

Loevenbruck

ALINA SZAPOCZNIKOW SCULPTURES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND PHOTOSCULPTURES

17.09.2021 - 16.10.2021

For its fourth monograph exhibition of Alina Szapocznikow, Galerie Loevenbruck is exploring the role of photography in this artist's life and work and her relation to this medium, both as work and index of the work, based on a selection of eight sculptures – one of which exists now only through its photographic record, the materials having been reused since – and eleven documents from her archives. As a sculptor Szapocznikow had an extraordinary relation to photography; her archives contain over seven thousand photos, paper prints and negatives.

She used photographs, taken mainly by others, in order to keep a trace of a work, to inventory it, or to freeze and even magnify it. Whether it was, say, Ryszard Stanislawski or Roman Cieslewicz, Szapocznikow seems to have directed "her" men during sessions designed to show the artist at work but also to stage the works. The pictorial quality of the resulting images has inspired Galerie Loevenbruck to juxtapose them with her sculptures. In this exhibition, the idea is to see what the beholder was trying to bring out at the time when the work was made and photographed. Sometimes what dominates the image is the artist at work, at others, the dramatized presence of the art itself, which may or may be expressive, opening onto its possible interpretation.

It is surprising to see how the artist was able to document ephemeral works, such as *Panna* [Young woman] (1962–63, plaster, H. 170 cm), that were destined to be destroyed or integrated into other pieces. Her work with new materials – polyester, polyurethane – was so experimental that only photography could anchor some of her experiments in time, since the actual results were often too fragile for the resulting works to be conserved.

But beyond the making of art from new industrial materials and the development of new techniques and a unique know-how, Szapocznikow was also interested in integrating photography into the works themselves. In this exhibition we have chosen to show only one example of her inclusions of photographs in transparent resin, *Self-Portrait* (c. 1967). It is no doubt one of the most powerful examples because it is a photograph of the artist herself. At first glance, the shape of the resin seems to dominate perception of this work, but, in the end, it is overshadowed by the face emerging from within in. Here, the sculptor is expressing the power of an image in this battle between sculpture and photography.

Following on from these experiments, and no doubt out of a desire to place herself and her work within other artistic perspectives, at the end of her life Szapocznikow used photography as a medium for more conceptual work. All that remains of her ephemeral sculptures are images; the sculpture is captured by the photograph and the result is photosculptures whose title reflects the work's status as an essential step which can be seen as a contribution to the history of sculpture.

"One has only to photograph and enlarge my masticated creations in order to achieve a sculptural presence."

In 2011, the art historian and co-curator of the exhibition, Elena Filipovic, wrote an essay for the catalogue of the retrospective, "Alina Szapocznikow. Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972," which she concluded as follows: "Photography appeared throughout Szapocznikow's oeuvre in many guises. As document, conceptual

¹ "One has only to photograph and enlarge my masticated creations in order to achieve a sculptural presence." Excerpt from a letter dated "92 Malakoff, 22 June 1971" accompanying *Fotorzeźby [Photosculptures]*, from 1971/2007, repr. in *Alina Szapocznikow. Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972*, exhib. cat., Brussels, Wiels – centre d'art contemporain, 10 September 2011–8 January 2012, Los Angeles, Hammer Museum, 5 February–9 April 2012, Columbus, Wexner Center for the Arts, 19 May-5 August 2012, and New York, Museum of Modern Art, 7 October 2012–28 January 2013, Brussels and New York, Mercatorfonds and MoMa, 2011, p. 60).

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record, model, material, and testament to unspeakable horrors, it served as a powerful tool to help her shift and invade traditional ideas of sculpture. Looking at her oeuvre in relation to photography—and its indexical twin, casting—tells us something about the ways she grappled with sculpture as a kind of imprint of herself, of memory, and of history. To do so meant that her late oeuvre refused the most stalwart pillars of sculptural convention: rather than perpetuating the long-standing faith in mimetic representation, Szapocznikow offered cast copies of the real instead—as if the body as a vessel of joy, trauma, or eroticism could not be adequately represented, but instead only cast from life. Indeed, it is arguable that although it constitutes the only photographic series within her sculptural oeuvre, in depicting what is formed in the inner recesses of the body, Photosculptures offers a telling allegory for the whole of Szapocznikow's work—imprinting that which is otherwise unrepresentable. Her insistent and repetitive casting of the body was her attempt to figure the reality of human vulnerability, struggling to present the body as unique and irreducible (i.e. utterly unreproducible) and its experiences as collectively shared (i.e., infinitely reproducible). Her work obstinately sits in this breach between the two, where photography played its ultimate role."2

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Jean Chatelus, a sublime collector who was the first to congratulate Galerie Loevenbruck for working with this outstanding oeuvre which he admitted to having missed, and whose favourite Szapocznikow work was the dark Fetish IV.

² Elena Filipovic, "Photosculptural: Alina Szapocznikow's Index of the Body," in *ibid.*, p. 64-77, here, p. 76.



