

MARINA
PINSKY

DYED
CHANNEL

22.1. – 10.4.2016

KUNSTHALLE
BASEL

One critic called it her “object-image tension.” The Moscow-born artist **EN** Marina Pinsky has, ever since her days studying photography in Los Angeles, made artworks that sit uneasily between photography and sculpture. Even some of her early staged photographs, the most seemingly straightforward of her uses of the medium, included elaborate props made by hand and then photographed in order to give the result sculptural dimensionality. And in nearly all her works since, her diverse means of overlaying images, embedding photography into the substrate of various materials, or even conceiving of and producing sculpture via photographic methodologies have entangled the two mediums.

For *Dyed Channel*, the artist’s first major institutional solo show and her first presentation in Switzerland, the young artist turned her lens to Basel. In making her work, Pinsky has often visited and been inspired by museums, both mainstream and obscure, as if even the most oddball collection might contain a key to decrypting the world. Previous work emerged from her visits to the Devil’s Rope Barbed Wire Museum in Texas, or the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum in Maryland. While preparing her Kunsthalle Basel project, Pinsky visited the Pharmacy Museum Basel, the Anatomical Museum, the Roche Historical Collection and Archive, the Novartis Campus (a “collection” of sorts, of buildings by star architects), and the Natural History Museum, among others. The photographic logic so relevant for thinking about her methods extends to the artist herself: almost acting as a sensitized photographic plate, she—and subsequently her work—become imprinted with the traces of her visits to these sites.

Room 1

The artist opens her exhibition with a mock landscape created through the apparently erratic placement of twenty-four oversize resin sculptures of medical packages containing ceramic pills. Pinsky’s sculptures combine disjunctive temporal references, the packaging loosely based on the “blister pack” in widespread contemporary pharmaceutical usage, while the “pills” themselves are

Room 4

1
Decoy, 2014
Electronics, glass, water, wood
30.5×183×122 cm

2
Rhine Riverbed 1-36, 2015
Series of works
36 archival inkjet prints on paper,
UV cured inkjet prints on glass
Each 33.8×44.4 cm, framed

3
July 15, 2015, 2015
Silk ribbon, UV cured inkjet print
on aluminum
146×149×1 cm

Room 5

Underbelly (Concorde), 2015
Digital print on Taffetta
28 parts, in total 1607×904.8 cm

