Once you've captured our hearts in one way, you move to another way to entertain. I'm into this idea that you are a singer, songwriter, actor, director, producer.

GUTIERREZ: I'd love a choreo moment.

ABBIE: Have you tried TikTok?

GUTIERREZ: I'm afraid I'll like it too much, and I'll never come back.

ABBIE: Why does that scare you?

GUTIERREZ: Because it's not real. I'd rather interrogate something I've cultivated, like, "Come here, and then we'll talk about it." Blonde is also that. Blonde is the avatar.

ABBIE: It could be an extension of that world. Imagine the next thing you do is a collaboration with BTS, the boy band.

GUTIERREZ: I would die. That would really be fierce.

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aperture

Searching for an Indigenous Fashion Star, Martine Gutierrez Casts Herself

By Nadiah Rivera Fellah | September 28, 2020

With her self-made magazine, the Latinx artist challenges notions of gender and cultural identity.

"No one was going to put me on the cover of a Paris fashion magazine, so I thought, I'm gonna make my own," recounts Martine Gutierrez, speaking about her 2018 project *c*, which takes the form of a 124-page magazine. In a series of spreads that encapsulates high-fashion glamour, as well as humor and the absurd, the artist is the project's featured model, photographer, stylist, creative director, and editor in chief. However, Gutierrez is enacting not simply the "artist as muse" but rather the "artist as media mogul," staging a guerrilla-style seizure and colonization of space in an image-based world to which she had previously been denied access.



Martine Gutierrez, Neo-Indio, Legendary Cakchiquel, 2018

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The concept of an artist's book is not new. Since the nineteenth century, following the inception of the photographic medium, artists have engaged the format through the sequencing of images combined with the use of text. In the late twentieth century, the artist's book took on new meanings. A cultural vehicle associated with the production and dissemination of knowledge was usurped and used to put forth polemical correctives to mainstream ideas about everything ranging from war and immigration to incarceration. But a fashion magazine rests in a decidedly different realm of popular culture. It is less precious, more pedestrian and unassuming. Any linearity dissolves in our casual method of flipping through pages, jumping around between images and spreads. Gutierrez was drawn to this aspect of magazines, and how they offered an opportunity to subvert white, Western standards of beauty: "What better way to do that than in a format we all understand?"

Indeed, appropriation is a thread that runs throughout the entire project. Not only does the artist appropriate the format, but there is a revolving roster of identities that she puts on and takes off as interchangeably as a hairstyle, a mask, or a pair of shoes. In a bilingual, psychedelic advertisement for "Identity Boots," Gutierrez poses nude in go-go boots, covered in gender symbols that gesture toward glyphs or pictograms. In other images, she appears in Indigenous textiles—some belonging to her Mayan grandmother—against a stark white background, with jewelry, bananas, or the ubiquitous handmade *muñecas*, a type of doll peddled in markets throughout Mexico and Central America. In each case, makeup, props, and costumes become part of the masquerade that Gutierrez employs as a challenge to stable notions of gender and cultural markers, resulting in a foregrounding of the performative aspects of identity. Within the artist's critical appropriation of the fashion magazine format, identity itself is put forth as commodity or currency, an item to be formed, expressed, weighed, and exchanged.

Throughout *Indigenous Woman*, indigeneity becomes a medium to reflect on gender, heritage, and narrative. As a trans artist, Gutierrez mobilizes the concept of indigeneity to question the birth origins of gender—what makes a "Native-born" woman, and what contributes to the stability of this identity? For Gutierrez, who is of Mayan heritage, the title evokes the facets of cultural identity and her family's Indigenous roots. As a result, the artist deftly avoids being categorized at the same moment that her image is repeated. She is carefully poised within the tension between indigeneity and popular culture. Such sincere investment in both makes the project equal parts impressive and enthralling. Gutierrez states, "Affirming my life is an ongoing project; it's about identity at large."

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Martine Gutierrez, Ad, Identity Boots, 2018



Martine Gutierrez, Neo-Indio, Kekchí Snatch, 2018



Martine Gutierrez, Neo-Indio, Mam Going Bananas, 2018



Martine Gutierrez, Queer Rage, Dear Diary, No Signal During VH1's Fiercest Divas, 2018

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The New York Times

The Native Artists Showing Us What's Happening in Indigenous America

We spoke with Wendy Red Star about what it was like to curate, edit and feature a wide range of Native artists for the Fall issue of Aperture.

By Fahima Haque | September 10, 2020



Wendy Red Star of the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation at The Grotto in Portland, Ore. Credit Josue Rivas for The New York Times

Wendy Red Star is a visual artist who grew up on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana and now lives in Portland, Ore. She recently was asked to guest edit the Fall issue of Aperture, a quarterly magazine, which focuses on Indigenous lives through photography.

"I've always been really enthralled with images," she said. "I really like to align my practice with research and investigation as the primary source of inspiration. Everything that I put out there visually is the way that my voice speaks the loudest."

We spoke with her about what it was like to curate, edit and feature a wide range of Native artists in the issue, titled "Native America" and launching Sept. 10.

This interview is lightly condensed and edited.

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Q. How did you get involved with this project? How much freedom did you have in curating these artists?

A. I've always known about Aperture. Since my background is in sculpture, I've never really thought of myself as a photographer.

I was very hesitant to be placed in this position. I don't have any formal training in photography, so there was that aspect. But another thing is that being an artist who is Native I'm really particular in what I would like to see. So I was a little bit hesitant in wondering where Aperture was coming from. I immediately put that out there to them, like the artists that I'm going to select are going to be similar and that maybe photography isn't their main language, maybe they work in other mediums, but photography does come up. The other thing, too, is I really liked specificity. I really wanted artists who were coming from their own environments and their perspectives and giving us access to a deeper look into who they are or communities that they're focused on.

The direction was to really expose artists and ideas that haven't really gotten as much attention. They're the deep dive and underbelly of what's happening in Indigenous America. Each of the artists that are in the magazine does a brilliant job with that.

Q. How did you choose these artists?

A. For instance, Jacqueline Cleveland, she's got a background in film and my connection with her is that we actually went to undergrad together at Montana State University in Bozeman, and she's Alaska Native. I used to be obsessed with all her Facebook posts of her home territory and her community. The way that she photographed made me feel like I was right there with her, there were a lot of images of typical things that she and her family would do, like harvesting or hunting. The way that she was able to let me enter into her life and her family life and community life, I thought was really powerful.

Duane Linklater has this very powerful message in that his work is very generous but also he'll show you what he wants to show you but then he'll also keep things that you don't have access to. As a Native artist, it's such a powerful perspective when you think about how Native culture is exploited by Western culture.

Kimowan McClain, who went by his mother's name, Metchewais. He passed away from cancer and I became aware of his work probably around 2000. He stuck with me and then I did an artist research fellowship through the Smithsonian. I did my research at the National Museum of the American Indian and that's where his papers and his artwork are. When Aperture asked me, he was my number one person that I really wanted because he hasn't really had exposure, but I think his work is so important to the dialogue for both Native artists and artists in general.

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Kimowan Metchewais, *Raincloud*, 2010
Courtesy Kimowan Metchewais McLain/National Museum of the American Indian/Smithsonian Institution

Q. How do you edit art?

A. Actually, this was really great because it was pretty freeing. Aperture paired writers with the artists. That was really important. We wanted writers of color, Native writers, but we also wanted writers that weren't Native to have to talk about Native artists' work. That was something that I really wanted Aperture to push forward, because it's part of what happens, especially if you want a career in the arts or anywhere. A lot of times people are afraid to write about Native artists' work. That's something I really wanted to have — a marriage between writers and artists and have that opportunity going both ways.

Martine Gutierrez had a project called "Indigenous Woman," which was a magazine that she produced, so she basically sent us that; I already knew about that project. Aperture was always so kind and let me select a wide range of images and then we would go back and forth on the editing process there. With Duane Linklater, he made completely new work. The artists were always allowed to look and give their final say.

Q. Did you have to convince these artists to be a part of the issue or assure them they'd be given free rein to express themselves? For many Indigenous, of color or Black artists attempts at inclusion can also be an attempt to commodify or distort.

A. It happened with almost every artist and it was a very humbling position for myself as an artist of color and having that sensitivity and trying to get away from the surface level and really dig in. It was a lot of cautionary, easing into these conversations and it really pushed me out of my comfort zone. I had to have a lot of humility in approaching the artists. Part of that humility was because I have such deep admiration and respect and their work inspires me greatly. Some of the people we couldn't get; I'm still reeling from rejection, even if that rejection was just timing.

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Queer Rage, Dear Diary, No Signal During VH1's Fiercest Divas, from the series *Indigenous Woman*, 2018. Courtesy Martine Gutierrez, Ryan Lee Galllery

Q. Is there anything that after working with these artists that you've learned, whether technique or perspective, that you are now inspired to try in your next piece?

A. I'm really enthralled with Martine's work and the way that she builds a whole world, or if it doesn't exist, she goes and creates it. That, to me, is so empowering. With my work I'm really digging into historical records and bringing light to these histories that have been buried and unearthing them. So to see this amazing freedom that I find within Martine's work is something that I would very much like to allow myself to build a new world or create something in that way.

Q. Were you thinking about the audience while putting this issue together? Were you thinking, first and foremost, about other Native artists?

A. Well, Aperture said something really interesting in the beginning. They asked, is there a publication out there that's quintessential for Native photographers or, if there isn't, what would you envision? That made me think, or put myself in the frame of mind when I was a young artist in undergrad, and I used to go to the art library and spend hours pulling random books and flipping through them and gaining so much inspiration. I thought, wow, what if there was this publication that I pulled out back then? So I was really thinking about that young artist of color or Native artist that would see something like this and how inspiring that would be to have a publication like this. That really helped me then select a path going forward of who I thought would be highly important and inspirational for that young artist to see.

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artnet news

The 100 Works of Art That Defined the Decade, Ranked: Part 3

In the third installment of a four-part series, our critic reveals his picks—number 50 through number 26—of the key artworks of the 2010s.

Ben Davis | December 31, 2019



Installation of copies of Indigenous Woman at RYAN LEE Gallery. Image courtesy the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery.

"Best of" lists are always at least half frauds. After all, no one can really see all the movies or read all the books in a year, let alone a decade—but at least film critics or literature critics are debating things that offer the same experience no matter where you are. The nature of art means that the exercise is extra arbitrary. A really successful work of art might travel to different museums, but it also might not. So you are left either taking someone else's word for what was good or leaving out important touchstones.

If you were to map out the geography of the works I mention below, it would look like a target, with most of the darts falling right around where I live, New York. The distribution of hits would then scatter out from the bullseye, landing at more and more random points the farther they get. You really feel your own limitations when you try to put together a list like this.

Nevertheless, I think there's some interest in picking out not just artists or general trends, but specific artworks. I find it's hard to do that, which is exactly why it's worth doing—to take note

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of specific images or ideas that appeared this decade and that particularly stuck, even if not everyone is going to agree on how exactly to value them.

Still, I'm left facing my own limitations. Just picking personal favorites leaves out a lot that was objectively influential, but pretending it's some kind of objective "Greatest Hits" leaves you just measuring raw popularity (in which case, Wall Street's Fearless Girl would be #1).

So I thought of five measures by which I might estimate artworks' importance: by originality/invention (the degree to which they introduced something new to the conversation); form/style (how memorable they were as a specific image or idea); depth/nuance (whether coming back to them was rewarding, or revealed new layers); symbolic power (the degree to which they seemed to stand as symbol of some bigger conversation, moment, or emergent cultural sensibility); and popularity/influence (how big a deal they were, either to other artists or to the wider public).

Combing back through a decade's worth of seeing, reading about, and writing about art, and squinting at it through the lenses of these five categories, I came up with a list of artworks that balance between these values, converging toward works that fire on most cylinders at the top. (I didn't want to repeat artists, because that made the list more boring.)

Starting at the end, then, here is one way to look at the 2010s in art.

38. Martine Gutierrez, Indigenous Woman (2018)

Gutierrez's great idea was to create a fictional 126-page glossy fashion magazine dedicated to "Mayan Indian heritage." For the project, she plays art director, model, and editor (and, less glamorously, as she told Vice, "also the crew. I'm the schlepping person"). This allowed her to explore different nuances of identity "as a woman, as a transwoman, as a latinx woman, as a woman of indigenous descent, as a femme artist and maker" in a fun, outspoken way. Images from the project made Gutierrez a break-out at the 2019 Venice Biennale as well.

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CULTUREBOT
MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE

Martine Gutierrez's CIRCLE at Performance Space New York

Dec 18, 2019
by Dot Armstrong



Performance Space New York promises an alien life form tonight. We are visiting an alien, in her testing site. There are guards at the elevators. They make specific flight attendant gestures with black gloved hands. They deliver many instructions in clipped, robotic inflections — half elegant, half hilarious. Welcome to Circle Corp, they say, and open the doors. We shuffle inside the black box on the fourth floor, unzipping coats and fighting with scarves, jocular, unnerved by the seriousness settling around us like some noxious gas. Pulsing beats evoke a post-apocalyptic rave. More guards, looking like lab techs covered head to toe in blue hazmat outfits, give us our own Protective Equipment. We suit up. The people behind me are concerned with the relative stylishness of the odd white getup — the suits are the texture of cheap hospital gowns, shapeless, neutralizing. We are told they'll be filming the event.

A white scrim, textured and lit to look red and imposing, gives way to a dark corner where we're shown a list of the procedures for the holding chamber. Security camera footage of the chamber plays on another screen. We peek, greedy for evidence of the alien presence. We're not so concerned about the rules. Someone wonders aloud if there's anything that could really hurt us in there. We are forbidden the following: talking, taking photos, touching the subject. We are

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instructed to follow our Facilitator. We all have the letter C on our right hands in case we get lost. Could we get lost in there? It's hard to tell how large the space is, how real the rules are, how serious we ought to be. The person beside me whips out their phone for a red-hued selfie. I catch a glimpse: we look like goofy ghosts, a cue of stunt doubles for the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. The Facilitator doesn't notice.



A signal from within the holding chamber; the Facilitator leads us into a corridor constructed with black curtains and translucent scrims. The sound score screeches, hums, swells. The alien is closer but we still can't see her too well. We wait, trying to get a better look through the milky plastic at the strobing lights in the inner sanctum. A bubble-like structure is visible, where a shadowy figure writhes — the alien. She is almost as tall as the top of the bubble when she stands upright; her hands (or what look like hands) describe the edges of the bubble, frantic, like she's trying to get out. Should someone help her? Is she dangerous? A hazy substance fills the bubble sometimes, obscuring her further. More people in white hazmat suits stand around, phantom-like. Green, red, and purple lights flicker and strobe as the rave beats resume their pulsing urgency. The people behind me are now discussing their college degrees, snickering, name-dropping. The person beside me scoffs, what are they going to do, kick me out? I start to explain something about artistic agency over visual archives of original work but all that comes out is I guess we're all in trouble.

As we finally shuffle onto a viewing platform in the holding chamber, I wonder if the piece is a study on human group dynamics, the rules we allow each other to break. Below, the alien lies prostrate in her bubble. Two guards in Che Guevara caps and plastic face shields march us around the platform. More lab tech types in navy blue hazmat suits clutch cameras and walk counterclockwise, intent. Femme robo-voices interrupt the sound score: Welcome to Circle Corp. Subject EVE. Testing, incomplete. Estrogen levels, dangerous. Standby. Scientists, we assume, or just officious people with clipboards, pace around the bubble. They shine a big spotlight at the alien. The alien moves slowly, distally, crimping her fingers into delicate arcs. She is a hominid, with familiar appendages and features — arms, knees, neck, lips, ass, clavicle. Her

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hair is a wild silver tangle. She arches her back, rotates her shoulders, drags her head on the bottom of the bubble. A bandage stretches across her chest; fabric scraps just darker than her skin, electrode patches, and other bandages cover the rest of her. She moves as if stunned, or sedated. Her eyes go wide at the multicolored lights crisscrossing her body. And the lights from above are glorious. Precise pale blue grids track squares across her torso. Oscillating acid green washes alternate with pulses of scarlet. Lavender and lime lasers inscribe incomplete circles around her. A cage of white light descends over her, flickering into shadow.



