





**NINA DOTTI**  
TIPPING POINT







# HETERONORMATIVITY:

## THE HIDDEN FACE OF HETEROSEXUALITY

In 1991, social theorist Michael Warner coined the term of heteronormativity. The concept, which has become a cornerstone of contemporary sociological studies, refers to the interpretation that the dominant heterosexual culture makes of itself and how this self-definition is projected and legitimated by our society.

Heteronormativity reveals how institutionalized heterosexuality implies an insider/outsider dichotomy that -hidden behind rigid gender binaries of male/female- standardizes and regulates individuals' roles in society through "learned behaviors." That way, heteronormativity is actively related to a consistent manipulation and subjugation based on race, class, gender and sexual orientation.

One of the most obvious manifestations of heterosexuality is "homosociality." Referring to the often intense social bonding of men with men and women with women, homosociality manifests itself in many institutional forms, such as social circles, single-sex clubs or other segregated areas of society, such as athletics or the military. This "gender-kind" solidarity reinforces heteronormativity and the subsequent dominant/dependent relationship between women and men.











# SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS:

## THE TIPPING POINT

Nina Dotti (Venezuela, 1968) is a pseudonym and an avatar. The artist borrows her name from Tina Modotti (1896-1942). An Italian-American photographer and model celebrated for her iconic images, Modotti's political activism and stormy personal life made her a natural feminist icon from the 1970s on.

Dotti's inspiration originates from sociocultural clichés historically attached to women and female behavior. Defined by French critic Frederic Charles Baitinger as a new-media contemporary artist and a "pluralized woman," Dotti uses her work to address the contradictions and ambiguities hidden behind women's roles in the 21st century.

The title of the show, "The Tipping Point" -- emphasized by pairs of scales as a leitmotif -- refers to that critical point in which little things can make a big difference.

"Little things" also are traditionally related to femininity, reducing women's universe to frivolity, while men's universe is identified with economic and political success -- or domesticity vs. political power. This explains the reference to "little things" all around the show. The inclusion of the so-called femininity icons is intentionally incarnated by toys -- objets trouvés that the artist patiently collected, then recast into these "readymades" heavily charged with irony and causing a measure of discomfort. The conceptual heaviness of these artworks contrasts with their physical lightness. We are not in the presence of the "real thing" but of dummies that emphasize the subjacent theme of segregation in contemporary society.



“The Tipping Point” focuses on one of the central pillars that justifies and sustains heteronormativity: the female role and how it is predetermined by a sexual reductive system of a patriarchal nature. It translates genders into social hierarchical archetypes: female–inferior, male-superior.



The layer of golden glitter that covers all the surfaces is a trap to the eye: a shiny delusion, a trompe l'oeil that creates a threatening atmosphere of chimera and misconception. Trapped in that vacuous world of appearances and trivialities, our eyes, blindfolded, risk reproducing ad infinitum the archetypical structure that secludes us.

Making use of conflicting identity traits, embodied in the pairs of scales, Dotti plays with balancing numerous roles: mother, wife, professional, feminine being. These pairs, presented as dialogic units, suggest a tight internal struggle and, consequently, invalidate the complete fulfillment of both parties and, of course, the self-realization of the identity in play.

In "Art vs. Tools," the pairs of scales contrast the hazardous balance, not exempt from risk, between career aspirations; in this case the art -- and responsibilities such as motherhood -- that presupposes the constant split between the roles of mother, financial supporter and domestic maintainer, among others. The maternal role is embodied by the baby bottle, the purse and a clamp, all of them gently placed on one of the pans of the scale. The artist manages to restore a fleeting and precarious balance with a puppy that alludes to the iconic work of Jeff Koons' 1996 "Balloon Dog."

The implied quote is not free. If, at first, it seems an apparent ode to childhood and innocence, this “Trojan horse,” as nicknamed by Koons himself, is loaded with subversive aesthetic insinuations -- such as the scope and relevance of copyright, the fatuity of the art market, as well as a “perverse eroticism” where the analogies to kitsch and pop are charged of a baroque effect -- that reference the style used by the church to manipulate and seduce.

