

WSCHÓD

Cezary Poniatowski
Scouts

Wschód New York
136 Orchard Street
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In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition

Svetlana Boym, Future of Nostalgia

For over a decade now Cezary Poniatowski earned a name for his toned-down yet powerful works fashioned out of everyday materials such as pleather, foam, or carpet as well as works on paper that are no less austere. “The darkness of Poniatowski’s visual universe seems to speak to the social upheavals wrought by the formerly socialist country’s economic transformation and the removal of state structures of support” wrote Moritz Scheper in frieze. “He stuffs his works with foam used for soundproofing in Communist social housing, shaping it into bulging, angular forms fastened to a board with screws and crudely secured staples.” wrote Camila McHugh. But the materials employed by Poniatowski, while familiar to some because of their history, have something else in common: they are tactile, more so than most of other components used in sculpture.

Not only straddling the past and present, Poniatowski’s work explores the interplay between the mass-produced and used, between the anonymous and the personal, and thus creates and breaches the boundary between external and internal worlds. His works morph from painting into sculpture and, on occasions, installations that claim a presence of their own and transform the space. For his presentation titled *Vaults and Swellings* at Futura in Prague, in 2020, he expanded his concept of reliefs into a broader spatial narrative that directed the way the viewers experienced the space. This insistence to work in three dimensions is even more captivating considering that Poniatowski graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Graphic Design. His modest choice of palette is constantly questioned by his relentless curiosity of what lies beyond the two-dimensional plane.

But there is something more to Poniatowski’s practice, something that borders on the familiar and unfamiliar but gravitates towards the new and, perhaps, the uncomfortable. As Camila McHugh had put it “Pick your fetish. It’s in there somewhere.” The presentation at Wschod New York features new works by the artist that invite the visitors to follow this conversation.