

A photograph of Cate Blanchett with blonde hair, wearing a red dress, looking over her shoulder. A large, stylized red hand graphic is superimposed over the image, reaching from the left and holding the dress. The background is black.

LOOK AT ME

CAP 74024

MORE
THAN
THIS

CATE
BLANCHETT

by
Zhong Lin

Mina Serrano

Artistic narratives
and experimentations

Gold geometric assemblage dress with fringes in raffia RABANNE



Words by
Carolina Benjumea

Artist
Mina Serrano @Ramón Pilacés

Mina Serrano admires all types of art: the art of crafts, the art of performing, the art of creating, and even the art of lying. While for most people lying signifies a lack of honesty, for Mina Serrano, it is what defined the life of Cris Miró and the feature that allowed her to become the person she wanted to be; lying set her free. Mina’s life has been filled with questions that were all answered through her art. Her journey through self-discovery has woven a tapestry of creativity, resilience, and authenticity. Today, her life is an honest portrayal of her inner desires, a truthful depiction of herself. This Spanish has traveled the world only to find herself immersed in the eclecticism of Paris, «I feel like Paris gets me more than Madrid used to get me. And I’m not sure why, but I seem to gravitate here in Paris». Her journey is one where artistic expression is at the center and where freedom is the ultimate goal.

Light shiny nappa leather dress with tassels in color fresh mint and light shiny nappa leather skirt with tassels in color fresh mint BOTTEGA VENETA



Please tell me about your personal journey. Which experiences have shaped who Mina Serrano is today?

It really feels like a journey because I feel like I’ve been searching for what’s going on in the world since I was a child. I left my hometown when I was 17, and I haven’t stopped moving around since then. So ‘journey’ is the appropriate word. I guess every experience made me who I am. Being a misfit, especially in the early years, made me question and ask myself more questions than maybe the other kids didn’t. When you have to deal with rejection at an early age, it makes you wonder who you are, and what you want. By the time I was a teenager, I had already figured out what I wanted to do.

As you were growing up, how did you envision your adult self? What were your dreams and aspirations?

Wow, I don’t know, because I think I accomplished the fantasy I couldn’t even dare to dream. Just being myself and being loved by the people that are in my life right now... I often think about it as my wildest dream. I couldn’t even imagine that maybe I would have this life, it didn’t feel like a possibility. When I was growing up, I thought that since I couldn’t become what I wanted, I would be a biologist. I thought I would be in the countryside. I love stones and jewels, so I thought, since I couldn’t be the person I wanted to be in my dreams, that was my other choice.

That’s interesting, so how did you go from being a biologist to working in the arts? How did this change happen?

I don’t know, many things. I think my early contact with art was through painting and drawing, mainly because of my mom. My mom is a very cultured woman, she used to show me the painters that she liked, the drawings. We used to love comics; I was always surrounded by comic books. She taught me how to draw. So, my first approach was that, and I think it makes sense because I was super shy. Drawing and painting were something I could do to portray my ideas while being by myself, and maybe let others see the drawing. I was such a shy kid that my parents suggested I should join a theater group. That created a monster because I would also make the costumes by myself in my room. I think I started to understand that all those things [Her drawings, ed.] could come alive through my universe, through theater and performances. I also fell in love, I loved going to the cinema or watching movies.

You said earlier that when you were growing up, you felt like a misfit, right? Do you feel like you fit right now?

To be honest, I just don’t expect to fit in. I have my group, I have my people. But what does it mean exactly to fit in? I realized it’s more interesting to bring something different to the table, so I stopped trying. Although sometimes it’s heavy; sometimes I find myself thinking: maybe if my life was more regular, I could be happier. It’s like a double-sided thing because, on one hand, you get to experience different things and meet extraordinary people that you



Shiny flared dress A/LA Jacket in cashmere goat embroidered with sequins CELINE



Mini dress in gold-tone laminated leather BLUEMARINE Embroidered tulle skirt DIOR

connect with, who also do their own thing and are also misfits. But at the same time, it’s lonely. You always feel like that, that feeling of being an outsider has a certain weight on you. It stays forever, it stays all the time. Also, it’s because I’m always in a foreign country, so I’m away from my hometown and my family.

