

Wallpaper*

Meet the Berlin-based artist melding Bauhaus and ancient Rome

By Elly Parsons

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Claudia Wieser's 'Shift' (left) at London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, with a selection of ancient Roman artefacts recovered during the site's restoration in the 1950s. *Photography: Dave Morgan*

What do Anni Albers, John Hurt and Caligula have in common? All have in some way inspired Claudia Wieser's eclectically referenced exhibition at the Bloomberg HQ in London. In the Bloomberg SPACE gallery – built directly above the ruins of an ancient Roman temple and underneath Stirling Prize-winning offices designed by Foster + Partners – the German artist has created a new installation that effortlessly timeshifts between the location's heritage and its contemporary architecture.

Wieser, who is currently exhibiting work with similar themes at San Francisco's Jessica Silverman Gallery, has long been inspired by the Roman Empire, and so was a natural choice for the Bloomberg commission. Here, Roman ruins slumber beneath the gallery, along with a selection of artefacts recovered during the site's restoration in the 1950s, which Wieser has responded to with a series of colourful tabletop wooden sculptures. She imagined the punch of colours as they might have been in Roman Londinium, when the objects were first created, alongside some 'notably contemporary' bright blues and pale pinks, that she thinks will appeal to the modern eye.



Installation view of 'Shift', by Claudia Wieser. London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, 2019. Photography: Dave Morgan

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Fractured mirrored works send disrupted reflections around the space – as if splicing a timeline – while vast swathes of collaged wallpaper feature fragments of images repurposed from the 1970s BBC production of *I, Claudius*, featuring the actor John Hurt as Caligula, plaited with strips of new photographs taken by the artist. Tiled benches (which Wieser encourages visitors to sit on) complete the varied installation, showcasing the breadth of her material and formal understanding. 'I trained as a blacksmith, which taught me to respect materials', she explains. 'And I also worked as a set designer on films, so understand the importance of spatial awareness in an exhibition.'

Wieser – who has exhibited widely across the United States and mainland Europe, but narrowly in London – hopes this exhibition will mark the start of a greater art affair with the city. She made a point of catching the Anni Albers exhibition at Tate Modern during her brief and busy stay in the capital, noting how the artist has 'long inspired her work'. Nowhere is this more evident than on Wieser's hand-painted tiles, which patchwork colourfully as if formed on a loom. This nod to historical German design cleverly roots the exhibition in yet another seasonable timeframe: the Bauhaus centenary, which continues to be celebrated across Europe this year.



Installation view of 'Shift' at London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE. *Photography: Dave Morgan*



Installation view of 'Forum' at Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. *Courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery*