

Galerie

Chantal Crousel

Wolfgang Tillmans

Selected Press

“Wolfgang Tillmans: Between Bridges”. *Photo London*, May, 2016.
<http://photolondon.org/event2016/wolfgang-tillmans-between-bridges/>

PHOTO
LONDON

Wolfgang Tillmans: Between Bridges

ABOUT
19 - 22 May
Exhibition Pavilion

Alarmed by rise of anti EU sentiment brewing in the UK and elsewhere across Europe and by a ‘Remain’ campaign that ‘feels like it is only campaigning on economic issues and lacks passion’ the artist Wolfgang Tillmans has made 26 ready-to-print posters alerting people to the seriousness of the choice before them. ‘I feel that we have reached a critical moment that could prove to be a turning point for Europe as we know and enjoy it – one that might result in a cascade of problematic consequences and political fall-out...Brexit could effectively spell the end of the EU. It’s a awed and problematic institution, but on the whole it stands for a democratic worldview, human rights and favours cooperation over confrontation. This could prove to be a once-in-a-generation moment’.

Visit Tillman’s website to learn more.

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Tillmans, Wolfgang. "Wolfgang Tillmans: the UK must stay in the EU". *Dazed*, May 24, 2016.
<http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/31258/1/wolfgang-tillmans-on-why-the-uk-must-remain-in-the-eu>

DAZED

Wolfgang Tillmans: the UK must stay in the EU

The legendary photographer outlines his personal and political reasons for wanting to keep Britain in Europe

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Wolfgang Tillmans: "I see myself as a product of the European post-war history of reconciliation, peace and exchange"

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Wolfgang Tillmans: anti-Brexit posters



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The reasons why I felt compelled to get involved in the UK-EU referendum are personal – my lifelong involvement with the UK, my love for the UK and its culture, music and people, my career’s groundedness in Britain and the always warm welcome I felt here as a German. I see myself as a product of the European post-war history of reconciliation, peace and exchange.

However, the more pressing reason why I morphed in recent months from an inherently political, to an overtly political person, lies in my observation of the larger geopolitical situation and an understanding of Western cultures, as sleepwalkers into the abyss.

The term “Sleepwalkers” comes from the title of the book by Christopher Clark which describes Europe in 1914, when different societies ended up in a world war, which none of them wanted. Today, I see the Western world sleepwalking towards the demolition of the very institutions of democracy, negotiation and moderation which allow us to live the lives that we are living.

In the US we are currently observing a rage which is threatening to wash away great American values, which anchor the world as we know it. These people claim to make America great again, but they embody the opposite. In the East of Europe, we see a surge in nationalist fervour, which wants to sweep away free-

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doms won only some 25 years ago. In western Europe and Britain, we see a wave of discontent with the outcome of globalisation, which turns its anger from the real perpetrators, say for example the tax-evading billionaires, to the weakest in our societies: refugees from terror and war.

“In western Europe and Britain, we see a wave of discontent with the outcome of globalisation, which turns its anger from the real perpetrators, say for example the tax-evading billionaires, to the weakest in our societies: refugees from terror and war” – Wolfgang Tillmans

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The EU is a scapegoat in the midst of all this. For decades press and politicians have loaded blame on it, when in fact it does its best to deal with the fallout of the tectonic shifts in world politics. The EU takes upon itself the task to negotiate the affairs of 28 member states. This can never be an easy task. I admire that this even works so well. We can exchange goods without having to probe product safety each and every time between the 28 countries. Brussels bureaucracy deals with that, and actually quite efficiently. People can move and work in whichever EU country they like. In fact, 1.5 million Brits enjoy this right just now, and due to deregulation of air travel millions enjoy cheap air travel to Europe.

We have in the last decades become a European family, with much less dividing us than connecting us. EU laws, making up only 10 per cent of laws made in the UK, enshrined rights like four weeks' paid holiday, health and safety and much more. The EU enforces standards that protect the environment. Water pollution doesn't respect borders, and here especially Brits benefit from rules that span across the continent. There are frustrations with the very nature of compromise and shared decision making.

The EU is well aware of its shortcomings and David Cameron has secured a clause for the UK to not part-take in a move towards a European States. This is no longer on the cards. There is no longer a danger of giving up British sovereignty. I feel that the forces driving towards the UK leaving the EU are disregarding a most crucial point – the values the EU stands for are fragile in this world of extremism. The anti-democratic forces in eastern Europe, the Islamist forces around the Mediterranean, the big business interests in North America, are all poised to wash away the EU's laws of moderation.

The EU protects your rights against these enemies of freedom. To leave the EU now, in these dangerous political times, is not patriotic, it's simply foolish and it would send the wrong message to the enemies of European values. The EU is not perfect and it never was designed to be that way. The very way of it being a negotiating chamber of 28 nations, is the key to its success. It is not in the security interests of the UK to weaken the EU at this point in time. Whatever your feelings towards the EU, be aware that voting for Brexit has catastrophic repercussions for the whole of Europe and the world.

Register to vote here – deadline is June 7

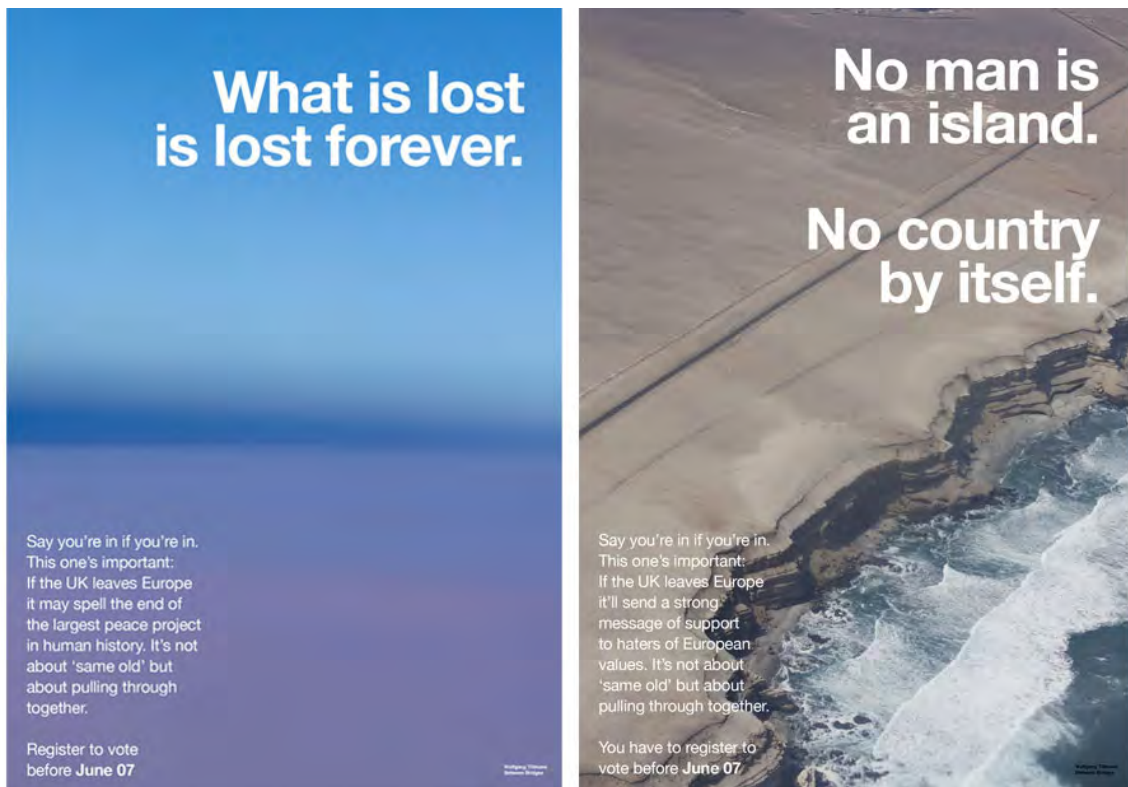
Bodick, Noëlle. «Wolfgang Tillmans Designs Posters Against Brexit», *Blouin Art Info*, April 27, 2016.
http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1388752/wolfgang-tillmans-designs-posters-against-brexit?utm_source=Blouin+Art+info+Newsletters&utm_campaign=042788ac62-Europe+Edition+Newsletter+April+28%2C+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df23dbd3c6-042788ac62-83702285

BLOUINARTINFO INTERNATIONAL

Wolfgang Tillmans Designs Posters Against Brexit

BY Noelle Bodick | April 27, 2016

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Posters by Wolfgang Tillmans.
(Wolfgang Tillmans)

Earlier this month, photographer Wolfgang Tillmans converted his Berlin project space into a platform for discussion of the refugee crisis in Europe. Now, the German-born artist who rose to fame for documenting 1980s and '90s rave subculture has designed more than two-dozen posters in opposition to “Brexit,” the United Kingdom’s proposed withdrawal from the European Union that is being put to a national vote on June 23. The signs urge Brits to register, with university students as the main target — the images are posted to the artist’s website, where they can be uploaded to social media or printed for distribution on campuses.

In a letter on his website, Tillmans, who is based in London and Berlin, calls the official “Remain” campaign “lame” and “lacking in passion.” Enter his clean, quippy designs, with lines like:

“If people like Rupert Murdoch, Nigel Farage, George Galloway, Nick Griffin, and Marine LePen want Britain to leave the E.U., where does that put you?”

Or: “If the UK leaves Europe it may spell the end of the largest peace project in human history.”

Bodick, Noëlle. «Wolfgang Tillmans Designs Posters Against Brexit», *Blouin Art Info*, April 27, 2016.
http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1388752/wolfgang-tillmans-designs-posters-against-brex-it?utm_source=Blouin+Art+info+Newsletters&utm_campaign=042788ac62-Europe+Edition+Newsletter+April+28%2C+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df23dbd3c6-042788ac62-83702285

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See all the posters in the slideshow above.

**NO MAN IS AN
ISLAND. NO
COUNTRY BY
ITSELF.**

IT'S TIME FOR ACTIVISM.
REGISTER TO VOTE BEFORE
7TH JUNE [AT GOV.UK/REGISTER-TO-VOTE](http://GOV.UK/REGISTER-TO-VOTE)

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**If people like
Rupert Murdoch,
Nigel Farage,
George Galloway,
Nick Griffin,
and Marine LePen
want Britain to
leave the E.U.**

Say you're in if you're in.
This one's important:
If the UK leaves Europe
it'll send a strong
message to haters of
European values. It's not
about 'same old' but
about pulling through
together.

Register to vote
before June 07

**Where
does that
put you?**

Wolfgang Tillmans

**Marine Le Pen of the
French Front National
knows the significance of
Brexit.**

**She equalled it to the Fall
of the Berlin Wall,
the beginning of the end
of the E.U.**

**The collapse of European
unity is a goal that she
shares with one of her
party's paymasters
Vladimir Putin and many
other European far-right
movements.**

Be aware of what it means to leave the E.U.
Register to vote before 7th June

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**A POLISH FRIEND TOLD
ME THE OTHER DAY:**

**I NOW HAVE AN E.U. FLAG
AT HOME. WHEN WE DEM-
ONSTRATE AGAINST OUR
NEW AUTHORITARIAN
GOVERNMENT, WE DO SO
UNDER THIS FLAG.**

**I SUDDENLY REALISED, THE E.U. IS THE LAST
DEFENCE AGAINST ANTI-WOMEN'S RIGHTS,
ANTI-GAY RIGHTS, RACIST 'STRONGMEN'
POPULISTS IN EASTERN EUROPE.**

**DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE
THEM ALONE? NOW?**

The E.U. Referendum is on the 23rd of June.
But in order to vote you have to register until
June 07 at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



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http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1388752/wolfgang-tillmans-designs-posters-against-brexit?utm_source=Blouin+Art+info+Newsletters&utm_campaign=042788ac62-Europe+Edition+Newsletter+April+28%2C+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df23dbd3c6-042788ac62-83702285

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**Democracy, peace
and human rights have
many enemies.**

**Brexit will make them
stronger. Only as a
united Europe can we
stand in their way.**

**Have your say.
Register to vote by
June 07.**

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© Wolfgang Tillmans

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MY FATHER'S POLISH,
MY MUM'S FROM SPAIN,
I STUDIED IN BERLIN,
NOW LIVE IN THE UK.

IT'S NEVER BEEN A
HASSLE TO DO SO.

AND I DONT WANT IT
TO BE.

COUNT ME *IN*.

Bodick, Noëlle. «Wolfgang Tillmans Designs Posters Against Brexit», *Blouin Art Info*, April 27, 2016.
http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1388752/wolfgang-tillmans-designs-posters-against-brexit?utm_source=Blouin+Art+info+Newsletters&utm_campaign=042788ac62-Europe+Edition+Newsletter+April+28%2C+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df23dbd3c6-042788ac62-83702285

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WHO WANTS TO LEAVE WHY ?

“I ONCE ASKED RUPERT
MURDOCH WHY HE WAS
SO OPPOSED TO THE
EUROPEAN UNION.

‘THAT’S EASY’ HE REPLIED.

‘WHEN I GO INTO
DOWNING STREET THEY
DO WHAT I SAY; WHEN I GO
TO BRUSSELS THEY TAKE
NO NOTICE.’”

In order to vote you have to register before
7th of June at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Fakray, Sarah. "Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate". *Daze*, April 19, 2016.
<http://www.dazeddigital.com/photography/article/30822/1/wolfgang-tillmans-on-his-first-time-ecstasy-and-empowerment>

DAZED

Wolfgang Tillmans on his first time, ecstasy and empowerment

As Tate Modern announces a major retrospective of the photographer, we revisit a 2010 interview in which he discusses his journey to abstraction

Sarah Fakray

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Lutz & Alex holding cock, 1992

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of *Dazed and Confused*
Taken from the July 2010 issue of *Dazed & Confused*:

Fakray, Sarah. "Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate". *Daze*, April 19, 2016.
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"I grew up in Remscheid, an industrial town that is the centre of tool-making in Germany. My father spent about nine years in South America on sales trips throughout his life, and my mum worked as an accountant and was also a local politician. My brother, sister and I enjoyed a lot of freedom because the parents were not always around.

At the age of ten, I became obsessed with astronomy to the degree that I could not think about anything else. That is what I have kept with me since then: the importance of exact observation and factualness. When I was 13, I went to summer camp with a group from church, and that was another life-changing experience. It was all about disarmament, demonstrations and pacifism.

In high school I discovered the first Canon laser copier in a coffee shop, which could photocopy photographs in a much clearer quality than before. I made a little fanzine using it, a collage of images combined with my own lyrics and a lot of teenage angst. The grey shades of early digital photocopies were where I really found my expression – I didn't own a camera until I was 20, after I had already done my first exhibition in Hamburg.

I came to London for the first time in 1983 on a language trip and saw Culture Club play. I think that was a lucky moment to grow up as a latently gay boy, in a time where the whole of pop music was about sexual ambiguity. It wasn't called 'gay', it was just stylish. It was all about making clothes and putting on make-up – I wore a hat made from perspex melted in my mother's oven.

"(Pop music) wasn't called 'gay', it was just stylish. It was all about making clothes and putting on make-up – I wore a hat made from perspex melted in my mother's oven" – Wolfgang Tillmans

I have known Lutz and Alex, my best friends from school, since we were about 13, and they are still my best friends. We were never going out with each other – Lutz was gay and Alex was straight, and there was never any drama. After school we moved to Hamburg, because if you didn't want to do the 15 months of national service with the army you had to serve 20 months in community service.

Fakray, Sarah. "Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate". *Daze*, April 19, 2016.
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August self portrait, 2005

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of *Dazed and Confused*

Hamburg had the most sophisticated club scene in Germany. I was, on the one hand, working on very reduced photocopy work, and on the other hand feeling I wanted to record what went on in these clubs. I was photographed by i-D at their party in Amsterdam for making an eco fashion statement by wearing a hat made from living moss. When they came to Hamburg, I took my first club pictures for them because I wanted to show them how happening the city was. I was right in the middle of the whole club explosion and that seemed to be the most exciting thing, the ecstasy feeling. It was so empowering and so meaningful in a truly political way. Lutz and I thought, 'Everyone should experience this.'

I went from club pictures to taking full page spreads for magazines, but I never actually wanted to do that, so I quit a successful career and left to study photography in Bournemouth. I really just wanted the innocence of a student. Plus I always had a soft spot for the English men!

The first love of my life was the keyboard player of Bronski Beat. I guess I was some kind of groupie. We had a night of romance in Cologne when I was 16, when I was under the age of consent, which was 18.

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Alex, Lutz and I moved to London in 1990, when gay rights was still a big issue. I went on the demonstrations that mattered to me, like the Criminal Justice Bill or the Anti-Nazi League. It felt as if hedonism and activism were not exclusive – that was my strong personal belief. I didn't see my own vision represented in the photography that I saw; that was my motivation. A lot of photography was either stylised or overly artistic – I photographed what I saw with little artifice. What got a lot of people mad about my work was how un-artificial it looked, and that is exactly what I worked hard to control. They were anything but snapshots.

"A lot of photography was either stylised or overly artistic – I photographed what I saw with little artifice" – Wolfgang Tillmans

I moved to New York with the opening of my first solo show there in 1994. I met Jochen Klein, my then boyfriend, and I had a great opportunity to develop my work in a different direction: still lifes and pictures of folds and fabrics and landscapes. Being with Jochen, who was a painter and conceptual artist, opened my eyes to old art and to understanding Caravaggio and the like as potential friends – as young men who were dealing with issues of their time in their way. I could learn from Jochen about Lacan and Žižek, and I would tell him about The Hacienda and New Order.

I had started a green card process, but the next year I realised, no, I actually don't want to be an American. I was longing for something a bit darker, without this constant 'upness'. I moved back to London with Jochen, and he was totally healthy at that point. The great tragedy of his death is that we had no idea that he was ill until five weeks before he died; there must have been a faulty test. He suddenly fell so ill with pneumonia that he wasn't able to take the combination therapy that had been invented the year before. It was only really in 2000 that I came out of that totally overshadowed period.

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NICE HERE, but ever been to KYRGYZSTAN? Free Gender-Expression WORLDWIDE, 2006
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of *Dazed and Confused*

Fakray, Sarah. "Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate". *Daze*, April 19, 2016.
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I had my time of greatest happiness in 1997 with Jochen, when I embarked on the Concorde series, which is as abstract as it is figurative. Abstraction has always been inherently there in my work, but in 1998, I exhibited pictures made without a camera, the most important development in my work. It was me questioning what a picture is. People interpret the pictures as something underwater, something with pigment... That's why they are so powerful. If I had painted them, you would not engage with them the same way.

I wasn't surprised that I got nominated for the Turner Prize, because at that point I had shown extensively internationally, but I was a bit insecure about the press – 2000 was the first year that foreigners were nominated. It was nice the way that Britain dealt with a foreigner that they liked, embracing me and calling me German-born, London-based, rather than German. In 2004, I got a place in Berlin and met Anders Clausen, the Danish artist. When artists are partners they talk about everything a lot, so the influence on one another is quite intense. He plays an incredibly important role in detecting weaknesses. A bullshit detector! I don't get upset about it. Maybe a little, but not really.

The US got on board with my work in 2006, and in my North American museum tour I included 'Memorial for the Victims of Organised Religions'. That time was fuelled by outrage over 9/11 and also the Iraq War, the warping of truth and the election of George (W) Bush. I always find myself in disbelief about being subjected to men telling you that they know what God wants.

The same year, I realised the entrance of my studio could be used as a gallery, and I felt that there were certain kinds of art not represented in London. Since I had always liked political art, I wanted to show artists that are engaged in social processes. I see my practice as political, even though it's not campaigning in its majority.

Last year I took a sabbatical, and rediscovered the camera. I found myself travelling a lot but also photographing London and Berlin as well as South America and Asia. I've got a great hunger to see what has changed in the world after me looking at it for 20, 25 years. My new pictures, some of which will be at the Serpentine exhibition, are informed by the non-figurative work of the last ten years, so this is an interesting new period in my photography. I'm really excited about taking pictures now.

