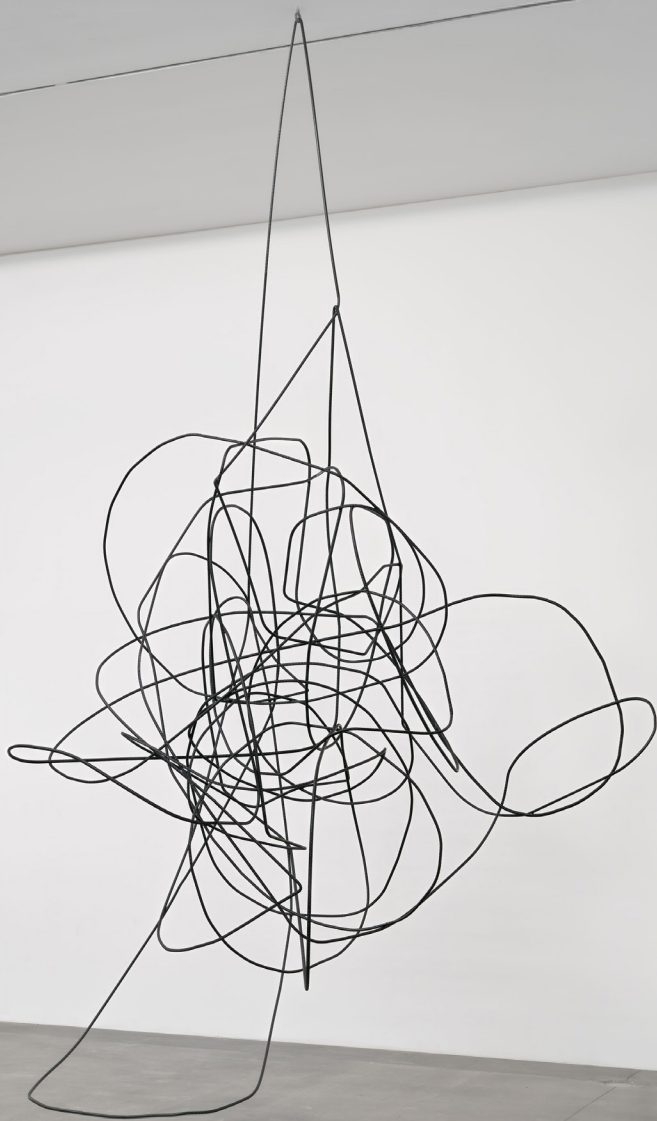
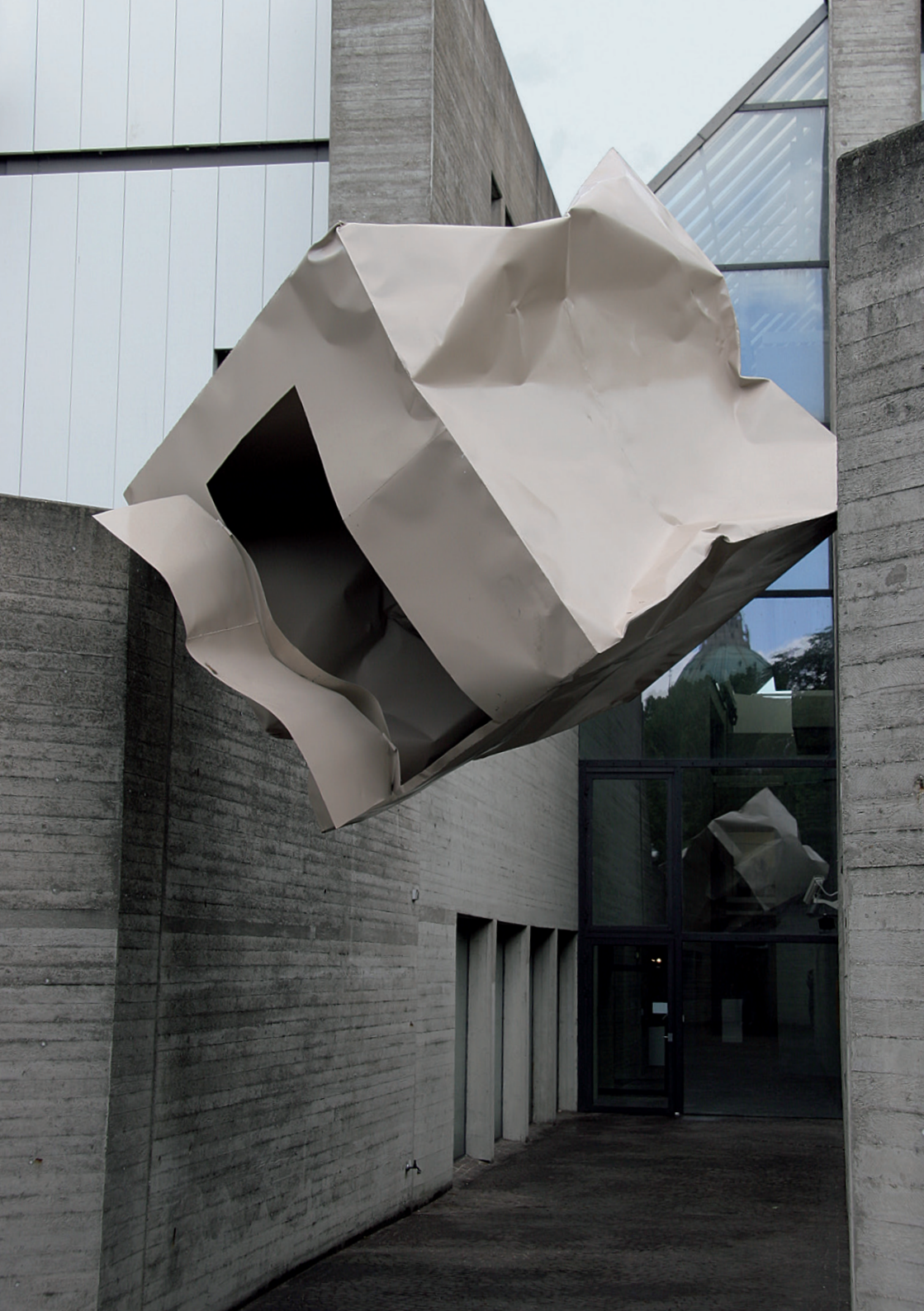