I want to talk about Cris Miró. Firstly, congratulations on securing the role in the upcoming series! How did you prepare mentally and physically to embody such an iconic character?

Mentally, I tried to synchronize myself with the ’90s, which is the time she blossomed. I think the ’90s have a certain rhythm and ideals, so I started to gravitate towards that. I started to listen to a lot of ’90s club music. I started to train because at that time there was an obsession with the sculptural body. I also started to experiment sexually how she would do it in the ’90s, I’m not sure if I want to say this, [Laughs, ed.] but I started to gravitate towards that, both mentally and physically. Also, she had a certain approach to femininity that is different from mine, maybe because of the period of time. I don’t necessarily search for hyper-femininity in my life, and my style is more fluid. She was a showgirl at the end, so I started to see how I felt in that role and started to embody that energy. I also trained with the Argentinian accent, I worked with a coach for over a year. While training the accent, I started to watch a lot of Argentinian movies, podcasts, radio, and TV shows; in the end, I soaked up all the culture I could find. So every aspect of the preparation added something else.

Dress in linen canvas with all-over embroidery Altorilevo Hibiscu VALENTINO

Which facets of Miró’s personality do you aim to highlight in the series?
I think there are two key aspects to her character: Firstly, she had a blind confidence; she asked for what she wanted. For instance, she asked to become the first showgirl in the main venue in Buenos Aires, even though there had not been anyone like her before. And she just knew she could do it. She asked for it. Secondly, she had a certain intelligence to be kind but still make a point. Additionally, she was the best liar; and it was such a beautiful thing to research about. Investigating why people lied, why she lied, and how she lied was such a beautiful and poetic thing.

What did you find out about her lies?
She dealt with HIV, and nobody knew it, not even her closest friends. So when she passed away suddenly, everybody was shocked. But there was something beautiful in that lie. You know, there was, I think, this blind hope and even naivety that she would get through it because she had won so many fights in her life. I think there was something in her that believed she could be cured.

It’s really interesting what you say, because you never think of lies as something positive, yet you portray it as one of her best attributes.
I think the only way for her to get through it was to lie and convince herself and everyone else that she was okay. So she could do what she wanted; being onstage. The sad thing about that is that she was starting to blossom in this universe and to be herself and to be where she wanted to be, and this thing was taken away from her. I’m not saying it’s a good way to do it – especially right now, it’s not the best – but it was her way. From a sincere point of view, I think it’s beautiful to understand and to experiment and to reflect on that.

I understand you’ve lived in Madrid for some time and are currently based in Paris. Is there a specific place where you feel most authentic and where you feel more comfortable being yourself?
I don’t know because it has been a self-discovery journey. So I kind of compare the way I feel now living in Paris with my Berlin period, which is an important piece to the puzzle. The Berlin era I think we all know what it’s about. [Laughs, ed.] But I also feel like cities have a certain energy. And I indeed feel like Paris gets me more than Madrid used to get me. I’m not sure why, but I seem to gravitate here in Paris.

«I lived in my art before I lived in the real world. In some way, the only time I felt alive was when I was creating something or performing, because I didn’t know myself, I didn’t know who I was in my regular life. At some point, it started to melt.»



That’s very interesting. I moved to Paris five years ago and when I first arrived I felt so comfortable, and I did not even speak the language at the time!
Oh my God! I feel the same way! Paris is a meeting point of the world, and aside from some social problems that Paris has, for sure, I think there is something about the spirit of this city that is always looking outside, willing to hear stories.

I agree. I think the fact that you can find so many people with so many different backgrounds, it makes you feel like you belong.
Yeah, totally.

How has your artistic career enabled you to express emotions and feelings that might otherwise be challenging to express in daily life?
I guess it was always like that. I lived in my art before I lived in the real world. In some way, the only time I felt alive was when I was creating something or performing, because I didn’t know myself, I didn’t know who I was in my regular life. At some point, it started to melt. At least in my case, sometimes my way of expressing myself is through art and not through words. It’s through emotion, visual images, even colors or textures. For example, there’s something about the jewels and the gold I use during my performances. I use a lot of these elements. And I don’t know why, but I’m so moved by it. When I feel the weight of the jewels and the gold, I don’t know if it’s because I’m Andalusian and all the folklore there, but there is something that moves me very much, and I cannot explain why. And it’s so sincere, it comes really from somewhere deep within me. I cannot even express it to someone in my day-to-day life. There’s this universe of colors, textures, and emotions that emerge. I don’t try to put names to them.

