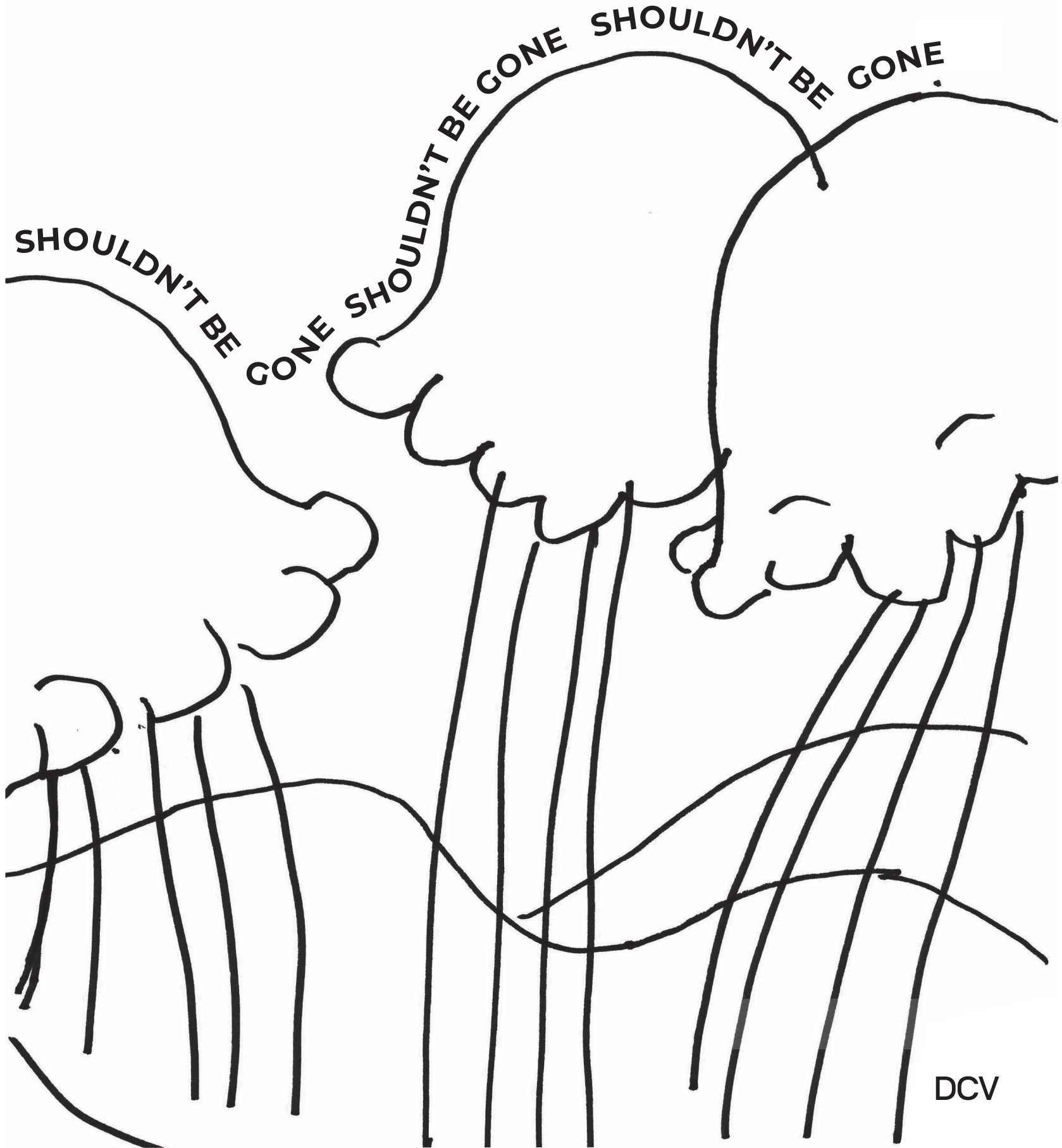


# BOGOUCHEVSKAIA ANNA

Sebastian C. Strenger (Hrsg.)  
Christoph Tannert



DCV

# “SHOULDN’T BE GONE”

## On the sculptural interplay between H<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub>

The predicted changes in our climate are playing an increasingly larger role in global population and economic developments. Serious impacts on the lives of humans, flora, and fauna are already to be expected, as shown by effects of climate change around the world: A global increase in the number of tsunamis and hurricanes, desertification of once flourishing landscapes, a massive reduction in ground-water levels, the disappearance of glaciers, and the drying-up of waterfalls continue to make headlines around the world, and the statistics are clear. Are we living through the apocalypse without noticing that the world is falling apart? In the current exhibit by German-Russian artist Anna Bogouchevskaia, “Shouldn’t be gone” is an admonishment by an artist who uses her sculptures to warn us of a world on the descent.

Bogouchevskaia bases her works on the chemical elements carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, with the resulting molecules of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and water (H<sub>2</sub>O). In doing so, she shows water and all its conceivable phases as the foundation for life itself. Only a fraction of about three per cent of the world’s available water is potable, and the rest is salt water with which our ecosystem undergoes a constant cycle of evaporation, precipitation, and runoff – and Anna Bogouchevskaia captures this through sculptures. It’s expected that over half – 52% – of the global population, or about five billion people, will be living in regions experiencing water stress by 2050, and approximately 40% of grain production and 45% of the global gross domestic product will be impacted by water shortages. Bogouchevskaia takes a subtle approach to this issue as she drafts her works, opening up room for interpretation and a rethinking of our political ideas.

According to the Max Planck Institute, water vapour and clouds make up about 70% of the greenhouse effect, while CO<sub>2</sub> makes up about 20 to 30%. CO<sub>2</sub> is the chemical formula for the molecule made up of carbon and oxygen that forms a natural component of our air. It’s also one of the most important greenhouse gases, which the artist gives a form through sculpture. This exhibit, curated by Isabella Mannozi, provides the artist with a special CO<sub>2</sub> Room that subtly draws attention to humanity’s influence in the unnatural heating of the earth’s atmosphere. Global warming caused by CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and their interplay with H<sub>2</sub>O is reflected once more in a cycle of phenomena and effects: The melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers, a rise in sea levels, and the thawing of permafrost, which in turn releases greenhouse gases and contributes further to global warming. This all results in social effects that the viewer of these primarily nickel silver sculptures is confronted with once they see themselves diffusely reflected in the work. Why did we end up here?

