

DAMN°

Fragile Structures: Artist's Book About Croissants and Consumer Lifestyle Destroys Itself From the Inside Through Use

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Artist and sculptor Nicole Wermers creates an absurd juxtaposition with the book *Croissants & Architecture*, combining portraits of croissants with sheets of sandpaper. Wermer's work often employs familiar objects of mundane consumer culture – daily rituals and objects that exemplify class struggles – attempting to destabilise preconceived societal gestures, habits and rituals. Wermer was nominated for a Turner Prize in 2015 for *Infrastruktur*, an exhibition of fur coats draped over the backs of facing chairs waiting for their owners – transient acts made into 'fixed concrete forms'. Displayed in a solo show this year, *Grundstück* at Jessica Silverman Gallery, *Croissants & Architecture* also takes the form of a limited-edition artist book published by Motto Books in 2016.

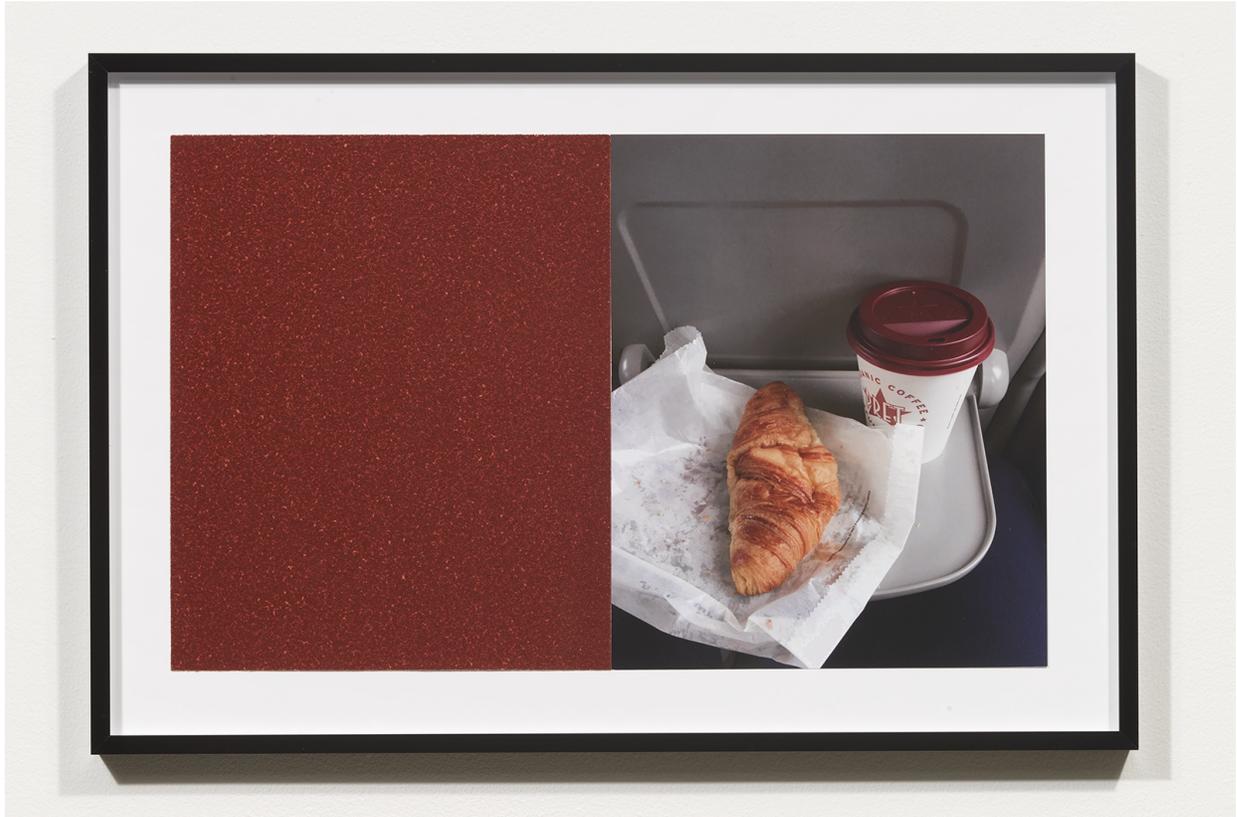
DAMN: What triggered *Croissants & Architecture* and the juxtaposition of the two subjects in the book?



