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## Destination: Colette Artist Exhibition

by Jason Grant and Roger Webster | [1 Comment](#)



The work Colette produces in Maison Lumiere deals with the issues that have surfaced after recent global catastrophes, one painting is simply "Fight Terror with Glamor."  
*(Roger Webster)*

**New York City** - Colette, the artist, has been the darling of the downtown art scene since the 1970s. Her pioneering street performances brought the avant-garde art form to mainstream America. At once original and daring, she is constantly evolving, making bold statements or asking provocative questions about art, women, gender clichés and the state of civilization.



The artist Colette.

It was no surprise when she debuted her metaphysical portraits, a striking departure from her baroque aesthetic, that she drew a crowd to Destination NY, on Little West 12th Street, in the meatpacking district. The subjects for the paintings were friends, art colleagues and some celebrities - all unlabeled. The most recognizable and well known were **David Bowie, Jeff Koons, Susan Sarandon, Richard Gere, Lauren Hutton, Patrick McMullan, Martha Stewart, Jim Jarmusch, Debbie Harry, Bill Murray, Katharina Otto Bernstein, Anthony Haden Guest, Rufus Wainwright, Sylvia Miles** and **Donald Baechler**.

Her exhibition began even before you entered the art space. She created one of her legendary installations in the large, glass front windows, staged and framed like a light box, which has been a familiar presentation for Colette's work since the 1970s.

She has celebrated aspects of the feminine - make-up, high heels, fashion, romance, elegance, good manners - while academic feminism declared everything conventionally associated with enjoying being a girl suspect.



Rufus Wainwright - Metaphysical Portrait By Colette.

Anyone familiar with her work knows that Colette has adopted various personas. It began with the staged reign of "The House of Olympia," which was followed by several legendary women. One of her recreations was Delacroix's figure of liberty, "Marianne." In 1984, she turned her Berlin apartment into the boudoir of the alluring spy Mata Hari. Then came the "Countess Reichenbach" (1986), a fictitious aristocrat from the era of the extravagant King Ludwig.

Her newest alter ego is "Lumiere," who emerged in the aftermath of 9/11. She creates art in "Maison Lumiere," the title and latest manifestation of Colette's ever transforming studio. The work she produces in Maison Lumiere deals with the issues that have surfaced after recent global catastrophes including terrorism and global warming. One of her paintings reads, "Fight Terror with Glamor."

Colette calls the window installation "The Letter." Central to the scene is a life-size, Colette-imaged sculpture like the one displayed at the Guggenheim's fashion art show, 1997. This likeness, "Lumiere," is dressed in white silk ruched satin and tulle. The scene contains many of her signature items and trademarks including a Colette suitcase, Colette lamp and a new painting. Like all of her work, this brings to question new themes, in this instance cloning and time.



Guest David Noh enjoys the gathering.

Inside Destination NY is Colette's exhibit "That's All She Wrote." Here she puts closure to a personal tragedy, the November 2007 demolition of her legendary atelier at 213 Pearl Street. The ever changing, historical art space was a magnet for celebrities, businessmen, politicians, sportsmen and socialites.

With this exhibition, Colette introduces a new stage in her amazing career with the metaphysical portraits. Also on display are the performance paintings and a short film she made about the destruction of Pearl Street.

Among the colleagues, collectors and art lovers who were admiring and discussing the paintings and video were Bronx Museum Director **Holly Block**, author **David Dalton**, **Janna Bullock**, MoMA curator **Jenny Schlezska**, Gen Art's **Keri Ingvarsson**, **Pavel Zoubok**, **Joyce Pomerantz Schwartz**, art publisher **Alexander Heinrici**, **Mary Barone**, **Maggie Norris**, **Alexandra Anderson Spivy** and **Jock Spivy**, **Barbara Spiegel**, **Paul Tschinkel**, **Carol Blake**, **Dan Schwartz**, **Ed Rubin**, **Elizabeth Cannon**, **Elizabeth Rogers**, **Graham Gilmore**, **Michael Schatz**, **Julie Sharbutt**, **Justin Mitchell**, **Marc Miller**, **Tom Beale**, **Marcia Grostein**, **Paul Robinson**, **Pamela Willoughby Smith**, **Shavon Martin**, **Ilya Bykov**, **Kevin Baker**, **Ingrid Dinter**, **Andre Enard**, **Geoffrey Hendricks**, **Helene Verin**, **Pryor Dodge**, **Peter Marangoni**, **Caroline Stern**, **James McLareny**, **Iris Rossi**, **David Cohen**, **David Noh**, **Eileen** and **Adam Boxer**, **James Rubio**, **Mary Mason**, **Robert Schaeffer**, **Alan Dodds**, **Dennis Elliot**, **Mia Morgan**, **Jake Bright**, **Gigi** and **Rodrigo Salomon**, **Hede Tachibana**, **Hisa Yamamoto**, **Yumiko Tamaka**, **Kyoko Muramatsu** and **Ullalah Muramatsu**.

With the portraits, the performance paintings, installation and the video, Colette confronts

issues of impermanence, unpredictability and the need to reevaluate what is essential in life. As the artist says, "This includes the current housing problem in the city; so many artists, who have contributed to New York's culture and excitement, have lost their studio space to developers and have been forced to relocate. Migration has become a way of life." With this exhibition, Colette proves she is here to stay.