

**The purpose of this investigation is to analyse how the collection and composition of heterogeneous images into larger units can evoke imageries accordingly to different purposes. For this reason I decided to investigate a famous work by Annibale Carracci based on an important collection of antiquities, Gustav Klimt's decoration for the Secession Building and a contemporary artwork by Claudia Wieser dealing with the imagery of Classicism and its political implications.**

## *Waiting in the Wings*

**Claudia Wieser  
(1973-present)**

*Museo di Arte Contemporanea, Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy, April 14<sup>th</sup> 2017- June 18<sup>th</sup> 2017*

The artwork by German artist Claudia Wieser is a site-specific installation, made exclusively for the Salone in Villa Croce. The intervention by Wieser can be seen in two different ways: exhibition with three pieces of work or, one exhibition with only one work (how I interpreted it). The art work consists in a wallpaper on the main staircase in the contemporary art museum, a former villa built in late 19<sup>th</sup> century's according to eclectic style. The first section of the work takes up the wall adjacent to the first set of stairs, the second section of the art work takes up the wall adjacent to the second set of stairs, and the third section takes up the wall adjacent to the third set of stairs. Between each set of stairs there is a landing that connects them and the art work continues through all the three walls. The work itself is a collage of images combining roman sculptures and Wieser's own sculptures, photographs of a woman's eye and feet (of other two women), geometric shapes and a staircase.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Claudia Wieser, *Waiting in the Wings*, 2017, environmental size, wallpaper and gold leaf, Villa Croce, Genova

The art work made by Wieser was inspired from BBC's TV series (70s), based on the Roman Empire, called "I Claudius". The collection of images is very specific since all of them are photographs of other objects. The art work's subjects are from ancient times (Greek and Roman) but they are seen through the lenses of a new environment. The images are all combined between one another.

The **first wallpaper** has a **combination of images** of modern sculptures made by the artist, ancient vases and a great staircase. The staircase (**red** rectangle) connects directly with the actual staircase (**green** rectangle) present in the untouched environment the artist chose to work on. This strong, and evident, connection between the two gives to the art work the possibility of placing itself harmoniously with the environment rather than disrupt it. Other parts of this first wallpaper connect it with the chosen site, for example the type of decorations of the vase (**yellow** rectangles) being the same type as the stucco decoration (**orange** rectangle) on top of the whole art work.

Figure 6

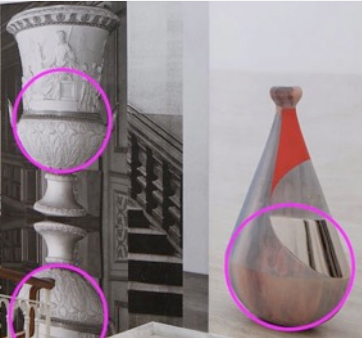
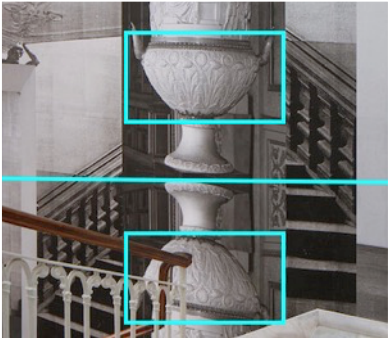


Figure 7



Analysing the **second façade**, the first visible connection to the first façade is the fact that also this one connection very harmoniously with its surrounding environment, not only for the connection between the amount of light grey, but also for the ornaments of the site and the ones on the Roman statue (**orange** rectangles). Another noticeable factor present also in the second facades is the use of repetition between different images and within different images. The most evident is the collage of the Roman sculpture than in two different parts repeats part of the image, the first one being the shoulder and the second one being part of the eye and mouth (**yellow** and **green** rectangles). This repetition between the image resembles the movement of the stairs going either upwards or downwards, and implements the idea of the art work ‘helping’ the viewer climb the staircase.



Figure 10

The second repetition is between the ‘cut eye’ effect (above) and the crop from a woman’s eye photograph placed right afterwards (**magenta** rectangles). This repetition, instead of connection the art work to the environment it connects the images between one another. By doing so, the artist created some sort of connection between past and present, or recent past, as the eye make up let me suppose.

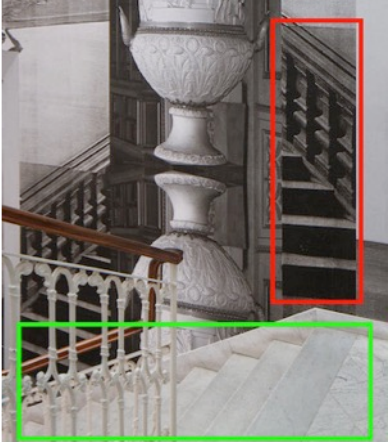


Figure 4



Figure 5

The art work isn’t only able to install a connection with the environment it was created but, most importantly, it has a harmony within itself. For example, still in the first wall, the artist used two completely different images, with different subjects, from different time periods, one in colour and one in black and white and connected them through their shape, especially their semi-circular closure and the end of them (**magenta** circles). The other part of the art work that creates repetition and therefore harmony between the elements is the fact that the vase is mirroring upside down (light **cyan** rectangles).



Figure 8

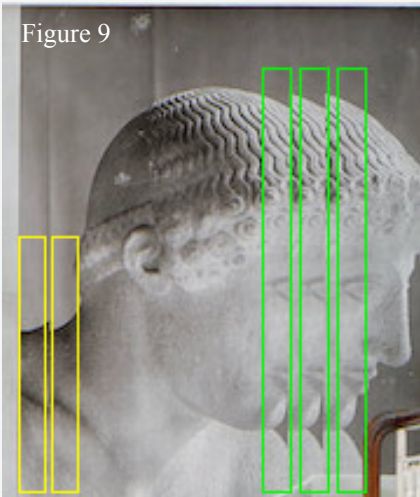
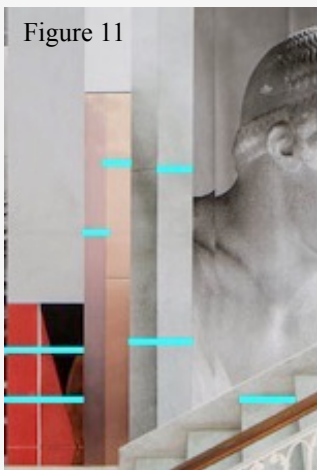


Figure 9



Figure 11



There is also another type of repetition present in this **second façade**. The repetition of lines throughout the whole façade. At first this repetition isn't extremely noticeable but after a while I was able to spot it. The constant use of lines, both vertical and horizontal adds to the connection between different parts of the art work but also it adds to the composition of the art work in regards to the staircase (cyan lines).

Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

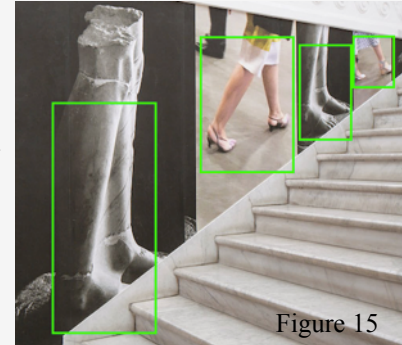


Figure 15

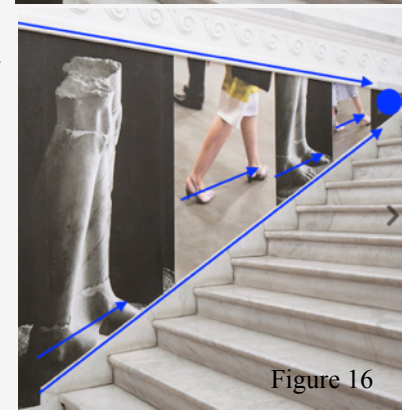
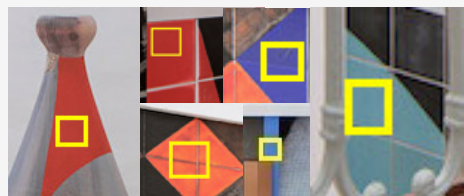


Figure 16

The **third façade** is less related to the first ones in terms of composition but it shares the same formal aspects when dealing with the colour palette and the repetition within the image. The first visible repetition within the third façade is the one of the Roman sculpture, there are three photographs of the same sculpture, taken from the same point-of-view but with different dimensions (cyan rectangles), to follow the shape of the staircase. These fragments of photos are divided by two colour photographs, shot in modern times, of women's legs, two different women walking in the same direction (magenta rectangles). Also this is a repetition within the work even if it's a different from the repetition of the sculpture's photograph. For the sculpture it was the same image cut in different ways, while for the women's legs it's two different images, depicting different women, in the same position, with a very similar cut. There is a third repetition, which is all the legs put together, they are placed one after the other and even if they are different photographs they all depict a pair of legs pointing in one direction (green rectangles). This type of composition resembles the one of the second wall, since even if the eye of the sculpture and the women's eye were different, they were a repetition of the same subject in two different contexts.

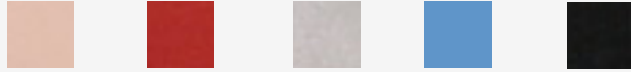
The three wallpapers are connected with each other also because of the colour palette. Specifically, the third wall shares the red and blue with the other two walls (yellow rectangles).

The most important aspect of this third wallpaper is the idea that the art work is 'helping the viewer' to climb the stairs and arrive to the top. While in the previous two walls the idea suggested through repetition and rhythm, the last one express it explicitly with the images of the legs in a combination of repetition and direction, clearly indicated by the the sculpture and the women (blue arrows). All the images in this last part of the wallpaper give a specific direction to the eye. The eye of the viewer is bound to start from the biggest image, follow the direction of the feet and arrive to the last one, almost impossible to detect. Therefore, the wallpaper is able to escort the visitors up the staircase without disrupting the environment but rather by working with it. Wieser created an art work conceived to adjust harmoniously to it's site instead of creating something that would discompose the view of the staircase.



Figures 17-22

## Colour



The art work is all based on these five hues, pink, red, grey, light blue and black. The most common of the five is the grey one since all the roman sculptures (head, column and vase) and the staircase are black and white images. This choice plays a really important role in the artwork because it gives it a linear movement through the three different walls and connects the work with the marble steps, the white walls and the stucco decorations surrounding it. The black is used less prevalent but it relates, as the grey, with the environment around the art work. The red is the binding colour between the three façades since it is minimal but present in all three wallpapers. In contrast to the red, the pink and the light blue's purpose isn't to bind the three facades, but rather to connect the images of the single wallpaper between one another. Even if the images are connected through the use of style and repetition the two hues make the connection between the different single images more evident. Overall such a reduced colour palette recalls both the neoclassical taste for pure white statues and the black and white images of old art history books.

The artist also choses to use gold leaf, which is the only component of the art work that isn't a photograph. The use of the gold leaf is mainly to separate the different sections of the wallpaper but at the same time connect them between one another. This is shown from the fact that all the divisions are of different height, colour and dimensions but they are all made from gold leaf. Therefore, the gold leaf is used to increment the idea that the wallpaper wants to show that even if they are completely different images in terms of year, technique and subject of the painting, they have something that keeps them connected.

## Texture

Another factor that connects the elements of the wallpaper between one another is the grainy texture that accompanies most of the images. This type of texture is present in the photos of the sculptures because of their natural texture. It is also present in the woman's photograph because of the background that the artist creates for her. On top of the woman's face there are small square-like blue spots, evenly spread, at first invisible to the eye. This effect on the woman's eyes is an effect generated by the plotter and not made intentionally by the artist. Even though the texture of the sculpture and the face aren't the same they resemble one another and this adds unity to the work.

