



*Marina Pinsky's Leaves, Vines and Trees*  
FRIEZE, March 2018  
(author: Aaron Bogart)  
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# Frieze

In the 17th century, when New York was part of New Netherland, Manhattan's fertile fields and marshy inlets were a Dutch colony. This early moment of American history is at the heart of Marina Pinsky's first solo exhibition in New York, which employs both photography and sculpture to examine the ways that symbols are framed, reused and reinterpreted over time.



Marina Pinsky, *Pine Tree Flag 1*, 2017, silver gelatin print, 1.4 x 1.7 m. Courtesy: 303 Gallery, New York © the artist

Pinsky is known for her conceptually strong photographic work, which she continues here with eight framed direct positive photographs, titled *Snow Mask 1-8* (all 2017). Each unique print features a simply painted pine tree on paper, foregrounded by live string-bean vines, which snake up armatures such as one might see in a vegetable patch and lend the images an appearance of depth. Some photographs are crisp and clear, while others are ghostly and inscrutable: for these latter works, Pinsky placed images of snowy landscapes, printed on acetate, before the camera's lens. The pine appears again in two larger, silver gelatin prints, *Pine Tree Flag 1* and *Pine Tree Flag 2* (both 2017), which depict hand-painted paper trees arranged behind grids of climbing vines. The conifers refer to a number of flags from colonial New England, flown during the Revolutionary War with the added motto 'An Appeal to Heaven'. In 1913, the International Exhibition of Modern Art – the first large-scale show of modern art in the US – also adopted the pine tree for its logo along with the slogan 'The New Spirit', hoping it would act as a reminder of American rebellion and establish New York at the vanguard of contemporary art. Pinsky's photographs not only highlight how a latent symbol might return to the forefront of our historical imagination, but also how easily it can embed itself within our visual vocabulary.

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The leaf and vine motif continues in three sculptures bounded by thick white frames reminiscent of hydroponics tubes. Produced from epoxy, high-density polyethylene, paint and plastic, and placed on small concrete columns roughly the height of a raised planter bed or a mattress frame, the sculptures are based on toy model assembly kits. The life-sized leaves of Pinsky's *Cucumber Assembly Kit* (2018) resemble the kind of foliage found in a typical New York garden, though their off-white lacquer blanches them of colour, as if they have tumbled from an overexposed photograph. Like Pinsky's paper trees, the leaves – redolent of the ubiquitous New York City Parks and Recreation logo – are playfully reimagined, inviting us to pluck them from their vines or gather them for a comfy bed.

*Wyckoff House Model* (2018) is Pinsky's own miniature version of the oldest surviving Dutch saltbox home in the US, built in Brooklyn in 1638. The model – made of unglazed ceramic, polystyrene and painted wood – has no roof and distended walls, which open up its corners and expose its interior layout. Grey nylon ratchet straps crudely belt the sculpture, literally and figuratively holding together a fragile fragment of the past.



Marina Pinsky, *Cucumber Assembly Kit*, 2018, acrylic paint, concrete, epoxy, high density polyethylene, plastic, primer, steel, sand, urethane plastic, 45 x 239 x 88 cm. Courtesy: 303 Gallery, New York © the artist

Ratchet straps also bind *Trigger Trace 3* (2018), one of three sculptures fashioned from polyurethane foam and pale pink and yellow Plasti-Dip adhesive, sandwiched between granite slabs, whose globular forms are meant to mirror the negative space of handgun triggers. Scratches in the granite resemble an ancient and mysterious language but are actually traces from their recent use as industrial cutting stones. Like the photographs, the sculptures require repeated viewing: these are not the historical artefacts they initially appear to be but manufactured objects of the modern machine age. Pinsky demonstrates how easily, and how often, we give meaning to the mundane, and how easily we can take that meaning away.