**Eisberg | Iceberg 2019**

Neusilber, Bronze / Nickel Silver, Bronze

H 73 / B 63 / T 33 cm

28,74 × 24,8 × 12,99 inch

CO<sub>2</sub>



**Baobab (klein) | Baobab (small) 2021**

Bronze

H 60 / B 29 / T 25 cm

23,62 × 11,41 × 9,84 inch





Schafe im Nebel | Sheep in the Fog 2019

Neusilber / Nickel-Silver

H 43 / B 114 / T 29 cm

16,92 × 44,88 × 11,41 inch



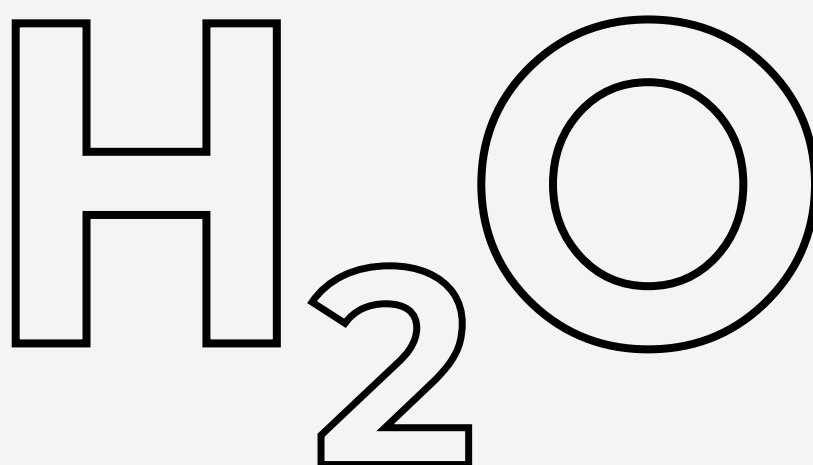


**Wasserfall | Waterfall 2021**

Neusilber / Nickel-Silver

H 76 / B 47 / T 30

29,92 × 18,5 × 11,8 inch







# “MY WORKS DEPICT A STATIC FINITUDE”

**Art critic Sebastian C. Strenger speaks with sculptor  
Anna Bogouchevskaia**

Anna Bogouchevskaia was born in Moscow on 5 April 1966. The German-Russian sculptor studied at the Moscow State Surikov Academy of Fine Arts from 1985 to 1991, where she was a master student of Prof. Vladimir Yefimovich Tsigal. She moved to the German capital in 1995, where she maintains her permanent studio in the Noack bronze foundry, which has played a crucial role in German modernism. She has since appeared in a wide range of projects, and her works can be seen in important museums and private collections around the world.

***What was your early perception of art, Anna?***

Art is a powerful weapon! I believed that from the start. It's a bomb. I make it for the soul, but art can also be political. Prehistoric cave paintings have also shown that art can be religion. At the end of the day, art is multifunctional, but it's also an independent organism with its own rules. You have to learn a lot in advance so that you don't come across like a dilettante during the creation process, including proper use of colour, knowledge of composition, light, and much more. In sculpture, it starts with the anatomy of the sculpture, as well as the mass in conjunction with the statics, the differences between the shapes – and then function, style, and content all contribute to the role that art plays in a social or political context.

***What made you choose to make this your career?***

I've always lived in cities, first in my home city of Moscow and now in Berlin. But I've always felt a special connection to nature. This is why my new project involves using my art to draw attention to ecological problems, among other issues. And art can also lead to social and public discussion of unseen ecological challenges and unresolved issues, or provide the impetus for such. I think that's a good thing. Art can be a beautiful reminder, and sculpture can also serve as a symbol. Let's take my waterfalls, which I'm still creating, as an example. There are waterfalls like Victoria Falls – a wide waterfall in the Zambezi between the cities of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Livingstone in Zambia, and which is drying up. Will we even still have waterfalls like Niagara, Iguazú, or the Rheinfall in Schaffhausen in 20 years?

### ***What do you think?***

Nobody knows. But aren't waterfalls dynamic natural phenomena like glaciers? We've known our waterfalls for centuries, and they are attested in historical records, pictures, photos. Only now does their survival seem to be at stake. Climate change is highlighting that that which water changes in one moment will look different in the next. But the days in which we can experience this interplay of nature are numbered. Effects that we're witnessing now are proof that the survival of these phenomena is threatened, and science backs this up. I'm using my sculptures on this topic to make a monument for 20 famous waterfalls around the world. It's weird to imagine that my sculptures could outlast the motif, namely the natural phenomenon that is these waterfalls. That would also be a rather romantic idea, unfortunately. Ultimately, my works depict a static finitude.

### ***Whom do you base your sculptures on, Anna?***

I usually have a philosophical basis for my sculptures, and Henry Moore is the example I follow. He added more depth to the image of his sculptures. For example, if he was basing a sculpture on an old bone, he would create a new, abstract shape that he would then cast in bronze. This is still commonplace at Noack, where I have my permanent studio and where I've had almost all my sculptures cast. I take a similar approach for my waterfall sculptures, in the spirit of the saying, "water is life."

### ***How do you mean?***

I have a close referential connection with the neo-impressionists. Like the impressionists themselves, I focus on natural phenomena, fleeting moments like those seen in waterfalls, changing surfaces in my sculpture just like stain painting once did, and the challenge of light, which I can plan through patinas, tones, and size ratios when making a sculpture. Yet I also really like that the impressionists paved the way for the October Revolution. Of course, when I say that, I'm indulging a bit in my heritage as the great-granddaughter of Karl Marx.