We are ushered out. We peel off our suits, leave the lights and music, the space age fantasy, the mock danger. We make wry faces at each other in the elevator again, trying to dispel the bizarre energy. Someone says, I need a cocktail. We disperse, coats caught in the wind. Neon signs lace the dark with brash colors. Outside is just as weird as inside — too many parallels from one fever dream into another. Who isn't an alien?

—

Concept and Direction: Martine Gutierrez
Collaborators: Cynthia Leung, Jeffrey Lee, DonChristian Jones, Christian de Franco, Charlie Mai, Fernando Cerezo, Tyler Berrier, Alicia Lane, Andy K. and Bryan Villalobos
Film: Andy K., Alicia Lane
Make-Up and Prosthetics: Izzi Galindo
Costumes: Kay Goldburg, John-Paul Trang

Photos: Maria Baranova

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CULTURED

Martine Gutierrez Questions the Commodification of Diversity

by Elizabeth Karp-Evans
Photography by Aubrey Mayer
November 26, 2019



Martine Gutierrez's work incorporates imagery from fashion, film and advertising, referencing the industries' visual languages while subverting the conventions that still inundate commercial imagemaking. Acting as muse and maker, her precise, cinematic photography and videos challenge public perception of identity by focusing on a subject adjacent to binaries of gender, beauty, race and class. Gutierrez is a selfmade star at the forefront of a generation witnessing broader representation than ever in the mainstream. She is also mindful of the inevitable drawbacks that can come with boundary-pushing success, "The doors of inclusion are opened more often now, but only to a select few," says Gutierrez, "and, almost instantly, everyone feels the need to monetize what gets you through that door. That commodification of access is a disservice to diversity."

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To address this, Gutierrez embarked on a monumental, four-year project, Indigenous Woman, completed in 2018. Taking the form of a 124-page artist book-cum-glossy fashion magazine, and a subsequent exhibition at New York's Ryan Lee Gallery, Gutierrez worked as editor, creative director and photographer, shooting the entire project in her mother's backyard and at friends' studios. "What it took to create Indigenous Woman has been part of my practice for a long time: making something seem effortless, bigger and more glamorous than what it actually is," she says. "It was also a question of 'who is the audience? Who are my advertisers?' I was making every decision because I was the stylist, the makeup artist, the model. I am the client. That kind of autonomy is something that I had never found in the real world." The project, and much of Gutierrez's work, is not only about controlling every aspect of her image but also giving narrative agency to her and her audiences' histories. Considered in its entirety, her practice is a present-tense pop-cultural archive, pivoting thousands of years of underrepresented and undocumented stories into the spotlight.

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PAPER®

Martine Gutierrez Plays a Humanoid in New Sci-Fi Show

by Chanel Burns
November 19, 2019



Circle, Performance Space New York, 2019

This week, multidisciplinary artist Martine Gutierrez invites any and all audiences courageous enough to step into her secret laboratory at Performance Space New York.

Gutierrez introduces *Circle* to the public as part of Performance Space New York's *The Stages Series*, which launched in October and runs until January. Gutierrez's latest show, which runs Nov. 20, as well as on Nov. 22 and 23, combines "cinema's obsession with femme humanoids and other imagined freaks of nature with Mayan legends and unsolved mysteries of Mesoamerican alien sightings."

So far, *The Stages Series* has hosted works by artists such as Princess Nokia, and its aim is to "transcend the black box and its institutional walls."

Gutierrez's *Circle* is named after the leading corporation in the development of biological warfare. The show replicates a highly classified laboratory, similar to something from a cult '90s sci-fi thriller. A humanoid named Eve, created by Dr. Red, is kept under militant surveillance inside. Eve is the first humanoid to be bioengineered with alien DNA, which was discovered by Dr. Red in the Mayan cave Xibalba, also known as the "place of fear" or "the mouth of the underworld."

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To reduce the pollution of human contaminants, protective clothing will be provided to everyone upon entry. This murky dive into the unknown doubles as an exploration of exaggerated femininity, shaped by pop culture's materialization while reflecting on identity and desire — all common themes in Gutierrez's work.

"Am I suddenly more palatable because of the particular character on display?" Gutierrez asks in a statement. "It is my practice of autonomy over my own image that gives me the power to advocate for and objectify my body without being tokenized or used to assume allyship."

She continues: "I often look to cinema, television, advertisements and pop music as a stage on which to act out my own narrative. These re-imaginings of the self call attention to the fictions that surround and define us all — those we internalize through daily life and those we create."

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The Originals: Martine Gutierrez

by Siddhartha Mitter
October 11, 2019



Martine Gutierrez wears her own clothing.
Photograph by Jesus Medina.

In an era where seemingly everything is mined for inspiration—or, let's be frank, appropriation—what does it take to be truly one of a kind? A willingness to break the rules is essential; a strong sense of personal style certainly doesn't hurt; but most of all, you need to have a truly meaningful point of view. At W we are all about celebrating originality, which is why we've rounded up some of our favorite people who are constantly pushing boundaries, and asked them to share valuable insights. They may be just starting out or in the prime of their careers, but they are all leading the conversation in their chosen fields—whether it's fashion, art, film, music, photography, or even skateboarding. The bottom line is that, regardless of their differences, they all share one very important trait: for them, standing out, rather than blending in, is not an option but a necessity.

Martine Gutierrez is a Brooklyn-based artist whose work explores identity, often starring herself as subject or muse.

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You have two series on view at the Venice Biennale, which is one of the most prestigious events in the art world. Both feature carefully staged photographs of yourself, and both are in the magazine you made last year called Indigenous Woman. But while "Body En Thrall" is very cool, mostly black and white, the other series, "Demons," is about these wild goddess figures that are colorful and highly ornate.

I'm drawing there on Mayan, Aztec, and Yoruba deities. But I didn't want to be too literal—they're just a jumping-off point for imagery. I had some exposure to indigenous culture from when I used to go with my family to Guatemala. My father's mother is Mayan. She never left the country. We would go to visit my aunt in Guatemala City, but she lived in the mountains for a while, and we went there, too.

In Indigenous Woman, you do it all: the editorial copy, the photo shoots, the faux advertising campaigns. You're summoning up indigenous and queer personas in all these settings. It feels like allegory more than autobiography.

I'm innately a storyteller, and yet I'm not interested in telling my own story. So it becomes this kind of fiction in which I imagine using me in these situations—but then I can never seem to get away from my actual life experience.



Martine Gutierrez wears her own clothing.
Photograph by Jesus Medina.

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Indigenous Woman is a superslick project, because it's meant to mimic a fashion magazine. You seem drawn to what lurks behind those shiny surfaces.

I'm transfixed by glamour. Since I was little, it has been my escape. I consumed it through movies—it was animated princesses, mostly. And oddly a lot of sci-fi. My father really loved action films, and I think the fact that I would sit and watch with him gave him hope that there would be a masculine bone in my body. But we'd watch The Fifth Element and I was like, "Dad, I am Leeloo! I'm outside the binary!" Of course, we didn't even have that language then.

When you stage yourself with other people in your shoots, they're actually mannequins. What's the appeal?

I grew up loving dolls. Mannequins kind of upped the ante. I think they served as a way for me to be more comfortable performing. I didn't have to worry about how the other person was feeling, or even about my own discomfort in an intimate narrative.

Gender often comes up first when people talk about you: a Latinx, trans artist. But you don't seem keen on foregrounding those aspects, even if they inform your work.

I feel like in my breakout moment this year there were articles framing me in terms of qualifiers, or headlines that didn't even say my name! In that framing we don't get to talk about anything that's in a gray area.



Martine Gutierrez wears her own clothing.
Photograph by Jesus Medina.

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There's an inherent politics in your work to do with gender but also about today's xenophobia toward Central American people.

I never had any dream of being political. My parents are. They met starting a nonprofit doing relief work in Guatemala. We had people staying at our house in California under false names. We always had someone crashing on the couch. And I would take my bowl of cereal, turn on the television, and ignore them. Like, you're not going to get in the way of what I need to do, which is watch The Little Mermaid. But I see now that as artists we can be prophets of culture. I literally made a magazine talking about the absence of representation, then I got a Sephora campaign. This year every corporation went off on LGBTQ, black, and brown representation. And I was like, Am I part of this? That terrifies me because it means the next work has to be something really meaningful. But I also need to live my life—have a garden, fall in love, all those normal things.

Does originality mean going someplace totally different?

A part of me wants to take my image out of my work. I honestly feel the worst that could happen is that I'm nailed down somewhere—like, someone puts a pin in me and I exist on a mood board forever. This work is not allowed to be my best work.

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ARTSY

The Artists To Know Right Now

by Artsy Editors
September 16, 2019

The landscape of contemporary art is ever-changing. It shifts according to countless factors, from artists' principles and the political climate to auction records and collectors' tastes. Nevertheless, each year, a new crop of ambitious artists stands out. They catapult from obscurity to ubiquity, earn representation from top galleries, garner interest from prominent collectors, and pack their schedules with exhibitions. Most importantly, they make work that expands our understanding of what art can be.

The Artsy Vanguard 2019 features 50 artists, hailing from 27 countries and working in 27 cities around the world. Ranging in age from 28 to 93, they pursue painting, sculpture, photography, filmmaking, and performance, as well as investigative research and virtual reality. They delve into topics from human rights violations to youth culture, and capture the attention of powerhouse collectors and celebrity royalty, like Beyoncé.

Artsy editors developed this list from a pool of 600 artists who were nominated by more than 100 curators, collectors, and art-world professionals. These artists represent three distinct career stages, which we've arranged into the following categories: Emerging, which introduces artists who recently started showing at leading institutions and galleries; Newly Established, which presents the artists making noise at major art events and gaining representation

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Martine Gutierrez

B. 1989, Berkeley, California. Lives and works in New York.



(left) Martine Gutierrez, Self Portrait. Courtesy of the artist. (right) Demons, Xochiquetzal 'Flower Quetzal Feather,' p95 from Indigenous Woman, 2018
RYAN LEE

At the 58th Venice Biennale, one can't help but stop in their tracks before the work of Martine Gutierrez. The transgender Latinx photographer's self-portraits challenge gender stereotypes, offer up new visions of pop-cultural icons, and commingle tropes of high fashion and indigenous cultures.



Body En Thrall, p120 from Indigenous Woman, 2018, RYAN LEE

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In one photograph, Gutierrez appears poolside, wrapped around a male mannequin, while resembling Kim Kardashian with silky black locks and a doe-eyed gaze; in another, she has melons in her bikini top, offering them up to the viewer like perfectly rotund breasts.

In the past year, Gutierrez, who shows with Ryan Lee, has earned not just prime real estate in Venice, but also the cover of Artforum and inclusion in museum shows across the U.S., the U.K., and Germany.



(left) Demons, Tlazoteotl 'Eater of Filth,' p92 from Indigenous Woman, 2018 RYAN LEE (right) Body En Thrall, p113 from Indigenous Woman, 2018 RYAN LEE

One of Gutierrez's recent works, the magazine Indigenous Woman (2018), was inspired by aspirations to be a cover girl and to behold a glossy fashion magazine that reflected her own ideals, mixing glamorous looks, indigenous garb, and pop culture. RISD Museum curator Dominic Molon included Gutierrez in the show "Bona Drag" earlier this spring. Molon noted that the artist's use of motifs from art history and commercial advertising "confuses the boundaries between them, provocatively suggesting how both 'sell' through seduction, whether the 'product' is high-end merchandise or established legacies of power and authority."

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art21 magazine

Demons and Deities: Martine Gutierrez's Indigenous Inspired Iconography

by **Barbara Calderón**
August 1, 2019



Martine Gutierrez. Demons, Xochipilli 'The Flower Prince,' p91 from Indigenous Woman, 2018. C-print mounted on Sintra. 36 x 24 inches (91.4 x 61 cm). Edition 1 of 8. Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

Rainbows of Guatemalan textiles, tassels, and pom-poms dangle from Martine Gutierrez, posing as a fantasy rendition of the Aztec goddess Xochiquetzal in her publication, Indigenous Woman. This image, from Gutierrez's "Demons" series, subtitled "Deities of the Ancient World Resurrected in Hair," is one of the many glamazon archetypes the artist embodies throughout the magazine. Xochiquetzal, a patroness of artists, lovers, and all things pleasurable, and Tlazolteotl ("Eater of Filth"), known to incite vice and purification, are Aztec deities in the series that manifests opposing concepts of duality and genderfluidity. "I was looking for iconography that celebrated bodies outside of the binary—deities even bigger than bodies—because in general we tend to see ourselves in a god's image, whatever god that may be," Gutierrez explained. And just as divinities from the Aztec pantheon encompassed a myriad of aptitudes, so does Gutierrez, as the creative director, model, and photographer of Indigenous Woman, an art magazine that uses advertising language to deconstruct out-of-date ideas about ethnic and sexual identity.

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Martine Gutierrez. Indigenous Woman (front cover), 2018. Artist magazine, off-set printed; 124 pages. 16 1/2 x 11 inches (41.9 x 27.9 cm). Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

The publication performs well as a traditional beauty magazine, complete with a collection of fashion editorials, hair and beauty features, and a plethora of advertisements. A passive observer may mistake it as another glossy monthly, but under its glamorous surface and high production quality lurks a humorous critique about the exotification of identity. Satirical beauty ads like "COVERTGIRL," underscored with the catchphrase, "Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's white privilege," and an editorial for lavish mask routines containing ingredients like "Japanese algae, Eastern oysters, and Chinese freshwater pearls" mimic the content that fills most trendy women's periodicals. About making the magazine, Gutierrez said, "I am pioneering an image that is to be consumed and engineered to be read as commercial. I had to study the visual language of advertising."

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Martine Gutierrez. Indigenous Woman (back cover), 2018. Artist magazine, off-set printed; 124 pages. 16 1/2 x 11 inches (41.9 x 27.9 cm). Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

"This is not a magazine about fashion, lifestyle, or celebrity," Gutierrez states in the Indigenous Woman letter from the editor. "Fashion is a good veneer for making people look at what otherwise might make them feel uncomfortable." Gutierrez's love of fashion, pop culture, and pageantry is clear, which reveals itself in her muse; "I just feel like a scam in terms of [my] references." When asked where she seeks inspiration, she says, "I'm looking at people like Kim Kardashian. I'm looking at everything that becomes cool and at why we're obsessed with it: Why do we want to be this person or this brand?"



Martine Gutierrez. Quezalteca Especial Ad, p40-41 from Indigenous Woman, 2018. C-print mounted on Sintra. 54 x 72 inches (137.2 x 182.9 cm). Edition of 8. Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

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During the four years of working to develop the publication—which blossomed into a solo exhibition—Gutierrez underwent "constant introspection and reflection": interrogating her image, cultural background, and identity; centering herself as the subject for Indigenous Woman. In the demon-goddess portraits, Gutierrez adorns herself with golden jewelry, beaded masks, and towering braided crowns, extending her expression of identity beyond the human realm. The Aztec heroines Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl, the Mayan goddess Chin, and the Yoruba orisha Yemaya were inspiring to Gutierrez, as entities "who sit in a temple built to protect me and dolls like me." Other personifications in Indigenous Woman—such as the Neo Indeo supermodels, allegories of the artist's preteen queer rage, and a cleaning lady in soap ads—also explore iterations of identities that have been pressed upon Gutierrez throughout her life. At its core, Indigenous Woman is an editorial look book of dramatized personal identity in conversation with stereotypes the artist has experienced.



Martine Gutierrez. Queer Rage, P.S. Your Parents Are Nuts, p73 from Indigenous Woman, 2018. C-print mounted on Sintra with hand-painted artist frame. 16 1/2 x 11 inches (41.9 x 27.9 cm). Edition of 8. Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

"Language never seemed like a way to clarify who I was. I was afraid of getting roped into a category or being pigeon-holed," Gutierrez says. The art, fashion, and media worlds use terms like Latinx, indigenous, trans, queer, and bi-racial to describe her, but these labels often function as reductive shorthand for a range of experiences. Gutierrez's self-examination came full force after the racialization she experienced when she moved across the country, from California to Vermont, during high school. Her blended ancestry—she has a white, American mother from upstate New York and a Guatemalan father—and her being trans were never seen as strange in Oakland, where many of her peers were from mixed-race, same-sex, multireligion, cosmopolitan households. "It was jarring because [in Vermont] everyone asked the age-old questions: 'Where are you from?' 'What are you?' I didn't know how to answer them—I'm so many things."

