

Educational assignment and workshops:

For every exhibition an educational assignment and workshop is developed.

Publications:

Copies of Marina Pinsky's publication *Dyed Channel* (2016) are offered for sale at our desk. Viewing samples of other publications and articles about the artist are also available.

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Strata of the Slow, Buried Trench

15.10-17.12.2017

Marina Pinsky

Opening: 14.10.2017, 17:00 – 19:00

Opening hours:

Wed – Fri, 13:00 – 17:00

Sat – Sun, 11:00 – 17:00

Public Programme:

05.11.2017, 12:00: Free guided tour

03.12.2017, 12:00: Free guided tour

06.12.2017, 19:30: Public programme



Strata of the Slow, Buried Trench is the first institutional solo exhibition by Moscow-born, Brussels-based artist **Marina Pinsky** in the Netherlands.

In her artwork, Marina Pinsky draws inspiration from any time, place or culturally encoded object she encounters. When invited for a solo exhibition at Vleeshal Markt in Middelburg, Pinsky, who previously studied photography in Boston and Los Angeles, turned her lens to this former meat hall, and the city in which it finds itself. Working her way carefully through the material, her methodology is like that of an archeologist unearthing a site, a detective scrutinizing a crime scene, or, in fact, a sculptor giving animated form to inanimate matter. That is to say, with a slowness that one does not often associate with photography—although Pinsky’s photographs manage to slow down the viewer’s gaze through layering physical material and virtual content.

Pinsky moves between photography and sculpture, staging objects and scenarios to be photographed, as well as creating sculptural work. In *The Originality of the Avant-Garde* (1981), Rosalind Krauss points out that some art forms such as photography and sculpture are not concerned with the concept of authenticity. The original work (negative or plaster) is not the final product and was never intended to be. We place more value on reproductions created closer to the “original” mold or negative, and, importantly, made by the artist’s own hand—but does it really matter?

Throughout Pinsky’s past works, sequential reproductions of hands appear again and again, repetitively enacting varied systematic activities. In the series of black-and white photographs *Instruction Manual, 2013*, a pair of hands is depicted in the act of trying to pick a lock. In another series of photographs, *Woman and Child, 2016*, one pair of gloved hands is directing the movement of another hand in what turns out to be a fingerprinting demonstration for children by the Brussels police. In a 13-minute long digital film, we see various hands touching a scale model of the city of Basel, slowly decoding both the miniature forms representing the city and the accompanying Braille descriptions. These sets of images can be read as ciphers for Pinsky’s own working method, and as instructions for how to look at the world around us; with a slowness and depth that counters the acceleration of most contemporary viewing. At Vleeshal Markt, Pinsky presents new

works—both sculptural and photographic—that she has specifically developed over the last year in response to the former town hall with its meat market. When the town hall of Middelburg was built in late Gothic style, from 1452 to 1520, the city was economically booming, due to a direct connection to the sea which made intensive international trade possible. The sea arm was called *Het Sloe*, in some old English-language books and maps of the area referred to as *The Slow*. Ships passing the sluices and the bridges of *The Slow* had to pay with a special type of coins, entitled “bakenloodjes” (beacon weights). This alternative economical system disappeared in Middelburg with the silting up of the sea arm. Another symbol of the city’s economic power regressing was the amount of eagles kept in the cage in front of the town hall. In 1700 there was only one eagle left, whereas at earlier, more prosperous times there were up to five—supposedly used to test the meat that was offered in the hall and fed with the leftovers of the slaughter.

For her exhibition, Pinsky metaphorically unearths the trench now buried under filled-in land, and brings in her version of meat stands, sausages and knives. The counts and countesses, who reigned over Zeeland between the 11th and 16th centuries and are positioned on the outside of the town hall in the form of sculptures, will also enter the stage. Pinsky photographed these sculptures, and juxtaposes their projected images with the four sculptures that are placed inside of the Vleeshal. The visitors are invited to join a conversation on past, present and future ways of seeing.

Marina Pinsky was born in Moscow, Russia in 1986. She studied at the University of California, Los Angeles and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The artist currently lives and works in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions include Polar at C-L-E-A-R-I-N-G, Brussels and Dyed Channel at Kunsthalle Basel. Her work has previously been shown in the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles) and WIELS (Brussels).

