

ZIEHERSMITH



This artist made colorful glass casts of the oldest living thing in NYC

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New York City was founded nearly 400 years ago and a survivor from that period still lives among us in the form of a tulip poplar tree in Queens. The Alley Pond Giant—so named for Alley Pond Park, where it's situated—is 18.6 feet in diameter and soars to a height of 133.8 feet. According to NYC Parks, the tree goes back about 350 years old, making it the oldest living organism in New York. And now, as reported by art website Hyperrallergic, it is the inspiration for gallery show in Chelsea by artist Rachel Owens.

For her exhibition “Mother” at ZieherSmith Gallery on W 20th Street, Owens went out to Alley Pond Park to take rubber casts of the Giant, which she then used to create a series of glass sculptures. Sections of the trunk, and a huge hollow at the base of the tree have been transformed into shimmering forms that seem to be covered in multicolored rock crystal. In fact, Owens used shards of colored glass pressed into molds to created the rainbowlike effect. The show grew out of the artist’s interest in the landscape of New York City, which isn’t usually thought of one in the natural sense. “Mother” is up until April 15. As for the actual tree, there is no end date for the foreseeable future.

