

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 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

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

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 facture 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 watch-makers 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 dump-site 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.

Thanks to
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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

Kunsthalle Basel

Marina Pinsky

Dyed Channel

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Pressebilder / Press Images



Marina Pinsky, Installationsansicht *Dyed Channel*, Blick auf *Landscape (Pharmakon I-XXIV)*, 2014-15, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger / Marina Pinsky, Installation view *Dyed Channel*, view on *Landscape (Pharmakon I-XXIV)*, 2014-15, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



Marina Pinsky, Installationsansicht *Dyed Channel*, Blick auf *Landscape (Pharmakon I-XXIV)*, 2014-15, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger / Marina Pinsky, Installation view *Dyed Channel*, view on *Landscape (Pharmakon I-XXIV)*, 2014-15, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



Marina Pinsky, Installationsansicht *Dyed Channel*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger /
Marina Pinsky, Installation view *Dyed Channel*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



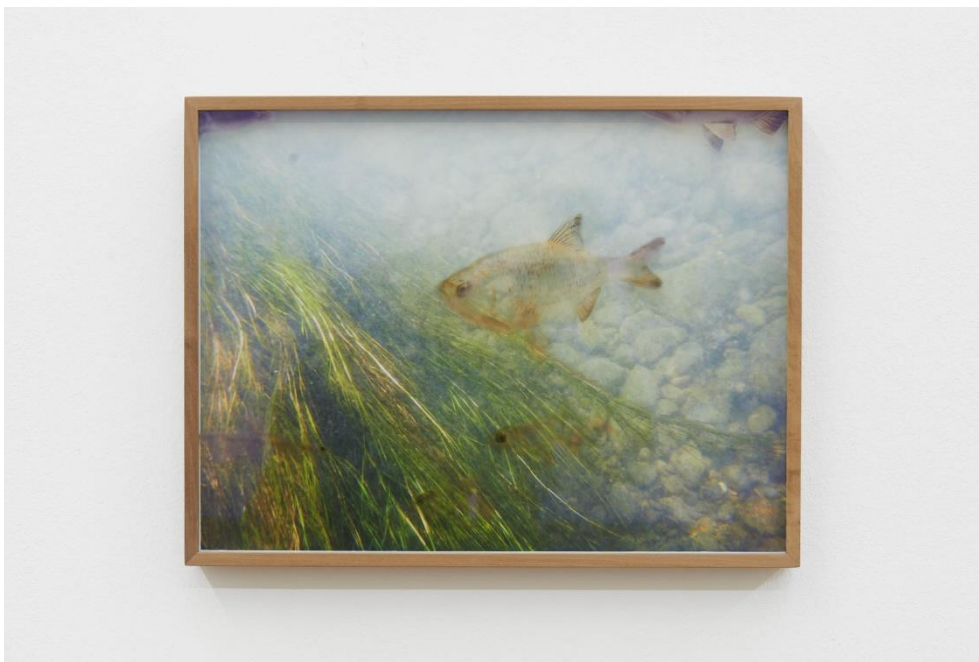
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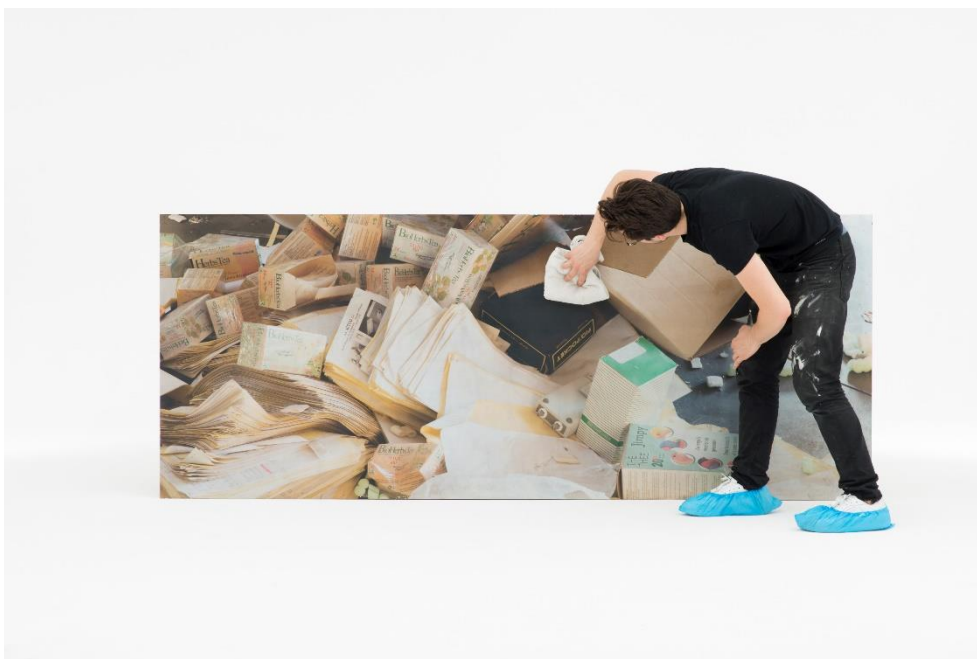
Marina Pinsky, *Rhine Riverbed 29*, 2015, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger /
 Marina Pinsky, *Rhine Riverbed 29*, 2015, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