### ***How are things looking with regard to sustainability?***

At the end of the year, I'm going to exhibit the entirety of my first catalogue of works for my big retrospective at the Kunsthalle Rostock. This first part of my catalogue will provide a view of my early works, which were primarily influenced by Marc Chagall, as well as an overview of the heart of my oeuvre, which now more than ever is centred around the border between figuration and abstraction. My early influence by Chagall is certainly due to my heritage. My great-grandfather, a rabbi, lived in the same village at the same time as Chagall and his wife, and they were regular visitors to the synagogue and very close to our family. The village was called Peskovatik, and is now a district of the Belarusian city of Vitebsk, on the border with Russia.

***But your artistic beginnings were different, correct?***

I come from an artistic family. My parents, Ninel Bogushevskaya (1923–1987) and Daniel Mitlyanski (1924–2006) were very renowned sculptors in the Eastern Bloc, and their works can still be seen in all the major museums. And so it was only natural that I would see my parents' studio as a sort of playground. When I set forth on my own artistic path and went to Berlin, it was mainly Russian intellectuals, like those surrounding dissident and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Sakharov, who gave me a home in Berlin and who also shaped my artistic style or understanding of art. This, for example, resulted in my involvement in the memorial to the murdered journalist Dmitri Holodov in Moscow in 1995. I came to Berlin in 1994 with my father and Andrei Asseriants so that I could work on an art project for the Museum at Checkpoint Charlie. At last I stayed.

***My last question to you: What do you see as the greatest success so far?***

My greatest honour comes from my early years in art, when the Iron Curtain was still up: The famous Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow purchased one of my works. With around 140,000 paintings, sculptures, and works of visual art, it's one of Russia's largest and most important art collections, alongside the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. And right now I'm honoured to have my sculptures accepted for display at the sculpture park at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Rostock.

Thank you for the interview.

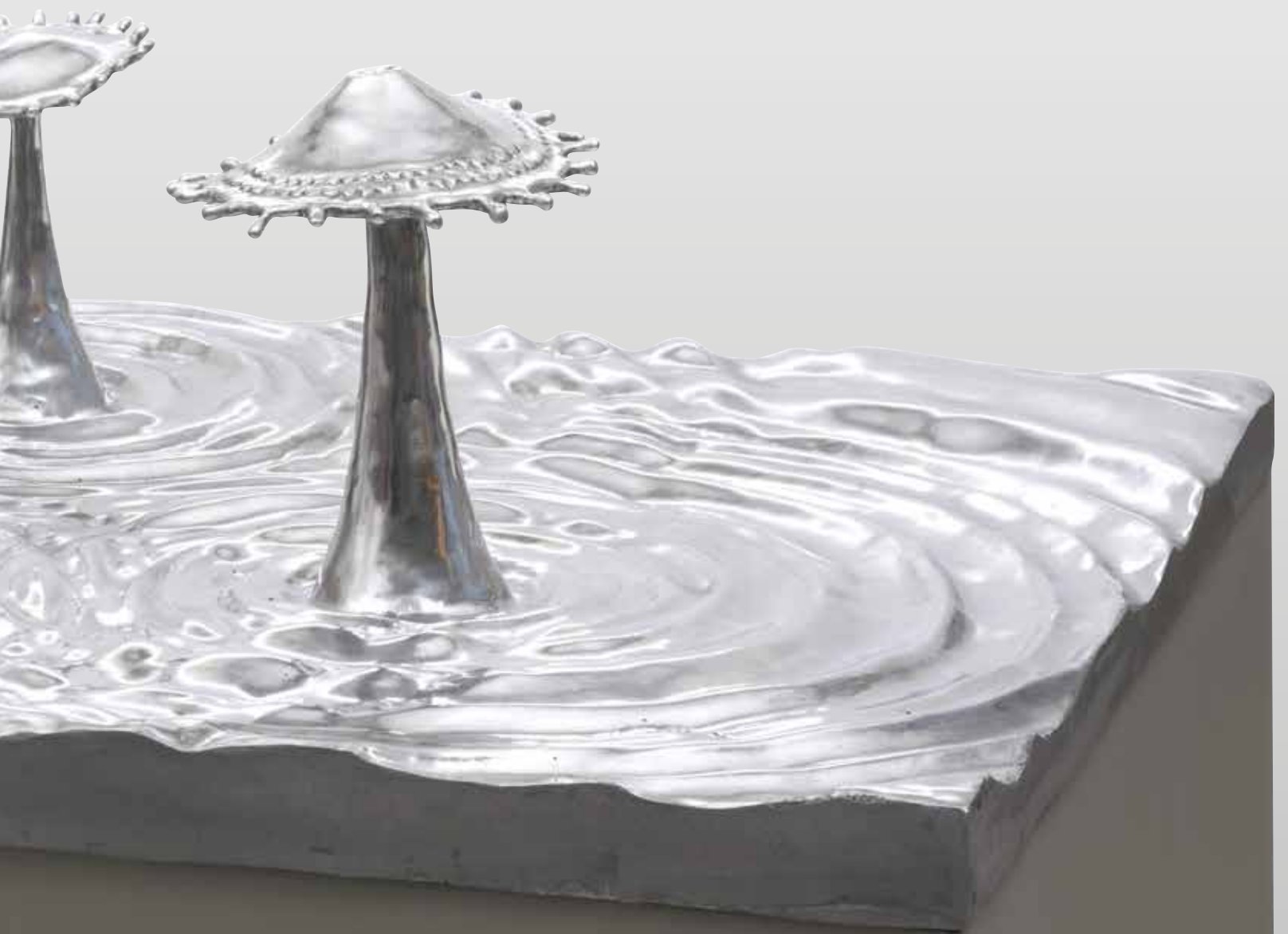
**Tropfen Motiv 11 | Drops Motive 11 2018**

