Wolfgang Tillmans

Selected Press
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 an 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.
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

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

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 partake 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
Wolfgang Tillmans Designs Posters Against Brexit

BY Noelle Bodick | April 27, 2016

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.”

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
Galerie Chantal Crousel


If people like Rupert Murdoch, Nigel Farage, George Galloway, Nick Griffin, and Marine Le Pen 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?
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.
A POLISH FRIEND TOLD ME THE OTHER DAY:

I NOW HAVE AN E.U. FLAG AT HOME. WHEN WE DEMONSTRATE 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
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.
term=0_df23dbd3c6-042788ac62-83702285
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 DON’T WANT IT
TO BE.

COUNT ME IN.

For 60 years the E.U. has been the foundation of peace between European neighbours.

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 97
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
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

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:
“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.
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.
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 Haçienda 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.
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

*Dennis*, 1995
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed
03/10
*Blushes #105*
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed
04 / 10
*Concorde L449-11*, 1997
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed
05/ 10
rain, 2006
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused

Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed
09 / 10
*paper drop (Roma), 2007*

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

Wolfgang Tillmans in Dazed
10 / 10

*Faltenwurf (submerged)*, 2000
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans, taken from the July 2010 issue of Dazed and Confused
PHAI DON

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?

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.
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.
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.
Idiosyncratic picture hanging Wolfgang doesn’t present a succession of single, framed works for visitors to behold. Instead, he covers gallery walls with 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.”
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.

PHAI DON

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.
“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
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 handwork. Architects have never lacked ego, and we live in an age in which their trade has taken on an outsized 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 rejigger to both the glossy coffee-table volume 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 unrelenting pace, the initial impression is of an oppressive sameness. Take the numerous aerial views of cities—black, 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 hurried 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, these projects tended to focus on a literally superficial similarity, with such 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 subvert 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. Let us 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 hatchmark spire cropped out of the top of the frame, the sheet 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 fussy 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
medium has long collided in flattening the specificity and complexity of spatial constructions into easily consumed images, editing 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 on construction sites, where garish, photo-realistic renderings trump real, 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 it a vivid, sensory quality that he poetically describes as a "how-do-it-feel-less." He sees photography, in other words, as a means out of transforming architecture into images but of understanding the occupation of space. He has achieved this effect in part through straightforward technical means, by choosing the tilted and wide angle typical of architectural photography, and by 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 are 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 music 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 his 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 a wall, with the photographs 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 not only for the world's 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, a ceiling, disrupting the carefully articulated union of a beam and a column, gloves of expanded foam insulation come out of the gap around a retrofit pipe and dribble down across 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 shelves constructed against the polished granite base of which appears to be an office high-rise. An example 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 devastating statement is about architects' misguided obsession with control comes from images of various "anti-homeless" 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 disquieting reminder that so long as buildings are understood as static manifestations of an a priori design intent, exigencies of inhabitation will always trump the assertion of control.

These images add weight poignantly from the fact that Tillmans also includes several slides of the most expensive home in the world, the skyscraper built for the private residence of the Italian businessman Antonino Maltese. In Mumbai, by Perkins+Will in Mumbai, at a reported cost of more than one billion dollars. In fact, housing in many ways—from refugee tents huddled along borders to ad hoc 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 realities is often expressed more 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 buffering that sets the stage for social interaction and dictates the conditions of life itself.
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, serial 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.

Wolfgang Tillmans has often spoken about the importance of the unknown in his work. His exhibition, Lignaux, Duste 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 captured 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 mundane has produced a very distinct result,” says the German artist when we meet on the day of the opening.

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 worked out, they...
could only have been made today. It is this particular
correlation between analogues 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 fas-
cinating 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."
Anna Sansom. «Between the Blur and the Flicker», *Damn Magazine*, n° 50, May 2015, pp. 78 - 82.

