

# ARTFORUM

Claudia Wieser: "The Fog at Bay"

By Andrew Berardini

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View of FOG Design + Art at Fort Mason Pier 2 and Pier 3, San Francisco, 2024. Photo: Nikki Ritcher / FOG Design + Art.

## Andrew Berardini visits FOG Design + Art

The long, low growl of a foghorn played its lonesome song over the dark waters of the San Francisco Bay, while from the mouths of two enclosed piers bright lights and festive music twinkled and tinkled over all those gowned and suited for the gala opening of FOG Design + Art. Ten years deep, the latest edition expanded to a second pier—FOG FOCUS—a smaller, invitational space for nine galleries to showcase artists younger and less represented than those at the forty-five galleries clustered on Pier 3.

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Seeking a little focus of my own, I slipped into the slimmer pier, passing by two tables stacked with effervescing champagne and bruised pink palomas, hastily poured, and immediately ran into critic Glen Helfand. He remarked that we were in the former student studios of the sadly defunct San Francisco Art Institute. Artist Lindsey White (recently returned to California after a sojourn in Chicago) stepped into our conversation and took a long look around herself, glasses surveying and reflecting on what it once was. Someone pointed out the blazered heir to the gap fortune, and that's when I knew I was really in the Bay.



Books or Goods at FOG Design + Art 2024. Photo: Glen C. Cheriton / FOG Design + Art.

Beyond a large booth devoted to the wondrous Creative Growth, Creativity Explored, and NIAD, I chatted briefly with bearded and beanieed Luca Antonucci of Colpa Press, who was helming a series of tables as BOG (Books or Goods), representing twenty-five different Bay Area artist book publishers. Beyond, the fair stretched with art to be sure, but a few sofas were on sale as well. An art-cum-furniture fair feels patently uncool on paper (perhaps it's just my own inbuilt prejudices speaking here), but it works much better in practice. The stark white booths had cozy, sophisticated living rooms tucked between them, walls warmly colored and cushioned divans invitingly placed amid objets d'art. The art and design model invited some art gallerists to create installations within the living rooms, including the Bay's own CULT Aimee Friberg, which offered an attractive array of bronze and felt shapeshifters from Shinto lore by Masako Miki, along with a pale-blue mural sweeping around and under a suite of watercolors. A booth over, the dazzling patterns of quilted figures by Adana Tillman at Jonathan Carver Moore added their own shivering softness.

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Not far away, I ran into Los Angeles artist Rosha Yaghmai standing astride her installation of paintings from her "Afterimages" series at Commonwealth and Council. Catching their shimmer just so, I remarked on their lenticular qualities; the artist gently added that they were of course acrylic and ink on organza. sfmoma's Eungie Joo warmly invited us both to a performance at the museum that week by Abraham Cruzvillegas as I moseyed back into the flow and out toward the next section of the fair.



Masako Miki's works at CULT Aimee Friberg's booth at FOG Design + Art 2024. Photo: Glen C. Cheriton / FOG Design + Art.

The second pier, holding the bulk of exhibiting galleries—including blue-chippers like David Zwirner and Hauser & Wirth—was really where the action was, with chattering crowds spilling through the aisles. Every few steps, the bars poured bottomless drinks and numerous stands served smorgasbords of food, the sound and scent of grilling meat and veggies wafting through the air, all of which felt quite civilized in creature comforts for an art fair. Passing through the opening hallway, this part of the fair began with strong declarations from some of the Bay's proudest players: Jessica Silverman, Fraenkel, Pt. 2 Gallery, and Anthony Meier.

Right at the front, a massive collection of works by Claudia Wieser at Silverman—replete with polychromatic geometries, polished mirrors, angular wood sculptures, and ceramic tiles paired with wallpaper and tapestries—gently traipsed the line between art and design with a special aplomb, ideal for the fair's thematics. At Anthony Meier, a massive polished-wood totem by JB Blunk rose near battered record spines of bands Dave Muller saw in the Bay, which hung in earshot of some gorgeously painted dollar talismans by Sarah Cain. Deeper into the fair at Gladstone Gallery, crowds (along with the few children in attendance) delighted in the animatronic

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fluttering contained in kelp-lined lanterns by Anicka Yi (coincidentally enjoying a yearlong season of regard at the nearby Wattis Institute at the California College of the Arts).

Before slipping out of the fair, I passed through the little shop of Park Life, where hung a bag designed by artist Tucker Nichols that, in screen-printed letters, read:

"I SUR  
VIVED  
THE SF  
DOOM  
SPIRAL"



Claudia Wieser's works at Jessica Silverman's booth at FOG Design + Art 2024. Photo: Glen C. Cheriton / FOG Design + Art.

"The Bay is not without challenges . . ." read one wall text near the entrance to the fair. And this darkling world certainly curled around the edges of all this fanfare as I heard in the aisles a few conversations about the upcoming elections and the catastrophic tragedy of the war in Gaza. Art can feel to many a frivolity amid such oncoming and ongoing tragedies, and seeing it at a fair even more so, but amid its luxury commerce, I still find the prospect of art, a foghorn in the shadows, just enough to guide me out of the fair and back out through the darkness.

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