Marina Pinsky, *Pharmakon XXIV*, 2015 (Detail). Foto: Hugard & Vanoverschelde /
 Marina Pinsky, *Pharmakon XXIV*, 2015 (detail). Photo: Hugard & Vanoverschelde



Marina Pinsky, *Pharmakon XVI*, 2015. Foto: Hugard & Vanoverschelde /
Marina Pinsky, *Pharmakon XVI*, 2015. Photo: Hugard & Vanoverschelde



Marina Pinsky, *Alex Dusting Pharmakon Underside*, 2015. Foto: Hugard & Vanoverschelde /
Marina Pinsky, *Alex Dusting Pharmakon Underside*, 2015. Photo: Hugard & Vanoverschelde

Alle Arbeiten Courtesy Marina Pinsky und C L E A R I N G New York, Brüssel /
All works Courtesy Marina Pinsky and C L E A R I N G New York, Brussels

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Marina Pinsky

Born 1986 in Moscow, lives and works in Brussels

Education

- 2012 M.F.A. University of California, Los Angeles (USA)
2008 B.F.A. School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (USA), in collaboration with Tufts University

Solo shows

- 2015 - *Dyed Channel*, Kunsthalle Basel (CH)
2014 - *Offset Water Bend or European Death Knot*, C L E A R I N G, Brussels
2013 - *White-Room*, White Columns, New York (USA)
- *Konzeptkitsch*, Global Colding, Dusseldorf (DE)
2012 - *Solitaire*, Exercise Projects, Vancouver (CD)
- *Collineation*, LACMA Special Projects, Los Angeles (USA)
2011 - *Department of Water and Power*, Workspace, Los Angeles (USA)

Group shows (selection)

- 2015 - *Ocean of Images: New Photography 2015*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, (USA)
- *La vie moderne*, 13th Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (FR)
- *Un-Scene III*, WIELS, Brussels
2014 - *The Material Image*, Marianne Boesky, New York (USA)
- *Displayed*, Anton Kern, New York (USA)
- *Made in L.A.*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (USA)
- *The Stuff that Dreams are Made of Too*, C L E A R I N G, New York (USA)
- *Kinemes*, Malraux's Place, New York (USA)
- *International Women's Day*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)
- *The Last Brucennial*, New York (USA)
2013 - *Made in Space*, Gavin Brown's Enterprise and Venus over Manhattan, New York (USA)
- *Made in Space*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)
- *Tradewinds*, C L E A R I N G, Brussels
- *Inside Order*, Kansas Gallery, New York (USA)
2012 - *Bulletin Boards*, Venus Over Manhattan, New York (USA)
- *New History*, Guest Spot, Baltimore (USA)
- *Beautiful Young Men*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)
- *MFA Thesis Show #4*, UCLA, Los Angeles (USA)
2011 - *Sunkist*, Cleopatra's, Berlin

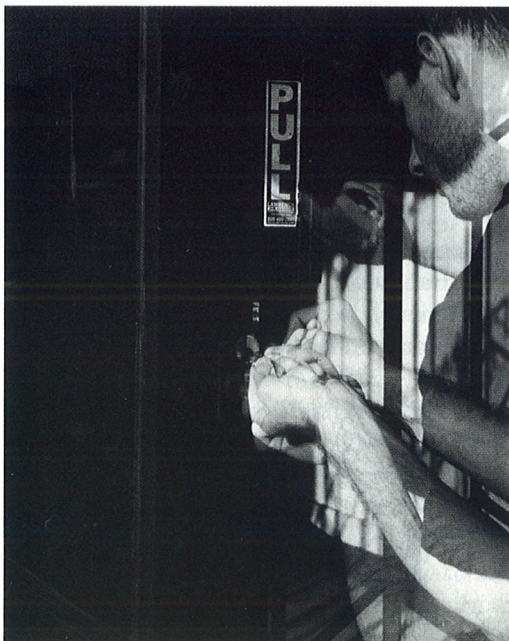


Above: Marina Pinsky, *Instruction Manual*, 2013, twelve gelatin silver prints. Installation view, Clearing, Brussels. Below: Three details from Marina Pinsky's *Instruction Manual*, 2013, twelve gelatin silver prints, each 9 1/2 x 7 3/4".

OPENINGS

Marina Pinsky

BEAU RUTLAND





Marina Pinsky, *Role Model too*, 2013, inkjet print on aluminum, polyisocyanurate foam, 56 x 68 x 32".

WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY?

Should it muse on the negotiations of our screen-filled lives? Or comment on Photoshop, the software that has seemingly come to stand for the medium itself? Recent essays and exhibitions have suggested as much, yet there are other paths too—escape routes from such technological determinism, for artists looking to extricate their work from the drop-shadow corner into which they have been backed. Los Angeles-based artist Marina Pinsky has found her own way by approaching the medium untraditionally: to put it simply, as a sculptor. Even if her photographs didn't both depict their three-dimensional subjects and sometimes take up physical space themselves—

an object-image tension she harnesses to great effect—Pinsky approaches composition and production with the disposition of someone used to working in the round. This sensitivity to objecthood affirms the time she spent studying with the gleefully confounding artist Charles Ray. Paradoxically, her deft manipulation of resolutely physical materials is what fuels her investigation (whether in the studio or the darkroom, or via the computer) into the process of looking.

Pinsky's object-based inquiry can be said to stem from a set of 2011 works that employ the traditional painting trope of the still life to generative ends, providing an alluring friction behind each depicted object. Tapping into the familiarity of commercial

displays and photography, Pinsky continues to examine the ways in which we read images now, but also our desire for images to perform, a desire Pinsky's art ostensibly satiates (though rather wryly). Take, for example, the works included in "Tradewinds," her two-person exhibition with Cooper Jacoby at Clearing in Brussels this past spring, which both fulfill and negate our expectations as observers. In *Gaussian Blur II*, 2013, yards of Dutch wax print—featuring a jaunty pattern of blue monster claws in the midst of spray-painting—serve as a backdrop for a tabletop tableau of household cleaners. One can imagine this visual trigger spurring a chain reaction, invisible cogs setting the image in motion. The bottles



of disinfectant sit atop plastic cubes filled with condensing screen-printing ink, an analog counterpart to the work's titular Photoshop filter, which averages out frequencies to produce a digital haze. A Windex-wielding hand is seen reaching into the frame, aggressively pointing the bottle toward the viewer and seemingly spraying the work's Plexiglas glazing, thereby fulfilling the potential action embedded within the graphic fabric. This physical blur propels the scene, guiding the viewer's attention to the previously unnoticed brand labels, in turn smudged yet still recognizable. Such ease of obfuscation within photography is no surprise, yet here Pinsky elicits the ability of advertising to hide itself in plain sight, reminiscent of Jonathan Crary's likening of photography and capital as "homologous forms of social power." This intentional visual slippage places a very tiny wrench in the act of looking.

The speed with which a picture is read takes priority in Pinsky's thinking—as we see again and again throughout the artist's process, and as she herself has explained. Another work exhibited in Belgium, *Instruction Manual*, also 2013, includes twelve black-and-white photographs of a model hired to try to pick a storefront lock with his handsome hands. The photographs appear to be double exposures, heightening the filmic tension of the interpolated moments—will he succeed in time? (Each gelatin silver photograph is actually printed from two overlaid negatives, and each

evokes remarkable spatial and temporal depth due to this nonsequential analog facture.) Indeed, the prominence of the word *PULL* on the door within the scene serves not only as a sly reference to the work's title, but also as an acknowledgment of the physical energy embodied in many of Pinsky's photographs.

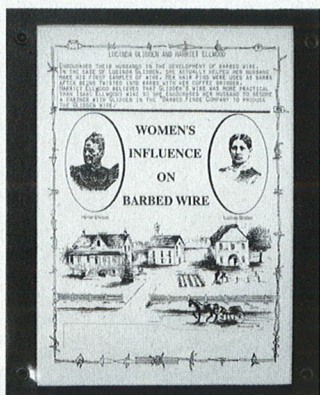
What may be Pinsky's "slowest" picture to date, an untitled work from 2013, captures the view outside the window of her Koreatown studio, cars piling up at an intersection and LA greenery in the distance. We are immediately aware of looking at something highly *mediated*, that overused term for the technical distance separating the viewer from the "scene" captured by the camera. Yet the work's intervening layers are analog in nature: etched Plexiglas, molded silicone, and a piece of cut glass upon which Pinsky has printed an image of a side-view mirror reflecting a chain-link fence pierced by a tree branch, to name just a few. This physical insertion of images within larger compositions, pictures *en abyme*, serves to help Pinsky better understand the way an image behaves and what other meanings it may hold, depending on the context in which it is situated. Through this accumulation and recursion of various strata, Pinsky highlights the entanglement of the many different speeds and modes of looking that our contemporary experience of seeing requires. She lets these disjunctions snarl and confuse the picture plane to productive visual ends—witness the traffic jam in

Pinsky enacts the ways in which photographs today never just float in a digital ether (as so many platitudes would have it), but always also stubbornly manifest as material, spatial, social, and ideological things.



