

# surface

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# ZOÉ OUVRIER

DESIGNER ARIK LEVY FINDS TIME-HONORED INSPIRATION AT HOME WITH THIS ARTIST'S SPIRITUAL PROCESS.

At a time when artists are exploring digital frontiers, using a 13th-century technique like wood engraving may seem like a throwback. But for Paris-based artist Zoé Ouvrier, 36, the method delves into elemental matter itself. "It links back to flesh, skin, and scars," she says, sitting in her studio surrounded by six-foot plywood panels featuring her abstract tree designs, each of which take about a week to complete. "I enter a state of hypnosis," she says. "I go into that space and I become one with my gestures." A 2002 graduate of the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, Ouvrier was introduced to the medium by Chinese artist Yin Xin. "I use industrial panels, but I return them to their origin," she says. "I'm taking something fabricated by humans to give it back its imprint." In that sense, her work couldn't be more different from that of her life partner, industrial designer Arik Levy. "I'm in prehistory, and he's already in the future," she says.—ATHENA GOODWILL



(THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT, MIDDLE, AND TOP RIGHT) Zoé Ouvrier in her Paris studio. Ouvrier's Noe screen (2009). Ouvrier making a sample engraving. PORTRAIT:

Franck Juery. (THIS PAGE, BELOW) Femke Hiemstra in her Amsterdam studio. PORTRAIT: Lukas Gobel.

# FEMKE HIEMSTRA

THE SURREAL DREAMSCAPES OF THIS DUTCH ARTIST HAUNT THE ILLUSTRATIVE MIND OF MARCEL WANDERS.

Amsterdam-based artist Femke Hiemstra's masterpieces resemble illustrations from a surreal storybook, with healthy doses of grim narrative and pokey anthropomorphism. In her work, wild-eyed felines backpack through the snow and parrots lift weights in a Victorian-era sideshow. Like the work of Mark Ryden, there exists a childlike presence, but her inspirations are less modern. "Hieronymus Bosch and Max Ernst are all-time favorites," says Hiemstra, 37, "but I'm equally attracted to art by the nameless artist, like the catalogue illustrators of the Victorian era, skilled or not so skilled, but all with their own quality and charm." Fans of Wanders will see similarities in the painter's illusory outlook. "Her work takes me into a surreal world where anything can happen," Wanders says. "It makes me doubt the innocence of this planet, it makes me fear the violent eyes of babies, it makes me understand how peaceful and safe my artificial life is in a world that hides inside a universe of fairy violence and toy terror."—CHRIS KAYE

