

Mana Contemporary Presents:

## *Marilyn: Character Not Image*

Curated by Whoopi Goldberg

September 25, 2016—October 21, 2016



Whoopi Goldberg. Photo by Thomas Sanchez

Press reception: September 22, 2016, 1PM  
VIP reception: September 24, 2016, 7PM  
Public reception: September 25, 2016, from 1PM—6PM

JERSEY CITY, NJ, September 23, 2016—Mana Contemporary is pleased to present *Marilyn: Character Not Image*, an exclusive, capsule exhibition of Marilyn Monroe's poems, drawings, and iconic dress; featuring photographs by Milton Greene and Weegee, as well as select video footage.

This show presents a different side to the legendary actress: behind the glamour was a vulnerable, sensitive,

and ambitious young woman who spent time writing poems and diary entries to self-analyze, understand, and reassure herself. In these writings, she craves love and friendship, and battles with ongoing pain, heartbreak, and disappointment. She attempts to understand the world on her terms, tries to accept her insecurities and fears, and become a better artist.

On view are nine photographs by Milton Greene, a personal friend who constructed many famous images of Marilyn the star, but he also took many intimate photographs of Marilyn the person. The images here demonstrate her sweetness, humor, and impatience:

with husband Arthur Miller, talking to animals, receiving directions for a photoshoot, taking a summer dip. The 24 images by Weegee reveal a sly complicity between subject and photographer: his dark-room distorted imagery pokes fun at the unreal and absurd facets of the Hollywood industry, of which Marilyn was keenly aware. Also on view are seven sketches on paper that Marilyn herself created, two of them watercolors, including *Making love sometime* (late 1950s) and *Nude tucking her knees under* (late 1950s).

There are five private rooms, which contain space for a few visitors at a time. Each plays live recordings of excerpts from Marilyn's personal texts, recited by actors, as a soundtrack to rare silent footage of Monroe the star: posing for photographs, being interviewed by journalists. In the fifth room is the dress she wore during the unforgettable 1962 performance singing "Happy Birthday" for President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden, perhaps the most significant moment of her career, the crystallization of the persona she was continually creating since she dreamed of becoming an actress as a little girl. The dress and the drawings are on loan from Julien's Auctions' forthcoming November events.

"The image of Marilyn Monroe the icon endures and strengthens as time goes by, but her personal life remains a mystery," says Whoopi Goldberg. "With this exhibition I wanted to show a glimpse of the woman behind the icon using, before now, never-before-seen images, some of her personal writings, and some pieces of her artwork."

Goldberg was in attendance at the show's press preview on September 22, further describing her connection to Marilyn and the complexities of stardom: "I represent that you don't have to be Marilyn. I represent that we exist in the same plane as performers, as actors. As we look at these women who are in movies now, we need to keep in mind that they have their real selves, they have their inner thoughts, and they are real people; they are not these images, they are breathing human beings. That is something [Marilyn] didn't get from audiences. Part of this is to remind people that [female actors] hurt and that they laugh."

### **About Mana Contemporary**

Founded in 2011, Mana Contemporary is a leading arts destination dedicated to celebrating the creative process. Headquartered in a former tobacco warehouse in Jersey City, Mana unites artists' studios, exhibition spaces, and ancillary services in a single location, facilitating conversation and collaboration among its burgeoning creative community. Together with its sister campuses in Chicago and Miami, Mana serves as a lively center for all members of the art world. Mana Contemporary is home to the Richard Meier Model Museum, Ayn Foundation, the International Center of Photography, The Florence Academy of Art, Gary Lichtenstein Editions, Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation, Armitage Gone! Dance, Keating Foundry, Shen Wei Dance Arts, Mana Urban Arts Project, and many others. For additional information, please visit [manacontemporary.com](http://manacontemporary.com).