Rece I. Szkic do projektu pomnika w Oswiecimiu (Hands I. Sketch for the project of the monument in Auschwitz), 1958 Archival photograph of the work of Alina Szapocznikow





Alina Szapocznikow Ręce I. Szkic do projektu pomnika w Oswiecimiu, 1958

Patinated plaster 13 3/8 × 12 3/16 × 11 in Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris Inv. No. : ASCRS118



Woltyżerka I (Acrobat I), 1959 Archival photograph of the work of Alina Szapocznikow





Alina Szapocznikow Woltyżerka I (Acrobat I), 1959

Lead $5\,1/2\times5\,1/8\times2\,15/16$ in Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris Inv. No. : ASCRS151



Głowa III (Head III), 1960 Archival photograph of the work of Alina Szapocznikow



Alina Szapocznikow Głowa III, 1960

Lost wax bronze cast, inlaid with stone 9 $13/16 \times 8 \, 1/4 \times 8 \, 11/16$ in Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris Inv. No. : ASCRS197



Ferdydurke, 1961 Archival photograph of the work of Alina Szapocznikow





Alina Szapocznikow Ferdydurke, 1961

Lost wax bronze cast, inlaid with waste iron $117/16 \times 71/4 \times 711/16$ in Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris

Inv. No.: ASCRS203







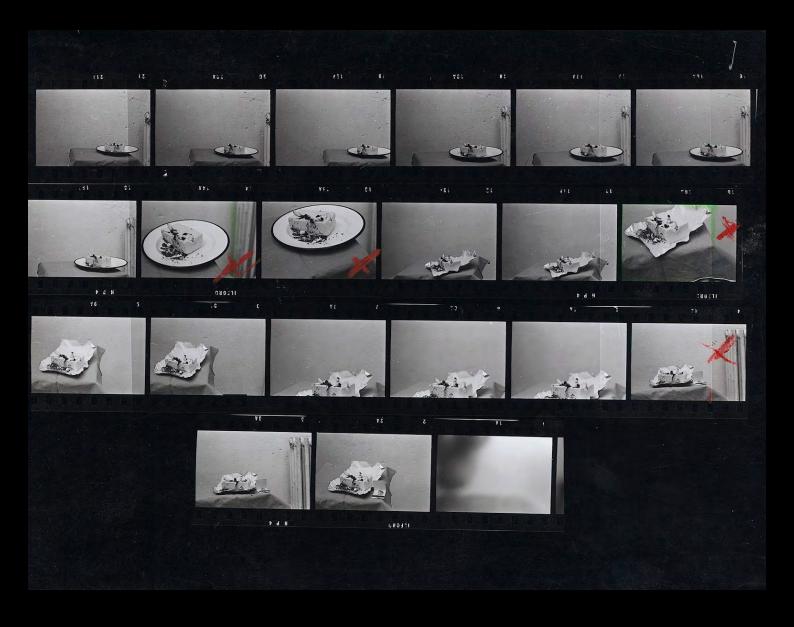
Alina Szapocznikow in her Père-Lachaise's studio In the foreground her work *Tabu* (Taboo), 1963 Archival photograph of the work of Alina Szapocznikow





Alina Szapocznikow Tabu, 1963

Patinated plaster encrusted with metal $16\,1/8\times22\,1/16\times13\,3/8$ in Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris Inv. No. : ASCRS236



Alina Szapocznikow, *Cendriers d'ambiance* (Ambient Ashtrays) (detail), 1972 – 2007 Color photographic reproduction of an original contact print, format 30 x 40.3 cm, and (next page) facsimile of a letter from Alina Szapocznikow to Annette Messager dating from 1972, format 31.6 x 23.4 cm.

KEL 9733 Chore Dueste Je suis au lit et je ue prent pas verus au relophone, Merei pour la carte de Bezliu et je vons embrasse tout les deux, Si on veux telephone s, t,p, a Mucky, dit hii, que je ne pent pas venir, con je suis souffrance et depense pour moi 2,30 Foii 3, 10 F et si elle vent qu'elle met un paquet du beuere avec quelques megos (comme sur le photo qu'elle a de moi) Et qu'elle signe « Cendriere d'embreuce" de moi, Merbe, Mais, ne te tracasse pas pour ga-c'est ne pas très importante, Ableutot j'espere quand je powerai me lever votre Alina



Alina Szapocznikow Cendriers d'ambiance (Ambient Ashtrays), 1972/2007

Two black-and-white photographs, color contact print, facsimile letter, and box Photograph, each: 40.5×30 cm; 16×11 3/4 in ; letter: 31.6×23.4 cm; 12 1/2 \times 9 1/4 in; box: $43 \times 32 \times 25$ cm; 16 7/8 \times 12 5/8 \times 9 7/8 in

Ed. 11/12

Courtesy The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow / Piotr Stanislawski / Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris / Hauser & Wirth

Inv. No.: AS210504

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Alina Szapocznikow Cendriers d'ambiance (Ambient Ashtrays), 1972/2007

Two black-and-white photographs, color contact print, facsimile letter, and box Photograph, each: 40.5×30 cm; $16 \times 113/4$ in; letter: 31.6×23.4 cm; $121/2 \times 91/4$ in; box: $43 \times 113/4$ in; letter: $11.6 \times 113/4$ in; letter: $11.6 \times 113/4$ in; letter: $11.6 \times 113/4$ in; box: $11.6 \times 113/4$ in; letter: $11.6 \times 113/4$ in; letter: 11.6 32×25 cm; $167/8 \times 125/8 \times 97/8$ in

Ed. 11/12

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[@] ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow / Piotr Stanislawski / Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris / Hauser & Wirth. Photo Fabrice Gousset, courtesy Loevenbruck, Paris.