Aluminium

H 100 / B 100 / T 100 cm

39,37 × 39,37 × 39,37 inch







**Die Wolke | The Cloud 2018**

Neusilber / Nickel-Silver

H 60 / B 50 / T 20 cm

23,6 × 19,68 × 7,87 inch



## IMPRESSUM / COLOPHON

Dieser Katalog erscheint anlässlich der Ausstellung /  
This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition  
Anna BOGOUCHEVSKAIA  
SHOULDN'T BE GONE  
mit der Unterstützung der Werkstattgalerie Hermann Noack /  
with the support of Werkstattgalerie Hermann Noack, Berlin

Herausgeber / Editor  
Sebastian C. Strenger

Konzeption / Concept  
Anna Bogouchevskaia, Isabella Mannozi

Gestaltung / Graphic design  
Dimitrij Sebellchen

Redaktion / Managing Editor  
Isabella Mannozi

Texte / Texts  
Sebastian C. Strenger, Christoph Tannert

Lektorat / Copy editing  
Martin Holz

Übersetzung / Translation  
Friedemann von der Lühe

Fotonachweis / Photo Credits  
Roman März, Seiten / Pages 11, 37, 65–73, 80–81  
Jochen Littkemann, Seiten / Pages 12–16, 19–34, 46–53,  
54–63, 74–79, 82–85  
Howard Greenberg, Seiten / Pages 41, 42

Lithografie / Image editing  
Andreas Gebhardt

Gesamtherstellung / Production  
Königsdruck, Berlin

© 2023 die Künstlerin / the artist,  
die Autoren / the authors, und / and  
Dr. Cantz'sche Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, Berlin

Vertrieb und Marketing  
DCV  
sales@dcv-books.com

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation  
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische  
Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar./  
This publication is listed in the German National Bibliography  
by the German National Library. Detailed bibliographic  
data are available at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Erschienen bei / Published by DCV  
[www.dcv-books.com](http://www.dcv-books.com)

ISBN 978-3-96912-139-9  
Printed in Germany

**DCV**