

By choosing a certain material known in other contexts, an artistic work is loaded with references, provoking a link between form and content. In this sense, German artist Nicole Wermers reinterrogates industrial production and design for negotiation in her work. In her exhibition for Georg Kargl BOX, designed by Richard Artschwager, she decided to cover the walls in a kind of oil base from floor to shoulder height with a frieze, where both materiality and form refers to a so-called Rautenblech, a skid-proof and water resistant aluminum structure used in warehouses and event sites for entrances and exits of shopping malls and other high traffic areas, and like the oil base marks public spaces and architecturally structures them. Its design as an elliptical surface structure has no autonomous character, but follows the necessity of its function. This structure is picked up by Nicole Wermers in her work, the individual element is selected and modified as an isolated pattern so that it is reminiscent of an associative floral form taken from nature, leaves or drops. This removal, dissection, and (re)construction of individual elements changes our view of them; they are then studied for what lies at their aesthetic and functional base.

The question of the importance of design of everyday objects, in industrial design, for example, runs through many of Wermers' works. Functionality and serial production of objects seem to disqualify them for the autonomy of fine art. Nicole Wermers renegotiates exactly this aspect when she raises considerations of the relationship between utility and aesthetics. The fascination for form and material cannot be overlooked in her work. While the criteria of the material are marked by a special durability in terms of function, like scratch-resistance, washability, the final result in the gallery proves to be very sensitive on the surface, and can be altered at the slightest contact.

In her choice of material, she decides for a texture that bridges an aesthetic as well as economic reference arch, from functional modernism (Bauhaus) through minimalist aesthetics (minimal art) to the everyday significance of industrial product design. The use of industrial sheet metal in BOX in the form of oil base that has been added since the nineteenth century to public buildings to protect from dirt or wear and tear, points both to its functional aesthetic as well as its economic value, combining form and content.

Artschwager's architecture links the interior of Georg Kargl BOX with the space surrounding it in a perfect synchronicity. The interior cannot be seen without looking outside. Wermers frieze stretches a thin membrane between this simultaneity, marking the threshold in which the transition becomes palpable. It comprises the limited social site, and opens it toward the portal. Through the dull mirroring of the material surface, all movement in the inner space of the gallery is reflected, and intersects in the moment of perception with the outer space, animated by passersby and traffic.

The dense network of allusions in Wermers' work, the cultural historical, economic, and spatial system of reference does entirely without quotations. Her works mark the threshold stimulations of social spaces, between inclusion and exclusion, architecture, design, and art solely in their use of form and materiality.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*