

Nicole Wermers

Givers & Takers

Gallery 1

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present *Givers & Takers*, Nicole Wermers' third solo exhibition at the gallery and first solo show since the artist's recent presentation at Tramway, Glasgow, as a 2015 Turner Prize nominee. On view June 1 – July 15, 2016, the current gallery exhibition features three new series of floor and wall-based sculptures: *Vertical Awnings*, *Givers & Takers*, and *Mood Boards*, which continue Wermers' exploration of how various materials produce and define urban space. Combining and reconfiguring familiar objects into new material forms, Wermers addresses the structures of ritualised social relations and the material objects through which these associations are communicated. These works transform, contain, and frame their environment, prompting a deeper consideration of how surface and design read as social and cultural indicators.

Populating the downstairs gallery, Wermers' *Vertical Awning* series is comprised of "assisted readymades," rolled-up retractable awnings redesigned with custom fabrics and turned on their side. These floor-based works articulate how soft materials, particularly textiles, divide, appropriate, privatize, shade, domesticate and protect public space. Wermers addresses the use of textiles for these purposes as having equally to do with their material properties of being flexible and our perception of them as unthreatening. Although each awning could cover up to nine square meters at full extension, they are displayed with the material completely rolled up and compactly displayed as vertical, columnar shapes, recalling Wermers earlier *Kusine* series and referencing the Modernist legacy of Brancusi's *Endless Column*. However, rather than dealing with space as an abstract concept, *Vertical Awnings* addresses space as a commodity that is constantly re-defined and allocated.

Accompanying these works is Wermers' series of wall-based sculptures entitled *Givers & Takers*, which combines models of domestic stainless steel ventilation fans with hand dryers found in public restrooms. While the fans are readymade, the hand dryers are scaled up and inverted to underscore the balance between public and private space and their counteractive functions: one is designed to extract air from a room and the other to generate it. Void of any connection to electricity or ventilation circuit, their juxtaposition emphasizes their formal properties and how they relate to the noisy yet invisible functions, now obsolete. The two objects at once service and negate each other. Giving further consideration to the contradictions inherent in modern design, Wermers chooses kitchen fans constructed of thin, inexpensive materials made to look like sleek stainless steel, volumetric imitations of strength and solidity. Similarly, the hand dryers boast suggestively powerful names like *Vortex*, *Excellerator*, *Air blade*, further highlighting the aspirational aspects of modern design aesthetics.

Wermers' *Mood Board* series consists of foldable baby changing stations (as found in public restrooms) filled with different types of terrazzo. These works expand on the artist's play with objects, materials and structures involved in rendering notions of public space. Made from molded hard plastic in a typically light gray color, the peculiar design of these changing units forge practical surfaces in confined public areas to perform an intimate ritual. Design elements such as the materiality of the plastic surface, synthetic straps and the austere color palette are reminiscent of hospital equipment, communicating standardized hygiene and safety. In contrast, the terrazzo material is popular for public flooring as its unruly pattern camouflages dirt and traces of heavy use.

In the early 20th century, terrazzo was improvised by Venetian construction workers who made the flooring material from an aggregate of easily sourced materials including marble chips left over from upscale building jobs. The combination of these disparate origins of design compare normative ideas of urban public space, characterized in the past by resourcefulness and chance, and in the present by over-regulation, safety issues and lack of space. Whereas the floor is categorically the most inferior in the hierarchy of space, Wermers elevates this unsophisticated surface to the plane of distinguished display.

Transforming a deliberate misuse of an object into an integral part of a new structure thereby implying new function is a recurring gesture in Wermers practice. Resisting the overdetermined functionality of objects and space, Wermers' compositions highlight the degree to which we are conditioned to comply with our environments, providing the opportunity for renegotiation.

