



### Marisol Escobar

Marisol Escobar, professionally known simply by her first name, came into her own as an artist in the early 1960s, just as the inward turning Abstract Expressionist movement began to give way to the extroverted ebullience of Pop. Her work has always occupied a niche somewhere between these two sensibilities,— of the often difficult relationship between individuals and the society which surrounds them.

combining the social commentary and wry wit of Pop with a keen psychological insight and awareness. A protean artist, she has created an unforgettable cast of characters who reveal the many sides of the contemporary life. She is well known for wickedly satirical works which take on the social games of the status us an uncondesboth a wonderful parody of grasping, overfed American children and a reverent homage to South African Bishop Desmond Tutu. She has made deeply personal works like “Mi Mama Y Yo”, a poignant portrait of herself as a little girl with her mother, who died when she was eleven, witty, caustic representations of world leaders like Franco, De Gaulle, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and



sensitive depictions of artists like Picasso, de Kooning and Georgia O'Keeffe in the later years of the lives. As impressive as her range of subjects is the unique method she has evolved to give them life. Stiff bodies formed of blocks of wood or bronze are topped with expressive and often haunting faces. Found and created elements attach to these figures, suggesting their place in the world, their social masks and their inner feelings in a manner not unlike the attributes affixed to representations of the medieval saints. Often figures appear in groups, their relative scales and poses suggesting the complicated dynamic of family or social subset. In the 1960s, Marisol was often associated with the celebrity cult surrounding Warhol and other Pop artists, and in fact Warhol dubbed her "the first girl artist with glamour." In the succeeding decades, however, it has become clear that the real reason for her artistic seekers of 60s America. But she is also the creator of deeply empathetic works which bring a candid view of a world shaped by privation and poverty. Marisol is capable of creating longevity is her uncanny ability to capture the psychological complexities behind the mask her subjects present to the world. She gives us a regal Georgia O'Keeffe sitting bolt upright on a real stump, an absurdly macho John Wayne who appears to be a cross between a merry go round figure and a weather vane, a dapper Magritte with a carved bowler hat and a real umbrella. In works which range from the poignant to the comic, with stops at all the emotions along the way, Marisol evokes the venality of social climbers, the integrity of great artists, the contradictions of the powerful and the quiet dignity of the dispossessed. Marisol feels both their absurdity and their pain and encourages us to do the same.

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