Above: Marina Pinsky, *Gaussian Blur II*, 2013, ink-jet print, 29 1/2 x 23 1/2".

Right: Marina Pinsky, untitled, 2013, ink-jet print, 20 x 30".



and [it has been decided] that the one it is indeed is genuine.



Page from Marina Pinsky's *The Road to White Columns*, 2013, photocopy on paper, closed: 11 x 8½".

the photograph's far-off corner—as one more instance of allowing dimension (perhaps more than we would like) into the image.

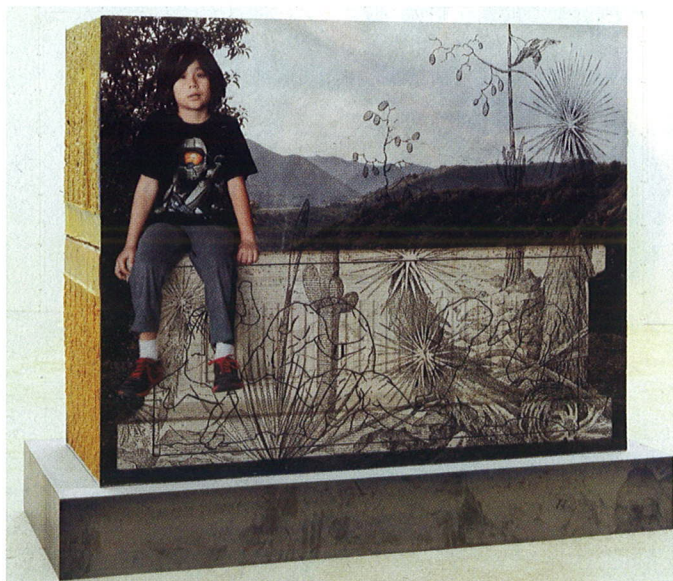
Seeking relief from weeks of studio labor during exhibition preparation, Pinsky has occasionally distracted herself with offhand projects. The zine *The Road to White Columns* mused on a cross-country road trip preceding her New York show at the venue this winter, punctuated by such highway diversions as an institution dedicated to barbed wire, the Devil's Rope Museum, in McLean, Texas. Likewise, in the months leading up to her MFA thesis exhibition, she showed "Beautiful Young Men," 2012, at Night Gallery, Los Angeles, in 2012—portraits of her fresh-faced male friends, their dress and poses paradoxically giving the works the casual appearance that commercials or niche youth sitcoms labor to achieve. Intended as a detour from official work, the project quietly ruminates on the hidden construction of images and social interactions alike.

How, then, do we expect photography to depict people today? What setting would appear most natural, most fitting? An appropriate answer seems to be the shoppers and anachronistic architectural kitsch that populate the Grove, LA's consumer wonderland of an outdoor mall. The vertical sculpture *Role Model I*, 2013, shows a strapping, sunglasses-clad twenty-something (a stranger to Pinsky) nonchalantly posing in front of faux Doric columns. More complex in subject and form, *Role Model too*, 2013, features two images of boys, one on either face of the work, in front of a barrier disguised as a vaguely classical wall, evocative of the sepulchre and melancholy landscape of Nicolas Poussin's *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1638–40.

One boy furtively sucks on a fountain drink, the other exudes innocent indifference to the camera. In both images, the Santa Monica Mountains loom in the distance as overlain line drawings of native vegetation and a Herculean frieze spring from the ground up.

The appealing peculiarity of these digital composites brings various photographic idioms to mind: advertising, traditional landscape, and 1990s youth portraiture in the self-conscious if unblinking vein of Rineke Dijkstra. The images were printed on an aluminum sheet (later bent), providing a dual presentation of adolescence, perhaps the fork in the road between sociable and lonesome. These upright works mirror their upright subjects, who carry their constructed identities in plain sight: through their dress, hair, posture, and so on. As one walks around the *Role Model* sculptures, the polyisocyanurate foam typically used to insulate houses becomes visible, giving rise to speculation about architectural and photographic authenticity. Here, Pinsky enacts the ways in which photographs today never just float in a digital ether (as so many platitudes would have it), but always also stubbornly manifest as material, spatial, social, and ideological things. A work such as *Role Model too* trains the eye to more fully explore what, exactly, is presented before it, both in actuality and through inference. By homing in on the ways in which we see, Pinsky pinpoints the circuitous and physically demanding experience of visuality in the present. Her medium-unspecific approach proves that it takes someone who constantly looks in multiple directions to point us in the right one. □

BEAU RUTLAND IS ASSISTANT CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART.



Left: Marina Pinsky, *Role Model too*, 2013, ink-jet print on aluminum, polyisocyanurate foam, 56 x 68 x 32".

Right: Marina Pinsky, untitled, 2011, ink-jet print, 23½ x 29½".