In addition to her recent presentation at Tramway, Glasgow as a Turner Prize nominee in 2015, select solo exhibitions include *The London Shape*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston upon Thames, UK (2014); *Manners, site-specific sculpture*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2013); *Hôtel Biron*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany (2011); *Masse und Auflösung*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado, USA; *Earring, site-specific sculpture*, Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2006); *Chemie*, Secession, Vienna, Austria (2005). Upcoming, Nicole will be the subject of a solo exhibition at Kunstverein Hamburg, slated for early 2018. Forthcoming group exhibitions include *Elevation 1049*, curated by Olympia Scarry and Neville Wakefield, Gstaad (2017), and at Künstlerhaus Bremen (2016). Her work is currently on view in *The Kids Want Communism*, MoBY: Museums of Bat Yam, Tel Aviv through January 21, 2017. Wermers lives and works in London.

Sandra Cinto

Two Forces
Gallery 2

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present *Two Forces*, Sandra Cinto's seventh solo exhibition at the gallery, on view June 1 through July 15, 2016. Ranging from immersive to intimate in scale, new works on canvas expand upon her rich vocabulary of intricately rendered natural forms, incorporating traditional Japanese ink and watercolor techniques developed during a residency in Aomori, Japan last summer.

In this new body of work, titled *By Chance and Necessity*, masterfully hand-drawn rock formations are layered with transparent fields of blue pigment applied to canvas using various methods. Recognizing the generative powers of opposing forces, Cinto strikes an exquisite balance: chance and control, fluid and solid, presence and emptiness are continually in conflict in her work. For Cinto, these dualities are a metaphor for embracing the instabilities in life and can also be understood as complimentary necessities, wherein one element cannot exist or be understood without the other.

Throughout her 25 year practice, Cinto has created powerful compositions that evoke stories of human hardship and redemption, fantastical landscapes that serve as a metaphor for the human odyssey, while also pushing the limits and possibilities of drawing. In particular, water is an important recurring element in the artist's oeuvre, a charged symbol of perpetual transformation that allows her to approach larger questions about existence and the human condition. For Cinto, water is essential to our understanding of reality. It is necessarily universal: we are composed mostly of it, require it for survival, excrete it in extreme emotional and physical states. And at the same time one's relationship to water is entirely relative: contingent on his or her socioeconomic and geographical orientation, where it may be taken for granted, perilously scarce or abundant. In *By Chance and Necessity*, water is not only depicted but also materialized as an instrument for composing the final image that at once suspends time and implies its uncontrollable passage.

In the center of the main gallery space, Cinto presents a unique sculpture of her own arm extended forward, holding water in a cupped hand. Carved from a single piece of alabaster, which is at once a solid and semi-transparent material, the sculpture adds further dimension to the presence of water and suspension of time within the exhibition. This sculpture manifests the two fundamental sources of creation embodied in the exhibition: water and the artist's own hand. Cinto's presentation renders the inextricable balance between intention and intuition, image and material, the universal and the individual.

Currently, Cinto's work is on view in *Expected: Soft Power. Arte Brasil*, Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, Netherlands. Earlier this year, her work was the subject of a solo exhibition entitled *Sandra Cinto: By Chance and Necessity*, West Gallery, USF Contemporary Art Museum (CAM), Tampa. Other recent solo presentations include: *En Silêncio*, Matadero Madrid Contemporary Art Center, Madrid, which traveled to Fundación Luis Seoane, *A Corunha*, Spain Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno – CAAM Museum, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain (2014); *A Casa das Fontes (The House of Fountains)*, an installation conceived for Casa do Sertanista in São Paulo, Brazil (2013); *Encontro das Águas (Encounter of Waters)*, Olympic Sculpture Park Pavilion at the Seattle Art Museum, Washington, (2012-2014); *One Day, After the Rain*, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (2012-2013), and *Solar*, a site-specific project for Espaço Cultural do Complexo Hospitalar Edmundo Vasconcelos, São Paulo (2011).. Sandra Cinto's work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, Albright-Knox Gallery, NY, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil, among others.