Wolfgang Tillmans will be on show at Tate Modern in London, February 15–June 11, 2017

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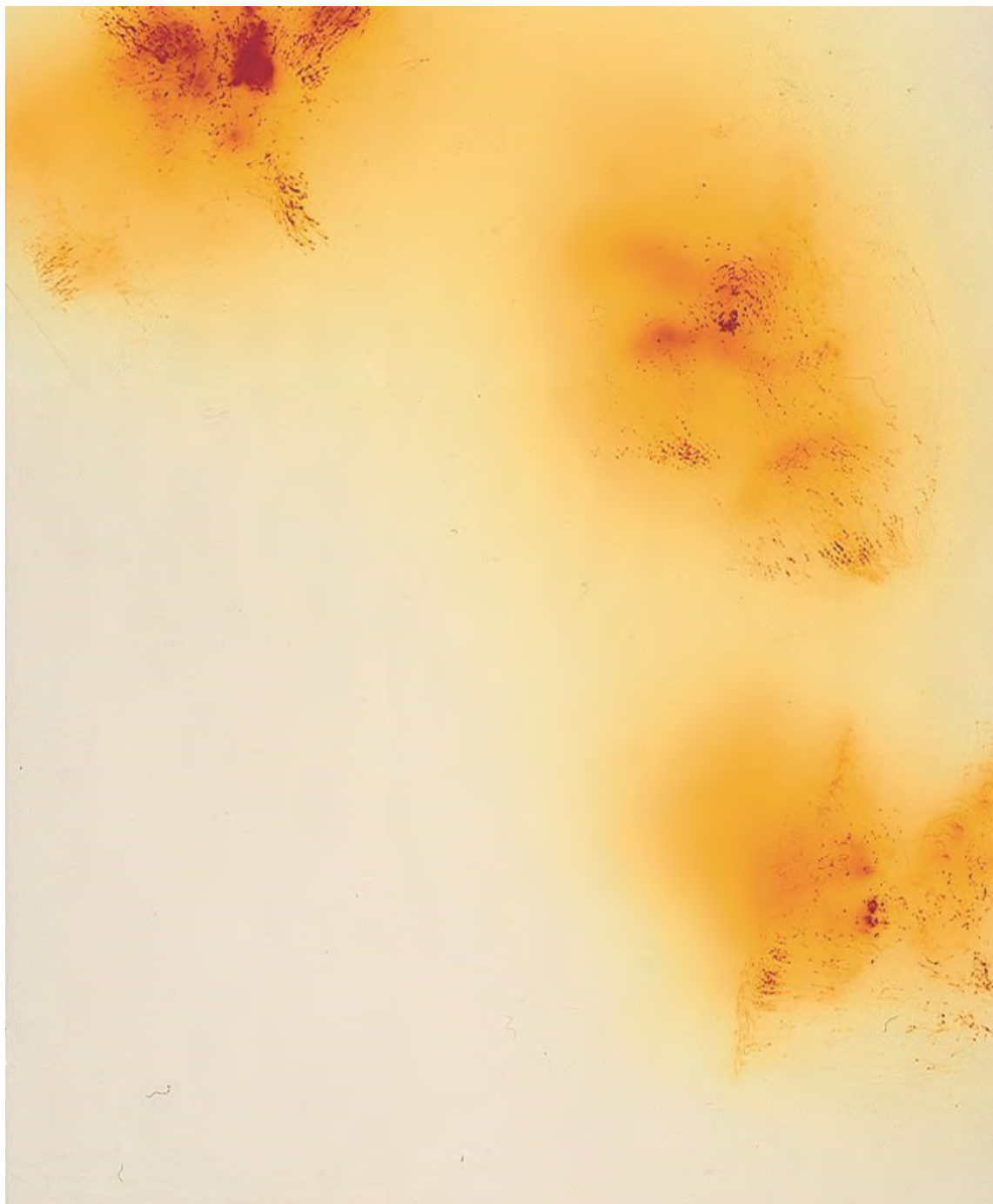
Dennis, 1995

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

03/ 10

Blushes #105

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

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Concorde L449-11, 1997

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

05/ 10

rain, 2006

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

07/ 10

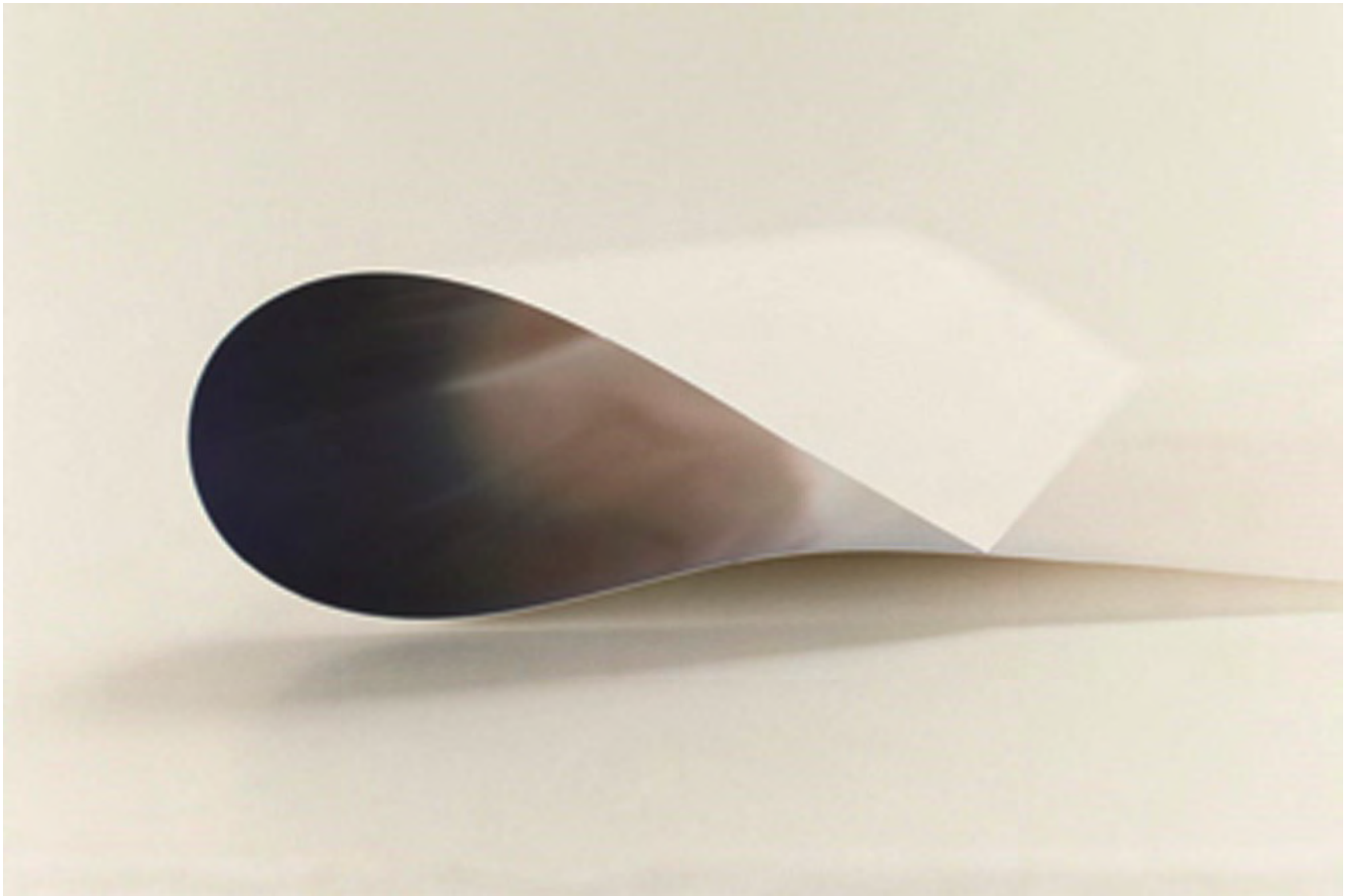
o.T. München, 1997

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

Fakray, Sarah. "Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate". *Daze*, April 19, 2016.
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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

09 / 10

paper drop (Roma), 2007

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

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Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed

10 / 10

Faltenwurf (submerged), 2000

Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

“Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate”. *Phaidon*, April 20, 2016.
<http://fr.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/april/20/wolfgang-tillmans-takes-over-the-tate/>

PHAIDON

Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate

He'll get a solo show at Tate Modern in 2017 and will also take over the South Tank. So what can we expect?

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Self-portrait (Christian) for Phaidon monograph, 2013, colour photograph, by Wolfgang Tillmans

What sort of photographer would one of the world's largest fine-art institutions turn to when drawing up not only its new visual arts calendar, but also its performance and installations programme? A photographer like Wolfgang Tillmans is the answer.

The Tate has just announced that the German Turner Prize winner and Phaidon Contemporary Artist Series subject, will receive a mid-career retrospective at the Tate Modern from 15 February – 11 June 2017. The show will focus on the photographer's output since his exhibition at Tate Britain in 2003. In addition to this show, the Tate has also invited the artist to take control of the Tate's South Tank for ten days, staging "an installation featuring live events." What should we expect? Let's turn to our recent Tillmans monograph for some potential clues.

“Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate”. *Phaidon*, April 20, 2016.
<http://fr.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/april/20/wolfgang-tillmans-takes-over-the-tate/>

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A spread from i-D magazine featuring early photography by Wolfgang Tillmans. As reproduced in our monograph

Magazines “Over the years Tillmans has been trying out varying platforms for the circulation of his images, from magazines to installations, from books to inserts in newspapers,” explains the critic Jan Verwoert in our book. Tillmans began his career as a photographer for i-D magazine, and placed a series of vintage magazines on display at his gallery back in 2015. Visitors were allowed to leaf through these old publications; perhaps he will include a few in this new show.

“Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate”. *Phaidon*, April 20, 2016.
<http://fr.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/april/20/wolfgang-tillmans-takes-over-the-tate/>

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Love (Hands in Air) (1989) by Wolfgang Tillmans

Music In our book Tillmans tells the artist Peter Halley that, he first grew to appreciate photography via the pictures on record sleeves. Wolfgang Tillmans installed a listening room, or gallery space fitted out with a high-quality hi-fi and a selection of CDs, at his Berlin gallery Between Bridges in 2014. The listening room enabled visitors to listen to the work of a single band - Tillmans chose the work of the 1980s indie group Colourbox for his first installation – elevating pop music to the same status as fine art. The BBC reports his forthcoming Tate show will also include music, so keep your ears open.

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Silver Installation VII (2009) by Wolfgang Tillmans

Idiosyncratic picture hanging Wolfgang doesn't present a succession of single, framed works for visitors to behold. Instead, he covers gallery walls with a images in a range of sizes, often unframed, in a style of hanging he describes as "Multi-vectored" " This way of hanging allows for each of these different vectors to have a voice," he explains to Halley in our monograph. "It's an inclusive practice, which allows me to have a little joke in one corner and some sort of personal wink to somebody else in another corner. And also say something very deliberate in terms of formal considerations related to, say, portraiture or landscape."

“Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate”. *Phaidon*, April 20, 2016.
<http://fr.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/april/20/wolfgang-tillmans-takes-over-the-tate/>

PHAIDON

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Silver Installation VII, 2009, 26 colour photographs, 306 x 843 cm, installation view at the Venice Biennale, 2009, featuring Tillmans' Venus pictures

A little bit of astronomy Tillmans shot the transit of Venus across the sun in 2004, using a telescope he has owned ever since he was teenager. While Tillmans admits that these images have no scientific value, he says in our monograph that “it was a moving experience to see the actual mechanics of the sky work in front of my eyes,» and now considers these pictures to be among his best.

“Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate”. *Phaidon*, April 20, 2016.
<http://fr.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/april/20/wolfgang-tillmans-takes-over-the-tate/>

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Astro Crusto, A (2012) by Wolfgang Tillmans

Maybe another famous artist or two Tillmans made his first professional sale as a fine-art photographer to fellow German artist Isa Genzken. The two have remained friends ever since. He has collaborated with Genzken, and shown her work as well as other artists such as Jenny Holzer, at his Berlin gallery. Perhaps he will call on one of them.

For greater insight into this important contemporary artist buy a copy of our newly updated Wolfgang Tillmans monograph [here](#).

PORTO, PORTUGAL

**“WOLFGANG TILLMANS:
ON THE VERGE OF VISIBILITY”**

Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves

January 29–April 25

Curated by Suzanne Cotter

Long before he completed his stunning two-channel video *Book for Architects*, 2014, Wolfgang Tillmans had established himself as an artist with an exceptional sensitivity to constructed space, not only as a subject to document but as a medium to explore and inhabit. Since the early 1990s, he has experimented with the installation of his work to produce exhibitions of extraordinary spatial complexity, even when he begins with the generic—and ubiquitous—white cube that still dominates contemporary exhibition space. Tillmans’s upcoming show at Álvaro Siza Vieira’s Serralves Museum, then, will be a welcome pairing. Featuring more than 120 of his works from the past decade, including his “Vertical Landscapes” and his recent “New World” series, all installed in the Portuguese master’s subtly sculptural galleries, the exhibition will present Tillmans encountering a spatial sensibility as sophisticated as his own.

—Julian Rose

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



From left: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Tag/Nacht II (Day/Night II)*, 2010, inkjet print, 81 1/2 x 54 1/2”.

REALIST ESTATES

Julian Rose on Wolfgang Tillmans's *Book for Architects*

ALTHOUGH WOLFGANG TILLMANS'S *Book for Architects*, 2014, offers an encyclopedic survey of the contemporary built environment, those to whom its title is addressed are likely to recognize surprisingly little of their own handiwork. Architects have never lacked ego, and we live in an age in which their trade has taken on an outsize importance and unprecedented popularity as a premium product of the international culture industry—charged with all manner of place making and identity branding. But this has led to a myopic understanding of architecture as little more than a series of individual buildings as prestige projects, isolated urban interventions that remain largely discrete from the broader contexts they seek to transform. Tillmans's work, which debuted at the Venice Architecture Biennale last year and is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, offers a far more inclusive view. The artist has a long-standing interest in architecture as both a photographic subject and a frame for experience, and *Book for Architects* is an extension of this fascination, taking the form of a kind of photo-diary of his day-to-day encounters with architecture over more than a decade. Tillmans lives and works in two global capitals, London and Berlin, and travels widely; the piece combines more than 450 still images (shot in and around dozens of cities across thirty-seven countries) into a two-channel video installation of some forty minutes. The result is an equally radical rejoinder to both the glossy coffee-table volumes and the vapid Tumblr-style blogs that play such a major role in defining architecture's cultural status today; it presents architecture not as it is conceived by its practitioners, or as it is pictured in the popular imagination, but as it actually exists in the world.

At first glance, things look grim. As the installation's dual digital projectors silently cycle through the images at an unremitting pace, the initial impression is of an oppressive sameness. Take the numerous aerial views of cities—bleak, gray, gridded, relentless. A similar uniformity is visible in many interiors, particularly spaces of transit (airports, hotels) and consumption (shopping malls, storefronts). The former tend toward the starkly generic, illuminated by the same dull fluorescent glare, occupied by the same crowds of harried travelers who are directed by the same uniformed staff. The latter are characterized by garish confusion: dazzling lights, loud colors, reflective glass, shiny metal.

This repetitiveness is not rooted in the individual photographs themselves, which have the spontaneity typical of Tillmans's work and are often stunning in the sheer visual complexity and variety with which they map architecture's dense, tangled textures across myriad scales of construction, ranging from individual rooms to entire municipalities. Rather, the consistency seems to emerge

inexorably from Tillmans's subject matter itself, almost in spite of the endlessly varied perspectives he presents (a variation reinforced by the format of the slides, where images are often paired or even layered on top of each other). In this sense, his project is a distinct departure from the long tradition of typological architectural analysis carried out by artists and architects such as Bernd and Hilla Becher, Dan Graham, Ed Ruscha, or Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who used a standard format to emphasize uniformity in their subjects. Moreover, their projects tended to focus on a literally superficial similarity, with each structure typically presented in a frontal facade view, while Tillmans emphasizes a more fundamental similarity in the experience of space, suggesting that the physical symptoms of globalization are the same, no matter where or how you look.

Inevitably, *Book for Architects* also includes famous buildings by well-known designers. But part of the brilliance of Tillmans's photographs lies in the way they undercut the mythology of the iconic structure, reminding us that, as actually experienced in the city, even the most ostensibly arresting landmarks frequently offer a relatively quotidian experience. Consider a pointed image: Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall (2003) in Los Angeles, glimpsed through a windshield (surely the most common view of the building in a notoriously

car-centric city), its signature swooping panels barely recognizable through layers of reflection and glare, and partially obscured by the rearview mirror. Lest we miss the point, Tillmans pairs this with an image of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's 2014 "Freedom Tower" in New York, captured from a (literally and metaphorically) pedestrian viewpoint a block or two from its base, its hallmark spire cropped out of the top of the frame, the sheen of its mirrored facade echoing that of another glass tower in the foreground.

Even more subversive are the photographs whose subjects are almost, but not quite, identifiable as famous buildings. A swath of fussily patterned curtain wall, an aggressively faceted corner, the hint of a dramatic curve—these moments suggest that the highly individualized styles of today's top architects may be more a matter of marketing than reality, ultimately reducible to a remarkably similar set of material palettes, structural systems, and formal strategies. Tellingly, too, these images collapse the distinction between individual and corporate authorship upon which so many assumptions about the cultural value of architecture are founded. Zaha Hadid? Kohn Pedersen Fox? Without a full picture, it's hard to say.

In the process of breaking down icons into fragments, Tillmans undermines not just the buildings themselves but the conventions of architectural photography. The

Tillmans sees photography as a means not of transforming architecture into images but of understanding the occupation of space.



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Book for Architects*, 2014, two-channel digital video, color, silent, approx. 40 minutes. Installation view, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015.



Two stills from Wolfgang Tillmans's *Book for Architects*, 2014, two-channel digital video, color, silent, approx. 40 minutes.

medium has long colluded in flattening the specificity and complexity of spatial constructions into easily consumed images, aiding in architecture's reduction to branding and speeding its transformation into commodity. Tillmans makes this point bluntly in several images of the billboards often erected at construction sites, where garish, photo-realistic renderings trumpet idealized visions of the developments to come.

Despite all this, *Book for Architects* is not a pessimistic project; it is an ambitious recalibration of the relationship between architecture and image. Tillmans describes his fundamental goal as using his photographs to capture the physical experience of architecture, giving a vivid, sensory quality that he poetically describes as a "how-does-it-feel-ness." He sees photography, in other words, as a means not of transforming architecture into images but of understanding the occupation of space. He has achieved this effect in part through straightforward technical means, by eschewing the tilt-lenses and wide angles typical of architectural photography, and instead shooting all the project's images with a fixed-focal-length lens that he feels most faithfully represents the perspective of the human eye. And indeed, many of the images he presents have the undeniable familiarity of architecture seen in passing—incidental glances out of windows, across streets, from planes—views indicative of both the Benjaminian state of distraction in which we typically experience architecture and the degree to which it has become the background Muzak of contemporary urban life.

But many of the photographs are far more deliberate and detailed, particularly the close-ups, which suggest an intimate bodily connection to architecture, indexing the artist's inhabitation of the spaces he depicts: We sense him leaning into a corner to see how two materials meet, or crouching down on the sidewalk to study the way a drainpipe emerges from a building's foundation.

To emphasize the physicality of architecture, Tillmans seems to argue, is also to engage in photography as a physical act. This physicality is echoed in the layout of the installation, where the two video channels are projected onto perpendicular walls, presenting the images in an immersive environment. *Book for Architects* extends Tillmans's interest—present since his first major gallery show in 1993—in the spatial mechanics of exhibition design, his insistence that viewers consider not only the world he presents in his images but the way in which his photographs exist in the world.

The results of Tillmans's scrutiny are sometimes hilarious. Again and again, we see the endless contingencies through which buildings escape architects' oversight, the numerous ways in which even the most carefully considered designs are no match for the messy business of daily use, of changing needs and passing time: A mass of hoses is jammed through a wall to enable the ad hoc installation of an air conditioner; a tangle of cables running across a ceiling disrupts the carefully articulated union of a beam and a column; gobs of expanded foam insulation ooze out of the gap around a retrofitted pipe and dribble down toward the floor. These are the kinds of things that drive most architects crazy.

But at other times, the results of the artist's examination are simply heartbreaking. This is particularly true of the images of a multipart cardboard shelter constructed against the polished granite base of what appears to be an office high-rise: an example not just of the ways in which buildings and urban spaces inevitably seem to be adapted far beyond their designers' intentions, but also a reminder that often architects are so focused on aesthetic control that they lose their ability to address the broader social and economic realities in which their designs are embedded. Indeed, Tillmans's most damning statement about architects' misguided obsession with control comes from images of various "antihomelike"

devices—physical barriers meant to fill or obstruct spaces that might otherwise become occupied by itinerants. One photograph, in particular, shows a man lying on the ground just inches beyond a field of pyramidal bumps that is clearly meant to discourage sleeping next to the adjacent wall. It's a distressing reminder that so long as buildings are understood as static materializations of an a priori design intent, exigencies of inhabitation will always trump the assertion of control.

