

Capitain Petzel

MONIKA SOSNOWSKA

Capitain Petzel, Berlin June 26 - August 29, 2009

For her first solo exhibition at Capitain Petzel, Monika Sosnowska has installed seven sculptural elements in metal, wood and glass in the empty gallery. The exhibition walls have been removed from the space to create one large, undivided area in which the different objects create a line along the room. Starting with the smallest sculpture, the installation proceeds down the middle of the space to end wall, where the last element hangs above all the rest.

Initially one cannot make sense of these seemingly incongruous, yet oddly familiar shapes. Their variation of size, colour and materials creates a strange, narrow forest of angles, conflicting lines and suggestions. In the context of this modernist glass structure something about them is discordant, but also recalls an appropriate structure and aesthetic.

With this exhibition, Sosnowska wishes to acknowledge the particular nature of the gallery building and to engage with it, but the seven structures placed evenly and cleanly in the room do not recall the large-scale, site-specific installations in command of their space which Sosnowska is known for. This procession of simple constructions instead presents itself quietly, yet purposefully.

On closer inspection, one can identify a picnic table, the built-in legs of which have been bent up and over the top of the table, rendering it unusable. A metal stool has been turned upside down and its legs twisted under, to retain its function but change its form and give it something cartoonish, animal-like. It is barred from the rest of the group by a free-standing door frame whose door is pulled open, standing ajar in mid-air, but with no rooms to conjoin. A door in the middle of a room.

The impression overall is one of a furniture showroom, with specific yet inexplicable items displayed for the viewer's confusion. These pieces almost seem to have made themselves, to have designated their own beguiling purpose. Yet they do not push one away, they force the viewer to become interlocutor, a partner in a conversation in which one party makes statements and the other must interpret them.

In the centre of the gallery the four walls of an unknown room have been separated and re-constructed as four half-rooms, suggestions of an interior space with some function, one side a table with mirrors on the other side. This is in fact a recreation of a section of a bar in a small Polish town.

Beyond this natural divider sits a mass of dull red steel shelves which are based on the impromptu, slapdash structures made by unlicensed market-vendors in Warsaw. At the end of the day, the wares are put away and all that remains are the empty racks tied together for storage. Next to this is a sculpture robbed of some of its parts, a sculpture for the metal-thieves who take scrap and resell it.