

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

Wolfgang Tillmans

REVUE DE PRESSE | SELECTED PRESS



La sélection Dance Music de Wolfgang Tillman's



Wolfgang Tillmans, en plus d'être un artiste et photographe influent, est aussi un producteur talentueux et un mélomane.

L'amour de longue date de Tillmans pour la musique techno a profondément influencé son travail : vidéos, installations sonores et portraits emblématiques de musiciens tels que Neneh Cherry, Frank Ocean, Honey Dijon, No Bra et plus récemment Kae Tempest. Peu de temps après la sortie de son premier EP « 2016/1986 », le morceau enregistré par Wolfgang en 2016 "Device Control" figurait par ailleurs sur l'album visuel de Frank Ocean, Endless. Depuis, l'artiste a sorti plusieurs EP, singles et remixes, ainsi que des collaborations et performances artistiques. Plus récemment, Tillmans a sorti son premier album solo "Moon in Earthlight", qui est également désormais disponible sur CD et vinyle 12 pouces.

En décembre dernier, Reif a invité l'unique Wolfgang Tillmans dans son émission, celui-ci nous offrait alors une énorme sélection de ses morceaux fav spécial dance music !
Pour écouter le replay, c'est juste [ici](#)
Restez verrouillé !

MoMA

Wolfgang Tillmans: On the Limits of Seeing in a High-Definition World

Read an excerpt from a 2018 interview by Aimee Lin, featured in the new MoMA publication *Wolfgang Tillmans: A Reader*.

Edited by Roxana Marcoci and Phil Taylor, the just-released *Wolfgang Tillmans: A Reader* (2021) is the first publication to present the artist's contributions as a thinker and writer in a systematic manner, illuminating the breadth of his engagement with audiences across diverse platforms. The interview excerpt below is included in the reader.



Wolfgang Tillmans. *wake*. 2001

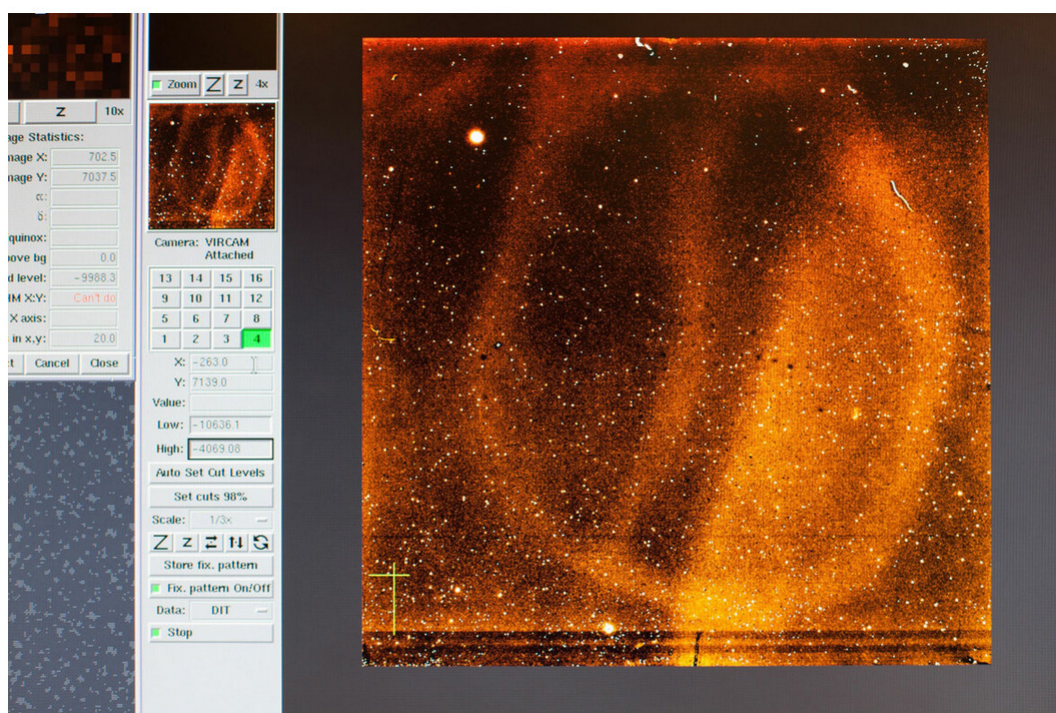
Aimee Lin
Wolfgang Tillmans: On the Limits of Seeing in a High-Definition World
MoMA, January 11, 2022
<https://cutt.ly/cIoICtc>

Aimee Lin: In the catalogue [DZHK Book 2018] for your Hong Kong exhibition [at David Zwirner] you have reproduced an email conversation with a printing company you contacted in response to a spam email. How did that dialogue start?

Wolfgang Tillmans: It was just by chance. The email caught my eye because it was so unsophisticated and innocent. I thought that, rather than malicious phishers, these might be real people. So I wrote back, and their response was quite touching. They explained they were young and sending out random emails to find customers for their printing business. We think of it as spam, but it is no different from a leaflet through the letter-box. They really were trying to find clients, but I naturally assumed that it was some terrible virus or phishing scam.

Why did you want to include this in the catalogue? It's a very beautiful story, very funny, even flirty.

I see this catalogue as an artist's book. I like to explore different materialities in books, different ways of thinking. It's not just a representation of images, it's a book of poetry. When I was laying out the book, I thought of it as writing. I can't tell you the story in words, but I feel it in the sequence of pictures. The book is about language, but not necessarily a verbal or literary language. Text is included in my recent pictures, including the works exhibited in this show. And I considered this exchange with the printer "Klaus" as a kind of concrete poetry.



Wolfgang Tillmans. *sensor flaws and dead pixels*, ESO. 2012

The conversation reminded me of Manuel Puig's 1976 novel *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. It's about two inmates, a political prisoner and a thief, and in each chapter one of the guys tells the story of a film they've seen.

I never understood myself as speaking only through photography. I feel like I can say almost everything I want to with photography, and I still haven't gotten tired of it, but on the other hand it is only one medium. More and more, I realize that language is something I care about and have developed as a medium in the shape of interviews and lectures. The lectures are like eighty-minute performances, with language, pictures, and silence. This performative element moved into video and finally back into music. Music is a lot about words being spoken and sung.

The exhibition at David Zwirner's Hong Kong space will include images of Shenzhen, Macau, and Hong Kong, all of which are political and geographical borders inside China. I'm curious about why you chose to photograph those places.

The Macau picture is from 1993, which is the first time I was in Macau and the last time I was in Hong Kong, so there's been twenty-five years between my two visits. Back then I wanted to see the border with China. I'm interested in understanding the difference across a border when the earth—the ground, the matter—is the same. I never took borders for granted, and I don't necessarily want to tear them down, but I do want to understand them in their material reality. To feel them. Clothes also interest me, this thin layer of fabric that conceals plain human bodies that are pretty much the same. The putting on of clothes changes so much. A uniform creates authority and distance, which is in a way ridiculous, because it's just a piece of fabric, it's nothing. A pair of ripped jeans is seen by a parent as something that should be thrown away, and by a teenager as the most beloved piece of clothing.

Clothes are an artificial border against your natural body.

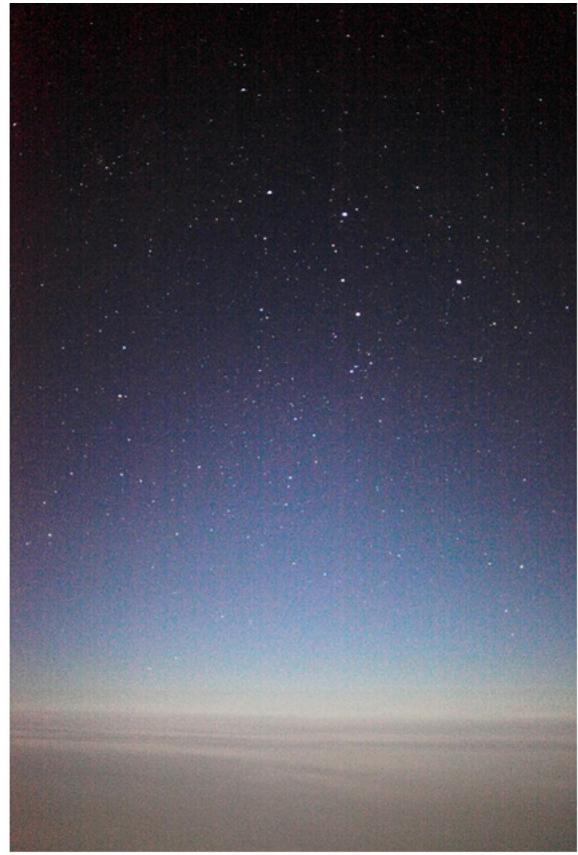
Yes. I acknowledge that there are borders between people, languages, and races. But I think that by looking at them, touching them, smelling them, feeling them, you can also see them for what they are. Strangely, that's the visible medium of photography. It's not a scientific way of looking deeper, but it does put me into situations where I can explore those limits, whether that's being at a border or looking through an extremely large telescope. I spent a weekend in Chile at an observatory, looking at the border of the visible.

The far end of the universe.

Astronomy is located at the limit. Can I see something there? Is that a detail or is it just noise in the camera sensor? By going to the limits, to the borders, I find comfort in being in-between. I always felt held in-between the infinite smallness of subatomic space and the infinite largeness of the cosmos. It gives me comfort to feel infinity.



Wolfgang Tillmans. *Playing cards, Hong Kong*. 2018



Wolfgang Tillmans. *in flight astro ii*. 2010

How does that experience, that feeling, relate to your high-resolution digital photographs, which are printed at a very large scale? Those images are so massive, contain so much detailed visual information, that they are overwhelming.

I wasn't originally interested in super-sharp, large-format film, because I wanted my photographs to describe how it feels to look through my eyes. For that, 100 ASA [ISO] 35mm film is close enough to how I feel things look. But since 1995 I have also shown very large photographs, the largest of which is called *wake* (2001), recently shown at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin. Those pictures were made with 35mm negatives, but in 2009 I started to work with a high-resolution digital camera. Suddenly I found myself with an instrument in my hand that was as powerful as a large-format camera. It took me three years to learn how to speak with this new language. By 2012, the whole world had become high-definition. Being able to zoom in on a huge print, and still see detail after detail, is how the world feels now, through my eyes. I'm grateful that I was able to make that development from film to high-resolution digital photography, because it opened up a new language in the history of art. One of the pictures, included in the Hong Kong exhibition, showing the texture of wood and an onion [*Sections* (2017)], is of such shocking clarity that you find yourself facing an idea of infinity. These pictures contain more information than you can ever remember. Only these large-format prints are able to display the full range of detail, color, and scale, and so digital has actually made the objects almost more unique. The object can only be experienced in the full depth of its presence and its material reality in that room at that time.

This material reality is only accessible through the picture. The eyes can't process so much information in one go.

I find that miraculous. There's something deeply philosophical in having to learn to let go of information. It's an analogy for the information age, and the challenge of valuing things at the same time as being prepared to let them go. To understand everything as the same, and yet to decide that some things are more valuable than others. I choose to value certain things, and at the same time to understand that everything is materially equal, if we accept that things are infinite. That's a strange opposition.

The full article was originally published as "Wolfgang Tillmans: On the Limits of Seeing in a High-Definition World," by Aimee Lin. *ArtReview Asia*, Spring 2018, 64–65. Courtesy Aimee Lin and *ArtReview Asia*.

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ArtReview

Power 100

The annual ranking of the most influential people in art



Photo: Daniel Buchholz

Power 100 The annual ranking of the most influential people in art
ArtReview, December, 2021
<https://cutt.ly/IYVA5xx>

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Wolfgang Tillmans

Artist – Celebrated photographer, LGBTQI+ rights advocate and ‘artworld statesman’

↓ 2020 - 23

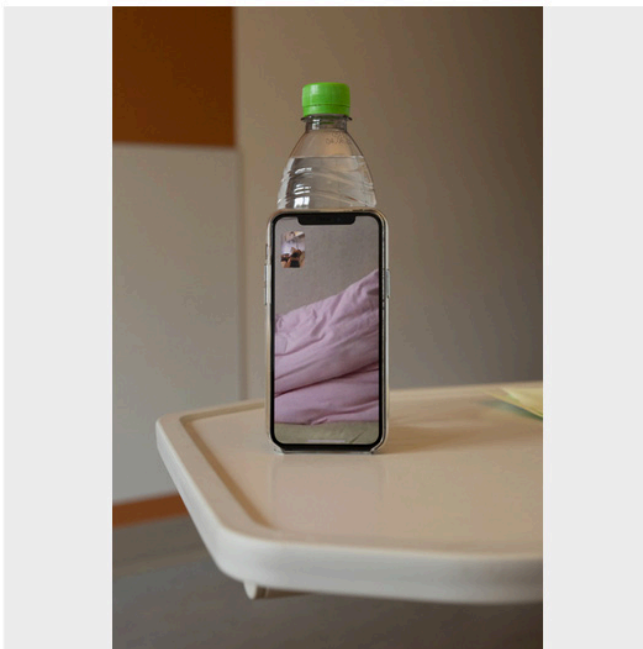
While in Budapest to open his solo show at the Trafó House of Contemporary Arts in June, Tillmans joined a protest against the homophobic policies of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The photographer has long mixed art and politics. His solo show with Maureen Paley this year included a nude portrait of himself on the sands of Fire Island, New York, a place he visits not only for holidays but also to check in on the Fire Island Artist Residency, run for LGBTQI+ artists, which Tillmans supports through his Between Bridges foundation. This year the foundation also staged a conference at HKW Berlin titled ‘European Culture of Resistance against Fascisms’, backed scholarships at a German education charity, supported various individual lockdown art projects and funded a queer zine. Tillmans released two singles of brooding electronic music and had a retrospective at the Museum for Science and Technology in Accra; he presented a show at Mumok in Vienna; and he chaired the board of London’s ICA – including managing its current hunt for a new director.

AD

La photographie sensorielle de Wolfgang Tillmans exposée à la galerie Chantal Crousel



L'artiste allemand, lauréat du prestigieux Turner Prize décerné par la Tate Modern, présente jusqu'au 12 juin une sélection de photographies dans le cadre de son exposition « Lumière du matin ».



© Wolfgang Tillmans / Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel

Wolfgang Tillmans, *Lüneburg (self)*, 2020.

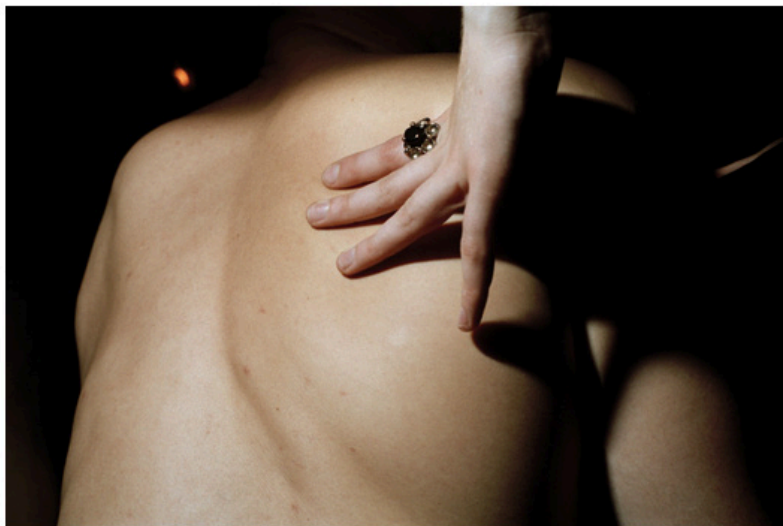
Camille Buonanno

La photographie sensorielle de Wolfgang Tillmans exposée à la galerie Chantal Crousel

AD Magazine, June 10, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/HnSn8My>

Réunissant des clichés datant des années 1990 à nos jours, l'exposition s'articule autour des différents moyens de mettre en scène les expériences sensorielles. *Lumière du matin* fait voyager le spectateur dans l'univers éclectique et souvent expérimental du photographe. Portraits, natures mortes ou paysages, Wolfgang Tillmans interroge aussi bien les genres que les formats pour insuffler une véritable subjectivité à son art. Photographe mais aussi commissaire d'exposition, musicien et activiste, il utilise une multitude de supports pour exprimer ses opinions et dénoncer les inégalités ou la hiérarchie sociale. Parvenant aussi bien à saisir l'intensité d'un bleu profond, la fragilité du détail charnel d'un dos baigné de soleil que la fougue d'une scène de boîte de nuit, les tirages qui habillent les murs de la galerie rue Charlot à Paris participent à cette remise en question de la création et de la production d'images que l'on retrouve en filigrane dans le travail de l'artiste.



© Wolfgang Tillmans / Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel

Wolfgang Tillmans, Omen, 1991.

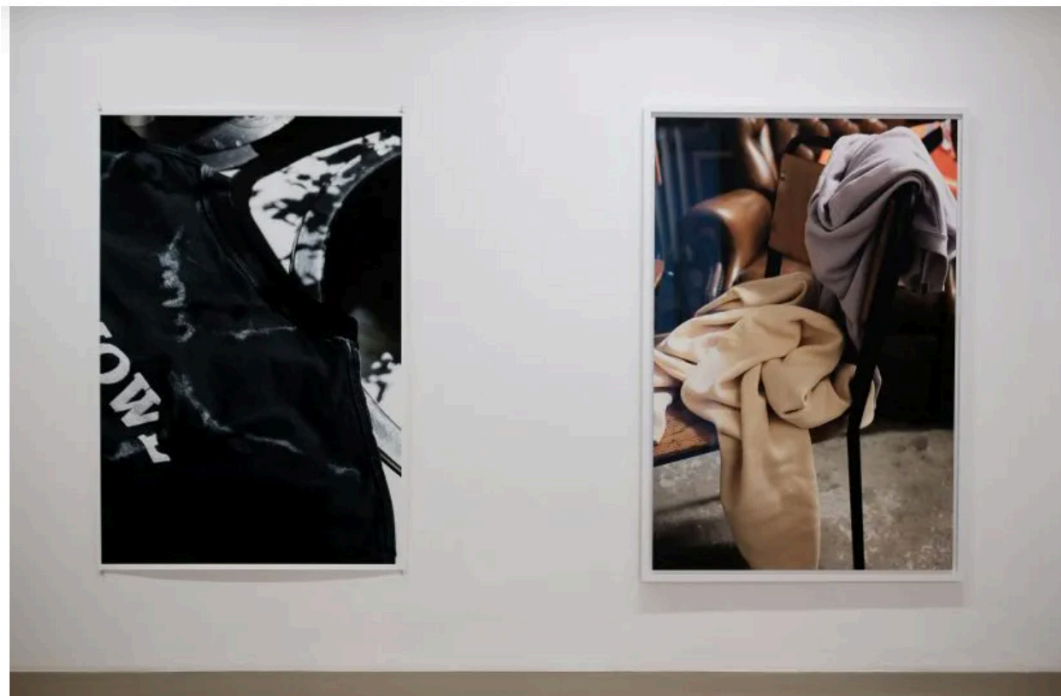
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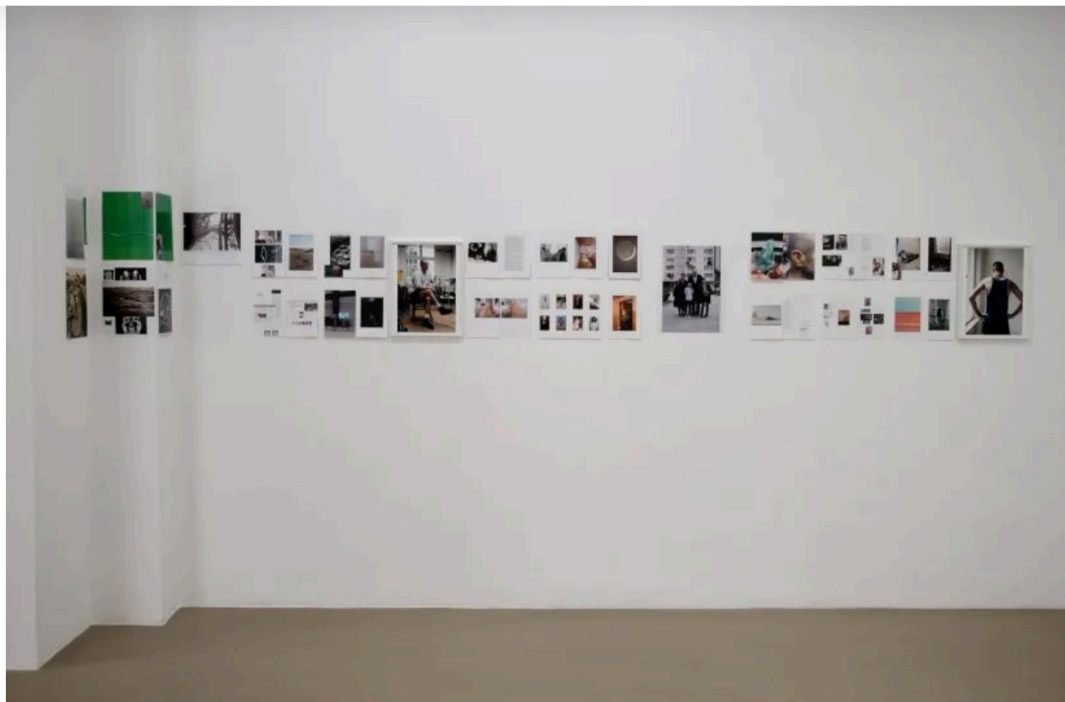
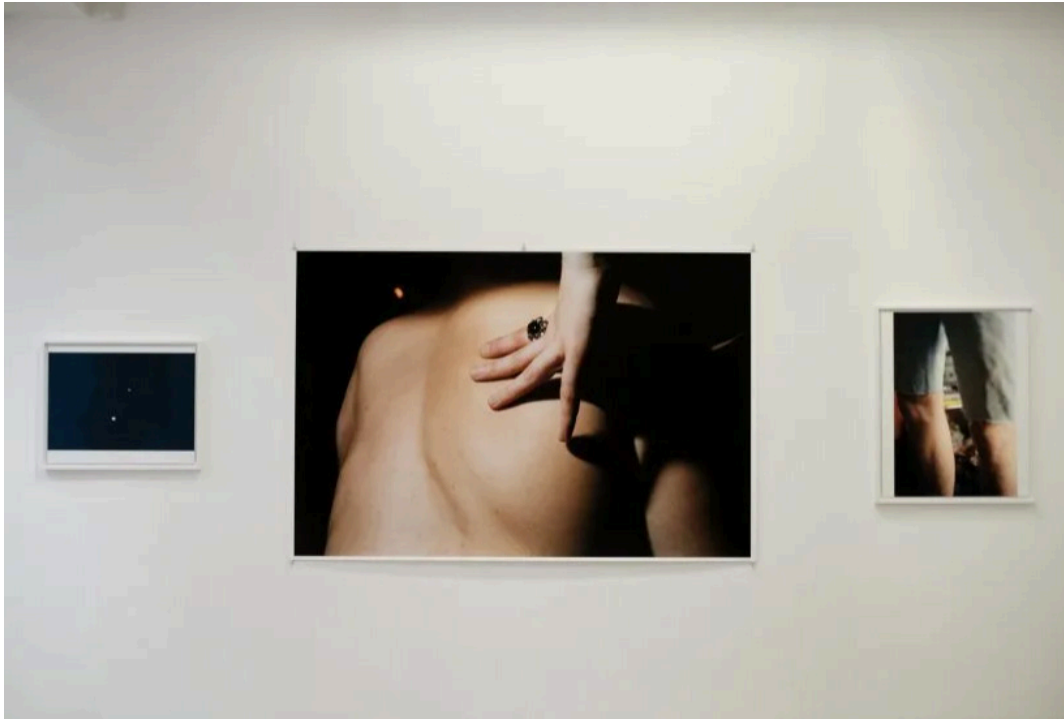
“LUMIÈRE DU MATIN,” AN EXHIBITION BY WOLFGANG TILLMANS AT GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS

Purple is pleased to present “Lumière du Matin,” by Wolfgang Tillmans, the artist’s fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel. Expanding conventional ways of approaching photography, Tillmans continues to push the boundaries of what it means to practice image-making in an increasingly image saturated world.

On view now through June 12, 2021 at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Photos by Jac Revald

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*"Lumière du Matin," an exhibition by Wolfgang Tillmans at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
Purple, May 30, 2021
<https://cutt.ly/YnhPH1u>*

Numéro



Rencontre avec Wolfgang Tillmans, le photographe qui explore les recoins du monde sensible

Scènes de liesse dans les soirées techno, fragments de corps délicats, ou encore portraits intimes de figures de notre époque telles que Frank Ocean sur la couverture de son album *Blonde* (2016) : Wolfgang Tillmans est un grand nom de la photographie contemporaine, déployant depuis trois décennies un style immédiatement reconnaissable malgré la grande variété de ses sujets. A la Galerie Chantal Crousel, l'Allemand également musicien, commissaire d'exposition et activiste présente jusqu'au 12 juin une sélection de ses derniers clichés ponctués de quelques archives, tous réunis par une même expression vibrante du sensible.

Matthieu Jacquet

Rencontre avec Wolfgang Tillmans, le photographe qui explore les recoins du monde sensible

Numéro, May 28, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/vnatZWC>



Wolfgang Tillmans, 2017.
Photo : Rebecca Wilton

Parler de son époque par l'image, Wolfgang Tillmans en a trouvé le secret. Photographe mais aussi musicien, commissaire d'exposition et même activiste... À l'aide de ses appareils photo ou à travers ses autres activités, **l'artiste allemand capture depuis maintenant trois décennies** les recoins d'un monde sensible qu'il explore inlassablement, trouvant toujours de nouvelles raisons de s'en émerveiller. L'atmosphère moite et souterraine des soirées techno de Berlin, la fraîcheur des forêts habitées par des corps nus et juvéniles, les surgissements tendres d'une peau lisse dans l'intimité d'une chambre à coucher ou encore les visages de ces anonymes ou vedettes qui incarnent, selon lui, l'esprit de leur temps, sont tous apparus au fil des années devant son objectif. Habitué des portraits et des corps, le photographe n'a pour autant jamais fui l'expérimentation, préférant au contraire l'embrasser à travers des projets plus picturaux : dans les années 2000, il produit ses *Freischwimmer* (littéralement "nageurs libres"), des nuées colorées nées grâce à une magie lumineuse opérée en chambre noire alors qu'une dizaine d'années plus tôt, l'artiste entamait sa série des *Silvers*, tirages maculés délibérément par des réactions chimiques qui créent sur leurs surfaces teintées des traînées mystérieuses. Certains clichés de ce projet habillent actuellement les murs de la galerie Chantal Crousel, qui, jusqu'au 12 juin, consacre une nouvelle exposition personnelle à l'artiste aujourd'hui quinquagénaire.

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Pour sa sélection investissant l'intégralité des espaces de l'institution parisienne, Wolfgang Tillmans déploie un projet d'une grande justesse dont il orchestre, une fois de plus, l'accrochage au millimètre près. Matière inépuisable qu'il fouille et recompose à l'envi, au gré de ses livres et expositions, son œuvre libère ici ses nouvelles pousses : des clichés réalisés au fil des huit dernières années, pandémie comprise dans une grande variété de formats, tantôt imprimés en 2 mètres par 3 et fixés par des épingles, tantôt encadrés dans des marie-louise ou développés sur des papier photos petits formats, scotchés au mur avec une rigueur mathématique. Une expérience de l'espace qui contraint le visiteur à sans cesse s'approcher et reculer pour déchiffrer ses photographies, tandis qu'en leur sein même, l'artiste joue également avec les échelles : d'une vue aérienne nocturne de la ville illuminée, il passe à l'apparition furtive d'un papillon bleu, tatoué sur la peau d'un cou anonyme ou la mise en abyme de sa propre image, dans l'écran lisse d'un smartphone. Même lorsqu'il est physiquement absent, le corps y est toujours présent : il apparaît bien sûr dans les froissements d'un short Adidas plié sur une serviette ou encore sur les traces blanches séchées qui maculent le col d'un tee-shirt noir, mais aussi plus indirectement dans les avocats mûrs à point disposés sur un drap blanc ou les pétales orange d'une tulipe penchant dangereusement d'un vase. Bien plus que des natures mortes, les images de Wolfgang Tillmans dégagent, au fil du parcours, une grande force de vie, reflet de l'artiste lui-même. Rencontré à cette occasion, l'Allemand a livré pour *Numéro* une véritable leçon de photographie et de création, analysant à travers sa propre pratique les devenirs de l'image et, finalement, du langage.

Numéro : À la galerie Chantal Crousel, vous présentez une vaste sélection d'œuvres récentes, ponctuées de quelques images d'archives. Comment avez-vous choisi ce que vous alliez montrer ?

Wolfgang Tillmans : Il n'y a pas ici de narration claire ni de sujet spécifique mais toutes ces œuvres sont unies par leur manière de parler des sens et des états d'existence : le liquide ou le solide, la douceur et la souplesse du tissu ou de la peau, la rigidité des os sous la chair ou des arbres... Depuis plus d'un an, nous sommes tantôt privés tantôt submergés sensoriellement, ce qui amène certaines œuvres à nous toucher différemment qu'avant. Bien sûr, le point d'ancrage de ces clichés reste le corps, qui apparaît aussi bien dans mes autoportraits que dans certains fragments de chair ou des vêtements évoquant la peau qu'ils recouvrent. Tout semble connecté par un même désir de faire de nouvelles images. D'ailleurs, si certains de mes sujets sont récurrents, je suis toujours assez motivé par l'idée d'en proposer de nouvelles versions si je peux y ajouter quelque chose de nouveau, comme cette image d'un tee-shirt taché d'une trace de sel : la physicalité s'y inscrit d'une manière très directe par le liquide séché, qui s'est imprimé en blanc sur le tissu noir. Je présente également ces quatre grands formats d'images "non-figuratives", les *Silvers*, qui sont en réalité très figuratives. On pourrait y voir une piscine ou des paysages japonais...

Vous ne les voyez donc pas comme des images abstraites ?