These images draw added poignancy from the fact that Tillmans also includes several slides of the most expensive home in the world, the skyscraper built as the private residence of the Indian business tycoon Mukesh Ambani, by Perkins+Will in Mumbai, at a reported cost of more than one billion dollars. In fact, housing in its many forms—from refugee tents huddled along borders to suburban family homes to the anonymous apartment blocks that proliferate on the outskirts of cities around the globe—is a recurring theme of *Book for Architects*, and these juxtapositions offer a powerful reminder that today, economic and political difference is often expressed most directly in architectural terms. And yet, more than any other field of contemporary cultural production, architecture also approaches a universal condition. It remains grounded in certain fundamental problems and entangled with the same basic social and cultural conditions the world over, even if cultural (and economic) specificity continues to emerge in the responses posed by architects and inhabitants. Indeed, given an ever more urbanized population and continuously accelerating growth, architecture increasingly *is* our world; not just a backdrop but the scaffolding that sets the stage for social interactions and dictates the conditions of life itself. But architecture in this expanded sense will remain out of architects' grasp until they recognize that they must flexibly intervene in and adapt to the social, economic, and environmental systems that shape it, rather than merely declaring authority in the face of the chaos these factors seem to introduce. It is presumably to provoke this recognition that Tillmans has created his book for architects. □

Book for Architects is on view through July 5 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

JULIAN ROSE IS A SENIOR EDITOR OF ARTFORUM.

DAMN°50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS



Between the Blur and the Flicker

Tillmans on TV

Wolfgang Tillmans was initially known for his seemingly casual, sometimes snapshot-like portraits of friends, famous and otherwise. His photographic practice has since developed to encompass a wide array of genres. Portraits, still lifes, sky photographs, astrophotography, aerial shots, and landscapes have all been motivated equally by aesthetic and political interests, in formulations of reality and truth claims. As Tillmans puts it: "I take pictures in order to see the world." His most recent project deals with the timely coexistence of analogue and digital photographic processes, the essence of which he has succinctly captured in the works currently on show in Paris, where DAMN° caught up with him.

ANNA SANSOM

Wolfgang Tillmans has often spoken about the importance of the unforeseen in his work. His exhibition, *Lignine Duress* at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris, continues this investigation. On show are two groups of pictures of fuzzy television screens, with an image of a ruptured tree trunk in another space. The link between these may not be immediately apparent but they allude to something having happened – the TV connection becoming lost or the programme being over, and the tree trunk snapping – that has a strong visual effect. "The connection that I find interesting between the two is that something very random has produced a very distinct result", says the German artist when we meet on the day of the opening.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

How the photographs of the TV screens came about is fortuitous. Tillmans was staying at a hotel in St Petersburg last February while preparing for Manifesta 10, and 'discovered' a badly tuned, first generation flat-screen television in his room that was still receiving analogue signals. Finding it to be a rich subject for picture making, he requested the same room on two subsequent trips. Using a high-resolution digital camera, Tillmans was able to capture the fast-changing images on the screen at a speed that would not have been possible in the past, when diagonal dark bands or blurriness would have shown across them. So although they are reminiscent of the days when the TV in your parents' living room conked out, they

Ligne Dure: exhibition view,
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2016
© Florian Kienleferm



DAMN 50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS

could only have been made today. It is this particular coexistence between analogue and digital technology rendering the pictures feasible that strongly appealed to the artist. "So it's a strange overlap of old and new technology together", he says, excitedly. "It was a fascinating discovery to be able to play and take these pictures just before the analogue signal disappears from the world, because in most western cities you don't have the analogue signal anymore anyway."

OTHERWORLDLY

The darker images, *Weak Signal*, carry recognisable yet indistinct flickering patterns of information that the television is trying to relay. The lighter ones, *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast*, capture instants after a broadcast when there is no information being transmitted and the fuzz is pattern-less. Although from a distance they appear black and white, closer inspection reveals pixelations of vivid colour – red, blue, green, and yellow – in the *Weak Signal* ones, and a more complex range of colours in the others, where some parts seem pink, yellow, or pale blue. Staring at them is an eye-popping, dizzying experience, your mind overwhelmed with trying to decipher any sense

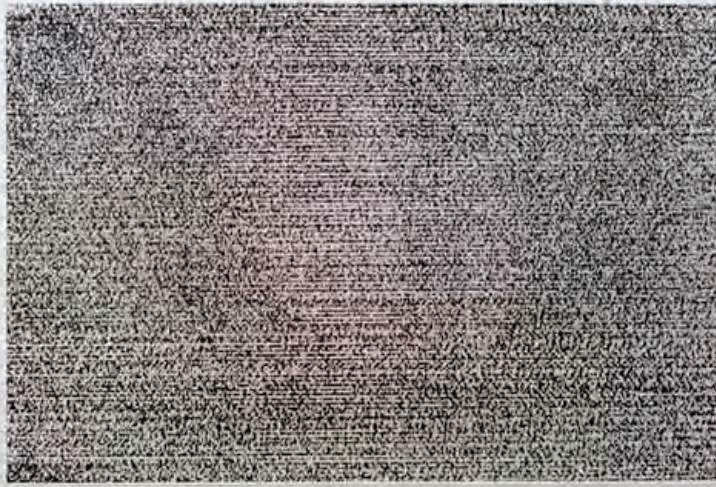
from the mass of lines of tiny squares. "The patterns are even like a kind of language when you study the lines – it could be Arabic or Hebrew or a musical code – and that of course happens all the time without us actively noticing that we're seeing stuff we don't understand", says Tillmans, 46, about the *Weak Signal* images. "So it's just background noise. What is specific about these images is: where does this meaninglessness gather meaning? There is a reason, and perhaps we will never necessarily understand. But I want to study why things end up the way they are in social, political, and personal contexts."

Indeed, he sees the series as a metaphor of the problems in the world today. "Lack of communication, misunderstanding, not hearing – that is the nature of politics", asserts Tillmans, who won the Turner Prize in 2000. "Something about the larger political situation we are in, made me perceptive to these pictures – of how, when there's too much pressure, something breaks. I'm not connecting this to any particular event, and the reason why these photographs are here is that they work as pictures. They are sensations to the eye, but they also speak about something in the outside world."

Weak Signal III, 2014
Unframed inkjet print on paper, clips
161 x 242 cm
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP
Courtesy of the artist and
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
© Florian Kleber



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



End of Broadcast V, 2014
Inkjet print mounted on D bond
171 x 262 x 6 cm (framed)

Lignin Dursss, 2014
Unframed inkjet print on paper, clips
208 x 138 cm

Both images:
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie
Chantal Crousel, Paris
© Florian Kleinferm

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

TEMPORALITY

Visually, the *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* works remind Tillmans of Dan Flavin's *Monument to V. Tatlin*, a staggered arrangement of white fluorescent tubes in homage to Russian artist Vladimir Tatlin's proposed design for the *Monument to the Third International*, a revolving spiral that would have been taller than the Eiffel Tower. (According to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Flavin made 39 such variations from 1964-1990). "Dan Flavin dedicated these light sculptures as memorials, and I like the idea of physically giving space to an idea", he says. Following on from Tillmans' abstract work, such as his camera-less series *Freischwimmer* and *Greifbar*, both created in a darkroom, the new images are also connected to *Memorial for the Victims of Organized Religion* (2006), an installation of black and very dark-blue photographs. "That was about illustrating the flawedness of absolute ideology by making the distinction between black and dark-blue impossible", explains Tillmans. "It's the same with these *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* works. At first you think you have black-and-white pictures, but when you go close up you see the colour, though you cannot really point at it."

The title of the exhibition, however, refers to the photograph of a tree trunk that has split in half after a storm in Essen, the exposed fibres of wood recalling fragile tendons severed from a bone. The exposure reminded Tillmans of how paper is composed of varying amounts of cellulose and lignin, the highest quality and longest lasting paper being lignin free. Longevity versus impermanence in paper and in photographic printing is something that has obsessed the artist throughout his career. In his early exhibitions, images of clubbers, London tube passengers, friends, lovers,



DAMN50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Encounter, 2014
Inkjet print, framed
30.80 x 40.60 cm
34 x 44.80 cm (framed)
Edition 1/10
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie
Chantal Crousel, Paris
© Florian Kleinferrn

Portrait of Wolfgang Tillmans
by Carmen Brunner

and still-lives would be stuck to the wall using bits of tape or pins, breaking down the hierarchy between framed and unframed pictures.

In his new show, Tillmans has chosen to juxtapose framed and unframed *Weak Signal* pictures. The different form of presentation is intended to make visitors more consciously aware of how the photographs are actual objects in themselves. It also brings into question notions of value and protection. The unframed inkjet prints are physically vulnerable, yet the owner can reprint the work with a set of data provided at the moment of purchase. By contrast, the framed and glazed photographs are physically protected but the owner has no right to reprint them.

The fact that the *Weak Signal* and *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* photographs are pictures of an image-carrier – the television – intrigues Tillmans. “With the TV, we are talking about an elusive image of an embodied picture that you cannot touch”, he says. “I made concrete pictures of the most elusive picture, but they are also photographs of a picture body – a grid of LCDs on a TV screen. Presenting them on two other picture bodies – the unframed inkjet print and the framed, mounted inkjet print – further activates this question of what are we looking at.”

Certainly, the perplexing complexity of image-making is what makes Tillmans's questing mind tick. 4

Lignine Durese is at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris, until 23 May 2016.
crousel.com

PARIS

Wolfgang Tillmans

Galerie Chantal Crousel / 18 avril - 23 mai 2015

La troisième exposition de Wolfgang Tillmans à la Galerie Chantal Crousel paraîtra étrangement sage au visiteur habitué au simultanéisme de ses constellations d'images proliférantes aux sujets, formats et supports hétérogènes. Tout au plus, l'artiste y alterne-t-il entre tirages encadrés et tirages libres qui correspondent à deux modes contradictoires d'existence et d'appréhension des images qu'il a toujours mis en tension. Cette retenue traduit peut-être la volonté de Tillmans de ne pas s'enfermer dans un mode opératoire qui pourrait se rigidifier en protocole et se banaliser en signature. Elle dit sans doute aussi le désir d'en réaffirmer, par le déséquilibre, la puissance déstabilisatrice qui force le regard. La série qui donne son titre à l'exposition *Lignine Duress* (la lignine est une composante du bois absente du papier sur lequel Tillmans tire ses images) n'est ainsi représentée que par une photographie, qui plus est placée dans un espace secondaire. Cette image d'arbre fendu par la tempête est pourtant décisive.

Figurative et descriptive, elle invite à ne pas se laisser séduire par l'opticalité et la pictorialité des grandes abstractions qui occupent seules l'espace principale de la galerie. Car ces *all over* aléatoires de carrés apparemment noirs et blancs mais en fait subtilement colorés de rouge, bleu et vert, ne sont pas une actualisation numérique des recherches abstraites développées depuis 15 ans par Tillmans dans le laboratoire. Ce sont des photographies prises en 2014, avec un appareil extrêmement rapide, dans une chambre d'hôtel de Saint-Petersbourg, de l'écran d'une télévision numérique de la fin des années 1990 recevant un signal analogique. Entre mauvais réglage et incompatibilité, absence de signal ou présence de parasites, les séries *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* et *Weak Signal* offrent une image de l'incommunicabilité instaurée par une communication surabondante.

Commentaire, réalisé avec une technologie de pointe, sur l'obsolescence technique et le passage au numérique, ces deux séries confirment que Tillmans, excellent observateur de son temps, fait du progrès technique, à la fois constaté et intégré dans son processus de création, un étalon de notre contemporanéité. Mais sans fétichisme ni naïveté, car ce progrès a ses limites et cet étalon est critique. À cet égard, *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* et *Weak Signal*'s inscrivent dans la continuité de *Neue Welt*



(2012), projet majeur dont l'ambition était de définir les images du « monde nouveau » que l'artiste voyait se dessiner sous ses yeux. Passionné par l'astronomie, il avait notamment rapporté, de ses séjours à travers le globe, des ciels étoilés, des télescopes et, significativement, dans ce haut lieu technologique qu'est l'Observatoire européen austral (ESO), la photographie d'un écran de contrôle intitulée *sensor flaws & dead pixels* (capteur défectueux et pixels morts). Auto-destruction de la technique qui n'est pas sans rappeler celle de la nature.

Étienne Hatt

Wolfgang Tillmans' third exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel will seem strangely moderate to visitors used to the simultaneism of his constellations of proliferating images and heterogeneous subjects, formats and supports. Here there is simply an alternation between framed and unframed prints, corresponding to two contradictory modes of existence for images and two different ways of seeing them, modes whose opposition has always informed his work. This restraint may reflect Tillmans' desire not to be limited to a *modus operandi* that could hypothesize into a protocol or become a banal signature. No doubt, too, it expresses a desire to reaffirm the destabilizing power of the image, which forces the gaze, by means of disequilibrium. The series after which the exhibition is named, *Lignine Duress* (lignin is a part of wood that is absent from the paper on which Tillmans prints his images) is represented by only one

Ci-dessus/above:

« Lignine Duress », 2015.

Vue de l'exposition / Exhibition view

Ci-dessous/below: « Lignin duress (b) ».

2014. Impression jet d'encre sur papier,

non encadrée, pinceau. 208 x 138 cm

(Court. de l'artiste © Florian Kleinfenn).

Unframed inkjet print on paper, clips

photograph—showing a tree split by a storm—and what's more, this is placed in a secondary space. But the image is decisive.

Figurative and descriptive, it encourages us not to be seduced by the opticality and pictoriality of the big abstract pieces that are the sole occupants of the main space. For these random all-over works with squares that seem to be black and white but are in fact subtly colored in red, blue and green, are not a



digital actualization of the abstract experiments made by Tillmans in the laboratory these last fifteen years, but photographs of a digital TV screen from the late 1990s taken in 2014 with an extremely fast camera in a hotel room in Saint Petersburg. The TV was getting an analogue signal. Showing a badly adjusted set afflicted by technological incompatibility, the absence of signals and the presence of interference, these two series, *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* and *Weak Signal*, offer an image of incommunicability caused by overabundant communication.

A commentary on technical obsolescence and the transition to the digital, made with cutting-edge technology, these two series confirm that Tillmans, who is an excellent observer of his times, takes technological progress, as something that his work both observes and assimilates, as a marker of our contemporaneity. But there is nothing fetishistic or naïve about this. In this regard, *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast* and *Weak Signal* continued on from *Neue Welt* (2012), a major project that set out to define the images of the "new world" that the artist saw taking shape before us. Fascinated by astronomy, in his travels around the world he has photographed starry skies, telescopes and, significantly in that great technological center that is the European Southern Observatory, a control screen, with the title *sensor flaws & dead pixels*. This self-destruction by technology echoes that of nature.

Translation, C. Penwarden

ENTRETIEN

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06

LE QUOTIDIEN DE L'ART | JEUDI 30 AVR. 2015 N°825

Propos recueillis par
Emmanuelle Lequeux

WOLFGANG TILLMANS, ARTISTE

« Faire la paix avec cette inquiétante étrangeté du monde »

Wolfgang Tillmans présente à la Galerie Chantal Crousel, à Paris, une série de photographies commencée en 2014 devant un écran de télévision mal réglée dans une chambre d'hôtel à Saint-Pétersbourg. L'artiste nous explique le fondement de ce travail.



Wolfgang Tillmans,
Weak Signal II, 2014,
impression jet d'encre
sur papier,
non encadrée, pinces,
273 x 410 cm.
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP.
Courtesy of the artist
and Galerie Chantal
Crousel, Paris.
© Florian Kleinfenn.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Emmanuelle Lequeux Pour cette exposition à la galerie Chantal Crousel, vous avez photographié, quasi exclusivement, la neige qui apparaît sur de vieux téléviseurs : motifs a priori abstraits, entièrement noir et blanc... Ces images peuvent surprendre, tant elles diffèrent de vos précédents travaux. Qu'est-ce qui vous a fasciné dans ce motif ?

Wolfgang Tillmans Ne pensez pas qu'il s'agisse de photographies noir et blanc ! Approchez-vous de l'image, et regardez combien elle est riche en couleurs ! Le noir et blanc ne revient que si l'on regarde à nouveau l'image de loin. Le glissement est imperceptible. C'est un jeu incroyable entre ce que l'on voit et ce que l'on croit voir. J'ai souvent pensé que les choses ne sont pas ce qu'elles semblent être. Voilà ce qui lie ces images à celles du passé : j'ai toujours cherché à rendre perceptible la notion même de développement. Que cela concerne les mouvements sociaux, les phénomènes naturels ou le développement chimique d'une photographie.

Vous mixez souvent les différents registres d'images, mêlant de purs flux de lumières et couleurs à des instants vécus proches du snapshot. Ici, il n'y a aucune échappatoire.

Mon instinct naturel est effectivement d'offrir des alternatives au regard. Mais ces images, qui exigent beaucoup du visiteur, méritaient d'être seules, pour encourager à plonger en elles.

Quitte à ce que ces images plus expérimentales semblent plus dures, plus sèches ?

Certes, ce que je ressens dans l'espace de cette galerie appelle une

L...

J'AI TOUJOURS
CHERCHÉ
À RENDRE
PERCEPTIBLE
LA NOTION
MÊME DE
DÉVELOPPEMENT

ENTRETIEN

PAGE
07

LE QUOTIDIEN DE L'ART | JEUDI 30 AVR. 2015 NUMÉRO 825

WOLFGANG
TILLMANS, ARTISTE

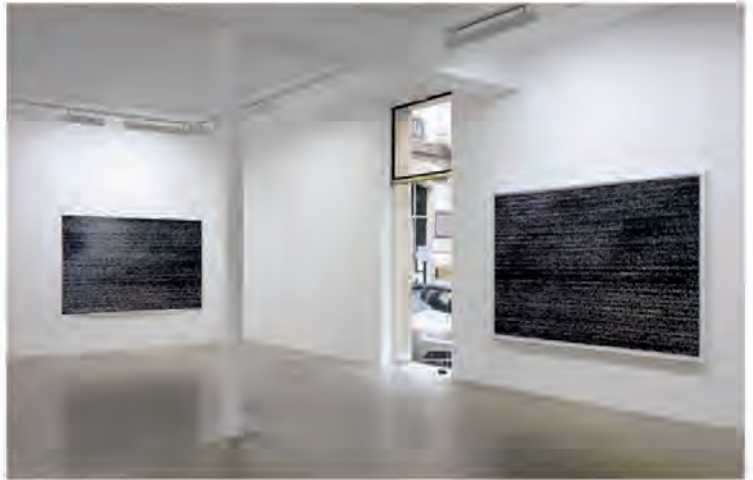
SUITE DE LA PAGE 06 rhétorique plus ardue, et je ne ferais sans doute pas cette exposition à Chelsea [New York]. Mais elle n'est pas plus expérimentale qu'une autre : toute exposition est un laboratoire.

La question de la réflexivité de l'image, de son processus technique, semble cependant avoir pris plus d'importance dans votre travail.

Sans doute, mais c'est le même cerveau qui opère : ces pensées étaient là à mes débuts il y a 25 ans. J'abordais déjà la question du regard d'un point de vue scientifique et philosophique. À quoi s'ajoute cet intérêt de toujours pour l'ici et maintenant : la musique, le sexe, la vie... En 1992, on a pris mes gros plans sur les peaux de danseurs comme des images tendance et *fashion* de jeunes gens. Mais elles portaient déjà sur ces questions : comment retranscrire cette émotion collective, l'alchimie d'un dancefloor... Ce qui m'importe est que le sujet, dans son esprit, soit actif jusque dans la matière de l'image.

Bien qu'abstraites en apparence, ces images relèvent donc d'une même quête de l'ici et du maintenant ?

Car elles n'ont rien d'abstrait : elles ont pour origine la réalité, et ont été saisies par un appareil photo à partir d'un producteur d'images, à savoir un téléviseur. Le signal électromagnétique de l'écran engendre deux types de motifs très différents. Les uns sont un pur chaos, où n'apparaît aucun signal, et dont l'œil ne peut dégager aucune forme. Les autres sont structurées, avec des formes fantômes qui surgissent, sous-jacentes : il y a bel et bien un signal, mais il n'est pas assez fort pour lutter contre la neige. C'est comme une partition musicale, ou une calligraphie, cela n'a rien d'un symbole vide : ce sont des dessins très stimulants, à décrypter. En même temps, je les vois comme une métaphore de notre condition, de l'absence de dialogue entre nous, qui vivons pourtant si près les uns des autres.



Wolfgang Tillmans, « Lignine Duress », vue de l'exposition à la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Florian Kleinfenn.

ON PEUT VOIR CES IMAGES COMME UNE CENSURE POSSIBLE, DANS UN MONDE OÙ LES TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS AURAIENT ÉTÉ COUPÉES

Vous avez pris ces images l'an passé à Saint-Petersbourg, au début du conflit ukrainien. Ce contexte leur confère-t-il un sens particulier ?

Au début du processus, bien sûr. On peut voir ces images comme une censure possible, dans un monde où les télécommunications auraient été coupées. Mais elles se sont aujourd'hui détachées de leur contexte d'origine. Avec le temps, le projet est devenu plus riche et plus complexe. Une manière pour moi d'aborder cette question qui me hante : je ne sais pas toujours ce qui se passe, je ne parviens pas à donner un sens à tout, mais je dois faire la paix avec cela,

avec cette inquiétante étrangeté du monde.

