



MSCHF, *Public Universal Car*, 2022. 2004 PT Cruiser, Chicken Run VHS tape, antifreeze, air freshener, found objects. 160 x 429.3 x 172.7 cm | 63 x 169 x 68 in. Photo: Guillaume Ziccardelli. Courtesy of the artists and Perrotin.

MSCHF ART 2

April 6 — June 1, 2024

In 1939, the Del Mar Theatre burst onto California's cinema scene with Frank Capra's "You Can't Take It with You." Throughout the next eight decades, the space has transformed and changed hands. Most recently, Perrotin Los Angeles took possession of the building, converting it into an art gallery while preserving the theater's historical marquee. An auditorium enhanced by Johnston Marklee serves as the central gallery space, where art collective MSCHF exhibits their second Perrotin solo presentation, *Art 2*. The collective stages a series of installations bound by the theme of a second act. In Tinseltown, where sequels seem inevitable, MSCHF takes on the role of superhero and villain. Drop after drop, they keep returning — taking us for a joyride. MSCHF shapeshifts between art collective and fashion company, traversing multiple dimensions while collectors, consumers, gamers and friends are subjects of their performative exercises.

In 2021, MSCHF acquired *Fairies*, an Andy Warhol ink-on-paper drawing. They reproduced 999 identical copies, mixed them with the original, and sold each for \$250 at Drop #59, *Museum of Forgeries*. In a matter of minutes, all 1,000 artworks sold out. If their website hadn't fully disclosed their speculative proposition of erasing provenance from this unique work, MSCHF may well be in orange jumpsuits. 2024's art world headlines trumpet the industry's fixation on authenticity, from the

ongoing saga of Leonardo Da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* to Rembrandt's *The Adoration of the Kings*. Riding on this wave of absurdity in attribution and perceived value, MSCHF transfers its online project to a gallery context. Their sophomore iteration revolves around Pablo Picasso's *Le Poisson*, a carved wooden artifact that fits in the palm of your hand. Replicated 249 times, this sculpture is recast as a school of fish adorning one long wall. The bait is twofold: a collector may purchase the entire installation, guaranteeing their "catch" of an original Picasso. Or 250 frenzied fans vote with their dollars to democratize accessibility over art pedigree.

MSCHF's Drop #84 *Key4All* demonstrates what can happen when thousands of people across the country can access a single car via duplicate keys. While the art collective originally predicted a Grand Theft Auto competition of participants stealing the 2004 Chrysler PT Cruiser from one another, the results revealed a dedicated, caring community. Participants constantly repaired, repainted, and accessorized the vehicular protagonist as it wended its way to Truckee, California, its final resting place where it broke down. A standout of this gallery exhibition, the *Public Universal Car*, now a relic, is accompanied by documentation and ephemera of its almost year-long transatlantic trek. Its static state recalls Ant Farm's infamous public sculpture, *Cadillac Ranch*. This work explored alternatives to corporate architecture and featured ten junked



MSCHF, *Soracelli*, 2024. Oil on canvas. Framed: 150.81 × 121.23 cm | 59 3/8 × 47 3/4 in.; Unframed: 149.5 × 120 cm | 58 7/8 × 47 1/4 in. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artists and Perrotin.



MSCHF, *Goo Goo Ga Ga (Botched Vierge à l'Enfant terrassant le dragon)*, 2023. *Vierge à l'Enfant terrassant le dragon*, Unknown, 17th c.; oils. Framed: 20.8 × 15.3 cm | 8 3/16 × 6 1/16 in. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artists and Perrotin.

Cadillacs half-buried in a Texas field. When the Cruiser is purchased, the proceeds will allow MSCHF to place a *Key4All* transceiver into a new vehicle, resurrecting the project to don its treads once more.

If you're on the internet, there was no escaping 2023's ubiquitous Big Red Boot (BRB). The boot became an overnight sensation when the Astro Boy cartoon image was realized as a seamless construction of molded rubber. We were bombarded with pictures of celebrities stylishly rocking them, then influencers, and finally, the whole wide world. In a matter of weeks, the project's approval rating went from brilliant to despicable. Internally, MSCHF grappled with the conundrum of popularity subsuming the art project's intention: mastering craftsmanship through the platonic ideal of exaggerated footwear. In a humorous double entendre, *Bootlegs* (in a series of six) is the Big Red Boot fitted with partially hairy legs, a reincarnation of an iconic image hijacked by meme culture.

Another instance of the transformative power of virality brings us to a small church in the Spanish village of Borja. A deteriorating painting once known as *Ecco Homo* resided here for many years when a beloved parishioner took it upon herself to improve the work in 2012. However, she lacked the touch of a skilled restorer, and the suffering countenance of Jesus Christ was subsequently rebaptized by the media as *Monkey Christ*, *Potato Jesus* or *Beast Jesus*. While the aesthetic results were disastrous, thousands of curious internet pilgrims descended, bringing a tourism boom to the town. This meme-fied conversion of destruction to creation inspired MSCHF's series *Botched Masters*. The collective purchased a handful of 17th and 18th century religious paintings, then "restored" aspects of each work, hoping to emulate the indie magic of Borja. In "destroying" the work, does their hand bring new value to the revised creation? Still to be scripted.

In the fast-moving world of fashion, there are three reigning accessory categories: shoes, bags, and frames. MSCHF's portfolio includes the

first two (and there are whispers of a future eyewear drop). For their third bag venture deconstructing the luxury product, the aptly named *Microscopic Handbags* are tiny and only viewable by microscope. Co-opting a biomedical industry technique, MSCHF leveraged 3D printing based on a two-photon polymerization for ultraprecise micro-fabrication in liquid resin. Each of the five works produced for this exhibition salute renowned bag makers: Bottega Veneta, Gucci, Hermes, Jacquemus, and Telfar. Probing lineage and legitimacy, these artworks are the 21st century portrayal of the ancient Indian fable featuring two weavers who deceive a king by presenting him with a garment that can only be seen by the competent. Hoodwinked, the emperor parades nude in his supposed magnificent robe, with his court concurring until a child blurts out, "The emperor has no clothes." With *Microscopic Handbags*, MSCHF co-stars as both weaver and child, a testament to their subversive cosplay.

MSCHF proves spectacle comes in all shapes and sizes, centering their exhibition with an exclamation point, *Touch Me Sculpture One More Time*. Conjuring Michaelangelo and Bernini, the bronze work is a group of friends in a chaotic embrace. The tangled bodies stand on a pentagonal pedestal, edged with an LED readout flashing a set of numbers. MSCHF would like the digits to remain a mystery until the art work is experienced in the gallery.

Spoiler alert: you are likely to laugh out loud. Be glad this art collective maintains a safe distance from the rules dominating the art world.

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Karen Wong

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and Co-author of MSCHF's upcoming monograph published by Phaidon