Le mot "abstrait" est amusant en ce qu'on l'utilise tout le temps de la mauvaise manière. Par exemple, les *Tournesols* de Vincent Van Gogh sont des abstractions de tournesols : les vraies fleurs ne ressemblent aucunement à ce que l'artiste a peint, il en a proposé une abstraction. Dans mes *Silvers*, devant ces surfaces faites de pigments bleus maculés par des traces de produits chimiques, c'est extrêmement concret. Ce ne sont pas là des abstractions du ciel mais des produits de leur propre fabrication. Ils ne représentent rien d'autre que des réactions photochimiques qui ont mal tourné.



Wolfgang Tillmans, "Silver 209" (2014). Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la | Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole.



Wolfgang Tillmans, "Remy at Spectrum" (2015). Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la | Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole.

Beaucoup d'artistes travaillent sur un projet ou une série, puis passent à un autre.

Vous puisez régulièrement dans l'ensemble de votre œuvre pour la recomposer dans des expositions ou publications. N'êtes-vous pas effrayé, parfois, par le vertige de ce potentiel infini ?

Potentiellement oui, car on ne peut jamais être certain que cela n'arrivera pas, mais pas pour l'instant. Souvent, les artistes craignent de ne pas être dans leur époque ou que leur travail devienne dépassé. C'est un risque qu'il faut accepter, car on ne peut pas lire l'avenir et savoir ce qui passera l'épreuve du temps. Je n'ai jamais eu peur de cela. Dans cette exposition par exemple, 95% des tirages sont de nouvelles œuvres qui datent de ces dernières années, et seulement quatre images datent de 1991 et 1992 : la photo d'un dos nu avec une main posée dessus a trente ans.

Matthieu Jacquet

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Numéro, May 28, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/vnatZWC>

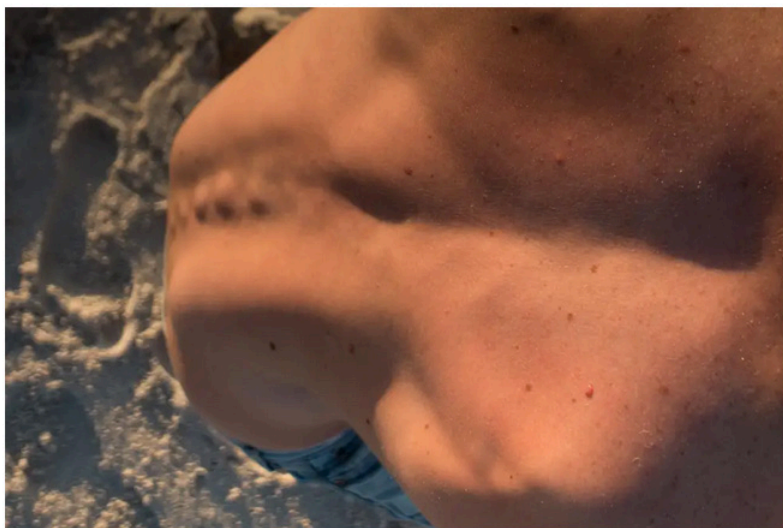
Je croyais que c'était l'une des dernières !

Exactement, et je n'aurais pas non plus pu prendre cette photo il y a quinze ans. En regardant le temps qui a passé, certaines images que j'ai faites trente ans auparavant pourraient très bien dater d'aujourd'hui. A côté de ce cliché, je montre un autre dos, photographié cette fois-ci très récemment, et tous deux semblent nouveaux bien qu'ils aient en fait vingt-cinq années d'écart. C'est toute l'expérience de cette exposition. Parallèlement, je travaille également sur ma future rétrospective au MoMA [en 2022], qui m'a amené depuis le confinement à me replonger dans mon archive et y redécouvrir d'autres travaux. L'étendue de ma pratique est certes très large et infinie, mais chaque composition que j'en tire est très spécifique. A la galerie Chantal Crousel, lorsque l'on regarde mes œuvres de loin, on peut se dire que ce sont trois Tillmans, mais dès que l'on s'approche on remarque leurs grandes différences. C'est le défi dont je ne me lasse pas, et qui est difficile à rendre chaque fois inédit.

“Mon but premier avec mon appareil photo est de représenter comment mes yeux regardent le monde.”

Nous avons tendance à considérer la photographie comme un médium plat et bidimensionnel, pourtant votre travail visuel a toujours été très physique. Cette expérience vivante de l'espace est extrêmement centrale dans votre photographie, mais aussi vos performances et votre musique. Comment vous êtes-vous adapté au tournant virtuel de cette dernière année ?

Je ne me suis peu aventuré dans les expositions virtuelles, bien que j'y ai été invité à maintes reprises. On s'est beaucoup moqué des “online viewing rooms” mais je ne partage pas ce cynisme : ce ne sont rien de plus que des pdf que l'on regarde en ligne ! Sur mon site internet, cela fait des années que j'ai créé ma propre “viewing room” en montrant la manière dont j'ai exposé mon travail depuis douze ans. Si la pandémie a souligné cela, ce procédé est encore aujourd'hui l'expérience la plus proche d'une exposition à laquelle on ne peut pas se rendre physiquement : j'ai exposé dans quatre continents durant la dernière décennie, et je ne peux montrer ce que j'y ai fait qu'en photographiant l'espace.



Wolfgang Tillmans, “James’s Spine” (2016). Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la | Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Wolfgang Tillmans.

Matthieu Jacquet

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Vous avez récemment donné une interview sur *France Culture* dans laquelle vous expliquiez combien vous étiez encore fasciné par la magie de la photographie, notamment argentique, et sa capacité à faire apparaître l'image sur le papier. Comment votre expérience du médium a-t-elle évolué au fil des trente dernières années, avec l'émergence de nouveaux outils et techniques ?

Il y a dans ma tête une constante négociation entre le temps de pose, la sensibilité de la pellicule et l'exposition lumineuse, que je ne partage jamais avec le spectateur. Ces trois critères contradictoires travaillent les uns contre les autres : plus la vitesse d'obturation [temps pendant lequel l'obturateur de l'objectif s'ouvre pour laisser passer la lumière] est longue, plus on risque de bouger l'appareil et flouter l'image ; pour réduire ce flou il faut élargir le diaphragme, mais cela réduit la profondeur de champ ; on peut augmenter la vitesse en augmentant la sensibilité ISO, mais cela ajoute du grain à l'image. Plutôt que me limiter à un seul paramétrage et travailler sur trépied, je me retrouve constamment à explorer les limites du médium d'une manière ou d'une autre. Dans l'exposition, les colonnes de béton sont des photographies numériques extrêmes en ce qu'elles ont été prises avec une vitesse d'obturation très rapide et une sensibilité ISO très forte, ce que l'on ne pouvait pas faire auparavant sans la rendre illisible. La technologie a toujours éveillé mon intérêt. Dans les années 90, j'étais l'un des premiers photographes à utiliser l'impression jet d'encre car j'appréciais le rendu de l'encre sur le papier, sans verre pour la couvrir. J'ai longtemps pensé que la pellicule suffisait à représenter la vision du monde à l'œil nu, mais lorsque les appareils numériques sont arrivés dans les années 2000, j'ai dû apprendre une nouvelle langue, cette fois-ci encore plus nette que nos propres yeux. C'était un véritable séisme.

“Il n'y a pas de mauvais appareil photo, seulement des appareils photo.”

Tout à l'heure, je vous observais en train de photographier votre assistant sous tous les angles avec votre iPhone. Les photos prises avec votre téléphone deviennent-elles à leur tour des œuvres d'art à vos yeux ?

Vous savez, il n'y a pas de mauvais appareil photo, seulement des appareils photo. Ils ne sont mauvais que lorsqu'ils déçoivent ou contrecarrent vos attentes. Evidemment que lorsque l'appareil est plat comme une boîte d'allumettes, comme sur un smartphone, on ne peut pas espérer une grande profondeur de champ. Mon but premier avec mon appareil photo est de représenter comment mes yeux regardent le monde. J'ai commencé cela avec un film 100 ISO à très haut grain, puis après 2010 j'ai réalisé que les nouveaux appareils se sont adaptés à notre vie contemporaine en haute définition. Aujourd'hui, on peut zoomer sur tout.

Les enfants nés après 2010 adoptent d'ailleurs très tôt ce réflexe de zoomer sur les images avec leurs doigts !

Et ils n'ont aucune conscience de ce que cela représente, sur le plan technologique ! Ces dernières années, il y a des images que je n'ai pu faire que grâce à mon smartphone. Trois d'entre elles sont d'ailleurs présentes dans mon exposition à la galerie. Je n'en fait pas un *statement* artistique, mais elles représentent elles aussi ma réalité et il serait artificiel de ne pas les qualifier d'œuvres d'art. Quant aux images que je publie sur Instagram, je ne les vois pas ainsi, mais davantage comme des photos qui parlent comme une langue.

Justement, votre Instagram semble très représentatif de l'artiste et la personne que vous êtes, bien que vous n'y montriez presque aucune des œuvres que vous exposez. Nous y avons un aperçu de votre univers global, ponctué d'articles et de longs textes qui reflètent vos pensées, vos opinions sur l'art ou la politique... Mais iriez-vous jusqu'à les imprimer et les exposer ?

Dans certaines circonstances, oui, mais elles sont très rares. J'ai récemment écrit un essai pour le magazine *Aperture*, intitulé "Les photographies sont-elles des mots ?" : j'avais le sentiment que nous nous trouvons dans ce pivot de l'histoire, un moment transitoire vers une époque où le langage visuel deviendra aussi important que le langage verbal. Ces dernières années, nous avons commencé à utiliser des images pour communiquer, d'abord sur le ton de l'humour, mais elles nous permettent désormais d'exprimer des émotions très complexes à travers des photos, GIF, pictogrammes ou émojis. Il est toujours un peu délicat d'évoquer cela en interview, car on croirait entendre un vieil homme barbu qui professe : "vous souvenez-vous du temps où les téléphones n'existaient pas ?" [rires] Mais je pense que nous sommes à l'aube d'un grand changement à ce niveau-là.



Wolfgang Tillmans, "Lüneburg (self)" (2020). Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la | Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Wolfgang Tillmans.

Matthieu Jacquet

Rencontre avec Wolfgang Tillmans, le photographe qui explore les recoins du monde sensible

Numéro, May 28, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/vnatZWC>

A propos de mots, je trouve très difficile de décrire vos images, qui parlent précisément de ce que l'on ne saurait exprimer par des mots. Pourtant, vous utilisez les mots très fréquemment, écrivez les paroles de vos morceaux... Trouvez-vous plus facile de vous exprimer ainsi ?

Certainement pas, sinon je n'aurais pas commencé à prendre des photos. Si l'on décrit mes images seulement en parlant de ce qu'on y voit, on ne pointe pas vraiment du doigt ce qu'elles ont de spécial. Le sont-elles parce qu'elles montrent une personne assise au bout d'une table, dans une chambre ? Bien sûr que non. Elle ne sont pas spéciales par le "quoi" mais par le "comment" : c'est ce "comment" qui échappe aux mots et crée une frustration chez de nombreux artistes. En peinture, le langage a évolué sur plusieurs siècles pour décrire la texture, ce qui se passe dans ces centimètres de matière, la toile, les modulations... En photographie, c'est un problème car on bloque encore sur quatre adjectifs tels que "flou" ou "net", qui ne décrivent pas pour autant comment on peut reconnaître des photographes instantanément. Pour autant, les mots m'ont toujours intéressé.

"L'avantage avec la photographie, c'est qu'une pensée intéressante peut être réalisée en une seconde."

Vous êtes d'ailleurs très investi dans l'écriture de votre musique [une électro minimale sur laquelle il pose sa voix] !

Oui. Depuis environ six ans, je ressens de plus en plus une certaine urgence à employer un langage performatif qui me ramène à la fin de mon adolescence, au moment de mes débuts artistiques. J'ai écrit une centaine de paroles et d'une certaine manière, elles ont aussi agi derrière l'objectif. Finalement, je vois les artistes qui exposent comme des performeurs : leur œuvre est elle aussi le résultat d'un déplacement dans l'espace.

Avec tous les domaines que vous explorez, comment parvenez-vous à rester inspiré et créatif ?

En m'investissant davantage dans la musique et la politique ces cinq dernières années, j'ai réalisé que ces nouvelles activités ne me détournent pas de la photographie. Au contraire : elles me permettent de garder l'inspiration en m'éloignant un peu de la pratique, plutôt que de m'asseoir et réfléchir à ce que je pourrais faire prochainement avec mon appareil. Cela me nourrit, tout comme mes années d'enseignement à Francfort ou le commissariat d'expositions à Between Bridges [espace d'exposition fondé par Wolfgang Tillmans en 2006, désormais à Berlin] : se concentrer plusieurs jours par mois sur le travail d'autres artistes me permet de continuer à avancer. L'avantage avec la photographie, c'est qu'une pensée intéressante peut être réalisée en une seconde. Votre art est seulement aussi intéressant que vos pensées, mais pas forcément que vos idées. Ainsi, du moment que je conserve mon intérêt pour le monde, pour la vie, pour les individus et leur art, je pense que je me porte bien !

Wolfgang Tillmans, "Lumière du matin", jusqu'au 12 juin à la galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris 3e.

WOLFGANG TILLMANS SUR CIMAISES

La galerie Chantal Crousel présente la quatrième exposition en ses murs du photographe allemand qui sort des cadres habituels

PHOTO

Paris. Les expositions de Wolfgang Tillmans, en musée ou en galerie, sont toujours un récit visuel sur la manière dont il regarde le monde. « Lumière du matin » à la galerie Chantal Crousel, titre donné par l'auteur lui-même en français, poursuit cette démarche. L'artiste allemand signe de nouveau des photographies pleines de sensibilité et d'émotions. Aucun cartell dans les deux espaces de la galerie n'indique la temporalité ou le sujet des œuvres. Comme de coutume, sa sélection mêle les époques, les propos et les genres bien que l'on ait du mal à employer ce terme pour Tillmans tant ses images constituent un vaste corpus lexical de formes photographiques et de réflexions dans lequel il puise avant de les organiser sur les murs de la galerie.

Portraits, paysages, natures mortes ou abstractions de la série « Silver », réalisés entre 1990 et aujourd'hui, se déclinent tout d'abord. On y croise des hommes, ou des femmes, posant souvent seuls devant l'objectif, une colonne de béton coulée dans le sol, la courbe délicate d'une tulipe sous la lumière d'un jour éblouissant ou un haut de sweat-shirt noir maculé d'une trace de sueur.

Dans l'autre espace de la galerie, un monochrome bleu laisse imaginer un bassin de piscine tandis que la courbe d'un dos avec une peau constellée de grains de beauté dialogue avec une photographie de la grande conjonction de Jupiter et de Saturne, du 21 décembre dernier. Les formats et les présentations des tirages différent, y compris pour la même image. À l'alignement traditionnel de photographies, Tillmans a toujours préféré une composition éclatée sans hiérarchie de valeurs.

Du livre à l'exposition

Pour lui, les livres ou les expositions sont des créations de mise en page ou « mise au mur ». Leur rythme propre et intuitif guide Tillmans dans un accrochage où les images puissent autant se suffire à elles-mêmes que résonner entre elles. Le livre est d'ailleurs souvent un des composants de l'accrochage. « Lumière du matin » intègre ainsi des doubles pages de son livre *Wako Book 6*, publié en 2020 avec la galerie et maison d'édition japonaise Wako Works of Art, lors de son exposition « How does it feel ? », organisée dans les espaces de l'enseigne à Tokyo, en novembre et décembre derniers. L'extrait de ce journal photographique retrace l'année 2020 de l'artiste. Il montre les divers sujets qui intéressent Tillmans, en particulier la politique et les conséquences de la crise sanitaire sur les relations sociales.



Wolfgang Tillmans,
Domenico, 1992.
© Wolfgang Tillmans.

Tillmans n'a jamais voulu que l'on interprète ses photographies à travers sa propre histoire ou ses positions sur les sujets d'actualité. Pourtant, on ne peut s'en empêcher devant ces pages et les autres photographies, comme son autoportrait à l'hôpital, ou le grand format de *Concrete Column*, une colonne de béton faisant écho aux travaux entrepris pour l'extension

du Between Bridge, l'espace d'exposition non commercial et de débats créé par l'artiste, à Londres, puis à Berlin. Les prix des œuvres exposées varient entre 12 000 et 250 000 euros.

● CHRISTINE COSTE

WOLFGANG TILLMANS. LUMIÈRE DU MATIN, jusqu'au 12 juin, galerie Chantal Crousel, 10, rue Charlot, 75003 Paris.



Wolfgang Tillmans: "Je suis incroyablement fasciné par le miracle de la photographie"

▶ ÉCOUTER (42 MIN)



À retrouver dans l'émission

PAR LES TEMPS QUI COURENT par Céline du Chéné

Nous recevons ce soir le photographe allemand Wolfgang Tillmans à l'occasion de sa grande exposition "Lumière du matin" visible à la galerie Chantal Crousel, à Paris, du 6 mai au 12 juin.



Wolfgang Tillmans • Crédits : Sarah Bohn

L'exposition "Lumière du matin" est la quatrième exposition de Wolfgang Tillmans à la galerie Chantal Crousel. Elle se compose d'une cinquantaine de photographies (principalement des portraits et des natures mortes) qui ont été prises entre le début des années 90 et 2020.

Wolfgang Tillmans s'attache à travailler sur les limites du visible et sur la frontière à explorer entre intimité et critique sociale.

Céline du Chéné

Wolfgang Tillmans: "Je suis incroyablement fasciné par le miracle de la photographie"

France Culture, May 5, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/wbTumQ4>



Wolfgang Tillmans, James's Spine, 2016. Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. • Crédits : Wolfgang Tillmans

Extraits de l'entretien

“ Depuis tout jeune, je réfléchis à la manière dont mes photos sont exposées dans un espace. La galerie me permet d'avoir une interaction spatiale avec mes images. Certaines sont encore plus grandes que nature et quand je suis face à ces photos, il y a un impact physique. Il y a d'autres photos toutes petites mais qui ne sont pas moins importantes. Cette manière d'accrocher sans hiérarchie est un geste qui permet de décider de ce qui va être important pour le spectateur. Il ne s'agit pas de flécher le parcours.

“ Je ne peux pas décrire une manière de procéder. Parfois je mets en scène les choses, parfois je les découvre et très souvent c'est un mélange des deux.

“ Je suis incroyablement fasciné par ce miracle de la photographie où la lumière vient frapper les produits chimiques. Il y a vingt cinq ans, j'ai commencé à travailler avec des images sans appareil photo, uniquement avec la lumière sur du papier photo sensible. Une famille particulière de photos est apparue. Il y en a deux très grands tirages dans cette exposition. J'utilise simplement la machine de développement avec des produits chimiques. Ça a l'air mécanique mais ça ouvre des espaces imaginaires, avec des scintillements dorés pour l'un des clichés. Une photo ressemble à un cerisier japonais, l'autre à une piscine publique avec les lignes de nage, elles ont presque l'air hallucinatoire. C'est à la fois tout à fait abstrait et concret. C'est le résultat photochimique.

Céline du Chéné

Wolfgang Tillmans: "Je suis incroyablement fasciné par le miracle de la photographie"

France Culture, May 5, 2021

<https://cutt.ly/wbTumQ4>

ARTFORUM



The dancefloor of the Berghain nightclub.

August 13, 2020 at 11:53am

BERLIN'S STORIED BERGHAIN NIGHTCLUB TO HOST CONTEMPORARY ART SHOW

Would-be clubgoers need no longer spend hours fussing over their outfits and titrating their MDMA intake only to wait nervously before the velvet rope of Berlin's Berghain nightclub in the wee dark hours of the morning, hoping to be let in by notoriously discriminating bouncer Sven Marquardt. The legendary techno venue, closed for its usual purposes since the pandemic, is collaborating with collector Christian Boros to present an exhibition featuring works by more than 80 artists.

Set to open on September 9, in conjunction with the annual Berlin Art Week, the exhibition, dubbed "Studio Berlin," will include photography, video, sculptures, paintings, and installations by such blue-chip artists as Tacita Dean, Olafur Eliasson, Cyprien Gaillard, Isa Genzken, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Rosemarie Trockel. The work of younger Berlin-based artists will be presented as well, with Anne Imhof, Klara Lidén, Robin Rhode, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Raphaela Vogel all showing.

The exhibition comes on the heels of a sound installation held in late July, during which 50 people at a time were allowed to enter the former East German heating and power station. The club's cavernous Kassel Hall echoed with muted city sounds and the whir of helicopter blades, courtesy of artists Sam Auinger and Hannes Strobl, working together as TamTam.

Works at "Studio Berlin" will be spread throughout the Kreuzberg venue's nearly 38,000-square-foot space, including the Panorama bar and the club's seamy darkrooms. Visitors to the exhibition must book guided tours—available in several languages—online in advance; according to organizer Boros, the show is open to everyone from the age of 16 through "grandmas with zimmer frames." There's no word yet on whether Berghain's famous "no-photos" policy will be enforced.

« *Berlin's Storied Berghain Nightclub to Host Contemporary Art Show* »

Artforum, August 13, 2020

<https://www.artforum.com/news/berlin-s-storied-berghain-nightclub-to-host-contemporary-art-show-83665>

W

Wolfgang Tillmans's New Video Is An Ode To Nights On The Dance Floor



The artist **Wolfgang Tillmans** usually chooses to spend the holidays alone. In years past, he's taken the two weeks surrounding Christmas as an opportunity to "enjoy being quite solitary," he tells *W*. But in 2020, he has no autonomy in the matter: "It's involuntary, so let's see how that will feel," Tillmans adds. "We need patience with each other—mood swings and all the rest that will come with this."

During this strange period, Tillmans decided to look back in time as inspiration for his latest work—a short film titled "Can't Escape Into Space" that he released on Friday. The Berlin-based photographer pieced together footage he shot in 2018 of the empty dance floor at Sip 'n Twirl, a club in Fire Island Pines in New York, and set the visuals against music he co-created—the sound: a 1980s-esque synth, echoing vocals, and a reverberating handclap. "It was late summer, early autumn—possibly the best time on the island," Tillmans says. "Then the [club] had nothing—desolate as it was imbued with the memories of a busy summer season." In the context of the pandemic, the lone disco ball and flashing, multi-colored lights falling upon an unoccupied nightclub takes on new meaning, and evokes a special kind of nostalgia.

Tillmans began creating the film during spring of this year while in lockdown in Berlin. He made the soundtrack first, with music collaborator Tim Knapp. As the city opened back up, they were joined by Bruno Breitzke, who produced the tracks further over the summer. (Tillmans would drop by sessions regularly, as the two studios are located on the same street of the German capital.)



“We were also joined remotely from Fire Island by Jay Pluck and Kyle Combs, two New York artists and musicians and longtime collaborators of ours,” he adds, noting that additional music they made over the summer will be released in an album next spring. “Some weeks ago, I realized that I wanted to release some of that work before the year’s end—and my friend and video editor Michael Amstad dug out the footage of the empty dance floor and spacecraft-like disco balls.”



Wolfgang Tillmans and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II on set for *W* magazine's "New Originals" issue.

The message of the video, as Tillmans puts it, centers around the dance floor: “We haven’t stopped dancing yet.” Meanwhile, the music, which he describes as “part comforting, part eerie,” has hope for change running through it.

Maxime Wally
Wolfgang Tillmans’s New Video Is An Ode To Nights On The Dance Floor
W Magazine, December 21, 2020
<https://cutt.ly/EjIXhTZ>

VANITY FAIR

This Winter's Best Coffee-Table Books

This season's most beautiful books include fine art collages, the Sistine Chapel, and a classic American road trip. While barreling toward the end of this bleak year, we offer a bright spot in the wonderful variety of art books released this winter. (Excellent alternatives to doomscrolling, all.) Whether you're longing for the familiarity of opening your mailbox to find a postcard from a far-off locale, looking to turn back time on your favorite city, or wanting to fall completely into a whimsical world with only soft edges, we have just the thing for you—or a loved one who needs their own pick-me-up!



Eyes of Our Time

Artist Wolfgang Tillmans

Taschen

This special 40th-anniversary publication from Taschen brings together a selection of four previously published books on the work of Wolfgang Tillmans, published between 1995 and 2012. *Eyes of Our Time* goes chronologically through Tillman's work. From early portraits of his community to still lifes, landscapes and nudes, to his abstract work we're led through a breath of his work threaded by his unmistakable eye and innovation.

VOGUE

CULTURE

Wolfgang Tillmans Is Holding an Artist Poster Sale to Support Queer Nightlife in NYC

BY LIAM HESS

July 14, 2020



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Resolute Rave*, 2020 Photo courtesy of Support Nightlife NYC

Liam Hess

« *Wolfgang Tillmans Is Holding an Artist Poster Sale to Support Queer Nightlife in NYC* »

Vogue, July 14, 2020.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/between-bridges-wolfgang-tillmans-artist-poster-sale-nyc-queer-nightlife>

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

The German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans is best known for his playfully arranged photographic installations that blur the miraculous and the banal—a windscreen wiper pinned next to an exposed breast, a sweat-soaked raver placed beneath an image of a double rainbow—that have covered the walls of institutions from New York’s MoMA PS1 to London’s Tate Modern. In 2016, however, Tillmans decided to revisit the origins of his long-standing fascination with club culture, establishing a new chapter of his career by producing his own music.

With it, Tillmans found himself embraced by the rich, hedonistic energy of New York’s queer nightlife scene, a present-day equivalent to the Berlin underground clubs where he first cut his teeth in the mid-’80s. And so, when the COVID-19 crisis hit these safe spaces for queer people of color with disproportionate force, Tillmans felt compelled to take action.

“I realized the potential of the project when I approached Berlin-based LGBTQ+ magazine *Siegessäule* asking if they needed help,” Tillmans says. “Within days the project expanded, and we’re now able to offer over 30 original artworks to this unique group of New York nightlife collectives.” The eight collectives Tillmans is fundraising for include Papi Juice, the Brooklyn-based night centering and celebrating queer and trans people of color, and GHE20G0TH1K, the now-iconic night started by Venus X that fostered the likes of Shayne Oliver’s Hood by Air. “Having enjoyed numerous inspiring nights in NYC’s scene over the course of recent years, I felt it was urgent to make sure this special biotope is being protected,” he adds.



David Wojnarowicz with Tom Warren, *Self-Portrait of David Wojnarowicz*, 1983/84 Photo courtesy of Support Nightlife NYC



Anne Imhof, *Eliza Douglas in Anne Imhof, Imagine*, Galerie Buchholz, 2019 Photo courtesy of Support Nightlife NYC

Liam Hess

« Wolfgang Tillmans Is Holding an Artist Poster Sale to Support Queer Nightlife in NYC »
Vogue, July 14, 2020.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/between-bridges-wolfgang-tillmans-artist-poster-sale-nyc-queer-nightlife>

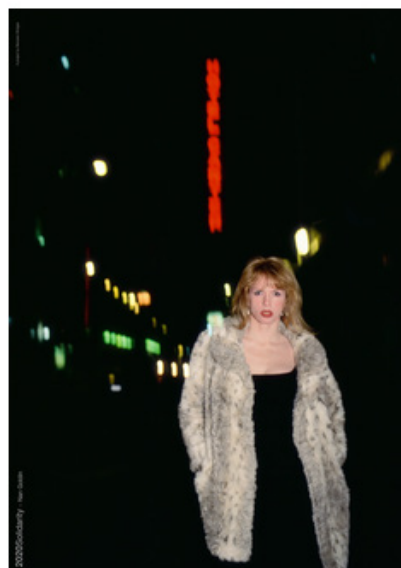
GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

The posters for sale—all available for \$50, with printing facilitated by Tillmans’s charity Between Bridges—come from an illustrious list of leading artists, many of whom offered pieces that resonated with the cause. Marlene Dumas’s submission is a portrait in ink of one of the great chroniclers of the Black queer experience, James Baldwin, while contributions from the estates of Peter Hujar and David Wojnarowicz pay tribute to the New York LGBTQ+ art scene of decades past. “These are originals and the designs come directly from the artists’ studios, and were made or chosen for this moment in time,” Tillmans explains. “We thought it’d also be a great opportunity to make accessible heroes of the queer community who are no longer with us.”

While the artists of Wojnarowicz or Hujar’s generation may have got their kicks after dark by cruising the Hudson River Piers or socializing in the East Village art community, the queer thrill-seekers of today find their release at the nights Tillmans is supporting—many of which are already on the brink of collapse. (Just last week, artist DeSe Escobar, who is also closely involved in the project, found her Club Glam night in limbo days before its fourth anniversary, after its venue, China Chalet, permanently closed its doors.)



Marlene Dumas, *James Baldwin* (from the series *Great Men*), 2014 Photo courtesy of Support Nightlife NYC



Nan Goldin, *Joey in front of the Ambassador Theater, Times Square, NYC, 1997* Photo courtesy of Support Nightlife NYC

“Nightlife has always been seen as frivolous, shallow, and derivative by the institutions that generate and police cultural and economic capital,” says artist Juliana Huxtable, a regular face at the nights being supported by the 2020Solidarity initiative. “The fact that nightlife, outside of the plainly bleak bar and bottle service venues that cater to the new New York Philistines, who seem to prefer an artisanal cocktail to a brilliant party, operates largely on a cash and under the table basis is the result of the tacit and de jure denial of protections, benefits, and permissive legal framework to celebrate a vital industry.”

Liam Hess

« *Wolfgang Tillmans Is Holding an Artist Poster Sale to Support Queer Nightlife in NYC* »

Vogue, July 14, 2020.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/between-bridges-wolfgang-tillmans-artist-poster-sale-nyc-queer-nightlife>

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

On this, Tillmans agrees. “Nightlife is often looked upon as something superficial, while I have experienced it as something deeply profound,” he says. “In the night hours, we are able to explore and experience being together in a way that opens new avenues. Nightlife is culture and nothing less.”

Part of the reason these venues, hosts, and performers are in such dire financial straits is that nightlife inevitably ends up being dismissed or overlooked as a valid beneficiary of the bailouts that are funneled to other, more widely palpable corners of the hospitality industry. (Meanwhile, in Manhattan alone, the nightlife economy is estimated to generate \$4.8 billion annually.) The sale serves not just as a fundraiser to support the communities who have been left without an income during the pandemic, but also an urgent reminder that these underground nightlife collectives are constantly under threat, and must be protected at all costs.

