

## Abacus – An Architecture of Images

A picture, is a picture, is a picture. So far, so good. When it is finished and functions as an image, it is self-explanatory, self-justifying and symbiotically connected to the subject. The road that gets one there is long and full of decisions, deliberations, mistakes, trials and risks. First comes the *what* and then comes the *how* – *form follows function* – as it does in architecture. Yet for Tino Geiss the *what* is not a function, but an object of his free interest. A motif with which he wants to grapple and engage in an hour-long dialogue, which interests him in terms of content and form. In Geiss' work, these chiefly are interior spaces – deserted, but full of the legacies of their inhabitants. The rooms are not just furnished, they are designed, inhabited – archives of a cultural memory. Carpets, armchairs, upholstery, pictures, many pictures, lamps, chandeliers, plants, shelves, books, many books, curtains, windows, patterns. Patterns on cushions, patterns of the armchairs, the curtains, patterns of the carpets, pictures that in their blurriness are primarily readable as patterns, patterns of the wallpaper and a giant monstera whose leaves protrude into the room as a three-dimensional pattern. All manifestations of their inhabitants, most of whom left the rooms some time ago. And as powerful as the interiors were, so were their inhabitants. Otherwise they would no longer exist – neither as a place nor as an image. They would not exist as an image, on the one hand for practical reasons, because Tino Geiss would not have visited them, and on the other hand because they would not interest him. All objects refer to their absent creators, tell their story. Just as black holes are detectable only through their effect on their surroundings, so

are the inhabitants of the rooms – invisible and yet still present as the sum of manifestations: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Alfred Nobel or Charles and Ray Eames.

But it is not only the living spaces of famous personalities that inspire Tino Geiss, but also libraries or archives, places of concentrated cultural knowledge, in which the number of books and their age correspond with the flair of the ambience.

With the details and the accompanying stronger emergence of the interior's peculiarity, namely the sophisticated form, colour gave way from Tino Geiss' pictures. Previously expressively coloured and only vaguely hinting at the specific location, colour has now given way to create space for the specific details, for the rhythm. Mainly kept in black and white, the sparsely and selectively used colour only points to the light entering the room. There are no coloured objects, only prismatic spots of light in yellow, red or blue that refract somewhere on the wall, ceiling or table leg. One is automatically drawn into the setting, which, by the omission of the colour, appears as if in absolute twilight, or in the darkened languid 12 o'clock midday sunlight. One feels one's way forward, from form to form.

And not only the viewer has this searching, caressing gaze that draws in and empathises. The way one reads a picture is not by chance – it is the notions of the originator, the author that one follows with one's own imagination.

Esther Niebel, July 2022