

NICOLE WERMERS: *Spray*

February 25 – April 7, 2012
Gallery 2

For immediate release

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Nicole Wermers. Titled *Spray*, this will be the artist's second solo show with the gallery.

In her new sculptures and photographs, Wermers recontextualizes and reimagines modernist forms in ways that frame, contain, and transform the spaces in which they are installed. Exploring how methods of display and presentation affect our understanding and experience of space, these new works continue Wermers' investigation of the legacy of modernism and the aesthetics of consumption in contemporary visual culture.

In the main gallery, Wermers installs "Wasserregal," which translates to "Water Shelf," a free-standing sculpture composed of levels of metal shelving supported by irregularly placed U-shaped steel spacers. Each shelf is a different color and Wermers subtly modulates these earth tones, moving from a stone gray hue on the bottom, through shades of smoky purple and sandy brown in the middle, and finally to an eggshell white at the top. While the structure of the work references utilitarian shelving from the mid 20th-century, with its simple materials and straightforward design, its purpose is quite different. Instead of holding books or objects, as this type of shelving might in a private home, or some visually seductive commodity as it might in a commercial context, Wermers' shelves hold pools of water. Reminiscent of the British modernist sculptor Barbara Hepworth's outdoor works, which collect pools of water in their concave spaces, Wermers' piece can also be installed outside, and similarly combines a manmade structure with a natural element. The surprise of seeing water presented this way is transformative and disorienting – the solid appearance of the steel is softened by the ripples of light that bounce off the pools on the shelves, and the U-shaped supports no longer seem to hold the shelves up, instead they appear to float down the length of the sculpture as their reflections catch on the surface of the water.

Transparency, reflection, and surface, have long been important formal themes in Wermers' practice and she explores them further in the "Buhuu Suites," a series of photographs installed with "Wasserregal," in the main space. Taken at the Rodin Museum in Paris, which was the home and studio of Auguste Rodin for the last nine years of his life, Wermers' photographs depict his marble sculptures and plaster models for several larger bronze commissions, along with a selection of works by Camille Claudel. The early 18th-century house-turned-museum is full of windows, mirrors, and vitrines, and this combination of reflective surfaces captures the mostly all white sculptures at different angles, giving their reflections a haunting and fragmented quality. The title of the series, "Buhuu Suites" refers to their spectre-like aura – "buhuu" is the German expression for the sound of a ghost. Examining how the works are presented within the museum's space, these photographs directly address methods of display, and Wermers' frames further this exploration. Redesigning the structure of the mass-produced clip frame, she creates geometrically shaped clips that not only anchor the glass to the photograph, but also create an intervention into the image, interacting with the photos of Rodin and Claudel's sculptures. The result is a kind of three-dimensional collage that combines and layers the images of the expressive sculptures with sleekly abstract metal forms.

In the side gallery, Wermers presents two sculptures that take Marcel Breuer's chrome nesting tables and chairs as their point of departure. Reconfiguring elements of Breuer's furniture—the chrome tubing, black surfaces, and S-shaped curves – Wermers creates two sets of wall-mounted shelves that are recognizably related to Breuer, yet formally unique. Like the free-standing "Wasserregal," in the main gallery, these shelves contrast the natural and the constructed and transform water from an amorphous substance into an entity that can be contained on a shelf and presented on the gallery wall.

Originally from Germany but based in London, Wermers currently resides in Rome, where she has received a fellowship, at Villa Massimo, the German Academy. She will be included in the upcoming exhibition at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne titled, *A wavy line is drawn across the middle of the original plans*, which opens April 18. Recent notable exhibitions include *Hôtel Biron*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 2011 (solo); *The Shape We're In, 176 - Zabłudowicz Collection*, London, 2011 (group); and *The New Décor*, Hayward Gallery Southbank Centre, London; traveling to The Garage Centre, Moscow, Russia, 2010-2011 (group); among others.

For further information please contact the gallery at mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com or 212-414-4144.