

In: ATP Diary

Conversation Piece | Part 3 — Claudia Wieser

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Conversation Piece | Part 3 —

Fondazione Memmo Arte Contemporanea presents **Conversation Piece | Part 3**, the third exhibition in a series curated by Marcello Smarrelli, and intended to chart the presence of Italian and foreign artists currently living in Rome or particularly attached to the city. The artists invited to this third exhibition are: **Jonathan Baldock**, **Piero Golia**, **Magali Reus** (Dutch fellow at the American Academy in Rome), **Claudia Wieser** (fellow at the Accademia Tedesca di Roma Casa Baldi).

The project was conceived with the aim of continually reviewing the contemporary art scene in Rome which is difficult to understand for the general public, but is a surprisingly active panorama dominated by the continuous activity of galleries, foundations, Academies and foreign cultural institutes where new generations of artists from all over the world, traditionally complete their education. Through these exhibitions and other activities, such as talks, workshops and performances, the Fondazione Memmo aims to support these institutions, which are considered vital in the maintenance and development of the contemporary visual arts and culture in Rome.

As for the previous editions, also for **Conversation Piece | Part 3** artists have been asked to reflect on a specific suggestion, linked to the nature of objects and their specific use in the artistic practice. «Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us – noted Marcel Proust – is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves, and not anything else, and by the immobility of our conception of them», so if we would approach things from other points of view, we should learn different and new answers that would otherwise remain unknown. This is one of the main themes of the most radical avant-garde movements of the twentieth century, such as Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, up to the end of the fifties to the New Dada, actually based on a new interest in the everyday object that the *junk culture*, revived through a process of *détournement*, leaving this interest as an inheritance to the movements born soon after: Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art.

It is about that principle of defamiliarization of an object proposed again by Jasper Johns in the early sixties with the statement: "Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it", that gave birth to a phenomenon that will be the *leitmotiv* of an entire generation of artists and critics.

The use of items borrowed directly from the everyday life reopens an ever-present issue within the discussion on the contemporary, revitalized by philosopher Arthur Danto in 1964 when, visiting the exhibition where Andy Warhol was exhibiting for the first time the



Claudia Wieser, *All that is*, 2016 Ceramic, wood, mirrors, MDF, copper, digital print - Courtesy Fondazione Memmo, Rome - Photo by Daniele Molajoli



— **Claudia Wieser, All that is, 2016 Ceramic, wood, mirrors, MDF, copper, digital print - Courtesy Fondazione Memmo, Rome - Photo by Daniele Molajoli**

series of Brillo Boxes, concluded that arts have –by that time- reached the maximum point of self-consciousness, because the work of art was no longer distinguishable from a commercial product: any object can be a work of art, even if not every work is separable from its time and if its “value” does not exclusively depend on the intrinsic or observables properties.

The works by Jonathan Baldock, Piero Golia, Magali Reus and Claudia Wieser, presented in this exhibition, want to give their opinion within this historical and complex debate by expressing, each one with its own language, the amazing and unexpected power of an everyday object that, thanks to the artist, enters into the “other” dimension of an exhibition space. (Press release)

Short interview with Claudia Wieser —

ATP: Regarding your stay in Rome: is there any artwork, place or artist that influenced you in some ways?

Claudia Wieser: It is unavoidable in Rome to look at ancient history as well as to the Renaissance period.

I was personally very drawn to the grandiosity and richness of the antique places even before I came to Rome. Of course it was a great pleasure to be able to spend more time than a normal tourist at some venues and being even able to come back. The structure of state and organisation of the Roman Empire I find really fascinating, as well as the cultural output. I can´t say that it directly influenced me in making art, also that takes a while to settle, but it was a real enrichment to be surrounded by this incredible richness of history. And the friendliness of the Roman people.

ATP: Which artwork will you show in “Conversation Piece”? Why did you choose it?

CW: I decided in accordance to the curators to show a heterogenous group of artworks, including digital prints for wallpaping, wooden sculptures, sculptures applied with ceramic tiles and mirror works which together built a special environment.

I very rarely think in single artworks I rather try to create different dialogues between the space, the works and the viewer. The works I have choosen for Conversation Piece / Part 3 helped establishing this dialogue. They were mainly object based and the used materials turned up to be well known in daily life like mirror, tiles, copper and wallpaper.



— Claudia Wieser, *All that is*, 2016 Ceramic, wood, mirrors, MDF, copper, digital print – Courtesy Fondazione Memmo, Rome – Photo by Daniele Molajoli

ATP: Regarding the subtitle of *Conversation Piece | Part 3* – “Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it” (Jasper Johns) -, which is your relationship with daily objects? How much do they affect your research?

CW: Coming from craftsmanship and working as a set designer for film productions before I started to make art I feel a strong relation to objects. Especially in making movie designs where a fake world is created and existing only in front of the camera lense, where objects have no real function outside the narrative and their contribution to a special atmosphere I got very much influenced for my later artwork. My work is often created in a way to balance on a thin line between design and art, decoration and art, function and art. I am not taking daily objects and transform them into an artwork – it is more that I create an object which is an artwork but suggests at the same time that it could have a second layer – being something else like furniture, a vase, a wallpaper etc. I am also interested in the additional information basically every objects gives us – in terms of history, function, atmosphere, shape, use etc. This very first undefined starting point of an artwork where you just have a first little moment of a vision is often triggered by a designed object. Nature, which I really enjoy, is in total opposition to that phenomenon, because it doesn't inspire me at all.

CLAUDIA WIESER (b. 1973, Freilassing, Germany). **Solo exhibitions** (selection): Studio SALES di Norberto Ruggeri, Rome (upcoming); *All That Is*, Arratia Beer, Berlin (2015); Lafayette, FIAC Paris (2015); *Container*, Sies+Höke, Düsseldorf (2014); *Galeria Casado Santapau*, Madrid (2014); *The Mirror*, Marianne Boesky Gallery, NY (2013); *Galerie Kamm*, Berlin (2013); *Wallwork # 8, L40*, Berlin (2012). **Group exhibitions** (selection): *Tantra Drawings: sites of transformation*, Drawing Room, London (2016); *Das Moment*, Neue Galerie Gladbeck (2016); *Homebase – vom Interieur in der Gegenwartskunst*, Kai 10, Düsseldorf (exh.cat.) (2016); *Thinking Tantra*, Jhaveri Contemporary Mumbai, India (2016); *Passing Leap*, Hauser+Wirth, NY; *Wo ist Hier? Malerei und Gegenwart*, Kunstverein Reutlingen (2014); *Brigadoon*, La Tolerie, Clermont-Ferrand, France (2013); *Pathfinder Part III, Moins Un*, Paris (2013); *Prix Canson Nominees*, Petit Palais Paris; *Goldrausch*, Villa Merkel, Esslingen (exh.cat.) (2013). *Claudia Wieser is currently in residence at Casa Baldi/ Villa Massimo, Rome.*