

Claudia Wieser

The Auratic Object

Opening: April 12th, 6 – 9 pm
April 12th – May 11th, 2024
Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf

Materials, as Monika Wagner once noted, are “indicators of social sensibilities,” since they are enriched by the “history of their usages.” And this alone is enough for social codes to be transmitted through them. According to the Hamburg-based art historian, the transfer from the practical-functional realm to an aesthetic one thoroughly shakes up the order and with it the “hierarchy of materials”—the “cherished boundaries between high and low” thus become shifted.

Fibers woven into carpets, with all their rich cultural history and diverse codings, have been hard to position in any such hierarchy from the outset. From early on, they seem to have been connected with everything in a variety of ways: with high and low, with the practical-functional sphere and the realm of art and representation, with craft and high-tech, as the underlying medium of sacred as well as profane rituals, as much as the field of modernist experimentation. For some, these artistic textile connections even call into question the tacit assumptions surrounding the hierarchical position of art as such. Le Corbusier, for example, considered tapestries to be the most suitable decoration for the dwellings of modern nomads, not paintings.

“Weaving is a complex process,” says Claudia Wieser, who has produced half a dozen large-format tapestries for her exhibition. The Berlin-based artist’s tapestries are hybrid collages of different image types: painterly and graphic elements, photographic found material, organic and geometric forms. Wieser, who initially created her designs as digital collages on the computer, began playing with different materials and forms in a specialised weaving mill. During production, the artist was able to intervene in the machine’s weaving process and thus directly influence the result. However, the hybridity is not only evident in what was woven—namely cotton, wool yarn, silver threads, synthetic materials, and cashmere—but also how. By using different modes of weaving and varying the float of weft and warp threads, the artist underscored the three-dimensional character of the fabric.

The exhibition title *The Auratic Object* can be read as a reference to Walter Benjamin and his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, published in 1936, in which the author defines aura as “the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be,” only to immediately diagnose its “decay” as a result of its technical reproducibility through photography and film. Benjamin predicted a “testing” distraction as a new form of art perception. In this sense, Claudia Wieser’s woven images can perhaps be understood as an invitation to test one’s own sensory perception: haptically and visually. They open up a space of immense temporality where past, present, and future intertwine.

Text
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