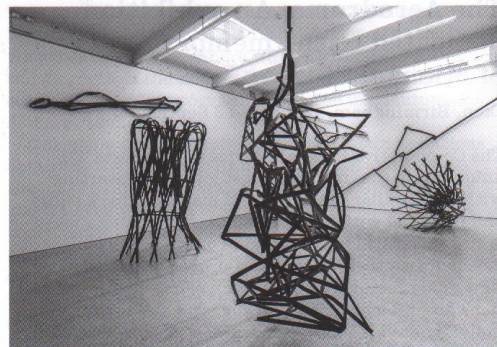


Stanley evidently worked closely with artists, frequently commissioning new work. The exhibition testifies to this collaborative bond, yet the organisers have been mindful in sprinkling some key historical works throughout the exhibition that give context to his influences. Sutherland's inclusion neatly dovetails with Warner's concerns, with their ambivalence to Modernism and responses to war. An exhibition of Sutherland's work in Oxford was an offbeat choice by Stanley in 2011. His other passion was the work of Marcel Broodthaers, whose work he installed at MK Gallery in 2008. Broodthaers's scathingly witty critiques of faded empire relate to Stanley's own tendency towards institutional deconstruction, especially his dRMM and Richard Woods architectural commissions for MK Gallery and Modern Art Oxford, and his general commitment to site-specific projects, many of which can now only be accessed through documents. In the case of Stephen Willats's multisite work for MK Gallery, *Person to Person, People to People*, 2007, visitors would also have to visit a nearby shopping parade in order to see the exhibition in its entirety. Inevitably, a lot of gaps have to be filled in when work like this is presented again as documentation.

The achievement of the exhibition is the way various voices are permitted to come across, with complementary echoes of past and present. Many of the works were included in past exhibitions – Stanley's 'greatest hits' – while other works are poignantly personal dedications by artist friends. Jean-Luc Moulène, whose solo presentation at Modern Art Oxford in 2012 was Stanley's finale, has contributed a painted rock sculpture, unambiguously titled *For Michael*, 2012. Polly Apfelbaum has chosen not to show her trademark brightly coloured works, and shows instead a monotone work that incorporates pale shroud-like fabric and hanging orbs. Titled *Shades of White*, 2019, the votive symbolism is clear. Another new work is Keith Wilson's *Puddle*, 1999, an adaptation of existing paving slabs to encourage the formation of a puddle, which will be a permanent feature of the Ikon Gallery forecourt. Significantly, the work was originally proposed by Stanley to Preston Council in 1999, but was cancelled following the protestations of a local newspaper. The realisation of the work 20 years on ensures an aptly subversive and prosaic testimony.

Neil Zakiewicz is an artist.



Monika Sosnowska, installation view

Monika Sosnowska

Modern Institute, Glasgow, 25 May to 7 September

A hundred years ago, in the summer of 1919, a decree was signed by Vladimir Lenin calling for the installation, 'in an extremely urgent manner', of a powerful, state-of-the-art radio tower. Communications demands between the Soviet states had outstripped the available technology. The operating Kodynka tower was no longer sufficient. A radical approach was required and, as so often in human history, political necessity and artistic invention were intertwined.

Enter Vladimir Shukhov, an avant-garde designer of increasing renown, who was already regarded as a pioneer thanks to a handful of game-changing patents. He invented hyperboloid structures (an inwardly curved form like a solid double-helix) and diagrid frameworks. Both of these are still used widely in contemporary architecture.

It was innovation that Lenin wanted in this case. Shukhov won the contract and work started with the extreme urgency Lenin had demanded. But the originally intended height of 350 metres was halved before construction, and the project was soon to experience another major curtailment. Hyperboloid structures require metal to be heated and loaded with torsional weight, in a technique called 'fatiguing'. The metal is weakened in the process. On 29 June 1921, Shukhov's diagrid metals twisted and buckled. The entire fourth segment of the tower fell through itself. Many workers died, and the tower existed briefly in a mangled, fluid-looking state of ruin.

A large printed photograph of the disaster serves as the exhibition poster for Monika Sosnowska's new show at the Modern Institute in Glasgow. For Sosnowska, the twisted form of the tower, silhouetted against the grey Soviet sky, functions as a symbol of thwarted aesthetic ambition. Because it is a Soviet radio tower, it also throws into relief questions of colonial occupation, language as a system of oppression, and the growing

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media-networks by which human beings live and communicate.