WOLFGANG TILLMANS. *LIGNINE DURESS*, jusqu'au 23 mai, Galerie Chantal Crousel, 10, rue Charlot, 75003 Paris, tél. 01 42 77 38 87, www.crousel.com





Le top 5 des expos de la semaine

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Wolfgang Tillmans, «Sendeschluss / End of Broadcast VIII», 2014

Chaque semaine, le meilleur des expositions art contemporain, à Paris et en province.

Wolfgang Tillmans

Il s'est fait un nom dans les années 1990 en photographiant la scène rave berlinoise naissante pour le magazine i-D. Et d'ailleurs, depuis quelques semaines, les habitués du Berghain à Berlin auront pu constater le renouvellement des trois grandes photos qui en ornent habituellement les murs. Ces tirages, ceux de Wolfgang Tillmans, ont ainsi été remplacés par trois autres de sa nouvelle série : de gigantesques photographies abstraites montrant un motif pixellisé. C'est cette série, datant de 2014, que l'on retrouvera à la galerie Chantal Crousel à Paris. Elle y voisinera avec une autre, qui donne son titre à l'expo : Lignine Duress, où il dresse le portrait d'arbres sinistrés lors de la tempête de 2014 en Allemagne, représentés comme des humains brisés en plein élan. Dans les deux cas, tout est à recomposer par le spectateur : chacun interprète les photographies de manière différente – soit que la trame pixellisée de la reproduction grignote le réel, soit que le réalisme “deadpan” du cliché numérique semble nous présenter la scène elle-même, sans cadrage ni composition. Parmi les plus novatrices actuellement, la pratique photographique de Wolfgang Tillmans ne cesse de s'interroger sur la manière dont le réel se donne à nous – et pas seulement dans les darkrooms d'un club berlinois.

Les Echos.fr

Trois grands de l'art contemporain à Paris : Bruce Nauman, Marcel Broodthaers, Wolfgang Tillmans :



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Paris expose en ce moment le travail de plusieurs artistes de grande qualité.

Pour ceux qui auront eu la chance de voir la rétrospective de Bruce Nauman (né en 1941) en 1995 au Moma, il est clair que cet artiste américain a inventé beaucoup de choses avant tout le monde. En vidéo, au néon, dans l'usage du son, dans l'expression de l'émotion aiguë... Bruce Nauman est un grand maître. La fondation Cartier présente une toute petite parcelle de son travail jusqu'au 12 juin. C'est toujours mieux que rien. En vieillissant Nauman est devenu plus contemplatif et ses dernières vidéo et installation au rez-de-chaussée sont moins convaincantes. Cela dit au sous-sol on est pris par la maestria de ses deux œuvres plus anciennes. Le tourniquet de ces animaux figés qui laisse une trainée au sol est l'incarnation d'une douleur universelle. Comme une allégorie d'une grande férocité humaine. D'autant que dans le même temps près de là un personnage projeté en très grand éructe un cri atroce. A tel point que la jeune fille qui garde la salle porte un casque d'insonorisation. Regardez la vidéo : <https://youtu.be/cZtdrzJwQEE>

Dans la salle suivante deux grands écrans projettent des sortes d'horloges géantes dont le temps est scandé par des corps de femmes. L'homme porte les traces du passage du temps. Regardez : <https://youtu.be/fq2-rbR-P-o>

Cette semaine était inaugurée l'exposition à l'hôtel de la Monnaie d'un artiste important, le belge Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976). Le point de départ significatif de sa carrière commence avec une déclaration claire sur le système de reconnaissance dans l'art en 1964 : « Moi aussi , je me suis demandé si je ne pouvais pas vendre quelque chose et réussir dans la vie. Cela fait un moment déjà que je ne suis bon à rien. Je suis âgé de quarante ans. L'idée enfin d'inventer quelque chose d'insincère me traversa l'esprit et je me mis aussitôt au travail ». Les années 60 sont comme le début du XXe siècle : des années déclaratives. Broodthaers déclare que plutôt de tenter d'appartenir à l'institution il va lui même créer l'institution. Il va créer un musée : « Le musée d'art moderne, département des Aigles ». L'insincérité déclarée mène évidemment à la sincérité tout comme le péché avoué est à moitié pardonné... Broodthaers est un cynique officiel donc suspecté de non cynisme. Du coup son musée est plein d'esprit, de charmes, de rebondissements et d'humour

Les Echos.fr

comme le montre l'exposition de l'Hôtel de la Monnaie. Sur la question du cynisme et de la dérision voire l'amusante installation d'un petit monsieur chauve dans un environnement de bord de mer qui lit son journal. Il l'a baptisé « Monsieur Teste » du nom du roman fameux de Paul Valéry qui servit de modèle à André Breton sur la prise de distance intellectuelle vis à vis de l'œuvre. L'exposition pêche cependant vraiment par manque d'explications. On est propulsé tout nu dans cet univers. Il est conseillé de se renseigner avant la visite.

Enfin depuis samedi dernier la galerie Chantal Crousel présente le nouveau travail d'un très talentueux allemand Wolfgang Tillmans (né en 1968). Il avait été l'objet d'une excellente rétrospective en 2013 au festival de la photo à Arles. Tillmans fait des photos qui semblent dérisoires (il les accroche souvent au mur avec des épingles) sur des sujets qui semblent dérisoires. Dans mon esprit son travail ressemble un peu aux pierres de rêves collectionnées et affectionnées comme un instrument de méditation par les chinois lettrés. On trouve partout beauté et poésie tout dépendant de l'angle de vue, du regardeur comme de la coupe de la pierre. Cependant cette exposition principalement consacrée à des images abstraites en noir et blanc est très difficile d'accès. Et le texte qui accompagne l'accrochage n'est pas là pour aider. Reste une photo en grand format d'un arbre victime d'une tempête. Un arbre massacré. Par son esprit cette image ressemble au carrousel des animaux pendus de Bruce Nauman. L'expression de la douleur profonde peut prendre de multiples chemins, tout aussi expressifs. Surtout lorsque les artistes ont ce talent là.

Wolfgang Tillmans en ligne de mire

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



«Lignin Duress» (b) 2014, de Wolfgang Tillmans. Impression jet d'encre sur papier, non encadrée. (Courtesy of Wolfgang Tillmans and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris)

Premier non-Britannique lauréat du Turner Prize en 2000, le très éclectique photographe allemand livre une nouvelle exposition parisienne aux notes boisées, alliant souplesse et dureté.

Il y a les photographes et il y a Wolfgang Tillmans. Cru sans être vulgaire, conceptuel sans même effleurer l'ennui, hyper-actuel mais jamais journalistique, son art embrasse et déborde toutes les catégories. D'ailleurs, portraits de stars ou d'anonymes, nus, natures mortes, paysages, instantanés de raves, abstractions sophistiquées, Tillmans, 46 ans, dégage tous azimuts.

Cette variété se retrouve dans le format de ses expositions où se côtoient tirages numériques monumentaux, banales photocopies, tirages léchés et cartes postales. Sans oublier ses fameux livres d'artiste. Pourtant, quel que soit son sujet ou son matériau, une image de Tillmans se reconnaît toujours entre mille.

Son secret? Il repart constamment de l'origine épiphanique de la photographie. Comme Maurice Denis déclarant qu'un tableau sera toujours «essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées», Tillmans martèle: «Je ne pense pas en termes de catégories spécifiques à un médium. Je me dis avant tout : une plage de couleurs est une plage de couleurs.»

Chez lui, l'élégance extrême va de pair avec une certaine sécheresse, forme de pudeur. Il place cette nouvelle exposition personnelle à Paris (la première depuis 2011) sous le signe de la lignine, cet élément qui donne au bois sa rigidité, son imperméabilité et sa résistance à la décomposition. Autant de qualités substantivement photographiques, aurait remarqué Roland Barthes.

«Wolfgang Tillmans : Lignine Duress», du 18 avril au 23 mai, à la galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris 3e.
(www.crousel.com)

Hugo Saadi. «La photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision», *Toute la Culture*, April, 23, 2015.

<http://toutelaculture.com/arts/interview-wolfgang-tillmans-la-photographie-est-un-outil-qui-enregistre-nos-pensees-avec-une-grande-precision/>



[Interview] Wolfgang Tillmans : « la photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision »

Exposé en 2002 au Palais de Tokyo ou à l'Hamburger Bahnhof de Berlin en 2008 dans le cadre d'une première grande rétrospective, le talentueux photographe allemand Wolfgang Tillmans se pose à Paris. Il est exposé à la Galerie Chantal Crousel jusqu'au 23 mai. Nous l'avons rencontré à cette occasion.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Hugo Saadi. «La photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision», *Toute la Culture*, April, 23, 2015.

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Dans votre nouvelle série « Lignine Duress », on découvre des arbres démembrés. L'acte de transformation est souvent au cœur de votre travail.

Oui. Je conçois deux actes de transformation. Le premier c'est celui qui vient naturellement, traduire ce que je vois comme une discussion de la 3D vers la 2D, entre ce que le regard capte et ce qu'il y a dans mon esprit. C'est là que naît le désir d'en faire une photographie afin de traduire et communiquer ces pensées. Le second réside dans la façon dont on perçoit les choses du monde. Tout est dans un changement perpétuel et c'est ce qui est le plus intéressant. Quand je vois un objet, je ressens une sensation et je me demande « Comment cet objet était-il hier ? », c'est le cas avec ces arbres qui ne sont plus dans leur état naturel. Pour les vêtements, ce questionnement est le plus intrigant.

Parlez-nous de votre second nouveau projet « End of broadcast » et « Weak signal » ?

J'ai capturé l'instant où les chaînes de télévision arrêtent leurs programmes. C'est quelque chose qui n'existe plus désormais, mais cette sorte de neige qui vole dans l'écran a été présente pendant longtemps. Et elle a fasciné beaucoup de personnes.

Y-a-t-il un message derrière ?

Si j'avais commencé mon travail avec un message en tête cela n'aurait pas été un travail libre mais simplement ce message et rien d'autre. Ce n'est donc pas intéressant. Je m'intéresse aux arts politiques, ceux qui portent un message, mais je pense que cela doit être ancré dans quelque chose avec une liberté visuelle beaucoup plus forte. Les gens pensent que ces photographies abstraites sont expérimentales, mais finalement ce sont celles des arbres qui le sont le plus. Des amateurs peuvent prendre ce genre de photo.

Quand je vois les choses je me demande si c'est possible de les photographier. Ici avec les coupures des télévisions, il y avait un événement naturel sous mes yeux, le signal analogique où le temps semble suspendu où vole cette neige. C'est également l'image d'un état de communication qui résonne comme un malentendu et on pense également à une potentielle censure.

Les photographies de la série « Weak Signal » sont différentes. Il y a quelque chose de particulier dedans que l'on ne reconnaît pas de suite. A l'instar du travail avec les arbres, on ne sait pas où cela se situe, c'est ce qui m'intéresse et pour moi ces deux travaux sont d'une certaine manière liés entre eux. Ils décrivent avec une précision et une acuité technique un moment aléatoire, que l'on n'identifie pas spécialement.

Allez-vous poursuivre votre réflexion photographique dans le domaine de l'abstrait ?

Avec ma série de photos sur le Concorde j'avais déjà pénétré dans ce domaine. Ce sont des travaux similaires dans un sens où ils sont ancrés dans un langage abstrait tout en étant réel. C'est ce dialogue entre les deux états qui m'intéresse le plus. Dans le même registre que mes écrans de télévision, on pourrait penser aux peintures de Pollock. Bien évidemment ce n'en est pas et je ne veux pas y ressembler.

D'ailleurs, avez-vous des influences, des inspirations lorsque vous travaillez ?

Non. Enfin je n'ai jamais eu l'impression d'avoir voulu être comme quelqu'un, parce que je trouve toujours que tu ne peux pas dépasser tes idoles par derrière. Tu dois toujours venir par le côté en cherchant un angle surprenant que toi-même tu ne connaissais pas. Tu te dois presque d'être surpris par ta découverte que tu ne peux pas prévoir !

Hugo Saadi. «La photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision», *Toute la Culture*, April, 23, 2015.

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Quand on parle de vous, on associe rapidement les noms de Terry Richardson, Juergen Teller et même Larry Clark. Les validez-vous ?

Je peux comprendre toutes ces comparaisons. Mais quand l'on regarde ce que j'ai pu faire durant ces vingt dernières années, je dirais qu'il y a 5% de mon travail où il y a des connotations sexuelles. Je reconnais peut être quelques similitudes avec Terry Richardson, mais disons pas plus que 3% ! Avec Larry Clark c'est très différent tout comme Juergen Teller. Je pense que la raison qui pousse à faire ces comparaisons c'est que mon travail a eu une forte influence sur la photo de mode, bien que je n'y ai jamais vraiment travaillé. Je ne suis pas contre ces associations mais je ne me sens pas proche de leurs travaux.

Galerie
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Quelle est votre relation avec les nouveaux réseaux sociaux comme Instagram qui permettent à n'importe qui de devenir photographe amateur et de partager ses clichés ?

La chose la plus fascinante avec la photographie, c'est que les gens pensent que c'est un simple moyen de communication purement mécanique, mais je l'ai toujours appréhendé avec un aspect sociologique fort. C'est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées et nos idées avec une grande précision. Parmi des centaines de photos, je pourrais reconnaître celles de Jeff Wall ou de Terry Richardson à des kilomètres. Et même les copies ! (Rires).

Hugo Saadi. «La photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision», *Toute la Culture*, April, 23, 2015.

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Cependant, je ne dis pas pour autant qu'il y a des travaux dénués de sens. Sur Instagram, il y a aussi des gens qui comme moi prennent en photos des fruits sur une table et les ressentent de la même façon que moi quand j'ai fais ce genre de photos. Et ils ne se disent pas « je vais copier Wolfgang Tillmans ». (Rires)



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Hugo Saadi. «La photographie est un outil qui enregistre nos pensées avec une grande précision», *Toute la Culture*, April, 23, 2015.

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À l'heure actuelle, tout le monde tout le monde vis sa vie à travers l'objectif de son smartphone ...



C'est vrai et c'est fascinant de découvrir cela. Tout change chaque jour, pas seulement nous, mais les paramètres qui nous entourent. Mes photos ont changé aussi, ce ne sont plus les mêmes qu'au début de ma carrière. Il y a 25 ans j'ai fait un autoportrait appelé « Me in the shower », désormais on appellerait ça un selfie, à l'époque cela n'existait pas. Et je continue d'en faire encore aujourd'hui !

Plus d'informations sur le site de la Galerie Chantal Crousel.

Wolfgang Tillmans *Central Nervous System*

Maureen Paley, London 14 October – 24 November

Meet Karl. Karl likes swimming, exercise and travel. He enjoys a soda, the odd cigarette and glass of white wine (nothing too fancy, maybe a Pinot Grigio). He likes comfortable sportswear: hoodies and tank tops in faded, not-too-bright colours. He might even like speedcore music. His hair is rabbit brown on his close-cropped dome, while he has a light white down on his ears. A darker brown of hair runs down in a line from his belly button, while a slightly lighter shade nestles in his armpits. This much we can tell from Wolfgang Tillmans's *Central Nervous System*. Following on from years of hang-anywhere, self-reflexive installations that would jump between images of quickly caught instances and concrete colour tests with photographic paper, here Tillmans returns to the body. A body: 30 photographs from 2008 to 2013 of just Karl, his feet, neck, eyes and determined mouth.

A step back from his more sculptural examinations of the mechanisms of

photography, the exhibition is pitched as a less conscious return 'to square one'. A slick conservatism rules the show, with a linear hang and several of the photos smartly framed underneath nonreflective glass. Many make a conscious effort to approach classical portraiture, with the Renaissance profile view in *Leonardo* (2013), Karl reaching a long index finger up to touch his neck, or the more relaxed, impressionistic sunlight dapples playing on his chest as he lounges in the park in *Karl Arles II* (2013). In the closeup of Karl's eye in *Augenlicht* (*Eyesight*, 2013), more than the details of his retina we see the reflection of the world around him: a window with a sunny garden, the kitchen that he's standing in and the shirtless photographer capturing the scene. The works obviously mirror Tillmans's affection for the man, whatever the relationship may be, but Karl's flat Teutonic demeanour also turns him into a sort of generic everyman. We might as well be looking at anybody, making the focus of the exhibition,

if we're being generous, the gaze itself: sustained, close and curious. More than the actual content, it is the dotting quietude of the assembled portraits that is touching; these are nonmoments, revelling in just looking at someone while events pass by.

While on the surface this provides more focus than Tillmans's usual catchall humanism, there's a double edge to the earnest intimacy invoked here. Lacking a sense of criticality, these works can be seen in the light of Tillmans's role over the past few decades in promoting a style of photography (along with Terry Richardson, Juergen Teller and spawn like Ryan McGinley) that's become the standard in cooler-than-thou 'lifestyle' magazines across the world. Looking at his demure downturned eyes as he apparently waits around in the Colombian city streets in a camouflage parka jacket in *Karl, Bogotá* (2012), you get the creeping feeling of how that same intense gaze can be turned to commodify your nearest and dearest. *Chris Fite-Wassilak*

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Outer Ear, 2012, inkjet print.

© the artist. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

“Wolfgang Tillmans, neue welt,”
Les rencontres d’Arles, April, 2013.

http://www.rencontres-arles.com/A11/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=ARL_1024_VForm&SrvRsp=1&FRM=Frame:ARL_1035

LES RENCONTRES
ARLES
PHOTOGRAPHIE

Wolfgang Tillmans, neue welt



Wolfgang Tillmans - Phare de voiture (b), 2012. Avec l’aimable autorisation de la galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne.

Headlight (b), 2012. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne.

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Depuis 20 ans, Wolfgang Tillmans ne cesse d’interroger et d’étendre les possibilités de la photographie par tous les moyens à travers ses oeuvres photographiques et filmées. Son exposition Monde nouveau présente des photographies extraites de la nouvelle série éponyme, créée au cours de nombreux voyages.

Vingt ans après que Tillmans a commencé à nous livrer sa vision du monde, il se demande si le monde peut être regardé avec un oeil « neuf » à une époque saturée d’images médiatiques, et s’il est possible de dégager une vue d’ensemble. Tillmans traque le « nouveau » non seulement en termes de changement politique et économique, mais aussi à travers la relation à l’évolution numérique de la photographie, désormais capable de représenter des détails avec un degré de précision sans commune mesure avec l’oeil et la vision humaine. Équipé d’un appareil numérique, Tillmans a fait le tour du monde, ne faisant que de brèves haltes – juste assez longues pour se concentrer sur la surface visible de la situation dans un endroit donné. On retrouve donc à maintes reprises dans ses photographies des toits, des revêtements extérieurs, des façades, ainsi que des thèmes issus de la technologie et de la science (plantes, animaux, minéraux, sédiments, moyens de transports et centres commerciaux).

Ces tirages sont associés aux grandes uvres encadrées de la série Silver, que Tillmans poursuit depuis 1998. Le nom Silver (« gris métallisé ») dérive des traces de saleté et de sel argenté qui restent sur le

“Wolfgang Tillmans, neue welt,”
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papier lorsque l’artiste développe les photographies dans une machine qui n’est pas entièrement propre. L’apparence visuelle des dépôts sur le papier photographique découle d’un accident produit par la technologie photographique, qui révèle le processus de formation et la matérialité de la photographie.

Soutien des Rencontres d’Arles depuis plus d’une décennie, la fondation LUMA a contribué à fonder et à élargir sa renommée internationale. Pour cette édition des Rencontres d’Arles, LUMA est heureuse de réitérer son soutien à travers la coproduction de l’exposition *Neue Welt* de Wolfgang Tillmans, à la Grande halle des Ateliers. Cela fait plus de dix ans qu’une monographie d’une telle ampleur sur l’oeuvre de Tillmans n’a pas été présentée en France. Sa production à Arles, en lien étroit avec les Rencontres, est un signe fort donné par la fondation quant au futur projet de Parc des ateliers développé avec Frank Gehry.

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Wolfgang Tillmans

Né en 1968 en Allemagne.

Vit et travaille à Berlin et à Londres.

Wolfgang Tillmans est un des artistes majeurs de sa génération. Après des études en Grande-Bretagne, il attire l’attention du public avec des photographies considérées comme novatrices par la jeune génération des années 1990, et qui soulèvent des questions liées aux sous-cultures et aux identités sexuelles. Depuis, c’est la valeur artistique même du médium photographique que Tillmans a redéfini. Entre portraits intimes, natures mortes et paysages, l’uvre de Tillmans démontre une compréhension simultanée de la relation émotionnelle qui lie le photographe à son sujet et de l’objectivité du processus photographique. En 2000, il est le lauréat du prestigieux Turner Prize.

Portrait de Wolfgang Tillmans
: Carmen_Brunner.

