Ania Jawworska

BMO Harris Bank Chicago Works: Ania Jawworska is the first exhibition in the series to present the work of a trained architect. For this installation, Jawworska has created sculptures and prints that are also designs and models for potential structures. Through these objects, Jawworska represents elements of the built environment, exploring how common architectural forms communicate.

Jawworska presents two distinct but related projects, both on view in their entirety for the first time. The artist removes gates, monuments, signs, and columns from their routine context and displays them in unfamiliar ways. In the absence of a specific building or community, Jawworska's architectural sculptures and prints are ambiguous, yet their familiar shapes invite interaction. *Chicago Works: Ania Jawworska* invites viewers to explore the role architecture plays in our lives, through bold, minimal forms that reference architectural history in Chicago and beyond.

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CHICAGO WORKS

This exhibition is organized by Grace Deveney, former Marjorie Susman Curatorial fellow.

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A Subjective Catalog of Columns

Columns, at once structural and decorative, have persisted in Western architecture since ancient times. The latter half of the twentieth century has seen the emergence of "ironic" columns that alternatively don't function like traditional columns, or have a radically different appearance.

For this series Jawworska meanders through the history of columns through works that reflect on the various uses of this form, which range from functional to whimsical. Each print starts with a reference: either to a specific style of column that has been used in a built structure, or to one of Jawworska's ideas for a possible column. From there, Jawworska reinterprets each in her signature graphic style. Many of the prints contain subtle punch lines that emerge in their details. Together, the prints offer an alternative history of architecture, filtered through Jawworska's sense of humor.

VIP Lounge, 2015
Steel and sandbags
Courtesy of the artist

Although they appear stately, these flimsy columns don't quite touch the ceiling, therefore lacking the functional value of the architecture they mimic. Any power or prestige they might convey lies solely in their title: ironically, sandbags support the columns from behind. Like *The Best*, this sculpture explores how grand architectural forms are invoked as status symbols, even when modest materials are used.

The Best, 2015
Cultured marble cast
Courtesy of the artist

Tucked in the back of the gallery, this small sculpture acknowledges how architecture can be used to aggrandize average spaces. The block, which appears to be made out of marble, is actually a marble/plastic mixture. This synthetic material undermines the statement of supremacy embossed on its surface.

Untitled (Empty Gesture), 2015
Steel and velvet rope
Courtesy of the artist

You've seen it before: stanchions and ropes blocking off spaces, prohibiting you from entry. This prohibition, however, seems arbitrary. What are we being kept away from? Why? While the answer remains unclear, the title underscores the absurdity of the work: it is an empty gesture that evokes the relationship between designed form and access.

Gated Area, 2015
Steel
Courtesy of the artist

This sculpture invites the viewer to walk though its arched entryway into an enclosed area. By creating entrances and restrictions that reflect the role of architecture and design in daily life, this sculpture—along with *Untitled* (*Empty Gesture*)—plays with the gallery space, creating ambiguous boundaries.

Sign of Their Place, 2015
MDF, steel, and motor
Courtesy of the artist

Jaworska created this sculpture, along with *Monument For Them*, to explore the notion that people project their basic desire for recognition onto built structures. The rotating sign recalls commercial signage, yet it advertises nothing. Instead, it offers a humble, and perhaps comforting, reminder of our presence.

Monument For Them, 2012
MDF
Courtesy of the artist

Monument for Them speaks to the anthropomorphic qualities signage can have—the sculpture looks like a kneeling supplicant, begging for attention with its simple greeting. The sculpture's towering presence commemorates a common phrase, "HI," which we say repeatedly throughout the day.