

Analysis



*Untitled (Super rich/
Ultra gorgeous/
Extra skinny/Forever
young)*

1997

277 x 277 cm

Photographic
silkscreen/vinyl

Untitled (Super rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra skinny/forever young), composed in 1997, is an artwork by Barbara Kruger, created through photographic silkscreen/vinyl. It measures 277 x 277 cm, and consists of a limited colour pallet of red, black, white and grey. The artwork itself depicts a woman's face covered in ice cubes, which also shows her features as neat and symmetric while her eyes and lips gleam. A black border surrounds this image, and also frames two red boxes of text, one of which says: "Super rich, Ultra gorgeous" (located at the top-right corner), the other "Extra skinny, Forever young" (located at bottom-left corner). Both sets of text are separated by a dot and set in italic Futura font.

Through this piece, Kruger relies on the picture of the woman to grab the audience's attention, establishing this as its focal point. The bizarre nature of this image is the primary instigator for this, as it causes viewers to question why the ice cubes are featured. Kruger's also uses black-and-white to contrast with the red boxes and their text, establishing it as another focal point. Nevertheless, Kruger has utilised the principle of proportion to place more emphasis on the woman as well as the principle of emphasis. Furthermore, her blank, almost mechanical expression is used to effect in order to unnerve viewers. In combination, these

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elements create a sense of hyper reality, forcing viewers to make a connection between their own connotations of the text with the image they see.

In *Untitled (Super rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra skinny/forever young)*, Kruger aspires to highlight the stereotypes of what society informs women should want. Through positioning esoteric materials (the icecubes) within her photograph, she actively creates a conundrum of an artwork by contrasting two unlike images together, which thrusts viewers from what would otherwise be a familiar sight. The text further achieves this, as it challenges yet confirms their precognitions: "ultra gorgeous" points to the woman, whose features are conventionally attractive, with the icecubes being the only objects keeping this work from being run-of-the-mill fashion photography. This piece jolts viewers from their comfortable perception of stereotypes and presents them with an original image, reinforcing Kruger's message of how ludicrous our society's expectations are.

Untitled (Super rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra skinny/forever young) is a powerful piece that uses jarring simplicity to urge a strong viewer response. Not only does Kruger thrust viewers from their comfort zones but she also challenges them to reconsider their perception of women's representation in media, asking them whether this woman is merely an unrealistic "reflection" of who real women are. Kruger achieves particular success with the insertion of icecubes, as it draws both viewers' eyes and questions.