

Sies + Höke Galerie

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Press release

Claudia Wieser: *Container*

23 May – 28 June, 2014, opening: Friday, 23 May 7-9 pm

Sies + Höke is pleased to show *Container*, Berlin-based artist Claudia Wieser's third solo exhibition at the gallery.

Claudia Wieser (*1973, Freilassing) creates works on paper, objects and installations that revolve around the contrast between old and new: her wallpaper installations in this exhibition, for example, feature early 20th century photographs of antique sculptures next to imagery of contemporary art and design; her delicate gold leaf drawings on handmade paper are offset by yellow neon light; her highly polished, hard-edged metal sculptures are counterbalanced by a hand-glazed ceramic tile panel which has been enamelled with real gold. In her work, traditional handicrafts and materials such as hand-blown glass sculptures, ceramics, tapestries, intricately coloured wood objects or complex drawings made of gold leaf and coloured pencil meet digital printing methods and clean cut geometric objects made of mirror or shiny metal.

With her use of "old" or "borrowed" imagery and techniques, Wieser aims to appropriate a certain aura, a particular stipulation that comes with certain objects or images. Using gold leaf, for example, she conjures up notions of value, beauty, secrecy, fortune or plain warmth. Her use of century-old photographic images carries different connotations than had she taken the photograph herself today: their blurriness, imperfections and scratches carry their own story. The geometric shapes she uses in her drawings also have a history; they are symbols for perfection, longing and continuity, and of course they point to countless arthistoric predecessors. Merging the old and the new, existing resources and novel ideas, according to Wieser can be like joining two parts and creating a whole.

A certain tension and disruption however is also key to Wieser's work. To this end, she creates successions of reflections, both real and misleading ones, printed and reprinted on her wallpapers, and doubled up and reflected in the metal sculptures. In this exhibition, the wallpaper is placed in the room's centre on a pentagon-shaped wall structure, creating a sculptural, if not architecture-twisting effect that dazzles, confuses and requires movement within the space in order to fully perceive. The viewer thus experiences the exhibition in transit, is inspired to meander, reflect and conflict. The show's title, *Container*, refers to something being "contained", beheld, embraced or embodied. It is perhaps an allusion to the numerous influences in Wieser's work being united in one larger entity; but also to the viewer, who circumnavigates and absorbs, traversing a cultural landscape of ancient and modern that negotiates itself as a contemporary experience.

As a special project, and also "contained" within this exhibition, one room of the gallery is dedicated to New York-based artist Lisa Oppenheim, on invitation by Claudia Wieser.

Claudia Wieser lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include: *The Mirror*, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York (2013); Galerie Kamm, Berlin (2013); *Furniture*, KIOSK, Ghent (2012); *Auch in geschlossenen Räumen müssen echte Sachen liegen*, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf (2012); Galleria S.A.L.E.S, Rom (2012); *Muster und Formen*, Galerie Ben Kaufmann, Berlin (2011) and *Poems of the Right Angle*, The Drawing Center, New York (2010). Recent group exhibitions include: *Drawing Biennial*, Drawing Room, London (2013); *Prix Canson Nominees*, Petit Palais, Paris (2013); *Goldrausch*, Villa Merkel, Esslingen (2013) and Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2012); *Punkt Systeme. Vom Pointilismus zum Pixel*, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen (2012); *Asche und Gold*, Marta Herford / Museum Schloss Moyland (2012); *HotSpot Berlin*, Georg Kolbe Museum Berlin (2011); *Kosmos Rudolf Steiner*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart / Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2011) and *Intensif-Station, 26 Künstlerräume im K21*, K21 Kunstsammlungen Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2010).

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Press release

Lisa Oppenheim: *Nature's Pencil*

23 May – 28 June, 2014, opening: Friday, 23 May 7-9 pm

As a special project and on invitation by Claudia Wieser, Sies + Höke is pleased to present an exhibition by New York-based artist Lisa Oppenheim.

Lisa Oppenheim (*1975, New York) makes still and moving images that explore the relationship between photographic process and content. Employing techniques from early experimental photography, such as solarization, cameraless photography (photograms), or exposure by natural (moon-) light and flames, and using found imagery, both archival and from contemporary digital sources such as Flickr, she consciously performs processes that evoke a poetic displacement, highlighting the magic of image creation as well as her own awareness of art theory.

“Part of the fun of making art is using technologies against the grain, pushing them in ways they are not supposed to go. In this way, technologies in themselves become both the artistic material and the content of the art” (Lisa Oppenheim in *The Polaroid Years: Instant Photography and Experimentation*, Mary-Kay Lombino (Ed.), Prestel, 2013)

In the series *Smoke* (2011-13), Oppenheim isolated images of smoke from found photographs and used these to produce digital negatives. Rather than use the light of an enlarger, she used the flames from a match and a culinary torch to expose and solarize the negatives- in essence using fire to make fire. *Fish scales, Véritable Hollandais* (2012-13) were made by placing fabric directly onto photographic paper and exposing the paper twice, folding the fabric between exposures. This wax fabric is made in the Netherlands and imitates handmade batiks from Indonesia but is produced almost exclusively for a West African market. The results here are dark violet, abstract, moiré-like patterned photographs. *Leisure Work* (2012-13) begins with a nod to the pioneering photographer William Henry Fox Talbot, who used photographic imprints of lace in order to describe his invention of a positive and negative process that allowed for photographic reproduction (prior to this photographs had been irreproducible plates), as people were just as used to seeing white lace as black. However the title refers to labour, and particularly the labour of women lace makers. *Leisure Work* was both the classification and explanation for the inability to count lace makers in a 19th century Belgian census. Works from a fourth series, *Passage of the Moon Over Two Hours* (2012) are made from an anonymous negative of the same name from the 1870s that Oppenheim scanned from a book of early scientific photographs. Here, playfully, Oppenheim re-exposed the negatives to moonlight on a Manhattan rooftop.

Lisa Oppenheim lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Upcoming solo exhibitions include *Lisa Oppenheim*, FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (2014); *Lisa Oppenheim*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg (2014); *Lisa Oppenheim*, Lulu, Mexico City (2014). Recent solo exhibitions include: *From Abigail to Jacob (Works 2004-2014)*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2014); *Everyone's Camera*, Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen (2013); *Heaven Blazing Into The Head*, The Approach, London (2013); *Point de Gaze*, Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam (2013); *Intervention: Lisa Oppenheim*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2012); *Equivalent*s, Harris Lieberman Gallery, New York (2012); *Vapours and Veils*, Klosterfelde, Berlin (2012); *Art Statements*, Art Basel 42, Lisa Oppenheim with Galerie Juliette Jongma, Basel (2011). Group exhibitions include: *The Dying of the Light: Film as Medium and Metaphor*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2014); *New Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); *ICP Triennial 2013*, International Center of Photography, New York (2013); *Artists' Film Club: Lisa Oppenheim – Double*, ICA, London (2012); *Found In Translation*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2012) and Guggenheim Museum, New York (2011); *Flags for Venice*, Swiss Institute, Venice (2011).

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