“Nightlife serves the very necessary role of lubricating a sense of freedom, where movement, time, and space are there for pleasure, social communion and musical performance,” Huxtable continues. “If we let this die, we are several large steps closer to the WeWork, Theory blazer, airport food truck dystopia that we all watch encroaching on the city every day.” Where these era-defining scenes led by queer people of color are snuffed out, New York’s spark will swiftly follow.

Liam Hess

« *Wolfgang Tillmans Is Holding an Artist Poster Sale to Support Queer Nightlife in NYC* »

Vogue, July 14, 2020.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/between-bridges-wolfgang-tillmans-artist-poster-sale-nyc-queer-nightlife>

les Inrockuptibles



© Fondation Louis Vuitton / Martin Argyroglo © Wolfgang Tillmans

ARTS

Wolfgang Tillmans : l'utopie concrète des corps reliés

24/06/20 16h04



PAR
Contenu Partenaire
- 24/06/20 16h04

Dans le cadre de SYNESTHESIA, challenge Instagram autour des artistes de la Collection de la Fondation Louis Vuitton, Les Inrocks vous propose la relecture 3.0 d'un artiste incontournable.



On a tous en tête des images de Wolfgang Tillmans. Pour les uns, ce sera les images d'extase qui dilatent les pupilles et font exulter les corps sur le dancefloor. Pour les autres, l'intimité transpercée de la lumière du matin, saisie par le velouté de la peau fripée d'un fruit ou les peaux encore chaudes de vêtements quittés à la hâte. Ou encore ses abstractions pixellisées ou aquatiques comme une goutte d'encre se répandant dans un fluide.

Depuis la fin des années 1980, le photographe allemand, également DJ et producteur, à la tête du lieu d'exposition Between Bridges à Berlin, relie mode, art et musique. Au cours des dernières années s'exprime également chez lui un engagement politique qui, s'il a toujours été une force active de son travail, prend désormais, face à la montée des extrêmes et de la dictature du profit, un tournant plus explicite.

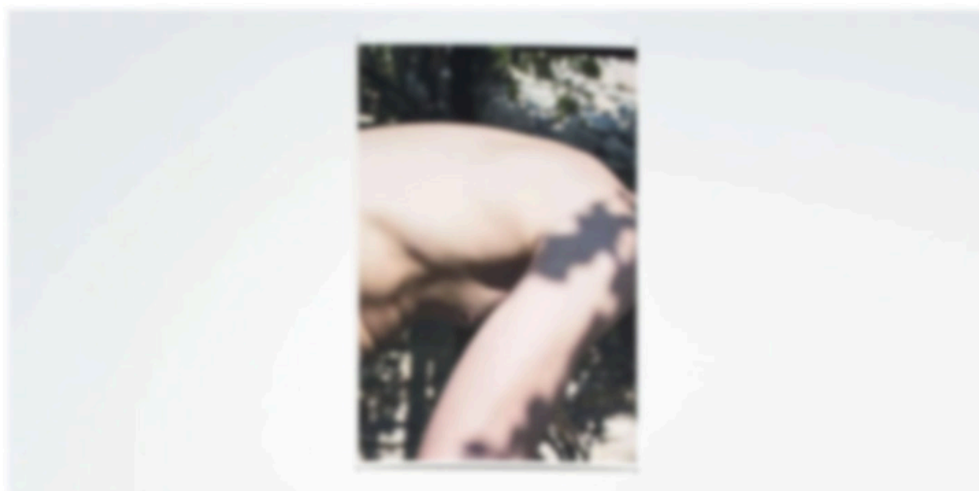
« Wolfgang Tillmans : l'utopie concrète des corps reliés »

Les Inrockuptibles, June 24, 2020

<https://www.lesinrocks.com/2020/06/24/arts/arts/wolfgang-tillmans-lutopie-concrete-des-corps-relies/>

Relier, encore et toujours, les corps et les images

Wolfgang Tillmans, c'est d'abord un ensemble de codes visuels. L'esthétique de la rave, d'une certaine manière, c'est lui. Les belles âmes libres à la recherche de la jouissance de l'instant, s'assemblent et s'entremêlent, errent dans les ruines d'un monde industriel désormais laissées vacantes et offertes aux danseurs. Elles portent du sportswear, s'ébrouent dans une nuit noire qui leur appartient entièrement, puis se retrouvent dans l'intimité d'appartements parsemés de détails : fleurs, fruits, bougies, vases.



© Fondation Louis Vuitton / Marc Damage © Wolfgang Tillmans

La foule et la fureur, la nature-morte et les chairs vibratiles se conjuguent en une même quête existentielle de liberté, d'un autre monde, gonflé de désirs et de possibles. Cette quête inlassable d'une circulation fluide et sans entraves qui parcourt registres et échelles, on la retrouve dans son système d'exposition : une prédilection pour un accrochage qui procède par constellations éclatées, variant les formats et les sujets, comme pour démontrer son attachement inépuisable à relier plutôt qu'isoler.

Non pas représenter mais exhumer le vécu

Il serait à proprement parler impossible de fragmenter le travail de l'artiste en périodes. La classification, il s'y refuse, et sa matière reste une potentialité ouverte en reconfiguration constante. D'ailleurs, l'artiste a beaucoup à dire sur la place même de la photographie aujourd'hui. Une photographie, noyée dans un flot d'image, garde la même force parce qu'elle traduit le vécu, les affects et la sensibilité de celui qui les prend, et qui les regarde : l'artiste dit souvent que même dans les années 1980, il avait déjà, avant Instagram, la sensation que tout a déjà été montré, et vu. Or ceci, explique-t-il encore, le libère : le sujet cède la place à l'affect.

En plaçant l'accent sur la qualité de l'immédiateté de l'instant périssable qui ne reviendra jamais, comme un coucher de soleil ne ressemblera à aucun autre tout simplement parce que ses conditions d'apparitions ne se répéteront jamais, Wolfgang Tillmans défend également des valeurs anti-capitalistes. L'objet, l'image, le sujet n'a aucune autre valeur que celui de procurer une expérience immédiate, un sentiment partageable, un éclair de sublime arraché au cours normé de nos existences productivistes.

« *Wolfgang Tillmans : l'utopie concrète des corps reliés* »

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<https://www.lesinrocks.com/2020/06/24/arts/arts/wolfgang-tillmans-lutopie-concrete-des-corps-relies/>



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Le clubbing est une politique des corps rassemblés

La beauté est donc politique, elle ne se vend ni ne s'achète, tout comme le clubbing l'est également. En dansant, chacun s'arrache à l'impératif de productivité et de rentabilité. En dansant, chacun accepte d'être placé dans une vulnérabilité, celle du corps dénudé et épuisé, qui transcende les différences de chacun. Sans but ni finalité définie au préalable, dans une pure dépense d'énergie tournée vers le sentiment d'appartenir à une communauté.

Brimer la vie nocturne a toujours été dans la ligne de mire des franges réactionnaires de la politique, celles qui pèsent comme jamais dans le débat et s'y arrogent visibilité et temps de parole. Encore et toujours, ces espaces sont à défendre, mais il s'agit, à travers eux également, de repenser le commun et la libre circulation. Ainsi, l'expérience des clubs marque un être-ensemble pacifique qui, dans le cas de Wolfgang Tillmans, est directement corrélé à l'Union Européenne, et à ses années passées à transiter entre deux villes cosmopolites : Londres et Berlin.

L'urgence de réaffirmer la politique à travers l'esthétique et le militantisme

Depuis mai 2016, Wolfgang Tillmans devient, tel qu'il le déclare alors au cours de ses interviews, « ouvertement politisé ». C'est-à-dire qu'à l'expression de la communauté et de l'intime dans ses productions esthétiques, se joindra dès lors un versant activiste directement engagé dans la défense des années de liberté qui influencèrent son travail.

A cette date, il se lance dans la campagne contre le Brexit et imprime une série de posters pour défendre l'Union Européenne, qu'il adapte en quatre formats : une version Instagram, une version PDF à imprimer soi-même, un format A1 classique imprimé dans son atelier, ainsi que des t-shirts pour incarner les mots. Par la suite, il s'engagera à chacun des moments forts de la vie politique et publique, et mettra à profit sa notoriété pour défendre les opinions modérées face à la montée des extrêmes.

« *Wolfgang Tillmans : l'utopie concrète des corps reliés* »

Les Inrockuptibles, June 24, 2020

<https://www.lesinrocks.com/2020/06/24/arts/arts/wolfgang-tillmans-lutopie-concrete-des-corps-relies/>



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L'artiste a le devoir de rendre l'engagement sexy

Pour lui, trop peu d'artistes osent encore faire entendre leur voix dans les débats publics ou sociétaux. Lui-même s'y emploie, par ces campagnes mais également via son compte Instagram, où il poste des images de son quotidien, des natures mortes la plupart du temps, accompagnées en légende d'un article de presse auquel il souhaite donner plus de visibilité.

En parallèle, celui qui expose actuellement au Wiels à Bruxelles et s'apprête à se voir célébré au MoMA à New York - après des rétrospectives d'ampleur à Tate Modern à Londres, à la Fondation Beyeler à Bâle et au Carré d'Art à Nîmes - continue avec la même minutie à approfondir son corpus d'images magnifiant la sensualité des petits riens du quotidien, cette jouissance éternelle et tout simplement humaine, d'autant plus poignante qu'elle est menacée et qu'il nous appartient, à tous et chacun individuellement, d'en défendre les espaces d'existence et d'expression.

Retrouvez #SYNESTHESIA sur le compte Instagram de la Fondation Louis Vuitton.

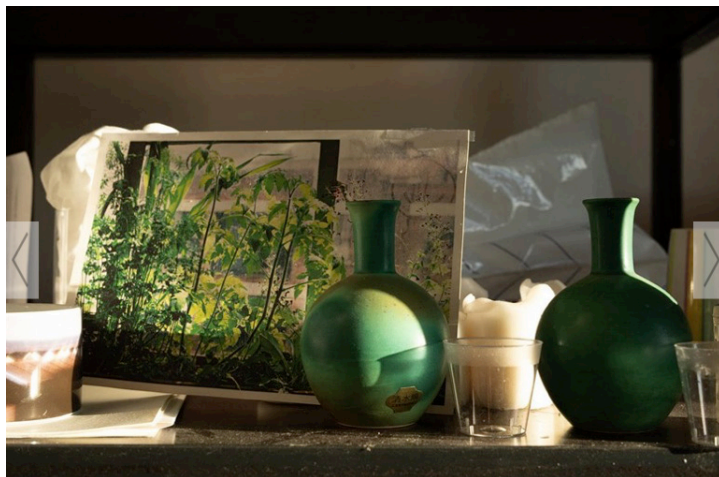
AnOther

Solidarity: Wolfgang Tillmans on His Poster Project to Support the Arts

Tillmans has launched 2020Solidarity, a project aimed at helping cultural venues, projects, spaces and publications that are existentially threatened by the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic is having a devastating impact on the arts. A recent survey of over 2,000 creative organisations and freelancers conducted by the Creative Industries Federation (CIF) – the membership body that represents the UK’s creative industries – revealed that just one in seven creative organisations believe they can last until the end of April on existing financial reserves, while only half think they can last beyond June. “With theatres, venues, museums and galleries closing, film shoots being postponed and festivals being cancelled,” the report reads, “more than half of creative organisations and individuals have already seen a 100 per cent drop in income”. And that’s just in the UK.

It’s this reality – that cultural venues, projects, spaces and publications around the world are being existentially threatened by the coronavirus pandemic – that inspired artist and photographer **Wolfgang Tillmans** to launch his project 2020Solidarity. Bringing together over 40 international artists – from Marlene Dumas and Mark Leckey to Peter Berlin and Heji Shin (lead image), and of course Tillmans himself – each has designed a poster, which is being offered on different crowdfunding sites as a reward for a donation.



2020Solidarity

Wolfgang Tillmans, still life (Bühnenbild), 2020

Ted Stansfield

« Solidarity: Wolfgang Tillmans on His Poster Project to Support the Arts »
Another, April 30, 2020

<https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/12475/wolfgang-tillmans-on-his-project-to-help-save-culture>

Here, speaking in his own words, Tillmans tells us more about 2020Solidarity; why he launched the project, what his hopes for it are, and the story behind his own contribution.

"I came up with the idea three weeks ago, starting from a realisation that I wanted to help cultural spaces that are affected by the current crisis as much as I can. I offered a limited-edition print to the Berlin lesbian and gay free magazine Siegessäule and while doing this realised that there are many different causes that could use editions or prints. So I came up with the idea of making unlimited posters, since a small edition would mean a higher price which is really cutting it off for many, many people. I then thought why not ask fellow artists from different countries to join in one project and organise many different posters and offer them to many different recipients. In a way this works like brokering, connecting causes with artists' posters that not every single cause would have the access to. The price point of 50 euros, dollars or pounds is obviously not cheap. It's obviously not an 'art for all'; it's action, it is about raising a substantial amount of money for places that are existentially threatened.

"I think there are many places that don't get help or won't get bailed out because they are informal places in culture and nightlife, where the lack of an audience is causing an existential threat. I feel an urgency to do something for them, so that they won't have to close down forever. For me, places of social life are also places of cultural life and it would be terrible if we lost half the places that we love going to. But we also want to support initiatives that are helping people in need locally within their communities, or that are raising funds for hospitals or health organisations.

"We are receiving many requests from various organisations that want to enlist the posters as donations. They all have different needs and capabilities. For example, the Arts Technician Emergency Fund or Migrate Art in the UK are successfully using the posters, in Poland there is Pogtos, an alternative club in Warsaw, or Artists Space in New York, clubs in Berlin such as ACUD or Griessmühle, or we are talking to the Artist Relief Fund in Bulgaria. It is just a start and hopefully it will get picked up by many places. We are now suggesting for smaller spaces or initiatives in the same region or city to come together in one crowdfunding effort, as it sometimes seems difficult for smaller organisations to set up a crowdfunding campaign alone.

"[My] photo was taken on March 1, when I had come back from a month-long trip around the world. I was working in New York and in Los Angeles, and travelled from Los Angeles to Taiwan, to the city of Kaohsiung where I was working on the re-staging of the stage set for the English National Opera's War Requiem by Benjamin Britten. I then came back to Berlin and saw this light in my studio kitchen and these vases which I had enjoyed looking at for a while. There was this particular light hitting behind the image in the photograph and the shelf that was creating this box. Maybe I saw this as a stage set because for a week before I was always looking at a stage. The second part of the title still life (Bühnenbild) means stage set in German, literally 'stage picture'. It is the last picture we enlarged in a big scale in the studio before the studio shut down on March 13, and so it sort feels personal. The story isn't really relevant, however on the other hand, the moment, the now, resonates in it."

Ted Stansfield

« Solidarity: Wolfgang Tillmans on His Poster Project to Support the Arts »

Another, April 30, 2020

<https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/12475/wolfgang-tillmans-on-his-project-to-help-save-culture>

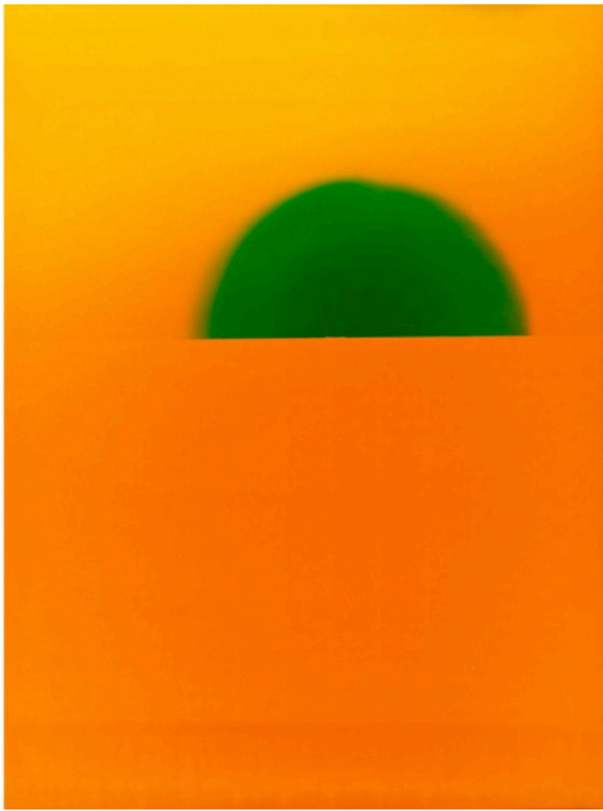
WOLFGANG TILLMANS, nature morte
de son pantalon, le 30 mars, à Berlin.



Pantalon copropriété FHB

HYPEBEAST

Wolfgang Tillmans' Decades-Spanning Photography Spotlighted at WIELS



Wolfgang Tillmans '6407-35' (2007) Artwork By Wolfgang Tillmans, Courtesy Wiels

Brussels-based contemporary art center WIELS is hosting a major survey on the seminal German photographer, [Wolfgang Tillmans](#). Entitled "Today Is The First Day," the landmark presentation chronicles three decades of work by the artist alongside new sound and video works displayed in a spatial constellation.

WIELS aims to shed light on Tillmans' varying notions of visibility across his prolific practice. A few of the questions the institute addresses within the show revolve around that premise: "When does something become perceptible? What is the relationship between what we perceive and what we know? What impact do new technologies have on how we see the world?"

Keith Estiler

« *Wolfgang Tillmans' Decades-Spanning Photography Spotlighted at WIELS* »

Hybebeast, March 11, 2020

<https://hypebeast.com/2020/3/wolfgang-tillmans-today-is-the-first-day-wiels-exhibition-info>

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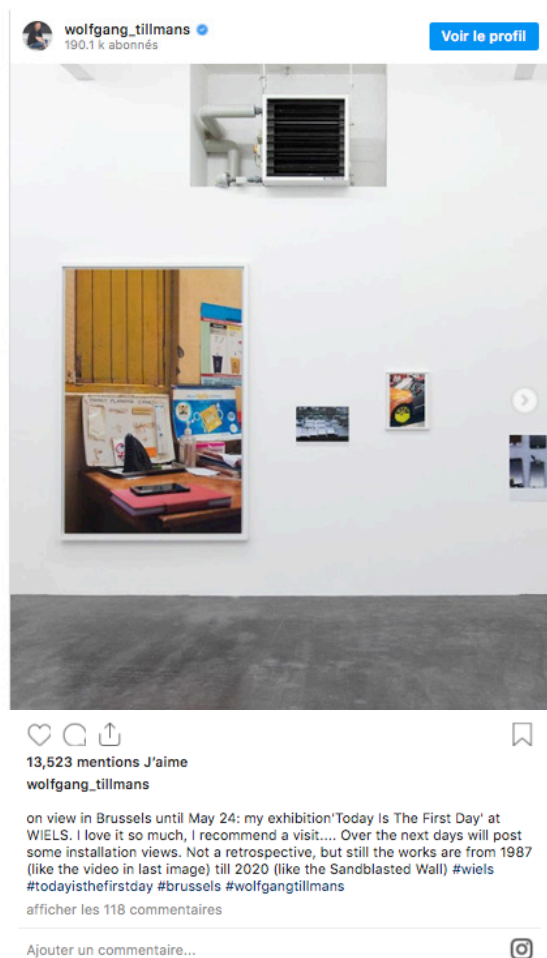
While Tillmans' photographic work encourages introspection, the artist also wants to remind viewers of overarching societal issues in his practice. His first images throughout the 1990s had championed documentation of young individuals affected by the AIDS crisis and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Over the years, his political consciousness grew from art to social activism with the artist having organized the non-profit exhibition space in Berlin, [Between Bridges](#), for the advancement of democracy and support for LGBT rights.

His first series of images which bore witness to the new social and cultural paradigms brought into being by a generation marked by the AIDS crisis and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Tillmans has always shown a strong political consciousness. For several years now, his political commitment has ventured beyond the practice of art and into social activism and the defense of democracy and minority rights via his foundation, [Between Bridges](#), and a number of pro-EU campaigns that he initiated.

The show is accompanied by an eponymous book that explores Tillman's career evolution and conversations with the artist, [purchase one here](#). "Today Is The First Day" is on view at [WIELS](#) until May 24.

Elsewhere in art, [1xRUN celebrates International Women's Day with a limited edition print collection](#).

Avenue Van Volxem 354
Forest, Belgium 1190



Keith Estiler

« *Wolfgang Tillmans' Decades-Spanning Photography Spotlighted at WIELS* »

Hybebeast, March 11, 2020

<https://hypebeast.com/2020/3/wolfgang-tillmans-today-is-the-first-day-wiels-exhibition-info>





ENTRETIENS

WOLFGANG TILLMANS

Premier photographe à obtenir le prestigieux Turner Prize, l'artiste allemand a fait de la chambre noire un art plastique. Il voit le reflet de son âme dans la vitre d'un photocopieur ou la mécanique fragile d'un appareil numérique. Discussion en profondeur des surfaces.

p. 58

BEN RUSSELL

Cinéaste et ethnographe, il est un genre de Jean Rouch sous LSD qui ne cherche qu'une seule chose : émanciper le regard occidental de son surplomb sur les prétendus « autres ».

p. 38

APRÈS LA NATURE :
PHILIPPE DESCOLA

Pour l'anthropologue, il n'existe pas une nature et des cultures, mais bien l'inverse. Les sociétés n'interprètent pas leur environnement : elles le créent en tant que monde à travers des discours, des croyances, mais aussi les images.

p. 90

L'ARMÉNIE À PAS DE VELOURS

En Arménie, la transition avec le projet démocratique se fait sur un chemin de crête. Les réactionnaires restent influents : Hasmik Tangyan en a fait les frais. Rencontre avec une chorégraphe accusée de « satanisme ».

p. 18

RONE & (LA)HORDE

Avec leur ballet postapocalyptique *Room With a View*, le musicien Rone et (La)Horde ouvrent un horizon branché sur l'énergie collective des corps, comme un doigt d'honneur aux lendemains de la catastrophe annoncée.

p. 84

VASLAV NIJINSKI :
LE MOI ET LES AUTRES

Frappé d'une forme de schizophrénie spectaculaire, le plus grand danseur du XX^e siècle a également souffert de l'emprise du fondateur des Ballets russes. Un abus de pouvoir historique qui nous éclaire au présent.

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PORTFOLIOS

WOLFGANG TILLMANS P. 67
LAURE TIBERGHEN P. 101

STORY



ROMAN PHOTO P. 6
POÉSIE P. 82
AGENDA P. 115

ENTRETIEN

On peut créditer l'artiste allemand, premier photographe à obtenir le prestigieux Turner Prize, d'avoir fait de la chambre noire un art plastique. Plastique comme l'émotion : Wolfgang Tillmans voit le reflet de son âme dans la vitre d'un photocopieur, le synthé itératif de New Order et la mécanique fragile d'un appareil numérique. Discussion en profondeur des surfaces.

Propos recueillis par Fabien Silvestre Suzor
Photographie : Johan Poezevara & Fabien Silvestre Suzor pour *Mouvement*

Wolfgang Tillmans se réveille d'une courte sieste et débambule déjà d'une pièce à l'autre du Wiels, centre d'art contemporain à Bruxelles, en donnant de nouvelles instructions à ses assistants. L'exposition ouvre au public dans une dizaine de jours : il travaille son accrochage jusqu'à tard dans la nuit, puis laisse la main à son équipe au matin. Dans les couloirs, on reconnaît facilement leurs visages, aperçus sur plusieurs photographies de l'artiste allemand. Des jeunes en sportswear, l'air détendu et résolument cool, leurs joggings parsemés des fameux morceaux de Scotch que Wolfgang Tillmans utilise parfois en guise de cadres pour accrocher ses tirages *glossy*.

Spontanément, il raconte la première fois qu'il s'est rendu à Bruxelles avec son ami Lutz Huelle, une virée entre adolescents en auto-stop depuis Remscheid, pour rejoindre une soirée dans un club gay de la capitale. Dans les années 1990, Wolfgang Tillmans se fera connaître pour ses images, publiées dans la presse magazine, de corps et de fêtes qui expriment l'abandon, la désillusion et une certaine radicalité de la première génération ecstasy. Avec les portraits dénudés de ses amis, il continue de bousculer le bon

goût et d'énerver les critiques. Lutz, Alex et Wolfgang, inséparables à travers les âges. Le point de départ du photographe est toujours une expérience intime du monde. Un dialogue constant avec l'époque et la technologie, qu'il fera évoluer jusqu'à l'abstraction, notamment avec ses célèbres *Paper drop*, photos de simples feuilles de papier pliées dans une illusion tridimensionnelle.

En pleine préparation de son exposition-laboratoire, qui mêle comme dans un flux, photocopies noir et blanc A4, grands tirages colorés et installations vidéo, Wolfgang Tillmans s'arrête. Pour *Mouvement*, il revient sur son basculement vers la photo numérique, sa tournée en Afrique et son rapport à la fragilité de l'homme et des objets. Il signe dans ce numéro un portfolio de 16 pages, archéologie du corps et de sa représentation. *Mouvement ist life*, le mouvement est la vie.

Votre exposition *Today Is the First Day s'est ouverte le même jour que l'entrée en vigueur du Brexit. Qu'est-ce que cela représente pour vous ?*

« C'est une simple coïncidence ! C'est en arrivant à Bruxelles que j'ai été frappé par

cette sérendipité. Ces mots sont issus de "Heute Will Ich Frei Sein", une chanson que j'ai écrite en 2016. J'y dis : "Aujourd'hui est le premier jour où je ne me mords pas la lèvre, où je ne me sens pas tendu, où je me laisse aller." Il s'agissait d'exprimer une forme de liberté, un commencement, mais à un niveau strictement personnel. J'y vois quelque chose de positif, politiquement, une sorte d'espoir dans le présent et en regardant vers l'avenir. Évidemment, je préférerais que le Royaume-Uni fasse toujours partie de l'Union européenne...

Vous avez été très actif dans la campagne contre le Brexit. Votre travail a toujours reflété un engagement politique et social mais, récemment, vous êtes devenu un véritable activiste.

« Quand l'idée du référendum s'est imposée, au printemps 2016, j'ai dû agir sur la base d'un sentiment d'urgence et d'un besoin d'autodéfense : mon mode de vie était attaqué, la liberté de mouvement entre le Royaume-Uni et l'Allemagne était menacée. Pour moi, l'Europe est fondée sur le rapprochement entre les gens, mais j'ai eu l'impression que, pendant la campagne,

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Fabien Silvestre Suzor
« Entretien — Wolfgang Tillmans »
Mouvement, N°106, March-April 2020, p.58-62.



Fabien Silvestre Suzor
« Entretien — Wolfgang Tillmans »
Mouvement, N°106, March-April 2020, p.58-62.

Lorsque l'avidité devient le moteur
d'un travail, cela se ressent.
La photographie, bien que mécanique,
est un médium psychologique si
incroyable qu'elle a cette magie qui
représente la façon dont on regarde
le monde, notre attitude.

personne ne parlait avec passion de l'Union européenne, y compris dans le camp du *Remain*. Si personne n'exprimait quelque chose d'enthousiaste face aux discours qui répandaient la peur, tout était perdu. J'ai eu ce besoin, j'ai trouvé ces mots et cela a pris sa place. Dans ce genre de moment, on ne se demande pas si les posters de campagne seront perçus comme de l'art ou si cette démarche est cohérente avec son travail. Au fond, je m'en fichais, je voulais seulement les publier. Bien sûr, cela s'est poursuivi avec d'autres campagnes politiques, parce que l'urgence face à la montée du populisme de droite est toujours là, et parce que certains posters pro-Brexit sont eux-mêmes des objets culturels. Ces dernières années, j'ai trouvé quelque chose de libérateur dans la culture populaire : les lignes qui cloisonnaient les différents domaines créatifs sont devenues de plus en plus floues. Dans les années 1990, on parlait de casser les frontières entre la "grande culture" et la culture mainstream. Moi, je me disais : "Non, la mode ce n'est pas l'art, et l'art ce n'est pas la mode." J'avais besoin de faire cette distinction. Je ne travaillerai jamais pour cette industrie, mais je me suis toujours intéressé au vêtement, à la signification du style. C'est différent aujourd'hui. Des gens d'à peine 20 ans ont une compréhension très fluide de la production culturelle. C'est à cet instant que le mot Instagram s'invite dans cet entretien, parce que ce flou entre les domaines y est très puissant.

Vous avez fréquenté et photographié la scène clubbing du Londres des années 1990. Qu'est-ce qui vous a attiré au Royaume-Uni ?

« Je suis allé étudier à Bournemouth quand j'avais 22 ans. Je n'ai pas quitté l'Allemagne parce que je ne l'aimais pas, mais Londres, et tout ce qui allait avec, me fascinaient :

la pop culture, le style urbain, l'ambiguïté, les pochettes d'album, les magazines de design... Le Royaume-Uni était à la pointe. L'Allemagne et Berlin sont devenus cool seulement par la suite, même si j'ai découvert récemment des groupes de Krautrock et des choses très audacieuses dans les arts visuels de l'époque. Quand j'ai commencé à aller en boîte, vers 16 ans, j'ai compris qu'il s'agissait d'une expérience sérieuse, que la nuit est un espace où l'on peut expérimenter d'autres façons d'être ensemble. Ce que les gens font la nuit est une alternative à ce qu'ils font le jour ! Je pense au monde, à ma vie, à mon travail lorsque je me tiens dans le coin d'un club et que je lève les yeux pour observer les lumières, des danses robotiques ou que je perçois des formes abstraites.

Pendant votre vingtaine, vous faisiez de la peinture et des vêtements, puis vous avez découvert une photocopieuse qui pouvait agrandir en nuances de gris. Que s'est-il passé pour vous à ce moment-là ?

« La même chose qu'avec la pop électronique : j'ai découvert que des processus mécaniques pouvaient exprimer mes émotions – ce qui, par définition, semble impossible. En matière de musique, je me réfère toujours à "Blue Monday" du groupe New Order, un morceau majeur, constitué d'une longue progression de sons robotiques produits par des synthétiseurs et des boîtes à rythmes. Les gens qui ne l'aiment pas entendent huit minutes très répétitives, mais j'ai le sentiment que tout y est : mon monde y est tout entier, et le monde entier est dans cette chanson. Avec la photocopieuse, mon expérience de vie m'apparaissait ainsi, dans cette sorte d'empilement de couches qui alternaient sur ces feuilles en noir et blanc, aux bandes créées aléatoirement. C'était le

résultat d'erreurs techniques, comme des... (*hésitation*).