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Martine Gutierrez. Neo-Indeo, Cakchiquel Calor, p34 from Indigenous Woman, 2018. C-print mounted on Sintra. 54 x 36 inches (137.2 x 91.4 cm). Edition of 8. Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

In Indigenous Woman, Gutierrez pays homage to her heritage with editorials featuring characters from the Mayan communities of Cakchquel, Chuj, and Kekchí. Modeling Guatemalan textiles sourced from her family's collection, fashioned into "a modern collection of traditional Mayan trajes de Guatemala," she illustrates "a contemporary living history, not one that is just buried." The fashion industry often appropriates indigenous culture through its design but rarely credits the source, and some designers even claim credit. "Neo Indeo" functions as a commentary on the invisibility of living indigenous craftsmanship and the appropriation that designers often perpetrate. It's reframing indigenous identity beyond the typical tropes of nostalgia, poverty, and antiquity. "This is how your abuelita might dress, but this is also how her granddaughter is going to dress," Gutierrez explained.

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Martine Gutierrez. Masking, Green-Grape Mask, p51 from Indigenous Woman, 2018. C-print mounted on Sintra. 20 x 16 inches (50.8 x 40.6 cm). Edition of 8. Courtesy of the Artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

From makeup and beauty advertisements to gallery walls, queer artists are more visible now than ever, but who is driving the narrative? Gutierrez says, "It's very cool to be brown, and it's really cool to be trans, right now." Her satirical "Masking" series shows extravagant stylizations of invented beauty rituals, prefaced by the editorial statement: "True beauty is not something we conform to but [rather] a practice of health and self-care that celebrates our complete uniqueness and individuality." GreenGrape Mask (2018), shows Gutierrez's face painted white with a jasmine-rice paste, with halved kiwi fruits placed on her eyelids, a dragonfruit in her mouth, cabbage covering her eyebrows, and a necklace of Chilean seedless green grapes. The list of luxurious ingredients needed for these facials is Gutierrez's humorous way of questioning the commodification and exotification of indigenous practices, akin to the absurdity of doing ayahuasca ceremonies in Brooklyn yoga studios.

Asked about the critical response to the exhibition, Gutierrez said it's been overwhelmingly positive, with the caveat that "people are afraid to give criticism to a trans woman or a person of color within a formal setting because they don't want to be seen as transphobic or racist or generally not woke." She says most people don't even want to talk about the publication: "All people want to do is talk about my identity—the qualifiers that make me a minority—and not that I published and executed a 120-page magazine by myself." And though the title Indigenous Woman is made up of identity designations, Gutierrez's shapeshifting subjects destroy commonly held beliefs about what an indigenous woman can signify. The artist concludes, "In my mind, labels are so divisional. We just need more people being, like, 'This is my life.'"

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The Boston Globe

Sweetness, ferocity in portraits since Stonewall

by CateMcQuaid
July 21, 2019

HARTFORD — The sweetness, ferocity, and sparkle of "Be Seen: Portrait Photography Since Stonewall" at the Wadsworth Atheneumm Museum of Art stands starkly against a particular societal backdrop: the hush and shadow of the closet.

The Stonewall Riots during the summer of 1969 weren't just the pivot point between secrecy and openness for the LGBTQ community. They set off decades of personal reckoning as people confronted the pain of oppression and owned what might have previously felt shameful. Then, as many stepped out of the closet, AIDS hit the gay community.

This exhibition, organized by Patricia Hickson, the Wadsworth's curator of contemporary art, mines a rich vein. LGBTQ artists have been at the forefront of numerous trends in contemporary art for decades, exploring personal identity, subjectivity, and performance of self — perfect themes for a portrait photography show, and ones that have only become more heightened in the Internet age.

Andy Warhol wasn't the first artist to self-consciously shape a persona to play in front of the camera — Marcel Duchamp did that with his female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. But Warhol had a way of going viral. His enigmatic, bewigged public self was part of his art.

With his "Ladies and Gentlemen," Warhol celebrated a community of others who created their own personas. This 1975 series of screenprint portraits of drag queens recruited from the Gilded Grape, a New York drag bar, is all glam, with blots of color like spotlights accentuating already over-the-top makeup. One of his subjects was Marsha P. Johnson, who helped lead the charge in the protests after police raided the Stonewall Inn.

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Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

But Warhol was coy. He claimed to be a virgin. His persona was as much deflection as declaration. Artists who picked up the baton from him, such as Robert Mapplethorpe and David Wojnarowicz, boldly rejoiced in their sexual identities. Mapplethorpe put a pulpy homoerotic stamp on the formal beauty of the male nude. He also celebrated gender crossover; his 1983 photo "Roger Koch" depicts a muscular man from the waist down in fishnets and high heels.

Such artists burst defiantly out of the closet into a world of fear shaped by HIV. The Corcoran Gallery of Art, facing political pressure, canceled Mapplethorpe's 1989 show. Both Wojnarowicz and Mapplethorpe grappled with the specter of death in their work, and died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Wojnarowicz's "Untitled (One day this kid . . .)" acutely captures the damage wreaked by homophobia. It's a self-portrait: A buck-toothed boy in suspenders surrounded by text predicting his future: "When he begins to talk, men who develop a fear of this kid will attempt to silence him with strangling, fists, prison . . . "

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Queer artists found one another and made a safe space together. In Boston, photographerssuch as Nan Goldin,Mark Morrisroe, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia started taking pictures of themselves and their friends, who were sometimes misunderstood and spurned by their families. They became known as the Boston School.

Photographer Catherine Opie was doing the same thing on the West Coast. In "Pig Pen," a trans artist, one of Opie's regular subjects, sits on a stool and stares directly, confrontationally out at us.

The sweetest images in a community-focused portion of the show are the black-and-white portraits of same-sex couples in Boston artist Sage Sohier's late 1980s series, "At Home with Themselves." Sohier captured ordinary affection, repudiating straight society's worst fears. These aren't performances of identity; they're family portraits, and they beautifully balance work in other sections by photographers who have taken their cue from Warhol (and maybe Marsha P. Johnson) and cultivated performance of identity as an art in itself.

Martine Gutierrez is a terrific 21st-century example. A Latinx trans woman of indigenous descent, she looks into her cultural history and finds Mayan gods who were both male and female. Spanish colonizers demonized them. Gutierrez embodies them.

In "Demons, Xochiquetzal, 'Flower Quetzal Feather,' p95 from Indigenous-Woman" she dons brilliant flowers, sculptural braids, and a beaded veil against a sunny yellow ground. Deities must be portrayed as big; they're archetypal, symbolizing essential parts of the human psyche. Gutierrez takes a glorious claim for a trans goddess.

Every work in "Be Seen" may be a kind of reclamation, but even this story of the last 50 years in LGBTQ portraiture brings up some difficult dynamics between artist and subject. Mapplethorpe, for instance, was a white man who photographed black men; it might be said that he fetishized the black male body. Hickson addresses some of these touchy areas in a section called "Reclaiming Art History."

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Photographer George Dureau, who died in 2014, made photographs of black men that bring up the same issues asMapplethorpe's. Paul Mpagi Sepuya, a black artist, takes on Dureau in a self-portrait: his back, shot in reflection with a camera tucked beneath his arm. He sits on a volume of Dureau's pictures. The mirroring in "Study Reflecting Dureau (OX5A 1227)" confuses space, unsteadying us, and that lens pointing right at us adds to the fuddle.

But we're all unsteady in life. We try to find traction, sometimes bolstering our self-esteem by judging others. It can be easier to do that than to examine our own fears and limitations. "Be Seen" celebrates a population that once lived in shadows. The subjects offer up their bright selves and tender hearts. And they remind us that the shadows remain.

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Hartford Courant

TIME TO 'BE SEEN'

Exhibit of portrait photography at Wadsworth Atheneum reclaims the gay experience

by Susan Dunne
June 30, 2019



Martine Gutierrez creates elaborate self-portraits incorporating elements from Guatemalan culture, as in this "Demons, Xochiquetzal 'Flower Quetzal Feather.'

The 1969 Stonewall riots emboldened LGBTQ people nationwide to fight for their rights. As an extension of that freedom, queer and nonbinary artists started coming out of the shadows. No longer would their faces be hidden in the world of art. No longer would their stories be told by others. They would depict themselves and their lives as they sawfit, regardless of how the rest of the world saw them.

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An exhibit of portrait photography at Wadsworth Atheneum is a celebration of this freedom. Some LGBTQ photographers captured realistic depictions of themselves and their friends living their lives. Others used their artworks to tell stories. Still others used their work to comment on gay history, traditional gender expectations or the history of art, skewing it to reflect a newperspective.

“Queer bodies haven’t necessarily been seen in the art-history canon. This is an opportunity to see these people featured,” says Emily Handlin, the museum’s curatorial fellow in contemporary art, who co-curated the exhibit with contemporary art curator Patricia Hickson. “It’s as much about gender as it is about identity, about howfar gay rights have come and haven’t come.”

The exhibit was largely drawn fromthe museum’s collection. Hickson says preparing for the show gave her the opportunity to diversify the photography collection and acquire more works by nonwhite, nonmale and nonbinary artists.

Among the newacquisitions were several works by South African Zanele Muholi, who focuses her lens on members of that country’s queer community. Another new acquisition is “Pig Pen” by Catherine Opie. Her gender nonspecific model, a frequent model for Opie, sits against a vivid red background.

Another new acquisition is Mickalene Thomas’ dazzling “Raquel with Les Trois Femmes.” Thomas recreates Édouard Manet’s “Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe”—apainting in which one nude woman and one scantily clad woman have a picnic with two fully dressed men—but empowers the women. All are fully, colorfully dressed and coiffed. All are black.

Two spectacular pieces by Latinx artist **Martine Gutierrez** show her in over-the-top, wildly colored elements that reflect her cultural history, especially that of two-gendered Mayan deities. “Conquistadors used that as a reason to say that those gods were blasphemous to convert people to Christianity,” Handlin says.

Ike Ude’s “Sartorial Anarchy” is another eyecatching exploration of history. He uses different items of men’s clothes fromvarious places and eras to show the arbitrariness of definitions of masculinity. But he has fun with it. As Ude says, “with such an inexhaustible, timeless array of men’s clothes at one’s disposal, who needs drag?”

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artnet® news

In Ralph Rugoff's Venice Biennale, the World's Artists Take Planetary Doom as a Given, But Search for Joy Nonetheless

There is much to be disquieted by in this year's Venice Biennale, artnet News chief art critic Ben Davis finds.

By **Ben Davis**
May 10, 2019



Martine Gutierrez, Body En Thrall. Image courtesy Ben Davis.

Then there are the witty, canny set-up self-portraits from Martine Gutierrez's *Indigenous Woman* magazine project, aping the look of fashion magazines or playing with archetypes—a real highlight.

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ARTSY

At the Venice Biennale, Artists Create Their Own Truths in the Era of "Fake News"

By **Alina Cohen**
May 9, 2019

At the Arsenale, Martine Gutierrez shows her "Body En Thrall" series, which presents her in a variety of poses that riff on fashion photo shoots. She emerges from a pool at a man's feet, wears a bikini with melons filling her bra cups, and serves water by a poolside populated with mannequins. In her colorful "Demons" series at the Giardini, Gutierrez depicts herself as *tzitzimimes*, or Aztec deities. The artist styles herself under bold flowers, beadings, elaborate headpieces, and ornate jewelry. With a maximalist palette, she celebrates the queer, indigenous body and her own capacity for endless self-invention.



Martine Gutierrez, Body En Thrall, p120 from *Indigenous Woman*, 2018. © Martine Gutierrez. Courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery, New York.



Martine Gutierrez, Demons, Chin 'Demon of Lust,' p93 from *Indigneous Woman*, 2018. © Martine Gutierrez. Courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery, New York.

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THE ART NEWSPAPER

Director's cut: Ralph Rugoff picks the artists to watch in his 2019 Venice Biennale show

The artistic director selects five artists, all born in the 1980s, with a big presence in his exhibition

by Ralph Rugoff
May 3, 2019



Martine Gutierrez's Demons; Tlazoteotl "Eater of Filth" (2018)
© Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

Martine Gutierrez

"Martine's a young New York artist exploring the complexity of identity. She produced an utterly remarkable publication called Indigenous Woman that looks a bit like Interview magazine and parodied fashion and style rags. It's an epic body of work in which Martine apppears in all the fashion spreads and fake ads. Some works parody fetishized representations of ethnic identity, while the Body En Thrall series consists of large black and white prints of scenes that suggest a class-conscious Twilight Zone soap opera, in which Martine appears surrounded by well-heeled (and occasionally amorous) mannequins."

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The New York Times

WeekendArts II

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER and WILL HEINRICH
May 3, 2019

We Sampled, So You Can Dig In

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C13
to hear the band's hypnotic music, too.
WILL HEINRICH

Casey Kaplan and Ryan Lee
Booths B1 and B8

Two exceptional but very different displays are on view in the fair's midsection. At Casey Kaplan gallery, Matthew Ronay's carved wooden sculptures, pieced together into abstract, evocative organic configurations in various coral hues, are placed on plinths and feel like an oasis amid the fair's chaos. (Mr. Ronay also has an exhibition on view at Kaplan's Chelsea location.) Martine Gutierrez continues her rampage as the Indigenous Woman, a transgender alternative-fashionista at Ryan Lee. In photographs and faux-fashion spreads, Ms. Gutierrez combines traditional Mayan and Guatemalan garments and fabrics with fantastic and futuristic accessories and makeup to conjure new, fluid forms of being.
MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Company, Bank and Very Small Fires
Booths F6, F12 and F14

The Frame section of Frieze, devoted to galleries 10 years old or younger, is particularly good this year. Befitting the ethos of the emerging artists they represent, the booths are platforms for performance or installations, with linoleum or AstroTurf on the floors. The New York gallery Company is hung with paintings by Jonathan Lyndon Chase that feature rough figures or graffiti, as well as crude sculptures. Yanyan Huang treats the booth at Bank, a Shanghai gallery, as an "immersive portal" (according to a handout) in which traditional ink drawings merge with digital applications. Diedrick Brackens's colorful tapestries at the Los Angeles gallery Various Small Fires join traditional materials with references to figures like African-American cowboys.
MARTHA SCHWENDENER





Galerist, Galeri Nev and Pi Artworks
Booths S4, S10 and S11

The fair's outstanding Spotlight section, curated by Laura Hoptman of the Drawing Center, is dedicated to "significant work by overlooked figures." They include Yüksel Arslan, a Turkish painter born in 1933 who moved to Paris at the invitation of André Breton and died in 2017. His "Arture 439, Sans Titre, l'Homme," from 1992, in a joint presentation by Turkish galleries Galerist and Galeri Nev, is a gloriously strange gallimaufry of interspecies sex acts and quotations from the artist's scientific reading, drawn with homemade colors. Susan Hefuna makes ink drawings inspired by the intricate wooden screens of her Cairo childhood. The examples presented by Pi Artworks of London and Istanbul are done on overlapping sheets of tracing paper fas-

on-wood abstractions at Kate Werble; don' miss the unlabeled low tables by Christo pher Chiappa, also in Werble's booth.
WILL HEINRICH

Michael Rosenfeld
Booth D10

There's something magical about William T Williams's early 1970s "Diamond in a Box' paintings, hard-edged geometric patterns in blazing colors. The subtle misdirection o those patterns, and the complicated rhythm of the colors, mean you could look at them forever. Michael Rosenfeld presents a dozen never-before-shown acrylic-on-paper works from the same period. In these, a wiggly meander snakes in and out of concentric circles filled with vibrant brush strokes — they're like Bauhaus takes on the Aztec calendar.

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i-D

frieze new york is back: here are the artists you don't want to miss

By **Sarah Moroz**
Published **May 1, 2019**

These ambitious presentations wrestle with identity, body image, gender, technology, and race.



