

Yulia Pinkusevich

The Armory Show

September 7 – 10, 2023

Press Release

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For the 2023 edition of The Armory Show, the Directors of Marlborough are pleased to present Yulia Pinkusevich in her first solo presentation since joining the gallery in 2022. The artist was raised in the former USSR and came to America at a young age, though is continually informed by her Ukrainian heritage and the hardships she faced. We present two perspectives that form the core of her work.

In 2020, Pinkusevich began “The Sakha Series” after learning that her maternal ancestors were indigenous Siberians who practiced forms of shamanism in the Sakha region of Russia, known for its rich biodiversity, harsh climate, and extreme landscapes. Pinkusevich says of the foundation for the project, “I spent my childhood summers in these environments with my grandparents—but because native Siberians were brought to the brink of extinction by white Russian settlers in the nineteenth century, very little indigenous culture remained there by the time I was a child.” When Stalin’s regime then systematically purged shamanism in the 1920s, a multigenerational amnesia around native heritage and sacred practices afflicted the region. These new works embody the essence of natural elements such as fire, water, and air, drawing upon the rich history and mythologies of ancient Ukraine, Siberia and beyond. These “portraits” of the elemental forces acknowledge the spirituality of her ancestors as a source of inspiration and life.

Accompanying “The Sakha Series” are works from “The Isorithm Series,” developed while an artist in residence at the Headland Center for the Arts and her research for *Double Vision*, a collaborative project with Andrea Steves and Francois Hughes. Pinkusevich located a Cold War-era declassified military manual which gave step by step instructions on how to create maps that predict the impact of nuclear bomb airbursts showing fatal and non-fatal casualty isorithms over particular types of habitable regions. She was struck by the immense tension between the elegant geometries and rational calculations of these maps, juxtaposed against the irrational chaos and mass destruction they represent. Pinkusevich draws on her Ukrainian and Russian identity and personal experience of growing up in the USSR at the end of the Cold War, as well as the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, to create marks made by gestures and physical movements that react to and synthesize the complex relationship between these two countries. Like something out of a post-apocalyptic Tarkovsky film, Pinkusevich’s work contains no recognizable figures and is instead guided by the sensation of a conceived presence, perhaps our own. The play on time, or rather the lack thereof, coupled with the artists’ steady bend of visual perception, lifts the viewer out of the familiar and into an advanced, abstracted way of contemplating space and time.



Isorithm 22-4 (Kharkiv), 2022
acrylic, ink, oil and dry pigment on canvas
60 × 56 in. / 152.4 × 142.2 cm
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Yulia Pinkusevich was born in 1982 in Kharkiv, Ukraine (USSR). After immigrating to New York at age 8, Pinkusevich received a degree from Rutgers University (2006) and an MFA degree from Stanford University (2012). Notable collections include the deYoung Museum, Stanford University, Meta HQ, Google HQ, and The City of Albuquerque. She has been awarded residency grants from Gray Area Arts Foundation, Wildlands, Lucid Arts Foundation, Autodesk Pier 9, Recology (San Francisco), Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris), and Headlands Center for the Arts, among others. The artist currently holds the Joan Danforth Associate Professorship of Studio Art at Mills College in Oakland, California (recently acquired by Northeastern University, Massachusetts).

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