Comme des imperfections mécaniques ?

« Des imperfections mécaniques, oui, mais qui résultaient de processus électroniques : la photocopieuse était électronique. L'image était transformée en points pour créer les nuances de gris. J'agrandissais ces points encore et encore, ce qui créait une sorte de rythme. J'ai alors réalisé que la surface est tout ! À cette époque, la peinture en vogue était celle de David Salle ou de Julian Schnabel, qui appliquait cinq centimètres d'épaisseur de peinture sur la toile. J'aime cette contradiction apparente entre la profondeur de quelque chose qui est vraiment plat et d'autres œuvres d'art que certains pensaient très profondes et qui, selon moi, ne l'étaient pas... Ensuite, j'ai acheté un appareil photo parce que j'avais besoin de nouvelles images à photocopier ! Et j'ai compris alors que je pouvais parler.

À quel moment avez-vous eu le sentiment d'être devenu un artiste ?

« J'ai eu la chance de ne pas être considéré à l'école comme doué pour les arts plastiques. Je n'étais pas celui qui dessinait super bien, je n'étais pas considéré comme "spécial" pendant ma jeunesse. Enfant, j'avais une véritable obsession pour l'astronomie, mais celle-ci a disparu à la puberté. Comme je n'ai pas été poussé dans une direction particulière, j'étais libre de créer mon art. Je faisais comme si j'étais un artiste, mais en même temps je n'étais pas totalement convaincu. C'était un mélange de force dans mes convictions et d'insécurité totale. Qu'est-ce que ceci ? Qui suis-je ? Quand on a 20 ans, on ne sait pas qui on est.

La technologie joue-t-elle encore un rôle important dans votre processus de travail ?

« Dans un sens techno-philosophique, oui. Mais je suis très analogique dans ma manière d'enregistrer le monde. Je suis resté fidèle à la pellicule jusqu'en 2011, à une époque où les gens étaient surpris en regardant le dos de mon appareil. L'impression numérique m'intéresse depuis ses débuts, mais pour ce qui concerne la prise de vue, je suis resté analogique. Je ne retouche pas mes photos numériques et je les considère comme des sortes de négatifs. Pourtant, la plus grande révolution dans ma photographie aura été d'apprendre à parler avec un appareil numérique. Soudain, j'ai disposé d'un outil de la taille de mon appareil 35 mm, mais qui avait la même précision qu'un appareil photo

Vous êtes de plus en plus présent dans vos propres images. Dans cette exposition, il y a une vidéo dans laquelle vous performez. Ressentez-vous le besoin de vous réaffirmer physiquement ?

« Peut-être qu'il m'a fallu faire toutes ces choses pour comprendre que je pouvais parler plus clairement, pour trouver ma voix, politiquement et à travers la musique. J'ai toujours été très "physique", sans jamais faire de sport. Dans la seconde partie de ma quarantaine, j'ai pourtant compris l'une de mes contradictions : toute ma vie tourne autour d'être de chair, de ces corps que je photographie dans mes portraits, mais j'ai vécu très longtemps dans le déni du corps qu'il y a sous mes propres vêtements.

est profondément mauvaise", forcément, on s'interroge... Certains croient que c'est une maladie occidentale importée par l'homme blanc. C'est tellement ridicule ! Quand on est internationaliste et non raciste, on pense que chacun devrait avoir le droit de s'exprimer partout de la même façon et en toute sécurité. Si je me suis censuré, c'est parce que je crois que la manière dont je pense aux corps et à l'identité est si présente dans mon travail – même lorsqu'il n'a pas de contenu directement sexuel – que cela transparaîtra de toute façon. La photo d'Anders qui retire une écharde de son pied est exposée dans un tirage de deux mètres. On y voit de la peau nue. Pour moi, c'est simplement humain, mais cela reste le regard tendre d'un homme sur un autre homme. D'une certaine façon, ce qui transparait, c'est le fait de ne pas avoir peur de sa propre fragilité.

La tournée en Afrique a d'ailleurs pour titre *Fragile*. C'est aussi le nom de votre groupe.

« C'est aussi le nom de mon alter ego adolescent. C'est curieux que ce mot m'ait toujours fasciné parce qu'à l'origine, cela sonnait d'abord comme un avertissement. J'ai trouvé de la poésie dans le fait d'accepter ma propre fragilité et de l'utiliser comme point de départ d'une hyperbole. En s'acceptant comme fragile, on peut mettre du maquillage, s'habiller de façon fantasque ou faire tout ce qu'on veut. Cela ne signifie pas qu'on ne doit pas se rebeller contre cet état-là. Mais c'est le cœur qui me sert de point de départ. Les gens qui me touchent sont ceux qui me donnent le sentiment d'être en contact avec leur fragilité.

C'est cette fragilité que vous suggérez dans vos expositions, quand vous présentez des images sans les encadrer ?

« Lorsqu'on vieillit, on remarque rétrospectivement que des points se connectent. Chez moi, c'est le pouvoir de cette feuille A3 qui sort d'un photocopieur. La beauté de cet objet fragile, vulnérable et bon marché, plus attirant que s'il avait été sur une plaque de métal. J'étais fasciné par ce tirage à développement chromogène qui sortait de ma machine d'impression dans ma salle de bain. J'ai voulu déplacer sur un mur la sensation procurée par cet objet posé sur une table. Ne pas encadrer mes photos, c'était aussi une considération économique et la recherche d'un usage adéquat. Je voulais disposer beaucoup d'images et avec 50 cadres, le projet aurait été bien différent... Ces premières expositions ont été possibles lorsque j'ai découvert une petite boutique d'encadrement qui vendait des cadres vides en aluminium hyper *cheap*. Je pouvais découper des passe-partout moi-même. J'en ressentais le besoin, parce qu'une photocopie a besoin d'être protégée : on ne peut pas la scotcher, sinon on la déchirerait en enlevant l'adhésif. Ensuite, il y a eu les im-

Le non-encadrement n'était pas une rébellion, c'était simplement une forme de minimalisme. Comment pouvais-je placer un objet pur au mur avec les moyens les plus simples ?

grand format. Les images que je produisais avaient un niveau de détail incroyable et une certaine froideur, qu'il m'a fallu apprendre à apprivoiser... Ce changement allait à l'encontre de mes convictions d'alors, par exemple sur l'école de Düsseldorf (fondée par les artistes allemands Bernd et Hilla Becher, connus pour leurs photographies typologiques d'installations industrielles à l'abandon - Nda). Quand je regarde le port de Salerne photographié par Andreas Gursky (l'un de leurs élèves - Nda), avec ses containers que l'on perçoit dans les moindres détails, j'admire et je respecte totalement le travail, mais cela ne me touche pas. Cette photographie ne ressemble pas à ce que je ressens et ne me fait pas ressentir ce que je vois. Par contre, le film 100 ASA de 35 mm au grain fin se rapproche de ce que je pense voir, par son détail et sa netteté.

Vous avez exposé partout dans le monde. Récemment, vous avez débuté une tournée en Afrique. Montrez-vous différemment les corps en fonction du pays qui accueille l'exposition ?

« Quand l'opportunité d'exposer en Afrique s'est présentée, j'ai été catégorique sur le fait qu'il devait y avoir la même qualité de fond et la même exigence matérielle qu'en Europe. On ne peut pas prédire ce que les gens vont comprendre, censurer de manière préemptive. Je déteste les personnes qui pensent que le public est plus bête qu'eux. C'est un sentiment horrible. La seule forme de censure de cette tournée, je l'avais déjà acceptée en 2014, lors de la biennale Manifesta de Saint-Petersbourg qui empêchait la diffusion de contenu sexuel gay. C'est en quelque sorte sous-entendu. Nous ne voulons pas créer de scandale, ce n'est pas dans mon intérêt d'en causer en tant qu'étranger. En Afrique, nous n'avons pas exposé dans des pays où l'homosexualité est punie de mort. Mais lorsqu'on tombe sur des articles selon lesquels "98 % des Éthiopiens pensent que l'homosexualité

Numéro

Suite au Brexit, Wolfgang Tillmans célèbre l'Europe

PHOTOGRAPHIE

Au lendemain même du départ officiel du Royaume-Uni de l'Union Européenne, le WIELS inaugurait à Bruxelles une grande exposition consacrée au photographe allemand Wolfgang Tillmans, remarqué notamment ces dernières années pour son engagement en faveur de l'Europe.



Wolfgang Tillmans, Wet Room, Gloves, 2010, © the artist, courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne, Maureen Paley, London, David Zwirner, New York, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Mathieu Jacquet

« *Février, Suite au Brexit, Wolfgang Tillmans célèbre l'Europe* »

Numéro, February 6, 2020

https://www.numero.com/fr/photographie/wolfgang-tillmans-wiels-exposition-bruxelles-brexit-union-europeenne-queer-prix-turner#_

Portraits tendres, paysages dépeuplés, gros plans microscopiques, détails érotiques, natures mortes ou compositions abstraites à la chambre noire : autant de genres photographiques et de thématiques reliés par une même signature, celle de Wolfgang Tillmans. Fort de son éclectique corpus de sujets, cet artiste allemand a creusé depuis les années 90 son propre sillon dans l'histoire de la photographie par ses images d'une poésie simple, caressées par une douce sensualité. *"Je choisis des situations et des personnes de mon environnement et j'essaie de les transformer en quelque chose d'autre, une image, qui ait un caractère plus universel."*, confiait-il à Numéro il y a deux ans. Son talent lui vaudra d'ailleurs de devenir en 2000 le premier photographe lauréat du prestigieux Prix Turner, autant que le premier artiste étranger au Royaume-Uni à recevoir cette distinction.

Si Wolfgang Tillmans a su explorer les dessous du réel pour en traduire l'intimité, sa démarche s'est également imprégnée de ses différents engagements. Depuis le début des années 90, le photographe accorde une visibilité non négligeable à la communauté *queer* et underground, lutte contre la xénophobie et mène même depuis 2018 une campagne en faveur de l'Europe à la lumière d'un Brexit imminent. Comme une étrange coïncidence, alors même que le Royaume-Uni vient tout juste de quitter l'Union Européenne dans la nuit du 31 janvier, le WIELS – grand centre d'art contemporain de Bruxelles – inaugure le 1er février la première exposition monographique jamais consacrée à Wolfgang Tillmans en Belgique. Celle-ci est également l'occasion de la publication d'un catalogue axé sur ses travaux récents, conçu et mis en page par l'artiste lui-même. Un saisissant hommage à l'Europe et sa diversité, à la lumière de sa triste actualité.

Wolfgang Tillmans : Today Is The First Day, du 1er février au 24 mai 2020 au WIELS, Bruxelles.

Mathieu Jacquet

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Lunch with the FT Life & Arts [+ Add to myFT](#)

Artist Wolfgang Tillmans: 'This game can never be mastered'

Wolfgang Tillmans hobbles towards me, his left leg strapped into a fearsome contraption designed to allow his broken bones and ligaments to heal.

He is mobile, but only just, reliant on crutches to move around his studio, and a wheelchair to cover longer distances. Tillmans, it turns out, is recovering from a serious car crash. For now, this most light-footed of artists — a prominent anti-Brexit campaigner whose works have explored themes such as dance, flight and space — finds his freedom of movement sharply constrained.

I have arranged to pick up Tillmans from his studio in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg, where he rents the first floor of a 1930s department store with a notable Bohemian pedigree. Tillmans and his 20-odd assistants occupy a succession of white, airy rooms. The largest contains a vast model of the exhibition space at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which is preparing a retrospective of his work; it seems destined to confirm Tillmans as one of the most celebrated artists living today.

Tobias Buck

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Financial Times, 7 Juin 2019

<https://www.ft.com/content/18398928-86c2-11e9-a028-86cea8523dc2>

The 50-year-old German is in shorts and a purple T-shirt that proclaims in bright pink letters: *Votiamo insieme. Votiamo per l'europa* ("Let's vote together. Let's vote for Europe"). The slogan is part of his pro-European political campaign work, an increasingly important part of his life in recent years. As we head for the nearby restaurant, Tillmans is talkative and scrupulously polite, equipped with a disarming, slightly mischievous grin that lights up his still-boyish face.

Our lunch venue is not without controversy. Orania is an ambitious restaurant, known for its subtle blend of German and Asian flavours, in a luxury hotel on the leafy square that abuts Tillmans' studio. This is the formerly rough heart of countercultural Kreuzberg, just up the road from SO36, the most storied punk club in Berlin. Like much of the rest of the capital, the neighbourhood is gentrifying rapidly, sparking angry — and occasionally violent — opposition. Orania is a highly charged symbol in that battle. Several windows are shattered by stones, other parts of the façade are marked by paintbomb splashes.



Amsterdam artist Vincent van der Waal, left, and streetwear shop owner Guillaume Schmidt in T-shirts designed for Wolfgang Tillmans' 'Between Bridges' project © Dana Lixenberg

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Tillmans seems keen not to pick sides in this urban conflict. He says he chose the restaurant because his broken leg makes it hard to move farther afield, and because it is quiet enough to allow for a conversation. “Also, the people here are really nice,” he says.

The waitress arrives with a clutch of menus. Tillmans finds what he wants in seconds. We are in the midst of *Spargelzeit*, white asparagus season, which exerts a near-mystical pull on Germans. Tillmans and I are no exception, and we each order a plate of the delicate vegetable, which is harvested in Beelitz just outside Berlin, accompanied by boiled potatoes, ham and Hollandaise sauce. As a starter, he picks Orania’s quirky take on a tomato and mozzarella salad. I opt for grilled octopus with gin-infused tomatoes.



'dancer, Opera House' (1989) © Wolfgang Tillmans, courtesy Maureen Paley



'Smoker (Chemistry)' (1992) © Wolfgang Tillmans, courtesy Maureen Paley

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As we wait for our first course, I ask about Tillmans' turn towards political activism, which started with Brexit and has since grown into something of a full-blown campaign organisation that produces slogans, posters and T-shirts for a variety of events, including the May 26 European election.

“What changed is that I suddenly saw my whole world and my entire way of life under threat,” he responds. “Friendship between the peoples of Europe is of absolutely central importance to me. It is the basis of the freedom and prosperity that we enjoy, and I wanted to do whatever I could to preserve that.”

It is easy to see why Brexit matters so deeply to Tillmans. Born and raised in the small town of Remscheid in West Germany, he moved to England in his early twenties and lived there for more than a quarter of a century. Today he spends most of his time in Berlin but keeps a smaller studio in London. “I didn't leave Germany because I felt I had to leave something behind. I left because I saw something positive in England . . . I found something in England that touched me, but I also never wanted to leave behind my Germanness.”

He emerged on the scene in the early 1990s, publishing photos of young ravers as well as strangely subversive fashion shoots in magazines such as i-D. In the years since, Tillmans has built up a body of work that is instantly recognisable yet fiendishly hard to summarise or define. Hours into our lunch, he offers an attempt of his own, saying he wants to “make pictures that talk about what it feels like to be alive today”. The phrase captures the scale of his ambition, but also the difficulty faced by anyone looking for a simple key to his work.

Tillmans' decision to venture into the political arena may be new, but his art has been political from the start, he says. “The acid house and house music revolution in the late 1980s and early 1990s seemed highly political to me. People were trying out a new utopian form of living together, between women and men, a new approach to sexuality . . . That is something I wanted to amplify. Photography was an amplifier and it still is today.”

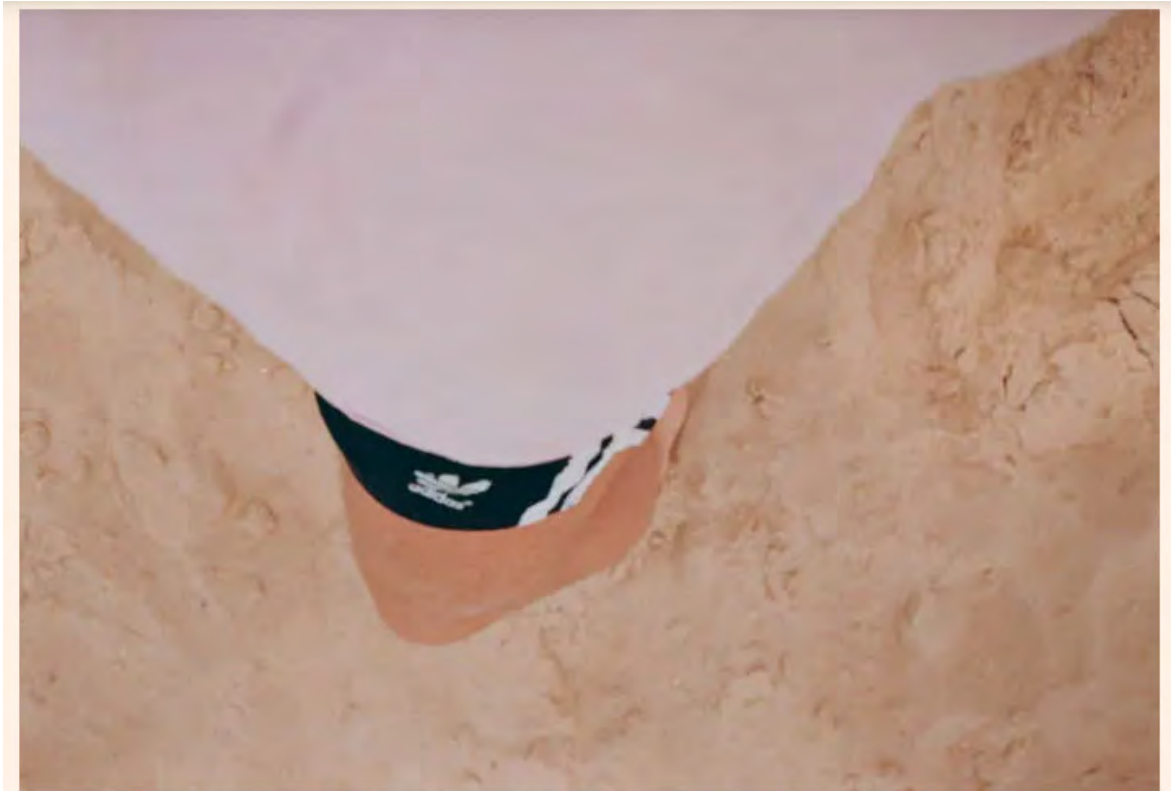
In Tillmans' mind, the political lurks everywhere, even — or perhaps especially — in the superficially beautiful. “Beauty is what society deems to be worthwhile or desirable. Ugly is what society deems to be non-desirable. If you take the example of two men kissing, that is a picture I can find beautiful even if someone else is disgusted by it.”

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'Lacanau (self)' (1986) © Wolfgang Tillmans, courtesy Maureen Paley

The irony, of course, is that the recent surge in rightwing and nationalist sentiment across Europe is at least in part a backlash against the cultural and social shifts that Tillmans was documenting at the time. “This has to do with men and it has to do with sexuality,” he says of the current political tides. “We are living in a moment when, at least in some parts of the world, equality between men and women and attitudes towards different sexual identities have reached a level that some regard with abhorrence. And there is an authoritarian part of society — mostly men, of course — who have seen society move in this direction for decades and who hate it.”

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We have made swift work of our starters — both delicious — and are halfway through our plates of asparagus when the conversation shifts back from Tillmans' politics to his art, which is far broader in scope than many of his casual admirers realise. In some of his best-known photographs, Tillmans tries to draw meaning and beauty from the seemingly mundane: apples and potatoes on a window sill, a folded piece of paper, the wing of an aeroplane, a fly sitting atop a pile of crab shells. He has also devoted long stretches of his career to abstraction, using chemicals, light and photographic paper to produce works of pure colour and movement.

In 2000, he became the first photographer and the first non-Briton to win the Turner Prize. Yet Tillmans insists that he is no photographer. Indeed, some of his earliest work was produced with nothing more than a photocopier. He has returned to this humble machine time and again since, including in the works that make up part of Tillmans' current solo show at Maureen Paley in London.

I ask him about the now-famous picture that apparently marked his beginning as an artist: taken during a beach holiday in Lacanau, France, it resulted from Tillmans pointing the camera downwards into the sand, creating an almost abstract image that includes bits of his leg, a swath of pink fabric and black Adidas shorts. He was 18 at the time. It could have stayed an experimental holiday snap, except — as Tillmans realised when he put together one of his first major exhibitions a decade later — it was not.

“What made it special was that it was an immediate moment of self-perception. It was a moment of doing something and reflecting it at the same time. It was also a moment of doing something irrational, and doing it so consciously,” he tells me. The picture, Tillmans decided, belonged in the exhibition. Today, it forms part of the MoMA collection in New York.

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GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL



'Forever Fortresses' (1997) © Wolfgang Tillmans, courtesy Maureen Paley



'17 years' supply' (2014) © Wolfgang Tillmans, courtesy Maureen Paley

“That is one definition of art: to do something that shouldn’t be done, to do something that others shouldn’t see you do. But when you do all this on purpose, it no longer works. Then it becomes artificial,” he adds. Tillmans has wrestled with these questions for more than 30 years but insists there can never be a formula. “This is a game that — unfortunately, thankfully — can never be mastered,” he concludes.

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Tillmans has decided against wine, leaving me to drink a glass of crisp Riesling on my own. I am tempted to order another but decide a clear head is preferable. Even in a state of sobriety, I find Tillmans' thoughts are not always easy to follow. He speaks slowly and carefully, stopping frequently along the way to offer a clarification or correction, though occasionally he soars to levels of abstraction that leave me slightly bewildered. There is also, I realise, an inherent contradiction between my desire to nail down precisely the meaning of Tillmans' work, and his determination to leave room for uncertainty, interpretation and association. As he remarks at one point, "don't kill it by naming it".

One thing that comes across clearly, however, is Tillmans' fascination with questions that have become increasingly acute in today's world of total image saturation: What makes a picture? When does a picture become possible? And how can a mechanically produced picture — that has never even been touched by the hand of the artist — still be charged with meaning and emotion?

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Restaurant Orania

**Oranienplatz 17, 10999
Berlin**

Tomato and mozzarella salad
€10

Pulpo salad €9

White asparagus €18

White asparagus and ham €24

Marinated strawberries €14

Sparkling water €6

Glass of Riesling (NikWeis, St
Urbans-Hof, 2017) €7

Double espresso €3

Espresso macchiato €2.50

Total (excl tip) €93.50

For Tillmans, one response has been to look at the ephemeral, and to “extract great impact from very fragile things”. At other times, his answer has been autobiographical. Indeed, among the many highly charged pictures that Tillmans has made over the years, two stand out for their painful personal connotation. “Forever Fortresses” dates from 1997 and shows two hands clasped on a hospital bed. One looks healthy and belongs to Tillmans himself. The other — pale and thin, the thumb attached to a pulse oximeter — belongs to Jochen Klein, a German artist and Tillmans’ partner at the time. The picture was taken just hours before Klein’s death, of Aids-related

pneumonia.

“It is not normal to take a picture like this — on the hospital bed, on the day Jochen died. But it seems I had to do it,” Tillmans recalls. “It shows a moment of devastation in my life but it is a quiet picture, a moment of sadness that is absolutely truthful. If you know how to read it you cannot avoid feeling a lump in your throat, even if you don’t know exactly what it shows. It is clear that something serious is happening.”

The second picture I want to ask Tillmans about was taken long after “Forever Fortresses” but is closely related. It is called “17 years’ supply” and shows a large cardboard box filled with empty pharmaceutical packages. The drugs they once contained were taken by Tillmans as part of his own HIV treatment and to prevent the outbreak of the disease that robbed him of his partner 17 years earlier.

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Once again, he sees an unmistakable political connection. “This picture also marks the arrival of HIV in the group of treatable diseases. The fear of death, that was so pervasive for people in the 1980s, is no longer there — as long as these medicines exist and are taken regularly. But if those medicines are no longer made and paid for, then my life is over. So this is a very existential question for me.”

We have been speaking for almost three hours. Tillmans’ appetite — for conversation, for ideas and for food — has turned out to be prodigious. Our desserts (a luscious combination of marinated strawberries and cream) have come and gone, our coffee cups are drained. We have covered vast and varied ground: from the role that Bronski Beat’s music in the early 1980s played in his coming out, to the awkwardness of photographing seafood on a park bench in Tasmania. He has tried to explain the order behind his seemingly disorderly manner of hanging pictures, and the difference between a loud but small image and a quiet but large one. I think with regret of all the questions that are still on my list, but Tillmans is already running late for an appointment with his physiotherapist.

I pay the bill. Tillmans settles into his wheelchair, and I push my guest back across Oranienplatz, drenched in mild late afternoon sun. We have almost reached his studio when Tillmans asks me to stop and wheel him back a few metres. He has seen something that is of interest: a patch of recently laid pavement, still dusted with fresh sand.

The spot, Tillmans tells me, was occupied until recently by a *Litfaßsäule*, one of the Berlin advertising columns that were once ubiquitous across the city but which are now gradually being dismantled. Armed with that knowledge, the unremarkable scene before our eyes suddenly takes on a different character: we are looking at a former hub of information that has now fallen silent.

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He gets out his mobile phone and takes a few pictures. “*Das muss man dokumentieren,*” he says matter-of-factly. That has to be documented.

A few minutes later Tillmans is back in his studio, and I am left to ponder an unexpected question: Did I just witness the making of an enduring work of art? Or will the pavement picture be swiftly filed away, never to reappear? I suspect it is the latter, but with Tillmans you can never be sure. If there is one lesson that can be drawn from his art, it is that pictures — beautiful, meaningful, unforgettable pictures — can emerge when we least expect them, and in the most unlikely of places.

Tobias Buck is the FT's Berlin correspondent

Mousse Magazine

MOUSSE 66
TALKING ABOUT

QUEER ABSTRACTION (OR HOW TO BE A PERVERT WITH NO BODY)



1

SOME NOTES TOWARD A PROBABILITY

1 - Wolfgang Tillmans, *Muskel*, 2001. © Wolfgang Tillmans. Courtesy: Maureen Paley, London

BY TRAVIS JEPPESEN

“I don’t think there is such a thing as queer art unless it deals bleakly with sexuality, and then I would call it sexual art or erotic art. I don’t think that just because a person is gay and creates art, that *queer art* has been created.”
—Bruce Benderson

QUEER ABSTRACTION (OR HOW TO BE A PERVERT WITH NO BODY)
T. JEPPESEN

Among all the nonsites I’ve visited in my peregrinations across the mindways, there’s one I keep getting stuck inside of, a place that resists nominal assignations and normative grammar, an outside of the outside where I enjoy getting lost and losing what little sense of self I still possess in the multiple contradistinctions of being. A splattered form of being...

Being open to the world, I suppose, increases your chances of getting lost in it.

This has to do with the body, with representation. With work, with projections of the self (selves) that fall outside of the figurative. And with feeling: how it feels to *arrive* without actually physically *being there*.

For there is indeed, in spite of our vociferous objections, a near-universal consensus that such a thing as *queer art* does exist. And that assignation is nearly universally relegated to those works where-in a body manifests itself. Is represented, pictorially or in space. Oftentimes, in performance—one of the favored modes of work deemed *queer*—an actual physical body. And so my thinking around this issue began with a very simple, even naive question: why does queer = body? Which leads, of course, to much more complicated questions, such as what it is that actually constitutes a body. And, for someone like myself, whose primary medium is words, language: what might a writing, a language (be it visual or otherwise) of the body *look* like when that physical body is no longer (re)present(ed)? In what ways, through what possibilities, does queerness articulate itself in the allegedly “pure” cerebral realm of abstraction? (Put another way: In what ways is mind a body?) Because queer people do make abstract work—very often, as it turns out.

This isn't a *theory*; it's not cohesive enough; I have no interest in assuming a position or defending it; rather, place this collection of thought-splatterings in the realm of poetics—the delineation of a certain sensibility that is not bound to any one particular time but whose resonances can perhaps be charted throughout the whole history of art, starting with that proto-Modernist moment when Wilhelm Worringer first articulated abstraction, not as a style but as a mode of intentionality in artistic creation.

1.

Something like a body: Okay, so I should at least begin with what I mean by *queer*. Meaning, definitionality, in its consensual constitution, has to be challenged and interrogated constantly—this, in a word, is the writer's duty. Like Benderson, I'm not a believer in the notion that something called *queer art* ontologically exists—even work “that deals bleakly with sexuality.” There is such a thing as “issues art,” which might stem from the artist's intentions or might be branded thus by an external viewer or critic after the fact. What is commonly referred to as “queer” relates, of course, to issues of nonheterosexual and nonnormative sexual identity and practices. Of course, “queerness” has come to encapsulate non-gender-conforming modes of being, as well. I would widen the perimeters a bit more. When we speak of things *queer*, be they human or art objects or whatever, let's speak of all those things whose inherent being is contingent upon a resistance to codification—whether that code be legal, signifying, or otherwise. By abstract, I mean non-representational.

2.

Abstraction and figuration (representation), as categories in art, are traditionally related to the Cartesian split between mind and body, respectively. A queer abstraction, on the other hand, refuses to honor this distinction. (This, among other attributes, is what makes it so *queer*, in the other meaning of the term: strange, bizarre, off-kilter.) Mind and body can never truly be separated; the one feeds the other; nor is there any real unity between mind and body; many minds, many bodies: many body-mind vehicles.

Queer abstraction posits that traditional figuration, as *representation of the body*, is less vital than a possible/probable *writing of the body*: a shooting-off-into-space of the body-mind vehicle's inner substance.

3.

“The primal artistic impulse,” writes Wilhelm Worringer in his 1908 classic *Abstraction and Empathy*, “has nothing to do with nature.” Nature, of course, doesn’t really exist, it is a construct in itself (here, I’ll follow Timothy Morton in capitalizing Nature to make it seem all the more unnatural). Just as we are now denaturalizing Nature, we are also living through a period in history where sexuality and gender identification are being increasingly denaturalized.

“[U]nnaturalness... the hallmark of all artistic creation determined by the urge to abstraction...”

—Wilhelm Worringer

Queer abstraction can thus be considered as a manifestation of Unnaturalism.

4.

