

Prada Marfa

While gazing out to the South side of the train, you may spot a Prada store all alone, seemingly in the middle of nowhere. You might like to make a quick shopping excursion at this fine designer store, but much to many people's amazement this is a sculpture and no Prada attire can be purchased here. In 2005, two artists from Berlin, Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, wanted to create a piece of art that depicted Western affluence and gentrification. The store you see out the window is actually a sculpture and has nothing for sale on the inside. When creating the sculpture the artist intended for the art to wear over time showing its age and the effects of the desert climate, and therefore did not intend for anyone to actually maintain the monument. By letting the sculpture age, it would be different every time a person views it. To begin the sculpture's installment, Prada generously donated fourteen right shoes and several handbags for the shelves.

The sculpture did not remain unscathed for long. Three days after opening, several people broke into the front of the sculpture and the donations from Prada were stolen. Soon after hearing about what had happened, Prada, being a company dedicated to art and expression, again generously donated more items for the sculpture, but this time surveillance cameras were put into place to monitor the activity around the area and ensure this did not happen again.

The rugged exterior of Prada Marfa, with its glistening designer shoes and bags, attests to the untamed yet sophisticated nature of Texas art and culture. Over time the earthen walls of Prada Marfa will erode away back into the West Texas landscape that they were created from, just as it was planned by the artist, but today travelers are able to

stare into the windows of the sculpture and reflect on the often hidden and unrealized art of West Texas.

Source(s):

Hoffman, Eva J. "A Guidebook to Amtrak's Sunset Limited." Flashing Yellow Guidebooks, Golden, CO, 2009.

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