TEMPORALITY

Visually, the Sendachow/End of Broadcast works remind Tillmans of his Picasso Monument to Y Tolstoy, a stagelike arrangement of white fluorescent tubes in homage to Russian artist Nikolai Tikhonov'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, Tolstoy made 99 such variations from 1964-1990. "Day Rien 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 Frenchwoman and German, both created in a darkroom, the new images are also connected to Memorial for the Victims of Organised Religion (2005), an installation of black and very dark-blue photographs. "That was about illustrating the flimsiness of absolute ideology by making the distinction between black and dark-blue impossible," explains Tillmans. "It's the same with these Sendachow/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 paint it."

The title of the exhibition, however, refers to the photograph of a tree trunk that has split in half after a storm in Bavaria, the exposed fibres of wood recalling fragile and decaying bones. 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 printmaking is something that has obsessed the artist throughout his career. In his early exhibitions, images of children, London tube passengers, friends, lovers,
Anna Sansom. «Between the Blur and the Flicker», *Damn Magazine*, n° 50, May 2015, pp. 78 - 82.

In his new show, Tillmans has chosen to juxtapose framed and unframed *Weak Signal* pictures. The different forms 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 glossed photographs are physically protected but the owner has no right to reprint them.

The fact that the *Weak Signal* and Sendachles/Bend of Broadcast photographs are pictures of an image-carrying — 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 entangles this question of what are we looking at.”

Certainly, the perplexing complexity of image-making is what makes Tillmans' question mind tack 

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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 à la simultanéité de ses constellations d’images proliférant aux sujets, formats et supports hétérogènes. Tout au plus, l’artiste y alternera-t-il entre images encadrées et images libres qui correspondent à deux modes contradictoires d’existence et d’appréhension des images qu’il a toujours mis en tension. Cette rétrospective traduit peut-être la volonté de Tillmans de ne pas s’entêter dans un mode opératoire qui pourrait se figer en protocole et se banaliser en signature. Elle doit sans doute aussi le désir d’en réaffirmer, par le déséquilibre, la puissance déstabilisante qui force à regarder. La série qui donne son titre à l’exposition Ligne Dure (la ligne est une composante du bois absent 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’abord figurée par la tempête est pourtant d’acide.

Figurative et descriptive, elle invite à ne pas se laisser séduire par l’optique et la picturalité des grandes abstractions qui occupent seules l’espace principal de la galerie. Car ces allers et retours de carrés apparents 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-Pétersbourg, 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 Sandschuss/End of Broadcast et Weak Signal offrent une image de l’incommuniquabilité instaurée par une communication surabondante.

Commentaire, réalisé avec une technologie de pointe, sur l’obsession canine technique et le passage au numérique des deux séries confirme que Tillmans, excellent observateur de son temps, fait du progrès technique, à la fois constante et intégrée dans son processus de création, un élément de notre contemporanéité. Mais sans fétichisme ni naïveté, car ce progrès a ses limites et cet élan est critique. À cet égard, Sandschuss/End of Broadcast et Weak Signal 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 cascades étoilées, 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 Fails & dead pixels (capteur détecteurs et pixels morts). Auto-destruction de la technique qui n’est pas sans rappeler celle de la nature.

Etienne Hatt

Wolfgang Tillmann’s third exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel will seem strangely moderate to visitors used to the simultaneity of his constellations of proliferating images and heterogeneous subjects, formats and supports. 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 its disequilibrium. The series after which the exhibition is named, Ligne Dure (line is a part of wood that is absent from the paper on which Tillmans prints his images) is represented by only one 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 90s taken in 2014 with an extremely fast camera in a hotel room in Saint Petersburg. The TV was getting an analogic signal. Showing a badly adjusted set afflicted by technological incompatibility, the absence of signals and the presence of interference, these two series, Sandschuss/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, Sandschuss/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
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.

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, méritent 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
SUITE DE LA PAGE 06 — rhétorique plus ardue, et je ne ferai 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’avais 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’importait le plus, dans son esprit, était l’éclipse 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.