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Art Review:

Contains 5% NATHANIEL MELLORS; 3% SAM GILLIAM AND RASHID JOHNSON;
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Wolfgang Tillmans

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Chantal Crousel





When *ArtReview* visited Wolfgang Tillmans recently in his labyrinthine studio in Kreuzberg, Berlin, we found an artist toggling between looking forward and looking back. On the one hand, Tillmans – first photographic artist to win the Turner Prize, nonpareil expander of his medium’s horizons and reach in recent years, etc – was fresh from the triumph of *Neue Welt*. This years-in-the-making project (showcased both in a 2012 exhibition at the Kunsthalle Zurich and a lavish Taschen book) serves as a surgical inquiry into how, in diverse ways, the world has changed, 20 years after Tillmans began photographing it: cue, for him, a global itinerary of lightning trips, toting a newly adopted digital camera, to everywhere from basement garages in Tasmania

to bustling Indian streets, silvery Far Eastern malls to titanic rubbish dumps. On the other hand, he was preparing – alongside a museum exhibition in Lima – his current large show for K21 in Düsseldorf. In an office filled with a big model of that space, its size necessary for the artist to perfect the intricate scalar shifts of his installs, Tillmans talked about his recent past and a more distant one – starting with his plans to include, at K21, some illuminating work from his teenage years...

MARTIN HERBERT

When did you first get a camera of your own?

WOLFGANG TILLMANS

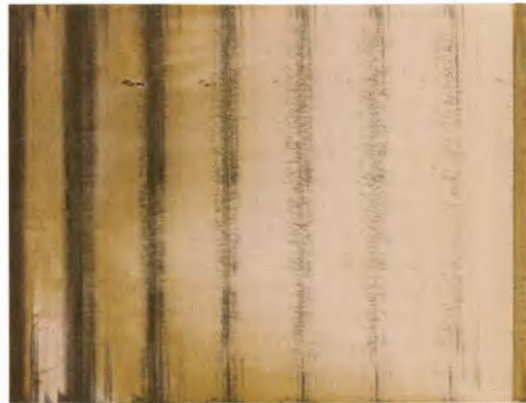
Not until I was twenty. I come from a family of avid amateur photographers – my father, my grandparents – and so that medium felt completely precluded for me. Maybe that’s why I didn’t initially put my photographs directly on the wall and only explored found photos, mechanical pictures. Look at these [points out *Edinburgh Builders a, b and c* (1987) on worktable]. With my mother’s little Rangefinder camera, I photographed a builder working on the opposite house – so the queer gaze is subtly already there [laughs] – and progressively enlarged it across several photocopies so it becomes just a distribution of surface pattern. It’s a kind of noise, but it comes across as super-specific. I still don’t know what this random-or-not information means, but it’s always been of great interest to me. The lucky thing was that I discovered these photocopies as ‘originals’. They had the aura of finished work, yet I didn’t have to paint or draw it. Maybe that was in keeping with me liking electronic music, too – the idea that you can do something expressive without an expressive hand, I was fortunate to have that at an early age. A photocopy is just a sheet of paper, but something happens and it becomes of value, of aesthetic charge.

This issue of transformation has never gone away in your work, has it?

WT: I’m always interested in the question of when something becomes something, or not, and how do we know? I observe it all the time. One person becomes a dear friend, the other not; this pair of old jeans your mother thinks is rubbish and wants to throw away, and to you it’s your favourite piece of clothing. There’s different attributions of value at different times and stages in one’s life, different people have different vantage points – and this is what *Truth Study Center* [his ongoing installation project, first shown at Maureen Paley, London, in 2005, intermingling astral photography, newspaper clippings emphasising various types of intolerance, and much more] was concerned with. All of these people claiming to know ‘what it is’, and almost, one could say, an immodesty in assessing value – in not asking ‘where did my evaluation come from, and when did I start

this page from top: *Silver 92*,
2012; *Silver 94*, 2012; *Silver 97*,
2012

facing page: *Freischwimmer 230*,
2012



thinking about that?' And I would also like to know what things are, but I also want always to acknowledge that even though I want clear answers, they always evolve over time.

And so now you've just looked back over 20 years, comparing then and now, for Neue Welt. How did this start?

WT: Part of what determined the locations was an interest in borders. At the end of 2008 I went to [the Sicilian island of] Lampedusa and a month later to Israel and travelled all over the borders of Israel, and then on the same trip – though not directly, of course, to Tunisia, to go to the other side of Lampedusa. As so often happens, though, when you backtrack, the seeds of the work lie further back. There's one photograph in *Neue Welt* called *Growth* and that's from 2004. I had an interest in going against the aesthetic that I've become known for, and at first – for a show at Andrea Rosen in 2007 – I thought of making deliberately ugly pictures, but that isn't an interesting pursuit in itself. Only two years after I started *Neue Welt* did it become clear that

this was the biggest thing I've been working on since the *Abstract Pictures*.

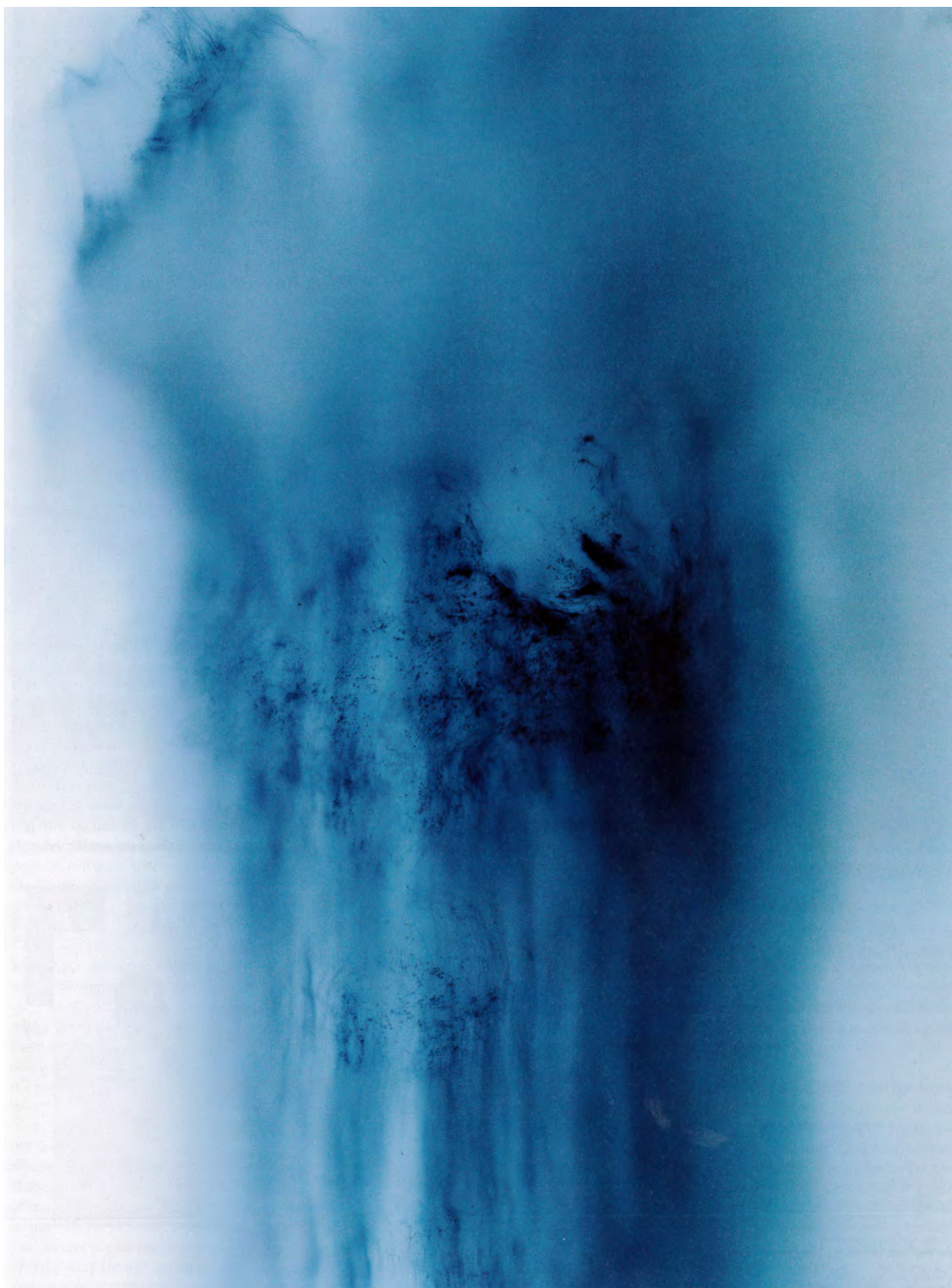
When you gathered those together in a book, you also included works like Edinburgh Builders: again, the starting point was earlier – your work doesn't divide neatly into sections. But from 1998 you did spend a decade focusing on abstraction

– the galaxial scanned-and-enlarged darkroom luminograms Freischwimmer and Blushes; the lysergic lumino- and photogram Mental Pictures; bent and crumpled Lighter photo-objects; the series of photographs of curling photographic paper; Paper Drop, to name but a few.

WT: Dealing with materiality was a way of dealing with changed contexts in the photographic world. At the end of the 1990s what I felt was needed was this slowdown of picture consumption – which of course seems funny to think about back then, because now there's an insane speed of picture consumption. But I already felt people were getting careless with it. I wanted to go against that and mess with expectations of what one would see and how one would read this piece of photographic paper. Since 1998, this talking about the photograph as an object has been such a strong focus for me. I'm doing what I do for myself, but of course I'm always doing it in the context of the world it exists in, so if I feel there isn't enough of something, then that, in a way, constitutes the reason for me to do something about it.

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For *Neue Welt* you began using a digital camera for the first time, and set out on deliberately short trips around the world, to these border zones. It's a project full of rocketing contrasts: in one section of the book, we zoom between car headlights - that you've identified as having a new cruelly sharklike design template - to a creamy abstraction, to a boy running down a shantytown street, to a pin-sharp night sky. In a conversation with Beatrix Ruf published in the book, you said, 'Essentially this is about humanism.' What did you mean?

WT: It's a big word, but I guess what I meant with it is that I don't want to create a distance between myself and the world that I depict and the viewer. With this triangle one can so easily put up distance and gaps and steps between the three; I find a low threshold of approachability between them more interesting than to build in distance or difference. At the same time, and this



MY PHOTOGRAPHY
BEGAN THROUGH USING
THE FIRST DIGITAL
PHOTOCOPIER

is crucial, I'm fully aware that there is difference, that there are huge differences in access, wealth... The difficulty with *Neue Welt* - which in itself I couldn't write down as the agenda - was to be open-ended but at the same time come up with specific results that speak about specificity in the most nonprescribed, unplanned way, because if you go somewhere with an idea in mind, you will only find that idea. And if you make drifting the subject, then you also maybe end up with just that, without focus. So there are specific interests



this page from top: spreads from *Neue Welt*, 2012, Taschen

facing page from left: *Headlight (f)*, 2012; *Spores*, 2012

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[in it]. I'm always reading and following what goes on, and there are certain markers that I find are significant and telling points.

Car headlights...

WT: Yes, or all sorts of things to do with markets and marketing and the transfer of goods.

And you feel like a lot of this is available on the surface? Because it seems this project is tied to surfaces: you're deliberately skimming the surface of a place, and leaving when it becomes familiar, and what you're picking up are articulate surfaces.

WT: Yes. Content inscribes itself into surfaces so eloquently, because a surface that is not purely made by nature is usually the result of layers of many people's interactions with it. With architecture, cityscapes, I'm always fascinated by the layering of different architects, generations of what they thought is right; and with shop displays, what that shop assistant thought in

conjunction with the display that was made by that design office - all those wishes and desires to design.

How does a project like this relate, then, to, say, ethnography?

WT: I guess an ethnographer identifies a subject to study, and they want internal coherence and it's led by an external demonstration of difference. And I wasn't led by pure expectation of difference, but nor was I led by a romantic longing for what all this human family shares. I guess that was the biggest personal human growth I got from this: learning to accept the similarity and, at the same time, total differentness of people and places. On the one

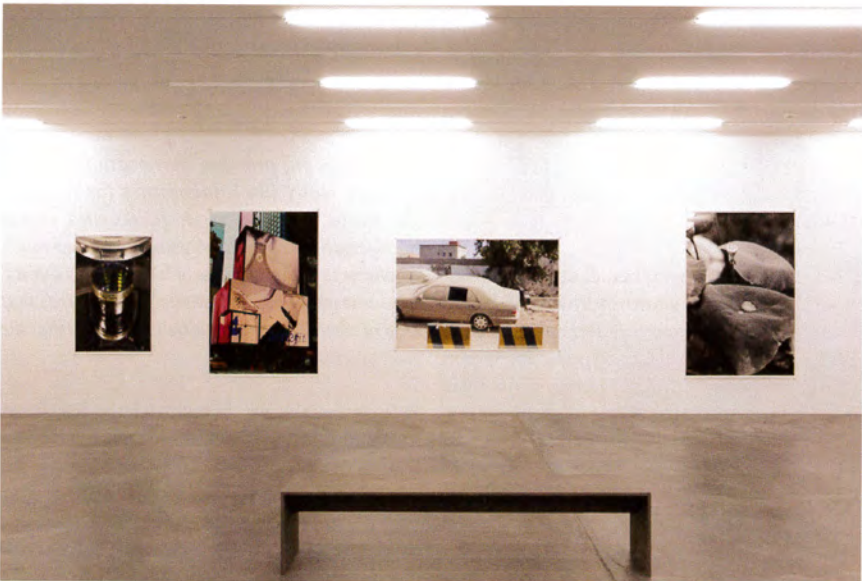
hand we're extremely the same, and at the same time we are insurmountably different.

You said in one previous conversation, 'This is actually really like a laboratory for studying the world in many of its facets and visual manifestations.' I'm slightly uncertain how much emphasis to put on the idea of 'the world as subject' in your work. Neue Welt would suggest there's that kind of whole-grasping ambition at work. Is that the scale you think on?

WT: Undeniably yes, but with a huge disclaimer attached: that it's an impossible task, and if taken too seriously it could be laden with hubris. But it would also be coy if I said, oh, I'm not dealing with it. I am, because how could I not - because that would mean my fascination would drop off at a point, and my fascination is kind of limitless. It's not greedy, it's not trying to piss on every territory, but I mean - economics and economic activity, for example: how important is that to what goes on in almost every aspect of human life?

these pages, from top:
installation views of Wolfgang
Tillmans exhibitions at Moderna
Museet, Stockholm, 2012, Museo
de Arte del Banco de la
República, Bogotá, 2012, and
Kunsthalle Zurich, 2012

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MY APPROACH TO
PHOTOGRAPHY AS
A MEDIUM HAS ALWAYS
BEEN THAT I WANTED
TO APPROXIMATE
WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO
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As you've made this marker of 20 years of work, do you feel your vision - your actual ability to look - has changed in that time?

WT: Maybe what I would call the ability to name and discern what my vision records, that has possibly improved. I hope so. Because there is what we *choose* to see and what we are *able* to see, and then there's a lot of things that people don't choose not to see, but simply aren't able to see. I hope I've stayed attentive. This term, attentive, is the most crucial in my life, in a way. The way we look, that is how we decide to act in this world, and that is then also how society as a whole acts, if you see societies always as an addition, an accumulation of individuals.

How much of a difference has working digitally made to you?

WT: My photography began through using the first digital photocopier, which you saw in those Xeroxes. I happened to come across that in 1986, and understood the possibilities it allowed for making pictures. And then I bought, obviously, an analogue camera and then in 1992 used a large-format Canon copier to make the large-format inkjet prints. So I stayed purely analogue, technically, until 2009 in regard to how the image generation is made, where the image dots come from. That's always been onto film, and in a way I'm still analogue now because I use the [digital camera's] sensor really as a film,

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and I never move pixels around. And I think that's important because people nowadays just expect that something has been altered in pictures. I find that a bit disturbing.

So this is about truth...

WT: Yes. In my work various ways of transfer, meaning printing, are possible, because this is how an idea becomes form, in a way. But the world as it passes through the lens and is projected onto film or sensor – I find that shouldn't be tampered with. Because the world already allows for so much absurdity, so many wild conjunctions of events and objects, it would be crazy to think that's not enough. By not doing retouching additions in my work, I insist that what you see somehow was in front of the lens. I want people to trust this as a basic given. That makes it somehow more powerful than all the pixels I can move around.

Then the attraction of digital is on the level of resolution?

WT: Yes. I had found my photographic truth in the grain and information level of 100 ASA fine-grain film. Which I read somewhere carries as much information as a 14-megapixel sensor. So until there were digital portable light cameras that could have 14 megapixels, I thought the idea of going digital was stupid anyway. My approach to photography as a medium has always been that I wanted to approximate what it feels like to look through my eyes, and that seemed very much achieved with 35mm. What was attractive to me about digital cameras of this full-format generation is the extreme variety in speed: that you can set it from 100 ASA to, now, 25,000 ASA. And it really makes certain pictures possible that were impossible before.

For example?

WT: The starry skies. They seem not of a particular time, but if you are in the know, you know this picture is very improbable. Ten years ago you wouldn't have been able to take this picture, without manipulation. Because after five, seven, eight seconds, stars show up as a line, because of the earth's rotation. So you'd have to put the camera on a countermovement, but then the ground would be blurry. For me to take a picture of the northern sky, an astro-photograph, from a flying aircraft, with no movement, that's such a crazy idea. So I'm glad I went to digital of my own free will, because then a year later Fuji discontinued the fine-grain film that I used.

It seems you're also more interested in issues of scale now. In the sense that you have these really large enlargements that are pin-sharp as well...

WT: The scale-shift issue has been going on since my first show at Daniel Buchholz, 20 years ago, but what has changed, and really been a challenge for me, is that you can look as close at the large pictures as you want and there's no dissolution. And that I find is of huge significance – in cultural history, possibly. I don't want to sound immodest because it's also something that was given to me by the camera maker, but some of these new pictures – or all of them, in a way – contain more information than the mind can possibly remember. So any super-fine paintings from 1500 with fur that looks super-real, they are still not as fine as these pictures, which are at the same time photographed from the vantage point of my eye, which is always interested in the nonhierarchical point of view. So whereas in the past a 10 x 8 photograph always somehow had to be taken from a privileged point of view, there is somehow a coming together of, on the one hand, this very human perspective and glance, with this precision. It's something I find personally still perplexing, like: what is going on here? It's a bit scary. And interestingly, now I've gone digital, there's no digital medium that can show these pictures in their full quality.

So it's still analogue in the end: you still have to go to the one-off, the print...

WT: There's no screen that has the depth of information. And so it becomes very much about standing in front of this print, and having the spatial relation and movement around it. So I kind of have great faith in the picture: it hasn't gone away. Fortunately. ♣

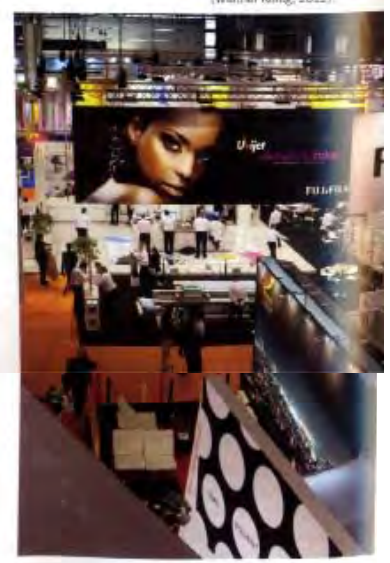
Work by Wolfgang Tillmans is on show at K21, Düsseldorf, until 7 July and at Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI) until 16 June. Neue Welt is available in a limited portfolio edition (signed and numbered) from Taschen

Michelle Kuo. "Step into Liquid. Michelle Kuo talks with Wolfgang Tillmans about the ascendancy of ink-jet printing" *Artforum*, 50th anniversary issue, September 2012, p. 420-429.

Step into Liquid

MICHELLE KUO TALKS WITH WOLFGANG TILLMANS ABOUT
THE ASCENDANCY OF INK-JET PRINTING

Pages from Wolfgang Tillmans's
FESPA Digital/First Lightbox
(Walther König, 2012).



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Michelle Kuo. "Step into Liquid. Michelle Kuo talks with Wolfgang Tillmans about the ascendancy of ink-jet printing" *Artforum*, 50th anniversary issue, September 2012, p. 420-429.

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Wolfgang Tillmans, *Headlight (n)*,
inkjet print on paper,
1 x 2' 6"; digital C print,
2"; digital C print,
10"; digital C print in
frame, 83 1/2 x 97".

We have arrived at a point where a large proportion of "painting" is actually ink-jet printing. This is an amazing fact. But it is never really talked about.



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Fischschwimm* 152, 2010. Inkjet print on paper, 12' 5" x 38' 4". Installation view, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

MICHELLE KUO: I was struck by your reaction to the David Hockney exhibition in London this past spring ["A Bigger Picture," Royal Academy of Arts]. Beyond any sheer aesthetic pleasure, you seemed especially taken by the show's structure, in which traditionally painted canvases were shown alongside digitally produced paintings as well as arrays of video monitors that functioned as display "canvases."

