

Press release

Rolandseck, 17 December 2021

»Bettina Pousttchi. Fluidity«

Exhibition 19 December 2021 – 12 June 2022

Bettina Pousttchi was born in Mainz in 1971. Today she lives and works in Berlin. Her works, which have been presented internationally with great success, range between sculpture, video, installation and photography. In the opening exhibition to launch our theme of the year 2022 »Wegweiserinnen« (avant-garde women), we follow Bettina Pousttchi's multifarious works and wonder about orientation in unexpected and new contexts.

»We encounter them every day: street bollards, crowd barriers and motorway crash barriers. You certainly wouldn't have expected to find these objects in an art museum. The artist Bettina Pousttchi transforms these seemingly familiar everyday objects and thus questions viewing habits,« says Rhineland-Palatinate State Secretary for Culture Prof. Dr. Jürgen Hardeck. »I am extremely pleased that we are having an artist as a guest here in Rolandseck who was born in our state capital Mainz and whose works have captured the imagination of people from Rome to London and Paris to the USA.«

»Bettina Pousttchi opens our new exhibition year themed »Wegweiserinnen« (avant-garde women) with her dynamic abstract forms. In 2022, we cordially invite our visitors to rediscover the works of four pioneering women artists,« underlines Petra Spielmann, acting director of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck. The exhibition's curator Jutta Mattern adds: »I am very pleased that after 20 years we were able to complete the riverside sculpture walk Skulpturenufer Remagen with a group of sculptures by Bettina Pousttchi and thus bring the project to a successful conclusion. On every kilometre of the Rhine in Remagen, walkers and cyclists will now find top-class works of art by international artists. In this way, we connect the Arp Museum with its vicinity.

About the exhibition

The show features sculptures, wall pieces, photographs and a video work from recent years, with the title »Fluidity« referring to the changeable, dynamically flowing form of the works. All-too-familiar street furniture, such as tree protecting arches, street bollards or crash barriers are mechanically deformed, then given a coat of paint and sometimes polished to a high sheen. Being transformed in such a way, the found objects are given an innovative and often dynamic visual appeal.

Arranged in groups, the abstract forms, such as the *Tree Squeezers* or the *Vertical Highways*, become figures that seem to communicate and interact with each other. Abandoning their original purpose of establishing order in public space, the industrially produced elements become independent entities that enliven the exhibition space. Bettina Pousttchi's sculptures can also be experienced outside the museum space. Her work *Marianne* (2015) from the *Squeezers* series completes the riverside sculpture walk *Skulpturenufer Remagen* as its last artistic position. It was installed as part of the exhibition below the Unkelstein Bridge in Oberwinter and will remain there permanently.

In a different way visitors will encounter the pieces made of glazed fired clay from the *Frameworks* group of works. Bettina Pousttchi found inspiration for the ornamental patterns of the square single elements in the structures of half-timber houses. By means of alienation and repetition, however, a new pattern is created that also evokes associations with oriental-looking décor.

»Richard Meier's generous light-flooded spaces with their magnificent views of the surrounding landscape are predestined for Bettina Pousttchi's works,« says Jutta Mattern. »This becomes particularly apparent when looking at the *Directions* series.« Only recently created, the cut-out objects made of cut and colour-coated steel are mounted on the wall »as if floating«. Their shapes are derived from street arrows, but do not indicate a clear course. The regulatory function of these signs and their influence on the body's movement possibilities are thus questioned, a single direction is extended by multiple directions.

Roadways with markings, on the other hand, dominate the photo series *Drive Thru*. This was based on the installation *Drive Thru Museum* at the *Nasher Sculpture Center Dallas* in 2014, in which the artist presented her own works in dialogue with the museum's collection in an unusual new way, including the sculpture *Torso with Buds* by Hans Arp. The resulting photograph now invites visitors to the Arp Museum to follow the dynamic rhythm of Bettina Pousttchi's pathbreaking works.

A tour of the exhibition surprises visitors with ever new perspectives on supposedly familiar forms and constellations. Bettina Pousttchi's works build conceptual bridges to Minimal Art and are not least reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades. The artistic works test the limits of our viewing habits and thus pave the way for entirely new aesthetic experiences.

Accompanying book to the exhibition

An accompanying book with installation views of the exhibition at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck will be published in German and English in February 2022. It comes with a foreword by Petra Spielmann and an introductory text by Jutta Mattern.

Artworks of the exhibition

13 sculptures (*Vertical Highways, Tree Squeezers, Double Monument for Flavin and Tatlin VII*)

3 ceramic reliefs *Frameworks*

6 wall pieces *Directions*

12 photographs from the series *Drive Thru*, 2014

1 video work *Ocularis*, 1999

The sculpture *Marianne*, 2015, at the riverside sculpture walk Skulpturenufer Remagen