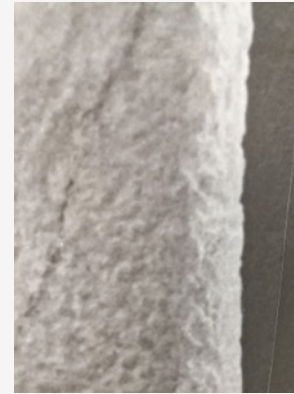


Figure 23



Figure 24

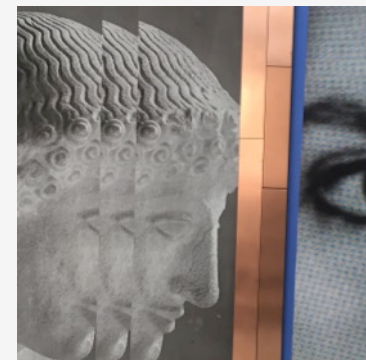


Figure 25



## Function and Cultural Significance

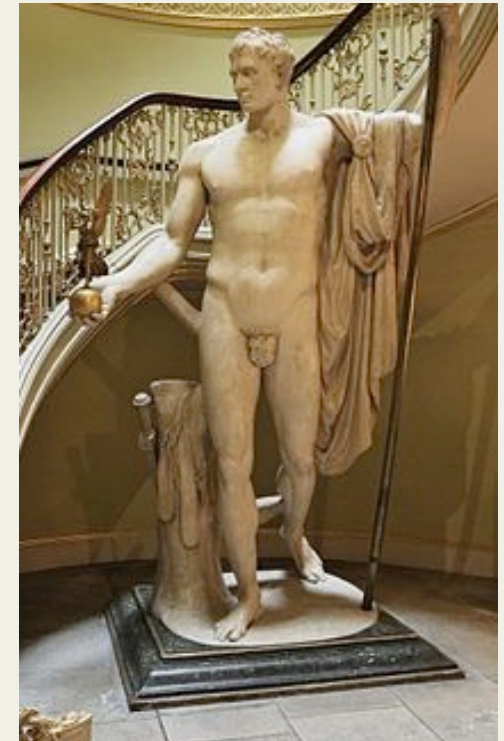
In an interview about her intervention at Villa Croce published by the online contemporary art magazine ATP, Claudia Wieser claims: “in this case I wanted to include a political dimension, just as a loose association, about power, repetition and violence, all these things which happened thousands of years ago [...] and are happening again in our present reality.” I think that such a reference to her work as having a political dimension is interesting to understand the function and the meaning of her intervention. No doubt, *Waiting in the Wings* relates to an almost absolute dimension to Classicism and Neoclassicism, an aesthetic stance for which the ideal beauty of ancient Greek and Roman art embodies the ideas of power and purity. Hence the association between classicism and propaganda, demonstrated for example in artworks such as Antonio Canova’s *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* or the introduction scenes of the Nazis documentary *Olympia* (Leni Riefenstahl, 1938). Even considering this connection, I disagree with the artist’s statement. The function of her work is mainly decorative. It fits harmoniously with the environment, making it beautiful and does not stand out with any emotional impact or expressive strength. I think that a political work would have turned completely around the site it was in, making ‘him’ the protagonist of the whole scene. Wieser’s work is no more than a decoration exactly for what I stated before, it accompanies the viewers up the great staircase.

After making these considerations though, I thought the meaning of the art work could be hidden behind its appearance. The practice of repetition associated with the idea of repeated violence and the recurrent resurrection of classicism as a distinctive feature of Western history may refer to something that is so obvious that it is no longer visible. As a matter of fact, in present time our society got so accustomed to violence that we aren’t even surprised by it and we see it as normal. Knowing this, it’s possible that the art work fell into the ‘decorative function’ purposely because we are so used with violence being a part of our society that it became a decoration in our lives and we take the idea of being in a ‘violent world’ as granted as inadmissible.

Even if I don’t agree with the artist under idea of the ‘political dimension’ of the artwork I do believe that it does have more layers than what one can think according to how it initially presents itself. Indeed its kaleidoscopic, multifaceted use of images and imagery connecting history, art and pop culture, objects and their representation, space and time well reflects our contemporary condition.

The most important thing about this art work is the questions it arises: what is the role of images in our experience of reality? Since the invention of photography, images managed to create a dimension where reality could be changed, distorted, improved and even deleted. In her work Wieser does exactly this, she manages to use her primal perception of reality but she then decides to change it, to place it somewhere it isn’t used to being, but at the same time fits with everything surrounding it. Living in an era where everything that has to be created has already been created or is being created, Wieser managed to show reality from a different point-of-view and let us rethink at our position in it.

Figure 26



Antonio Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1802-1806, white marble, gilded bronze, 345 cm, Apsley House, London

# *The Loves of the Gods*

Galleria Farnese, Rome, Italy, 1597

## **Annibale Carracci (1560-1609)**

Galleria Farnese is a site-specific art work with high cultural significance for two reasons: it serves as a model for future baroque decorations and is a vivid representation of classic imagery. The composition of the Galleria was created by artist Annibale Carracci (b. 1560 d. 1609), under commission of Cardinal Odoardo (Alessandro Farnese's great grandchild). Odoardo decided to have depicted the paintings of Alessandro Farnese's collection which had mythological subjects. Annibale Carracci designed a simple but effective strategy for arranging images on the vault. There are two main aspects that are of extreme importance: the overlapping of the paintings and the decorations. These two aspects are connected in a metamorphic process obtained thanks to the use of grisaille painting and colour images.

The overall structure of the art work is extremely symmetrical because if the vault was folded on it self the position of the paintings would be identical on both sides. This symmetry is a contrast with the composition of the images, since, as explained before, all the components of the art work overlap between one another, which creates a sensation of chaos. The contrast between the perfect symmetry of the structure of the paintings and the chaos of their composition makes the vault more interesting to the eye because it's as if there was a battle going on, order against chaos.

Annibale Carracci, *The Loves of the Gods*, 1560-1609, fresco, Galleria Farnese, Rome

Figure 27

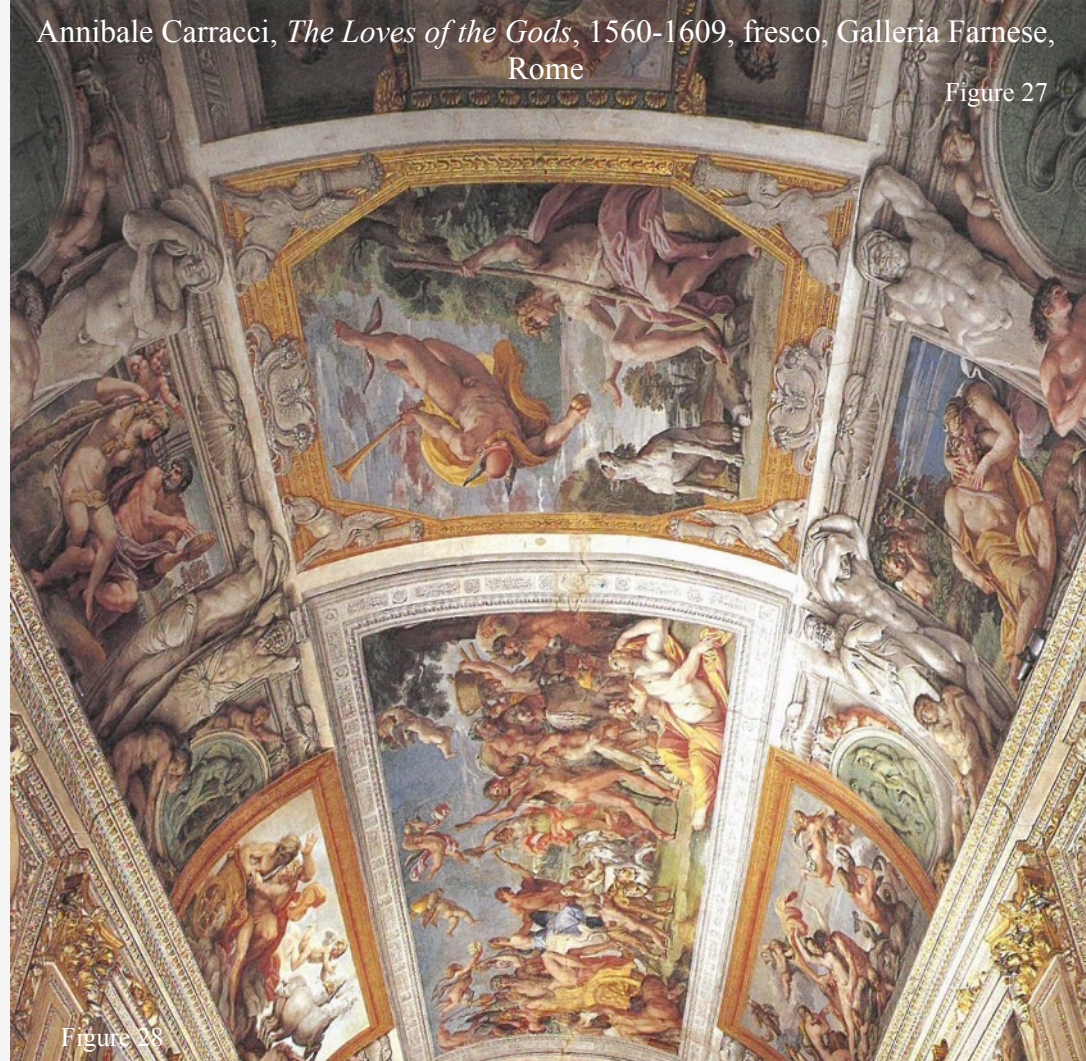
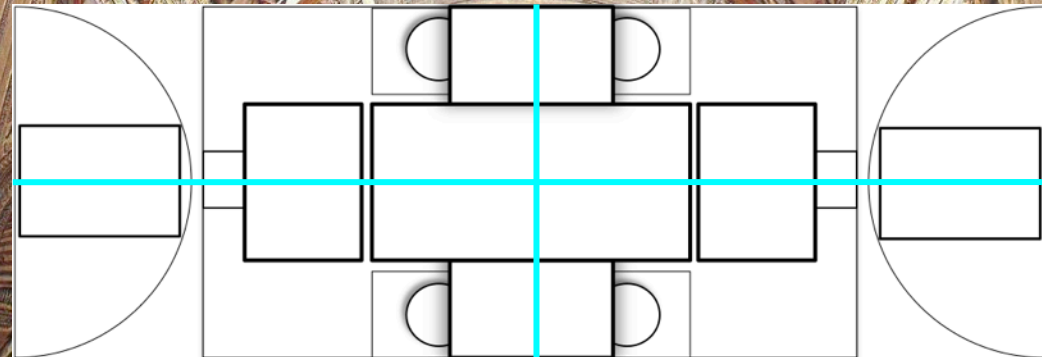