WOLFGANG TILLMANS: Hockney's exhibition is a fascinating example of the veil we put around medium. This is a subject I've been dealing with in my work from the beginning, so I was intrigued to see this set of issues appear in another artist's practice—and excited by the exuberance of the show. Not only by his relentless dwelling on the subject matter of nature but also by his iPad paintings, which were actually ink-jet prints on paper mounted on Dibond. I was curious to see how these digital images were presented as material paintings in drop-shadow frames. And they resonated with the multipanel video screens showing moving images made with nine cameras. Ultimately, though—even if the work celebrates new media and technology, just as Hockney has done in the past—it almost seemed as if the iPad and video pieces were there as foils, to

underline, by contrast, the masterly position and unsurpassable value of actual oil on canvas.

Last month I was in Cologne to take a portrait of Hockney, and he talked about how amazing the quality of ink-jet printers is today, how they can produce colors beyond those of any other medium. But then he added, "The images have to be drawn. You have to draw them. It can't come from photographs." I found this so telling, this notion that something hand-drawn will print differently from something that is photographed, and that the printing technology itself could be used, ultimately, to uphold this hierarchy. The ink-jet printer itself obviously doesn't care where the input, the color values, come from, whether something drawn, scanned, or photographed; the printer merely prints the color space it can technically cover.

In fact, the show demonstrated there is an unprecedented equality among different media today. But it also made clear that there is a deep psychological attachment to traditional hierarchies of medium. And I have been observing this leveling—and the attachment to hierarchy in the face of it—for many years. For example, the same medium exists in completely different museum departments. If one looks

at the traditional divisions of modern art (the same category of mechanically produced work exists across the print department, the photography department, the painting and sculpture department, plus obviously architecture and design,

MK: And just as the boundaries between those traditional mediums themselves have become increasingly murky, markets and institutions have seemingly reinforced those divisions all the more.

WT: We have arrived at a point where a large proportion of "painting" is actually ink-jet printing. This is an amazing fact. But, almost as astonishingly, it is never really talked about. A photographic ink-jet print on paper, an iPad drawing printed on ink-jet paper, and an original design printed on ink-jet paper are all technically exactly the same. Perhaps it's time to rethink the remarkably persistent categorization of artworks. In my view, we are all making pictures.

MK: How is this condition of "pictures" reflected in your work, and how did you come to work with digital photography and ink-jet printing yourself?

WT: I always saw myself as a picture maker, using whatever means were available to make a new picture. I started working with digital printing in 1986. I used the first black-and-white laser photocopier by Canon in a copy shop to print a one-off zine. When

Wolfgang Tillmans, *Let's stick* 1992. Inkjet print on paper, 63 x 47 cm. Installation view, Museum of Contemporary Art, London, 2010.





Wolfgang Tillmans, *Interfall*, 1987, black and white laser photocopy, 11 9/16 x 16 1/2".

I started experimenting with this new machine, I realized how much more meaningful those photocopies were in texture and in presence than the drawings and paintings I was making at the time—that this mechanically produced object had a richer texture because of the rather rough dot screen and the surface lines generated by the technology of the moment. It was digital, which meant it should be perfect, but in fact it wasn't; the process always created some degree of interference and unevenness, which I liked. Then in 1992, in order to make larger pictures, instead of tiling many A3 photocopies together I found a brand-new Canon Color Bubble Jet Copier A1, which was really a photocopier unit

with an ink-jet printer inside it that printed on twenty-four-inch rolls of paper.

I realized that I could make large-scale, lightweight pictures by photocopying my smaller, hand-printed photographs from the darkroom and enlarging them to four feet by five feet. I hung each picture as a sheet of paper on the wall, unframed, so that there was nothing between the viewer and the ink-saturated matte surface. Because these early ink-jet prints were executed with unstable dyes, I realized that if I wanted to have the advantage of this fragility and more immediate spatial relationship, it was essential to find a way for people to perceive them as permanent, and so I accompanied the works with the original photograph

and a certificate, instructing the owner how to reprint the picture when the first copy faded. While this was a practical solution, it also afforded viewers the opportunity to break down certain barriers of materiality—attaining a paradoxical permanence even as attachment to the "original" print was obviated.

MK: And that transitioned away from the heavy vehicle or container—like the thick wood and Plexiglas frame or the light box—that was standard practice for large photographs and also associated with a certain strain of conceptual photography.

WT: Yes. I wanted to avoid the heavy language of large-scale photographs. The unframed ink-jet print was definitely an exception to that language, and it

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Wolfgang Tillmans. Onion, 2010.
Ink jet print on paper, 81 1/2 x 54 1/2"



Details of various contemporary artworks made using ink-jet printing. Photos: Wolfgang Tillmans

was seen as a dramatic, rebellious gesture at the time, although it has since become a common practice. But for me, it was not so much an objection to the frame. It was about the love of this immaculate object as it comes out of the printer or processing machine. It was about acknowledging the objectness and the specificity of materiality. I was asking: How can I present this object, which has always been just that—an *object*, a print, for me, and not just a conduit of information? And how can I bring it to the wall?

For my small-scale C-type prints, I found a way of taping the photograph that wouldn't harm the surface and was detachable from the back, in order to foreground this attention to materiality. After some years, though, I became known for this way of installing my work; it felt important to reinvigorate the dialogue about the photograph as an object and not let it drift into the background as merely the expected way of encountering my work. So I introduced frames and showed them next to the unframed work. This juxtaposition held open the possibility of a reversal of meaning, or a questioning of expectations.

MK: The frame, or the border, gets pressured differently within newer media. In several photographs that

you took for this piece, which are close-ups of ink-jet works by different artists, you focused on the edges and corners.

WT: Because that's really where the picture begins and ends, where it meets the real world around it. It is a crucial point—where the reality or the body of the work, so to speak, manifests itself. It is also, importantly, a juncture where you can often see the paint or ink or pigment meet the material support underneath. So I've always been interested in the ways in which artists deal with the corners and edges, how they are managed and handled. Whether viewing a Velázquez or a Jeff Wall, after taking in a picture as a whole I take a look at its side. I like to observe the shadows that stretchers cast—as in a room of Rothkos on view recently at MOMA, which could be viewed afresh by blocking everything else out and only concentrating on the shadows cast by the bottom corners of the paintings.

MK: Modern ink-jet technology also produces something you've referred to as "smooth color," the experience of pure, solid color.

WT: The experience of pure color has been heightened to a new level. That is where I think there has been a

In its most extreme state, a contemporary ink-jet painting on stretchers inside a museum is technically the same as an advertising banner stretched on the museum's facade. For some that may be hard to stomach.

seasonic change in technology, what Hockney referred to as colors that have not been possible before, colors with a deep richness—not a lurid richness. The quality of ink and ink-jet printing has become even more amazing in recent years, and manufacturers are now using pigmented ink, which lasts much longer than traditional C-type color photographs.

We have come to a point where the ink-jet printer actually has a bigger color space than C-type photography. But I have also noticed that there remains a faith in the optical C-print because it is connected to a unique negative and not to a set of codes. There is a tendency to want to hold on to the analog for some sort of authenticity.

MK: And yet images generated by a set of codes are dominant, across vastly different types of imagery—from the commercial pictures at the digital print fair you visited in Barcelona, for example, to a late Pollock on vinyl.

WT: In its most extreme state, a contemporary ink-jet painting on stretchers inside a museum is technically the same as an advertising banner stretched on the aluminum framework on the museum's facade, for some that may be a little hard to stomach.

MK: One could cynically surmise that's why various artists have tried to bring the symbol for the artist's hand or the gesture into their art, by adding an "original" painterly touch with washes of paint or color on top of the ink-jet-printed image, just as late Warhols were individualized in that way.

WT: Yes, that seems a bit anachronistic. Interestingly, I think that for a younger generation of artists, expressive gestures are more naturally performed on digital recording surfaces, like trackpads, stylus tablets, or iPads. And these pictures' first state of being is immaterial. They are just as immaterial as a digital photograph on a computer screen or a FreeHand illustration. They are all categorically the same, but there still seems to be a hierarchization of this material, which is a near-ethical dilemma that I find fascinating.

In order to transfer such imagery into an exhibition space, it has to be mediated back onto a physical substrate, unless it will be shown on monitors. Probably one sad day, exhibition spaces may be covered floor to ceiling in digital screens as thin as wall-

paper. But today the challenge is this: Everyone who makes digital images uses the same machines made by a handful of manufacturers that produce state-of-the-art ink-jet printers. From Gerhard Richter in Cologne to a photographer in Tokyo to a fine art printmaker in Los Angeles, they all use the same set of machines.

MK: On the one hand, that introduces a bottleneck, because so many of those parameters are completely predetermined—but they then have endless permutations. You can introduce a boundless series of layers of different visual registers—scans, vector graphics, photographed imagery—into what is outputted.

WT: And now you can print onto anything—canvas, wood, glass, metal, Mylar, you name it. The choices going into making a specific pictorial object are all important here: What is a good way for this image to exist in the real world? Of course there is also the question of how one can assure that monetary value is attributed to the image. It's hard to ignore the fact that we still value the notion of an image on canvas more highly than if it were on wood, and therefore a sculpture, or on paper, and therefore a photograph.

MK: Nevertheless, the principle at the moment is always the same: ink pigment sprayed onto something. Which raises questions of reproducibility, of editioning, of uniqueness. None of this is new, of course—from early hand-wringing about photography to the industrially produced objects of Minimalism. Yet what seems new is the pervasiveness of one type of *media* across so many supposedly different *mediums*.

You also point to something interesting, which is that despite the sophistication of our programs or printers or technical apparatuses, it is still extremely difficult to achieve the same results. That even though we think that things are infinitely reproducible, in fact reproduction itself is still always slightly contingent on—

WT: On the touch and the craft and the knowledge of the operator of the printer. The reproducibility of art has to some extent always been an ideal, because the moment the data meets the physical world, you are dealing with the idiosyncratic consistency of the pigment powder that has been mixed into the ink liquid in Japan by a specific company.

For instance, the static charge that creates a slight blip in the flow of data or ink, the inconsistencies in paper or other base materials, and printing profiles and program updates mix with variables like humidity and temperature in the print workshop—anybody who has experience in fine printing knows how frustratingly difficult it is to achieve a perfect result. Just as my work addresses its relation to medium, it also directly addresses our relationship to perfection and accident.

MK: It recalls Warhol's paintings: the randomization of texture and the introduction of numerous lines—screenprinted surfaces—versus now, when nothing falls through the grid of the screen.

WT: Because today's best ink-jet prints have become a closed surface, with no screen or dots visible to the naked eye. The surface is 300 dpi or more, with 100 information density. But random noise still happens in digital photography, in which a photo sensor translates what it sees or doesn't see into zeros and ones. In extreme low light, cameras generate random information. I used this effect in photographs of the night sky, where at great enlargement a star is no longer distinguishable from a pixel that just displays a random charge.

MK: Do you see the users—whether they be an agency or a graphic designer—as subjects in the technology, waiting for the next advance, looking forward to the opportunity to play around with whatever new tools are designed? Or is it (in) the other way around: The producers are looking at what their users desire in terms of each next-generation development?

WT: I don't think that the artists are the ones who are actively pushing the development, and I don't think the developers are looking to artists, necessarily. But there is no denying the incredible democracy of this medium and in these extremely powerful nodes. The technology is on the desktops of millions of people using all kinds of applications, making everything from home video to political signs. One has to see this as an opportunity. What does it mean, then, for the art object?

MK: Now the ink-jet print is a kind of material picture that parallels the register—in resolution, in color—of the picture on the screen. But this portends a homogenization of vision even as it suggests new possibilities for imaging.

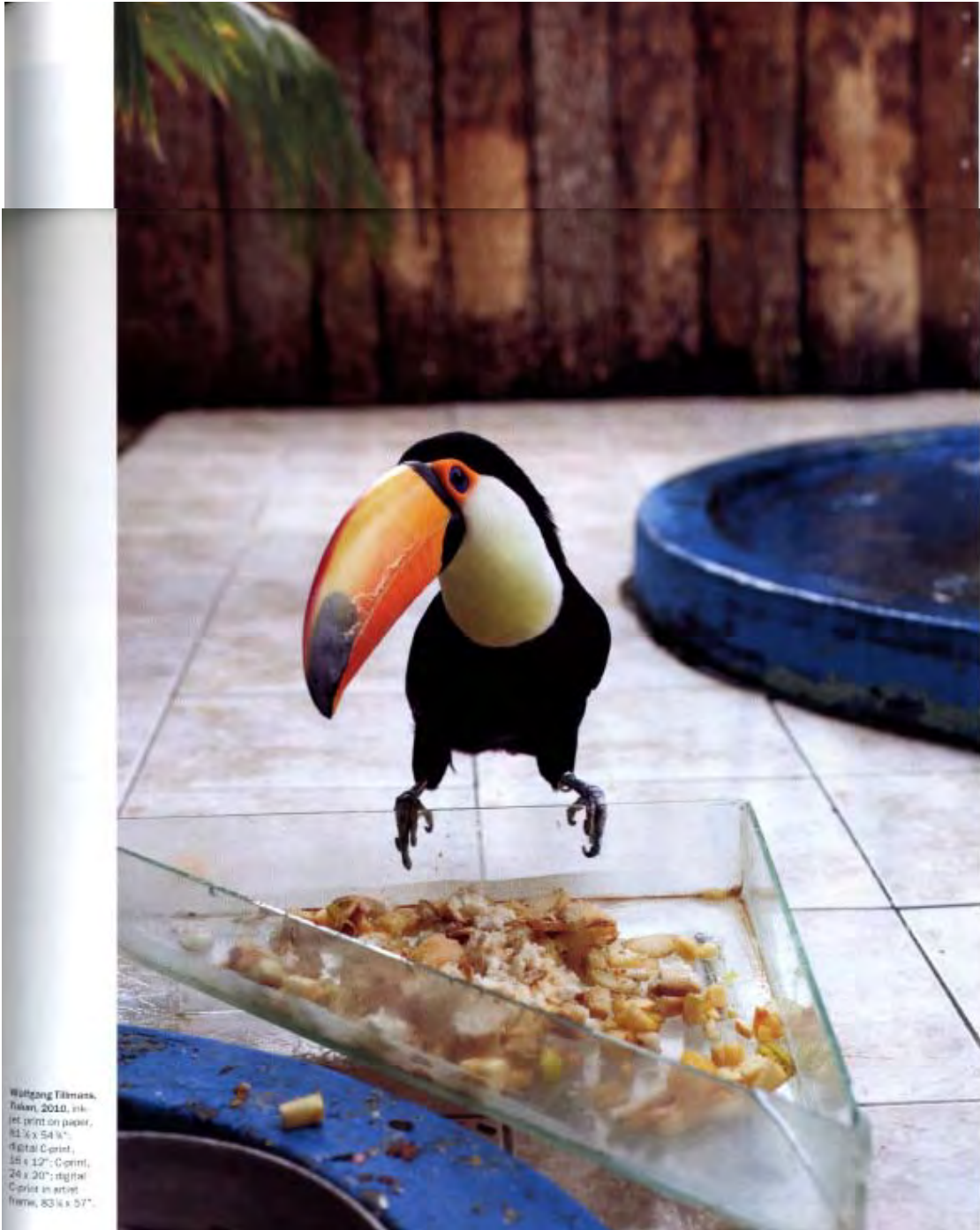
WT: It's mind-boggling. Digital has allowed an advance in quality at the same time as it has created an incredible degradation of standards and of expectations. Just think of how we only watch *trivia* in fuzzy YouTube quality.

Buying a digital camera three years ago was, for me, a total revolution. I needed to learn my language for the second time. I suddenly had to deal with high definition, that every picture now sees more than my eye can see. This was about a whole new way of seeing, of working. In the past I had always said that 35-mm film was exactly right for my photography because I want my photographs to look like what my eye sees. And photographs recorded on large-format film always felt cold; they are impressive, but they have nothing to do with my experience of the world.

Now I have suddenly found myself with a small SLR (single-lens reflex) camera that has the deepest

Michelle Kuo. "Step into Liquid. Michelle Kuo talks with Wolfgang Tillmans about the ascendancy of ink-jet printing" *Artforum*, 50th anniversary issue, September 2012, p. 420-429.

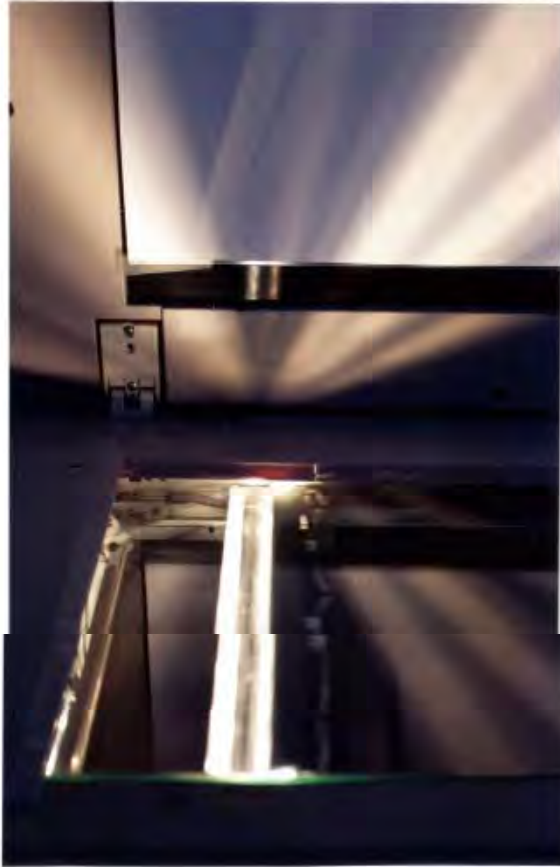
Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Wolfgang Tillmans,
Toucan, 2010, ink-
jet print on paper,
81 x 54 1/2".
Digital C-print,
26 x 12"; C-print,
26 x 30"; digital
C-print in artist
frame, 83 1/2 x 57".

Paradoxically, today, when almost all of our images involve mechanical reproduction, we are hardly aware of the social functions that the new technology might fulfill.

Wolfgang Tillmans, *Kopierer* (c), 2010, ink-jet print on paper, 81 3/8 x 54 1/2"; digital C-print, 18 x 12"; digital C-print, 24 x 20"; digital C-print in artist frame, 83 3/8 x 57".



Wolfgang Tillmans, *An Night scene* (W), 2010, ink-jet print on paper, 81 3/8 x 54 1/2"; ink-jet print on paper, 10 x 1.5"; digital C-print in artist frame, 83 3/8 x 57".

of large-format film. So I have really had to learn to adapt to a different process—because there is no point in artificially adding grain to these pictures. That would be so wrong. And about four years ago there was a new generation of digital cameras with sensors exactly the size of 35-mm film, and so optically the lenses perform exactly the same as those in my 35 SLR. Before, I could always recognize digital photographs. Now they don't have the same quality of flatness that they once did. Because of the portability of these supersharper cameras, I can carry on in the way that I move around the world and keep the same angles and perspectives as my previous work.

The transition was tough. I didn't want my medium to look nostalgic, but could I still make pictures of the same emotional charge and intensity? This is all coming together, in a way, as I prepare for my exhibition "*Neue Welt*" [New World] at Kunsthalle Zürich in September. As I've worked on this show, a whole new layer has entered my work, which can only be seen in person in front of the actual prints. The depth of detail is so great that a picture can never be memorized in its entirety. It's as if in

each one there is a sense of the infinite complexity of matter—a kind of trompe l'oeil effect that is neither clinical nor cold but surreal.

MK: This seems like part of a shift to a different visual order, one in which a surfeit, an exponentially greater magnitude, of information is simultaneously readily available—both within the camera's viewfinder and on print—and totally beyond our perceptual capacity.

WT: I had experienced this act of learning a new visual language once before, when starting to work with cameraless, nonfigurative pictures in the darkroom. These shifts, some chosen, some forced on us by technological development, shouldn't be seen as a threat. They are profoundly exciting.

MK: If *Pictures* was famously coined by Douglas Crimp as a way of talking about the class of images being made in the 1970s that did not seem self-

reflexively preoccupied with their own medium specificity but instead addressed new types of representation—film, photography, television, advertising—Crimp articulated the ways in which such "pictures" were still committed to modernism, to its radical aspirations and to its investigations into signification and representation, along the lines of Surrealism and Pop. To his mind, these artists in the '70s had merely turned from modernism's internal, formalist questions of medium to questions of the psychology of the image and its relation to (consumer) desire.

It seems that, on the one hand, the "pictures" you speak of deal very much with this territory—the realm of desire, psychology, consumption (those lurid images at the digital-printing trade fair!). But on the other hand, the universe of pictures you are talking

about also appears to break with modernist radicality, with older critiques of representation. The landscape has changed, even if we are leaving many of its possibilities unexplored.