Room 3

1
Stem Assembly Kit, 2015
Concrete, epoxy clay, plastic, steel
2 parts, 243×60×30 cm, 30×50×30 cm

2
Sunflower, 2015
Enamel paint, glass, mineral oil,
steel, thermoform plastic
Approx. 30×100×60 cm

3
Orchid, 2015
Enamel paint, glass, mineral oil,
steel, thermoform plastic
Approx. 30×100×60 cm

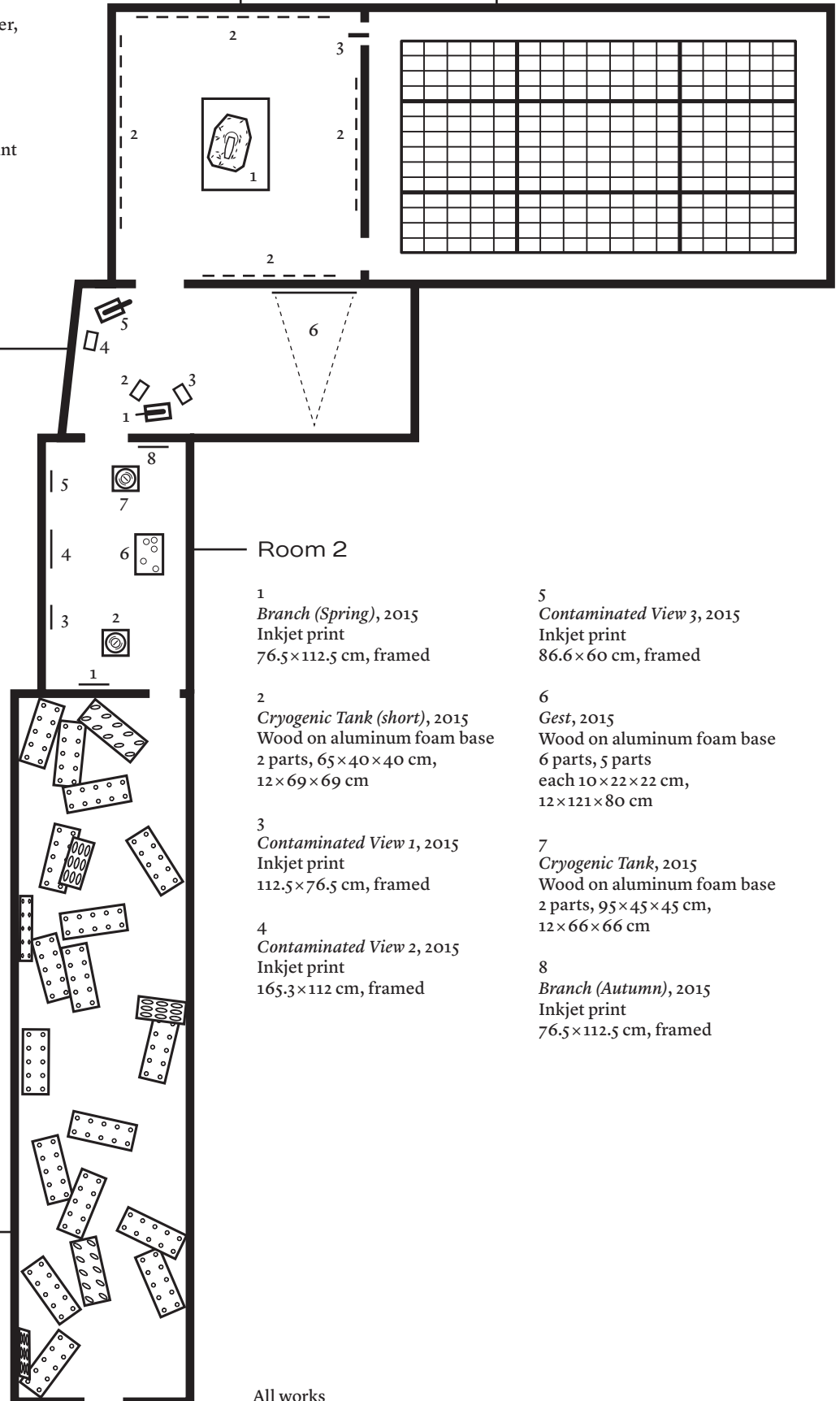
4
Lily, 2015
Enamel paint, glass, mineral oil,
steel, thermoform plastic
Approx. 30×100×60 cm

5
Sunflower Assembly Kit, 2015
Concrete, epoxy clay, plastic, steel
2 parts, 243×75×30 cm, 30×50×30 cm

6
Department of Conservation, 2015
Digital film, color, no sound
7'45"

Room 1

Landscape (Pharmakon I-XXIV), 2014-15
Series of works
Aluminum, ceramic, epoxy resin,
fiberglass, UV cured inkjet prints
21 sculptures, each 5×250×100 cm
3 sculptures, each 5×150×75 cm



Room 2

1
Branch (Spring), 2015
Inkjet print
76.5×112.5 cm, framed

2
Cryogenic Tank (short), 2015
Wood on aluminum foam base
2 parts, 65×40×40 cm,
12×69×69 cm

3
Contaminated View 1, 2015
Inkjet print
112.5×76.5 cm, framed

4
Contaminated View 2, 2015
Inkjet print
165.3×112 cm, framed

5
Contaminated View 3, 2015
Inkjet print
86.6×60 cm, framed

6
Gest, 2015
Wood on aluminum foam base
6 parts, 5 parts
each 10×22×22 cm,
12×121×80 cm

7
Cryogenic Tank, 2015
Wood on aluminum foam base
2 parts, 95×45×45 cm,
12×66×66 cm

8
Branch (Autumn), 2015
Inkjet print
76.5×112.5 cm, framed

All works
Courtesy Marina Pinsky and
C L E A R I N G New York, Brussels

modeled on *terra sigillata*, portable forms of ancient medicinal clays. When traded, these forerunners to the modern pill were emblazoned with an insignia or other imprint that referenced their origins. Pinsky has created her own equivalent, her “branded” pills each displaying in relief the contours of the contemporary architecture populating the Basel pharma-industrial landscape.

After having investigated the corporate language of medicinal titling, the artist decided to eschew any possible imagistic title of her own, opting for photographic images imprinted on the backsides of each package. While the front sides depict idealized landscapes, soaring modernist buildings, and the “beautiful” side of the industry, the secret backsides depict the ruinous site of an abandoned pharmaceutical production plant in Brussels, the artist’s current hometown.