“When I was starting to form a path with my work, the male torso was accepted as synonymous with gay male identity or desire, and later, with the beginnings of an articulation of queer identity. I wanted to work away from this somehow, beyond the pictorial, which is why I focused on specific physical locations, spatial zones, and their power distributions, as a way of complicating that discourse.”

—Tom Burr

Let placelessness be the place. A journey, too, relies upon a frame.

5.

Perhaps the crowning moment, art historically, for queer abstraction was the moment that lovers Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, put off by the machismo and not-so-latent homophobia of the reigning Abstract Expressionists, decided to stop showing up at the Cedar Tavern. The work that they produced during their six-year-long relationship would alter the course of the canon, as it is traditionally conceived, paving the way for the evolution of Pop in the 1960s—though their own work remained by and large rooted in abstraction.

6.

The frame is unbearable. The only option is to try to destroy it, implode it from within. This is not a mere disordering. It is an attempt at rectification, based on volition (the artist's own).

7.

That abstract work is consistently gendered by its critical appraisal is evidenced by, for instance, the derogatory use of the adjective “decorative” (or, more usually, “merely decorative”). Decoration, ornament: these have been traditionally relegated to the domestic, which is the domain of the feminine under patriarchal systems. Queer artists working in abstraction occasionally work to subvert these structures; this can be alluded to in titles, such as Julie Mehretu's series *Sapphic Strophes*.

8.

Central to the notion of a possible queer abstraction, a queer abstraction of the past and a queer abstraction to come, is the notion of gesture. But gesture, in its seeming spontaneity of execution, framed by our consideration, is never about the mere motion itself; rather, its elegance is found in the details of the stain, the mark. To understand this, it helps to take an extreme example, one of the three “dicks from Dixie” (along with Johns and Rauschenberg) whose work fomented a queer abstraction: Cy Twombly. An artist much of whose work seems to be comprised of pure gesture. Whose work seems to stage a very vivid and violent struggle against the frame. For within the densely layered markings and scribbles that typically fill one of his canvases, Twombly gives us a pertinent definition of queer abstraction we might hold to be universal: a *writing of the body*.

9.

The decorative must be recovered from the derogatory and rehabilitated as a positive attribute. Anyway, in historic terms, it is inaccurate, since there were and are many cultural and historical contexts (for example, wall painting in ancient Rome) in which there was no real distinction between what we tend to categorize as either an instance of “fine art” or certain elements of “design.”

10.

Bodies everywhere: especially in those spaces where there are no bodies. Working in a medium, sculpture, in which the body has historically been the central motif, Helen Marten spares no sorrowful glances backward as she writes her way into space with her messy hyperdetailed and conglomerated objects that oftentimes resemble half-animate bodies, perhaps belonging to some as yet undiscovered extraterrestrial species. Something like a body, indeed.

11.

“[T]he urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world; in a religious respect it corresponds to a strongly transcendental tinge to all notions. We might describe this state as an immense spiritual dread of space... this same sensation of fear may also be assumed as the root of artistic creation.”

— Wilhelm Worringer

Zones, places re-infested with agency. Certain of John Monteith’s drawings on drafting film elicit a near Jasper Johnsian seriality of expression. The titles guide you toward what they are: architectural elucidations of actual spaces, neighborhoods, buildings, occasionally just a detail. Re-created, re-elicited in shapes of color—Monteith is, among other things, a great colorist—the spaces throb, pulsate, exude subterranean liveliness, even when, as in the drawing titled *XX* (2017), their frenzied geometry serves to assert negation.

12.

In the work of Agnes Martin, we find confirmation of Worringer’s assertion that “the simple line and its development in purely geometric regularity was bound to offer the greatest possibility of happiness to the man disquieted by the obscurity and entanglement of phenomena.” Lines. The calming strokes that posit a sort of endlessness. A promise of transcendence that we seldom find reflected in lives structured by a heteronormative matrix.

13.

At the same time, we can't completely write Abstract Expressionism off here. There's something deeply faggoty about all this harping on the heroic prowess of the masculine gesture, sublimated lust in the battle with the canvas. And even the female protagonists, like Joan Mitchell, had to play along, out-butching all of the dudes both in life and in art. Something, certainly, queer in the way

“the Abstract Expressionists paraded themselves as painters without a country, stripped of the exigencies of culture—those particularities of time, place and audience that make manipulated pigment meaningful. They thought of themselves as totally autonomous individuals, as anti-cultural cultural workers”

—Jonathan Katz

Hence, a sort of anarchic individualism is at play here—one that is not at variance with assertions of queer selfhood. Not at all.

14.

To lose oneself in substance. In the assemblages of Magali Reus, we discover a multidimensional world that seems to elucidate the hylozoic revivalism that has been occurring in philosophy of late (object-oriented ontology, hyperobjects, speculative realism... one of Timothy Morton's lesser known texts is an essay on queer ecology). Common household or hardware-store objects are transformed into strange inexplicables; constructed objects are disguised as mundanities. Space is outer, inner, splintered. Space is anguished. Space *is* anguish.

15.

“In the urge to abstraction the intensity of the self-alienative impulse is incomparably greater and more consistent.”

— Wilhelm Worringer

The motif of loneliness is, of course, a central tenet of the queer canon. Alienation from society, sure. But alienation *from* the self, too (not mere *self-imposed* alienation, though that happens, of course, and often as well). Often happens through *multiplication, dilution* of the self into separate selves. Context becomes its own parade: the what I am here, the what I become over there. Identity drag, not just a means of survival but a way of inserting the joy back into detachment.

16.

Surfaces, surfacing. Canvas, like skin, a porous object. The body has its own logic, one all the more profound because it speaks a language that cannot be transcribed “properly,” only inferred; an endless work in progress. Instances of which are made to surround us.

17.

“For us, art is no more and no less than ‘objectified self-enjoyment.’”

— Wilhelm Worringer

That is, an enjoyment of the self as reflected in objects. The splattering of the self, semen-like, into those things that surround you, that might give you back that pleasure with which you inseminated them.

18.

“Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality.”

— José Esteban Muñoz

19.

Longing for the ineffable. For that moment to come.

20.

To return to Benderson's objection, the articulation of a queer abstraction must not be mistaken for a desexualization of this kind of art; rather, it is an infusionary reminder that abstraction, in itself, is necessarily perverse, sexual, affirmative of the corporeal. Fucking is also abstraction. All forms of non-Catholic fucking, fucking without a purely procreative intent. Fucking is praxis (creation). There's the old cliché that to fuck is to lose yourself in the other. This needs to be revised. To fuck is rather to mix one's selves (for one is always a multiple) with the other's selves, to put all those selves into a blender and make a chunky cocktail that, when diluted, yields a consistency that elicits a postradial primordial mud: here comes a future where there's no such thing as names.

21.

All abstraction is fundamentally queer, because queerness is an abstract state of being.

Le réel en fragments de Wolfgang Tillmans au Carré d'art de Nîmes

PHOTOGRAPHIE

Après deux expositions en 2017 à la Tate Modern de Londres et à la Fondation Beyeler, le musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes célèbre à son tour le mythique photographe allemand dans une exposition jusqu'au 16 septembre.



"Am Rhein", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2014, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne.

Eric Toney

« *Le réel en fragments de Wolfgang Tillmans au Carré d'art de Nîmes* »

Numéro, August 21, 2018

<https://www.numero.com/fr/photographie/wolfgang-tillmans-exposition-carre-art-nimes>

Premier étranger à recevoir le très british prix Turner en l'an 2000, Wolfgang Tillmans est, depuis la fin des années 80, le témoin incontournable d'une génération. Son œuvre photographique exprime, mieux que n'importe quel texte, le chemin parcouru. De son Allemagne natale à celle de la chute du mur de Berlin, jusqu'à la scène techno, il aura traversé la mode, les rave parties, l'amour, le sexe, le sida, la politique et l'art. Et après avoir côtoyé la mort, celle de son compagnon, Tillmans quitte le domaine du portrait pour aborder celui de l'abstraction, comme pour prendre de la distance. Un recul que l'on retrouve dans ses vues panoramiques prises d'avion. Photographe du quotidien, ses natures mortes composées de bananes ou de saucisses font désormais partie des images iconiques de notre temps. L'artiste aime mélanger les thèmes et les formats pour présenter, comme il le dit, *"des constellations d'images dans lesquelles j'essaie d'approcher ma vision du monde, pas d'une façon linéaire, mais à partir de multitude d'expériences parallèles"*.

"Je choisis scrupuleusement les sujets et il serait hâtif de penser que mon travail est documentaire." Wolfgang Tillmans

On l'a parfois pris pour un photographe générationnel. Mais Wolfgang Tillmans est moins porté par le souci de dépeindre son époque que par un amour profond des images. Sa relation sensible à l'esthétique permet à ce jeune génie de capturer l'essentiel et de transcender sans complexe une émotion fragile en beauté universelle. On le croit flâneur débonnaire, photographiant à la sauvette... erreur. C'est un calculateur au sens le plus noble du terme. Né en 1968, il a su imposer dans les années 90, l'air de rien, une façon apparemment décomplexée de faire de la photographie. S'il a ébranlé bien des académismes dans cette discipline, jusque dans ses stratégies de présentation –punaisant ou collant des pages de magazines sur le mur ou les cimaises des galeries–, c'est pour mieux déclarer sa passion aux images et réfléchir à leur extraordinaire pouvoir de séduction. Séduction mêlée d'érotisme, s'il le faut, comme un élément naturel du dialogue. Il fréquentait les clubs et y faisait des images : on le déclara photographe de la "Génération X". Mais est-ce bien le monde contemporain qui lui tient lieu de sujet, comme on a coutume de le croire?

"Je choisis scrupuleusement les sujets, confie-t-il, et il serait hâtif de penser que mon travail est documentaire. S'il l'était, il inclurait aussi bien des choses négatives. C'est un monde parfaitement utopique, un fragment de la réalité. Je choisis des situations et des personnes de mon environnement et j'essaie de les transformer en quelque chose d'autre, une image, qui ait un caractère plus universel. En aucun cas mon objectif est d'immortaliser des instants de ma vie, il ne s'agit pas de cela du tout."

Wolfgang Tillmans, jusqu'au 16 septembre, Carré d'art de Nîmes.



"Paper Drop", Oranienplatz, Wolfgang Tillmans, 2017, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne.

Eric Toney

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"Nee l'Yaow eow eow II", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2017, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne.



"Open Heart Bypass", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2015, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne.



"Morning rain", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2014, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne

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"Vapeur", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2017, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne



"Springer", Wolfgang Tillmans, 1987, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne



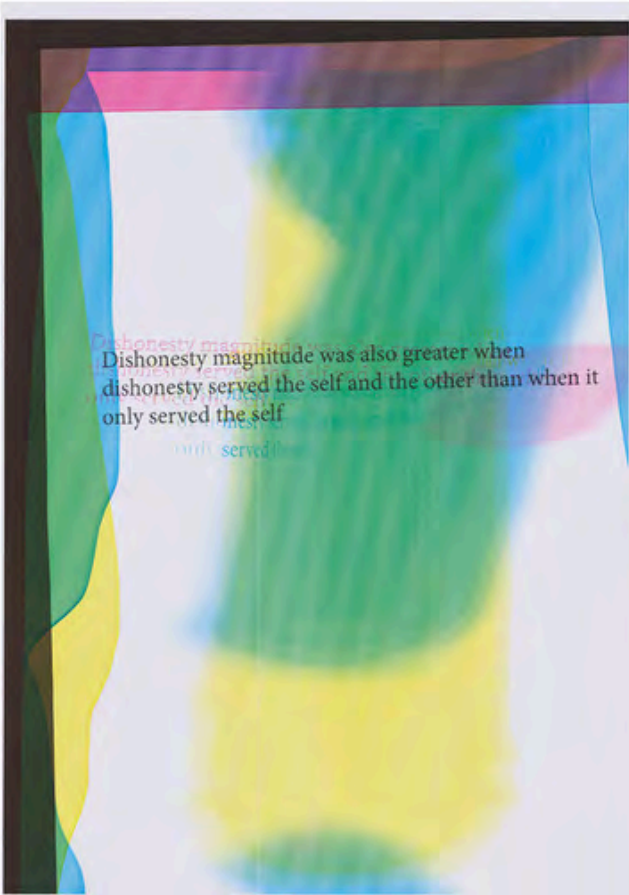
"Victoria Park", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2007, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne

Eric Toney

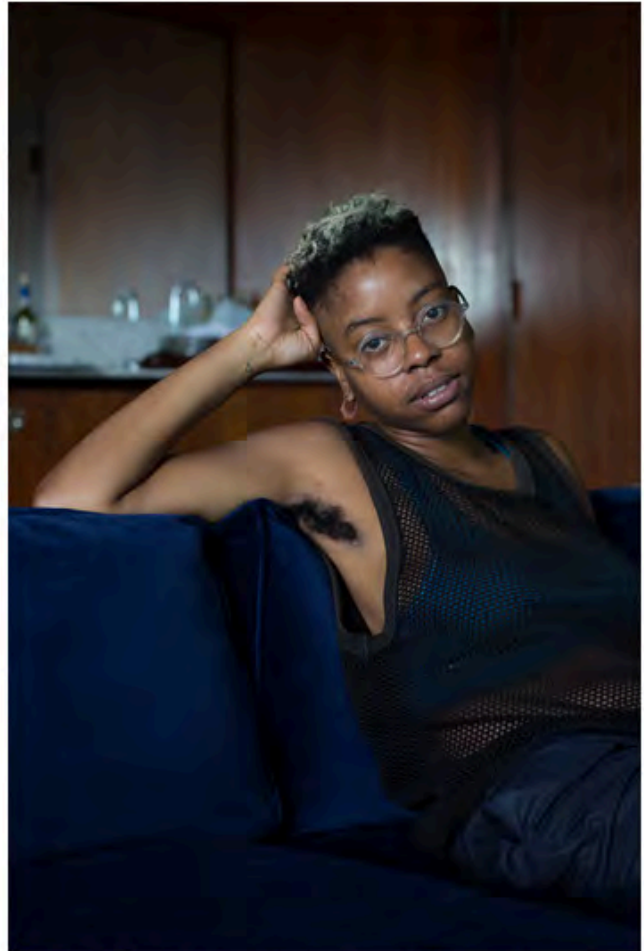
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"CLC 004", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2017, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne



"Yulan Grant", Wolfgang Tillmans, 2016, Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin-Cologne

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Wolfgang Tillmans, nature morte au citron

Par [Julie Ackermann](#) - le 2 août 2018



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Morning Rain*, 2014

Nous sommes en 2018. À tout casser, cela fait donc 400 ans que les artistes peignent des natures mortes en tant que telles ; plus d'un siècle qu'ils en photographient et un demi-siècle que nous sommes proprement assaillis d'images dans nos sociétés du spectacle. Malgré tout, Wolfgang Tillmans, 49 ans, s'obstine encore à faire des natures mortes (pas que évidemment) et parvient à apporter sa pierre à l'immense édifice que constitue ce genre un brin vieillot.

Ce sont donc, tout simplement, trois citrons pas encore mûrs et humides de quelques gouttes de pluie claire, qui accueillent le visiteur dans l'exposition que consacre le Carré d'art de Nîmes à ce photographe allemand établi. Et quels citrons ! Des citrons d'une sensualité folle, comme des seins transpirants émergeant d'une touffe de feuilles vertes, comme des ballons gonflés de sève, de vie, comme la promesse foisonnante et balbutiante d'un renouveau.

Démesurés et en si haute résolution qu'on n'en perçoit pas les pixels, ces citrons-bijoux si frais incarnent en fait à merveille l'approche de ce virtuose de la photo, attelé à conserver coûte que coûte la fraîcheur de son regard sur les éléments les plus triviaux. Une entreprise en photo somme toute banale, elle aussi : beaucoup de photographes s'y aventurent, la plupart échoue, Wolfgang Tillmans y excelle. Car enfin, qui peut se targuer aujourd'hui de photographier comme lui un entrejambe, des coquillages, des pêches ou des vêtements simplement déposés sur un lit ? Une chose est sûre, après avoir vu cette photo, on ne regarde plus le citron de la même façon.

→ Wolfgang Tillmans

Du 4 mai 2018 au 16 septembre 2018

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Julie Ackermann

« *Wolfgang Tillmans, nature morte au citron* »

Beaux Arts, August 2, 2018

<https://www.beauxarts.com/vu/wolfgang-tillmans-nature-morte-au-citron/>

Galerie
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Été / Summer 2018



**Jonas Lund
Celia Hempton
Nick Mauss**

**Laurent Jeanpierre
Berdaguer & Péjus
Supports / Surfaces**

**Wolfgang Tillmans
Craft is back**

Wolfgang Tillmans Qu'est-ce qui est différent ? / "What Is Different?"

—
par / by Patrice Joly

Carré d'art, Nîmes (F),
04.05 – 16.09.2018

Galerie
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L'exposition de Wolfgang Tillmans au Carré d'art de Nîmes s'inscrit dans une série de monographies au sein d'institutions de renom comme la Tate Gallery et la Fondation Beyeler. «Qu'est-ce qui est différent?» ne déroge pas aux préoccupations récurrentes de l'artiste qui mêlent des interrogations purement liées au médium à des considérations d'ordre sociopolitique. Forme et contenu: le traitement de l'image via les dernières avancées technologiques accompagne une extrême attention portée aux problématiques qui irriguent le débat sociétal et politique du moment. Chez le Berlinoise, l'innovation formelle qui lui a valu une reconnaissance précoce — en 2002 une grande exposition monographique au Palais de Tokyo (*Vue d'en haut*) faisait découvrir au public parisien ses impressions numériques décadrées et simplement fixées aux cimaises par de petites pinces— est toujours au service de la recherche d'un réel qu'il semble traquer dans les moindres recoins: l'utilisation d'imprimantes de plus en plus performantes affirme toujours la même exigence, seul le format semble avoir varié, ainsi que la densité des pixels. En même temps, ses positionnements politiques où s'expriment la prégnance d'une culture empreinte de post-utopie et de clubbing ne faiblissent pas... Les images qu'il distille à Nîmes dans ce qu'il appelle le «cabinet» affichent crûment ses préférences sexuelles sans pour autant tomber dans la provocation gratuite; Tillmans expose et s'expose sans complexes et sans angoisses dans le giron d'une société européenne ouverte et débarrassée de ses carcans religieux et autres interdits comportementaux mais cependant menacée par le retour en force des réactionnaires. Dans la publication qui accompagne l'exposition et dont il est le rédacteur en chef invité — le *Jahresring* de Sternberg Press, désormais une véritable institution — le photographe tente de mettre en lumière ce qui a permis la réémergence des énergies négatives au sein d'une Allemagne à la santé économique insolente, et au-delà de la seule Allemagne, ce qui menace l'un des piliers de la cohésion européenne, l'acceptation des comportements «non normés». Il se paie le luxe de faire le tour des ministres de la coalition gouvernementale sortante et d'interroger, après Sigmar Gabriel, un Wolfgang Schäuble qui, on le devine aisément, ne partage pas les mêmes orientations politiques mais se révèle étonnamment lucide quand il s'agit de déterminer les causes de cette disparition des tabous qui réussissaient jusqu'à maintenant à juguler le retour de l'antisémitisme et du populisme.

Une autre des grandes préoccupations de l'artiste est le phénomène de l'effet rebond qui consiste non seulement à adopter des points de vue que les faits contredisent mais

The Wolfgang Tillmans exhibition at the Carré d'art in Nîmes is part of a series of solo shows being held in famous institutions like the Tate Gallery and the Beyeler Foundation. "What Is Different?" is not a departure from the artist's recurrent concerns which mix questions connected solely with the medium with socio-political matters. Style and content: the treatment of the image by way of the latest technological breakthroughs goes hand-in-hand with an extreme attention paid to issues informing the societal and political debate of the moment. The formal innovation which earned the Berlin artist early recognition—in 2002 a large solo show at the Palais de Tokyo (*Vue d'en haut*) enabled the Paris public to discover his unframed digital prints which were simply affixed to the walls using small clips—is still a tool in his quest for a reality which he seems to hunt down in the smallest of nooks and crannies: the use of ever more efficient printers always asserts the same demand, only the format seems to have varied, as well as the pixel density. At the same time, his political positions, in which are expressed the significance of a culture imbued with post-utopia and clubbing, do not falter... The images he distills in Nîmes, in what he calls the "cabinet", crudely display his sexual preferences, but without toppling over into gratuitous provocation; Tillmans exhibits and exhibits himself with neither complexes nor anxieties in the bosom of an open European society freed of its religious straitjackets and other behavioural prohibitions, but a society that is nevertheless threatened by the comeback of reactionaries, in force. In the publication accompanying the exhibition, for which he is the guest editor-in-chief—Sternberg Press' *Jahresring*, which is nothing less than an institution now—the photographer tries to shed light on what has enabled the re-emergence of negative energies in a Germany whose economic health is brazen, and, beyond just Germany, on what is threatening one of the pillars of European cohesion, the acceptance of "non-standardized" forms of behaviour. He offers himself the luxury of doing a tour of the ministers in the outgoing government coalition, and questioning, after Sigmar Gabriel, a figure like Wolfgang Schäuble who, as we easily guess, does not share the same political ideas but shows himself to be surprisingly lucid when it comes to determining the causes behind this disappearance of the taboos which have hitherto managed to curb the comeback of anti-Semitism and populism.

Another of the artist's major preoccupations is the phenomenon of the backfire effect which consists not only in adopting viewpoints contradicted by the facts, but, in addition, involves defending them tooth and nail against all manner

en plus à les défendre bec et ongles à l'encontre de toute rationalité: prospérant sur le terreau d'un désintérêt grandissant pour une information argumentée et d'une désinformation massive entretenue par les lobbies, le *backfire effect* a de beaux jours devant lui. Les fameuses *fake news* qui ont enregistré, au moment de la campagne de Trump, un véritable tournant, sont le corrélat de ce principe psychologique retors, mais elles ne font après tout que s'inscrire dans une longue tradition de manipulation des esprits, entre l'invention des «armes de destruction massive» par l'administration Bush et l'escamotage des dossiers secrets sur le Vietnam par Nixon. On comprend aisément que ces sujets interpellent grandement un artiste qui ne peut rester indifférent à tout ce qui touche à la production de l'image contemporaine; la présence très marquée des unes au début de la déambulation trahit un intérêt jamais démenti pour la presse et tout particulièrement les journaux. De quoi est faite l'image photographique sinon de multiples manipulations et autres interventions sur sa matière première, le réel? Une photo n'est jamais vraiment pure et participe toujours d'un discours, d'un désir d'interprétation, voire d'une idéologie.

Dans la première salle de l'exposition, un ensemble de vitrines jumelles se font face, l'une exposant des objets anodins (pierres, patates, cailloux) quand l'autre exhibe son double photographique: désarmantes de simplicité et d'efficacité, ces œuvres renvoient au gouffre qui sépare le réel de sa représentation. Les autoportraits de l'artiste sont également très présents et demeurent l'un des axes majeurs de son travail: l'un des tout premiers, datant du début des années 1980 est également présenté, fait suffisamment rare pour être rapporté. Le parcours savamment organisé fait découvrir l'organicité d'une pratique qui prend en compte la totalité du spectre de la photographie contemporaine. Le moment central de la manifestation est certainement la grande salle où se côtoient d'innombrables portraits de toutes les couleurs et de tous les formats, mêlés à des natures mortes bien vivantes de plantes, d'arbres et d'objets divers dans une tentative sans cesse renouvelée d'approcher la complexité du monde mais aussi d'y affirmer d'évidents principes affinitaires. Les grandes compositions / collages extraites de la dernière série de l'artiste et d'où surnagent slogans et sentences parfois énigmatiques, témoignent de la difficulté de représenter un monde qui se dérobe à la seule «objectivité» de l'appareil. La dernière salle de l'exposition vient clore une profonde réflexion sur le médium avec une série intitulée *paper drop* qui constitue comme un retour à l'objet, à la chose, nous éloignant d'un réalisme photographique auquel nous étions plus habitués jusqu'alors.

of rationality: thriving in the loam of a growing disinterest in reasoned information, and of wholesale disinformation upheld by lobbies, the backfire factor has a bright future ahead of it. The famous fake news which, during the Trump campaign, chalked up nothing less than a turning-point, is the correlate of this crafty psychological principle, but, when all is said and done, it is merely part and parcel of a lengthy tradition of mind manipulation, somewhere between the invention of "weapons of mass destruction" by the Bush administration and the spiriting away of secret files about the Vietnam war by Nixon. It is easy to see that these subjects considerably exercise an artist who is unable to remain indifferent to anything that involves the production of contemporary imagery; the very distinctive presence of headlines at the beginning of the stroll betrays a never denied interest in the press, and in newspapers in particular. What is the photographic image made of if not many different manipulations and other interventions on its raw material, which is reality? A photo is never really pure and is always part of a discourse, a desire for interpretation, or even an ideology.

In the first exhibition room, a set of twinned display stands are placed opposite one another, one showing insignificant objects—stones, potatoes, and pebbles—while the other exhibits its photographic double: these works, which are disarming in their simplicity and effectiveness, refer to the chasm which separates reality from its representation. The artist's self-portraits are also very present and remain one of the major themes of his work: one of the very earliest, dating from the 1980s, is also on view, a fact that is sufficiently rare to be worth mentioning. The shrewdly organized circuit lets visitors discover the organic nature of a praxis which encompasses the entire spectrum of contemporary photography. The central moment of the show is undoubtedly the large room where countless portraits of every colour and format rub shoulders, mingled with very alive still lifes of plants, trees and various objects in an ever renewed attempt to broach the complexity of the world but also to assert obvious peer principles. The large compositions/collages from the artist's latest series, displaying enigmatic slogans and sentences, attest to the difficulty of representing a world which slips away from the camera's sole "objectivity". The last room in the exhibition winds up a far-reaching line of thinking about the medium with a series titled *paper drop*, which represents something akin to a return to the object and the thing, removing us from a photographic realism which we had hitherto become accustomed to.

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dans le sens des aiguilles d'une montre /
clockwise from left:
Kammerspiele, 2016
Bronzino, 2015
paper drop Oranienplatz, a-d, 2017
Springer II, 1987
Springer III, 1987



Galerie
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Steffen. Chains, 1993



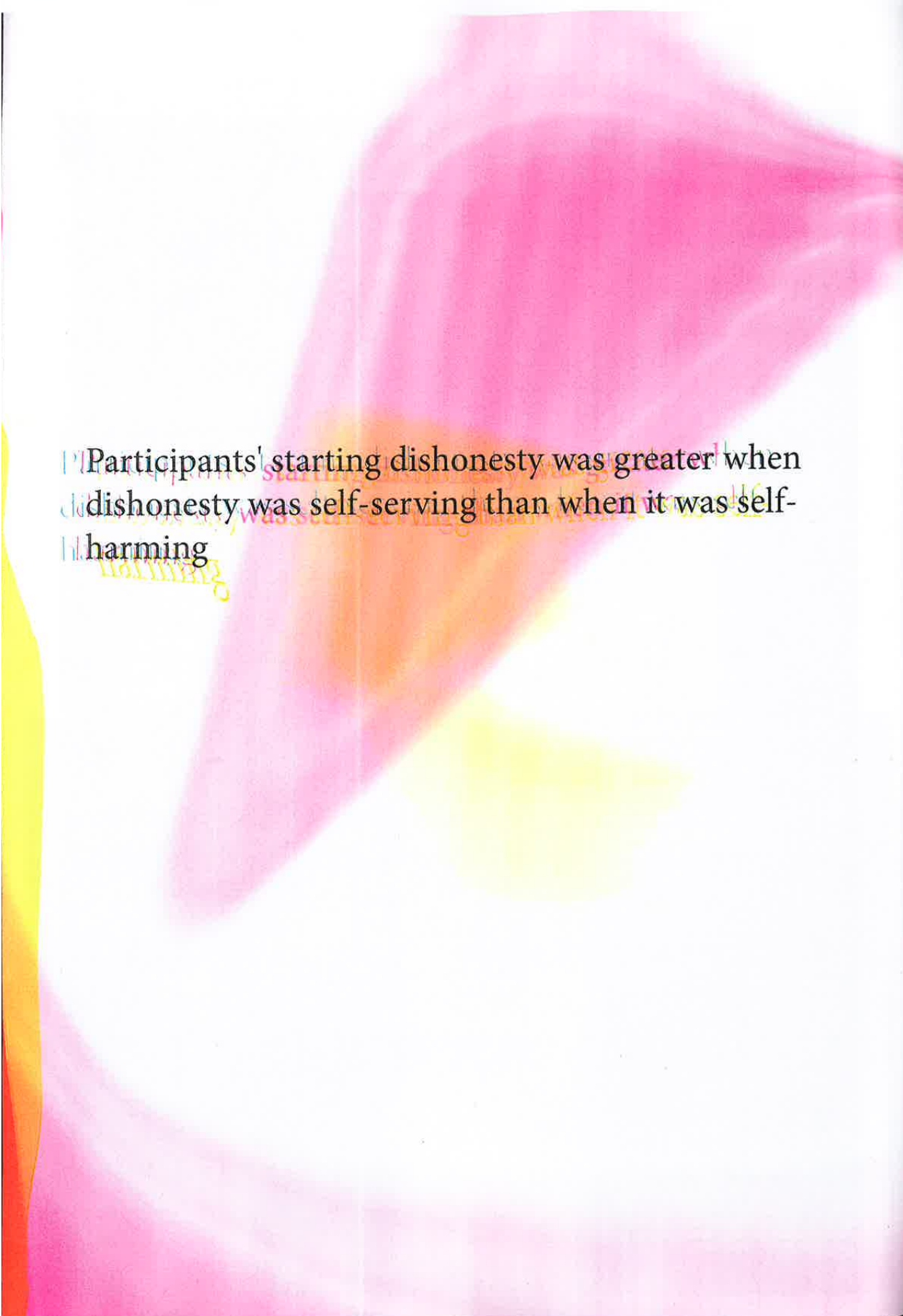
morning rain, 2014

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CLC 008, 2017

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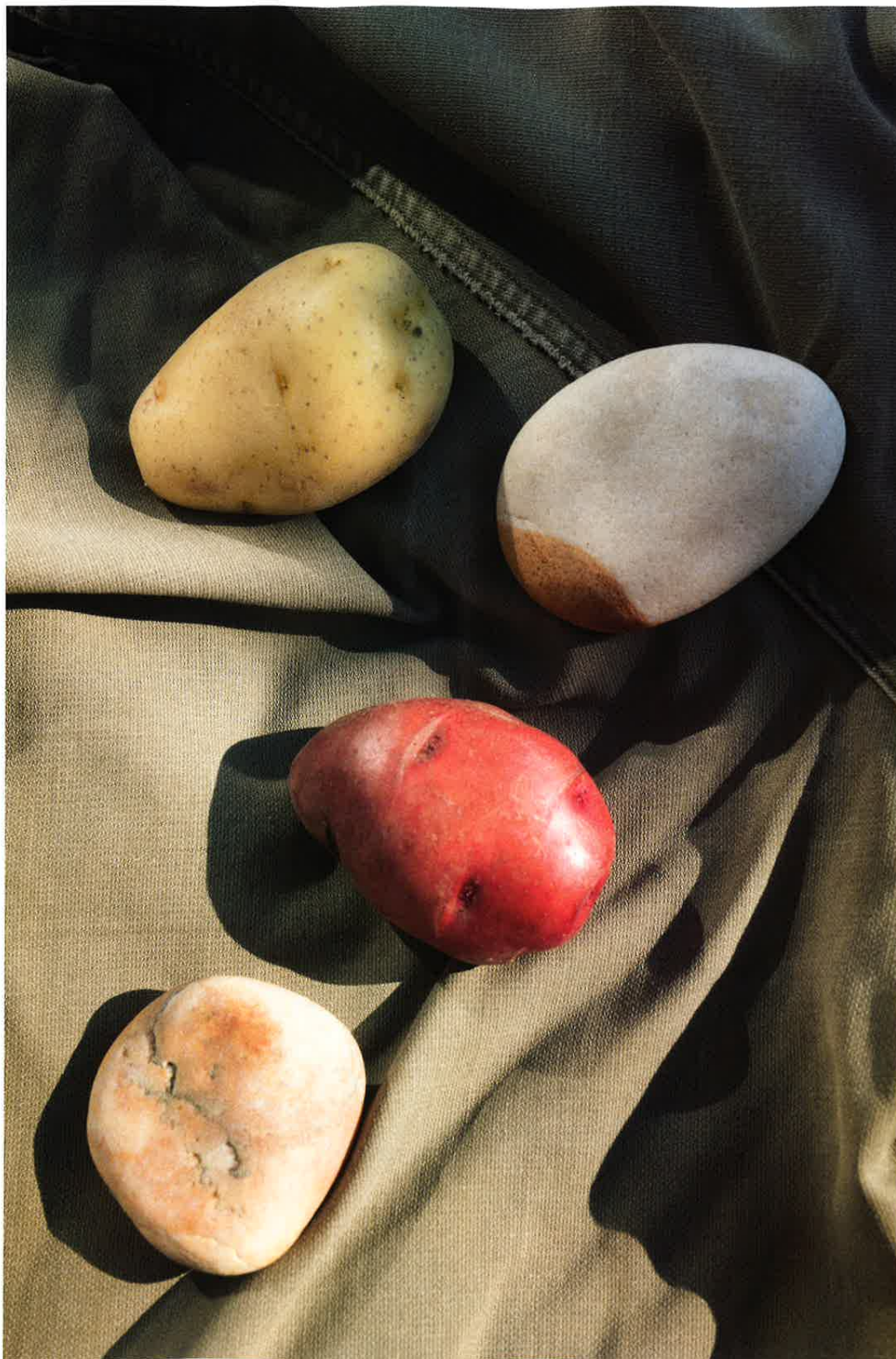


Participants' starting dishonesty was greater when
dishonesty was self-serving than when it was self-
harming

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Far away inside (Echo Beach), 2017

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Sunken Forest, 2017 Central Park, 2010

« QUELQUE CHOSE D'ORGANIQUE. QUI VIENT DE L'INTÉRIEUR, QUI SORT DE LA TÊTE. »
Isa Genzken en conversation avec Wolfgang Tillmans

20

Wolfgang Tillmans C'est à Chicago qu'il y a eu les premiers gratte-ciel?

Isa Genzken Oui, c'est là qu'ils sont nés. Un grand incendie avait détruit toutes les maisons — d'un coup d'un seul — et ils ont dû reconstruire. C'est comme ça que les premiers gratte-ciel sont apparus. Avant New York.

W.T. Et ils ont aussi inventé l'ascenseur?

I.G. Oui.

W.T. C'est ce que j'ai lu. C'est la société Otis qui les a probablement inventés et c'est pour ça qu'il n'y avait pas de gratte-ciel avant. Mais les gratte-ciel t'ont toujours intéressée...

I.G. J'avais 21 ans quand je suis allée à New York pour la première fois. J'étais si fascinée par l'architecture, si heureuse que quelque chose comme ça existe et que je puisse en faire l'expérience visuelle, que je me suis dit : c'est là que je veux vivre. Je pense que pour moi, New York était lié à la sculpture. Même si à 21 ans je n'étais pas encore une sculptrice, que je commençais à peine mes études et que je ne savais même pas ce que je voulais faire. New York est une ville incroyable de stabilité et de robustesse. La hauteur des immeubles m'impressionnait, et aussi le fait que les gens dans la rue aient l'air un peu plus heureux que les Allemands. Quand je suis revenue en Allemagne, mon environnement visuel ne me paraissait pas très plaisant, c'était franchement ennuyeux. Le modernisme est très peu présent en Allemagne. D'accord, il y a eu le Bauhaus et puis telle ou telle chose, mais l'architecture moderniste est pratiquement absente. En revanche à New York, il y a eu l'Empire State Building dans les années 1930, puis les Twin Towers... Je veux dire, les tours étaient extrêmement modernes... Ce qui est affreux avec l'architecture, ici, c'est que presque tout est construit dans le style le plus bas de gamme, vraiment.

Ils ne s'assurent pas de la qualité des matériaux, ils prennent juste le moins cher. Regarde Potsdamer Platz, on dirait un décor ! Tout cela est fait à moindre coût, ça pourrait être à Cologne ou à Tenerife... On n'autoriserait jamais une chose pareille à New York, ils ont une conscience insensée de la qualité.

W.T. Peut-être parce que les Américains n'ont pas peur de la richesse... Ça ne les dérange pas de produire des choses très chères, tu ne crois pas ?

I.G. Ah non, c'est sûr. À l'inverse, ici, j'ai toujours dû me battre avec des matériaux bon marché... parce que je vis ici et que je ne peux pas faire comme si j'étais à New York. Ça me rappelle que Josef Strau a récemment réalisé une sculpture d'extérieur pour moi, et beaucoup de jeunes artistes étaient vraiment enthousiastes le jour du vernissage. Je ne m'y attendais pas du tout, parce que je m'étais juste dit que ce serait bien de faire quelque chose de simple pour changer. Et c'est précisément ce qui leur a plu : qu'une chose puisse être relativement généreuse, mais bon marché. De ce point de vue, les Américains sont complètement différents. Ils adorent que ce soit cher et que ça se voie. J'ai eu de la chance avec mon exposition *Fuck the Bauhaus 1* à New York en 2000, parce qu'il y avait quelques sculptures dans des matériaux bas de gamme et ça a quand même été un succès. C'est peut-être que les Américains savent baisser la garde quand ils voient quelque chose de simple, qui change. Tu vois ? Quelque chose à quoi on ne s'attend pas en Amérique.

W.T. Mais ton travail avec Josef Strau est par ailleurs très sympa. Comment l'idée t'est-elle venue ?

I.G. D'abord je voulais mettre des stores sur le bâtiment. Mais quand je refais quelque chose que j'ai déjà fait, parfois j'ai un sentiment d'insécurité. Même si je suis sûre que ça marche. De toutes façons, c'était trop cher. J'avais remarqué des bambous tout neufs, d'un vert éclatant,

1. *Fuck the Bauhaus (New buildings for New York)*, AC Project Room, New York, 7 octobre – 18 novembre 2000.

au KaDeWe. Je m'étais dit que ce serait bien d'en faire quelque chose. De retour chez moi, j'étais assise à dessiner sur la photo quand je me suis rappelée ce beau bambou vert vif, et puis aussi qu'il y a un bâtiment fasciste, ou en partie fasciste, juste à côté du KaDeWe, un théâtre, un truc très moche. Alors j'ai pensé : le bambou est politiquement correct, voilà, c'est ça. Mais évidemment, c'est aussi beau à voir. Simple. L'œuvre s'appelle *Haare wachsen, wie sie wollen* (« Les cheveux poussent comme ils veulent »), et elle va très bien avec le petit pavillon.

W.T. Et les bambous, c'est ceux du KaDeWe ?

I.G. Non. Mais ils sont gris à présent, c'est très bien aussi. Le bambou est normalement jaune, et il a quelque chose de cheap, un truc très « touriste » — jaune canisse. Mais maintenant, il est devenu gris à cause des intempéries, il est passé de vert à gris. C'est la première fois que je vois ce genre de changement de couleur. Elle s'adapte à ce qui est autour, c'est bien.

W.T. Tu as peint sur une photo pour ce projet ?

I.G. Oui.

W.T. Tes idées commencent souvent avec des photos ?

I.G. Oui, pour les sculptures d'extérieur.

W.T. Toujours ?

I.G. Presque toujours. Tu prends une photo et tu regardes ce qui manque.

W.T. C'est important que ce soient tes propres photos ? Que ce soit ta propre perception de la situation sur laquelle tu vas travailler ? Ou bien les gens peuvent t'envoyer des photos, aussi ?

I.G. C'est mieux si je vois la situation et que je prends la photo.

W.T. Je suis toujours étonné quand je vois à quel point on ne voit rien dans les photos professionnelles de musée. Même si tu connais les lieux, ces photos d'intérieurs ne te disent rien. Elles sont pourtant en général parfaitement réalisées. Je préfère travailler avec un cliché que j'ai pris moi-même, juste comme ça. Tu as souvent ton appareil photo avec toi ?

I.G. Quand je suis invitée à faire quelque chose. Je le prends avec moi.

W.T. Et sinon, le reste du temps ? À l'atelier, tu en as un ?

I.G. Très rarement. Il faut vraiment que je me force pour prendre des images de mes nouvelles sculptures.

W.T. En guise de notes ?

I.G. Oui, parce que c'est important, aussi.

W.T. Pour voir où tu en es ?

I.G. Oui, récemment je suis retombée sur des photos de mes sculptures en verre. On voit l'idée d'où c'est parti, c'est intéressant.

W.T. Tu as toujours pris des photos ?

I.G. Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire ?

W.T. Je sais que tu prenais déjà des photos dans les années 1970. Est-ce que ce médium jouait un rôle particulier pour toi ? Ou plus exactement, est-ce qu'il y a eu un moment où tu t'es dit que tu pourrais te l'approprier ?

I.G. Si on a l'idée de photographier une oreille, ou un équipement Hi-Fi... C'est très différent des photos que je prends maintenant quand je travaille sur un projet.

W.T. Je comprends. Mais je voudrais savoir ce que la photo signifie réellement pour toi...

I.G. Je crois que la photographie a beaucoup à voir avec la sculpture, parce qu'elle est spatiale et qu'elle représente la réalité. Par exemple, ça a toujours été plus facile pour moi de me rapporter à une photo plutôt qu'à une peinture. Quand je photographiais les pubs Hi-Fi, je me disais : tout le monde a une de ces tours chez soi. C'est le dernier cri, le truc le plus moderne disponible. Donc une sculpture doit être au moins aussi moderne et durable. Puis j'ai accroché mes photos au mur et j'ai mis une *Ellipsoïde* au sol et je me suis dit : l'*Ellipsoïde* doit être au moins aussi bonne que cette pub. Au moins aussi bonne. Une sculpture moderne doit être à ce niveau. Tu comprends ? Il y avait ce dialogue...

W.T. Donc en fait, le monde réel est toujours ton point de départ...

I.G. Oui, et j'ai toujours dit qu'on devait pouvoir dire de toute sculpture, même si ce n'était pas un ready-made, qu'elle pourrait en être un. C'est à ça qu'une sculpture doit ressembler. Elle doit avoir un certain rapport au réel. C'est-à-dire pas quelque chose de hors sol ou de fabriqué, mais de distant et poli.

W.T. Donc ce n'est pas ta seule volonté qui te fait juxtaposer des formes à la réalité. L'Empire State Building, par exemple, fonctionne comme une sorte de repère, de règle.

I.G. Exactement. Et je ne vois pas cet aspect chez beaucoup d'artistes. Souvent, j'ai l'impression qu'ils veulent déterminer ce que l'art devrait être. Ce n'est pas du tout mon but. Au contraire, une sculpture est vraiment comme une photo : elle peut être folle, mais elle doit toujours posséder quelque chose en commun avec la réalité.

W.T. C'est ce que j'aime aussi dans le médium photographique. Qu'il offre une certaine économie. Qu'il soit discret et sans prétention. On peut poser une paire de jeans sur un dessus de porte et mettre le tout en espace dans une pièce. Mais je trouve plus facile de le prendre en photo. En tant que geste, c'est moins grandiloquent. Parce que la photo crée une sorte d'universalité ou d'accessibilité.

I.G. Une chose qui me dérange avec certains de mes étudiants c'est que leur travaux ne sont pas chaleureux envers le regardeur. Je leur dis toujours : vous devez aussi imaginer comment on le voit. Vous devez faire preuve d'empathie avec le spectateur quand vous faites quelque chose. C'est important pour moi. Sinon, c'est trop froid ou trop arrogant.

W.T. Au sens de « je peux faire quelque chose que tu ne peux pas » ?

I.G. Exactement.

W.T. En ce sens, une photo permet de communiquer quelque chose qui existe et t'intéresse avec une certaine économie de moyens ?

I.G. Oui. En gros, je peux lire ta photo et voir ce qui t'émeut. Ce qui t'émeut vraiment, pas une émotion simulée. Je ne crois pas que ce soit bon quand c'est comme ça en art. Malheureusement ça l'est souvent. C'est pourquoi j'aime Bruce Nauman, par exemple, comme sculpteur. Devant son travail, je me suis souvent dit : c'est juste très beau.

W.T. Parce que c'est quelqu'un qui utilise toujours autant que possible des moyens qui sont déjà là ? Parce que ses œuvres ne sont pas faites de formes imaginaires inventées...

I.G. Surtout, c'est assez difficile de décrire quelque chose qui te remue profondément. Mais au bout du compte, c'est ce que doit être l'art et c'est aussi ce qui attire les gens, quand un artiste y arrive.

W.T. Et quand la volonté de « faire art » n'est pas ce qu'on voit d'abord, mais plutôt...

I.G. Oui, exactement.

W.T. ... mais plutôt quelqu'un qui se soucie vraiment de quelque chose. C'est bien plus excitant quand quelqu'un s'intéresse à quelque chose plutôt qu'à la volonté de faire quelque chose. Et en gros, on peut diviser l'art entre ces deux groupes. L'un consiste dans la volonté de montrer : je fais quelque chose. Et l'autre procède d'un intérêt immédiat pour le monde et les choses.

I.G. Je ne sais pas comment dire ça... ce n'est pas facile à exprimer... c'est pourquoi je n'aime pas donner d'interview non plus...

W.T. Ce que je viens de dire, par exemple, est extrêmement simplificateur si on se demande, bon sang, est-ce que je peux dire ça ? Mais quand je regarde l'art, c'est en gros la façon dont il fonctionne pour moi. Y a-t-il une idée ou non ? Est-ce inventé ou non ? En vrai, cela te mène dans des zones taboues... Parce qu'on ne devrait pas vraiment dire ça...

I.G. Je pense qu'on se ressemble un peu de ce point de vue...

W.T. Est-ce que tes photos ont une structure formelle ?

I.G. Les premières photos que j'ai prises, c'étaient les chaînes Hi-Fi. Elles sont évidemment en rapport avec le son et la musique, et elles ont leur propre forme, très présente. Ensuite j'ai photographié les oreilles. Quelque chose d'organique. Qui vient de l'intérieur, qui sort de la tête. J'ai fait cette série d'oreilles à New York et j'ai demandé aux gens, des femmes, dans la rue, si je pouvais prendre leur oreille. Il n'y en a pas eu une pour refuser. Parce que je ne leur demandais pas leur visage, mais quelque chose de beaucoup plus anonyme.

W.T. C'était quel genre de femmes ?

I.G. Des femmes dans la rue, c'est tout.

W.T. Donc des femmes que tu connaissais à peine et dont tu photographiais les oreilles comme ça, sur le coup ?

I.G. Oui.

W.T. Je vois. Mais vraiment, dans la rue ? Ou tu fixais des rendez-vous ?

I.G. Non, dans la rue. Ça prenait un instant. Les femmes répondaient toujours « Quoi mon oreille ? Bien sûr ». Mais je n'ai jamais froissé personne en les regardant de près avant. Juste l'oreille. Et tout le monde trouvait ça super. C'était une très belle expérience. Pour moi aussi comme photographe. Évidemment, j'ai un peu travaillé la lumière et les reflets du soleil dans les cheveux... J'ai essayé de rendre le contexte avantageux pour l'oreille.

W.T. Quel rôle joue l'autportrait ?

I.G. J'ai fait les *X-Rays* après la Hi-Fi et les oreilles. C'est de ça que tu parles ?

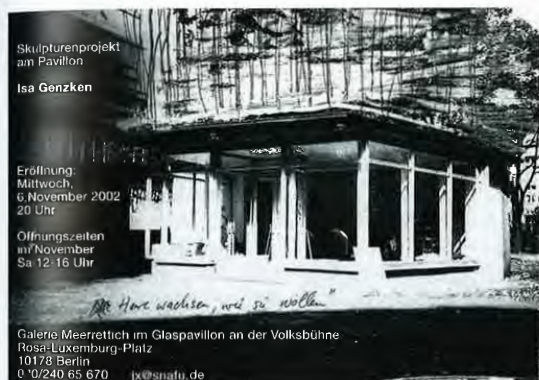
W.T. Ce sont tes premiers autoportraits ? Parce qu'il y a aussi tes photos de la clinique, en noir et blanc.

I.G. Ah ça ? Je venais de subir une opération, je m'en-nuyais profondément et donc je me suis prise en photo. Par ennui. Ce n'est qu'après que je me suis rendu compte que ce travail-là était spécial. Prendre des photos à la clinique et les publier dans un catalogue... ça prenait soudain un air sérieux. Tout le monde a peur des cliniques et personne ne veut voir à quoi ça ressemble de l'intérieur. Enfin, vraiment voir. Et tout le monde a un peu peur de s'y retrouver soi-même. Moi j'y étais, j'étais là à ne rien faire. Alors j'ai utilisé la clinique comme un studio et j'ai commencé à prendre des photos. Et j'ai commencé à me sentir mieux. Juste parce que ça me permettait d'avoir une occupation. Quant aux *X-Rays*, je voulais juste savoir à quoi ressemblait l'intérieur de ma tête, et ça me plaisait qu'elle puisse être éclairée de l'intérieur, comme un globe terrestre. Puis j'ai photographié les façades de New York.

W.T. C'était à la fin des années 1990 ?

I.G. Oui. J'ai fait les livres à la fin des années 1990 et les façades peu après.

A. Isa Genzken, carton d'invitation pour « Isa Genzken. Haare wachsen, wie sie wollen », 2002, Galerie Meerrettich au Glaspavillon de la Volksbühne, Berlin. B. Isa Genzken, *X-Ray*, 1991, photographie couleur, 108 × 81,4 cm, 1991.



W.T. Et tu as aussi fait les photos en rapport avec les livres, par économie de moyens?

I.G. Oui.

W.T. C'était comme à la clinique, tu n'avais pas de studio, juste l'appareil photo...

I.G. C'est ça. Parce que je suis quelqu'un qui doit toujours s'occuper. Si je ne fais rien, je vais très mal. Mais en fait, je travaille toujours sur quelque chose. Et j'ai toujours le désir de travailler.

W.T. C'est peut-être une autre chose que nous avons en commun : une forme d'obsession?

I.G. Oui, sûrement...

W.T. Mais c'est peut-être le lot de tous les artistes...

I.G. C'est-à-dire que tous les artistes que je connais très bien, ils sont si... Tu t'exposes à un gros blocage si tu te dis, bon, maintenant, je dois faire de l'art. C'est très important d'apprendre que ce n'est pas la chose la plus importante.

W.T. *Hier und jetzt zufrieden sein* (« Être content ici et maintenant »)², c'est ce que je dois me répéter en permanence. L'art finira par arriver tout seul.

I.G. Oui, après, ça vient.

Traduit de l'anglais par Éric Loret
Initialement publié sous le titre « *Isa Genzken. Ein Gespräch mit Wolfgang Tillmans/Isa Genzken. A conversation with Wolfgang Tillmans* », *Camera Austria* 81, Vienne, 2003, p. 7–18.

2. En référence à AC: *Isa Genzken, Wolfgang Tillmans, Science Fiction/Hier und jetzt zufrieden sein*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 1^{er} novembre 2001 – 17 février 2002.

Luquet-Gad, Ingrid. « Entretien exclusif avec le photographe Wolfgang Tillmans : “Je veux rendre l’activisme attractif” »,

Les Inrockuptibles, May 13, 2018.

<https://www.lesinrocks.com/2018/05/13/arts/entretien-exclusif-avec-le-photographe-wolfgang-tillmans-je-veux-rendre-lacti-visme-attractif-111081929/>

Inrockuptibles



Wolfgang Tillmans, "Victoria Park, 2007". Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris - Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne. © Wolfgang Tillmans

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Entretien exclusif avec le photographe Wolfgang Tillmans : “Je veux rendre l’activisme attractif”

Dans un entretien exclusif, le photographe Wolfgang Tillmans se livre sur son récent engagement politique en faveur de l’Europe, intimement lié à l’utopie des raves des années 1990.

Les pupilles extasiées des raves des 90s, les néo-vanités d’un tas d’habits gisant au sol, de fruits se recroquevillant sous la lumière du petit matin, ou encore les grandes abstractions pixellisées. Wolfgang Tillmans a réussi là où la plupart des photographes échouent : non seulement son vocabulaire est immédiatement reconnaissable, mais il a réconcilié également la sensualité intime de son médium et les ambitions conceptuelles de l’art contemporain, souvent réticent à accepter entre ses rangs les photographes – c’est particulièrement le cas en France. Cette plasticité tient beaucoup à sa manière de combiner les différentes images entre elles. Dans les constellations qu’il dessine au mur en associant différentes tailles d’images et types d’encadrement, mais aussi dans les planches de recherche se lit une pensée en train de se faire, attachée à relier plutôt qu’à isoler.

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Après deux grandes expositions monographiques à la Tate Modern à Londres et à la Fondation Beyeler à Bâle, le Carré d'Art à Nîmes lui confie l'intégralité de ses espaces. Comme point de départ à l'exposition, il y a d'abord une nouvelle série entreprise il y a deux ans autour du phénomène du "*backfire effect*" ("*effet rebond*"), mécanisme psychologique expliquant que l'on puisse être persuadé d'avoir raison alors que toutes les évidences prouvent le contraire. Que l'on en soit arrivé à ne plus croire aux faits, c'est ce que démontrent la prolifération des fake-news. A partir d'un scanner en fin de vie trouvé dans la rue en bas de son atelier berlinois, l'artiste dissout dans des nappes de couleur RMB des fragments de textes, diagnostics psychologiques, interrogations laconiques et divers documents relatifs au phénomène en question. Mêlées à ses prises de vues habituelles, les images viennent réorienter la lecture de toute son œuvre. Et résonnent avec des œuvres de jeunesse pas montrées jusqu'alors, des scans de photos noir et blanc qu'il réalise dans les années 1987-88 alors qu'il a vingt ans.

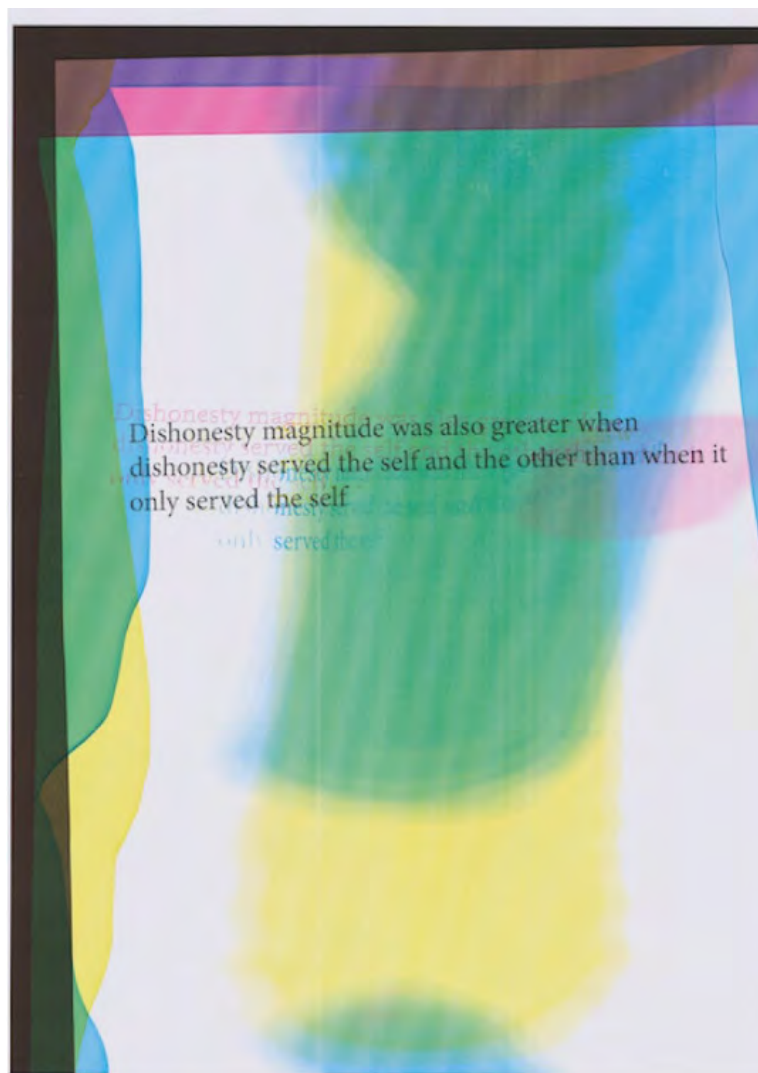
A quelques mois de son cinquantième anniversaire, Wolfgang Tillmans mène plusieurs activités de front : un *project-space* à Berlin (Between Bridges), une activité de musicien et de DJ (il vient de sortir un nouvel EP remixé par Roman Flügel) ainsi qu'un engagement politique s'exprimant notamment à travers des affiches, des textes dans les journaux allemands et des billets d'humeur sur Instagram. Une constellation donc, comme celle que tissent ses image, où le détail résonne avec l'infini, où l'intime est déjà intensément politique et la fête se confond avec la création d'espaces libertaires.

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Wolfgang Tillmans, "CLC 004", 2017. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris ; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne. © Wolfgang Tillmans.

En mai 2016, alors que plane la menace du Brexit, tu te lances dans la campagne avec une série de posters pour défendre l'Union Européenne. Dans la presse, tu déclarais être à ce moment devenu "ouvertement politisé". As-tu ressenti qu'être artiste ne suffisait plus, ou voulais-tu contraire mettre à profit la visibilité dont tu bénéficiais en tant qu'artiste ?

Wolfgang Tillmans - Je ne suis pas devenu un artiste politique en 2016. J'ai toujours eu l'impression de l'être ; et mon travail a toujours servi de caisse de résonance à des idées, des esthétiques et des positions politiques. En revanche, je ne m'en étais jamais servi pour faire campagne. Tout au long des années 1990, j'ai regretté que les jeunes soient moins politisés qu'au cours des années 1980 dans lesquelles j'ai grandi. Pour moi, il n'y a aucune contradiction entre le clubbing et l'engagement politique. Mais j'ai aussi conscience que personne n'aurait eu envie que je vienne leur faire la morale. J'ai donc surtout voulu rendre l'activisme attractif. D'ailleurs, l'activisme doit surtout se prolonger par l'engagement politique de la majorité de la population. Ce n'est pas une poignée d'activistes très actifs qui nous sauveront, mais que chacun se sente concerné et exprime ses opinions politiques. Le centre, les vues modérées, on les entend trop peu.

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Ce qui serait une manière de répondre à la question concernant ton propre engagement, qui est d’abord celui du citoyen...

Oui, c’est le cas. Je ne recherche en aucun cas le romantisme des extrêmes. La pop-culture a toujours été fascinée par les positions politiques extrêmes. Ce n’est pas ce qui fait tourner le monde. Nous devons parvenir à inverser le mouvement centripète qui place les extrêmes au centre du débat et de la visibilité publiques. Tout ne peut pas être extraordinaire. S’engager au sein d’un parti politique classique est sans doute assez fastidieux, ça n’a rien de sexy au premier abord. Mais si tu ne le fais pas, d’autres le feront à ta place. Désormais, nous sommes face à une situation où la nouvelle droite est tellement guidée par une mission suprême que si nous ne faisons rien, elle progressera inéluctablement. Si c’est le cas, notre liberté à tous qui en pâtira.

Cette idée de normalité revient souvent dans ton travail. Dans les années 1990, lorsque tu photographies ton cercle proche, tu ne cherches pas à parler de toi mais à montrer comment les gens normaux s’habillent, se prélassent et font la fête. A l’époque, montrer la majorité invisible, magnifier le quotidien, c’était nouveau...

En art et en musique, les extrêmes m’intéressent énormément. Mais effectivement, j’ai toujours été attentif à ne pas sous-estimer la valeur du banal. La raison est simple : le banal est réaliste.

Il est souvent dit que face à la nouvelle droite (*l’Alt-Right*), la gauche traditionnelle a perdu la faculté d’imaginer les récits fédérateurs de demain. Est-ce pour cela tu as choisi d’intégrer également des images à tes posters, pour qu’ils ne parlent pas uniquement à la raison mais aussi aux sens ?

