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## Claudia Wieser *Barock*

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A pearl gave its name to an era,  
the era gave its name to a glaze,  
the glaze gave its name to Claudia Wieser's exhibition.

Behind all the frills, there is the Gesamtkunstwerk, whose sole dictum is to give itself over to beauty. Entering Claudia Wieser's exhibition, you are immediately in the thick of it. In the bar, amidst the beauty, in the installation. As if on a stage, visitors instantly become part of the ensemble, which blurs all distinctions between art, architecture, and design and invites us to sit at tables and on benches, actively immersing ourselves in the art. Large mirror works on the walls reflect all the action.

As you enter the *Barock* (Baroque) exhibition, there are tables that Wieser designed specifically for the show together with the furniture manufacturer e15. Their tiled tops are typical of Wieser's work, displaying a harmonious conjunction of color, form, and surface, the classical design elements of modernism. Their titles are succinct, with no frills attached: *Black and White; Red and Blue; Triangles; Circles; Game*.

The artist's affinity for the avant-garde and constructivism is reflected in the geometrical abstraction that characterizes her works, but, as in the baroque, Wieser's oeuvre is subject solely to the dictates of harmonious aesthetics and resonant composition. Her works set out to give pleasure, not to educate. Thus, in the central part of the gallery, visitors are greeted by an impressive group of friendly wooden sculptures. They seem to be curiously stretching their finely proportioned bodies upward. And the title of the abstract sculpture of a building at the rear of the gallery, *But round my chair the children run*, which is taken from an Oscar Wilde poem, is indicative of the artist's daring cheerfulness. This sculptural installation was shown in 2023 for several days in the public space of the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. More than two thousand resplendent tiles invited passers-by, and especially children, to interact with the artwork. The artist explicitly wanted them to touch and be touched by it.

In all of Wieser's works, handicraft and material are both invisible and yet very present. Effort, quality, and time are these works' silent companions. The artist's media structure her forms of expression, not least by virtue of the technical restrictions involved: the grids formed by tiles, the selection of colors, materials, textures, and glazes. "Baroque" is also the name of a soft brown in Wieser's large repertoire of ceramic color tones.

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In her Berlin studio, the artist handcrafts each tile in a complex production process involving five steps prior to the final application of the glaze.

Could it be that the material's restrictions are what lead to the freedom of intuitive expression? Wieser's works open up a vibrant space spanning pragmatism, profligacy, handcrafted detail, and intuitive association—seen also in her woven tapestry entitled *Histories*. The freedom not to have to definitively stick with abstraction is here very much in evidence, and nonetheless this work's affinity to Wieser's oeuvre as a whole is unmistakable even though the reflective surfaces are absent. Geometrical color fields effortlessly link figurative elements and photographic snippets, while a simple formal idiom and architectural fragments can be discovered on carpets and wallpapers and in drawings. How much beauty is too much? And what do you have to leave out in order to put beauty in pride of place? How many right angles are needed for an architectural form? And can a circle be enough to open up a space? Art can pose many questions and give some answers. One of these answers is that a Gesamtkunstwerk that gives itself over to beauty can be made without any frills—welcome to the baroque.

Text by Hila Dirks

Claudia Wieser, born in 1973, lives and works in Berlin.

For more information about the artist, including interviews, videos, and press images, please visit our website at [vonbartha.com](https://vonbartha.com).

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