

Rudolf Polanszky

Eidola

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How can we imagine the order of prime numbers other than in the familiar linear form of the series? By endowing it with a spatial aspect, a third dimension, for example, so that a *prime space* emerges. Which (new) cognitive possibilities open up when the perception of negative and positive spaces, of internal and external demarcations, is inverted? These and similar questions preoccupy Rudolf Polanszky, as do fundamental themes in mathematics and epistemology or ancient Greek schools of thought. In his sculptures, pictorial reliefs, writings, and actions, he lends them a provisional manifestation that conveys a positively poetic lightness.

Polanszky's preferred materials include acrylic glass, metal, mirror foil, synthetic resin, wire, and plastic foam. Working with these staples, he sets them free by disassociating them from their original purposes or intended uses. Superimposing and layering strata, interleaving, nesting, or folding elements, he creates new structures. The artist's term for this nonlinear and spontaneous procedure of piecing together existing materials and accidental forms is "ad-hoc synthesis." The resulting "trans-linear" or "trans-aggregate" structures, Polanszky says, are "an unstable construct of a subjective reality that points beyond a seemingly stable condition."

His solo exhibition in the Secession's main gallery gathers a number of sculptural pieces and picture objects from various ensembles the artist has worked on in the last decade. They provide insight into his world of ideas and exemplify the oeuvre it has inspired, which plays with the inconstancy of assertion vis-à-vis incontrovertible observation. Polanszky explains his approach as follows:

"My work is an attempt to reorder correlations to patterns of imagination, to change them, and to rearrange the structures of my thinking. [...] In the play of perception and experience, it seems we are compelled to decode the external image we are offered in a rational manner, and we draw on mnemonic material, available patterns of similarity, which we mold until an apparently congruent model of reference ensues.

The convention on the interpretation of experience is organized and pre-formed, on the one hand, empirically via the senses and, on the other hand, by rational, deductive structures of the cognitive system.

In my work, I aim to modify the basic material by distorting and exaggerating precisely these mental patterns of imagination [...]."

Mounted on the walls of the side aisles are pictorial reliefs created by layering and assembling negative and positive sections of thin acrylic glass panes and mirror foil: two large-format mirror pictures (*Dark Reflection*) on one side, several picture objects from the *Reconstructions* series on the other. Set between them are loosely arranged groups of *Prime Sculptures*, *Hypertransformation Sculptures*, *Confusion Sculptures*, and *Hyperbolic Spaces*—"imaginary mental spaces of multidimensional structures [that], like the trans-aggregate structure, elude direct observation" (R.P.)—surrounding a kind of imaginary agora.

Since the mid-1970s, Rudolf Polanszky has created a multifaceted oeuvre in a range of media that extends from conceptual film, video, and photography to drawing and painting, sculptural objects, and assemblages. His art is informed by the intentional and even methodical integration of the accidental. Of particular significance is the incorporation of materials that show traces of wear or exposure to the elements: they in a sense encourage the artist to abdicate control over the emergence of form and undercut his constructive-creative will. His fascination with scientific explanatory models in conjunction with his skepticism concerning an ostensibly imperturbable logic's claim to interpret the world has prompted the artist to devise various schemes of comprehension. Guided by the idea of renouncing the making of meaning, they manifest themselves in intuitively constructed objects he sees as tentative embodiments of mental-linguistic formations.

Polanszky first broached questions of perception/cognition, fallacy, and illusion in early Super 8 films such as *On a Semiology of the Senses*, 1976, and *The Musical Ape*, 1979. *The Coil Spring Drawings* and *Seating Pictures* from the mid-1980s accord a salient role to the gesture of randomness and relinquishing control in both conception and realization. Defying the principle of determinacy, he has continually posited a kind of "hypothetical interim" meant to remind the beholder of the mutability of structures and the relativity of a scientific logic of truth. Hence Polanszky's keen interest in phantasms, simulacra, and mirror images and his skeptical view of the absolute and purely rational. The title he chose for his show at the Secession, *Eidola*, is the plural of the Greek *eidolon*, a small insubstantial image or phantom, and in a variation of the well-known phrase "What you see is what you get," its leitmotif might be "What you get is more (other) than what you see."

An artist's book published in conjunction with the exhibition contains selected writings by the artist in the form of facsimiles of his handwritten notes complete with transcriptions.

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