WT: Well, the Pop silk screen was at the center of this tension between the radical and the commercial in the postwar period. And decades before that, Walter Benjamin spoke of mechanical reproduction as, in a way, freeing the artwork from its cult status, its role in ritual, and allowing it to enter the realm of the political. But paradoxically, today, when almost all of our images involve mechanical reproduction, we are hardly aware of the social functions that the new technology might fulfill; instead we persist in tethering it to the realm of cult and ritual, which is the fetishization of images stretched on canvas. □

WOLFGANG TILLMANS IS AN ARTIST BASED IN BERLIN AND LONDON.

Wolfgang Tillmans, *Waste 66*, 2008, ink-jet print on paper, 54 1/2 x 81 3/4"; digital C-print, 12 x 16"; digital C-print, 20 x 34"; digital C-print in artist frame, 57 x 83 1/2".





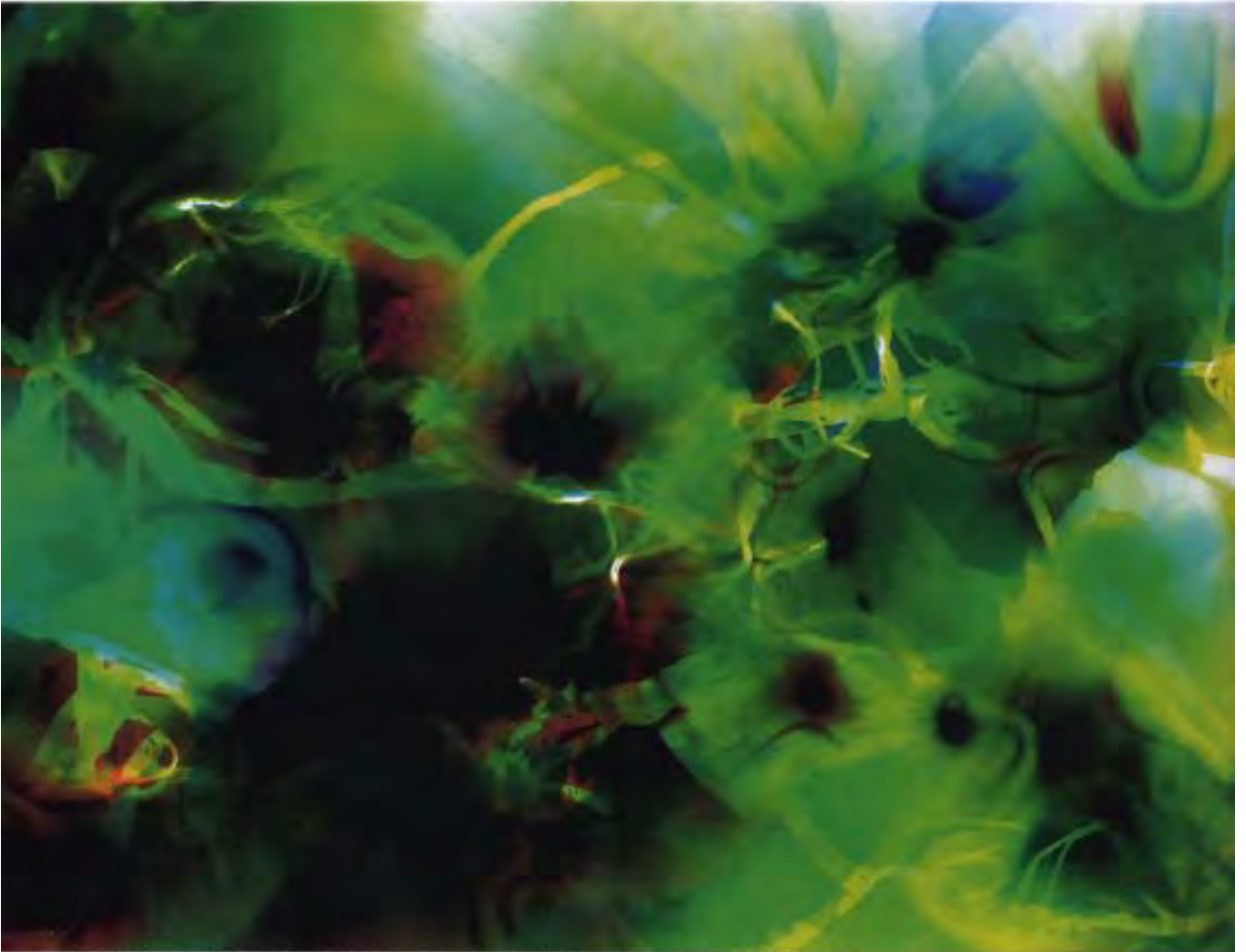
„Ostgut Freischwimmer, right“ (2004, 244 x 614 cm)



„Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten“

Wolfgang Tillmans, einst der Chronist der Clubkultur, macht seit über zehn Jahren vornehmlich abstrakte Bilder. Jetzt ordnet der Turner-Preisträger sein Œuvre in einem opulenten Fotoband neu. *art* hat mit ihm gesprochen und präsentiert ein exklusives Portfolio

INTERVIEW: ADRIENNE BRAUN, UTE THON, PORTRÄTFOTOS: SVEN PAUSTIAN



„Mental Picture #62“ (2002, 267 x 377 cm). Rechts: „City (São Paulo) II“ (2010, 257 x 181 x 6 cm)

„Interessant an den nicht
gegenständlichen Bildern finde ich, dass das Auge die
Wirklichkeit hineinprojiziert“

Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, "Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten", ART#7, July 2011.

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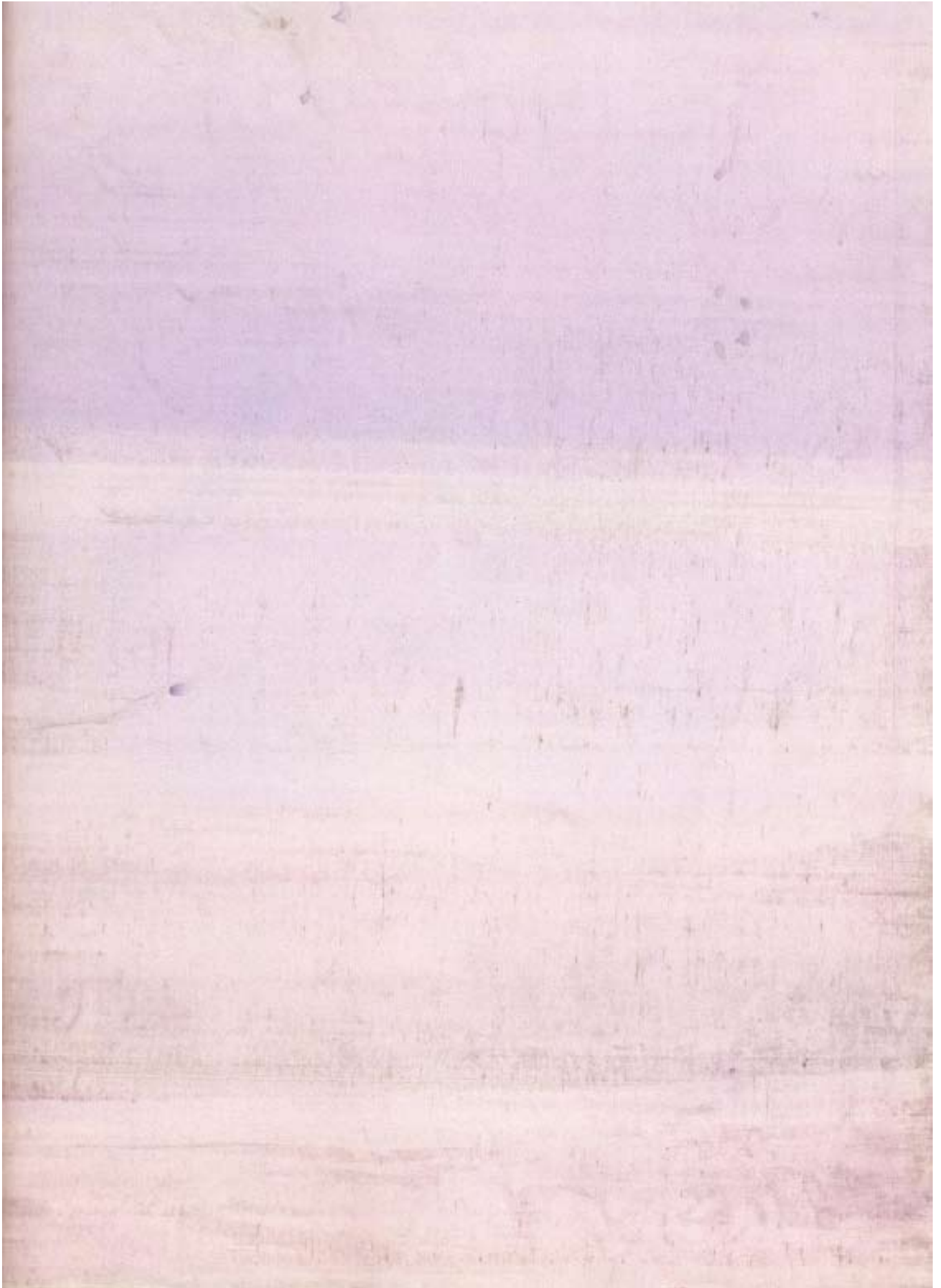


„Wenn man auf diese Bilder schaut, ist im Hirn eine Assoziationsmaschine am Werk. Gleichzeitig sind es Bildräume, die nicht mit der Wirklichkeit in Verbindung zu bringen sind. Dadurch entsteht Spannung“

„photocopy (Barnaby)“ (1994, 213 x 145 x 6 cm). Rechts: „Silver 71“ (2008, 238 x 181 x 6 cm)

Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, "Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten", ART#7, July 2011.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel





„I don't want to get over you“ (2000, diverse Formate). Rechts: „Urgency XXII“ (2006, 238 x 181 x 6 cm)

„Jedes Foto ist ein Experiment, das Scheitern ist mit inbegriffen. Dabei lade ich den Zufall bewusst mit ein“

Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, "Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten", ART#7, July 2011.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel





Farbkorrektur: Wolfgang Tillmans überprüft die Andrucke seines Buchs in der Druckerei

Wolfgang Tillmans im Glück. Begeistert klettert der Künstler auf einer riesigen Druckmaschine herum, beugt sich mit seiner Kamera über die Farbwalzen. So überbrückt er die Wartezeit, bis die nächsten Druckbogen zur Farbkorrektur durchgelaufen sind. Hier in der Druckerei des Hatje Cantz Verlags in Ostfildern entsteht gerade sein neues Buch „Abstract Pictures“, und der Künstler überwacht jeden Schritt höchstpersönlich. Die ganze Nacht hat er mit den Drucktechnikern durchgearbeitet, zwischendurch nur ein, zwei Stunden auf einer Klappcouch im Firmenbüro geruht. Dennoch ist er am Morgen bestens gelaunt. Die Buchproduktion läuft gut. Tillmans gönnt sich eine kleine Kaffeepause – und Zeit für ein Gespräch mit *art*.

art: Sie sind bekannt geworden mit schembar beiläufigen Porträts, Städteansichten, Stilleben. Nun machen Sie vor allem abstrakte Arbeiten. Wie geht das zusammen?

Wolfgang Tillmans: Es ist nie mein Ansatz gewesen, dass Fotografie nur das ist, was auf dem Papier zu erkennen ist. Ich habe Fotografie immer als Möglichkeit gesehen, innerhalb dieser vier Ecken ein Bild zu machen, das heißt, Farbe und Form hinzubringen. Bilder wie die „Concorde“-Fotos sind für mich auch Farbfelder. Und ich habe schon 1991 mit den „Faltenwürfen“ angefangen, Nahaufnahmen von zerknitterten Kleidungsstücken, die absolut gender sind in der Jugendkultur. Gleichzeitig sind es reine Formstudien. Andererseits muten viele von den abstrakten, nicht mit der Fotolinse gemachten Bildern gegenständlich

„Es gibt ein Grundprinzip, dass ich ein Bild immer wieder prüfe und erwarte, dass es nach fünf oder zehn Jahren immer noch relevant ist“

an und lösen häufig körperliche Assoziationen aus.

Die auch durch die mitunter sehr konkreten Titel wie „Mieskel“ oder „Ätma“ geweckt werden. Existiert für Sie keine Trennung zwischen dem, was das Bild darstellt und dem, was es im Kopf auslösen könnte?

Ein Bild soll immer ohne Titel funktionieren, aber der Titel kann eine Richtung geben. Interessant an den nicht gegenständlichen Bildern finde ich, dass sie fotografisch erzeugt sind und das Auge die Wirklichkeit hineinprojiziert. Fotografie war immer ein Beweis von Wirklichkeit. Wenn man aber auf diese Bilder schaut, ist im Hirn sofort eine Assoziationsmaschine am Werk. Gleichzeitig sind es Bildräume, die nicht mit der Wirklichkeit in Verbindung zu bringen sind. Dadurch entsteht eine Spannung, die sich niemals malen könnte.

Ist der Betrachter für Sie denn wichtig? Wollen Sie in ihm etwas auslösen?

Den Betrachter gibt es nicht. Es gibt eigentlich nur ein kleines Feld von vier, fünf Leuten um mich herum, die mir als Referenz dienen. Sie sehen, wenn etwas glaubwürdig ist. Man sieht als Urheber häufig nicht, dass die Absicht zu deutlich wird und man davon gefangen ist. Dann ist es wichtig, sich vorzustellen, wie würden die anderen darauf gucken. Das sind die einzigen Betrachter, über die ich nachdenke. Wobei ich mich vor jeder Ausstellung frage: Was braucht diese Stadt in diesem Moment?

Sie haben einen großen Fundus an Bildern, die Sie für Ausstellungen immer wieder neu arrangieren und in neue Kontexte stellen. Was sind dabei die Kriterien?

Es gibt ein Grundprinzip, dass ich ein Bild immer wieder prüfe und erwarte, dass es nach fünf oder zehn Jahren immer noch relevant ist. Es lassen sich Dinge wiederholen, die eine Tiefe, eine Verweisfläche erzeugen, die ich im Moment nicht erzeugen könnte.



„Sportflecken“ (1996, diverse Formate)



Wolfgang Tillmans

Seine Porträts und Stillleben aus der Clubszene der Neunziger waren stilbildend für die jüngere Künstlergeneration. 1968 in Remscheid geboren, fotografierte Tillmans zunächst für Magazine wie „Prinz“ und „Tempo“. Daneben experimentierte er mit Fotokopieren. Von 1990 bis 1992 studierte er am britischen Bournemouth & Poole College of Art & Design. 2000 erhielt er als erster Fotokünstler den britischen Turner-Preis und zählt heute zu den international renommiertesten Fotokünstlern. Neben den Motiven überrascht auch seine lässige Präsentation der Bilder, die nicht edel gerahmt, sondern oft nur mit Klebeband direkt an die Wand geheftet waren. In seinen Fotoinstallationen nimmt Tillmans auch Stellung zu politischen Fragestellungen. Seit 2003 lehrt Tillmans an der Frankfurter Städelschule.

› Bräuchen die Bilder einander? Oder stehen sie für sich allein?

Das ist ein sprachliches Phänomen. Die Sprache sucht immer ein Entweder-Oder. Entweder sind die Bilder eine Installation oder es sind Einzelbilder. Ich will aber beides. Sprache funktioniert da binär, trifft ihrem Wesen nach Unterscheidungen, in meiner Arbeit will ich aber das Dazwischen ausloten, das Aber-Auch. Die Fotos sollen allein existieren können, aber natürlich ist eine Installation auch mehr als die Summe ihrer Teile.

Wenn man sich heute mit Abstraktion beschäftigt, reiht man sich automatisch in die lange Geschichte der Moderne ein. Wollen Sie, dass Ihr Werk in diesem größeren Kontext der nichtgegenständlichen Kunst wahrgenommen wird?

Ich sage gerne, dass ich mich im Kontext von 30000 Jahren Bildproduktion sehe – und nicht im Kontext von 170 Jahren Fotografiegeschichte. Die Frage des Mediums ist da absolut sekundär, und es wundert mich immer wieder, dass das ein Thema ist.

Aber es bleibt die Frage, ob es eine bewusste Auseinandersetzung mit den Formen von Abstraktion gibt.

Mir ist klar, dass das ein dicht besiedeltes Terrain ist. Aber Kunst ist durch Zeit veränderbar. Man kann nicht auflisten, dass so und so viel Blau auf einem Rechteck schon gemalt wurde – und deshalb nicht wieder gemalt werden darf. Es ist die Frage, wie etwas gemacht ist und in welcher Zeit. Ich habe keine Referenzen, mein Anspruch ist, originär zu sein und neue Sachen zu machen. Natürlich kann man sagen, dass die „Silver Installations“ mit der Verteilung von Mondrians Farbflächen zu tun haben. Es gehört Risikobereitschaft dazu, zu solchen Vergleichen einzuladen. Aus monochromen Farbflächen ein Wandbild zu machen, ist schon gewagt. Aber man muss sich etwas trauen, um da durchzukommen.

Die gängige Meinung ist eher, dass in der Kunst alles schon da gewesen ist. Sie wollen aber Neues schaffen?

Es geht mir auf keinen Fall um Modernismus-Zitate. Ich finde das eine sehr ermüdende zeitgenössische Kunsttendenz. Ich habe so viele Ausstellungen in den letzten Jahren gesehen, in denen modernistische Positionen ausgegraben wurden und es nur noch um Referenzen geht. Mir geht es nicht

um Nostalgie, die Bilder sind auch nicht im Sinne von Kunstgeschichte kalkuliert.

Worum geht es Ihnen dann?

Ende der neunziger Jahre war da für mich zum Beispiel das Gefühl, dass ich eine Verlangsamung des Bilderstroms brauchte und eine Störung der Leseweise von Bildern, die ich auch mitgeprägt habe.

Wie lässt sich Verlangsamung herstellen?

Gute Frage. Es ist natürlich erst mal ein schönes rhetorisches Bild: Ich will Verlangsamung! Ich meine damit die Entkopplung von Bild und Narration. Bei Malerei nimmt man immer ein Körper gewordenes Bild, ein „embodied image“ an. Bei Fotografie ist der Fotokörper dagegen nie wahrgenommen worden als Objekt, das Foto hat nur als Bildinformationslieferant funktioniert. Das wollte ich sperren, indem ich ein Fotopapier fotografiere und es selbst zum Thema mache. Ich denke, das funktioniert als Verlangsamung der Wahrnehmung.

Welche Rolle spielt der Zufall bei Ihren abstrakten Experimenten?

Ich habe nichts gegen das Wort Experiment, solange klar ist, dass jedes Foto ein Experiment ist. Jedes Porträt ist ein Experiment. Wenn mich ein Apfel auf der Fensterbank als real existierendes Objekt interessiert, wäre der fotografische Akt geleitet von der Frage: Kann ich hieraus glaubhaft ein Bild im Kontext meiner eigenen Geschichte und der gesamten Kunstgeschichte und Bildgeschichte machen?

Und? Wie finden Sie die Antwort?

Wenn man das immer gleich beantworten könnte, bräuchte man gar nicht anfangen. Das Experiment besteht für mich gerade in dem Zweifel, ob es möglich ist, diesen Sonnenuntergang zu fotografieren – angesichts von Milliarden anderen Sonnenuntergängen. Insofern ist das Scheitern immer mit inbegriffen. Dabei lade ich den Zufall bewusst mit ein.

Sie haben sich immer auch als politischer Künstler verstanden. Welche Rolle spielt die Politik in Ihrer Arbeit?

Ich weiß nicht, was als erstes da war, das gesellschaftliche Interesse oder der Wunsch, ein Bild zu machen. Das unwertvollste Bildgebungsverfahren zu wählen und das als Unikat auszustellen, ist vielleicht nicht politisch aktivistisch, aber es ist eine Haltung. Die Mediumsfragen, die mich von Anfang an beschäftigt haben, sind immer besetzt gewesen



„Silver Installation V“ (2008, 25 D-Prints, hier 265 x 694 cm)

von Überlegungen zu politischen Fragen: Wie funktioniert Repräsentation? Was ist ein Kunstobjekt? Ein Gebrauchsobjekt? Oder wie wird aus dem Apfel Kunst? Verraten Sie doch mal konkret, wie Sie das machen. Müssen Sie Dutzende Aufnahmen machen, bis der Apfel im Kasten ist? Wird er kunstvoll arrangiert?

Da kommt wieder das Moment der Unschuld ins Spiel. Man kann nicht erlernen, seine visuelle Unschuld neu zu entdecken. Man kann sein Wissen nicht verlieren. Sobald ich weiß, wie es geht, geht es auch schon wieder nicht. Insofern bleibt es eine endlose Herausforderung, die nicht leichter wird. Aber Sie wollen konkrete Zahlen, ...

Ja, gern.

In Bezug auf meine Fotokopierer-Arbeiten ist es so, dass ich im Laufe der letzten Jahre zwölf alte Schwarzweißkopierer bei Ebay erworben habe. Die haben unterschiedliche Bildqualitäten mit verschiedenen Störungen oder Schwärziefen. Ich probiere aus, welcher Kopierer das passende Bild hat. Das kann 30 verschiedene Kopien in verschiedenen Gradationsstufen und Helligkeiten erfordern, bis ich die richtige gefunden habe. Warum dieser Aufwand? Warum machen Sie das nicht am Computer?