Nicole Wermers: As a sculptor, croissants are an interesting three-dimensional shape, created by rolling and repeatedly folding paper-thin leaves of dough. Once baked, their volume is made up principally of air, so that a well-done croissant crumbles into next to nothing when subjected to pressure. Emphasised by

the repetition of the basic form, the images in the book become portraits of pastry. Alongside this, I have for some years been collecting sandpaper. I'm fascinated by the varied textures, colours and abrasive grades, as well as the numbers and symbols printed on the reverse sides of the sheets, which relate to brands and degrees of roughness. Sandpaper is also, as far as I know, the only surface or material I seem to have a strong physical reaction to, which is related to the sound it produces when coming in contact with another material.

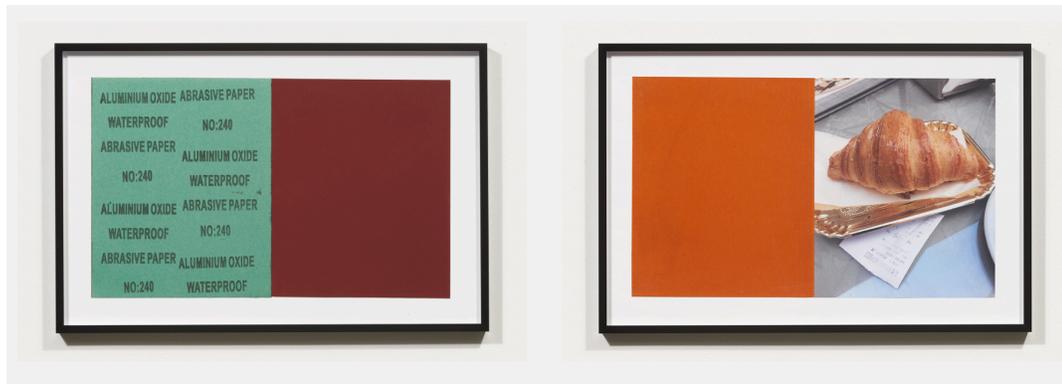
Your work often questions or challenges certain systems or structures inherent in daily life in Europe – how does this work relate to that fascination?



Sandpaper is a surface and a tool. It causes friction and produces negative space by removing material. Outside of France, croissants are lifestyle pastries – indicators of the first wave of gentrification and globalised tastes. Nowadays, croissants are almost passé, an outmoded form of the good life, superseded by organic superfoods and avocado on toast. Juxtaposing sanding paper with the images of croissants explores changing dynamics between positive and negative space, two- and three-dimensions, production and consumption, visceral discomfort and sensual pleasure. The sandpaper will eventually destroy the images and the book could be seen as a humorous comment on the materials of sculpture and our lifestyle-obsessed culture.

It seems that the book has an interesting relationship between local and global. Did you journey through Europe purposely taking images of croissants?

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I basically shot croissants for a year or so whenever I happened to be in a cafe in London or when travelling. So some are local croissants shot in East London and others are shot in cafes in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Basel, Paris etc. In the summer of 2015, I made a more focused effort, shooting a few in Germany where I first came across them in the 1980s in Greven, where I grew up.

Each book is original and there is no set order in the pages.

Yes, the sequence of the portraits of croissants is always the same but the sandpaper sheets are placed differently. Also, the types of sandpaper, the different colours, grades and brands vary from book to book – these papers come from my personal collection of sandpaper that grew over the years and that I gave up for the production of the books.

So the book becomes a sculpture – an object intended for use?

I liked the idea of a book that kind of destroys itself from the inside with the help of prolonged use. The fact that sandpaper produces either destruction or a shiny surface depending on what surface it is used on was one of the first things that interested me about it.

Is Croissants & Architecture ongoing? Will we see another iteration?

As of now I am still taking pictures of croissants and came across some really beautiful Japanese sandpaper, so who knows!