It is no coincidence. A baroque atmosphere upholds “The Tipping Point.” Amid the apparent spirit of self-contentment that prevails at first glance lies a disturbing note. Every single element carefully placed in the weighing scale is a neo-Baroque entity acting as a summon of social-cultural archetypes, dazzling, seducing and accusing.

The golden halo, clouding and baffling in the midst of the white cube, echoes the theatrical and illusionistic effects so cherished in the baroque style, introducing another major allegory: the gallery -- here an archetype of the social institutions -- is presented as a rarified space that sacralizes the artwork and its commentaries, causing a chasm between art and life.



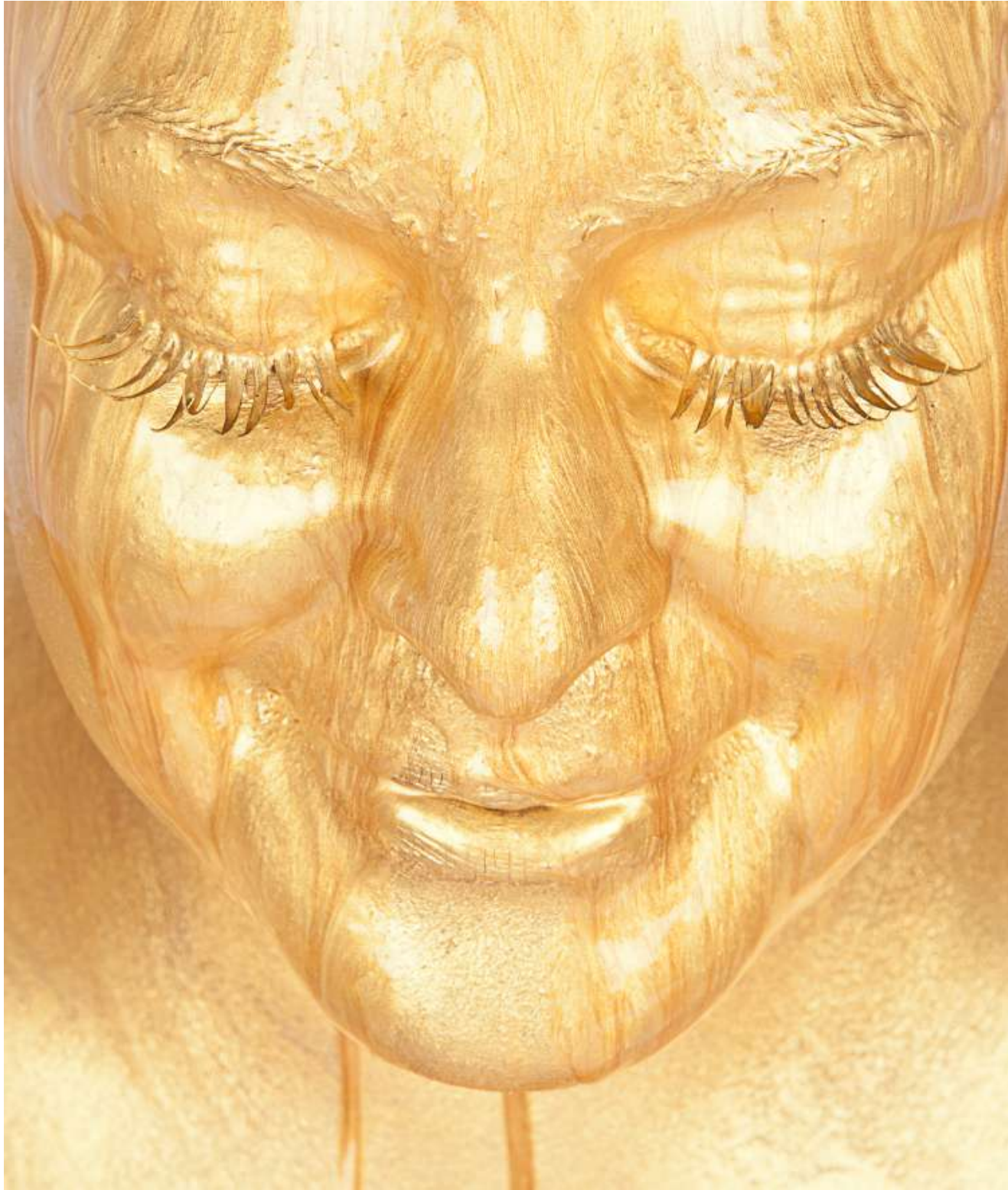






The use of gold with white empty spaces throughout the show is equally charged with tension, directly resonating with Yves Klein's "zone of immaterial pictorial sensibility." In this alternative pattern, Dotti is looking to raise awareness about the unrepresented -- and unrepresentable -- as the only viable space for the self. This way, the immaterial, freed from any precept and prejudice, and therefore beyond representation, becomes the only grasp toward the restitution of identity. The gold, with its attendant exchange value, embodies the aspiration of social recognition and affirmation while the self, repressed by the rules imposed by heteronormativity, presupposes the transgression of these values.