Vous avez pris ces images l’an passé à Saint-Pétersbourg, 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 ce que je dois faire, c’est passer 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
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 présente 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.
Trois grands de l’art contemporain à Paris : Bruce Nauman, Marcel Broodthaers, Wolfgang Tillmans :

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

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.
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 pèche cependant vraiment par manque d’explications. On est propulsé tout nu dans cet univers. Il est conseillé de se renseigner avant la visite.

Wolfgang Tillmans en ligne de mire

«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, dégaine 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 substantiellement photographiques, aurait remarqué Roland Barthes.

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


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

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 intriguant.

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 présent 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 télés, il y avait un événement naturel sous mes yeux, le signal analogue 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. À 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 !
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.

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 simplement un 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 pourrait reconnaître celles de Jeff Wall ou de Terry Richardson à des kilomètres. Et même les copies ! (Rires).
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 fait ce genre de photos. Et ils ne se disent pas « je vais copier Wolfgang Tillmans ». (Rires)
À l’heure actuelle, 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 Fino or Grigio). He likes comfortable sportswear: hoodies and tank tops in faded, not too bright colours. He might even like speedboat music. His hair is rambly brown on his close-cropped dome, while he has a light white down on his arms. 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; 20 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 conservation rules the show, with a linear hang and several of the photos smartly framed underneath non-reflective 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’s shirt (2013). In the shot of Karl’s eye in August (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 dotted quietude of the assembled portraits that is touching: those are moments, revealing in just looking at someone while events pass by.

While on the surface this provides more focus than Tillmans’s usual checkall humanism, there’s a double edge to the earnest intimacy invoked here. Lackling 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 spaws 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
Wolfgang Tillmans, neue welt

Depuis 20 ans, Wolfgang Tillmans ne cesse d’interroger et d’étendre les possibilités de la photographie par tous les moyens à travers ses œuvres photographiques et filmées. Son exposition Monde nouveau présente des photographies extraits 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’œil 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
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’œuvre 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.

Wolfgang Tillmans

Né en 1968 en Allemagne.

Vit et travaille à Berlin et à Londres.

When *ArtReview* visited Wolfgang Tillmans recently in his labyrinthine studio in Kreuzberg, Berlin, we found an artist toting 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 scale shifts of his installation, 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 preordained 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 2003, interweaving 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?
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 2006 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 these 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.

IF I FEEL THERE ISN'T ENOUGH OF SOMETHING, THEN THAT, IN A WAY, CONSTITUTES THE REASON FOR ME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

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.
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 reverberating contrasts: in one section of the book, we zoom between car headlights—that you’ve identified as having a new cruelly makeshift design template—to a creamy abstraction, to a boy running down a shabby street, to a pin-sharp night fly.

In a conversation with Beatrice Ruf published in the book, you said, ‘Essentially this is about humanity.’ 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 is huge difference 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 shifting the subject, then you also maybe end up with just that, without focus. So there are specific interests
[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 a lot of this is available on the surface? Because it seems this project is tied to surfaces: you're deliberately skinning 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 you 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?
MY APPROACH TO PHOTOGRAPHY AS A MEDIUM HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT I WANTED TO APPROXIMATE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO LOOK THROUGH MY EYES.

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 photocycler, 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,
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, is 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 counter-movement, 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 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 non-hierarchical 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.

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.

Michelle Kuo: I was struck by your reaction to the David Hockney exhibition in London this past spring. You were absolutely taken with the Hockney show, and it led to our talk about this new medium, which is the subject of the book. I was interested in your reaction to the show, because it was so different from the traditional way of looking at a painting. I was curious to know how you approached the role of the ink-jet printer in contemporary art.

Wolfgang Tillmans: Ink-jet printers are a new medium in contemporary art. They have opened up new possibilities for artists, and they have changed the way we think about art. It’s not just about making a picture, but it’s about the way in which the picture is created. The ink-jet printer is a powerful tool for creating images that are not possible with traditional painting techniques.

