

SEMAFOR

Nicole Wermers: "Sculpture captures endurance and exhaustion of Depression-era dance craze"

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Nicole Wermers/Lismore Castle Arts

A sculptor's new work draws inspiration from the Depression-era craze of endurance dance competitions in the US. Marathon Dance Relief at Ireland's St Carthage Hall depicts dance partners exhausted after enduring brutal week-long contests to win prizes worth one year's salary.

While the high-octane competitions were hugely popular in the 1920s and 1930s — serving as precursors to contemporary reality dance shows — they took a toll on the contestants, and in rare cases, led to injuries or deaths.

But Nicole Wermers' figures — "slumped and clutching at each other" — suggests that her true subject is "the doomed waltz of the unit of the couple in society," The Guardian wrote, "the absolute necessity and disorienting terror of dependency on another person."

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