

Remnants of the Past As Omens of the Future at Turley Gallery

[July 17, 2023](#) by [Sara Farrell Okamura](#)



Martine Kaczynski, Threshold, Installation, Turley Gallery

Why is home so important? Is it like religion, where we have faith that once we turn the key in the door and step over the threshold, we are safe from all those events that we believe cannot happen to us, or happen in the place we call home? We now live in a world where the mundane, the environment we know as home is threatened. Common places are invisible because they are part of the warp and weft of our

everyday existence. Our personal landmarks such as the library, the elementary school, and the ugly grocery store we quickly stop in, are no longer safe spaces. Self help and self care are great strategies for maintaining equilibrium, but may not extract the roots of our anxiety. Art obviously cannot solve these issues, but sometimes an artist who combines intellect, skill, and personal experience can act as the parakeet in the mine shaft.

Martine Kaczynski is one of those parakeets. Her new exhibit, *Threshold*, is a visual elegy to the past, while simultaneously presenting relics of a strived utopian life that provided joyful interludes. Kaczynski is the daughter of Holocaust survivors who escaped from Nazi Germany and formed a settlement in England. After growing up within this community haunted by its devastating past, Kaczynski moved to the United States and again confronted the concept of home.

Walking into Turley Gallery, one is immediately struck by the synchronic sense of comforting bliss and a ghostly aura of desertion. These sculptures could be the inspiration for a sci-fi film or the real-life traumatizing vestiges of sudden forced evacuation brought on by any one of the several calamities we face, be it war, climate change, or toxins.

Though this exhibit could be considered an installation, each piece is discretely unique.. Below are a few chosen

highlights, but it is not meant to signify one sculpture is more successful than another.



Martine, Kaczynski, Waterline, 2023, Milled foam, Epoxy, Paint

Waterline is reminiscent of a hulk of a slate blue plastic tub overturned with the simulation of a small infinity pool collected on its surface. The circular lines embracing the circumference and the flat lip on the structure's bottom edge conjures images ranging from an upside-down kiddie pool, to a water trough for animals, to suburban gardening containers. It is none of the above or all of the above depending on the viewer's experience.

Adjacent to *Waterline* is *Steps/Rails and Hose*. Industrial grey steps seem secured to the gallery floor with ludicrously designed steel handrails that skew towards each other rather than run parallel. On the left side of the top step is a quintessential emerald green garden hose coiled like a snake that is beginning to meander down the stairway towards prey. The feeling that someone just ran and left, possibly without turning the water off, is palpable.

Meta Yellow, is at the backend of the gallery, a summery yellow print asymmetrically stretched over precariously flimsy aluminum supports found frequently in backyards, beaches, and parks. This festive awning summons recollections of picnics, barbecues, and street fairs. Isolated, it stirs emotions of what was, or maybe that home or even culture, is nothing more than a collection of shared happiness and the comfort of being safe and secure.

There is more, *Fence/Defence* articulates the dual nature of

fences being both welcoming and foreboding. The drooping *Fallen Flags* and piles of melting *Flag Fall* bring to mind the famous quote by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "*After the revolution, who is going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?*"

Small, delicately rendered drawings and silkscreens line the perimeter of the gallery. These drawings don't carry the punch in the gut that the sculptures do, but they exemplify the beauty and delicacies of graphics by sculptors. Some renderings seem to float in space unattached, while others recall the elegance of Russian Constructivists such as El Lissitzky. It would be great in the future to see an exhibit of just Kaczynski's drawings and prints as they stand on their own, not as studies or auxiliary works.

In addition to the visual art on July 1 and July 22, opera singers Sungyeun Kim and Maria Giovanetti perform Léo Delibes's *Duo des fleurs / Flower Duet* (opera *Lakmé*) and *Ferdinand Gumbert, O bitt' euch liebe Vögelein / Oh please, dear little birds*.



Martine Kaczynski, Steps/Rail and Hose, 2023, Cast Rubber, Steel, Drywall, Paint

All photos courtesy of Alon Koppel

***Threshold, Works by Martine Kaczynski Turley Gallery,
Hudson NY***

You have till July 30 to see and experience *Threshold*. Turley Gallery is located at 98 Green Street, Hudson, NY, and is open Friday thru Sunday, 12-5 pm, and by appointment.