Martine Gutierrez, Masking, Pineapple Mask, p53 from Indigenous Woman, 2018 © Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

It's time to venture across the Triborough bridge again because Frieze New York is back for its eighth showcase of modern and contemporary art. Touting diversity, outsider artists, and virtual reality, the 2019 edition opens in Randall's Island Park from May 2-5. With top galleries flying in from 26 countries, the fair showcases iconic art world figures (Tracey Emin, Jenny Holzer, Lorna Simpson, Anish Kapoor, Alex Katz, Robert Rauschenberg) as well as fresh features like a section dedicated to Latino and Latin American art (Diálogos) and the inaugural Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center. There's a rich assortment to see, but i-D is especially excited about these ambitious presentations that compellingly wrestle with identity, body image, gender, technology, and race.

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Martine Gutierrez, Demons, Chin 'Demon of Lust,' p93 from Indigenous Woman, 2018 © Martine Gutierrez; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

Martine Gutierrez, Ryan Lee , FOCUS

California-born Martine Gutierrez will showcase new printed work from her self-made publication Indigenous Woman, which subverts the fashion magazine template even as it nods deferentially to it. (The New Yorker described the series as a "critique of colonialism that's ready to party.") Bulldozing the still-all-too-prevalent cis, white, Western iconography that characteriz-es such publications, Gutierrez's version is replete with authentic regalia, textiles, and cultural tropes that celebrate her Amerindigenous heritage, mingling editorials with cheeky fake ads that skewer real-life campaigns. "I was driven to question how identity is formed, expressed, valued, and weighed as a woman, as a transwoman, as a latinx woman, as a woman of indige-nous descent, as a femme artist and maker," Gutierrez stated in her editor's letter. The endeavor is a powerful showcase of a 360-degree vision, an aesthetic created with "full autonomy—all photography, modeling, styling, makeup, hair, lighting, graphic design, and product design I have executed myself." As the artist told Vice last year: "I want it to feel easy." The artist added: "We're living in an era where my existence is political whether I want to be or not. It's really hard and emotionally taxing, and humor is my savior."

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DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

Who's real and who's not? Photo exhibit poses questions about identity and reality

By **Laura Holland**

April 24, 2019



Martine Gutierrez, Girl Friends (Rosella & Palma 4), 2014. (c) Martine Gutierrez; courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

For Martine Gutierrez, art and life are fully entwined and fluidly transformational. In "Life/Like," which displays two series of photographs at the Mount Holyoke College Museum of Art, she engages in serious play with intimacy, identity, and gender — and transposes illusion and reality.

As a trans woman, Gutierrez, a performance artist and photographer based in Brooklyn, N.Y., does not pose for self-portraits as much as compose complex narratives, rich with props and personae. And as the maker, model, and muse of her own imagery (and her own image), she deftly inhabits each frame unfolding in a cinematic stream.

Paramount among the props she employs are life-sized mannequins. Girl Friends explores two sequences of seven images: one presents "Anita and Marie," while the other introduces "Rosella and Palma."

Printed in black and white, measuring 9 by 13½ inches, the photographs are scaled for intimacy. Pairs of women appear in a variety of places and poses that announce narrative connections but

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obscure the nature of their relationship. They look like sisters, if not identical twins, and in pose, they repeat and enhance each other.

But look more closely into the frame. One figure in each image is the artist herself and — surprise! — the other figure is a meticulously styled mannequin, imitating life through costume, lighting, and camera angle — and manipulating viewer expectation.

With that realization, the initial sense of intimacy in each scene shatters, revealing itself as a hollow shell, an illusion. Despite the presence of an almost identical shadow, each figure is alone.

The images lead the viewer through a series of perceptual twists and turns, following the women through scenes of uncertain stories. "Rosella and Palma" find themselves in a sequence of elaborate settings. In one in particular, the architectural curves of a stairwell flare like wings around the two women.

But a pivotal moment comes with the implicit drama in one of the photographs framing Anita and Marie. A third figure — alive? imaginary? male? female? — enters the scene. Anita and Marie echo each other's poses, but in reverse.

One woman is flooded in light outside a doorway, leaning towards the ambiguous interloper. The second woman — her visual twin — stands inside, deep in the shadow of the doorway, but facing forward, to invite similar engagement, this time with the viewer. Complicit, we are drawn into their equation of intimacy.

A stronger demand for viewer participation emerges in another series, Line Up. At 42 by 28 inches, these photographs are life-scaled, if not life-sized, and the element of color adds another dimension.

But Line Up conveys none of the intimacy — illusory or not — of Girl Friends. In this series, Gutierrez poses herself among a crowd of similarly styled mannequins. The repetition of the female form as well as the depiction of feminine stereotypes shifts the focus to an exploration of gender roles and collective identity.

Line Up 5 shows a cluster of beautiful women swathed in pink cloth and soft light, similar in style and stance. Most avert their gaze, but one, in the center and soaking up the spotlight, is in profile. These women could be ballet dancers, poised and ready, backstage. Or maybe they are cookie-cutter contestants in a beauty pageant, just before the curtain rises.

But look closer, and note the shoulder seams at the joints of the mannequins, who surround the sole live figure, the artist herself, in the center.

Line Up 2 depicts a group of young women with identical long, black ponytails topped with white bows, wearing crisp white blouses and short black skirts, suggesting a girls' field hockey team. The delicate physique of the figures introduces some doubt, however, about field hockey.

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Maybe just "school-girl uniforms" (sans sport) is the better way to describe this styling. No faces (or shoulder seams) help identify which figures are mannequins and which one is "real." This time, it's lifeless fingers that identify the inanimate figures.

In the center, the live figure tenderly cradles a creepily plastic hand in her own two hands. Another mannequin rests a lifeless hand on her shoulder, in a gesture that would indicate strong group solidarity and reciprocal support — if the plastic hands were not so unnervingly spooky.

But the greatest challenge in determining who's real and who's not (or what's real and what's not) comes with Line Up 4. Here, the scene is visually congested. All the women have ostentatiously unreal, bright red hair, made all the brighter by their green-toned turbans and the uneasy chartreuse light that suffuses the scene.

Gazes go in all directions — up, down, sideways, forward, fully averted — and the artful blur of overlapping bodies eliminates clues like shoulder joints and waxen fingers.

Which figure is the "real" live woman? Is she the one in profile on the left, who seems to claim the spotlight? No, her face seems too flawless, her chin too shiny in the light. Maybe the figure facing towards the viewer? No way: her face seems composed of planes of plastic rather than flesh and blood.

I found one major clue in the seemingly real hand of a totally blurred figure falling off the right foreground, but also turned to crowd-sourcing for comment, curious about what others would see. Answers varied, but that blurred hand was a sign of life for several other sets of eyes.

Of course, the point is not to play the game of "One of These Things is Not Like the Others" but to toggle in and out of perceiving what's real and what's illusory, and what's individual and what's collective. Think of it as the revelations of a social or conceptual astigmatism, with a shift in perception, blurred vision, and multiple focal points.

At the gallery, an iPad attached to the wall invites viewers to reflect on their personal and collective identities. Gutierrez's images offer the same invitation as she creates a world in which constructs of seeming opposites — male and female, gay and straight, intimacy and alienation, reality and illusion — tend to blur, then bend, and blend together.

"Life/Life: Photographs by Martine Gutierrez" is on view at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum through June 16. More information on the museum, such as visiting hours and special events, is available at artmuseum.mt- holyoke.edu.

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Interview

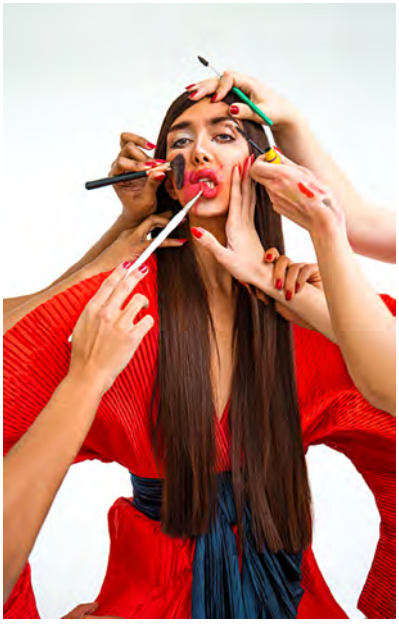
ARTIST MARTINE GUTIERREZ PAYS HOMAGE TO NEW YORK CITY'S CLAWS-OUT SPIRIT

By **Interview**

Photography **Martine Gutierrez**

Stylist **Martine Gutierrez**

Published **April 9, 2019**



"How did these images come together, you ask?" says Martine Gutierrez, the artist known for her portraits of mannequins as well as her mannequin-like portraits of humans. "I waved my little glam wand around, and Mel [Ottenberg, Interview's creative director] waved it back at me, and bippity boppity boo, bitch." Here, the artist goes on assignment for us with an homage to the claws-out spirit of New York City while sharing some of her thoughts along the way.

———

"In terms of narrative, I was thinking about New York's catfight energy. People who live here are hungry for their dreams, and it's far from relaxing. This is a reminder of the path that I've taken to stomp out New York and make a name for myself here. It's so Studio 54, being a go-go dancer for, like, a minute, and then having gallery representation."

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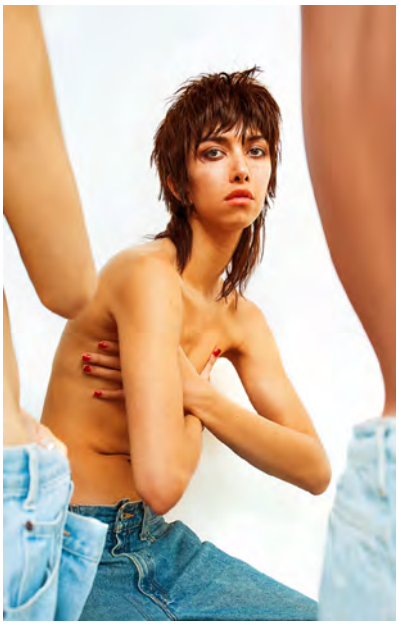
"Magazines and advertising and now, more than ever, social media are the codes that the next generation is learning from. Being a trans woman of color, it's like, no shade, but don't just invite us in. Give us marginalized folks autonomy over our own image so that we can at least voice our own ideas instead of them being appropriated by the mainstream."



"I'm kind of known for having this long Cher hair," says Gutierrez, who had her hair cut by her friend Sunny on set. "And if there was ever going to be a moment to change that, it would have to be documented and published."

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———

Models: Dara Allen, Devan Diaz, Haize Odogbo, Martine Gutierrez, Maya Mones, Nomi Ruiz, Stevie Triano
Hair: Sonny Molina
Makeup: Martine Gutierrez
Production: Fernando Cerezo III, Jesus Medina

RYAN LEE



In an era when everyone is a self-portraitist, these three artists are redefining the genre.

Serving SELF

MARTINE GUTIERREZ

Twenty-nine-year-old, New York–based artist Martine Gutierrez's supernatural self-portraits look like snapshots from another world we already know. Take one black-and-white photograph, *Body En Thrall, p113 from Indigenous Woman*, from her 2018 series *Indigenous Woman*. Gutierrez rises from a swimming pool in a white blouse, her wet hands at the feet of a man in polished leather shoes, the look on her face an indiscernible combination of desire, disgust, and fear. Perhaps it's an homage to Herb Ritts' work for *Vogue*, or a still from an occult horror film unfolding somewhere unknown. This is her work—a transfixion of symbolism drawn across time and compiled into something seamlessly familiar. Old, but also new.

Her body of self-portraiture possesses a quality of transcendence. There's a spirituality that exists in her images, whether she's lying next to a life-sized silicone doll buried in a bush of full, round flowers, or modeling a high-cut pink bob beside a bust of a man splattered with paint. Gutierrez speaks the language of editorial fashion, while enriching that space with totems of the culture from which fashion pulls (and sometimes sucks the soul).

Gutierrez says that she tends to draw on "the dominant imagery that surrounds us: pop media, advertisements, editorials, movies, celebrities, all of it. I subvert our mainstream because it cannot be ignored. But the more I think about it, I don't know if I'd say popular culture actually 'inspires' me." She is inspired by the things that seem to have a second life, like trends that die and are reborn, sometimes decades later. "'Cool factor' is just timing: a recontextualizing of past iconography that is reintroduced to consumers." Her work is less to do with her references and more with what those references are missing.

Gutierrez was born in Berkeley, California, and grew up on both coasts of the United States. She and her family would travel every year to see her father's family in Guatemala, which felt like another home. In the U.S., people struggled to pronounce her Latin first name correctly, so they added an "e" to the end, as if it were French. "It became a girl's name, and I adopted it." Creating work that is about self-presentation, in which she controls the totality of her own portrayal, is a rejection of other people's stereotypes and an acceptance of the psychic spaces where she feels at home.

"It's about taking control," Gutierrez says, which is not to say that her work isn't also very fun, and very major. "It's always been play. I hope it always continues to be playful, as dress-up in a way. I was obsessed with dress-up then, but now, it's a more elaborate, indulgent understanding. Everything is ceremony, everything is performance. It's bigger than transness." Her outrageous vignettes root an image of the self in another world as complete and mysterious as our own. "I only wear costumes," she laughs. "That's when I feel most comfortable—in something loud, something frivolous."

Gutierrez typically shoots using a tripod with a timer and a remote control small enough to hide within her image. "I usually press it against my body, drop it on the ground, or occasionally hold it in my mouth—it's that small." As for her focus on self-portraiture, Gutierrez is a pragmatic woman. "I was the most convenient subject to work with, and I still am," she says.

"It's my interest as an artist to subvert whatever the current standard is, because the majority knows how to digest advertising, but in place of the traditional archetype of the blonde, blue-eyed, cis white woman, I insert myself—my narrative, by body, and my control over how both are used to talk about the lack of visibility for individuals like me from communities like mine," Gutierrez says. "I came into my power when I realized that the rules were written by someone else." —DIANA TOURJÉE



Martine wears necklace and earrings by **BULGARI**





On this page: Bangles and necklaces by **GUCCI**. Opposite page: Cuffs by **TIFFANY & CO.**



On this page: Rings and bangle by **CARTIER**. Opposite page: Bangles by **CARA CRONINGER**



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PROJECT
MARTINE GUTIERREZ

Opposite page: Martine Gutierrez, *Covergirl*, 2018, digital photo collage.

Pages 112 and 113: Martine Gutierrez, *DIAM*, 2018, digital photo collage.

THE NEW NATIVES ARE RESTLESS.

The world disappears, a parade of ancient colonizers determined to take it with them when they leave.

I think: Don't let the door hit you on your way out!

We've got a lot of reading to do.

Last fall, the twenty-nine-year-old artist Martine Gutierrezdebuted *Indigenous Woman* at Ryan Lee Gallery in New York. It is a singular achievement, three years in the making: 146 pages of autonomous, autochthonous delectation. Every image produced, designed, and starring one person: Gutierrez herself.

Therein its juicy, oversize pages is Gutierrez as a Mayan demon (Chin) and an Aztec deity (Xochipilli). There is Gutierrez as migrant maid. As perfume cynosure. She is Antonio Lopez, Cindy Sherman, Yasumasa Morimura, Laurie Simmons. Defying (Helmut) Newtonian physics, she is gazer and gazed-at, maker and muse. Diana Vreeland and Richard Avedon. Irving Penn and Lisa Fonssagrives. She is Condesa Nast.

She is . . . MARTINE.

"I'm a scam!" she protests, in her magazine's interview with Aponi "Butterfly."

She pushes kitchen-sink realness to its extravagant edges. Her budget glamour looks like moneyed glamour, which is to say, it is glamour at its best: transformation.

At the moment of print's purported obsolescence, Gutierrez restores its purpose, makes it new again. I never envy other magazines, but I envy *Indigenous Woman*. Thank goddess there's only one issue.

So many *issues* in that one issue.

The old labels stutter as they speak. She's a young high-femme of Guatemalan and Northern European descent, a nonbinary transwoman of color and/or a Latinx artiste, depending on who's asking. She shoots a splendid arrow straight into the whole fabulous history of magazines, lodging in their codes of colonization and fantasy, articulating the wound and its dressing. *Indigenous Woman* is smart and sexy and wildly funny: an object of desire and a tool for reeducation and a petition for genuine, mutual understanding.

