

# JoANNE ARTMAN GALLERY

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## **“Yes, Masters: A MANthology” - A Conversation with Greg Miller**



**JA: This exhibition, *Yes, Masters: A MANthology*, explores Old Master paintings being reframed in a contemporary context, in addition to the idea that the compositions and narratives still hold relevance in today’s art and society. Do you think of your works as portraits of figures at a particular time and place? Are your paintings set in the past, or are these figures that would exist only today?**

MILLER: A search is a search. I’m a contemporary cave painter, an archaeologist of sorts. Imagery comes from old art books, garbage cans, book stores (if any are left), junk piles, walls... My paintings that I am creating are contemporary appropriations of Andy Warhol, Leonardo Da Vinci, Manet, and Picasso — All inspirations that I draw from in my work, past, present, and future.

**JA: Where did you get your imagery from for this series? What, if any, sources or particular artistic movements did you reference?**

MILLER: The 4 paintings will be laid out by layers and layers of collage and book pages as foundations to the masters. I will then paint, collage, sand, into it. I will be digging away layer-by-layer, words, imagery...I will find elements that will appear to tell a story.

**JA: A large part of the construction of culture is how we depict each other. How do you select and then choose to portray the figures in your work?**

MILLER: The selection of these works:

Manet, Olympia: I was inspired by the impressionist movement. The portrait shows a beautiful woman with a servant bringing her flowers. It was a confrontational piece because it portrayed the woman as being a prostitute. It has many meanings as I interpret it all as positive, and sexual independence for woman. I enjoy depicting woman as HEROES of our time.

Warhol, Coca Cola: I just love the powerful POP image. It's pure Americana. I wanted to recreate this piece by building a canvas by using skateboard planks. It will depict urban pop culture today.

Leonardo Da Vinci (DuChamp), Mona Lisa/L.H.O.O.Q: I love it when DuChamp did it. So now it's my turn. I want to tell more of a story. Stay tuned...

Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon: I love this cubist painting; it abandons all known form and representation of traditional art.

**JA: How does this differ from your typical work? What challenges did you face creating this new body of work?**

MILLER: These works are not much different to my work. The only challenge is repainting these incredible masters.

**JA: Is there a cultural experience that changed the way you see the world? How has this affected your artistic practice?**

MILLER: I draw from the diverse cultural and geographic makeup of my California roots. I keep exploring my relationship with the space that I inhabit to communicate a particular experience. I continue to appropriate, work with paint, collage, deconstruct exploring the contradiction, ambiguity, and truth between urban streetscape and history.