Figure 28





The first noticeable overlap is the one found within the individual paintings of the vault. All the figures in the paintings tend to overlap between one another, which creates a multi-layered effect on the paintings. This type of multi-layered space is also generated by the cluttering of the bodies. Thanks to this stylistic choice every painting has its own unique form and movement (cyan rectangles).

The overlap within the painting is not the only important aspect of the vault, to make the composition of the figures even more intersected, the artist decided to also make the painted frames, sculptures and people overlap between one another (magenta rectangles). The interaction between the elements that surround the individual paintings creates a combining effect. All the paintings share the same subject: depiction of the Gods and have all overlapping figures. This shows that the different paintings aren't only connected through the thematic point-of-view (Gods) but also by a physical, tangible connection (overlapping figures).

The overlapping of the people in the paintings and the overlapping of the frames, sculptures and people create a powerful effect based on forms cluttered in a way that was not seen before. The whole vault is in two dimensions but Carracci decided to not only give a new life to the antiquities held in Farnese's collection but also make classic mythology come to life in a way. The stereometric rendering creates the illusion that these paintings were actually rested on the ceiling and moved from their original location to the vault with their frames.

The parts of the vault that really create such an illusionary space are especially those where the statues overlap with the people (green rectangles). In order to create the illusion of the form and texture an actual statue would transfer to the viewer, Carracci used grisaille paint. Since grisaille paint is a monochromatic paint it created the perfect optical illusion for the painted statues to resemble marble statues.

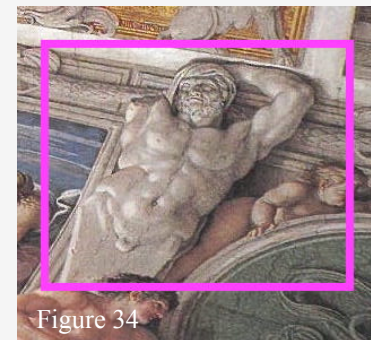
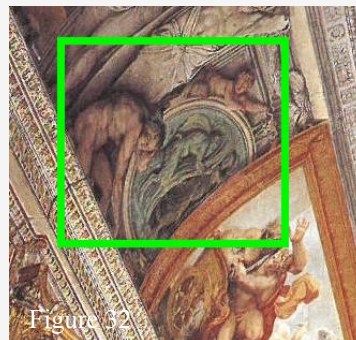
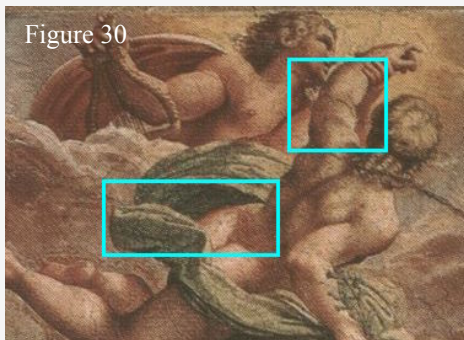
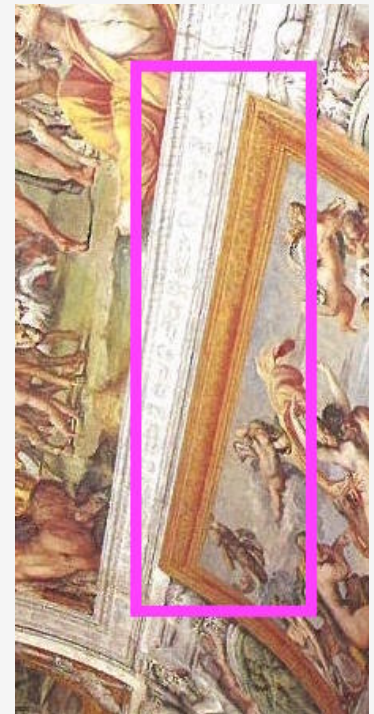
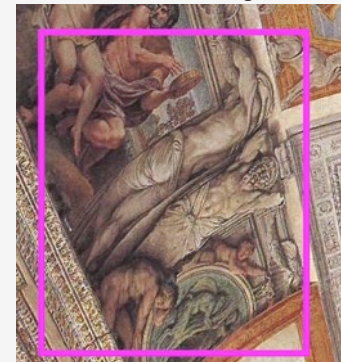
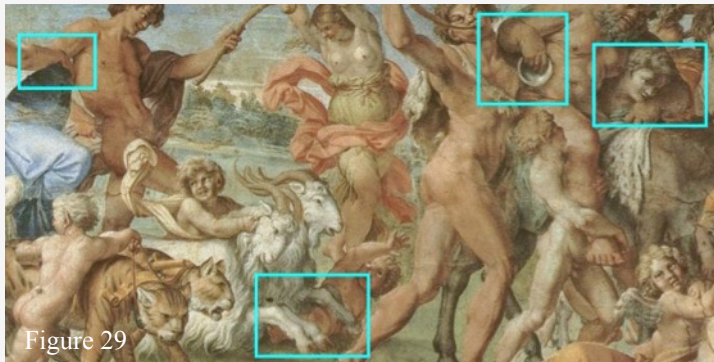


Figure 33

Figure 35

Figure 31

Figure 29

Figure 30

Figure 32

Figure 34



Another feature in the art work is the **movement** present in the illusory stucco figures and in the paintings. This movement in the art work will be commonly used in Baroque art. The curved features in the paintings, in the statues and people, not only show a continuity between the type of body that was appreciated at the time but it adds a sense of motion throughout the whole art piece.

Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 41



Figure 40



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



The fresco painting in its whole is divided in four main **layers** and four sub layers (from closest to farthest): 1) humans, 2) sculptures, 3) a) frames b) ornaments 4) a) paintings b) white background. The humans included in the art work are probably the most noticeable (after the paintings), not because of their volume, but because they are painted with the highest level of accuracy and detail. They are in the first part of the painting, to create the illusion of them being actually attached to the paintings, they have to be more accurate since if they were actually there, the human eye could see them with greater detail than the paintings (red rectangle). The second layer of the art work is the one depicting the statues. These statues are similar to the people but they are covered sometimes by the bodies of the people.

The third layer is actually contained by two minor layers, sometimes one is on top of the other one and vice versa. These two layers are the ornaments and the frames. In some occasions the ornaments are on top of the frames, but for example the rounded ornament is actually behind one of the paintings' frames (ornaments, magenta rectangles; frames, yellow rectangles). The last layer, which also contains two sub layers, is the part of the paintings and the background. To increase the level of symmetry and contrast the chaos in the paintings the artist decided to create some type of 'boundaries' that divide the paintings between one another. Therefore, the last two layers are the paintings themselves and the white coat that helps the separation between them (white coat, green rectangle; paintings, cyan rectangle).



*The Loves of the Gods* follows a social function because it celebrates the connection still vivid and strong within the Farnese family. This is first seen from the decision made by Odoardo Farnese of having the Carracci brothers recreate paintings from Alessandro Farnese's personal collection. The frescos derived from the idea of making an homage to the family and 'paying respect' to the cultural influence the Farnese family had in Rome. The decision of depicting the *idea* behind the Farnese family as powerful was extremely important because it set the tone for the choices in technique Carracci made while making the frescos. At the time the fresco was commissioned to Carracci he was an important emerging artist. Normally these type of artists would be commissioned to decorate churches or public places because they were emerging promising artists who asked large sums for their works. Because the work itself was so challenging and at the same time private choosing an artist who was already very famous for his works showed the importance and power the family had in the Italian (especially Rome) society at that time.



The fresco vault by Carracci is considered one of the milestone work of art, which revolutionized the monumental fresco paintings. What made his fresco so interesting and innovative is the invention of a syntax combining vividly conceit images, objects and imagery. Carracci managed to depict classicism keeping the fundamental ideas and the common subject matters but rendered the whole representation active and powerful. His interpretation of Classicism especially stood out because of the use of powerful volume through the illusory painted decorations and figures. The replicas from the Farnese collection did not undergo changes but the whole piece is a revolutionizing work and the basis for Baroque art. Carracci's piece served for the basis of Baroque art because of the metamorphosis from the paintings to the sculptures to the decorations.

Glykon von Athen Lysippos, *Farnese Hercules*, 216 AD, 3.17 m, marble, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples

# Beethoven Frieze

Secession Building, Vienna, Austria, 1902

**Gustav Klimt**  
(1862-1918)

*Beethoven Frieze* by Gustav Klimt, held still today at the Secession Building in Vienna, originates as a decorative fresco painting which would accompany the other art works (Klinger's "Beethoven", Bohm's *The Coming of Day* and Roller's *Night Falls*). The location of the frieze and time period plays an extremely important role in the comprehension of both stylistic and conceptual meaning. The Secession Building, of which Klimt was president, was created by Vienna Secession art movement formed by few Viennese artists who revolted against the Association of Austrian Artists. The building's architectural style was done following Art Nouveau and made specifically to accommodate and embody the different artistic needs of each individual exhibition. The 1902 exhibition at the Secession was made as an homage to "struggling artistic genius that suffers for the benefit of mankind," (Bisanz-Prakken, 23): Ludwig van Beethoven. The frieze's original position (almost identical to the current one) was in a room, with completely white walls and an opening on Klinger's "Beethoven" on the right wall. It is divided in three façades, all depicting a different theme and placed about 2 meters from ground level.