Au début, j’avais l’intention de n’utiliser que du texte, car je désirais garder mon travail visuel séparé. Mais la combinaison du texte et de l’image est une formule éprouvée et redoutablement efficace. De nombreuses personnes m’ont également fait remarquer que plus personne aujourd’hui ne faisait des posters. Or pour moi, cela ne fait aucun sens puisque n’importe quel smartphone affiche une image avec du texte : c’est un poster ! J’ai donc choisi d’adapter les posters en quatre formats : une version Instagram, une version PDF à imprimer soi-même, le format A1 classique que nous avons imprimés à l’atelier, puis nous avons pris conscience du poids des t-shirts – le corps de la personne qui le porte devient un poster pour des réseaux sociaux. Le côté affectif joue effectivement un grand rôle. J’ai réalisé que personne ne parlait de manière positive de l’Union Européenne ; et que si je ne le faisais pas, peut-être que personne ne le ferait. Pour moi, j’associe d’abord l’UE à plein de moments heureux passés à l’étranger ou avec des ressortissants des autres pays. Peut-être est-ce une expérience plus présente dans le monde de l’art ou de la musique. Il n’en reste pas moins que nous avons vécu dans les années les plus pacifiques de l’histoire de l’Europe.

Inrockuptibles

Tu insistes beaucoup sur le fait que lorsque tu as grandi, la mode et la musique exprimaient des positionnements sociaux – des formes de vies fédératrices, sans forcément parler d’engagement politique. Perçois-tu aujourd’hui des phénomènes de pop-culture qui jouent le même rôle ?

Il y a toujours des voix très puissantes aux Etats-Unis. Des artistes à grand succès comme Beyoncé n’hésitent pas à faire entendre leur voix, mais ce phénomène concerne essentiellement la communauté noire. En revanche, la scène club est étonnamment peu politisée alors que c’est elle qui a le plus à perdre. Par exemple en Allemagne, l’AfD (le parti eurosceptique d’extrême droite) vient de déposer une motion au parlement pour faire fermer le Berghain, le mythique club berlinois. Pour l’extrême droite, la liberté du dancefloor est perçue comme une provocation. S’ils arrivent au pouvoir, la première chose qu’ils feront serait de brimer la vue nocturne. C’est leur hobby préféré, ainsi que celui du néolibéralisme en général. Voilà la liberté que je défends, celle du dancefloor qui rejoint celle de l’art. En ce moment, on me demande très souvent si je pense que l’art devrait être plus engagé : je réponds à la fois oui et non. Ce qui dérange l’extrême droite avec les clubs est la perte de temps, l’inutilité de ces moments de communion. La beauté de l’art est également d’être inutile. Et d’un autre côté, les artistes ont oublié le pouvoir dont ils disposent. Lorsqu’ils s’expriment, ils sont écoutés. Or justement, trop d’artistes ont peur ou honte de faire entendre leur voix dans les débats politiques ou sociétaux.

Tu publies régulièrement des textes engagés dans les journaux allemands, tandis sur ton Instagram, chaque image est un prétexte à poster un long texte d’actualité dans la légende – souvent sans rapport avec la photo. L’écriture, c’est récent chez toi ?

Pas entièrement. En 1994, j’avais publié un long texte dans la revue *Purple* qui s’appelait *Les Années Dix? The Nineties Haven’t Happened yet!* Mais pour répondre plus directement à la question, c’est bel et bien récent que l’écriture prenne cette ampleur. Je me rends surtout compte que je peux le faire, que je sais parler et écrire et que j’ai envie de m’en servir plus. La confiance est venue avec l’âge, auparavant je me sentais gêné de m’exprimer. Surmonter cette gêne est primordial.

Récemment, le New York Times publiait une longue enquête sur le futur "post-texte" où il était question du passage d’un internet de l’écrit à un internet de l’image et de la vidéo. Lorsque tu détournes l’usage d’un média de comme Instagram pour y poster des textes, est-ce une manière de résister à la facilité de la consommation fast-food des images ?

Oui, c’est une stratégie délibérée de ma part. Ne pas atteindre la totalité de son auditoire potentiel n’est pas très grave. Si 90% ne lisent pas le texte, cela veut quand même dire que 10% le liront. C’est déjà important. Lorsque les gens ne vont pas voter, c’est l’attitude inverse qui les conditionne : ils se disent que leur vote n’aura de toute manière pas d’importance ; ou ne veulent pas tenter de changer les choses s’ils ne peuvent pas avoir exactement ce qu’ils veulent. Pour en revenir à Instagram, je n’ai jamais été inscrit sur un autre réseau social, et je ne pense pas qu’un médium détermine forcément ses usages. Ici aussi, le choix nous appartient ; y compris celui de continuer à vouloir lire et écrire.

Luquet-Gad, Ingrid. « Entretien exclusif avec le photographe Wolfgang Tillmans : “Je veux rendre l’activisme attractif” »,

Les Inrockuptibles, May 13, 2018.

<https://www.lesinrocks.com/2018/05/13/arts/entretien-exclusif-avec-le-photographe-wolfgang-tillmans-je-veux-rendre-lacti-visme-attractif-111081929/>

Inrockuptibles

Sur Instagram, tu postes des vues de détail à deux doigts de basculer dans l'abstraction, tandis que pour ta dernière série autour du "Backfire Effect", tu te sers d'un scanner en fin de vie pour reproduire des bribes de texte. Pas de visages ; peu de corps, ou fragmentés . Ton travail est-il en train de prendre un tournant plus conceptuel ?

Pour moi, toutes les images figuratives, c'est à dire toutes celles faites avec un appareil photo, l'ont toujours été. Chaque photo est confrontée à un dilemme conceptuel : pourquoi aurait-elle la moindre importance ? Quelle est la possibilité que l'on s'en souvienne plus tard ? Au vu des millions de photos prises tous les jours, la possibilité est infime – il y a vingt ans, c'était la même chose. Parler de ma vie ne m'a jamais intéressé. Je parle à travers mon vécu parce que c'est la seule matière que j'aie à ma disposition. Lorsque je photographie une pile d'habits, je ne cherche pas à montrer mes habits mais ce que j'y perçois. – le potentiel social ; la qualité sculpturale, sensuelle ou sexuelle. Dans les années 1990, je me suis demandé pourquoi j'avais tant envie de faire des portraits ; si tout en prenant des photos alternatives de personnes pouvant être considérées telle, je n'étais pas en train de reproduire un processus normatif. Est-ce que je légitimais l'industrie de l'image en faisant contre ma volonté l'apologie de certains standards de beauté ? Et en même temps, le plaisir de prendre des photos a toujours été là. J'aime toujours faire des photos de natures mortes. Et je n'en ai toujours pas marre de faire des photos. Elles changent tout en restant remarquablement identiques. L'exposition à Nîmes le montre bien : mes toutes premières œuvres, les photocopies de la fin des années 1980 que je faisais lorsque j'avais 20 ans rejoignent la dernière série sur le "Backfire Effect".

Si la photographie reste pour toi un plaisir, est-ce que tu l'aurais aussi choisie comme moyen d'expression si tu avais eu 20 ans en 2018 ?

Il y a quelques jours, je parlais avec des étudiants en photo qui me disaient se sentir menacés par Instagram. Lorsque j'ai commencé dans les années 1980, j'aurais pu avoir le même sentiment vis-à-vis de photographes plus âgés. Au contraire, j'ai assez vite ressenti que c'était une liberté de ne plus avoir à prendre les photos qu'ils avaient déjà faites. Personne ne nous oblige à continuer à reproduire ce que d'autre ont déjà fait mieux que nous. J'ai le sentiment que nous vivons à une époque de transition aussi riche que problématique ; il y a tant de textures et d'affects avec lesquels travailler. Bien sûr, les années 1990 sont une pierre d'achoppement pour la jeune génération, car elles ne semblent ne jamais vouloir prendre fin. Personnellement, je me retrouve toujours dans beaucoup de valeurs de cette décennie.

Comment tu expliques ce revival des années 1990 ?

Parce que nous n'en sommes jamais sortis ! Et nous n'en sommes jamais sortis parce qu'elles ont été le symbole d'une valorisation de l'instant présent. Cette immédiateté, nous ne pouvons l'expérimenter par procuration. Pour moi, les valeurs des années 1990, ou du moins certaines d'entre elles, sont authentiquement inadaptées au système capitaliste. Certes, les tentatives de vendre l'esthétique et l'esprit des années 1990 n'ont pas manqué. J'ai moi-même dû défendre mon langage photographique à la fin de la décennie lorsque cette esthétique a commencé à être reprise par la pub et la mode mainstream. Reste que nous avons toujours autant faim d'expériences immédiates et du sentiment d'appartenir à une communauté.

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Inrockuptibles

Dans le sillage du mouvement des places, on a récemment beaucoup évoqué la vulnérabilité de corps rassemblés malgré tout, malgré les différences ; sans que préexiste un but ou une fin prédéfinie....

Je retrouve cette idée dans le clubbing ; la sensation de communion à travers l’atomisation du dancefloor, le sentiment d’être rassemblé tout en dansant seul. L’unique chose que je regretterai serait peut-être la disparition des paroles dans la dance music des années 1990, qui questionnerait peut-être la portée de l’identification que peut produire un track sans paroles. Mais en fait je pense que ce n’est pas le cœur du problème. Le clubbing reste un acte de résistance contre le capitalisme, dont la liberté sexuelle et l’improductivité ne pourra jamais être commercialisée.

- **Wolfgang Tillmans, jusqu’au 16 septembre au Carré d’Art à Nîmes**

Inrockuptibles

Portfolio

Si l'artiste allemand **WOLFGANG TILLMANS** tisse une œuvre sensible depuis le début des années 1990, il n'en est pas moins engagé. Après s'être attaqué au Brexit, il compose aujourd'hui une série inspirée par le phénomène des fake news et le trouble qu'elles induisent sur notre rapport à la réalité.

TEXTE Ingrid Luquet-Gad

L'HEURE POST-VÉRITÉ

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

POUR CERTAINS, CE SERA LES PHOTOS DE RAVE 90'S. POUR D'AUTRES, LES NATURES MORTES où la simplicité tutoie le sublime. Il y a encore les photos abstraites, celles qui figurent la dissolution du réel dans une mer de pixels. Qu'on les ait aperçues sur les cimaises des plus grands musées, au détour d'un magazine de mode ou dans la touffeur du Berghain à Berlin, les photographies de Wolfgang Tillmans sont cultes.

A bientôt 50 ans, l'Allemand n'a jamais été aussi engagé. A Berlin, son espace autogéré Between Bridges accueille débats et expositions autour de l'avenir de l'Europe ou de la crise migratoire; tandis que ses virulentes campagnes d'affichage,

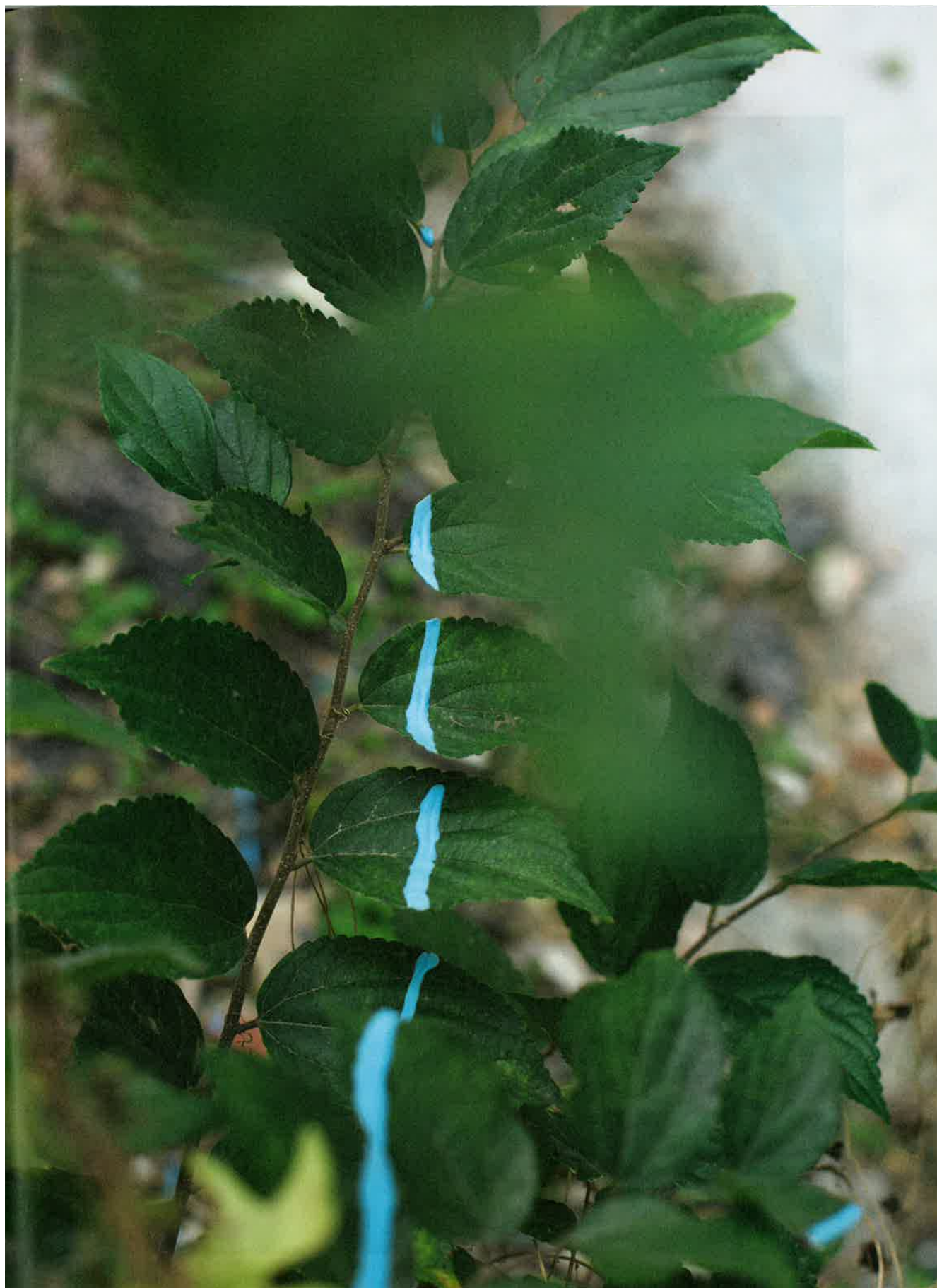
notamment contre le Brexit, n'épargnent ni la rue, ni Instagram. Le portfolio que l'artiste a composé pour *Les Inrocks* témoigne de cet engagement. Issues d'une nouvelle recherche initiée en septembre 2017, ses images à la lisière du visible explorent le phénomène paranoïaque de l'"effet rebond" ("*backfire effect*"), où la conviction d'avoir raison l'emporte sur les faits rationnels. ●

Expo Du 4 mai au 16 septembre, Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes (30)

Musique *Source* de Wolfgang Tillmans, disponible le 4 mai en vinyle et en streaming. La version originale est une pièce vocale de 16 min, remixée par le DJ et producteur allemand Roman Flügel

Inrockuptibles

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

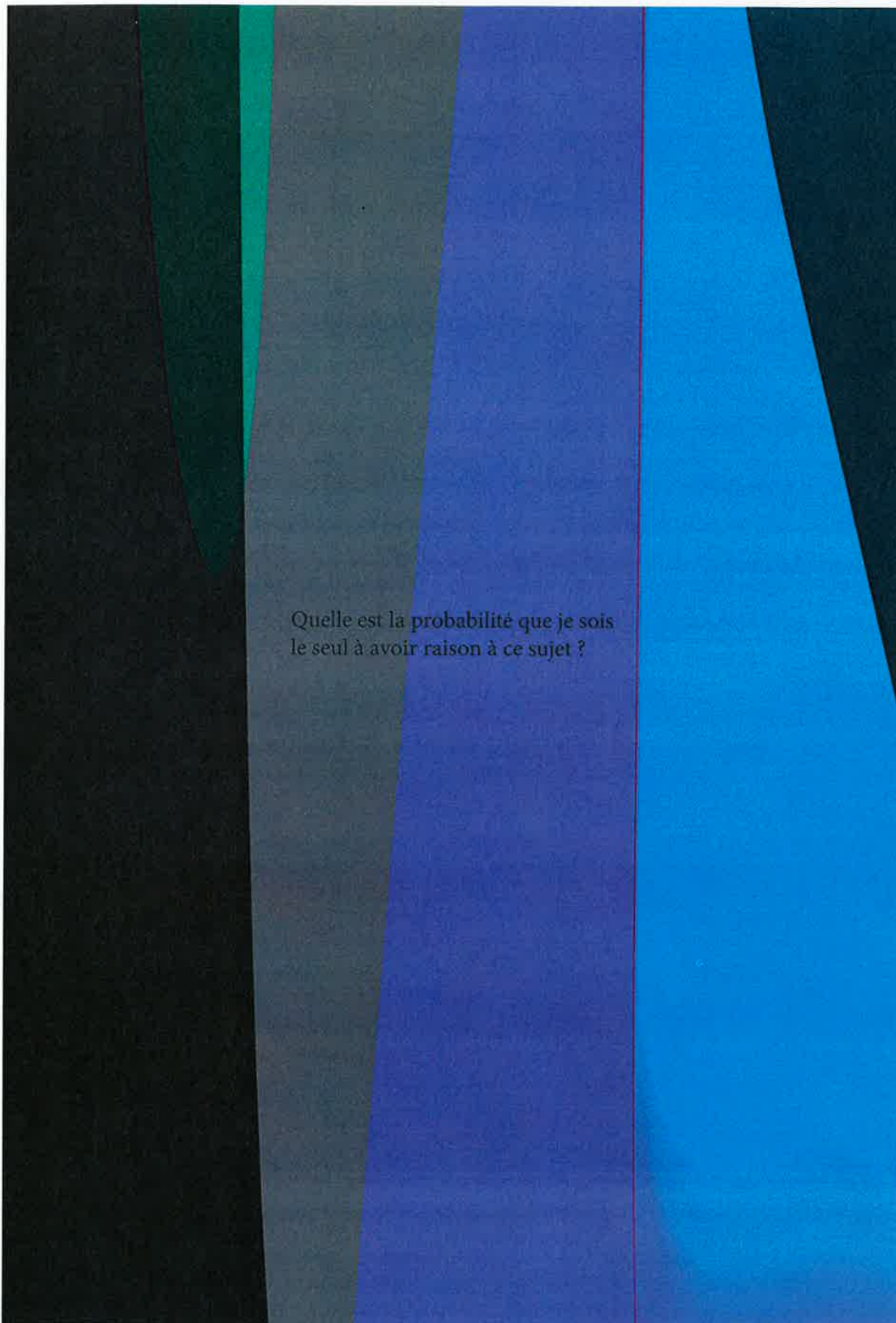


Les Inrockuptibles

Portfolio Wolfgang Tillmans

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Quelle est la probabilité que je sois le seul à avoir raison à ce sujet?; 2017. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

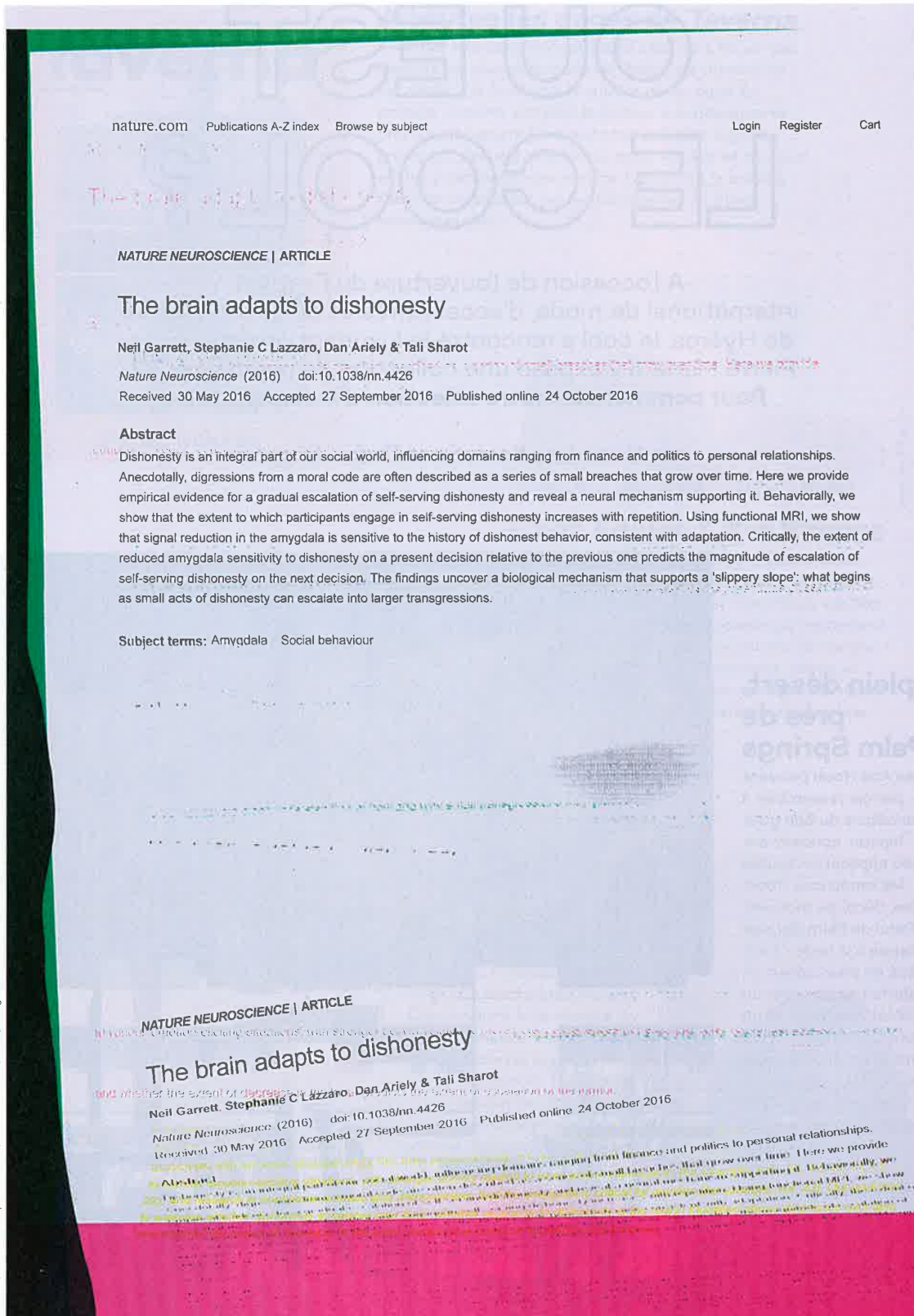


Inrockuptibles

Portfolio Wolfgang Tillmans

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

CLC 001, 2017. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris



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NATURE NEUROSCIENCE | ARTICLE

The brain adapts to dishonesty

Neil Garrett, Stephanie C Lazzaro, Dan Ariely & Tali Sharot

Nature Neuroscience (2016) doi:10.1038/nn.4426

Received 30 May 2016 Accepted 27 September 2016 Published online 24 October 2016

Abstract

Dishonesty is an integral part of our social world, influencing domains ranging from finance and politics to personal relationships. Anecdotally, digressions from a moral code are often described as a series of small breaches that grow over time. Here we provide empirical evidence for a gradual escalation of self-serving dishonesty and reveal a neural mechanism supporting it. Behaviorally, we show that the extent to which participants engage in self-serving dishonesty increases with repetition. Using functional MRI, we show that signal reduction in the amygdala is sensitive to the history of dishonest behavior, consistent with adaptation. Critically, the extent of reduced amygdala sensitivity to dishonesty on a present decision relative to the previous one predicts the magnitude of escalation of self-serving dishonesty on the next decision. The findings uncover a biological mechanism that supports a 'slippery slope': what begins as small acts of dishonesty can escalate into larger transgressions.

Subject terms: Amygdala Social behaviour

NATURE NEUROSCIENCE | ARTICLE

The brain adapts to dishonesty

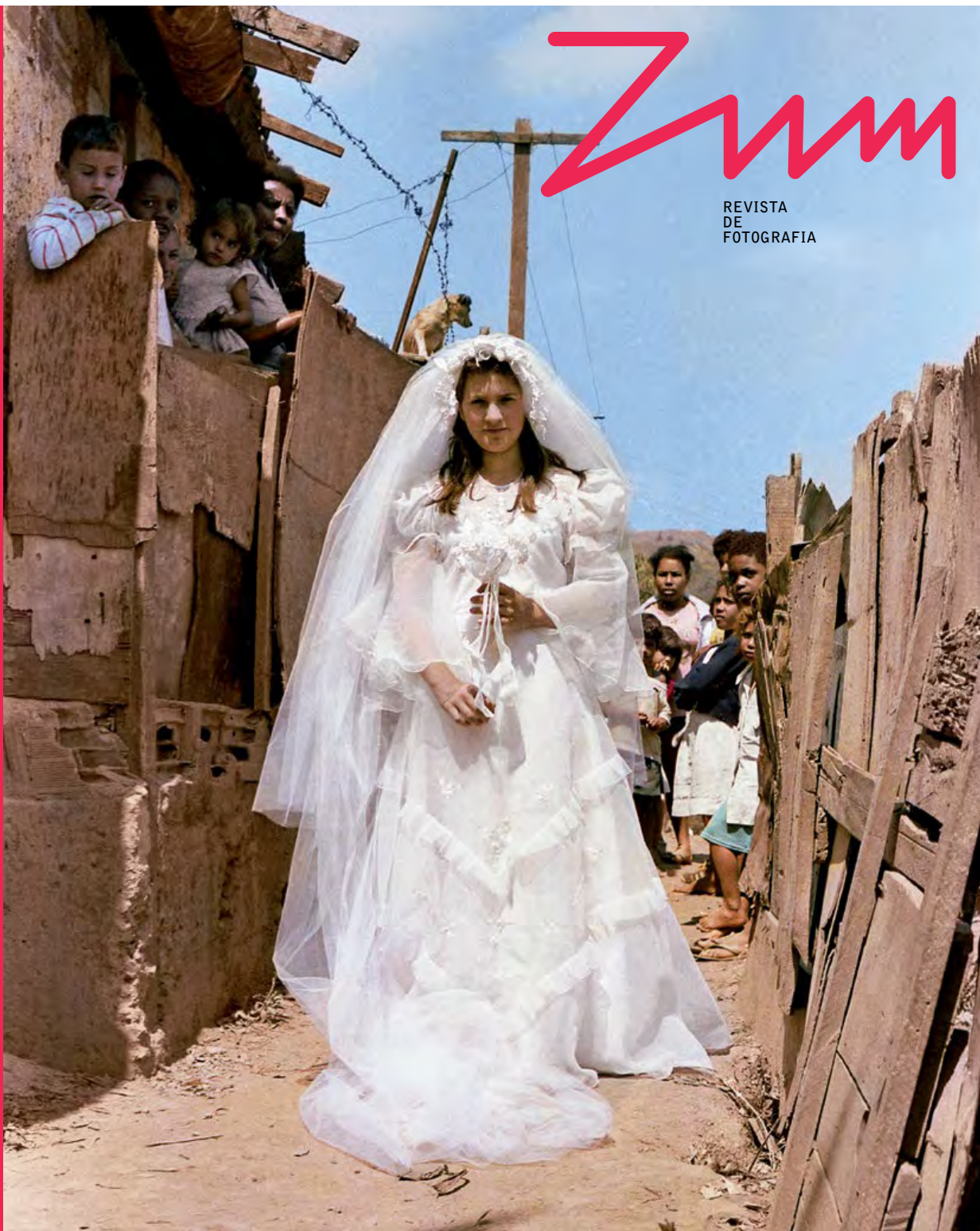
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THE FORM OF FREEDOM

By WOLFGANG TILLMANS

Looking back at his artistic development, the German photographer WOLFGANG TILLMANS reflects on his interest for youth and urban culture and his fascination for Astronomy and Painting.

After having experimented with a number of media, from singing in a band to making dresses, to painting, and drawing, I came across a photocopier, the first digital photocopier, in 1986, in a copy shop in my hometown, and realized its great potential of reproducing halftone images with an enlargement of up to 400%. After having worked with different expressive modes, I was totally taken by this potential of a mechanically produced image that didn't really get touched by me, but was still made by the touch of a button. And yet, out of this industrially produced sheet of A3 paper, a transformation happened into an object that I held with great esteem and great appreciation. That interest in the texture, in the surface of the photographic print, has stayed with me ever since. I've been ever since also open to digital printing, at the time when that was not, of course, widely used. But I have, until a couple of years ago, never believed in digital image taking. When I made my first little exhibitions in Hamburg, in 1988-89, I realized I needed my own camera to make more pictures that I could then photocopy. And that's how I really ended up at photography.

At the same time, "acid house" happened and I was, for the first time, part of a youth culture, a movement. And I greatly embraced this liberating music and club life, which was in such stark contrast to the posy-dressy 1980s. That particular late 1980s, early 1990s music scene was so powerful because it was non-hierarchical, all-inclusive, and of course a bit mind-expanding as well.

Very early on, I recognized the potential of photography speaking about three-dimensional issues. The relationship between photography and sculpture is to me very strong.

Grey jeans over a stair post (1991), deals with personal subject matter, not really in a "diary-istic" way, but in a general way. I was not talking about somebody's specific jeans, I was trying to speak about the meaning of clothes, the essential aspects of these membranes that are between our bodies and the world. *Still life Talbot Rd* is also from 1991. Both types of pictures – the one of the art historical genre of drapery, and the still life –, are parts of an ongoing interest. They're not series; I don't really ever work in a serial mode. I don't make them in an art historical reference, they're not meant to be primarily read through art history. Instead, I see that the still lives on window ledges from 400 years ago are there because also those artists have been drawn to the particular situation between inside and outside, or that fold of fabric is of a deeper interest and potentially of greater meaning, even though it is so inconsequential and insubstantial. Without referencing art history, I feel that these different genres have come into my work, and that they are there co-existing ever since.