Michelle Kuo: How do you think the ink-jet printer has changed the way artists work?

Wolfgang Tillmans: The ink-jet printer has allowed artists to explore new materials and techniques. It has opened up a new world of possibilities that was not available before.

Michelle Kuo: How do you think the ink-jet printer has changed the way we think about art?

Wolfgang Tillmans: The ink-jet printer has changed the way we think about art because it has opened up new possibilities for artists. It has changed the way we think about the relationship between art and technology. It has changed the way we think about the relationship between art and society.

Michelle Kuo: How do you think the ink-jet printer has changed the way we think about the world?

Wolfgang Tillmans: The ink-jet printer has changed the way we think about the world because it has opened up new possibilities for artists. It has changed the way we think about the relationship between art and technology. It has changed the way we think about the relationship between art and society.

Michelle Kuo: How do you think the ink-jet printer has changed the way we think about the future of art?

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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.
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.
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.
Michelle Kuo. “Step into Liquid. Michelle Kuo talks with Wolfgang Tillmans about the ascendency of ink-jet printing” Artforum, 50th anniversary issue, September 2012, p. 420-429.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.


INTERVIEW: ADRIENNE BRAUN, UTE THON, PORTRÄTFOTOS: SVEN PAUSTIAN
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.

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

„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.
Es gibt ein Grundprinzip, dass ich ein Bild immer wieder prüfe und erwarte, dass es nach fünf oder zehn Jahren immer noch relevant ist.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.
Wolfgang Tillmans

Seine Porträts und Stillleben aus der Club- 
scne der Neunziger waren stilbildend 
für die jüngere Künstlerszene. 1988 
in Bremen lebte, fotografierte 
Tillmans zunächst für Magazin wie 
„Prinz“ und „Tempo“. Daneben experi 
mentierte er mit Fotokopieren. Von 
1990 bis 1992 studierte er an britischen 
Bournemoth & Poole College of Art & 
Design. 2000 erhielt er als erster Fotokünst 
l er den britischen Turner-Preis und 
zählt heute zu den international renom 
miersten Fotokünstlern. Neben den 
Motiven übte auch seine lange 
Präsentation der Bilder, die nicht led 
genannt, sondern oft nur mit Klebe 
band direkt an die Wand gehängt waren. 
In seinen Fotoinstallationen nimmt 
Tillmans auch Stellung zu politischen 
Fragestellungen. Seit 2003 lebt Tillmans 
an der Frankfurter Stadtbahn.
Adrienne Braun, Ute Thon, “Ich will das Dazwischen ausloten”, ART#7, July 2011.

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

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


Lässt sich das unterscheiden? Looks kann man immer erkennen. Es ist aber ziemlich, dass Dinge nie voll kopierbar sind. Andere sagen mir, dass man sich immer erkenne kann, egal, um welches Sujet es sich handelt. Das tot das Interesse an der Fotografie, dass es ein reinmechanisches Medium, aber auch ein extrem psychologisch ist. Es gibt Millionen, Milliarden von Fotos, und doch ist immer genauer das abgebildet, was der Kopf hinter der Kamera denkt.


Between notions of them and 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 Delord 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 Michele Bernstein; the drug addict Alexander Trocchi; and above all the Danish artist Asger Jorn, for Wark an underrated deaner of Marxism. In the space of these 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 (1927–), Socrates, Jorn, Henri Lefebvre and of course Delord. ‘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 exhibiting royal automobiles during London’s recent student protests and investigating the mysterious FANUC company, which manufactures the majority of robotic industrial labour (and finishes 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 than that: he just wants someone to give it a try.

