

For Immediate Release

Contact: Michael Kaminer, 212-260-9733  
[pressreleases@michaelkaminer.com](mailto:pressreleases@michaelkaminer.com)

**Echoes of the Borscht Belt:  
Yeshiva University Museum Hosts First Large-Scale Exhibition  
of Haunting Catskills Photos by Marisa Scheinfeld**

[yumuseum.org](http://yumuseum.org) // [yumuseum.tumblr.com](http://yumuseum.tumblr.com)

<b>WHAT:</b> <i>Echoes of the Borscht Belt: Contemporary Photographs by Marisa Scheinfeld</i>
<b>WHEN:</b> <i>September 10, 2014 – April 12, 2015</i>

*"I find myself enamored of these leftovers, abandoned and forgotten within the mountainous landscape of their former pasts, lying in a state of exquisite and captivating entropy."*

*-Marisa Scheinfeld*

**New York City, September 2, 2014** – Turquoise barstools punctuate trash-strewn ruins of Grossinger's coffee shop. A jumble of weeds clogs the outdoor pool of the Pines Hotel. Colorful furniture rots inside the Nevele's ski chalet.

In the museum debut of a major photographic talent, [Yeshiva University Museum](http://yumuseum.org) will present Marisa Scheinfeld's haunting photos of abandoned sites where Borscht Belt resorts once boomed in the Catskill Mountain region of upstate New York.

*Echoes of the Borscht Belt* assembles images Scheinfeld has shot inside and outside structures that once buzzed with life as summer havens for generations of New York Jews.

Scheinfeld, who grew up in the region, began her documentary photo project in 2009; this exhibition marks the first time audiences can see her photographs on the large scale on which they were conceived.

*Echoes of the Borscht Belt* will also feature original artifacts and ephemera from Scheinfeld's personal collection, a trove of objects from the Borscht Belt's most beloved hotels and resorts. Among them: Postcards from the Jerry Lewis Theater Club at Brown's, soap from The Nevele, an ashtray from Grossinger's, and a ski hat from the Concord, in addition to era photos.

Some of the structures in Scheinfeld's photographs have already been demolished, making the project resonate for its documentary as well as for its artistic value.

"The results are portraits of destruction as well as rebirth," as The New York Times noted in a 2013 essay on Scheinfeld's photographs. Nature has encroached into or overtaken the historic sites; many of the interiors

have been vandalized or marked by paintballers and graffiti artists. Scheinfeld's images record all of these developments with sensitivity to color, composition and narrative.

"The Borscht Belt was a haven for an entire cultural and social movement of people," Scheinfeld notes; "its influences spread to mainstream American culture, entertainment and media. Growing up in Sullivan County, I feel a strong connection to the region and, as a photographer, I felt inclined to document its history, decline and what has come of it. I was drawn to the hotels because of their rich history but found unexpected beauty in their current, changing landscape."

Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of Yeshiva University Museum, agreed. "The Borscht Belt gets labeled as the birthplace of standup comedy; but it was much more than that. It became an important communal resource for Jews from the 1920s to the 1970s, when many of them couldn't afford to go – or were banned from going – elsewhere. The Borscht Belt became a community where they formed bonds and could vacation 'like Americans'. In addition to being beautiful and monumental works in themselves, Marisa's photographs offer a moving reflection on that period."

The [Forward](#), the leading national Jewish news source, is media sponsor of *Echoes of the Borscht Belt*.

### **About the artist**

Marisa Scheinfeld was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1980 and raised in the Catskills. She took her first black and white photography class at age 15 and hasn't put the camera down since. In 2002, she graduated from The State University of New York at Albany having studied under photographer Phyllis Galembo and photographer Abby Robinson at The School of Visual Arts. She earned her MFA from The School of Art, Art History and Design at San Diego State University, where her thesis was called "Leftover Borscht".

Scheinfeld's photographic projects and books are among the collections of Yeshiva University Museum, Lynn Kroll, The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, CA, The La Jolla Athenaeum in La Jolla, CA, The Edmund and Nancy K. Dubois Library at the Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego, CA and The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation in New York, NY. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Washington, DC, California, Kansas and London, UK.

### **ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM**

Yeshiva University Museum is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life. The Museum, founded in 1973, is distinguished by its wide-ranging and intellectually rigorous exhibitions and, as the cultural arm of Yeshiva University, by its strong educational mission. As a partner in the thriving Center for Jewish History and a participant in New York's lively downtown cultural scene, Yeshiva University Museum makes a distinctive and important contribution to Jewish life and to the world of culture and the arts. The Museum's rich and diverse collections preserve Jewish artifacts, art, texts and material culture for posterity, making objects accessible through exhibitions, educational programs, and research and conservational initiatives.

# # #