Works in Vleeshal

Marina Pinsky’s exhibition *Strata of the Slow, Buried Trench* consists of four bodies of new works, especially developed for the Vleeshal.

Meat Stand I (1793-1796), Meat Stand II (1790-1811), Meat Stand III (1829)

Intrigued by the former function of this center for contemporary art - a meat market inside of the former city hall used by butchers over decades - Marina Pinsky decided to fabricate market stands, sausages and other sorts of meat on her own. The three market stands not only display her ware, but also present plates that are enlarged copies of beacon weights. These lead tokens were used in an alternative economical system; ships passing the sluices and the bridges of the sea arm *The Slow* had to pay with these coins. The following information is inscribed on them: “SAS”, which refers to the Dutch word for a sluice, a water channel controlled at its head by a gate; the year of the coin’s production; and the value it had in “ST” which is an abbreviation of “stuivers”, a pre-decimal coin used in the Netherlands that circulated until the Napoleonic Wars. The proximity of the sea through the sea arm *The Slow* largely contributed to Middelburg’s wealth. During the Middle Ages, the city became an important trading centre in the commerce between England and the rising cities of Flanders. It is in this period that the building of Middelburg’s city hall was started, a process that lasted from 1452 to 1520. Until the end of the 16th century it was the largest trading city of the Northern provinces. In the 17th century it became the most important center for the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, after the capital Amsterdam. With the silting of *Het Sloe* in the 19th century, the city’s power diminished. It’s the now buried trench of Pinsky’s exhibition title.

AR1 Golem

The large mural is based on an image of an AR1 GOLEM computer chip that Marina Pinsky discovered in the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The GOLEM computer was one of the first computers in Israel, following the WEIZAC (Weizmann Automatic Computer) that was operational until 1963. The chip shows a complicated network of streams, similar in form to (lost) rivers on a map. While researching the former sea arm *The Slow*, Pinsky came across an image depicting the ditches that people had made, which were deepened by the sea and later on artificially filled with earth again. The similarity in the patterns of networks in Walcheren’s layers of earth with those on the computer chip was striking. The name AR1 Golem evokes the golem, which

in Jewish folklore, is an animated anthropomorphic being that is magically created from inanimate matter (specifically from clay or mud). It is these loose associations that Pinsky is interested in, different for each viewer.

New Netherlands Subway Ride

New Netherlands Subway Ride combines close-up images taken by the artist of the sculptures on the facade of the Vleeshal with photographs Pinsky collected on her travels. These portraits of sculptures highlight gestures made by the figures, which are transposed onto gestures of real-life authority figures such as airport security guards. Whereas the security guards are seen from the back, the former rulers of Zeeland seem to be looking at the same slideshow that we are viewing. Their facial expressions seem to be subtly commenting on this *New Netherlands Subway Ride*, where one moves from the river *The Slow*, to the peripheral semi-industrial marshlands surrounding New York City, coming across fields of new hydroponic growing equipment. Large Styrofoam blocks in the yard of the foam factory in Tholen, marble from the Carrara quarry in different states of being (from blocks in the quarry to ancient and contemporary sculptures), meat displayed in the stands of a market in Oaxaca, Mexico, documents from the Zeeuws Archief and tapestries from the Zeeuws Museum: they are all part of her personal archive.

Not Yet Titled (Foam Blocks 1-10)

The ten foam blocks are positioned in front of ten of Vleeshal’s small cabinets, in which – as the story goes – the butchers of the former meat market kept their knives. For her exhibition, Pinsky had all cabinets’s doors reinstalled. The blocks imply the condition of layers of earth built over time, the physical strata of Walcheren island, which can be seen in topological maps with different ages of soil fill. Marina Pinsky translates these “organic” channels (that are really not that organic) into poured layers of foam. *The Slow*, the trade route connection between Middelburg and the sea, was one of these channels, now buried under filled-in land. On top of the blocks is a collection of knives and other weapons. They are cast, carved objects based on images of some of the weapons that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has seized at airport gates in the United States. The TSA’s Instagram account, with over 800.000 followers, shows some of the items the agency has confiscated at security checkpoints.