Who wouldn't want some of that? How fun to mingle our editorial realities. And so, for the January issue of *Artforum*, Gutierrez produced several new spreads and tweaked a few old ones. The results are, predictably, unpredictable—marvelous.

"To control our own image we need to be our own photographers, distributors, CEOs . . . all of it!" she tells us. "We need to make our own gags. That's tea."

Tea, and sympathy. □

—*David Velasco*


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artnet® news

8 Art Advisors Tell Us Which Artists You Should Be Watching (and Buying) in 2019

By Henri Neuendorf
December 20, 2018

Martine Gutierrez



Left: Martine Gutierrez, *Masking, Green Grape Mask* (2018). Right: Martine Gutierrez, *Masking, 24k Gold Mask,* (2018). Photo: courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

Martine Gutierrez is an artist whose work explores her identity as a trans, Latinx woman of Mayan heritage. Her exhibition *Indigenous Woman* was a breakout show at Ryan Lee Gallery in Chelsea in September. Her work is fresh, inventive, smart, and funny—and her full-on recreation of a 146-page fashion magazine in the style of *Interview* was jaw-dropping in detail and style. Expect to see much of her in the public eye in 2019. —*Lisa Austin*

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ARTFORUM

TOP TEN

By DONCHRISTIAN
NOVEMBER 1, 2018





6. Leilah Weinraub, Shakedown, 2018, video, color, sound, 75 minutes. 7. Still from BbyMutha's 2017 video Roses, directed by Kindora. 8. FAKA with Donatella Versace backstage at the Versace Spring/Summer 2019 menswear show, Milan, June 16, 2018. 10. Page from Martine Gutierrez's Indigenous Woman (Issue One), Gallery and Martine Gutierrez. 2018. Martine Gutierrez.





4

OUTKAST'S *SPEAKERBOXXX/THE LOVE BELOW* (2003) André 3000's half of OutKast's fifth studio album, *The Love Below*, changed hip-hop forever. I first heard it when I was thirteen years old and thought, *What the hell is this?* It was like a transmission from outer space. André's unexpected and unprecedented eclecticism and lush orchestral arrangements set the stage for Kanye, Lil Wayne, Kid Cudi, Drake, and countless others.

5

ESPERANZA SPALDING Esperanza is a musical savant. Her ability to create new sonic languages across a range of instruments, including her voice, is simply remarkable. Her artistic and scholarly trajectory over the years has been incredible to witness. She's teaching at Harvard now—not a surprise. Though classically trained at Boston's Berklee College of Music, she takes great pleasure in destroying what she's learned.

6

LEILAH WEINRAUB'S *SHAKEDOWN* (2018) Filmmaker and fashion virtuoso Leilah Weinraub's debut documentary feature, *Shakedown*, named after the legendary black lesbian strip club in Los Angeles, is a portal into black gender fluidity and a queer underground. Many scenes—so startlingly familiar and yet so strangely taboo—caused me to weep when I saw the film screened across the dome at MOMA PS1. I even cried watching a rough cut of it on a tiny laptop. The guts it takes to build a community—one of love, kinship, and unrepentant desire—are deeply moving.

7

BBYMUTHA This rap phenom, born and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee, calls herself the "Hoodrat Aphrodite." I believe her. BbyMutha's music calls to mind early-'90s Memphis hip-hop and horrorcore. With noted inspirations like La Chat and Gangsta Boo, it's clear BbyMutha is carving out an exhilarating new lane, commanding ownership of her voice and intersectional identity as both a mom and a *star*.

8

FAKA (DESIRE MAREA AND FELA GUCCI) I first met the members of this art duo independently from each other on Facebook in 2013. It was there that we exchanged positive affirmations and words of encouragement as we navigated the beginnings of our own art practices. Online, I watched them cultivate communal spaces for queer black art in Johannesburg, South Africa, as they pioneered new avenues in music and fashion. Fast-forward to five years later, they're touring the world, working with Versace and Telfar, among other collaborators. FAKA struck a match and started a fire.

9

JUST DOSHA Overall mother of the art collective House of Ladosha, Just Dosha (formerly known as La'fem) is the blueprint for everything beautiful, radiating authenticity in every aesthetic pursuit. From my favorite track, "Burning Like Paris"—made in conjunction with House of Ladosha and available on YouTube—to the scathing club anthem "This Is Ur Brain," Just Dosha lays the foundations for New Age femme queen rap.

10

MARTINE GUTIERREZ'S *INDIGENOUS WOMAN* (2018) *Indigenous Woman*, a singular magazine by multimedia art and pop star Martine Gutierrez, is my new prized possession. This high-gloss publication is the love child of *Vogue* and the newly undead *Interview*, and was designed, shot, styled, and edited, from cover to cover, by the artist. In the ads, articles, portfolios, and letter from the editor, Gutierrez does more than challenge the ways in which the mainstream misrepresents and colonizes the brown femme body—she charts a whole new way forward. Gutierrez is also the only model featured throughout the entire mag, aside from a handful of carefully cast mannequins. □

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THE NEW YORKER

A Trans Latinx Artist's High-Fashion Critique of Colonialism

by ANDREA K. SCOTT October 20, 2018



In her anti-memoir "Disavowals," from 1930, the French Surrealist Claude Cahun wrote, "Under this mask, another mask; I will never finish removing all these faces." Cahun was born Lucy Schwob, but that identity couldn't contain the writer and artist, who performed an inventive series of gender-fluid selves in front of her camera. The portraits prefigure those of Cindy Sherman but, perhaps more significantly, they're the spiritual ancestors of the works of subsequent generations of genderqueer chameleon-photographers, such as the Japanese photographer Yasumasa Morimura (who has a strong survey up now at the Japan Society) and the South African photographer Zanele Muholi. The latest addition to this lineage is the Latinx transgender phenom Martine Gutierrez, whose new project "Indigenous Woman" centers on the September issue of a fictional fashion magazine so glossily convincing that you may try to subscribe.

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The front and back covers are clearly modelled on Andy Warhol's Interview magazine, down to the jagged cursive font that spells out the title. Inside, a hundred and forty-six pages pages are filled with Vogue-worthy fashion spreads—and the ad campaigns that make them possible—featuring Gutierrez playing the roles of an entire agency's worth of models. In addition to posing, she also took every picture, styled every outfit, and designed all the layouts. She has, in the most literal sense, made herself up, imploding the classic power dynamic of Pygmalion and Galatea—or Kanye and Kim—by keeping men, if not the male gaze, out of the picture. When a male model shows up, he is either a mannequin, a rag doll, or a trouser leg—which, as anyone who is familiar with Helmut Newton's photographs and Y.S.L. suits knows, could just as easily belong to fierce woman.

Eighteen of Gutierrez's photographs are on view (through October 20th) at the Ryan Lee Gallery, where copies of the magazine are also displayed. The images are printed in a variety of sizes and framed eclectically—or not framed at all—to convey the breadth of styles that Gutierrez manages to both celebrate and subvert. Mario Sorrenti's moody black-and-white campaign for Calvin Klein's Obsession perfume is lampooned in a lush nearly eight-foot-tall closeup in the exhibition, in which Gutierrez pouts at the camera in a white bikini top, supporting two halves of a cantaloupe in lieu of breasts. A pitch-perfect quartet of vivid color portraits satirizes the #selfcare Instagram craze for face masks, while channelling Irving Penn's editorial homages to the fruit-and-vegetable faces of the sixteenth-century Italian painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo.





Looking at these chimerical pictures, another painter inevitably springs to mind: Frida Kahlo, who relentlessly reinvented herself as a proudly indigenous woman. Gutierrez—who was born in Berkeley, California, in 1989, grew up Vermont, and is now based in New York City—is of Guatemalan descent. Her most powerful pictures turn indigeneity into a darkly magical superpower, moving past conventions of feminine beauty toward something thrillingly monstrous. Regard "Demons, Tlazoteotl, 'Eater of Filth,' " who is draped in a stole that reimagines the traditional Guatemalan huipil as a shoulder-baring, glamazon garment. The caption describes her as "the Aztec deity of the underworld" but also "the goddess of forgiveness and purification thought to transform pain and suffering into gold." Cortez looted Montezuma's gold. Gutierrez reclaims it as body paint and accessories—a critique of colonialism that's ready to party.

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whitewall

Martine Gutierrez's Glittering, Glossy, and Gutsy "Indigenous Woman"

by Katy Donoghue



Martine Gutierrez at Ryan Lee Gallery
September 6—October 20

For Martine Gutierrez's current show at Ryan Lee Gallery in New York (on view through October 20), the artist created a large-format glossy magazine entitled Indigenous Woman. In the project, Gutierrez wore many hats—editor in chief, creative director, model, photographer, stylist, hair and makeup, and more. She celebrates Mayan Indian heritage, indigeneity, and the fluidity of self-image from front cover to back, and even the ads in between.

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Whitewall caught up with the transgender Latinx artist about creating political, personal, and beautiful work that can travel, and therefore connect, beyond the gallery.

WHITEWALL: What was the starting point for Indigenous Woman? How long has this been in the making?

MARTINE GUTIERREZ: Over three years at this point. The magazine was conceived at the same time as my first billboard campaign in New York City. A public installation titled MartineJeans, made with support from International Studio and Curatorial Program.

WW: Why did you want to work through the frame of a glossy fashion magazine?

MG: Because everyone has flipped through a magazine. It's a format that can travel without me, without a gallery, without the Internet.

WW: You work within all the roles—creative director, editor, photographer, model, stylist, and even, as you describe, schlepper. Do you see them all as one role, or is there one you really love?

GT: I see them all as one job. To make me into a glittering star, I gotta do it all, because no one else was offering to put me on the cover of their magazine. I love doing it, which is fortunate considering it's still an obligation.

WW: We loved the series "Masking." Can you tell me more about the inspiration and process for those spreads?

GT: Every notable fashion magazine has an iconic beauty feature, so I wanted to incorporate a kind of do-it-yourself face-mask spread that could speak to the practice of self care, but also the masks we wear. Not literal, but the figurative masks we hide behind. I love personifying identity as something alien or unfamiliar, it feels the most truthful.

WW: The editorials are full of color, fantasy, fashion, beauty…did you have a favorite to conceptualize and shoot?

GT: I like them all differently. But page 21 is most dear to me because I possess at least one thing from every cherished family member in the photograph.

WW: Indigenous Woman features both fashion editorials and ads (which you really have to do a double take with!). What was your approach for the ads, as they tell a different story from the editorials?

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GT: The ads were an opportunity to be more outspoken, but also more explicit politically. They illustrate themes that are already throughout the magazine more directly.

WW: In the exhibition, certain images are blown up, framed specifically, grouped a certain way, etc. How did you want to translate the pages of Indigenous Woman onto the gallery walls?

GT: I wanted diversity in the gallery, a chance to acknowledge some of my favorite moments from the magazine.

WW: In a recent interview with Vice, you touched upon how emotionally taxing it is that your very existence is political whether you want it to be or not. How do you like to use humor to address that?

GT: I believe I said to Vice, "We're living in an era where my existence is political whether I want to be or not. It's really hard and emotionally taxing, and humor is my savior." And it's true, most days I gotta laugh to keep from crying.

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The New York Times

GALLERIES—MARTINE GUTIERREZ

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER
SEPT. 28, 2018

Galleries

ROMUALD HAZOUMÈ

Through Oct. 13. Gagosian, 821 Park Avenue, Manhattan; 212-796-1228, gagosian.com.

The Yoruba artist Romuald Hazoumè's "Nettoyeur," one of 16 "masks" made from found plastic jerrycans that make up his latest New York show, is an astonishingly economical comment on the relationship between African and Western art. With a straight handle for a nose above the container's own gaping round mouth, and a semicircular indentation for drooping brows, the work becomes not merely a face but an expressive one. Originally golden yellow, its surface now has a complex texture of abrasion and encrusted gray filth. Instead of the feathers that adorn many of Mr. Hazoumè's other masks, a sinuous wooden brush with thick, dirty bristles is wired to its dome.

Using an everyday tool as a decoration rather than for its intended purpose is analogous to the way 20th-century European artists decontextualized African masks. Substituting that tool precisely for the medium it's meant to work upon is a pretty good critique of Western culture in general: Mr. Hazoumè replaces hair with brush just as we look to empty aesthetic symbols instead of a spirit world.

Still, Mr. Hazoumè, who lives and works in the Republic of Benin, ably plays both sides of the fence: With or without their satirical bite, his masks are also tremendously entertaining.

WILL HEINRICH

IVY HALDEMAN

Through Oct. 21. Downs & Ross, 96 Bowery, second floor, Manhattan; 646-741-9138, downsross.com.

You could focus on how clever they are. The sexy anthropomorphic hot dogs that Ivy Haldeman paints in gauzy near-silhouette with a limited palette of colors borrowed from an old Gahan Wilson cartoon could be sendups of advertising or American gender roles. Matter-of-fact descriptive titles like "Colossus, Ankles Cross, Hand Hooks Heel, Finger Tips Press Bun," by emphasizing their cheeky what-you-see-is-what-you-get quality, nudge them into the self-conscious realm of paintings about painting, too.

But what's striking about the works in her show, "The Interesting Type," isn't so much their density of double entendre as how effervescently charming they are. What they're about, I think, if anything, is that magical something of sex, art, femininity, or even good advertising that no analysis can ever quite capture.



MARTINE GUTIERREZ, VIA RYAN LEE

Martine Gutierrez assumes a quasi-fictional role in her photograph "Demons, Tlazoteotl 'Eater of Filth,' p92," from "Indigenous Woman."

The show also includes two wonderful paintings of women's hands. In "Hand, Index Forward Left," the subject is relaxed and assertive, its middle and index fingers striding along with perfect freedom. In "Hand, Index Linger Back," those same two fingers, by crossing demurely, pin that ineffable something down: It's the seductive lie that's also a wish.

WILL HEINRICH

MARTINE GUTIERREZ

Through Oct. 20. Ryan Lee, 515 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-397-0742, ryanleegallery.com.

When you hear the term "indigenous woman," you probably don't think of a transgender fashionista posing with designer sunglasses and that opaque expression called resting bitch face. But that's the image Martine Gutierrez presents, among others, in her clever and provocative exhibition "Indigenous Woman," at Ryan Lee.

Ms. Gutierrez created this body of work as a glossy art publication, which she styled specifically after Andy Warhol's magazine, Interview, casting herself as editor and model. Presented as both large-scale prints and as a display of magazines lined up on shelves in the gallery, the photographs star Ms. Gutierrez, who's often pictured with textiles bought from her father's homeland, Guatemala. Alternating among vixen, earth mother and comedian, she hugs a brown male mannequin, sports melons as breasts, or sits among dolls and other trinkets, evoking fashion shoots in which models cavort with "natives" or animals in remote jungles or savannas.

The work here also sits within the tradition of self-photography, with the artist assuming quasi-fictional roles or personas, a genre that includes Claude Cahun, Ana Mendieta, David Lamelas, Samuel Fosso, Yasumasa Morimura and Cindy Sherman, as well as Frida Kahlo, whose self-styling and elaborate costumes were as exotic to her Mexican neighbors as they were to Americans.

Ms. Gutierrez contributes to the self-photography genre by re-imagining — rebranding might be more accurate — indigenous identity. The "Indigenous Woman" here is no longer victim, subaltern, immigrant or refugee (although she might also be one of these), but powerful, hybrid, glamorous — even a bit scary. With her ancient Mayan roots and historical wisdom, she makes the devil who wears Prada look provincial and passé.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

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VICE

A Trans Latinx Artist's Incredible High-Fashion Self-Portraits

Martine Gutierrez explores her identity as a trans Latinx woman of indigenous descent with a 146-page fashion magazine she published entirely by herself.

by MISS ROSEN September 21, 2018



Frida Kahlo once said, "I am my own muse. I am the subject I know best." It's a sentiment that also eloquently describes Martine Gutierrez, a transgender Latinx artist who routinely performs the triple roles of subject, maker, and muse in her own eclectic body of work.

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By establishing a practice of full autonomy, wherein Gutierrez conceptualizes and executes every detail on both sides of the camera, the artist has taken complete control of her narrative. For her latest exhibition, Indigenous Woman, Gutierrez created a 146-page art publication (masquerading as a glossy fashion magazine) celebrating "Mayan Indian heritage, the navigation of contemporary indigeneity, and the ever-evolving self-image," according to the artist's "Letter From the Editor."

