

Nicole Wermers
Day Care
1 March – 20 April 2024

Nicole Wermers, 'Day Care' presents sculptural work from the artist's latest series, 'Reclining Females' (2022–2024). These sculptures bring together the familiar, art historical trope of the reclining nude, with readymade commercial products and the banal apparatus of the service industry to critically engage with the social, psychological and economic conditions of urban space and architecture.

Wermers' lounging female nudes appear larger than life-size and are hand-formed in plaster over styrofoam. Striking poses that may evoke Henry Moore's reclining bronze women, these voluptuous figures have the rough-hewn appearance of largescale sculptural studies. Each of the female figures adopts a different posture of repose, heads angled to meet the viewer's gaze from an elevated position. They balance on wheeled maintenance carts filled with mops, freshly pressed linen, plastic bottles and chemical products for cleaning and disinfecting spaces such as hotels and corporate environments.

The formal juxtaposition of the figures and carts create tension between ideas of labour and leisure, undermining gestures of decadence and desire routinely expressed by (male) renditions of the female nude. Instead, the figures imply exhausted, overworked bodies: low-waged and typically invisible women's labour that sustains commercial and business environments. At the same time their size and elevated position asserts their defiant presence and independent agency. In the particular white-collar context of this exhibition space, the artworks generate discourse on corporate structures and overlooked labour hierarchies.

Nicole Wermers (born 1971 in Emsdetten, Germany) lives and works in London. She studied at Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg from 1991–97 and received an MFA from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 1999. Since 2017 she has been a professor of sculpture at Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich. Wermers was short-listed for the Turner Prize in 2015.

Selected solo exhibitions include: 'Reclining Fanmail', Kunsthhaus Glarus; 'P4aM2aRF!', Herald St, London; 'Emscher Folly', Urbane Künste Ruhr/ Emscher Kunstweg, Duisburg permanent public art commission, (all 2022); 'Earring for Cambridge' public commission for Cambridge Judge Business School, Cambridge University; 'Women between Buildings', Kunstverein Hamburg, (both 2018); 'Grundstück', Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, (2017); 'Givers & Takers' Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York (2016); 'Infrastruktur', Herald St, London (2015); 'The London Shape' Stanley Picker

Gallery, Kingston-upon-Thames (2014); 'Manners', site-specific commission for Tate Britain (2013). 'Hotel Biron', Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; 'Masse und Auflösung', Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2007), 'Earring' public sculpture project, Camden Arts Centre, London; and 'Chemie', Secession, Vienna (2004-2005).

Selected group exhibitions include: '13 Women: Variation III', Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, California; 'Phantom Sculpture', Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry; 'Your Home Is Where You're Happy', Haus Mödrath, Kerpen; 'Homo Ludens / About the Game of Art', Woods Art Institute, Hamburg; 'Concerning Nature', Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; 'Femmenology', Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco (all 2023). 'Identität nicht nachgewiesen – Neuerwerbungen der Sammlung des Bundes', Bundeskunsthalle Bonn; 'SSSSSSSSCULPTURESQUE', Kiang Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong; 'German Caviar', Kunstmuseum Bonn; 'On Equal Terms', Uferhallen, Berlin; 'By A Thread', Tenter Ground, London (all 2022).

Her work was also included in 'Magical Soup', Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; 'More More More', Tank Shanghai, Shanghai; 'Grace before Jones', Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham; 'Museum For Preventive Imagination', MACRO, Rome; 'Design by Time', Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco (all 2020); 'Crack up Crack Down', 33rd Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, Center for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; 'Design by Time', Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, Tennessee, College of Wooster Art Museum, Wooster, Ohio; 'Tainted Love (club edit)', Villa Arson, Nice; 'Das Ruhr Ding', different venues in Dortmund, Oberhausen and Bochum, 'Mein Blick', Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (all 2019); 'ANTI', 6th Athens Biennale, Athens; 'You Remind Me of Someone', FRAC Lorraine, Metz; 'Die Zelle', Kunsthalle Bern, Bern; 'Dime Store Alchemy', Flag Art Foundation, New York (all 2018). 'Elevation 1049', different venues, Gstaad; 'Quiz 2', MUDAM Luxembourg; 'Home Is No Place', German Embassy, London; 'Tainted Love (Where Did Our Love Go)', Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers; 'In Awe', Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; 'You Remind Me of Someone', Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen; 'An Idea of Boundary', S.F. Arts Commission Gallery, San Francisco; 'Display Show', Stroom den Haag; 'Intensive Nesting', Division Gallery, Montreal (all 2017); Turner Prize, Tramway, Glasgow; 'Function Follows Vision, Vision Follows Reality', Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz, Vienna; 'Überschönheit', Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (all 2015); 'A Singular Form', Secession, Vienna (2014); 'Villa Massimo Stipendiaten', Martin-Gropius Bau, Berlin (2013); 'Crazy House', Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt (2012); 'The New Décor', Hayward Gallery, London (2010-2011); 'A wavy line is drawn across the middle of the original plans', Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2012); 'Weltempfänger', Galerie der Gegenwart/ Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2007); 'Tate Triennale', Tate Britain (2006).

List of Works (front to rear)

Reclining Female #6 (2024)

Plaster, pigment, styrofoam, fabric, metal, wood, housekeeping trolley, various materials

Reclining Female #5 (2022–24)

Plaster, pigment, styrofoam, fabric, metal, wood, housekeeping trolley, various materials

Reclining Female #7 (2024)

Plaster, pigment, styrofoam, fabric, metal, wood, housekeeping trolley, various materials

Reclining Female #3 (2022)

Plaster, pigment, styrofoam, fabric, metal, wood, housekeeping trolley, various materials

Reclining Female #1 (2022)

Plaster, pigment, styrofoam, fabric, metal, wood, housekeeping trolley, various materials

Break (2024)

Stainless steel, sand, cigarette butts

All works courtesy of the artist; Herald St, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York and Los Angeles; Jessica Silverman, San Francisco; and Produzentengalerie Hamburg.

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