

Monika Sosnowska
BROKEN GLASS DIRT AND DUST
The Modern Institute, Osborne Street
15th November – 15th January 2025
Preview: Thursday 14th November 2024, 6-8pm

Monika Sosnowska's work explores architectural entropy, an interest initially rooted in her experience of the structural and societal changes which took place in Poland, and in particular Warsaw, when the country transitioned from a communist political regime to a liberal democracy in the late 80s and early 90s. Her materials – rebar, glass, concrete, steel – are familiar elements of architecture but Sosnowska subverts their utilitarian function. Her sculpture aligns material collapse with political collapse, suggesting that the two are intertwined. Formative pieces appropriate from or reproduce specific structures from Modernist sites, subjecting them to torquing, cutting and weight to produce forms which are haunted and skeletal. She has previously framed her practice as 'digesting Modernism.'

The title of the exhibition speaks to Sosnowska's enduring interest in both materiality and ruination. This new suite of sculptures continues her exploration of abandoned urban spaces, specifically their capacity to reveal uniquely beautiful and melancholic configurations when in a state of decay. Sosnowska imbues her works with the strange mix of utopian aspiration and spectral, broken elegance found in these places across the globe. For example, one work takes inspiration from shattered windows in a disused factory in Chemnitz, Germany.

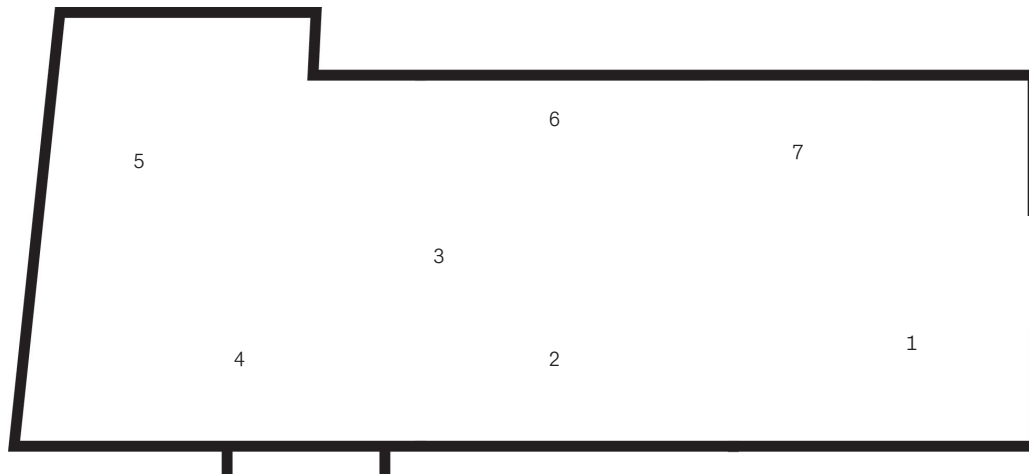
Collectively, the works show a shift towards more poetic and figurative concerns rather than direct references to the built environment and Modernist construction. Sosnowska anthropomorphises her modest materials, creating evocative humanoid and plant-like forms: a section of cut pipe resembles mushrooms or leaves composed from torn paper; a warped metal shape appears as a fragment of a discarded machine; twisted rebar and concrete passages recall crumpled fragments of antique sculpture.

Sosnowska produces detailed maquettes in her studio before embarking on the fabrication of the final pieces. These miniatures are composed from paper, cardboard, modelling clay and wire, and were recently the subject of a survey exhibition at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern. In each one, she is seeking a kind of rightness or identity in form. The installation was assembled in a similarly intuitive manner – producing a sense of tension which is cut through by a welded section of rebar snaking through the space. While the sculptures nod to the aesthetic history of Minimalism, she rejects the purity of this genre. Sosnowska draws back all the context and historical contingencies which this movement displaced, the *broken glass, dirt and dust*. This creates a compelling dialectic between the promise or mythology of Minimalism and Modernism, and the reality of their existence in the world.

Monika Sosnowska (b. 1972, Ryki, Poland); lives and works in Warsaw. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'An Order Apart', EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Finland (2024); 'Fire Escape', Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen (2023); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2023); 'Impossible Figures', Adrastus Collection, Ávila, Spain (2022); 'Fatigue', Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn (2022); Saarlandmuseum Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken (2020); 'Monika Sosnowska', Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2020); 'Facade', Galeria Labirynt, Lublin (2020); 'Exercises in Construction, Bending', Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2020); The Modern Institute, 3 Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2019); 'Habitat', The Contemporary Austin, Austin (2016); Indianapolis Museum of Art (2016); The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane (as part of Glasgow International 2016); 'Architectonisation', Serralves Foundation, Porto (2015); 'Gate', Ginza Maison Hermes, Ginza (2015); Perez Art Museum Miami, Miami (2013); Aspen Art Museum (2013); 'Regional Modernities', ACCA, Melbourne (2013); The Modern Institute, Osborne Street, Glasgow (2012); 'Fire Escape', Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2011); 'Stairway', Herzliya Museum Tel Aviv, Israel (2010); 'The Staircase', K21, Düsseldorf (2010); and 1:1, The Polish Pavilion, 52nd Venice Biennale (2007).

Sosnowska represented Poland in the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). She has completed public art commissions including: FIR TREE, Public Art Fund, New York (2012); The Wind House, Primrose Hill, Camden (part of Portavilion), 2008. She has also participated in group exhibitions worldwide, including at: Museum of Contemporary Art in Monterrey, Mexico (2023); Schaulager Museum, Basel (2023); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2022); Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy (2022); Kunsthall Rotterdam, Rotterdam (2021); Schlossgut Schwante Sculpture Park, Brandenburg (2020); Kunst Meran, Meran (2020); Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka (2020); Hayward Gallery, London (2018); Kunsthalle München, Munich (2018); David Roberts Art Foundation, MOSTYN, Wales (2018); Tate Modern, London (2018); Middelheim Museum, Antwerp (2018); Whitechapel, London (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel (2016); de Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln (2015); MCA, Chicago (2012); Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2012); Arsenal, Venice Biennale, Venice (2011); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2009); Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw (2006).

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|--|---|--|
| <p>1 <i>Rebar</i>, 2024
 Painted steel, concrete
 300 x 110 x 140 cm
 118 1/8 x 43 1/4 x 55 1/8 in</p> | <p>2 <i>Coil</i>, 2024
 Painted steel (image is of paper
 maquette)
 260 x 70 x 50 cm
 102 3/8 x 27 1/2 x 19 3/4 in</p> | <p>3 <i>Rebar 20</i>, 2017/2020
 Painted steel rebar
 Dimensions variable</p> |
| <p>4 <i>Spring</i>, 2024
 Concrete and painted steel
 200 x 150 x 110 cm
 78 3/4 x 59 x 43 1/4 in</p> | <p>5 <i>Untitled</i>, 2024
 Concrete, rebar and wood
 Sculpture 130 x 90 x 80 cm
 Plinth 70 x 30 x 25 cm</p> | <p>6 <i>Broken glass</i>, 2024
 Glass and painted steel
 300 x 30 x 15 cm
 118 1/8 x 11 3/4 x 5 7/8 in</p> |
| <p>7 <i>Pipe</i>, 2024
 Painted steel (image is of paper
 maquette)
 140 x 185 x 120 cm
 55 1/8 x 72 7/8 x 47 1/4 in</p> | | |