"I was driven to question how identity is formed, expressed, valued, and weighed as a woman, as a transwoman, as a Latinx woman, as a woman of indigenous descent, as a femme artist and maker? It is nearly impossible to arrive at any finite answers, but for me, this process of exploration is exquisitely life-affirming," she writes.

Gutierrez uses art to explore the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and class as they inform her life experience. The Brooklyn-based artist uses costume, photography, and film to produce elaborate narrative scenes that combine pop culture tropes, sex dolls, mannequins, and self-portraiture to explore the ways in which identity, like art, is both a social construction and an authentic expression of self.

Fashion editorials and beauty features with titles like Queer Rage, Masking, and Demons pepper the pages of Indigenous Woman, alongside advertisements for faux products like Blue Lagoon Morisco sunless bronzer, paired with the tagline "Brown is Beautiful." Gutierrez subverts the traditional cisgender white male gaze while simultaneously raising questions about inclusivity, appropriation, and consumerism.

While her exhibition is on view at Ryan Lee Gallery in New York, VICE caught up with Gutierrez to talk about her masterful interrogation of identity.

VICE: **What metaphorical hats did you wear while creating Indigenous Woman?**
Gutierrez: Everything! Most people don't take into consideration all of the minute details that make up an image of someone who doesn't look like me or doesn't exist in the same world I do, even though it is me. I am the creator, founder, editor in chief, grant writer [laughs]. There really wasn't a budget [for the magazine], which is probably why it took three years to make.

From a fashion magazine standpoint, it's easy to name those categories because they exist to be noted in that format. Here I could highlight this part of my practice that had always remained silent: doing hair, makeup, styling, any kind of graphic design, photography, the modeling, location scouting. What's less glamorous is that I'm also the crew. I'm the schlepping person.

People just think it's a glamorous image, and that is what I want. I want it to feel easy. I want you to not get hung up on the raw edges of something—because there are a lot of them, I've just smoothed them all down. People have always held my work to [the fashion] industry, because I do a glossy finish innately. I think it shows great care and attention.

Could you talk about how your early work as an avant-garde performance artist relates to your role as a photographer/model?
I look at my photoshoots as performances—they are just hyper-controlled and private. Because

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my practice is so solitary, the live performances are structurally similar to my shoots and hold the ephemeral beauty of transforming [and turn it] into a feeling. The experience can linger in you the way an image can't. Live performance is internalized, so it can manifest in dreams or be remembered until death.

There's a line in the magazine about how you devolved from an emo shaman into some sort of femme fatale—and you're praised for it. Can you speak about the role of glamour in your work?
That high school picture of me—I feel like no one believes me. I'll look through the magazine with a curator, and when we get to that image I'm always like, "That's a school picture," and they're like, "Wait, that isn't a photo shoot? This isn't some recreated moment?"

No, it's real, and that's what's so funny to me. The whole magazine is real in a fantastical and reimagined way. It is taking elements of my life and elements of my identity that are confusing and hard for even me to chew on, and attempting to share them.

I love the interview you did for the magazine. When you quoted a line from the HBO movie Gia with such precision and expertise, it made me laugh and realize that the conversation about art can often be humorless and dry.
I think there's an air of intellectualism that art needs to function. There needs to be rhetoric for the art world, for the museums, for the public who goes to these functions to say, "This is valid because…"

I don't know if I am trying to change that. I just know I don't like to play that way. We're living in an era where my existence is political whether I want to be or not. It's really hard and emotionally taxing, and humor is my savior.

In the feature Masking, you create elaborate photographs of at-home facials that are reminiscent of the late work of Irving Penn, where you use fruit, flowers, and beauty treatments to build a wild, new face. What was the inspiration for that series?
Masking was the first opportunity to not even be human, to disguise the conversation of gender, and to get away from identity politics. I had just done a body of work about mannequins and so much of it was about holding myself. I was doing the same thing—painting on my face with colors we assume are natural: red on the lips, blue on the eyes, flesh everywhere else, cover your beard, accentuate your better feminine qualities. It's exhausting. It lost its fun and I lost motivation to keep making work in that way.

I wanted to do a series that could allow me to gain wellness from the practice of it. I was thinking about the stuff [that happens] after a photoshoot—washing it all off: the toner, cream, olive oil, honey, matcha, mud, and the facial masks that help me look and feel good in the real world. I was like, What if that's the makeup? It became exciting to build an identity based on alien forms, looking for shapes and textures and colors in fruit, flowers, and vegetables that could create what we recognize as a face: two things above and a line below. We are trained to look for faces, and once we see faces we are trained to take them apart and ask, "What kind of person is it?"

Is it a man or a woman? How old are they? Where are they from? Building that narrative, we

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look at how people dress, how they walk, talk, and carry themselves. All of those markers are so connected to the binary of gender and how we separate people into one or the other. There's so little opportunity not to be sifted into those two categories, and Masking was the opportunity to treat this as alien, without being sci-fi.

What's the significance of going beyond the binary?
We look at things as black and white when there's so much grey. Even people that think they're in the black or in the white—they have a foot in the grey. We all do. It's impossible not to.

Could you speak about the indigenous perspective?
That's part of the question: Do I have that? I don't think I do. I am an American, born in Berkeley, California, raised in Oakland and Vermont, and living in New York City. I have an Amerindigenous perspective. It is the perspective of both my parents' cultures and yet neither, because it is my own mess. I've been called every iteration of a "half breed," and it's no doubt the origin of my questioning. I'm asking what signifies a real, authentic, native-born woman?

It's a critique and a simultaneous investigation of what claim over these labels, stereotypes, and iconographies I have. My authenticity has never been to exist singularly, whether in regard to my gender, my ethnicity, or sexual orientation. My truth thrives in the gray area, but society doesn't yet allow an open consciousness to celebrate ambiguity, and we are told who we should be. But it's up to you to consider everything and be open, otherwise how will you know if your life is real or just a reenactment?

In the feature Demons, you cast yourself as Aztec, Mayan, and Yoruba deities to examine how the sacred feminine in indigenous cultures has been portrayed by the West. How did this series come into being?
I went into it thinking I was going to call it Goddesses, because that's what my community calls trans women. We are either called "angels" or "goddesses," and I guess that's how we're looked at. We're otherworldly. I was like, Let's look at some goddesses from my ancestry. What [role] did they serve? The closest things to me are these deities. I like that word. It feels ungendered for an individual in a place of spiritual power.

In [ancient Mayan] literature, they were referred to as demons. Maybe the establishment doesn't think of these as people existing. It's mythology. But for me—the person trying to relate to an ancient person that represented their community—they were seen as a demon, and even my reaction [to that] is connected to colonialism. That negativity catapults you into the underworld. [The Mayans] called it Xibalba, the underworld, and that's where a lot of these figures reigned.

I found it both shocking and exciting. Especially because I had already started making hair crowns for these deities, and I was like, Oh you girls are going to be a little different. You're a little demonic. But it's such a mind frame. I don't have a clear understanding of what they did, because whether it was Mayan or Aztec, everything that we have that's taken down is translated into English, and the interpretation of it, because it is Western, is immediately filtered through the eyes of the people cataloguing it.

That would be like if I was writing about Christian pop music or competitive cheerleading. It

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would be so outside of anything I am familiar with, yet I have the power of authority to say, "This is what it is," and that's the reference. The truths of history are daunting to me because of that. What is that saying about how there are many truths? [Laughs]. I think it's so true.

How does identity and representation drive you as an artist?
I can only speak on my life, my experiences. I feel like most of the questions I pose or the roles I assume are roles that I am grappling with in life. That's why they feel so important to manifest, and in manifesting them, it helps me move on. Not always, but I have learned that the practice of image, video, or music making is to see something outside of myself or how society doesn't see me—and it somehow comes true. It's like making a wish, or putting a message in a bottle, and [it helps] you let go of the latter one.

Indigenous Woman is on view at Ryan Lee Gallery, New York, through October 20, 2018.

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them.

A Trans Latinx Woman Takes Total Control of Her Narrative in New Magazine Art Project

There will only be one edition of Indigenous Woman, a magazine that interrogates its creator's queer, mixed-race identity.

by JOHN PAUL BRAMMER September 5, 2018



There will only be one edition of Indigenous Woman, a magazine photographed, edited, and written by its editor in chief, artist Martine Gutierrez. "Why would I ever make a magazine again?" Gutierrez, a transgender Latinx woman, says over the phone shortly before its release. "It was so much work, and so much writing."

The 146-page volume, which will debut at the Ryan Lee art gallery in New York on Thursday, sees Gutierrez adorned in Mayan textiles, inspired by her indigenous roots, in photo spreads that evoke the glitzy modern world of couture. "From behind long lashes and lacquered lips, I use the fashion magazine's glossy framework to play with perception," she says. "I employ mannequins, advertorials, and indigenous textiles to reassert control over my own image."

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That image, Gutierrez says, is one she hadn't always felt belonged to her. Gutierrez explains that the word "indigenous" in the title is used to refer to native cultures from a particular region, but also "as a synonym for the natural and innate. It signifies a real, authentic, native-born woman," she says. "There was a time when I believed there was no such title for me to claim."

Gutierrez' exploration into her identity — her mother is a white woman from upstate New York, she says, and her father is from Guatemala — began when she went through her Guatemalan grandfather's collection of Mayan textiles. Her parents, she says, also collected these textiles while doing relief work in the late 70s.

"I used to play with them because they were colorful and magical, and they had animals and intricacy woven into them, so I could build stories around certain weavings," Gutierrez says. "Finding those chunks felt very nostalgic, and I was instantly like, 'I have to use these in a project. They can't just sit down here.'"

Those textiles appear in the high fashion outfits Gutierrez dons in the pages of her magazine. The result is a union of influences — old and new, native and post-colonial — that collectively represent an interrogation into Gutierrez' identity as a queer, mixed-race person. But Gutierrez says up front that there are no concrete answers to the questions raised in Indigenous Woman. "This is a quest for identity," she says. "Of my own, specifically, yes. But by digging my pretty, painted nails deeply into the dirt of my own image, I am also probing the depths for some understanding of identity as a social construction."

It's artistic territory Gutierrez has explored before; in December 2016, as part of her project for the prestigious Van Lier Fellowship, which provides funds and professional tools to budding artists, she erected a billboard of herself topless in a pair of jeans in New York City's garment district. "It was this claiming of my body and how I could use it, project it outwards," she says. "It felt in a way like marketing. Then I felt the billboard needed to be part of a larger body of work, which birthed this magazine."

The magazine contains several photos of Gutierrez, a faux perfume ad, and a letter from the editor, all crafted by Gutierrez herself. "Mine is a practice of full autonomy," she says. "All photography, modeling, styling, makeup, hair, lighting, graphic design, and product design, I have executed myself."

On the subject of how her queerness impacts her work, Gutierrez pauses before saying, "Straightness impacts the world without thinking it does. Queerness should be the same. It just doesn't, because it's not the majority."

This is, in part, what makes Indigenous Woman so exhilarating to look at. It represents a glamorous, self-contained world in which queerness isn't centered, because in the universe in which it exists, queerness is inherently central. It sees a trans Latinx person in total control of their narrative, while at the same time interrogating their own identity.

Those looking to experience the piece up close and personal will be able to do so from Thursday until October 20, 2018 at the Ryan Lee gallery.

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The New York Times

Gender-Fluid Artists Come Out of the Gray Zone

By HILARIE M. SHEETS SEPT. 15, 2017



Martine Gutierrez's "Line Up 1," from 2014, a photographic series in which the artist is styled to blend seamlessly with glamorous mannequins. Ryan Lee, New York

In the window of the New Museum this month, the performance artist Justin Vivian Bond plans to periodically strike a pose in a pink gown with rhinestone teardrop, framed by hand-drawn wallpaper twinning the artist's face with that of the former Estée Lauder model Karen Graham. As a closeted transgender teenager in the 1970s, Bond obsessively drew Ms. Graham, until "I made myself my canvas." The artist is wearing a vintage dress by Frank Masandrea, one of several little-known couturiers who outfitted Ms. Graham before AIDS cut them down in their creative prime.

The project, "My Model/MySelf: I'll Stand by You," proudly puts what Bond calls a "queer face" on the glamour created by gay people that has long been appropriated by mainstream culture. The designers "served the aspirational whim of wealthy upper-class white women and then were completely dismissed by history," the artist said.

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Bond is one of more than 40 intergenerational artists in "Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon," opening on Sept. 27 with work that explores gender beyond the binary of "male" and "female."

It is the largest show to date at a major museum to tackle gender fluidity, which has become native to young people who are used to constructing their own identities on social media and declaring their preferred personal pronouns on college campuses and at workplaces. And as the highly charged debates over transgender rights swirl in the news — from President Trump's call for a ban on transgender service members in the United States military to the laws governing access to public bathrooms and locker rooms to harassment in prisons — "Trigger" brings a new level of visibility to gender-fluid artists who have only been acknowledged before in a trickle of mainstream shows.

"This show is attempting to identify without codifying something that may be completely alien to 20th-century folks still grappling with feminist issues and gay rights," said Lisa Phillips, director of the New Museum, long known for its politically themed exhibitions.

Since Charles W. Leslie and Fritz Lohman began showing work by gay artists in their loft in 1969, gender fluidity has been part of the mix, said Gonzalo Casals, director of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in SoHo. "But it's very important for mainstream museums — not just for cultural specific museums like mine — to show that work," he added. "The best way you can alienate a community is by denying them their reflection in society."

Survey shows have traditionally relied on establishing categories like "women-only" or "Latin American artists." The curator of "Trigger," Johanna Burton, is intent on disrupting categorization, much as the artists are personally doing.

"Some of the activist work we think of from the AIDS crisis was really didactic," said Ms. Burton, who promises that the New Museum exhibition "won't look like a political show from the '80s. Beauty and pleasure are really primary for these artists and are seen as a mode of resistance."

Sadie Benning's lush new series of photographs titled "rainy day/gender," for instance, are self-portraits shot through droplets on a windshield in a way that makes the artist's body appear surreal and almost incomprehensible.

Mickalene Thomas explores lesbian desire in her 12-monitor video grid, "Me as Muse," presenting herself reclining naked on a couch and focusing the gaze on different parts of her body.

Candice Lin and Patrick Staff's smoke machine will pump testosterone-lowering, plant-based tinctures into the museum lobby in their piece "Hormonal Fog" — sure to both delight and startle viewers when they learn what they are breathing.

The show considers gender in relationship to race, class and sexuality. About half the artists are nonwhite. Most identify as queer — the term for nonconforming sexual identity that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. And some, like the filmmaker Wu Tsang, reject the gender spectrum altogether. "The art itself doesn't have to be tethered to the biography of

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the artist," Ms. Burton said.

"Trigger" warning: This show is intended to challenge viewers, and some may find the concept of gender as a moving target difficult to accept.

Just days ago, conservative critics succeeded in getting Santander Cultural, an arts center in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to shut down the exhibition "Queermuseum" amid accusations that it advertised pedophilia and blasphemy.

"Transgender and gender nonconforming expressions have been around forever," said Erin Christovale, the co-curator of the roving film program "Black Radical Imagination" who recently started work at the Hammer Museum. "What's new is that people are claiming these terms very proudly and these terms are starting to be valued."

With the rise of transgender characters in popular television shows, including "Transparent" and "Orange Is the New Black," art galleries are getting in on the trend. Diamond Stingily, a transgender woman and, at 27, one of the youngest artists in "Trigger," will show new sculpture and video in a solo exhibition opening later this month at Ramiken Crucible in Los Angeles.

"The art world is interested now because everybody wants to be woke," Ms. Stingily said. "That's a good thing if it gets more people who look like me to come into those spaces and not have them be so exclusive to a predominantly white audience."

For "Trigger" she is making a braid of synthetic black hair more than 200 feet long that will descend through the four gallery floors of the New Museum, summoning the strength and beauty of "racialized" hair and characters ranging from Medusa to Rapunzel.

