

PLAZA

APRIL 27—MAY 25, 2024

ELLEN SCHAFER
NICOLAS G. MILLER

TIMESHARE

3526 N. BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CA

PRESS RELEASE

Timeshare proudly presents *Plaza*, a collaborative exhibition by LA-based artists Nicolas G. Miller and Ellen Schafer—sculptors who individually approach the morphology of 20th-century retail space albeit from two historical tail-ends. In *Plaza*, their concerns synthesize into a single shopping environment springing from an uncertain place and time: if early 1900s department stores heralded a newly dignified form of consumption for the middle classes, the 1990s American mall typology would signify its ceremonial finale: a capitulating to fast fashion at the precipice of online shopping. An anachronistic soundtrack of shopping music curated by the artists provides a sonic backdrop to this speculative environment entirely saturated in a ghostly cream color. *Plaza*, from the Spanish “town-square or central place of gathering,” has long been used by North American shopping spaces in an attempt to signify foreign luxury; cream—known in the fashion industry as “the color of money”—has similarly connoted lavishness in various trend cycles over the past century.

Anchoring the exhibition is a central display unit on wheels featuring two distinct chambers: a Tiffany’s-style illuminated jewelry box (typically mounted to the exterior of buildings to achieve 24-hour exposure of merchandise) and a built-in clothing rack (a negative space for the display of garments, simulating the familiarity of a home garderobe). Each advertises objects by the artists: the rack presents Schafer’s lifesize garment sculptures, Pierrot-esque suits rendered in hand-painted and digitally printed fabrics, while the box advertises Miller’s 3D-modeled bronze statuettes (by way of a trompe l’oeil version in painted resin). A jest looms latently over these set-ups: artworks in the drag that is fashion merchandise, promising an alternate value in the form of displayed preciousness or fashionability. Miller and Schafer point to the dramaturgical element that is present in all commodity fetishism: the need for highly dynamic spatial staging and framing to produce fascination and desire, the required effects in the age-old ritual of consumption.

PLAZA

APRIL 27—MAY 25, 2024

ELLEN SCHAFER
NICOLAS G. MILLER

TIMESHARE

3526 N. BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CA

What exactly performs in these spaces of commodity theatre, where what is produced is literally what sells? Bodies are notably absent in Miller and Schafer's shop – much like in the images of Eugène Atget, retail's first documentarist. Vacatedness allows for a finer appreciation for wares on display, and the spatial scenography itself, which serve as robust stages for the liveness of the act of consumption. Adjacent to the display unit stand two, three-tiered pedestal displays exhibiting Miller's hosiery and tie gift boxes derived from three different department stores that occupied the same address in downtown L.A. (3050 Wilshire Blvd.) at different points in time: Bullocks, Bullocks Wilshire, and I. Magnin. Miller imprints the little-appreciated temporality of store death through a mutant, relieved logo adorning each rarefied box; an attempt to conjoin these stores in history. In Schafer's tiered "in-the-round" pedestal structure, standard merchandise such as sneakers have been swapped out for miniature, roughly hand-modeled chairs, evocative of fine jewelry. Emphasising the trace of the hand, Schafer pushes the language of sculptural modernism to the edge that is luxury accessories; or is it rather its mass-produced knockoffs?

Probing the relationship between merchandise and artwork, Miller and Schafer's individual works point to the same trap: that all sculptural form is also always already a consumer-morphological genre. In its pursuit of profit, retail appropriates cultural techniques and typologies at will and with no regard for medium, scale, institution, or mode of sociality: shop floors become theatrical stages become dioramas become museums become playhouses. The actual act of purchasing is delayed by a complex journey through a landscape of encyclopedic visual forms, 3D dreamworlds as it were— which the shopper-viewer must navigate with increasing sophistication.

And what about the artwork—its formal toolbox, its mythic critical autonomy? Isolating retail in the context of a white cube, the artists admit to a painful but omnipresent truth: that exhibitions are also always retail, a place for the theatre that is showing, selling, and buying.

- Jeppe Ugelvig

PLAZA

APRIL 27—MAY 25, 2024

ELLEN SCHAFFER
NICOLAS G. MILLER

TIMESHARE

3526 N. BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CA

ARTIST BIOS:

ELLEN SCHAFFER

Ellen Schaffer is a Los Angeles based artist. Her work navigates feelings of intimacy and estrangement where the body is mined as a site inextricably bound to commerce. The indexing of the hand features prominently in the work. Recent solo and duo presentations include the Mak Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles (2023), Galerie Wonerth Dejaco, Vienna (2021); Artissima Art Fair, Turin (2021); New Low and The Fulcrum Press, Los Angeles (2021). She received a BA from the Glasgow School of Art (2012), was an MFA candidate at USC's Roski School of Art (2014-15), and graduated with an MFA from the University of California, Irvine (2020).

NICOLAS G. MILLER

Nicolas G. Miller is an artist working in Los Angeles, CA. His sculpture practice addresses the aesthetics of impermanence in culture and commerce, as well as the effects of technology on our shared search for a meaningful past. Miller's recent solo and group exhibitions include Timeshare, Los Angeles (2024); Castle, Los Angeles (2022); Ben Hunter Gallery, London (2022); Soldes, Los Angeles (2021) and MOCA, Los Angeles (2018). Miller received his Master of Fine Arts from UC Irvine in 2019.

PLAZA

APRIL 27—MAY 25, 2024

ELLEN SCHAFFER
NICOLAS G. MILLER

TIMESHARE

3526 N. BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CA

WORKS LIST:

1. *Bullocks Hosiery Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
Painted resin
9.25 x 5.75 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1AP
2. *Bullocks Wilshire Hosiery Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
9.25 x 5.75 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1AP
3. *I. Magnin Hosiery Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
9.25 x 5.75 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1AP
4. *Bullocks Tie Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
Painted resin
11 x 3.5 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1AP
5. *Bullocks Tie Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
Painted resin
11 x 3.5 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1A
6. *I. Magnin Tie Box*
Nicolas G. Miller
2023
Painted resin
11 x 3.5 x 1 inches
Edition of 2 + 1AP
7. Forthcoming (*Charles Boyer in Comme des Garçons Spring / Summer 2000*)
Nicolas G. Miller
2024
Painted resin, hand-painted plywood, velvet, lights, marble
Dimensions variable

PLAZA

APRIL 27—MAY 25, 2024

ELLEN SCHAFFER
NICOLAS G. MILLER

TIMESHARE

3526 N. BROADWAY,
LOS ANGELES, CA

WORKS LIST:

8. *Suit I*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Mirror polished stainless steel, custom designed digitally printed and hand painted muslin
62 x 19 x 3 inches
9. *Suit II*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Mirror polished stainless steel, custom designed digitally printed and hand painted muslin
62 x 19 x 3 inches
10. *Suit III*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Mirror polished stainless steel, custom designed digitally printed and hand painted muslin
62 x 19 x 3 inches
11. *My Life as a Chair I*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Cast sterling silver
2.5 x 1 x 1 inches
12. *My Life as a Chair II*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Cast sterling silver
2.5 x 1 x 1 inches
13. *My Life as a Chair III*
Ellen Schafer
2024
Cast sterling silver
2.5 x 1 x 1 inches