

MONIKA SOSNOWSKA

*Urban Flowers*

September 8 – October 20, 2018

Gallery Gisela Capitain is delighted to announce its fourth solo exhibition by Polish artist Monika Sosnowska.

Sosnowska is internationally known for her architectural installations. The artist transforms familiar architectural elements into idiosyncratic and bizarre sculptures that challenge the viewer to perceive these well-known structures more attentively and sensitively. The early works often referred to the modernist architecture of her native Poland, which after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 was subject to dramatic socio-economic change with the corresponding economic effects. The field of vision has steadily expanded since then. Among other things, the artist deals with provisional, makeshift architectures from Mexico. The latest works created for this exhibition are inspired by a trip to Bangladesh and her observations there.

The architecture that the artist found in places like the capital Dhaka is often in a difficult to assess intermediate state: is it still in the process of construction or already abandoned to decay? Everywhere steel bars are growing out of concrete bases in all directions and seem to promise that the construction will continue to grow. Wildly proliferating power cables wind around the buildings like the tendrils of lianas and bundle chaotically on electricity pylons. "Urban Flowers" is what Sosnowska calls these almost organic-looking structures that grow out of the buildings and around them. Regardless of the ruinous nature of these buildings, a lively atmosphere dominates the city, which impressed Sosnowska. The unfinished buildings are not empty. The ever-growing population absorbs this architecture, makes it its own and usable.

Inspired by the presence of these hidden structures in the architectural vocabulary of Bangladesh, the artist creates a sculpture garden in the gallery with bizarre plants made out of concrete and steel. The spaces of the gallery serve as a stage for the tragic-comic hybrids, which carry the idea of change and growth, but in the truest sense of the word, as if petrified await for their deployment.

While Sosnowska's work has hitherto referred to concrete, recognizable architectural units such as house facades and rooms, or industrially manufactured modules such as flights of stairs and staircases, her new sculptures mainly refer to the constructive components of architecture that are usually invisible and whose actual function can no longer be deduced from the sculptures.

Sosnowska's work deals with a specific, modernist aesthetic and how the artist perceives, experiences and observes it entirely subjectively. Often it is anonymous, imperfect architecture, often dilapidated, places of poverty that imply failure. This leads her work to far-reaching questions, to the inquiry of the causes of such urban structures. If architecture is a means to create order and structure, a means to rearrange society, an ideological system, what does such a city image say about local social and political processes? The works on display are a poetic metaphor - a pars pro toto - for the political and social processes responsible for the appearance of these places.