"Golden Nina," a photographic series based on a performance the artist did in which, while covered in gold paint, she prayed a conjure: "I always feel like smiling, all my dreams come true, my path is paved in gold, I love the real me." The series is intimately interconnected to the video "Melting Gold," showing in a loop a never-ending cascade of gold. The innermost commentary in these pieces goes beyond the mere interpretation of the gold, money and material goods as a meaning of success and self-contentment. "Golden Nina" establishes an interesting parallel with one of the most visited themes in the history of art: "Danae and the Golden Shower of Zeus." Danae, who has already failed her father, who wanted a grandson, is confined in a golden chamber that is at once both burial and bridal. Then, impregnated by Zeus -- or the profuse rain of gold coins? -- she gives birth to the prophesy. This is the only role for Danae, reduced to being a receptacle of external -- male -- decisions, becoming a mere excuse for revisiting the enduring theme of sensuality and desire.





"Paved in gold" - "Channel of light" • 2013 • Archival metallic photo paper • Ed. of 5 + AP • 33" x 44" e/a





The main installation of the show, "Matter of Balance," located in the heart to the gallery, is itself a white cube that reinforces the allegory of the gallery as a symbol of the institutions in our society and their role in the construction and preservation of heteronormativity.





↩️ ↗️ "A matter of balance" • Installation view • 2013 • Variable dimensions • Mixed media •



"A matter of balance" • Exhibition view • 2013 • Variable dimensions • Mixed media • [↕→](#)





*"A matter of balance"* • Exhibition view • 2013 • Variable dimensions • Mixed media •