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in SoHo begins its season this week with a solo show by the performance artist Cassils (formerly known as Heather Cassils). On view is a glass cube containing 200 gallons of the artist's urine, collected in the months since the Trump administration reversed President Obama's protections for transgender students to use bathrooms consistent with their gender identities.

Carlos Motta, an artist known for his multimedia work documenting queer communities, calls attention to the underreported discrimination against gender-nonconforming refugees. In his 11 video portraits going on view this week at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, refugees recount the oppression they experienced in their homelands in the Middle East and at refugee camps in the Netherlands.

Mr. Motta is skeptical, however, whether representation in the privileged art world really leads to political change.

"Of course it is important to tell people's stories, but who is actually benefiting by projecting a film in a museum and what is this discourse actually doing for communities at stake?" Mr. Motta asked. He has looked for ways to bridge the socioeconomic gap between art institutions and the marginalized people he films, including using some of his own exhibition funding to give copies

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of his videos to trans organizations for their own promotion.

Juliana Huxtable, one of the most discussed artists in the New Museum's 2015 Triennial because of its representations of her nude transgender body, also questioned whether greater visibility for transgender art will lead to social progress.

Are "audiences obsessed with and consuming media about transness tapping into a derivative pornographic obsession with transgender bodies?" she asked, in an interview in a new anthology, "Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility," to be published in November by the New Museum. "Or are they putting me on display as a circus freak show?"

"That's the anxiety that I've gotten from the whole situation, because I think that the policing and the violence against trans people have a direct relationship to that increase in visibility."

Ms. Huxtable pointed out that her work that doesn't present herself in a sexualized way doesn't sell. "No one wants to buy work that doesn't seem seductive," she said.

Ms. Burton estimated that two-thirds of the artists in "Trigger" have no gallery representation at all.

Martine Gutierrez, who never identified as a male and is currently transitioning to a woman, struggled to conform to the demands of the art world when she first began showing work. "They want the artist to define themselves and they want the work to be defined, especially if the artist is in the work," Ms. Gutierrez said. This proved unnerving when her identity hovered in a gray area.

Images from her 2014 photographic series, "Lineups," in which the artist is styled to blend seamlessly with groupings of glamorous female mannequins, are on view in the group show "Converging Voices: Gender and Identity" at the Hofstra University Museum in Hempstead, N.Y. "This body of work was my first inclination to realizing that I wanted to be seen as a woman," said Ms. Gutierrez, who is now comfortable using the female pronoun.

In 2013, as transgender people began to be included in institutions of legitimacy and power, Chris E. Vargas, a multimedia artist, invented the fictional Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art, or MOTHA, as a form of institutional critique. It started as a logo and poster with images of more than 250 gender nonconforming heroes, from Chaz Bono to Peppermint Patty, that will be on view in "Trigger." Mr. Vargas's project has snowballed into tongue-in-cheek events and lectures that he performs in the guise of MOTHA's executive director. (He will be delivering a performance at the New Museum.)

"Is it the responsibility of an art and history institution, one that is dedicated to a historically marginalized community, to join the mainstream celebration of liberal inclusion?" Mr. Vargas mused in his essay in "Trap Door." "Or should that institution stay faithful to its history, rooted in disruption and transgression?"

Ms. Burton, the curator, said that while no artist approached for the exhibition turned her down,

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she is acutely aware of the issues and responsibilities of injecting these clamorous voices into the ivory tower. She doesn't want "Trigger" to be too easily digestible.

"If the show is done right, and I hope it is, it makes people interested but doesn't allow them to think they fully understand something," she said. "If you stop thinking about yourself as a stable identity looking at something made by another stable identity, at least for the duration of the show, it changes the whole game."

"And some people," she predicted, "won't like that."

A version of this article appears in print on September 17, 2017, on Page AR16 of the New York edition with the headline: Transcending the Binary.

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THE CUT



GALLERY

This Artist Thinks Gender Is a Drag

By **Lena Rawley**

In 2013, Brooklyn-based artist Martine Gutierrez turned into a sex doll for her first solo exhibition. Now, the RISD graduate has completed a nine-part film that dismantles gender identity, telling a semiautobiographical story of personal transformation. She spent six years shooting *Martine Part I-IX*, currently on view at the Ryan Lee Gallery in Chelsea, and premiered the final segment in North Carolina last year — just after the state passed legislation that prohibited transgender peoples from using their preferred bathrooms.

"It made me realize that my body was political even if my art wasn't," she said of the timing. "Subconsciously, I think the project has served to illustrate my rejection of societal binaries as I

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come to an understanding of my gender and identity as a trans woman … My work continues to inform how I see myself or want to be seen — it is the only way I have found to validate my beauty and my expression of gender without being manipulated by social constructs."

In *Martine Part I-IX*, Gutierrez travels to a variety of locations: Providence, New York, Central America, and the Caribbean. Each place symbolizes her character's steps toward self-discovery, prompting her to negotiate various perceptions of gender identity. "In the film, architecture and manicured gardens represent the constructs of society and are eventually replaced by vast, seemingly 'untouched' landscapes — timeless, elemental themes," she told the Cut. "I feel put into the context of how small we are, how meaningless the topic of gender is."

Although the story is only loosely based on Gutierrez's own experiences, she said notions of her own gender identity changed while working on the film. "I adopted gender neutral pronouns and added an 'e' to the end of my name, previously Martín — same pronunciation, different gender," she said. Gutierrez thinks the idea of gender identity is also toxic, regardless of how one identifies: She says while it traps non-binary individuals, it also perpetrates stereotypes that restrict people who identify as men and women.

"The idea of 'gender roles' really sums it up — these are parts we play. There's a vast tradition of gender roles that are perpetuated by the media, enforcing the belief that men are masculine and women are feminine. The reality is we're all both. Our identities are fluid," Gutierrez said. "It's important to emphasize that outside of these artificial boundaries we're both inherently equal and profoundly, infinitely diverse."

Martine Part I-IX is on view at RYAN LEE, located at 515 West 26th Street, until February 18.

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On View

Editors' Picks: 8 Things to Do in New York This Week

Start 2017 off right with these shows.

Sarah Cascone, January 3, 2017

Thursday, January 5–Saturday, February 18, 2017



Martine Gutierrez, *Martine Part V*, video still. Courtesy of Ryan Lee Gallery

5. Martine Gutierrez, "Martine Part I–IX" at Ryan Lee Gallery

Ambitious 28-year-old multimedia artist Martine Gutierrez, who lives in Brooklyn, gets her third solo show at Ryan Lee Gallery this week. Her nine-part video work, titled, *Martine Part I-IX* (2012–16), is an exploration of gender and identity, and includes her own original score.

Location: Ryan Lee Gallery, 515 West 26th Street
Price: Free
Time: Opening reception, Thursday, January 5, 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

—Kathleen Massara

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MODERN **LUXURY**

THE DISRUPTOR

Martine Gutierrez's portfolio is equal parts mind-bending and gender-bending, with the multimedia artist herself (Gutierrez was born male but currently identifies as female) usually the focal point of her photography's preoccupation with so-called sex norms. Recent examples include "RedWoman01," in which the 27-year-old Brooklyn-based California native poses provocatively while wearing a tight crimson jumpsuit, and her many self-portraits as lacquered-up, peurient versions of typical mannequins in various compromising positions.

"I had discovered sex dolls online some time before and was fascinated," the composer, runway model and filmmaker says. "They're lifelike yet not, and I wanted to capture that. The male gaze is so dominant and directs almost every narrative in media."

Gutierrez added that all too often, viewers assume that portraits of the artist as a young sex statue are actually the real things. "A new publicist for a solo show wrote an entire press release asking me where one of the sex dolls was now," says the artist, laughing. "I slowly pointed at myself and his jaw just dropped—I could hear his mind being blown."

Indeed, the always-surprising auteur, who is represented by Jeffrey Lee of the famed Ryan Lee Gallery, long ago learned that her own androgyny can fuel her creativity. "I grew up with my own gender constantly questioned as I maneuvered through adolescence and puberty fluidly," Gutierrez recalls, "and time has shown me that it all keeps shifting—there is no finalizing gender summary."



LIFE IN PLASTIC Photographer Martine Gutierrez, seen center among mannequins, in her piece "Line Up 5"



IN THE ROUND Work by artist Matthias Bitzer at the Marianne Boesky Gallery

PUBLIC WORKS

Marianne Boesky is celebrating her 20th anniversary in the business, but she's as big a risk taker now as she was when she showed then-outré artists Takashi Murakami and Lisa Yuskavage in the '90s. This year, she tripled the size of her West Chelsea space. "Now we can show established artists like Frank Stella and Pier Paolo Calzolari using both spaces," Boesky says. The expanded gallery is also a more effective launching pad for new work. "For a while, starting a very young artist on 24th Street was a disservice because people weren't coming here to discover young artists—the Lower East Side was for that," she explains. "Now we can run concurrent solo shows, with a younger artist and an established artist, and the audience can focus on both." She hasn't lost her taste for edgier work, either: provocative interdisciplinary artist Sanford Biggers joins her roster for 2017. *507 W. 24th St., marianneboeskygallery.com*

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miami art watch | Miami Herald

Women artists at the fairs, plus gender-fluid Martin Gutierrez

By Siobhan Morrissey

Special to the Miami Herald



Many female artists – including "gender fluid" Martin Gutierrez – took center stage at galleries at Art Basel Miami Beach and satellite fairs.

Gutierrez was the focal point of the New York-based Ryan Lee Gallery at Pulse, in a beachfront tent next to the Fisher Roc in Miami Beach. (S-200)

"He would say people who have known him for a long time call him 'he,'" says gallery co-owner Jeffrey Lee. "But [s]ome who met him more recently tend to use the 'she' pronoun."

Gutierrez, who styles and photographs himself with mannequins, also has pop star persona "Martine" – which is pronounced the same as his male birth name. He makes hilarious art videos using that persona.

At only 26, Gutierrez both transcends gender and the role-playing portraiture practiced by Cindy Sherman and Yasumasa Morimura, the latter who famously dressed up to look like Frida Kahlo in native Mexican costumes. Unlike Sherman and Morimura, who pose alone, Gutierrez has a cast of characters, all mannequins that have his same self-physique and are dressed in similar fashion, with similarly-style hair and make-up.

"He so gets himself," Lee says. "To live in a world where you transcend social norms and not feel self-conscious about it – that's amazing."

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Interview

ART

MARTÍN GUTIERREZ

By EMILY MCDERMOTT
Photography RAF STAHELIN



MARTÍN GUTIERREZ IN NEW YORK, APRIL 2015. PHOTOGRAPHY: RAF STAHELIN. STYLING: MARINA MUNOZ. MAKEUP: YACINE DIAHLO/DEFACTO INC. PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: PAOLO STAGNARO. SPECIAL THANKS: RAMA AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING AND EMPIRE NAIL SALON.

Whether manipulated in post-production or created within a false reality, photography has the ability to simultaneously pose questions and hide truths, and New York-based multi-media artist Martín Gutierrez subtly takes these opportunities to the extreme.

Born in Berkley and raised in Oakland, California, before moving with his mother to rural Vermont in the sixth grade, Gutierrez has dressed up, painted, and made home movies since early childhood. Now, the Rhode Island School of Design-graduate's second solo show at Ryan Lee Gallery in Chelsea is on view, exploring and posing questions about gender, sexuality, and self-identity.

Hanging throughout the gallery are two series of self-portraits, one black-and-white and another vibrantly colored, featuring Gutierrez posing with a collection of mannequins. At first glance, each black-and-white image appears to feature two living people in a highly extravagant setting—ascending the grand staircase of an ornate mansion, standing within a luxurious garden landscape—but upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the images are presenting an exaggerated fantasy. In the color images, Guiterrez stands amongst various groups of stereotyped women—schoolgirls,

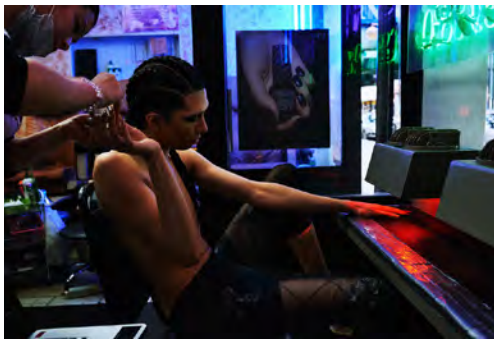
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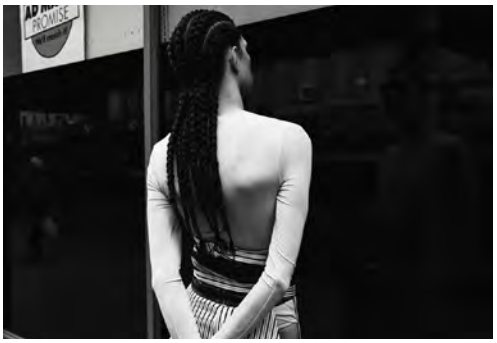
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luau dancers—but really, these women, like in the black-and-white series, are inanimate. In addition to the photographs, the exhibition, "Martín Gutierrez: Can She Hear You," also includes an installation of disassembled mannequins, cartoonish paintings, and music videos, all of which Gutierrez produced.

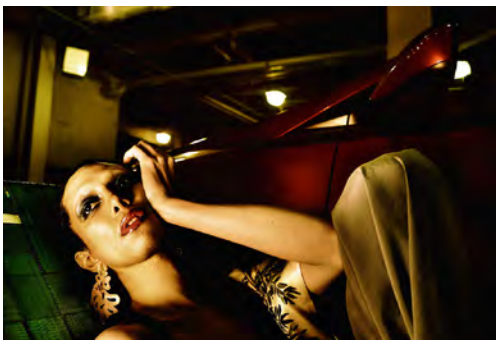
"I don't see them all as separate things," Gutierrez says in regard to the many mediums. "There's not really an alternative. I don't know how else I would make this image if I wasn't doing all of these jobs."

This image is one that confuses gender and one that consistently evolves. More than just fine art, the artist also produces and performs music under the name Martine, and some songs have even been used in commercial collaborations with fashion brands like Saint Laurent, Dior, and Acne.









NAME: Martín Gutierrez

BASED: Brooklyn, New York

AGE: 26

YOUNG BEGINNINGS: From a very young age I was sporadically putting on wigs and costumes and dancing around the house to music. At that age, we don't have a dialogue for why, it was just that I had to. I didn't know that making myself happy in that way was a career choice until I was in high school and I did a summer program called The Governance Institute. The program was about developing your skill set, but really everyone that was there was so honestly motivated. I was like, "These are my people, I need to do this for the rest of my life, this is what college should be too!" And then realizing, "There are art schools! You can do this!" [laughs]

FIRST PIECE OF ART: My mother still has this terrible, and amazing, finger painted watercolor that I made that's a self-portrait. It's just this huge orb with two dots inside and then these stick-like arms and legs coming out. There's no body; it's a face with hands and arms and feet and legs. I'm really dyslexic, so I actually used to write backwards when I was younger. All of my works, they say "Mom," 'cause that's the same either way, and then they say "Nitram," because I signed my name backwards on everything.

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But I also obtained a video camera pretty early on and would make videos. I would make my babysitters star in them and I would always have supporting roles, obviously. I think it was called "The Wizard And Something Else," which I would call my first art piece. I found [it] recently on VHS...there's this loose moral about being nice and when you're nice, better things happen to you. [laughs] My babysitter Erin gets this curse put on her—whatever she sees in the mirror is actually her inner beauty, not her exterior beauty. So every time she looks in mirror I had this really gross Halloween mask I'd put on her. It was pimply and gooey.

GENDER IDENTITY: I think these themes [of gender and sexuality] are intrinsic to me as an individual, partly in just figuring myself out as a young adult. Always kind of not fitting into a gender binary has made these issues that I've had to wrestle with, but I don't think I go out of my way to talk about them. I feel like the experience [of moving from California to Vermont] paused my identity as a person for a prolonged amount of time. I didn't identify as anything; I think partly because everyone kept asking, "Are you this? Are you that?" and my response, to protect myself, was to be like, "I'm a little bit of everything." I wanted to feel like there was a choice, because I believe there is one.

