

## A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

What makes good art in this day and age? How is it created? And why are more and more women artists making breakthroughs in the art world? We asked three experts for answers: a sculptor, a curator and a gallery owner

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PHOTO MADELEINE BOSCHAN

Artist Madeleine Boschan created this story for us under the title "Changing perspectives". The photo shows a detail of her sculpture "Turning a disc, and in turn, being turned as well (light blue and rosy)", and was taken by Boschan herself.



**Madeleine Boschan** is one of the few women artists who create huge minimalist works in public spaces. Boschan works with changing perspectives, and her sculptures are several metres tall. She intends to create still more works of monumental proportions in the future. Some of her works make up part of the Daimler Art Collection's exhibition "31: Women", which is currently on display in Berlin. The photo shows her in her studio among her works. [madeleine-boschan.de](http://madeleine-boschan.de)

> The steel portals, a close-up of which is shown on the previous page, soar to about six metres tall and are positioned in front of the University of Ulm's Centre of Quantum BioScience.



## “I want to create new spaces, convey peace”

Before Madeleine Boschan plans an exhibition, she paces off the space available: “I create a sensorimotor archive of moods and impressions,” she explains. No measuring tape is required; she measures the space using her own body. From her feet to her outstretched hand: 2.16 metres. From the tip of her thumb to her little finger: 21 centimetres. The coordinates of the room become imprinted on her body for subsequent recall in the studio. The Berlin-based artist creates sculptures whose shape and position “redefine the space”, as she says.

Boschan discovered at an early age that spaces can be perceived physically. Even as a child, she enjoyed taking things apart and reassembling them in a different way, cutting furniture and walls out of paper, pushing them backwards and forwards, creating new contexts and perspectives. Nowadays, she can use other forms of expression in her work with space. Her art expresses her perception of environments on several levels: mental, emotional and physical. “I want to create new spaces, convey peace,” explains the sculptor. Her work is complex, but no less accurate and exacting than her childhood handicrafts. However, her pathway has been anything but linear, which makes it all the more interesting.

### Strolling through Berlin

In the early days of her studies in Braunschweig, Madeleine Boschan created representational paintings of objects such as interiors that were directly influenced by the works of Henri Matisse, one of the artists who shaped classical modernism. Later on, while she was still a student, she created large-scale collages that penetrated real space ever more deeply.

PHOTO STEPHAN KLONK

However, it was not until she moved to Berlin that she turned to sculpture. “My strolls through the city gave me inspiration,” the 41-year-old artist remembers. “In 2007, many of the buildings here still lay in ruins, and you could have conducted sociological studies of the bulky waste on the streets.” It was these everyday items that inspired her. Her first sculpture, created for a group exhibition, was a kind of self-portrait that stood on two legs made of roof battens. “What I liked most was how the space around the sculpture became a location,” she says.

### How can we live together?

Over time, the “entities” became more and more sophisticated. The poses were reminiscent of machinery: metal pipes were turned into outstretched legs, neon tubes and blinds became bowed heads. When the sculptures were exhibited as an ensemble, they were linked by cables, thus creating a network which showed that positioning in space always exerts an influence on our sense of togetherness. The last great question asked by French essayist Roland Barthes – “How can we live together?” – became a fundamental guiding principle of Madeleine Boschan's work. But then she discovered that complex answers to elemental questions such as this only brought her up against her limits. For that reason, she turned aside onto a more open path, away from linear configurationism towards planar bodies. “I longed for the full broadside,” says the artist.

### Monumental sculptures

The impression made by her latest works is therefore all the greater: Madeleine

Boschan is currently one of the few women artists whose minimalist, constructive and monumental sculptures adorn both interiors and public spaces. Her works are up to six metres tall.

### Disappearing surfaces

In her studio, there is a group of tall steles; each surface is a different colour. To experience the full power of these works, visitors have not only to walk around them, but also, in a manner of speaking, allow themselves to be drawn on to the pathways between them.

Just a few centimetres can make a difference. One step to the left, and the black surface disappears behind the violet one. Two steps to the right, and the pink side of the next stele is transformed into a vibrating line that frames the adjacent turquoise. “It's all about perception and self-perception,” explains Madeleine Boschan. “Without context, we have no position. I am not concerned solely with the physics of objects. Social and ethical questions are also important to me. Where and how can encounters take place? How is it possible for people to come together? An idea made up of possible connections, none of them standing alone, none of them without the others. A togetherness – and an awareness that space can always be culturally and historically transformed.”

### Solo exhibition

The artist is currently preparing for her solo exhibition, which will open at Cologne's Forum für Fotografie this summer. Curated by Ulrike Jagla-Blankenburg, Madeleine Boschan is working on an extensive installation comprising sculpture, painting and film that will be presented in this expansive form for the first time. <





Madeleine Boschan's sculptures are included in "31: Women" at the Daimler Art Collection's location in Berlin. The exhibition features select works exclusively by women artists.

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