# **MONIKA SOSNOWSKA: WEIGHT OF MATTER**

South London Gallery  
10 Sep – 22 Nov 2026



## MONIKA SOSNOWSKA: WEIGHT OF MATTER

*Weight of Matter* is Polish artist Monika Sosnowska's (b. 1972) first solo show in a London institution for more than twenty years. She is internationally known for her sculptural practice which explores urban transformation, and the impact of architecture on how people live and feel. Having witnessed the implosion of the communist regime in Poland in 1989, Sosnowska became fascinated by the social and architectural changes which followed. Her works are rendered in steel, concrete, rebar and other materials associated with the functional, minimalist design of modernist buildings. She tests the capability of these materials to take on surprising new forms, stripped of function and often captured in various states of collapse.

Sosnowska's early works distorted conventional forms of interior spaces to explore the potential for disorientation, disruption, and even fear. Installations and sculptures featured wonky floors, walls and ceilings; lopsided corridors leading nowhere; and doors opening onto another door, and another, and another. There's an absurdity to these works which highlighted the challenges involved in transitioning from one space, ideology or social system, to another. The implication is that change doesn't

necessarily result in progress. As Sosnowska's practice evolved it included deconstructed staircases, handrails and gates, twisted and contorted almost beyond recognition. Defying our expectations of how certain materials can be used, and eradicating functionality from these familiar architectural features, Sosnowska created her own, distinctive visual language. An enormous cardboard cube with a cutout doorway, squashed between two walls, was in fact an enamelled steel replica of a make-shift shop, typical of those which sprung up in Poland in the post-communist era.



*1-1*, installation view at the Polish Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia, 2007.

Photo: Marta Leśniakowska / Zachęta Archive

Left: Monika Sosnowska, 2006  
Sprengel Museum, Hannover.