HIM OR HER: I refer to myself as Martín, which I always have. I accept that in words there's a masculine and a feminine, and in physicality people see a masculine and a feminine as well. I, myself, can't control that. [pauses] Some of my friends refer to me as "her," and some of them refer to me as "him." It's just how long I've known them and how they perceived me when I met them, which is really interesting. I'm almost more interested in that than telling someone how they should refer to me. Right now, I'm in a gleeful place of not settling on anything. I'm being water right now; I'm just trying to cover up the surface. Maybe I'll become ice later on and it will feel like I don't need to move around as much.

MARTÍN WITH AN E...is definitely me hyper sexualized. I see Martine, that musical world, as this alternative path that my life could very easily be, based on the neighborhood I grew up in in Oakland. It wasn't very big, we had girls prostituting themselves, and there still are, even though the neighborhood is becoming gentrified. It's a Latino ghetto and my dad and my sister and her children still live there. I used to find it really glamorous in a weird way, this unattainable nightlife that I would see and really want to be a part of. Even though it seemed dangerous, it also seemed really alluring and sexy.

LETTING OTHERS IN: I feel like I'm actually somewhat self-conscious and it's harder for me to be vulnerable around other people. That's part of why I work alone, because no one is watching me and I'm really choosing the moments I let other people see. For this show, I've been doing more collaborations and loosening my reign in terms of what I'm willing to let other people do. I feel like it's been really healthy for me to be able to sit back and let someone else execute an aspect of a project and trust them. If anything, I've realized I never thought of myself as a perfectionist beforehand, but I might be. [laughs]

A RARE COLLECTION: My first mannequin was given to me in high school. I think I got a mannequin instead of an iPod, but it was really without a purpose. People always knew I loved dolls, so they would be gifts, or I always look at thrift stores and clothing stores, and ask about their mannequins. I have six now, but they can be expensive, so it's taken a while. I'm also very picky—I won't take any girl, she needs to have the right qualities to be one of my girls. It's very much about that they, for me, are evoking something and that their pose can allude to movement—a posture that is still, but on purpose. It's not just this thing that you look at and translates as a dead doll.

FOR THE LOVE OF FILM: All of my work is very narrative based and I think it's partly because of my love of film. The Fifth Element is one of my all time favorites, since I was young. I have a very intense relationship with the James Bond saga, 007 and Diamonds Are Forever. My father, I think he really wanted to pump me up with some testosterone. He loved action movies, and I also love action movies, but he would sit me in front of the television and we would just watch James Bond. I think in his mind, it was somehow like, "Oh yeah, Martín is going to like guns and handle women in this misogynist way," but all it did was solidify that I am the evil heroin woman. [laughs] The only person I ever really identified with in the film was the mysterious love interest of James Bond, and she usually ended up being his demise.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS: What's important to me is that people use their brains. I am not interested in giving answers to people; I would much rather someone have to process it, and part of that is the learning that happens in someone projecting their own perceptions onto something. It's going to teach that person so much more about how they view gender and how they view sex, what turns them on. It's going to be so much more meaningful than approaching an image and being told, "This is a mannequin; that's a person; this is a set, not a real forest." Maybe they don't perceive that anything is not what it seems, and that in itself is interesting to me, that they're willing to accept it even though there's definitely aspects of the reality within the image that don't make any sense.

MARTIN GUTIERREZ: CAN SHE HEAR YOU IS ON VIEW AT RYAN LEE GALLERY THROUGH MAY 9.

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i-D

martín gutierrez is our new favourite performance art pop star

As we premiere his new video the artist tells us about the troubling lack of Latina Barbies, worrying about mama watching the performances and growing up under the shadow of Shania Twain.



Artist Martín Gutierrez's second show, *Can She Hear You*, opens at New York's Ryan Lee Gallery today, and it's a mixture of video, performance and photography that deals with gender, self-transformation and the play between fantasy and reality. Gutierrez has created large-scale self-portraits in and amongst a girl gang of mannequins, who he's positioned in ways that play with ideas of gender ("both personal and collective") and keep the viewer guessing about the relationships and scenarios unfolding. Also on display will be three new music videos (*Head 2 Toe*, *If* and *Blame the Rain*) featuring "Martine", his popstar alter-ego who takes cues from Riri,

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B and TLC and whose music (which was played at the Saint Laurent Cruise Collection in 2012) has been described as "Lana del Rey goes to the Caribbean and is still sad." To tie in with the opening of the show, Martín has co-directed an exclusive new music video for *i-D*, featuring himself and his beloved mannequins dressed head-to-toe in Jacquemus. We caught up with the Bed-Stuy based artist to find out more.

Hi Martin.
It's Mar-teen.

Do you refer to yourself as Martin or Martine?
Well, it's confusing because I was born Martín [pronounced similarly to the English "Martine"] the Spanish name. My father's from Guatemala, so it's after his father. It's a very masculine Spanish name, so going to school in the United States no-one could say Martín, so it became Martine. Every substitute teacher I had would just put the "E" at the end. I didn't realise that there was a gender play happening when I was a child just because of my name.

There are three music videos in the show, right?
Yeah. It's usually me staring in my own make-up, hair, costuming, pressing play on the music, and filming with a few friends, driving around with a camera. In the photographs I do everything completely alone so this collaboration (see our i-D video here) has been really exciting because I get to have my hands off and just perform and forget about the process.

Are you enjoying the performance element more right now?
Yeah. I guess my aesthetic becomes less a part of it because my hand isn't in every aspect. Then moments happen where I'm more real, because when I'm making work by myself, I have to prepare myself to be unprepared in a weird way. I have to think like, "Ok let's be real." The pictures in the show are like a film still. For those I probably took anywhere from 100 to 600 pictures for just one set up. Because the mannequins don't move, it's up to me to make the shot dynamic, to bring movement or some life into it.

Why the fascination with mannequins?
I've had mannequins since I was in high school. The first mannequin I was given was by my mother, and it was right when the iPods came out. And all my friends were getting iPods, and I was dead set on getting a mannequin.

To dress it up?
Yeah, to dress it. But before that, I always had a love of dolls. I had my mother's dolls, I had my grandmother's doll, I had my Barbies. I had American Girl dolls, but I've always wanted a My Size Barbie. They didn't make PC Barbies then - they only made the blonde girl. There was no like Latina My Size Barbie. That's why the mannequin idea was really exciting: I could have those things, and she could look more like me.

You say you're investigating gender, both personal and collective in your show? Can you explain that a little more?
It's about losing individuality within a group. The mannequins are meant to be seen as human, or some kind of idealistic body form of a female, but they're not made to have an identity.

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Your music has been used by Saint Laurent, Dior and Acne. Didn't you just want to become a musician?
I see myself as more of an artist. I feel like music falls under that umbrella. I was never taught how to read music and I don't think about it like minor chord major chord, what's the tempo of the song. It's a process of putting things together, making an image for me. And making an image, it's about me moving little things.

What about the influence of 90s hip hop and RnB? Which singers and rappers were you really into?
Oh, the first CD I bought was by TLC. FanMail is girl power at its best. It's so good. Although, I was also a big pop fan. I listened to a lot of Spice Girls. But they had RnB influences too. I also listened to a lot of second hand music because of my sister and my mother's music. My mum was listening to Celine Dion. And who's that country singer?

Shania Twain?
Yes! And then my sister was really into rock. She's older than me, so she actually saw Madonna, David Bowie and Boy George.

What do your mum and sister think of watching Martine, your performance persona?
My sister hasn't, I think my mum has once when I was really nervous. I was really worried, like "Oh no, mum's watching."

You were worried that it was too sexy?
Yeah. My stepdad was watching too, which was maybe more uncomfortable than my mother. Cause my mum's just supportive, she's been supportive of everything since the beginning.

Will they be there for the show when it opens in April?
Yes! And my father will be flying in, which is exciting. It's easier to do things that would otherwise feel maybe morally wrong or embarrassing when you can say it's a persona. But all things are connected, and I end up maybe starting a gesture as the persona, but then the gesture kind of finishes and it's me.

And it's interesting to see whether people can spot those little moments when you come through.
Right. And maybe that's what's also confusing - in a good way. I seem to be very confusing to people all the time.

Martín Gutierrez: Can She Hear You runs 9th April - 9th May at Ryan Lee Gallery, NYC.

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VOGUE

CULTURE

ART

Martín Gutierrez's Exhibitionist New Art

by Elizabeth Inglese



Martín Gutierrez, *RedWoman91*, 2014, single-channel video, silent, 30:01. Courtesy of the artist & RYAN LEE, New York.

Martín Gutierrez is a head-turner: Walking down Chelsea's High Line on a hot summer afternoon, all eyes are on the gender-bending 25-year-old with hip-length, raven hair. He first drew stares in the art world with his photo series "Real Dolls," for which Gutierrez transformed himself into a cast of uncannily lifeless sex dolls. Tonight, it's his latest work that will command attention, debuting in the windows of the Ryan Lee gallery's new location beside the High Line, tailor-made to engage the walkers outside. "In New York, everyone is living on top of each other, staring into someone else's world," says Gutierrez. "We're being watched right now."

Voyeurism and the exhibitionism of selfies inspired *RedWoman91*, which features Gutierrez posing in an "advertising red" jumpsuit, exuding withering sexual power alternating with hesitant vulnerability. At a time when "people are curating images of themselves, finding their light, choosing their filter," Gutierrez's probes into self-presentation are particularly poignant, though they were central to his work long before the birth of Instagram. "I went through a swan phase where I was a really beautiful little boy who was always mistaken for a girl," says Gutierrez, who, after puberty, longed for the ability to slip seamlessly back into "girl world." His look now, like his name (which, when pronounced, sounds both like the masculine Spanish name that it is and the feminine French *Martine*), wraps together gender dualities. "*Fluidity* is my coming-back-to word," says Gutierrez, who glides between creating photography, videos, and music.

His androgynous sensuality has appealed to fashion powerhouses; Dior and Acne Studios have played his music in video editorials, Saint Laurent set its 2012 resort collection video to his single "Hands Up." Though he's walked the runway himself as a model for Eckhaus Latta, Gutierrez is cautious to remain in control of his carefully cultivated image, turning down other modeling offers. Wrapping his arms around his lithe body, he says, playfully, "This is *my* medium."

Martín Gutierrez's RedWoman91 *will be in the windows of RYAN LEE, New York until July 25.*

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The New York Times

ART IN REVIEW

Martín Gutierrez

By HOLLAND COTTER

Published: August 1, 2013



Martín Gutierrez's photograph "Real Doll, Raquel 4," part of a series featuring the artist himself at RYAN LEE.

RYAN LEE
527 West 26th Street, Chelsea
Through Aug. 16

Just a year out of Rhode Island School of Design with a bachelor of fine arts in printmaking, Martín Gutierrez is having a strong first New York show, and printmaking has nothing to do with it, though several other disciplines — photography, video, performance, fashion, music — do. The artist is in command of them all.

In a series of photographs, he acts the roles of four life-size female sex dolls — Ebony, Luxx, Mimi and Raquel — each installed in different domestic settings and dressed and posed to fulfill specific fantasies. Playacting for the camera is overly farmed terrain, though Mr. Gutierrez, stiff-limbed and lacquered with makeup, brings some enticement to it.

Best, though, are his videos, particularly three short ones in which he stars as a character named Martine who, after introducing herself with the mantralike statement "There's something to be said for those who get what they want," wanders an empty-looking city (Providence, R.I.) in search of fulfillment. Her quest leads her to merge herself with a neo-Classical public sculpture, drag ocean water in a clear plastic bag from a beach to the middle of town, and lose herself in reverie in a zoological museum where she talks to animals, live and stuffed, and dances to music only she and they can hear.

With Mr. Gutierrez, as with many young artists now — Kalup Linzy, Jacolby Satterwhite and Ryan Trecartin are a few — mashing up race, class and gender is second nature, the basics, what they start with. It's where they go with it that counts, and Mr. Gutierrez is going in several directions. It will be interesting to see where he lands and digs in over time.

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NEW YORK

The Approval Matrix: Week of July 22, 2013

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to who falls where on our taste hierarchies. Roll over the images for related links.

Published Jul 14, 2013



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THE CUT

FIRST LOOKS

The Man Who Turned Into a Sex Doll (for Art)

By **Julie Ma**



Martín Gutierrez, 24, is a gender-blurring artist who seamlessly integrates performance, video, and photography to engage (and disturb) his audience into seeing the world as he does: a place where he constantly grapples with social issues linked to race, sexuality, gender, and class. It's a cocktail, perhaps unsurprisingly, that has many in the fashion world already taking an interest in his early work. Saint Laurent plucked Gutierrez (who produces music under the name Martine) out of obscurity when the brand selected his unreleased single, "Hands Up," for its 2012 cruise collection video editorial; houses like Dior and Acne have followed suit by using his music, too.

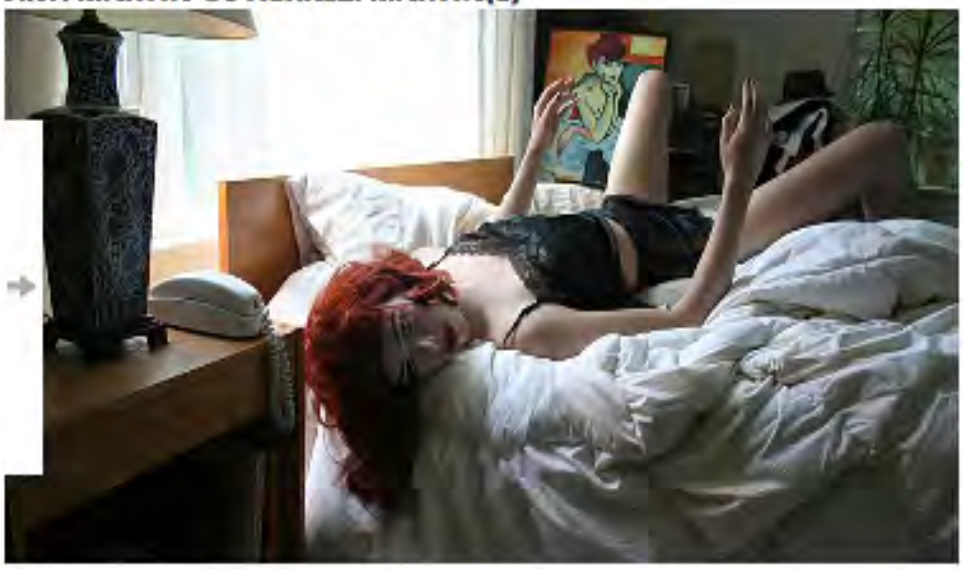
Starting today and running through August 16, the RISD graduate's first solo exhibition, titled *Martin(e)*, will be on view at the Ryan Lee Gallery in Chelsea. In addition to a three-part, eerily melancholic video series titled *Martine Pt. 1-3*, the exhibition will include a photo series called *Real Dolls* in which Gutierrez personally dives into the world of life-sized sex dolls — by assuming the personae of four different dolls that he's named Ebony, Luxx, Mimi, and Raquel. Click through the slideshow to get hypnotized, first by the stark juxtaposition of these sex dolls posing wantonly in a suburban setting, and second, as you process that Gutierrez himself is the doll in every single photo.

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GAYLETTER

ART: MARTÍN GUTIERREZ: MARTIN(E)



REAL DOLL: RAQUEL 1, 2013 ARCHIVAL PRINT, 11 X 17" | IMAGE: ART

The 24-year-old artist **Martin Gutierrez** has a great gender bending exhibition at **Ryan Lee** gallery that opened last week. It includes photography, film and performance art. The artist dresses himself up as a series of life-sized dolls he calls 'real dolls.' The dolls are mostly shown in suburban settings in provocative poses, in some instance they appear ready for sex — they're named **Ebony, Luxx, Mimi** and Raquel. I guess if I had a sex doll I would probably give her a name too. Mimi is my favorite because it's probably in honor of **Mariah Carey** who in the video for **"Up Out My Face"** places a very convincing real life sex doll. The artist is trying to show how *'transgenderism and identity impact art and popular culture, while challenging ideas of class, race, and sexuality.'* The powerful and sometimes disturbing images are very intriguing, playing with ideas of possession and perfection. This is a must see show from a promising young artist. Never forget that dolls need love too! —T&A

FREE, 10:00AM-6:00PM, RYAN LEE GALLERY, 527 W. 26TH ST., NY, NY