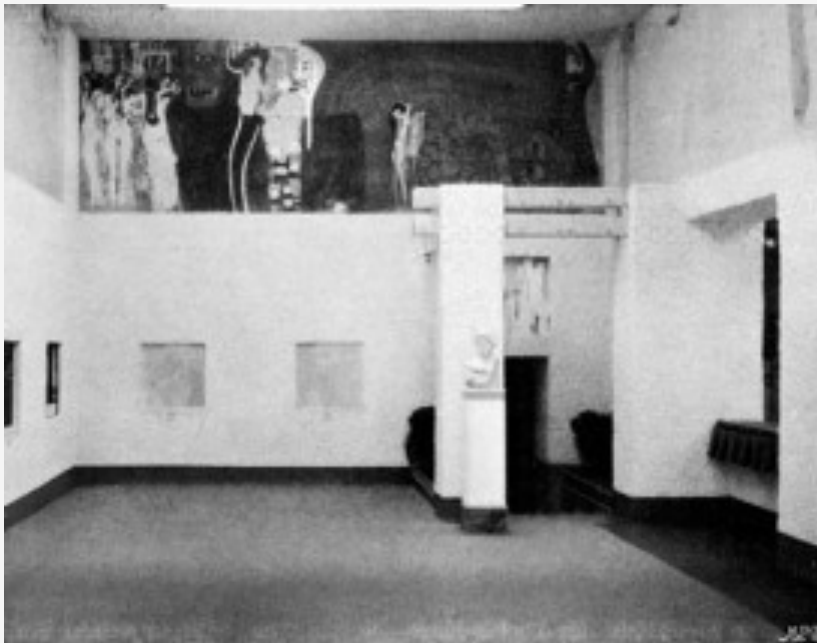


Figure 46

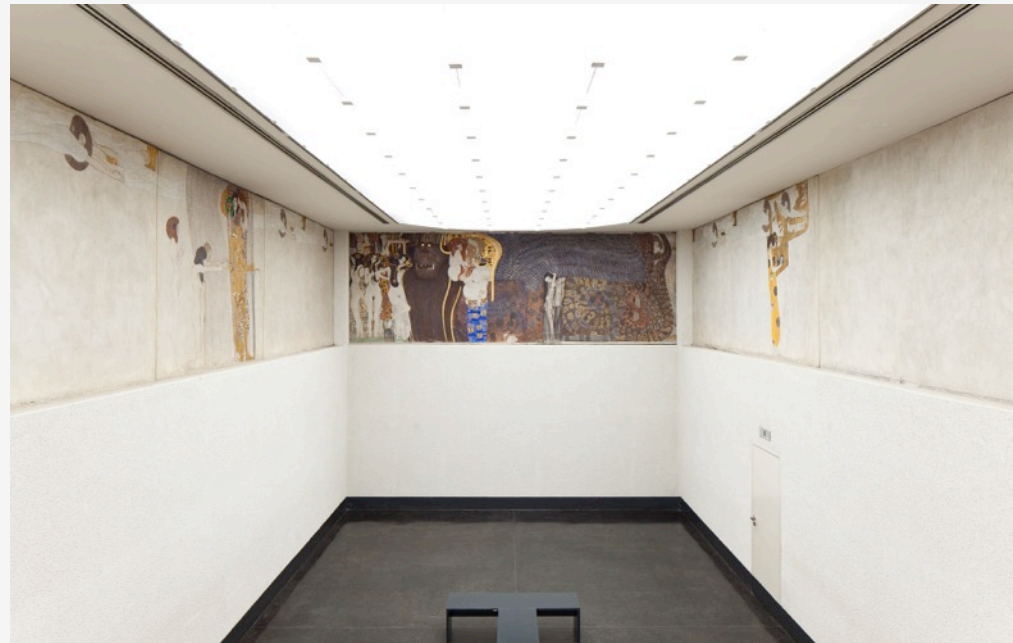
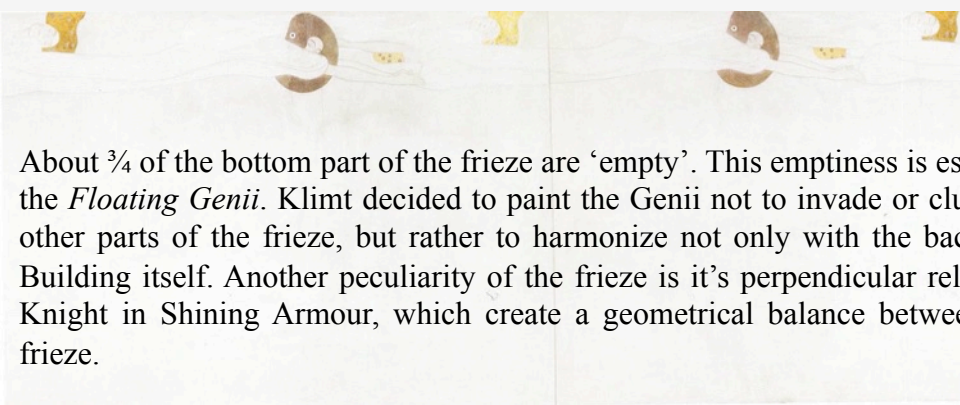


Figure 47

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*, 1900-1902, 2,15 x 34 m, Casein paint, gold and graphite, Secession Building, Vienna



The **left wall**, *Yearning for Happiness*, is divided in three sub-works: Floating Genii, Suffering Humanity and Knight in Shining Armour, Ambition and Compassion. There are three main features in this first wall: space, fluidity of images and use of colour (specifically gold). The first part of the left wall is characterized by the “Floating Genii”. Three fourths of the wall are completely figureless and are only tinted with a light grey, which sets the colour for the skin of all the figures depicted in the frieze. The upper one fourth of the wall hosts the figure of seven Genii connected between one another. Klimt decided to represent the figures of the Genii with the use of lines connecting all seven of them. They blend with the background of the wall both for the light grey colour that Klimt used for the background, the skin and the dresses of the Genii and for the light lines that make their figures. This first part of the frieze is harmoniously put together and resembles perfectly a musical piece, rendering the homage to Beethoven. The artistic representation of music suggests a tranquil piece of music with occasional high/low (piano/forte) notes represented by the colour of the Genii’s hair since the first and the fifth have dark golden hair, the second, fourth and sixth have brown hair and the third and last have light golden hair.



About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the bottom part of the frieze are ‘empty’. This emptiness is essential to the frieze to emphasise the *Floating Genii*. Klimt decided to paint the Genii not to invade or clutter the space, as can be seen in other parts of the frieze, but rather to harmonize not only with the background but also the Secession Building itself. Another peculiarity of the frieze is its perpendicular relation between the Genii and the Knight in Shining Armour, which create a geometrical balance between the different elements of the frieze.

The **centre wall** of the frieze stands in complete opposition to the other two parts that enclose it. The central façade is the one that mostly stood out when I saw the frieze, firstly because of the use of dark hues and secondly because of the clustering images. The wall *Hostile Forces* is completely coloured, with exception of the Three Gorgons, Lasciviousness, Wantonness, and Intemperance’s striking white skin.

The line of the Genii is abruptly interrupted by the portrayal of what Klimt refers to as Suffering Humanity, a Knight in Shining Armour enclosed between Ambition and Compassion. To represent the Suffering Humanity Klimt depicted three figures (one woman standing up and one woman and one man kneeling), extremely pale and meagre, showing an extreme fragility. The technique used for the three humans is very similar to the Genii, with the exception that the lines are more visible and their bodies are geometric, angular, instead of harmonious. The three humans are directed towards the Knight in Shining Armour, who is ‘accompanied’ by the figures of two women, representing Ambition (left) and Compassion (right). Ambition and Compassion are the two characteristics ‘guarding’ the knight. The knight is definitely the protagonist of this first part of the frieze and in the musical piece he would be the part when the whole orchestra plays together transferring a range of powerful emotions. In this part of the frieze there is a crescendo from the Suffering Humanity to the Knight in Shining Armour, Ambition and Compassion. Then there is an abrupt decrescendo from the Knight in Shining Armour to again the delicate image of the remaining three Genii.

