



Nicole Wermers: "Sitting Pretty - A glamour-puss with an iconoclast's heart, the Turner Prize contender Nicole Wermers is poised to make some serious art world waves."

Written by Karin Nelson

November 2, 2015



The German artist Nicole Wermers, who lives in London, is both drawn to and critical of "our overly designed world," as she describes it. "I'm a bit schizo," she explains, noting that as a teenager she listened to punk music and marched in political demonstrations but also devoured fashion magazines. Her sleek, subversive work, which earned her a slot on the short list for this year's prestigious Turner Prize, addresses such seemingly incompatible passions. "Untitled Chairs," a series of sculptures that debuted at London's Frieze Art Fair last year, references the unconscious act of draping one's coat over the back of a café chair. "It's a ritual people do to personalize the space and claim it as their own," she says. The materials—adapted Marcel Breuer Cesca chairs and relined vintage furs bought on eBay—are inspired by the sort of modernist interiors in which plush pelts were slung over tubular steel pieces by Eileen Gray or Le Corbusier. "I also liked the idea of a very feminine coat overpowering a male design," she adds. For this exclusive project for *W*, Wermers has recontextualized the pieces, taking them out of an austere gallery space and into sun-dappled surf. The gesture is a nod to the British sculptor Barbara Hepworth, who brought her work to the beach in the film *Figures in a Landscape*, and to a 1980s Japanese furniture ad from Wermers's sizable collection of magazines. "Obviously, you're going to ruin the chair," she says. "But I find that interesting—the notion of doing something wrong, being so excessive."