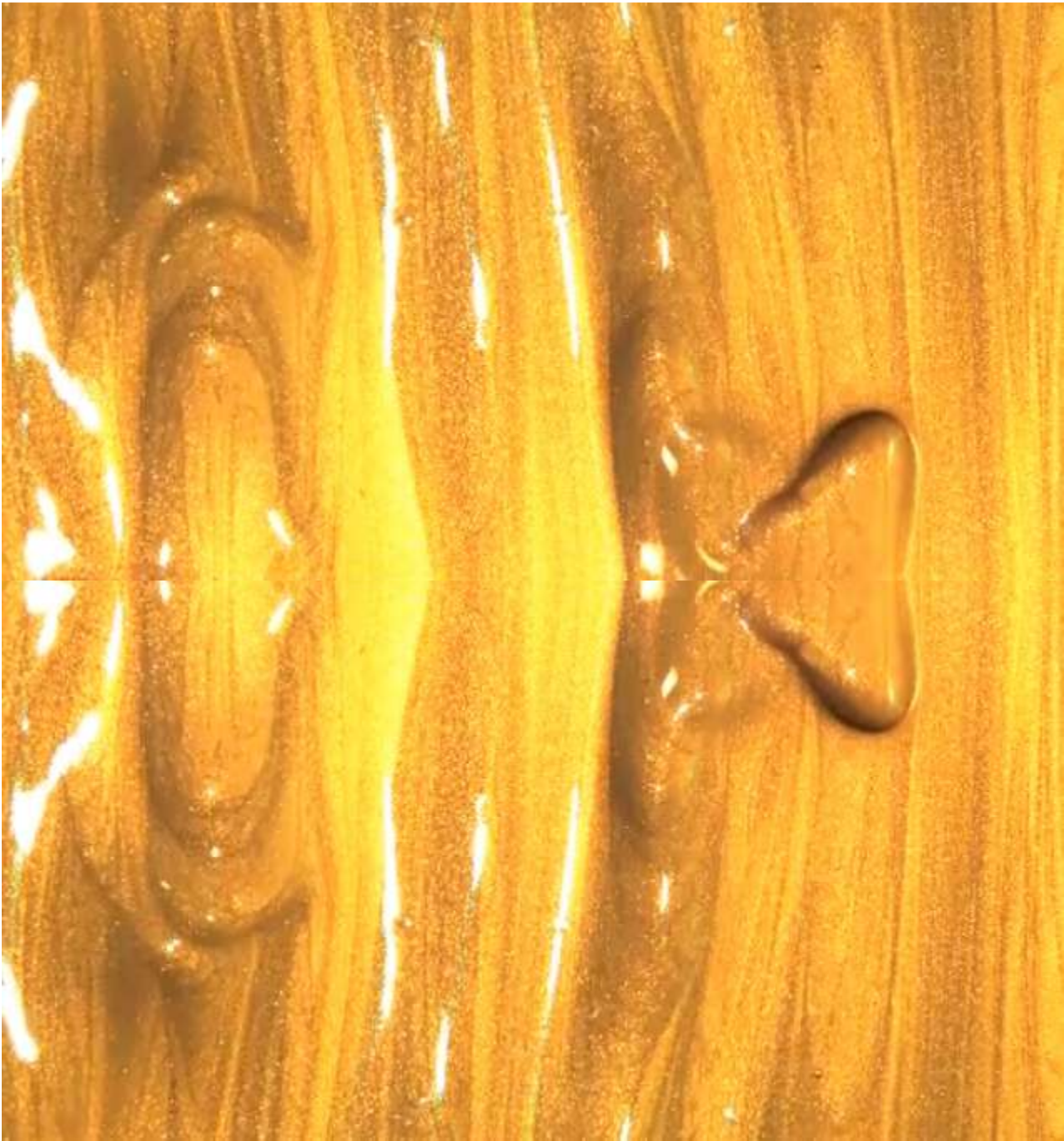
One of the sides of the cube is open, inviting the viewer inside where everything seems to be troubled by Midas' grace. The light, flashing over the shimmering objects, captures our fascinated gaze with the glow here and there, pointing to everyday icons: watches, toe shoes, phalluses, trophies, superheroes, Buddha statues, medieval knights, all of them coated by yellow light. In an instance of alchemy, everything inside the golden cube has been transformed into gold.