Photo: Aline Gwose / Michael Herling

For the 2007 Venice Biennale, Sosnowska re-constructed the steel frame of a 1960s office building, twisted and skewed to fit into the Polish Pavilion. Challenging the power dynamics between institutions and artists, the work spilled out beyond the gallery walls, refusing to be confined within them.

For her South London Gallery exhibition, Sosnowska brings a selection of works made over the past 14 years into dialogue with the architecture and history of the SLG's buildings. A monumental new installation in the Main Gallery unites a group of large-scale sculptures suspended from the ceiling beams of the purpose-built Victorian gallery. This huge display, in which some of the works weigh over half a tonne, tests the fabric of the 135-year-old institution. It also upturns the age-old tradition of sculptures being shown on plinths or the floor, influencing the way in which viewers interact with the works and introducing an impression of precarity. The skeletal forms hang from the rafters like carcasses, remnants of architectural and broader histories merged into an intertwined mass. Some of the works are to scale replicas of the stalls from one of the many markets which sprung up following the fall of the communist regime and the easing of restrictions on trading.

Eventually, however, new buildings, supermarkets and department stores took over and many of the markets closed. Sosnowska's market stalls are strung up and redundant, in various states of ruin. Another suspended metal sculpture mimics a huge curl of paper, whilst a three-dimensional scribble in mid-air is made of lengths of rebar, manipulated into elegantly intertwining curves.

At the SLG's Fire Station annexe Sosnowska's works are positioned to be in direct response to the architecture and history of the building, which dates back to 1867. In Gallery 1, the former engine room, a twisted black metal staircase is slumped on the floor, in stark contrast to the functioning white stairs which are a prominent architectural feature in the Fire Station. In Gallery 2, which overlooks a leafy outdoor space, sculptures with plant-like forms create a concrete jungle of rebar branches and collapsing trees. Drawing on the materials and visual language of demolition, these works reflect on the predominance of construction sites in Warsaw where the artist lives.

Installation view of *Weight of Matter* at the South London Gallery. Photo: Jo Underhill







Upstairs in Gallery 3, in what used to be the firemen's living quarters, a wall of paint-smeared tile fragments is suggestive of the former life of this abandoned room. Huge pieces of crumpled paper made from painted steel are also evocative of hidden histories, and the peeling walls when the building fell into disrepair. In Gallery 4 the artist has cut a rectangular section out of a partition wall to reveal a room in which a selection of her models are displayed. Visitors are offered a glimpse of Sosnowska's working process, which starts with her crafting a meticulously detailed model, usually from paper or cardboard, to give an initial form to her ideas. These are then the point of reference for her collaboration with teams of construction and metal workers to translate them into the finished sculptures. Rarely seen outside the artist's studio and shown here for the first time in London, these small-scale maquettes draw on the architectural tradition of model-making and reveal a fascinating aspect of the artist's working practice.

Previous: Installation view of *Stairs*, 2019 at the South London Gallery. Photo: Jo Underhill

Left: Installation view of *Weight of Matter* at the South London Gallery. Photo: Jo Underhill