Who do you admire?
So many people, but especially my mom. She was also a misfit, and she educated me the way she would have wanted to be educated and treated as a shy and weird person. She understood that I was moved by art and that I was sensitive to it. She allowed me to see it and took me to places to see art and explore other options in life. Also, she’s a hard worker, and she taught me that if I wanted something, I just had to work for it. She gave me this work ethic – I don’t expect things to come, I just work for them to happen. And I’m very grateful for that.

I thought it was really interesting what you were saying about the jewels that you use

in your performances. I would like to talk a little bit about fashion and about clothing. How have fashion and clothes influenced the person and performer you’ve become?
Of course, a lot. You know, for me, it’s so connected. I make my jewels. I always wear them. I always wear the same necklace that I made myself. It’s not a self-portrait, but it’s a portrait of my stage persona. I always wear it to remind me how I feel on stage or how I feel performing. I have several rings and jewels that I made for myself, so for sure, they have an impact on who I am. In my performances, most of the time, I create my costumes because there’s something magical that I feel when I’m performing in clothes that I put time and effort into, that I imagine and design. There’s something magical I cannot explain, like a secret relationship. I think there is a certain essence, and it comes also from necessity because when you’re first starting, nobody wants to dress you. Now some people would like to dress me, but not when I started. That allowed me to learn how to do things because I didn’t have the money or the influence to get certain clothes, but

Gold geometric assemblage dress with fringes in raffia RABANNE



I had an idea of how I wanted to present myself in the world. And I knew I had to present myself that way to attract the people who were going to understand me. It’s like a message – sometimes it’s from the inside to the outside, and sometimes it’s also from the outside to the inside. You put on those jewels, and you feel a certain way. So I started doing my clothes and trying all different styles, and the notion of who I was. It’s so common in Queer culture. We always dress up and go to the clubs so we can say, ‘this is me’ through our styles, or make clothes and find our tribe. I think it’s very intuitive because we’ve always done that.

Do you perceive your art as a political statement?
I am aware that it’s political because it’s a political act, but I don’t highlight it. I don’t provoke it. I create from a different point of view, but I’m aware that what I do has a political impact. I try to be careful with that because I think sometimes Queer people are pushed to become activists in our art, and I think being an activist is a really difficult job – a task that many people do very well. And I value the work of activists a lot, so I wouldn’t consider myself one. I think I’m an artist, and I think my art has a political impact on what I do, but it’s not the focus of my work.

Balancing roles as a model, performer, and actress requires a deep understanding of oneself. How has your profession fostered self-acceptance and confidence in your body and identity?
It’s been a journey, really, and it goes back and forth. The thing about working with your body, your voice, and your emotions is it’s always a fight – it’s like sometimes it gives you more confidence, sometimes it takes it back. I feel like I’m always in dialogue with that, always trying to navigate it because exposure and working with your body means that you need to put some effort into feeling good in your own body. In today’s society, I think we all have all sorts of questions about our bodies and insecurities, and exposure can magnify it. It’s like a day-to-day thing for me. But I look at myself on the outside as if I were like a sculpture or something. When I put on top all my values – the uniqueness, the sensibility, the vulnerability, I’m actually in a good relationship with my body, and I always try to go that way, but sometimes it’s difficult, especially in fashion. It makes you tremble; makes you question all these things.

Are there any other artistic disciplines, or careers you wish to explore in the future?
I would love to do sculpture and create more jewels. I would love to learn more crafts and explore that path.

What’s in the future for you? do you have any plans that you can tell us about?
I’m currently working on a new film project in a different language. Let’s say I revisited the coach. [Laughs, ed.] I’m not sure what I can disclose about this film at the moment, stay tuned.

Hair and make up Sacha Giraudeau
Production Jes Palumbo-Levy @Magali Mgmt

Thanks to Magali Mgmt