

Against the Romanticism of Rocket Science

So, you ask, what would the founding fathers of space travel have thought of Adrienn Dorsanszki's rockets? *Answer: they would have been either furious or terrified!* Sure, of course they would have, and rightly so! All that effort put into pushing the envelope, propelling science to the cutting-edge, revolutionising travel, only to discover that their supersonic rockets had conquered all that distance only to end up here like so many bronze relics -- old and unlaunchable and basically *useless*. Their once superhuman proportions are now ridiculously small. And to top it all off, to add a bit of a twist here, the artist's name -- Adrienn -- cannot help but conjure up its aerospace equivalent: Ariane, the name of the famous European missile family. Then there's the title, "Mars Project", as if mankind could have reached the Red Planet in that clunky sculpture. Just how far awry reality can go, how far reality can get misrepresented in art, seems to be the key question Dorsanszki is asking. Giacometti's genius lay in his mistrust of the ability to really portray the human form. By divesting his work of its exact likeness to nature, he was able to fill it with that much more intensity, to fan the flames, so to speak, of the human spirit. I believe this to be the only useful kind of art. Past attempts at reproducing things in accurate and painstaking form have about as much to do with art as photography: i.e. *nothing*. Art begins where nature is left looking a bit dull, a trifle dumb, its mouth agape. Like the Adrienn Rockets, which, though technically not objects, have grown so familiar as to appear completely natural to us. Here, alas, is the unabashed romanticisation of technology and its army of faithful crusaders -- the rocket scientists! And yet Dorsanszki insists on exposing its thorns: how very unromantic these products can be. She does this not by desecrating their form but by casting them in precious metal -- by entombing their magnificent array of heroes and feats within its bronze shell. It's this bronze, however, that makes the romanticism of technology, and all of its mumbo jumbo filling, a visual reality.

Just how romantic the idea of a trip to Mars really is becomes clear to anyone who feasts their eyes on the Romanticism section of the history books. Here they will steal a pastel-colored glimpse at man's escape from the industrious world and from all of its monster-eyed machines. They'll soon see that Mars is the blue feather in the cap of today's adventure-hungry romantic, that never-never land of all hopes and dreams that is always just a hair's-breadth out of reach. Whenever global trends threaten to destroy our planet, Mars pops up to lasso our every last gripe and desire. The rockets (not the space agencies, mind you, which offer nothing more than tin cans filled with spacemen) promise to bring us there. Adrienn Dorsanszki's rockets do exactly that: one look at them is enough to send us straight to Mars -- almost, indeed (to use the word of our new romantics) at the speed of light. For that, though, blasting agents are needed. Dorsanszki only needs a clump of bronze to leave not only nature, but overgrown technology, looking speechless and dumb.

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