Photo: Darko Todorovic

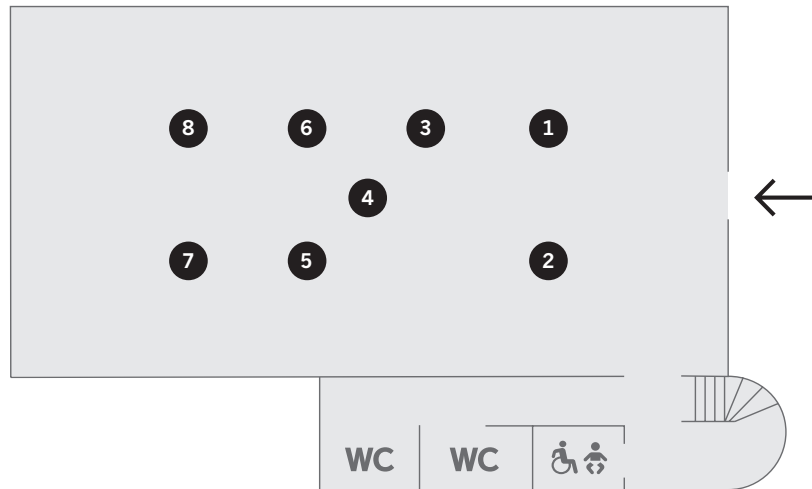
## BIOGRAPHY

Monika Sosnowska studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań and completed postgraduate training at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. She is now based in Warsaw. Recent solo exhibitions include *Monika Sosnowska: An Order Apart* at EMMA (Espoo Museum of Modern Art), Espoo, Finland (2024); *Ghosts* at Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, Germany (2024); and a major presentation at Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland (2023). Her work is currently on show at the Princess Estelle Sculpture Park, Rosendal, Royal Djurgården, Stockholm.

# LIST OF WORKS

## MAIN GALLERY

1. *Rebar 12*, 2017  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation
2. *Gate 2*, 2014  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne
3. *Vendors Stand*, 2012  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne
4. *Market*, 2013  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation
5. *Coil*, 2024  
Painted steel. Courtesy the artist and The Modern Institute, Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow
6. *Struts*, 2019  
Painted steel. Courtesy the artist and The Modern Institute, Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow
7. *Gate 4*, 2014  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne
8. *Gate 3*, 2014  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne



## FIRE STATION GALLERY 1

*Stairs*, 2019  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation

*Pillar*, 2018  
Concrete, steel, paint. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

## FIRE STATION GALLERY 2

Clockwise left from door  
*Oyster*, 2024  
Concrete, terrazzo. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Ballerina*, 2024  
Concrete, terrazzo, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Pot*, 2018  
Paint, steel, concrete. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Pillar*, 2018  
Concrete, steel, paint. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Concrete and Rebar*, 2016  
Concrete, rebar. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation

## FIRE STATION GALLERY 3

Clockwise left from door  
*Tiles*, 2024  
Ceramic. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Wallpaper II*, 2024  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne  
*Wallpaper I*, 2024  
Paint, steel. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

## FIRE STATION GALLERY 4

Artist's maquettes  
Mixed-media, 2002-24. Courtesy the artist.  
Dimensions vary

*Concrete and Rebar*, 2023  
Concrete, rebar. Courtesy the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation

Above: Installation view of *Artist's maquettes*, 2002-24, at the South London Gallery.  
Photo: Jo Underhill

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Monika Sosnowska: Weight of Matter**  
is generously supported by:

**Lead exhibition donor**

Bukhman Foundation

**Exhibition partner**

Adam Mickiewicz Institute

**Exhibition donors**

Helena and Igor Czernecki,  
Henry Moore Foundation,  
Jill and Peter Kraus, Latif & Company,  
Marcin and Izabela Wiszniewski

**Gallery donors**

Foksal Gallery Foundation,  
Galerie Gisela Capitain, kurimanzutto,  
The Modern Institute

**Additional support**

Emma and Fred Goltz,  
The Monika Sosnowska Supporters'  
Circle, Polish Cultural Institute in London

The works on display can  
be photographed. Share your pictures  
with us on social media!

 @southlondongallery

 South London Gallery

 @southlondongallery\_

Large print guides are available

Cover: Monika Sosnowska. *Rebar 12*, 2017  
Metal and paint. Installation view of Structural  
Exercises, 2018, Hauser & Wirth London.

Curator: Margot Heller, SLG Director  
Installation: David Angus, SLG Technical Manager  
and Flavia Dent, SLG Gallery Technician

Registrar: Sharon Strom



Ministry of Culture and National Heritage  
Republic of Poland



ADAM  
MICKIEWICZ  
INSTITUTE

# SLG

South London Gallery

Main Building: 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH

Fire Station: 82 Peckham Road, London SE15 5LQ



Supporting public funding by  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



South London Gallery is a registered charity no.312160.  
It is registered as company no.04720002 (SLG Trustee Ltd)