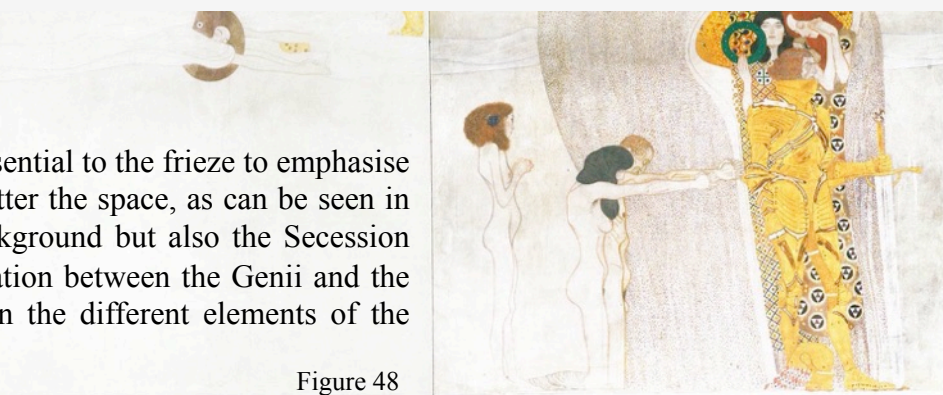
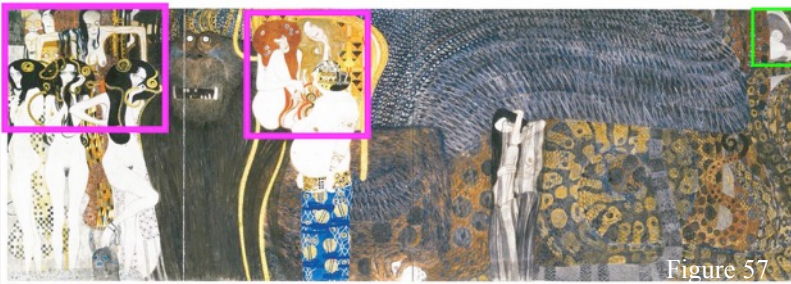
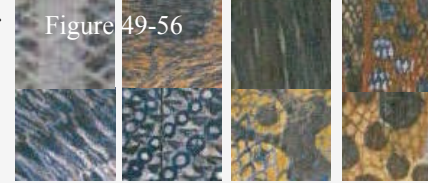


Figure 48

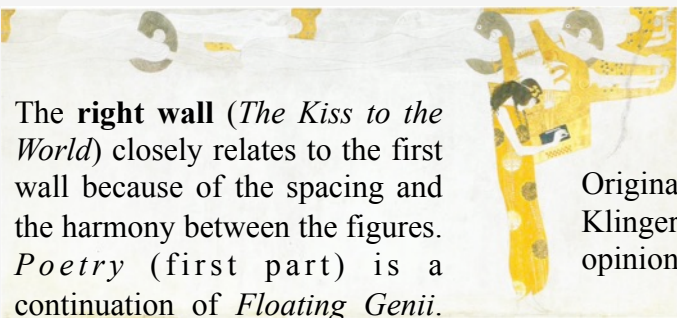
One of the most impactful elements of *Hostile Forces* is Klimt’s use of textures throughout the whole wall and especially the background mixing with Typhoeus’ body. Only for Typhoeus there are eight different textures to continue the movement present also in the first wall (through the Genii). *Hostile Forces* is the *fortissimo* of the art work because it has many strong and impactful elements.

The eight different textures which make up Typhoeus' body in the **centre wall** are the most significant aspect of the wall that make the figures active, unstable. The different textures are not completely different between one another. Klimt managed to make all the textures different but connected with one another, having every textures recreate an element of another one. In *Hostile Forces* Typhoeus' body is what gives a melodic tune to the wall because they recreate the gestures of a conductor.



In addition to the multitude of textures, the clustering of figures (**magenta** rectangles) is the element which gives movement and personality to this third wall. Even though the frieze has overlapping figures also in the first and third wall, in this 'intermediate step' it is highly stressed. This overlapping transfers the feeling of chaos and perdition. The sense of perdition is not only transferred through the clustering figures but also through the use of multiple different hues (black, blue, orange, yellow and red). Another striking element of this wall is the fact that Klimt added a Genii on the top right of the frieze in order to connect it with the other two walls even though it is the most different one (**green** rectangle).

Figure 58



The **right wall** (*The Kiss to the World*) closely relates to the first wall because of the spacing and the harmony between the figures. *Poetry* (first part) is a continuation of *Floating Genii*. The composition is exactly the same as the other Genii but it ends with two Genii overlapping almost completely, which recalls the overlapping in *Hostile Forces*. There is a third element: poetry, represented by a woman with a lyre. The woman is another representation of divine figures because she opposes completely the representation of humanity in the first wall. In terms of music *Poetry* represents a small *crescendo* between two *pianissimos*.

The second part of the third wall has no title and it is an empty space coloured with the same hue as all the empty spaces in the frieze.

Originally it served as an open space, presenting Klinger's sculpture. Seeing it today it seems, in my opinion, a vital component to the frieze.



It has the responsibility of making the ending stand out and leave the listener, in this case viewer, with the strongest emotion possible.

The empty space represents a *pianissimo* because in has the tint of the other empty spaces instead of being completely blank. A 'repairing space' became to the frieze essential for the representation of the *Ninth Symphony*. The effect of the empty space was intended by Klimt in the next image which is *The Arts*. These five women represent the arts and they are closely related to the Genii. Although there is an important distinction between the two, which is the expression of the faces and the gestures with the hands. For *The Arts* they are more seductive and capture more intensively the concentration of the viewer.

*Choir of Angels* is the last component of Klimt's frieze. It is the *grand final* of the piece and it is the only time Klimt makes a direct reference to music (the choir). This last part is as rich as *Hostile Forces* but inspires joy and harmony. Here the figures overlap one another but do not clutter, which gives the feeling of movement but not chaotically. The change in this scenery is that the humans kissing are not represented as the humans in *Suffering Humanity* but they are healthy and in love. The last element in the last piece is the use of hues (teal, brown, red, blue and gold) which give more strength to the ending of the piece.



## Function and Cultural Significance

The Beethoven Frieze initially had a decorative function, it only served as an ornament to Klinger's Beethoven sculpture. Even though it was thought by Klimt as decorative it became a social/religious function. It is in the middle from social and religious because it praised the divine (through *Yearning for Happiness* and *The Kiss to the World*), it condemns the evil (through *Hostile Forces*) and it pities humans (through *Suffering Humanity*). Even though it's not strictly an homage to modern religions it has some elements of mythology and divine forces. Beethoven Frieze also serves as a social function for two main elements, first because it portrays how humanity is suffering compared to the divine and second because it was exhibited at the Succession.

The frieze directly relates to Early Byzantine art which "differs from the art of the Romans in that it is interested in depicting that which we cannot see—the intangible world of Heaven and the spiritual." It has both a strong conceptual connection and a connection with the styles used by Klimt. Conceptually it shares those of Byzantine art because, as the quote suggests, it embodies the figurative representation of what humans will never achieve: divinity (if not in life after death). Klimt managed to recreate the idea of Byzantine art not only conceptually but also stylistically through his use of gold. The Beethoven Frieze is part of what is known as Klimt's "Golden Era", which is when the artist produced art works which always contained the gold (sometimes entirely as the case of the *Portrait of Adele Block-Bauer I*). Probably Klimt did not intend to add gold to the frieze in order to create even more connection to Byzantine art but he unintentionally did so.