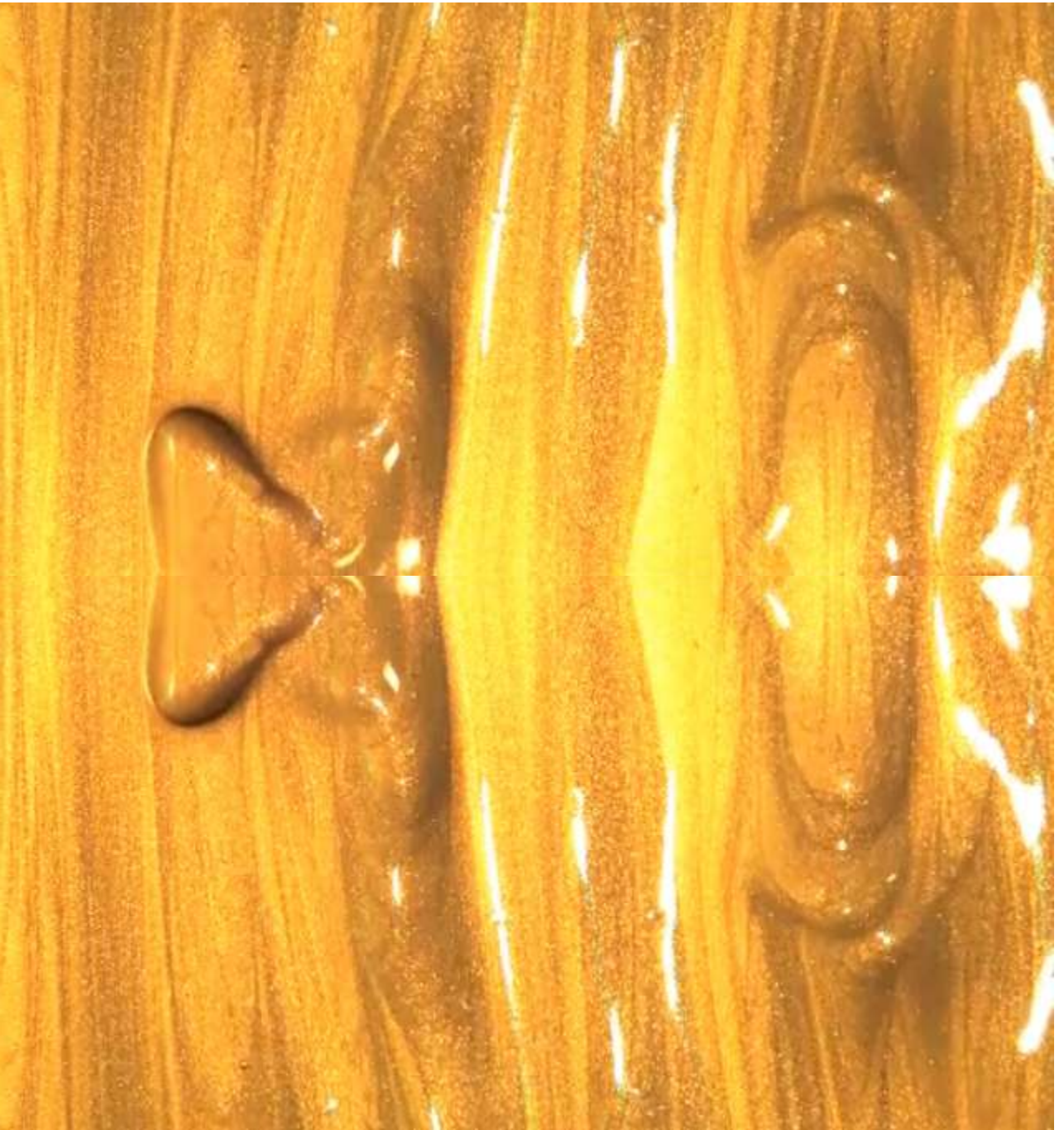
*"Tipping Point"* • Installation view • 2013 • 13 balances, accesories and gold paint • Variable dimensions •

"Super Girl," inspired by vintage American comics, is a collage series in which the Super Girl character -- Dotti's creation -- contends with renown superheroes facing different roles. It's defiant, questioning unaltered archetypes accepted since early childhood.

Using a few effective resources, gold, scales and superheroes, Nina Dotti's show "The Tipping Point" raises awareness about the status quo that supports contemporary society. Is this "tipping point" capable of redeeming us from the lethargy that for centuries has foreshadowed Western society? A society based on patriarchal models that still predetermine our identities and social roles? These identities and social roles are configured to favor not our fulfillment as individuals but the perpetuation of mechanisms of segregation that guarantee the reaffirmation of precepts such as white, heterosexual males as the archetypes of absolute power.







