

Arboreal Anxieties at Chashama 266 by Mary Ivy Martin

By Etty Yaniv | February 5th, 2016 | Interviews, New York, Reviews and Photo Stories

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In *Arboreal Anxieties* the NYC based artist Mary Ivy Martin turns the gallery into a studio where she deconstructs discarded Christmas trees and transforms them into wearable sculptures, offering an intimate view of her practice to unsuspecting midtown passersby. Her performance will culminate on the final day of the exhibition when Martin will display the tree sculptures and other documentation of her performances. I interviewed Martin during the first week of her show:

EY: Tell me about the genesis of your show, how did you conceive the idea?

MIM: I have been working with discarded Christmas trees for about five years and have a tree in my studio that I've been collaborating with for much of that time. I was working on a piece to say goodbye to this tree and I began to cut its limbs off to make a costume to be worn ritualistically. This show is an expansion of that idea; I find the trees on the sidewalk with the trash, make a costume out of the limbs, and wear it while I make a pilgrimage back to the place where the tree was found.

EY: what are you aiming to express and what would you like visitors to take away?

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MIM: My work is a material investigation of larger ideas I'm thinking about—my relationship with nature, other people, and the city. I question the role of nature in urban life and the relationship between humans and their environment.



EY: Tell me about your experience finding and collecting the x mass trees

MIM: I have to say that carting a dead Christmas tree through Manhattan at the end January is really fun. It can be stressful on crowded corners, but it's thrilling to do something odd on the city streets. Most people ignore it, but it becomes a means to engage with friendly and curious New Yorkers.

EY: What draws you to plants?

MIM: I am drawn to the way plants viscerally connect me to the world.

EY: How do you envision the space by the end of the show?

MIM: By the end of the show, the space will be adorned with hanging tree costumes and carpeted with needles and sawdust. The space is where the process of transformation happens and the street is where I will be performing.

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EY: How do you see the relationship between the diverse disciplines you utilize in your practice (photography, performance, installation)?

MIM: I often pick one medium to express an idea, usually, the most immediate and interesting for the concept. With this project, I thought it would be useful to work with multiple mediums to convey the process and layers of meaning.

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EY: The show takes place in a Chashama space. can you tell me a bit about your interaction with the organization?

MIM: I applied for the Chashama space and proposed this project. I was very delighted to get a call back, saying they had the space available during the time of year that I needed it. They have been very helpful in promoting the show and are doing great work in a city that is becoming increasingly difficult to live in and create in. Thank you, Chashama!

Opening Reception: Friday, January 29, 6-8pm

Closing Reception: Saturday, February 13, 6-8pm, Hours: Friday – Saturday, 12-6pm

chashama 266, 266 West 37th Street, New York, NY www.chashama.org

Follow the performance on Instagram and Twitter: [@maryivymartin](#) [#arborealanxieties](#)

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About the Author: Etty Yaniv



Etty Yaniv works on her art and art writing in Brooklyn. She holds BA in Psychology and English Literature from Tel Aviv University, BFA from Etty Yaniv works on her art and art writing in Brooklyn. She holds BA in Psychology and English Literature from Tel Aviv University, BFA from Parsons School of Design, and MFA from SUNY Purchase. She is integrating mediums such as drawing, photography and painting to form three dimensional immersive environments. She has exhibited in galleries, museums and alternative spaces in solo and group shows nationally and internationally.