Sosnowska's own sculptures reclaim the 'fatiguing' process as an expressive one. All nine of the works on display inside the Modern Institute's Aird's Lane space are made in black steel, architectural in their enormous scale, and variously deformed. *Tower* (all works 2019) blooms in on itself like a skeletal carapace, its diagrids wrenching between each other in a direct echo of Shukhov's fallen tower. *Truss* reaches skyward then droops. The five wall-mounted pieces called *Cross Brace*, 2019, are stretched to breaking point, but no further. A second piece entitled *Tower*, comprises the pyramidal peak of a fallen structure, exposed on its side and booming out into the room like a phonograph-head or a skirt.

What strikes you first, of course, is the sheer physical presence of the things. As with Richard Serra's work, sharing a room with such huge objects begins to change your perspective on space. They have an appalling actuality. The vertices of the room are suddenly very apparent, the geometries of lived-space. The experience is oppressive but also has a kind of sublimity, giving you a sense of vertigo.

But what begins to happen as you spend time with them is that Sosnowska's sculptures reveal their vulnerability to you. Halfway between a Serra and a Louise Bourgeois spider, the layered personalities of these massive objects become unexpectedly erotic. The rigid grids flex into forms resembling the cicatrix networks of veins and arteries. In giving up their shape, the structures become organic. The radio-tower's signalling impulse morphs through the mechanical to become living, like the stridulating legs of a cicada. Or, because they are doing something that resembles dying, the towers become alive. This strange, negatively discovered tenderness combines with the brute power of their scale, their wrought materiality, to become an experience of historical erotics.

In 1973, Roland Barthes wrote about pleasure and loss. 'It is not violence which affects pleasure', he said, 'nor is it the destruction which interests it; what pleasure wants is the site of a loss ... the *dissolve* which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss.' As Sosnowska's structures take on organic properties, they seem to become subjects rather than objects. Their warping ceases to be an act of destruction and becomes a moment of loss, of dissolve.

The deformation becomes more like denaturing. It's like looking at our own enzymes made large as the various degenerate pressures of our contemporary age – climate change, overpopulation, resurgent fascism, the immense weight of historical time – begin to affect us on a cellular level. The perverse nature of progress is that the greatest breakthroughs can also function as the moments of greatest loss. Like the *petite mort* of pleasure. It is fatiguing. In these ways, Sosnowska's inquiry into the pitfalls of progress becomes, 'in an extremely urgent manner', a real and human concern.

Adam Heardman is a poet and writer based in London.

Image Bank

KW, Berlin, 22 June to 1 September

One problem with writing about Image Bank, the subject of this crepuscular trove of memorabilia, video and objects, is defining what Image Bank was. Founded in Vancouver in 1970 by Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov and Gary Lee-Nova, and named after a phrase in William S Burroughs's 1964 novel *Nova Express* – where it implied performing the author's fabled 'cut-up method' on visible aspects of dominant ideology in order to create new meanings – Image Bank resembled an artists' collective, but one whose edges were hazy. Morris, Trasov and Lee-Nova were just its core: not only did they collaborate with figures and groups including mail-art originator Ray Johnson, network-focused Robert Filio, General Idea, Ant Farm and Willoughby Sharp, but Image Bank's procedures also enfolded a huge number of artists.



Vincent Trasov, *Mr Peanut on the Staten Island Ferry*, New York, 1972

For most of the 1970s, the trio triggered lo-fi, low-cost exhibitions and instant archives via correspondence, soliciting images from artists in increasingly thematic shows (eg 'Piss Pics', in response to Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, and 'Inventors of Today are Planning for Tomorrow / Your Image of 1984', both 1972). These are extracted here in vitrines alongside other, related projects, such as collections of artists' envelopes, rubber stamps, postage stamps etc. With the aim of creating a network that bypassed the gatekeepers of the art market and museums, Image Bank amassed a directory of artists' contact details, *The Image Bank Exchange Directory*, that was published in two issues of General Idea's *FILE* magazine and as a book (the obsolete list is reproduced in KW as a huge wallpaper). Also in 1972, and in classic hippie back-to-the-land style, Morris and Trasov purchased a 6.25-hectare property in the countryside, named it Babyland and ran it for approximately four years as an artists' retreat and place to experiment – photographs and archival film suggest that much of this involved psychedelics, nudity, research into colour and perception, and reflecting light from mirrors onto bare flesh.

The first thing one encounters in the darkened gallery, though, is an oak sculpture depicting a stack of unshelled peanuts, Trasov's *Endless Peanut Column*, 1978/2019. This goofy, Brancusi-burlesquing sentinel points to one of the key moments in Image Bank's span: Trasov's anarchic campaigning as Mr Peanut, the