Room 2

Sitting atop bases cut from industrial aluminum isolation materials are wooden sculptures in the form of cryogenic tanks made through a combination of machine manufacture and the artist’s own hand-chiseling. Near them sit outsize human egg cell sculptures, modeled on pedagogical displays of cell development in Basel’s Anatomical Museum. Together they point to the artist’s characteristic combination of industrial and handmade, high-tech and analog, copy and auratic. The surrounding photographs similarly point to her methods: alongside using digital tools such as Photoshop, Pinsky literally stuck slides found in an abandoned Brussels pharma company and transparencies of diseased tissue to her studio window, layering several strata of reality and time.

Room 3

“Doesn’t the image’s power lie in its proliferation of meanings?” the artist once asked in an open letter to a scholar. Everywhere in her exhibition, juxtapositions constructed both within and outside of the image create just the sort of proliferation of signification that Pinsky holds dear. *Department of Conservation* brings together a slideshow-like choreography of images from the Roche Historical Archives, alongside other sites

such as the Museum of Modern Art of New York’s art conservation offices and the UK’s Millennium Seed Bank. Encapsulating the whole exhibition’s preoccupation with the split between nature and culture, one realizes that every one of the works grapples with the imposition of technology on natural things.

Room 4

Lining the walls, photographs the artist took while in the Rhine of its riverbed are overlaid with images of Swiss fish specimens from the Natural History Museum. They surround *Decoy*, a scale model of a boat that the artist once saw in a decoy museum, covered in imitation ducks and with a lowered hatch meant to hide a duck hunter. In her copy of this strange lure, the artist has hidden a cellphone jammer. In order to create an artwork that imposes its own contemplative silence, the piece forcibly denies modern communication devices the possibility to operate.

At the threshold space of the gallery, the artist has propped *July 15, 2015*, modeled on an enlarged silicon disk from which watchmakers cut a watch’s parts. On one side of the work, one sees engraved watch elements, and on the other, a representation of the Internet is mapped via brightly colored vectors and nodes. Acknowledging that any charting of the Internet’s networks would be outdated at ferocious speed, basically in as little time as a day, Pinsky overlays the map with an astrological chart of the day it was made, July 15, 2015.

Room 5

Underbelly (Concorde) is a photographic print on textile fitted to the skylight of the space and comprised of 238 individual photographs, creating a 1:1 image of the underside of a turbojet-powered supersonic passenger jetliner. Just as Pinsky offers us the possibility to view the ill-fated invention in impressive detail and as it is not widely seen, so do the artist’s dozens of Rhine riverbed photographs from the previous room reveal another “underbelly,” documenting the current site of what has been called the world’s first dumpsite for chemical waste. In the nineteenth century, the river’s fast-moving current served as a convenient conduit for Basel’s textile

factories to carry away the waste from their aniline dye. A number of those companies morphed into global chemical giants such as Ciba and Geigy (later to become firms like Novartis and Syngenta), who originally used the waterway to carry away the toxic consequences of their phenomenally profitable business to someone else's backyard. The backside of every image, Pinsky's complex show demonstrates, like the underbelly of every city, contains a proliferation of histories waiting to be unraveled.

Marina Pinsky was born 1986 in Moscow; she lives and works in Brussels.

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GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE EXHIBITIONS

Every Sunday at 3 pm guided tour, in German

24.1.2016, Sunday, 3 pm

curator's tour, in English and French

25.2.2016, Thursday, 6.30 pm guided tour, in English

EDUCATION / PUBLIC PROGRAM

22.1.2016, Friday, Basel Museums Night, 6 pm – 2 am

6–12 pm fold paper planes and let them fly,

a workshop for all ages

8.30 pm, 9.30 pm, and 10.30 pm guided tours

through the exhibition by students from the
Department of Art History, University of Basel

Children's tour *I Spy with My Little Eye!*

6.3.2016 and 10.4.2016, Sundays at 3 pm

With an emphasis on variety and fun, children
tour the current exhibition and then turn what
they have seen into art of their own.

Conducted in German, from 5–10 yrs

Presentation of *art scanner*

17.3.2016, Thursday, 6.30 pm

Students research and prepare in dialogue
with the artist commentaries and
interpretations relating to the artworks on
display which will be online accessible.

Conducted in German

In the Kunsthalle Basel library you will find an
associative selection of publications related
to Marina Pinsky and her artistic practice.

More information under kunsthallebasel.ch