MARK RAPPORT

For the last ten years Wolfgang Tillmanns 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 anonymous, characteristically unframed print entitled Freischwimmer 155 (2010) towers over the fragmented collection of images and news stories in vitrines that Tillmanns pulls together as part of his Truth Study Centre (TAS) project (2010). This abstract luminogram seems so active, as black dots and trails skitter and flutter, that they seem to be the only things left of Tillmanns’ previous experiments 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, Tillmanns has created images that somehow resemble exploding universes, stormy seas, euphoric nightclubs and jets bearing around coloured skie as well as abstractions that call to mind more erotised subject matter, such as wet hair, rushes of blood under the skin and crumpled clothes.
Wolfgang Tillmans

Wolfgang Tillmans is an artist who lives and works in Berlin and London. His solo exhibition at Warsaw’s Zacheta Narodowa Galerii Sztuki will be on view until January 23. Abstract Natures, a monograph on his recent work, was published by Helje Cantz in July. Since 2006 he has run the London exhibition space Between Bridges. PHOTO: CARMEN FRIEDRICH


WILLIAM LEAVITT “THEATER OBJECTS”
(Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; curated by Ann Goldstein and Bennett Simpson) Leavitt’s paintings and film 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 min 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.

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-Marce-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, deploping, and rejecting the concept of family and Ciecaen’s own embonpoint in its confining traditional roles. In the entire of this expansive survey, there was no sentimentality.

Co-organized with Sammlung Rüschens, Hambra, and ZKM Museum für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe, Germany.

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“ATLAS—HOW TO CARRY THE WORLD ON ONE'S BACK?” (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; curated by Georges Didi-Huberman) Ringing together numerous artists’ attempts to chart, list, and map the world—and ultimately truth itself—this show was kooky, quirky, and nerdy. Didi-Huberman made no attempt to blend 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 Rüschens, 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 Ies 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-

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 All Substitution was the on-site curator, Hawkins’s architectural models and drawings...

6. **MARK MORRISON** (Artists Space, New York; curated by Richard Birkett, Stefan Rainer, and Beatrix Hue). There is a passion in Morrison’s work that is so touching today, because one feels that his pictures weren’t taken with a camera in mind. The scenes have an interesting take on how to deal with the image-to-print relationship in exhibitions of historical photography (for Morrison’s 50s poster scholarship is definite history now). Most often his work is shown instead, but here the prints were shown in their entirety, letting viewers see the white edges that he used to test the printing papers before applying them to a sheet of dust or hair.”

7. **THOMAS STRUTH** (K20 Kunstsammlung, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, and Whitechapel Gallery, London; curated by Anette Kruysmans). 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 relatedness, if one may use this term for an opponent of the Dadaist school, in Struth’s point of view that I like—he has no fear of ordinariness. His own photos are not always straight, nor are his necessarily the most graphically 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.

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 previews. 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. **DORIS MIKAILOV** (Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin). At their best, Mikailov’s photos of his fellow Ukrainians are magic concoctions...
of dignity and edgedness. His portraits overcome the pitfalls of documentary photography’s so-called naiveness 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.

MARC CAMILLE CHAIMOWICZ (MD72, Berlin) This installation was a wonderful fusion of two different domestic spaces. In a spacious premıe Berlin apartment where the sunlight was partially obscured by gauzy curtains, the fifteen-minute film Partial Vista of an Interior, 1976, played via 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 Ruff, The Bonnatić Family, Münden 1997, color photograph, 30 1/2 x 49 1/2”.

8. Above: Michael Finkentor, Columbia, the Woman, 2010, screen-print on newsprint, 41 1/2 x 39 7/8”.


Wolfgang Tillmans: Dunkelkammer

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 seems somewhat psychological and can never be fully explained and controlled by the photographer. Film translates reality in right ways, not always selfly and poetically as it now nostalgically claimed, film is sometimes quite unforgiving. Digital has its right ways but also makes new pictures possible – not by way of predictable postprocessing but by its own ways of translating light into a two dimensional picture.

Please pass the poppers.

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 Warneke’s national gallery Zachte Novabron Galerie Schelten runs from 18 November 2011 to 29 January 2012.