"Melting gold" • 2013 • Video • Ed. of 3 + AP • 2.5 min





"P.M.S" • 2012 • Video • Ed. of 3 + AP • 2.5 min •

# NINA DOTTI

Born in 1968, Caracas, Venezuela

Currently lives and works in Miami, FL

## STUDIES

- 2004 – 2006, Photography. Organización Nelson Garrido: ONG. Caracas, Venezuela
- 2003 – BA Museum Studies & Art History. José María Vargas University. Caracas, Venezuela
- 2002 – Photography. Roberto Mata Photography School. Caracas, Venezuela  
Sculpture. IUESAPAR, Workshop. Marcos Salazar. Caracas, Venezuela
- 1997 – Sculpture & Drawing. Art Student League. New York, NY  
Sculpture with Polymers. IUESAPAR, Workshop. Marcos Salazar. Caracas, Venezuela  
Law, Social & Political Studies. Universidad José María Vargas. Caracas, Venezuela
- 1996 – 1997, Sculpture Appreciation. Modeling I,II, Glaze I, II. Escuela Arte y Fuego.  
Caracas, Venezuela
- 1996 – Clay Sculpture. Escuela Arte y Fuego. Caracas, Venezuela  
Airbrush Technique. Instituto de Diseño Perera. Caracas, Venezuela
- 1991 – BA Business & Finances. Universidad Metropolitana. Caracas, Venezuela

## SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

- 2013 – “Tipping Point” Dot Fiftyone Gallery. Miami, FL
- 2012 – “P.M.S.” Galerie 13 Jeanette Mariani. Paris, France
- 2008 – “Wedding Cake Toppers & Once Upon a Time”. Galerie13 Jeanette Mariani. Paris, France
- 2007 – “99 Cents Cliche”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Miami, FL
- 2006 – “China Shipping”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Miami, FL  
“Hot Flashes Bar” [Performance]. FIA, Feria Iberoamericana de Arte. Caracas, Venezuela
- 2005 – 2006, “The Wedding Cake... The Bride As Is”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space.  
Miami, FL

## SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2013 – “Let it go, the best is yet to come” Bienal del Sur Panama. Panama
- 2010 – “Go Green BP”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Scope Miami. Miami, FL  
“I stole this bike at Basel”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Scope Basel.,  
Switzerland
- 2009 – “Superwoman TV Show”. Latin American Art Center. Shanghai, China  
“Hot Flashes Bar”. Club MINT. Art Shanghai. Shanghai, China
- 2008 – “Happy Box”. Tales From The Far Side, Farside Gallery. Miami , FL  
“Donor 401”. Ephemeral Trends VI, Merrill Lynch Arte Americas. Convention  
Center, Miami Beach, FL  
“Roja Rojita”. FIA, Feria Iberoamericana de Arte. Caracas, Venezuela  
“Superwoman y los Petrodolares de Antonini”. Cartografías Meridionales.  
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Rosario MACRO. Rosario, Argentina  
“Changarrito”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Scope Miami. Miami, FL
- 2007 – “New Art As Universal Language”. The Art & Cultural Center of Hollywood, FL  
“Latin is Hot”. Merrill Lynch Arte Americas. Convention Center Miami Beach, FL  
“Happily Ever After”. Objecthood. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Miami, FL  
“Kiss the frog”. Hardcore Art Contemporary Space. Photo Miami. Miami, FL  
“Comámonos esta torta roja rojita”. FIA, Feria Iberoamericana de Arte. Caracas,  
Venezuela  
“Blue Pill Bar”. Circa Puerto Rico. San Juan, PR  
“Picture Perfect Wedding Cake Toppers”. Ephemeral Trends V. Merrill Lynch Arte  
Americas. Convention Center Miami Beach, FL  
“Saints, Witches & Bitches”. Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus. Miami, FL



MAY 2013, MIAMI USA

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Design: Margarita Castro  
Photography: Catalina Ayubi

**DOT** FIFTYONE  
Guzmán • Fernández • gallery