Der Computer kann nur tun, was ihm gesagt wird – leider. Insofern ist das Resultat limitiert durch das, was du selbst formulieren kannst. Ich weiß ja oft gar nicht, was ich will. Das Leben überrascht mich und zeigt mir, was ich will. Es sind oft Fehler oder Abfall, die plötzlich Sinn machen.

Sind Sie ein Kulturpessimist oder ein Romantiker? Es ist doch fast schon Retro, heute noch Dinge von Hand zu machen.

Man darf nicht vergessen, 2003 hat man sich noch nicht annähernd vorstellen können, wie sich das Verhältnis zum analogen Foto ändern wird. Damals nahm man nicht generell an, dass du hinten auf der Kamera sehen kannst, was drin ist. Heute guckt ja jeder wie ein Auto, wenn da kein Display ist. Fotografieren Sie noch analog?

Ich bin vor zwei Jahren auf digital umgestiegen. Vor fünf Jahren wurde die Vollformat-Chip-Kamera auf den Markt gebracht, bei der sich die Bildaufzeichnung durch die Linse genau verhält wie auf meinem Film. Da habe ich nur gesagt, ich will diese Sprache auch selber lernen.

Nicht nur die Technik hat sich verändert, auch Sie sind älter geworden und inzwischen rausgewachsen aus der Jugendkultur, die Sie früher fotografiert haben. Wo sehen Sie sich heute?

Es fängt ein dritter Abschnitt an. Der erste war in den neunziger Jahren, die Zeit der Jugendkultur, der Clubs und Raverszene; der zweite Abschnitt in den Nullerjahren war geprägt durch das Arbeiten am Bild und Objekte. Seit zwei Jahren bin ich stark daran interessiert zu schauen, was die Kamera für mich tun kann. Ich gehe jetzt ins Gegenteil und fotografiere mit der Kamera verstärkt auch Umfelder, die ich nicht kenne.

Unter Laien und Fotoprofis gibt es unzählige Tilmans-Epilgonen. Stört Sie das?

Es gibt Leute, die das blöd oder unbewusst

„Es geht mir nicht um Modernismus-Zitate. Das finde ich eine ermüdende Kunsttendenz. Ich will eine Verlangsamung des Bilderstroms“

machen und welche, die die Dinge ähnlich sehen. Das tut mir dann leid, denn es war ihnen nicht vergölten, ihren eigenen Blick auf die Welt mit ihrem Namen in Verbindung zu bringen, sondern sie werden mit meinem Namen in Verbindung gebracht. Mit denen hab ich kein Problem, da merkt man eine Verwandtschaft. Andere sind nicht am selben Blick, sondern nur an einem Look interessiert.

Lässt sich das unterscheiden?

Looks kann man immer erkennen. Es ist interessant, dass Dinge nie voll kopierbar sind. Andere sagen mir, dass man mich immer erkennen kann, egal, um welches Sujet es sich handelt. Das ist das Interessante an der Fotografie, dass es ein vermeintlich mechanisches Medium, aber auch so extrem psychologisch ist. Es gibt Millionen, Milliarden von Fotos – und doch ist immer genau das abgebildet, was der Kopf hinter der Kamera denkt. **a**

Wolfgang Tillmans: Abstract Pictures - Holger Carls Verlag 364 S., 312 Abb., Deutsch/Digibsch, 49,80 Euro. In der Collettris-Edition als signiertes Künstlerbuch in Leinwand-Schwarz

studies. In fact, the SI is everywhere: inspiring punk and Factory Records, and referred to in everything from Steve Aylett's strange slipstream science-fiction to Roberto Bolaño's epic novel *2666* (2004). Let's not go into the frequency with which references to the group, commonly clustered around the Marxist theorist Guy Debord and the Dutch artist Constant, pop up in magazines such as this one. If we are bored of this planet, perhaps we should be bored of the Situationists too.

Wark argues that we shouldn't be. If we are, it's our own fault. Contemporary art, like other cultural production, has renounced the desire to turn over the world in favour of turning over capital. If one of the Situationists' aims was 'the destruction of all forms of middle-class cultural shopkeeping', then they have failed. Or more accurately, we have failed them. For Wark, contemporary art is dominated by the likes of Jeff Koons, inspired by his experiences on Wall Street to produce the shiny products created by his boutique art factories in New York. In these terms Koons is a middle-class shopkeeper par excellence. And we've got to stop lapping up his spectacular wares before it's too late.

Covering the SI's adventures in philosophy, art, architecture, literature and cinema (and suggesting that we should do away with many of the distinctions between these categories), Wark traces the lineage we've apparently lost: the ways in which the theories and philosophies of the group anticipate blogging, 'netlish' (the mishmash of languages and 'bad' English found on the net), and the copyleft, hacker or pirate cultures of today, practices that allow culture to be a 'gift' rather than a commodity. The goal is to allow culture to bypass regulation, brokers and intermediaries. When it comes to art, that last means the primary network of dealers, patrons and museum curators who create the art stars of both the present and the past.

To avoid the obvious trap of becoming a broker himself (elevating his subjects to stardom), Wark makes the extraordinary announcement that *The Beach Beneath the Street* claims no originality whatsoever. Of course – despite the author's frequent deployment of acknowledged and unacknowledged, manipulated and unmanipulated quotes and references, to the point that it sometimes seems as if you're reading a total cliché – that's not quite true. But the tactic also allows him to avoid the strictures of the academy when it comes to notions of original research, and strike towards what he terms 'low theory' – the SI's booze-riddled philosophy of the street and, presumably, his own attempts to construct a wiki-style philosophy of the Internet superhighway (Wark is best known as the author of *A Hacker Manifesto*, 2004, and *Gamer Theory*, 2007).

The author's primary proposal is that although we live in serious times we should still have fun with time. We should treat history as a user's manual. Thus his 'history' of the SI shifts with gay abandon between the past, present and future tenses, and constantly rattles the boundaries

between notions of a them and an us (the story of the SI is 'our' story, he keeps chanting). Uniting form and content, the book is an attempt to create a 'situation': a singular mix of discrete elements confronting each other – at once a whole and a collection of parts. Thus Wark attempts to shift attention away from the infamous Debord as the SI ringleader and onto figures who have tended to play a fringe role in other accounts of the group – the women, Jacqueline de Jong and Michèle Bernstein; the drug addict Alexander Trocchi; and above all the Danish artist Asger Jorn, for Wark an underrated détourner of Marxism. In the space of three short paragraphs the author references the French playwright Molière, the English comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, the American science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick, the *Prince Valiant* comic strip (1937–), Socrates, Jorn, Henri Lefebvre and of course Debord. 'Historical thought', Wark writes, 'has the task of preparing the active subject for the emergence of promising situations in lived time'.

Beyond the obvious targets of hacker culture, these promising situations today include molesting royal automobiles during London's recent student protests and investigating the mysterious FANUC company, which manufactures the majority of robotic industrial labour (and fetishises the colour yellow). Had Wark waited a few more months, it might equally include the dismantling of Murdoch's News Corporation. Of course it's far from clear that art is any more capable of turning over the world now than it was during the heyday of the Situationists (when any member who became successful was expelled). But Wark's mission is more basic than that: he just wants someone to give it a try.

MARK RAPPOLT



Abstract Pictures

By Wolfgang Tillmans
Hatje Cantz, £45 (hardcover)

For the last ten years Wolfgang Tillmans has been taking a slow plunge into abstraction in his photography, and this publication sees him fully submerged in a nonrepresentational world of lights, chemicals and surfaces – luminograms, chemigrams and photograms. In British Art Show 7, currently touring Britain, an enormous, characteristically unframed print entitled *Freischwimmer 155* (2010) towers over the fragmented collection of images and news stories in vitrines that Tillmans pulls together as part of his *Truth Study Centre (BAS)* project (2010). This abstract luminogram seethes with activity, as black dots and trails skitter and flutter around a lush expanse of greenness as though in joyful retreat from the stories of homophobia and abuse, and the relentless rhetorics of advertisements, religions and politicians, in the cabinets below. *Abstract Pictures* brings together Tillmans's expansive experimentations in abstraction and, as Dominic Eichler puts it in the introductory essay, the possibilities of making 'pictures of a kind that have never been made or seen before'. Out of a concoction of errors, spillages, misprints, folds and bad chemicals, Tillmans has created images that somehow resemble exploding universes, stormy seas, euphoric nightclub lightshows and jets tearing around coloured skies as well as abstractions that call to mind more eroticised subject matter, such as wet hair, rushes of blood under the skin and crumpled clothes.

LMF

“Best of 2011 : Wolfgang Tillmans”, Artforum, Decembr 2011.

Wolfgang Tillmans



Wolfgang Tillmans is an artist who lives and works in Berlin and London. His solo exhibition at Warsaw's Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki will be on view until January 29. *Abstract Pictures*, a monograph on his recent work, was published by Hatje Cantz in July. Since 2006 he has run the London exhibition space Between Bridges. PHOTO: CARMEN BRUNNER



1

“WILLIAM LEAVITT: THEATER OBJECTS” (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; curated by Ann Goldstein and Bennett Simpson) Leavitt's paintings and film-set installations of the 1970s and '80s show an awareness of the constructedness and fragmentation of Western reality that was way ahead of his time. For example, his paintings can seem curiously lacking in detail, unless you know that he took a cue from prop art, doing the minimum necessary to make the work look like a “real painting” when captured on film—a low-res approach that predicted the degradation of image quality that is all around us now thanks to Web 2.0.

2

HENRIK OLESEN (Kunstmuseum Basel; curated by Nikola Dietrich and Jacob Fabricius) “Someone disassembles his laptop and sticks the parts to Plexiglas”: Who would think, after hearing that description, that the work in question would feel new, relevant, and compelling? But Olesen's arrangements of technological scraps are touching displays of his own entanglement with conditions beyond his control and understanding. The “Papa-Mama-Ich” series of 2009 also moved me deeply. In addition to sculptures, it consists of thirty prints of pages from the *Daily Mail*, the UK's most popular and spiteful middle-market tabloid, partially overprinted with

texts questioning, deploring, and rejecting the concept of family and Olesen's own embroilment in its confining traditional roles. In the entirety of this expansive survey, there was no sentimentality.

Co-organized with Malmö Konsthall, Sweden.

3

“ATLAS—HOW TO CARRY THE WORLD ON ONE'S BACK?” (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; curated by Georges Didi-Huberman) Bringing together numerous artists' attempts to chart, list, and measure the world—and ultimately truth itself—this show was kooky, quirky, and nerdy. Didi-Huberman made no attempt to dumb down the complex and diverse works on view, proving that it is possible for a national museum to mount a nuanced thematic exhibition that will find both an audience and critical success.

Co-organized with Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg, and ZKM Museum für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe, Germany.

4

WILLEM DE ROOIJ (Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin) In the heart of the modernist dream that is Mies van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie, de Rooij's installation was a wildly extravagant apparition surrounded by ample amounts of space. Juxtaposing Hawaiian featherworks with Melchior d'Hondecoeter's seventeenth-century paintings of fighting birds, the artist created an ambitious, spec-



1 Above: Vyacheslav Akhunov, *1 Square Meter* (detail), 2009, 375 matchboxes, video projection. From “Atlas—How to Carry the World on One's Back?”

2 Below: Willem de Rooij, *Intolerance* (detail), 2011. Melchior d'Hondecoeter paintings, Hawaiian featherwork, paper, three-part publication. Installation view, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Photo: Jens Zimmer



tacularly colorful collage that became especially potent through its title: *Intolerance*.

Organized by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Ethnologisches Museum, the Gemäldegalerie, and the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, Berlin.

5

RICHARD HAWKINS (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; curated by Lisa Dorin) While Leavitt explores the nature of display and exposure, his fellow LA artist Hawkins creates works that are charged with the allure of the hidden. At the Hammer (where Ali Subotnick was the on-site curator), Hawkins's architectural models and dior-

3 Left: William Leavitt, *Jaguar* (from “The Tropics”), 1974, oil on canvas, 34 1/2 x 44 1/2”.

4 Henrik Olesen, *17” PowerBook G4* (detail), 2010, disassembled laptop mounted on Plexiglas, two parts, each 39 1/2 x 78 1/2”. From the series “I Do Not Go to Work Today, I Don't Think I Go Tomorrow,” 2010.





5. Left: Richard Hawkins, *House of the Mad Professor (detail)*, 2008, wood, collage, plastic, lighting, table, 41 1/4 x 37 x 37".

6. Above: Mark Morrisroe, *'Nymph-O-Maniac' Promo Still Spectacular Studios (Pia, Richard, Nathan)*, 1984, color photograph, 16 x 20."

mas, cruising mazes, and photographic images of desire coexisted with paintings that are pure and autonomous in their exploration of color, composition, and the medium itself. Over the years Hawkins has developed a totally independent practice that doesn't follow any trends, while never losing his eye for a hot picture.

Organized by the Art Institute of Chicago.

6

MARK MORRISROE (Artists Space, New York; curated by Richard Birkett, Stefan Kalmár, and Beatrix Ruf) There is a passion in Morrisroe's work that is so touching today, because one feels that his pictures weren't taken with publication in mind. The curators had an interesting take on how to deal with the image-to-print relationship in exhibitions of historical photography (for Morrisroe's '80s hustler underworld is definitely history now). Most often his work is shown matted, but here the prints were shown in their entirety, letting viewers see the white edges that he used to test the retouching dyes before applying them to a speck of dust or hair.

Coorganized with the Estate of Mark Morrisroe at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland.

impressive things you've ever seen. On the other end of the spectrum, I sympathize with his exploration of high technology, which he presents almost as a *force majeure*.

Organized by K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in cooperation with Kunsthau Zürich.

8

"MICHAEL FULLERTON: COLUMBIA" (Chisenhale Gallery, London; curated by Polly Staple) Under the directorship of Polly Staple, Chisenhale has once again become the primary venue for emerging artists' London premieres. This exhibition was a great showcase for Fullerton's method of amalgamating disparate inspirations—from concepts of discovery and colonial endeavor to the space shuttle, Columbia Pictures, and Christopher Columbus—into an elegant overarching installation.

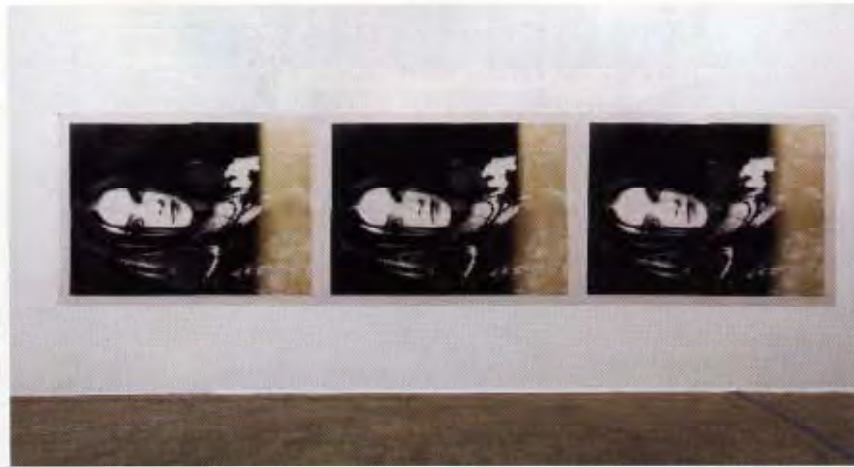
9

BORIS MIKHAILOV (Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin) At their best, Mikhailov's photos of his fellow Ukrainians are magic concoctions

7

THOMAS STRUTH (K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, and Whitechapel Gallery, London; curated by Anette Kruszynski) I grew up near Düsseldorf myself, so seeing some of Struth's early photographs of sites around the city, from the time when I was a child, gave me a particular thrill. There is a relaxedness, if one may use this term for an exponent of the Decher school, to Struth's point of view that I like—he has no fear of ordinariness. His views down a street are not always straight, nor are they necessarily the most graphically





8. Above: Michael Fullerton, *Columbie, the Woman*, 2010, screenprint on newsprint, 4' 10 1/2" x 19' 7 1/4"

9. Below: Boris Mikhailov, *Black Archive*, 1968–79, one of 152 black-and-white photographs, colored pencil

of dignity and edginess. His portraits overcome the pitfalls of documentary photography's so-called realness without resorting to the safety of the artist's studio. And though they're not filled with pictorial or historical references, his artless in-camera compositions have the urgency that every good history "painting" has.

10

MARC CAMILLE CHAIMOWICZ (MD72, Berlin) This installation was a wonderful fusion of two different domestic spaces. In a spacious prewar Berlin apartment where the sunlight was partially obscured by gauzy curtains, the fifteen-minute film *Partial Views of an Interior*, 1978, played on old-school Hantarex monitors, offering glimpses of the younger Chaimowicz's London live-work space. Panels were propped against the walls, some with photographs of interiors tacked to them, some showing printed patterns, their status suspended in an ambiguous space between picture, furniture, and display device. □



7. Left: Thomas Struth, *The Bernstein Family, Münderbach*, 1990, color photograph, 36 1/2 x 49 1/2"

10. Right: View of "Marc Camille Chaimowicz: *Appartement . . .*", 2011, MD72, Berlin. Foreground: *Dressing Table*, 1977–2011. Background: *Here and There*, 1978–2009. Photo: Stefan Korte.



Wolfgang Tillmans: Dunkelkammer Darkroom

In dieser Serie bittet *frieze* d/e KünstlerInnen, KuratorInnen oder AutorInnen, über ein Wort und seine Wirkung nachzudenken
In this series, frieze d/e asks artists, curators or writers to reflect upon one word and its impact

Fotografie war ein nasser Prozess. Mit dem Ende von Chemiebadern ist Fotografie ein trockener Prozess geworden. Kein Abwasser mehr, kein Waschwasser, keine erschöpften Chemikalien, die mit ausgewaschenem Silber angereichert sind.

Es gibt keinen Bedarf mehr für eine Dunkelkammer, und die populärste professionelle Software zum Organisieren und Betrachten von digitalen Photos heißt deshalb auch „Lightroom“ (Lichtkammer).

Eine Dunkelkammer existiert weiterhin und wird es auch immer tun: der Ort der „Kamera“, die Kammer, zwischen Linse und lichtempfindlichen Sensorchip, dort, wo ehemals der Film eingelegt wurde. Dieser Raum wird immer dunkel bleiben müssen, denn das Licht, das durch die Linse fällt, wird niemals stärker sein, als das umliegende Licht, das nicht durch diese Linse muss. Nur der Ausschluss des gesamten umliegenden Lichts lässt das wenige Licht, das durch die Linse kommt, erkennbar werden.

Auf dem Sensor findet ein Übersetzungsprozess statt, der immer irgendwie psychologisch bleiben und für den Fotografen niemals erklärt und voll kontrollierbar wird. Film übersetzt Wirklichkeit auf starre Art und Weise, nicht immer sanft und poetisch, wie jetzt nostalgisch behauptet wird. Manchmal ist Film ziemlich unmachbar. Das Digitale hat ebenso seine Beschränkungen, aber es macht auch neue Bilder möglich – nicht durch vorherschaubares Photoshopping, sondern durch seine eigene Art, wie es Licht in ein zweidimensionales Bild übersetzt. Reich' mal das Poppers rüber.

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Der Künstler Wolfgang Tillmans lebt in Berlin und London. Seine Ausstellung in der Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris läuft noch bis zum 3. Dezember 2011. Seine Solo-Ausstellung in Warschaus Nationalgalerie Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki ist vom 18. November bis zum 29. Januar 2012 zu sehen.

Photography was a wet process. With the end of chemical baths, photography has become a dry process. No more waste water, no wash water, no exhausted chemicals that are laden with washed-out silver.

There is no longer any need for a darkroom, and the most popular professional software for managing and viewing digital photographs is therefore called 'Lightroom'.

One darkroom carries on existing and always will: the place that makes the 'camera', the little room, between the lens and the light-sensitive sensor chip, once occupied by film. This room will always have to be dark, as the light that falls in through the lens will never be stronger than the surrounding light that doesn't go through the lens. Only the exclusion of all surrounding light makes the little light that falls through the lens noticeable.

A process of translation occurs on the sensor, a process that stays somewhat psychological and can never be fully explained and controlled by the photographer. Film translated reality in rigid ways, not always softly and poetically as is now nostalgically claimed, film is sometimes quite unforgiving. Digital has its rigid ways but also makes new pictures possible – not by way of predictable photoshopping but by its own ways of translating light into a two-dimensional picture.

Please pass the poppers.

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Wolfgang Tillmans is an artist based in Berlin and London. His exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris continues until 3 December 2011; his solo show at Warsaw's national gallery Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki runs from 18 November 2011 – 29 January 2012.