



Installation view of MSCHF: *No More Tears, I'm Lovin' It* at Perrotin New York, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

## **MSCHF** *NO MORE TEARS, I'M LOVIN' IT*

**November 3 — December 23, 2022**

Perrotin is pleased to present the first-ever exhibition of work by Brooklyn-based art collective MSCHF. Conceived in 2019, MSCHF is a conceptual collective whose elaborate interventions expose and leverage the absurdity of our cultural, political, and monetary systems. Opening on November 3, *No More Tears, I'm Lovin' It* will transform the gallery into an interactive strip mall with various sections. In these spaces, the collective will showcase art as merchandise, where sneakers are investment vehicles and video games are fine art. MSCHF challenges our institutional structures by forcing commentary and engagement, provoking widespread public response as a means of performance directly within the environments it critiques.

The following essay was written by curator Michael Darling to accompany the exhibition.

Art history is often pushed forward by pranksters and rabble-rousers. Duchamp with his urinal, Piero Manzoni with his *Merda d'artista*, Andy Warhol's soup cans, and David Hammons selling snowballs on the sidewalk, to name a few. Typically, these gestures have forced the art world to confront what it thinks are its cherished values, revealing hypocrisies and inviting much-needed self-reflection. The media and

tools used to instigate these reckonings have historically been irritants themselves, challenging good taste, manners, and the established social order of elites—scatological jokes and crass consumerism being two of the most reliable.

Into this space steps art collective MSCHF, who over a short period of three years have built a body of work that is consistently smart, snarky, aesthetically sophisticated, and absolutely annoying to the powers that be. At this time and place in our society, those powers are corporations—the increasingly king-like men who own them—and the unrelenting momentum of capitalism itself, which has emerged as the real Manifest Destiny guiding the United States. MSCHF has figured out exactly what makes contemporary capitalism tick, and what ticks it off. And, when you hit corporate America, it hits back – MSCHF have been subject to innumerable cease and desist decrees and being de-platformed from social media and online payment services.

This exhibition at Perrotin New York is the first opportunity to see a critical mass of MSCHF's output under one roof. So, as to not slide easily into the cozy ecosystem of the artworld, where the codes of decorum are crystal-clear to those who uphold them, the collective has come up with an exhibition concept sure to inspire contempt among

the gatekeepers. Even though the art world is a largely unregulated, multi-billion-dollar industry, the appearance of commercialism is a major no-no. So, why not structure your debut gallery exhibition around the concept of a mall? That is exactly what MSCHF has done by framing works, which expose the inner workings of celebrity, authenticity, privacy, value, branding, and censorship, within one of the most ubiquitous devices for creating and managing one's desires to consume: a strip mall.

Upping the ante of the mall greeter, on the opening day, visitors will be welcomed by the disembodied hand of rapper 24kGoldn. Ensnared behind a wall, with only his hand available to be touched by adoring fans, his teen idol face and smooth voice are held back as a true test of the power of his celebrity.

One of MSCHF's most notorious works was the "Satan Shoes," Nike Air Max 97 sneakers altered to include satanic iconography and actual human blood in its clear soles. Sold out in seconds after it was put on the market, the shoe was just as quickly attacked by Nike for copyright infringement, creating widespread, fervent discussion in the legal community around novel and unexplored grey areas of copyright law. So, naturally, there is a Foot Locker-style outpost at Perrotin, where the group's infiltration of sneaker culture continues. Similarly, there is a store emulating GameStop where visitors can play physical video games developed by MSCHF. Additionally, within this mall within a gallery, there will also be an art gallery, displaying the group's latest interrogation of the art world's belief and value system, titled *Severed Spots*: a Damien Hirst limited edition print of colored dots, purchased at a fair market price and sliced up into individually framed dots and then resold.

Central to the space will be a mind-bending facsimile of a paparazzi ambush, unveiling a truly frightening breach of personal privacy created with current technology and other "public affordances." Here, visitors will see a life-sized sculpture of Jennifer Lopez made possible by a team of hired paparazzi, simultaneously shooting her from multiple angles, whose photos have been sewn together by a computer program to capture her likeness. The subsequent applications are chilling to fathom, which is the case with almost all of MSCHF's projects, if their audience is willing to take time to understand what they are trying to say.

While there is much more to unpack here, beyond the constraints of a brief text, the many layers of *No More Tears, I'm Lovin' It* will surely compel sincere engagement and nuanced conversation. In fact, the best MSCHF projects simply set the parameters for analysis of any number of phenomena impacting contemporary life—we, the audience, are left to enact them, the level of our engagement determining the outcome of the inquiry.

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Michael Darling

Former Chief Curator, MCA Chicago, currently Co-Founder and Chief Growth Officer at Museum Exchange