

# GAGOSIAN

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February 7, 2018



## RACHEL FEINSTEIN SECRETS

Opening reception:  
Thursday, January 11, 6–8PM  
January 11–February 17, 2018

456 North Camden Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

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*I've always been interested in portraying some kind of fantasy, then showing that it's completely constructed. There are always dark messages hidden behind beauty, and the act of sculpting is about listening to that inner voice that warns you about something lurking beneath the surface.*

—Rachel Feinstein

Gagosian is pleased to present “Secrets,” an exhibition of new work by Rachel Feinstein. This is Feinstein’s first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

In richly detailed sculptures and multipart installations, Feinstein considers the sumptuous materiality of historical European luxury, updating its refined surfaces and edges with a gritty and approximate excess. Borrowing freely from Baroque and Rococo sculpture, religious iconography, Romantic landscapes, and mainstream media, she explores issues of taste and desire, synthesizing visual and societal opposites such as romance and pornography; elegance and kitsch; the marvelous and the utterly banal.

“Secrets” consists of new sculptures, wallpaper, and paintings in which Feinstein cannibalizes notions of beauty, belief, and spectacle to reveal perfection as a form of burlesque. *The Secrets* is a series of eight large-scale sculptures that reflects on the Victoria’s Secret phenomenon, with its trademark “Angels” in their jaw-

dropping lingerie costumes—butterflies, firebirds, baby dolls, snow queens, and more—strutting their stuff at the brand’s annual fashion extravaganza that is broadcast to millions of ogling fans worldwide. Feinstein’s figures have been scaled up in hard foam from small clay maquettes, then individual hues applied piece by piece in hand-colored epoxy resins.

According to standard Renaissance proportions, five of *The Secrets* are rendered at just above human scale, and three smaller figures are placed on tall plinths, thrusting forward in mid-stride. But, instead of the ideal curves of classical figures or the equally unattainable lines of their contemporary runway prototypes, Feinstein opts for something far more mortal. *The Secrets* mutate, deliquesce, and bulge, as she trowels on chunks of clay and epoxy, unconcerned either with verisimilitude or refinement. Titled after their costumes, *Bandleader* holds up a large, white-gloved hand; *Butterfly*, teetering in heels, leans forward to blow a kiss; and *Ballerina* tilts her smeared rainbow face towards her raised arm, pinup style. Here, the priceless, gem-encrusted bras and lacy thongs that feed the Victoria’s Secret myth deflate into muddy neon pastes and visceral tangles, debunking the multi-billion dollar American lingerie magnate as a mess of filthy lucre.

“Secrets” also includes mirror-paintings of luxury homes and cars, as well as a collaged wallpaper that pairs found images of modern West Coast architecture with details from eighteenth-century wallpaper depicting lush, Arcadian gardens. This immersive environment further highlights the distorting effects of consumer desire, wherein real, breathing bodies are displaced by the intoxicating fumes of costly commodities.

**Rachel Feinstein** was born in 1971 in Fort Defiance, Arizona and lives in New York. She studied at Columbia University, New York and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, Maine. Institutional exhibitions include “Tropical Rodeo,” Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2006); “Rachel Feinstein: The Snow Queen,” Lever House, New York (2011); and “Folly,” Madison Square Park, New York (2014).

**Image:** Rachel Feinstein, maquette for *Bandleader*, 2017 (detail) © Rachel Feinstein. Photo by Robert McKeever.

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