Figure 59

Detail from the mosaic Emperor Justinian and his retinue, in Basilica di San Vitale, Ravenna, 547

Another important aspect of the frieze is the impact it has on the viewers. There are two elements which strike the most, the first being the position of the frieze in space and the second being the movement created by the figures. The frieze is kept in an underground room at the Secession Building where there is only the frieze and one long bench. There are no windows, the lighting is particularly strong and the rest of the room is all white. The peculiarity of the frieze, even when it was originally shown, is that it is at more than two meters from the ground. I found this view somewhat constraining because I was not able to view the frieze in detail. Even though it's some times frustrating to the visitors it follows the concepts of the frieze and the function it served. Since the frieze was made for decorative purposes it could not 'distract' from the central piece of the original exhibition, Beethoven's sculpture, and even though the sculpture is not exhibition now the curator decided to keep the original composition of the piece. Being exhibited at the very top of the walls also connects to the frieze's themes because it shows divine forces, it is an art work that depicts subjects which are intangible to human beings and therefore cannot be seen as if they were.

The second element important to the effect on viewers is that the piece accompanies the viewers throughout the frieze. Klimt was able to create an active movement in the piece that induces the viewer to walk forward every time and discover a new phase of the work. This is extremely visible with the use of the Genii, which go in the direction the viewer should walk towards.

# Comparing and contrasting the works *Waiting in the Wings* by Claudia Wieser, *The Love of the Gods* by Annibale Carracci and *Beethoven Frieze* by Gustav Klimt

## Use of images

Carracci, Klimt and Wieser make a very specific and accurate use of the images in their own techniques to create different effects that concord with their intention. The three works have in common the use of 'cluttered' images, creating a confusion that blooms into connections between the different parts of each piece. In Carracci's, the clutter and the overlap of the different images within the painting and between the different paintings have a dual effect. To some extent it creates a mess when viewed square meter by square meter, but in the end this effect creates a linearity in the fresco and make it a whole. Klimt approaches the 'clutter of images' in a slightly different way from Carracci or even Wieser. He creates a linearity through the actual structure of the work and decided to mix between extreme cluttering and blank spaces. This makes the work different from both Carracci and Wieser because both works have a continuous clashing of images while Klimt also takes pauses from the chaotic. *Waiting in the Wings* encompasses elements similar to both *The Love of the Gods* and *Beethoven Frieze*. It shares the idea of the constant clutter but follows the flow of images present in *Beethoven Frieze*. Even though at first glance the composition of the images and therefore the flow may seem similar between Wieser and Klimt there are two very different approaches. Wieser decided to create an actual collage, similar to Carracci, but different from the other two works because they are images that do not share a connection through the type of images but are connected conceptually.

The three artworks are also similar in terms of composition because they are not individual art pieces but instead they are structures derived from individual images. This shared technique shows that the artworks trigger the idea of comparison between the different elements of the art works to then arrive to a deeper concept.

## Movement

When it comes to the movement within the different art works there are many similarities in terms of effect towards the 'audience' but many differences in the techniques used. All three works are environmental works, which means that the place where they were presented are important components. *The Love of the Gods* was created in order to enclose the viewers even though the fresco is on the ceiling. Therefore, the movement created by Carracci is a circular movement which makes the people dance with the subjects of the paintings and appreciate the work without a direction but instead taking it all in and flow with every muscle of every person in the paintings and the statues. Beneath the creation of the movement Klimt's frieze and Wieser's wallpaper are extremely related because both works induce the audience to observe the work starting from a specific point and then travel to arrive to the conclusion. Even though both artists made the viewer walk through the work in the same way the methods used to induce this journey are extremely different. Wieser created this effect on the viewer not only by setting her work on a staircase but also by creating a pattern between the images. For example, with the Roman statue facing right and the women's feet walking 'up' the flight of stairs. These are all techniques that automatically induce the viewer to see the work as 'correct' when walking up the stairs and feeling strange, at least it is what I felt, when walking down the staircase. Klimt instead, used a completely different technique to induce the audience to walk a certain direction when viewing the frieze. The Genii play an extremely important part (and it is the element shared with Wieser's technique) because they are positioned to be with their hands on the right, which, as explained before, induces the viewer to follow them. The second technique used is the method of storytelling, differently from the other two works Klimt narrates a story which has a beginning and an ending, clearly shown.



# Comparing and contrasting the works *Waiting in the Wings* by Claudia Wieser, *The Love of the Gods* by Annibale Carracci and *Beethoven Frieze* by Gustav Klimt

## Function

The three art works have many different functions, either because of the decisions implicated with the creation of the art work or because of the interpretation the audience gives to them. I found an interesting connection between the three art works, which is that at some point while analysing them I found that they all shared a moment of decorative function. Klimt's frieze started as a decorative piece and later became much more, while for *Waiting in the Wings* and *The Love of the Gods* the function was not intended to be decorative but later became decorative because both have the purpose of being ornaments to different buildings and co-existing with the site they were created in.

Even though the three art works, at least at one point, shared a decorative function they all have different functions because of the artist/commissioner/viewer's wishes. Odoardo Farnese wanted to show the greatness and influence of his family through the use of Farnese's collection and this showed socio-political function. Similar to Carracci's work, Wieser decided to explain herself that her work had a socio-political function because it portrayed the repetition of violence in societies of the past and of the present. Instead the *Beethoven Frieze* served as socio-religious function because of the meaning transferred by Klimt's depictions and the fact of exhibiting the work at the Succession Building.

Therefore, the three works share similarities and differences when it comes to their functions because either by the artist's decisions or my personal perspective all three shared a decorative function but also showed deeper implications.

## Cultural Significance

Being all artworks from different time periods and being made for different reasons all the works signified to different scales and in different ways the impact they had on the culture they were made in. When it comes to the impact the works had on the artistic movement of the times Carracci and Klimt's are the ones which influenced the most compared to Wieser. Even though they are both milestones of art they impacted the art movements in different ways. Carracci was one of the first artists to introduce the concept of Baroque art, but he did so in a linear and swift way, without sensationalising the public. *The Love of the Gods* is a work that revolutionized the way of depicting Classicism but was never the rise of revolution. Contrarily, the *Beethoven Frieze*, being made for the Secession Building, was meant to strike a revolution for contemporary artists who were not able to express themselves. The frieze remains today an extremely important work not only regarding Klimt's personal career but also as a vital piece in contemporary art. Wieser's *Waiting in the Wings* does not compare with effect the other two works gave to the art world mainly because of two reasons. First of all it was a site specific work, planned and exhibited only at Villa Croce, therefore not many people are able to appreciate Wieser's work, and secondly because of the modernity of the piece. Before becoming milestone pieces, the other works were admired and scrutinized by the public and by experts for many years, decades even. Wieser's piece has the potential to show a new perspective on violence by showing it as an ornament in our lives but still has to be appreciated (and also scrutinized) by many people before it can be regarded as a work of high cultural significance.