I have also been greatly inspired by magazines and by the immediacy that a magazine can have on the viewer. You can find it anywhere, it can travel much easier than an exhibition. So, the potential of the printed page, just like the potential of the photocopy as a venue for art, has been with me from the start. I approached the *i-D* magazine, which at the time was an alternative non-commercial journal, documenting urban youth culture, and started to take photographs for them. I realized that the fashion pages in these magazines are really the only pages where you can publish pictures that have no particular agenda. From the mid 1990s onwards, fashion magazines have become completely and utterly linked to the advertisers. But in these days I did actually style these photographs, I chose the clothes and made my observations or comments on, for example, the depiction of genders in the media. For example, that toplessness in women is not equal toplessness in men (*Lutz & Alex holding cock*, 1992); to get an equality it should really have a bottomless in men. Simultaneously, I carried on exhibiting these pictures and have been very at ease about them existing in magazines, as well as on gallery walls. That has not been an easy position to take and, for a long time, my practice was being read in a hierarchical way, as if no artist could deliberately choose to publish in magazines. I was always seen as a magazine photographer who moved into art. I find it interesting that it is continuously the case: applied arts seemingly preclude the fine arts practice.

Those 1990s were... those 90s!... I mean, I was very enthusiastic and excited about exploring what one would cover under the um-

brella of the term *identity*, and how it is a fractured one; how it is not one single entity, but it is composed out of different aspects, of different layers. For example, the use of military clothes (*Lutz, Alex, Suzanne & Christoph on beach (orange)*, 1993), which have been altered in their meanings. All of this also loosely circling around the politics of the body, and trying to show pictures of people not afraid of their bodies; a free and playful use of their bodies and sexuality, not in an exploitative, but in an equal and participatory way.

I recreated one of my first exhibitions, which I also consider my first show after the photocopy works of the late 1980s. This was in 1993, at Daniel Buchholz gallery, in Cologne. To show the equivalents between a hand-printed fine photographic print that I made with my own hands, and a magazine page which has been printed for 30000 copies, but which had been laid out and designed by me, I showed these side by side: the prints carefully taped, so one can remove the tape, and the magazine pages pinned, because the tape would tear the different paper. All of this has been about the purity of the objects. To not frame them has been really about showing it in the way it would lie in my hands in front of me. This way of installing doesn't speak the language of importance of framing one piece and presenting it on a big white wall.

The portrait is also something that stays with me and that I would find difficult or problematic if I got tired of it, because it is an exercise in alertness where no recipe can help. If you go into the situation with a sense of security, then the photograph will look exactly like that. And that is an axiom that I found generally to be true. Photography always lies about what's in front of the camera, but it never lies about what is behind, it always clearly reveals the intentions that are behind. So, if you are in a portrait situation and you're not open, you're just putting the person into a pre-set idea. Then, photography will only speak about that pre-set idea. Allowing and being as prepared as possible for what might happen, while staying open for what chance may come into play, is my way of working. That is hard to maintain because the moment you think you know how it works, the parameters have already changed. This openness is an ongoing challenge, which doesn't get easier the longer one works. *Deer Hirsch* (1995), for example, is a good illustration of this correlation of chance and control. What looks like a heavily staged photograph has actually been a chance encounter on a beach in Long Island, where there happen to be wild deer. We were feeding our food to the greedy deer and, then, when nothing was left, Jochen was gesticulating that there's nothing left in his hands. I saw that and just said:

[6]

hold it! I just rewound the situation by one second, and took this photograph of an attempted communication between animal and human.

People occasionally say that I look at everything, that I'm all-consuming eye, and I beg to differ. I think I do not photograph everything, not everything all the time. When I have arrived at a picture of something that holds the essence of what that experience, that object or that subject might be, I don't embark on an entire series, I just rest with that. For example, for some people, my photograph *Hallenbad Detail* (1995) might contain the smell and remind them of their own experience in a place like that, and that point of connection interests me. I still try to photograph every sunset that moves me, however hard that is. Is it possible to take another photograph of this? Is it possible to make something new in the face of potentially completely exhausted subject matter? That challenge continues to excite me: the transformative power of photography, the way you look at things, and the way they will look back.

From 2000 – really from 1998, but more visibly from 2000 –, I included work that was not made with a camera, that was non-figurative and pretty much abstract in nature. There was a sense of surprise which I could never quite share, because I felt that abstraction has been within my work from the start, from the early black and white photocopies. The work called *Concorde*, from 1997, which first was a book of 64 photographs and, shortly after, a grid of 56 photographs of the supersonic airliner which had intrigued me for years because, at the time, it was the last and only thing left from the space age that was fully functioning in the way it was originally designed. Other things from the 1960s that were made from this belief of a better future through technology had been defunct, had been abandoned, or had to be repaired three times over. But *Concorde* was this icon, this image of overcoming time and space through technology. That straight forward belief was of course no longer available for my generation, and so this really is a work functioning on many levels. It may also be a love story, the work of two nations, and also an abstract piece of 56 colour gradations.

It took me years to finally act on this little seedling of an idea that popped-up occasionally in my head, and that is what I want to address the students present tonight about. I found that it is crucial to take these ideas seriously, ideas that are seemingly unimportant or inconsequential, that don't feel big. But if they knock on your conscious three times, then it's usually a good moment to take them seriously and to act on them. Because those things that come up from the subconscious or

semi-conscious, and mix with the conscious, those are the things that are truly yours and are not ideas that have been invented, that have been made up. I guess when one talks about art and making art it is by nature language driven. But visual art is not primarily driven by language and there is a dichotomy in that when one is, on the one hand, constantly forced to talk about it, and language seems to favor ideas, and, on the other hand, one also shouldn't blindly follow any idea that comes to mind. It's a difficult equilibrium. That's why I usually find the serial work that is just an idea, and then played out forever and ever again, less interesting, unless it is for a particular reason.

Here's an example of the *Blushes*, which is a 24 × 20 inches C-print a color photograph (*Blushes #3*), which I began making in 2000. I never felt a particular allegiance to the camera as such. I love the camera and photography because it can speak so easily, it can communicate so freely, and can be expressive without the weight of expressive gestures that, for example, comes with painting. I found that lack of expressiveness on the surface very liberating, and this allowed me to make pictures that wouldn't probably be possible for me to make when painted, even though they are painterly in some way. It is really important that they are photographs. The brain instantly connects to them on a realistic level, trying to connect them to reality and removes this sense that each mark has been made by the artist's hand. Another type of semi-abstract figurative work also emerged in 2000. This one called *I don't want to get over you* (2000) was the centre piece of my Turner Prize presentation in 2000, and, from the year after, the photograph called *New Family* give good examples of the co-existence of abstraction and figuration, and abstract elements in figurative pictures.

Somehow my visual initiation was as a child through Astronomy, I can't quite explain... There was a little book I found in my parents bookshelf, an introduction to Astronomy, and it completely got me hooked until I was 14. That experience of intense observation, of looking at dots of light for hours, I believe has had an important influence on me. And I stayed fondly connected to the subject. When I was 10-11 years old I knew that when I'd be 36 years old there would be a transit of Venus happening, which is an extremely rare astronomical phenomenon taking place every 128 years and then 8 years after once more and then not for another 128 years. And what happens is that the planet Venus, the Earth, and the Sun are perfectly aligned – just as it happens in a total solar eclipse where Moon, Earth and Sun are perfectly aligned. And then you see the little disk of Venus move over the duration of six hours over the disk of the Sun. So

what you here see is: the pink circle is the Sun, the spot is Venus (*Venus transit*, 2004). This was of particular importance in Science History, which led actually to the discovery of New Zealand and Australia by Captain Cook, who went out on a mission to time the entry of Venus and the exit of Venus into the disk of the Sun, compared to the same timing taking place in London, and from the two time keepings one hoped to determine the parallax, and determine the distance of Earth to the Sun. So it was really the only way at the time to locate ourselves in the universe, where we are in relation to what surrounds us. For me that was an extremely moving experience to see, like the mechanics of the solar system right in front of your eye.

For years I admired in museums the *Spi-nario* subject matter for antique sculptures, usually a young person pulling a splinter from their foot. Because again it is such a universal experience of how everything is of relative importance and if you have a splinter in your foot the entire world around you could collapse, you only want to get that splinter out of your foot. One day I walked into the living room and my boyfriend Anders was completely absorbed trying to remove a splinter from his foot, and this picture (*Anders pulling splinter from his foot*, 2004) was completely not set up or made in any way in reference to the historical forefathers, but of course stays in direct lineage to it.

The interest in paper – in the three-dimensional presence of paper – is something that struck me in 2000/2001, when I realized that really absolutely everything I do is on paper. And I began photographing photographic paper. This was the first, in 2001, which I called *paper drop*, it was a sheet hanging curling on a wall. Five years later, I came back to the subject, then folded paper over onto itself and photographed it with a very shallow depth of field, so there is only the very rim/edge in focus, and everything, in front and behind, it is out of focus and, then, this strange two-dimensional/three-dimensional looking drop shape works emerged.

Ten years ago, when I last held a talk at the Royal Academy, then in connection with the *Apocalypse* show, the pictures were shown as analogue slides, and showed of course so much more detail than the digital projector, which is a kind of a nemesis of any artist's work. It is just interesting how we freely accept lesser quality through technology. We're all watching YouTube, we're all watching the films in the worst possible resolution and think this is an advance. But anyway these are really actually quite beautiful in real life and they are called *Siber*, a family begun in 1998 and continuing. They are the opposite of the abstract pictures that I make with lights on pa-

per in the dark room, where I use different light sources, manipulate them over light sensitive paper in darkness, and then process the paper normally through the conventional process. These *Silver* works are actually chemograms, made with wasted chemicals, picking up the dirt from the rollers of machines. They are mechanical pictures. And all I do is set up the parameter surrounding their making, they don't have my hand involved, and they are usually enlarged to 1,80m x 2,40m.

In 2005, I also made a transition into actually three-dimensional photographs that have been folded or creased either before exposure or after exposure, after processing different modes that lead to different results, again still fully, and 100% photographs, but now again a photograph with no subject, more with an object inserted into them. They become photographs that reject the natural role of depiction because they are things themselves, which is of course the case for all photographs; I've seen them always as extremely flat cubes. Here, in the photographs called *Lighter*, in reference to cigarette lighters that play a role in their making, their emancipation of the role of depiction becomes more fully apparent. After ten years of primarily exploring the relation of abstraction and figuration, I've felt from 2009 a renewed interest in looking at the world. How does the world look like twenty years after I began my career? I have travelled extensively and photographed a great deal with a camera; and also a new type of camera, a new technology has finally allowed the digital camera to be better than film camera. For years I've been asked "do you photograph digital?", and I said "what's the point? A 100 ASA film has 14 megapixels and your camera has 6, so why should I use digital?". I mean, it's all about resolution. Now the threshold has been crossed and new full format chip cameras allow an exact optical performance like a 35mm camera. They act exactly as my 35mm film camera, but they have a higher resolution, so now that has become for me natural to of course use that, because it is a true advantage that however co-exists with film. This interest in technology it is not only in my own medium but also in the world, looking at things that simply have not been there before.

In 2008, in the preparation for the Venice Biennale where I had a major installation, I travelled to different borders, and I went to Tunisia to the place where the boats of refugees left for the Italian island of Lampedusa, and I travelled to Lampedusa, where those boats landed. They of course all arrive in these hardly sea worthy boats that are basically one-way journeys. The Italian authorities don't send the boats back; they take them out of the water and destroy them on a gigantic ship-graveyard (*Lampedusa*, 2008).

At the Walker Art Gallery, in Liverpool, in 2010, I had an exhibition where I was invited to integrate twelve works that the Art Council Collection had acquired, plus three that I added to the group. I was given carte blanche to move, remove, insert, and combine them with my own work. There was a Flemish tapestry of the same size and I replaced it by *Freischwimmer 155*, an inkjet print. There were interesting and unexpected relations happening in the room between the presences of the huge steel blue colour and the most of the skies in the old Baroque paintings.

In 2006, in Los Angeles, the Truth Study Center Installation, which has a title a little tongue in cheek, is a response to the polyphony that surrounds us. I also use my work as an amplifier, using the medium to promote causes. I found myself powerless in the light of what happened in the last decade, and often found the newspapers articles commentary much more to the point. So I included them and placed them around. It's all about different levels of perception and clarity of seeing.

Very occasionally I have a moment of seeing a person in a painting, and then feeling compelled to portray, re-portray this person. It's not really an act of art appropriation, but re-framing the person in the first degree. This photograph (*The Cock (kiss)*, 2002) of two guys kissing got slashed by a visitor at the Hirshhorn Museum, in Washington. I'm always aware that one should never take things for granted, never take liberties for granted. For hundreds and hundreds of years this was not normal, not acceptable, and this term of acceptable is really what I connect beauty to. So, sometimes I'm said to be turning everyday subject matter into beautiful things, and I find that a bit uncritical, unless it is connected to that beauty that is of course always political, as in it describes what is acceptable or desirable in society. That is never fixed, and always needs reaffirming and defending. ///

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CAPTIONS p. 47: *The Cock (kiss)*, 2002 p. 49: *Grey jeans over a stair post*, 1991 p. 51: *Still life Talbot Rd*, 1991 p. 52: *Lutz & Alex holding cock*, 1992 p. 53: *Lutz, Alex, Suzanne & Christoph on beach (orange)*, 1993 p. 55: *Deer Hirsch*, 1995 p. 57: *Hallenbad Swimming Pool, detail*, 1995 pp. 58-59: *Concorde grid*, 1997 p. 60: *Blushes #3*, 2000 p. 61: *I don't want to get over you*, 2000 p. 63: *Anders pulling splinter from his foot*, 2004 p. 64: *Venus transit*, 2004 p. 65: *paper drop*, 2001 p. 67: *Silver 50*, 2006 p. 68: *Lighter, Red II*, 2008 p. 69: *Freischwimmer 155*, 2010 pp. 70-71: *New Family*, 2001 p. 73: *Lampedusa*, 2008.



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Jeans cinza sobre corrimão, 1991

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Natureza-morta, estrada Talbot, 1991

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Lutz & Alex
segurando pau,
1992

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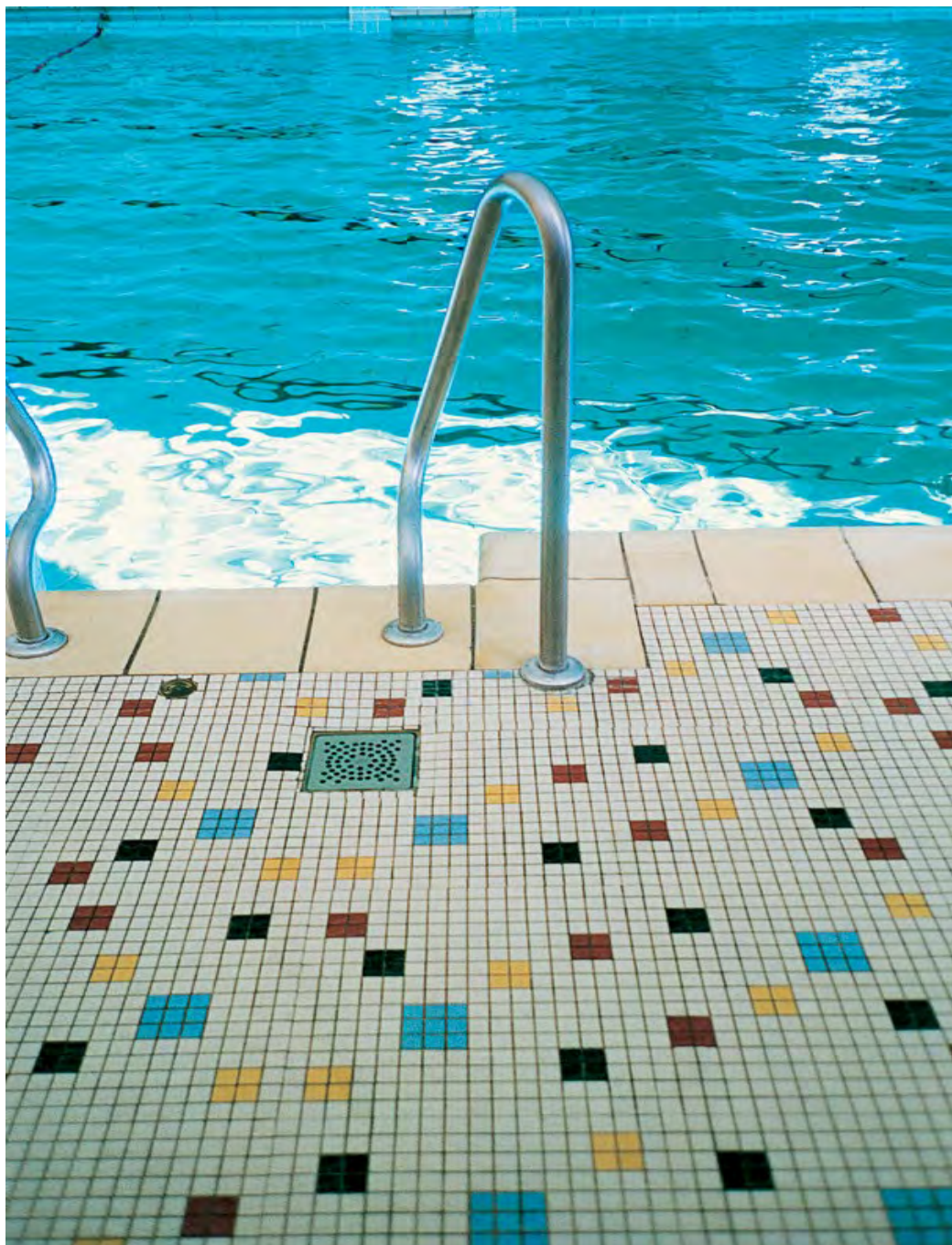
*Lutz, Alex,
Suzanne &
Christoph na
praia (laranja),
1993*

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Veado, 1995

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*Piscina coberta,
detalhe, 1995*

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Concorde (grid), 1997

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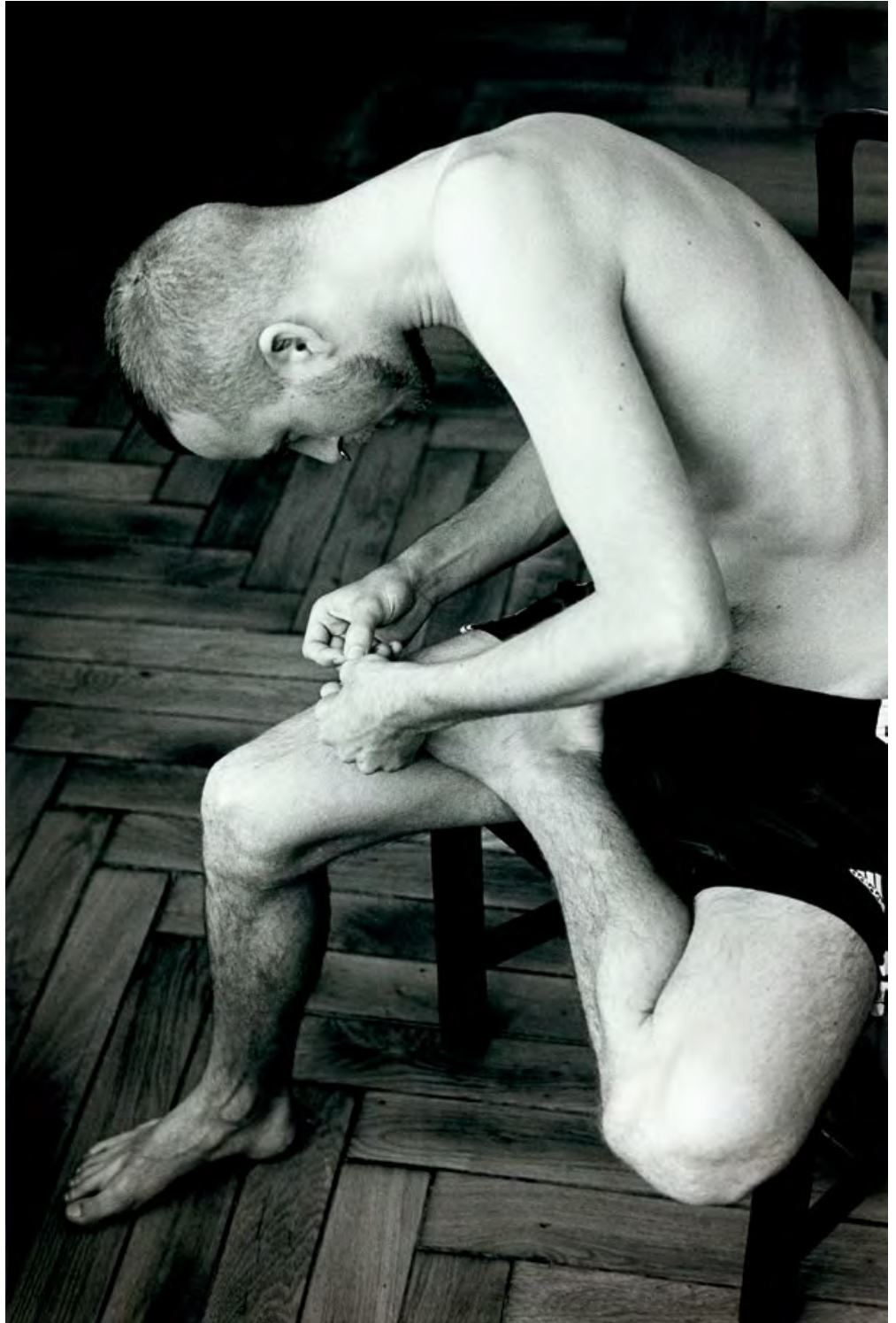
Borrões 3, 2000

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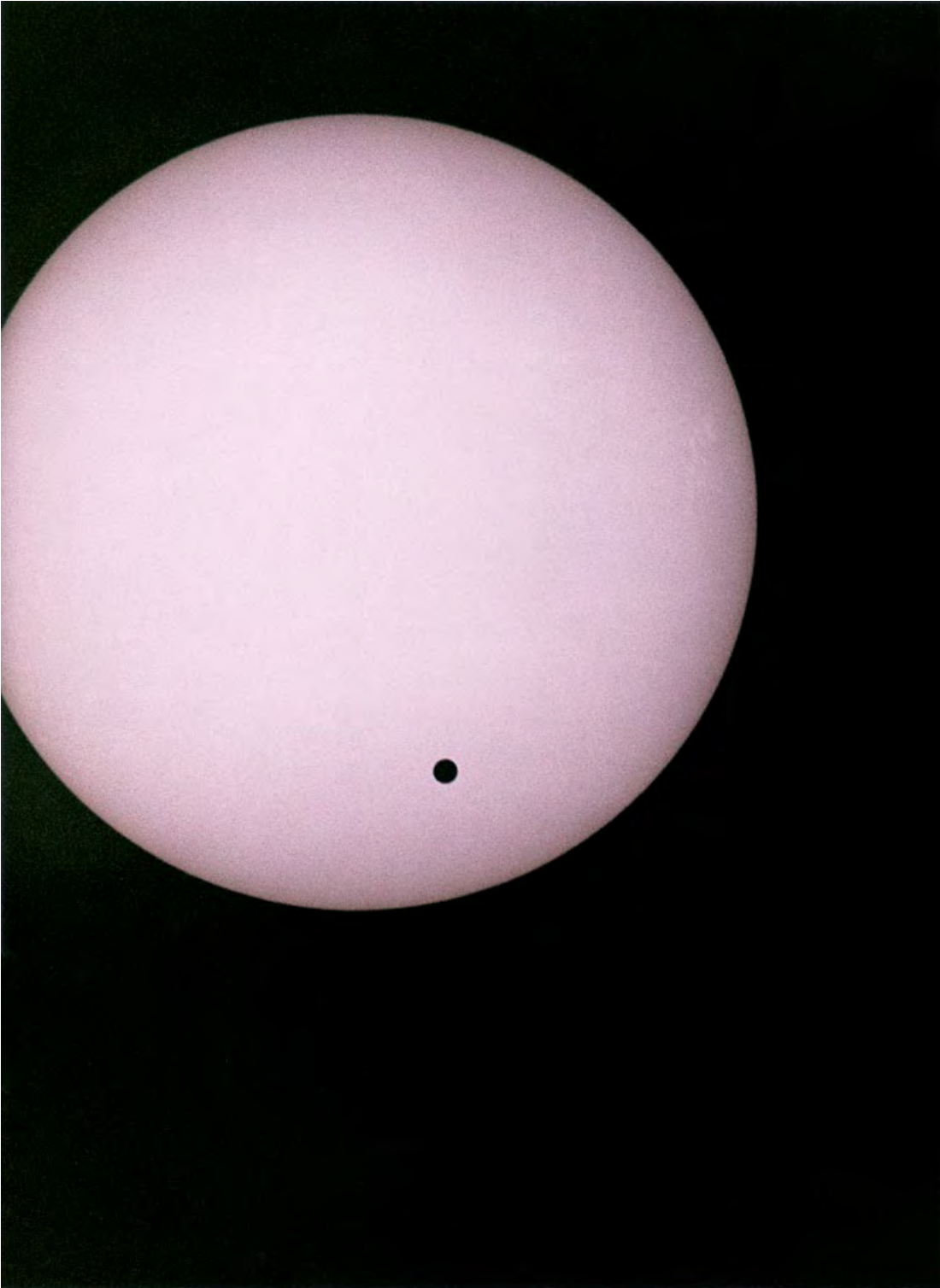
Eu não quero esquecer você, 2000

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*Anders tirando
farpa do pé, 2004*

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*Trânsito de
Vênus, 2004*

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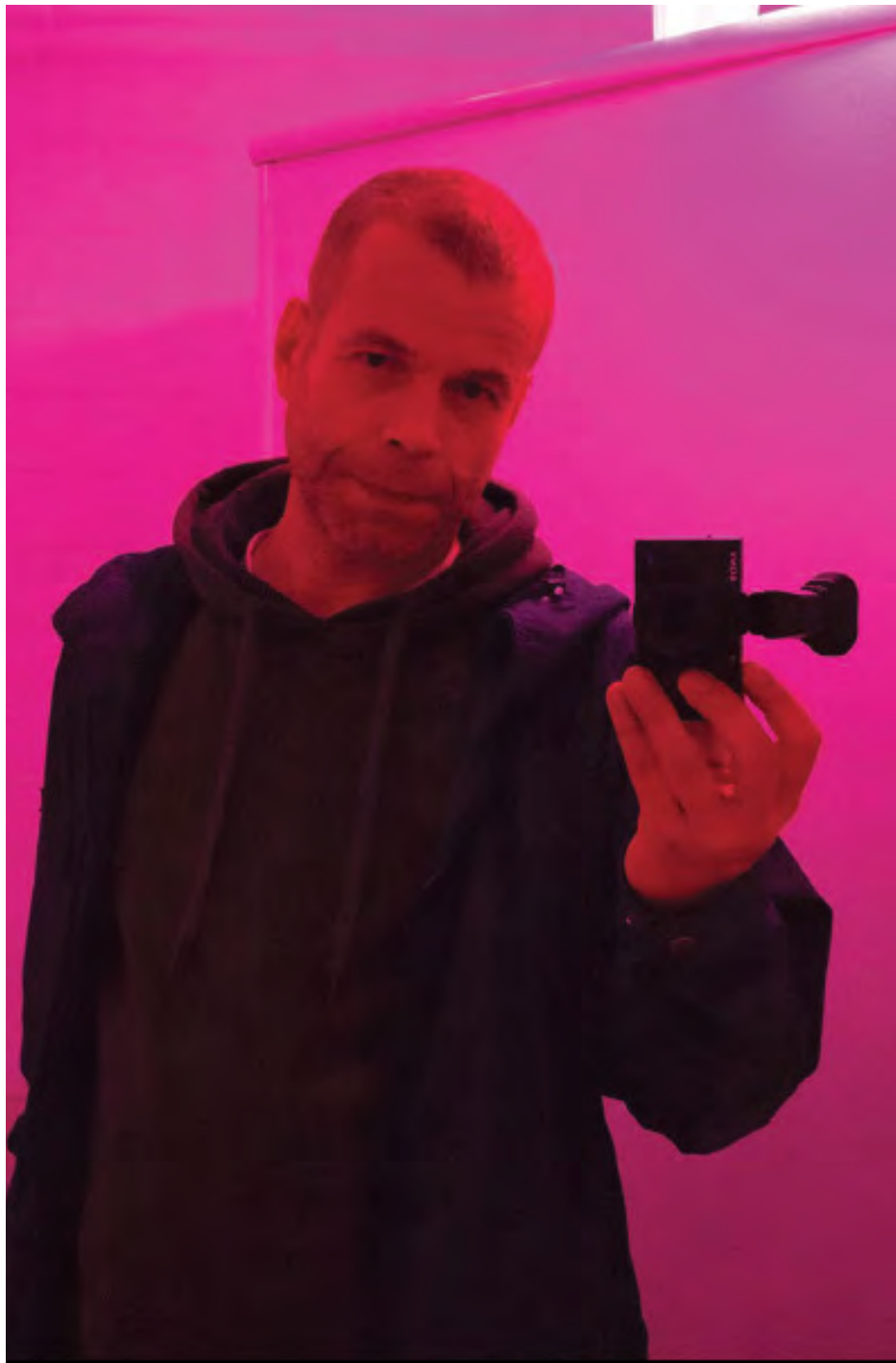
Papel pendurado, 2001

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Prata 50,
2006



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Wolfgang Tillmans

**What's on during Art Basel Hong Kong
Shanzhai special**

Wolfgang Tillmans

On the limits of seeing in a high-definition world

ARTREVIEW ASIA *Do you feel that your work is received differently in Asia than it is in Europe?*

WOLFGANG TILLMANS During interviews with Japanese critics in the early to mid-1990s, I noticed that they picked out different and deeper meanings in my work. While Western writers were more interested in the social narrative of clubbing or youth culture, the Japanese accessed my work on a more spiritual level. They were concerned with different states of being and the interplay, or the suspense, between chance and control in my work. That we are all 'in-between' is at the heart of what I do. The subject matter is only a means of talking about those overarching philosophical concerns.

ARA *Your work quickly gained a reputation in Japan, but it took much longer for a show to happen in China.*

WT I'm a latecomer to Hong Kong and China, because I've only shown there once before, as part of a group show at Leo Xu in Shanghai [in 2012]. I've only been to China twice.

I'm fascinated by how China is, of course, connected via land to Europe: Japan is an island, but you can take the train to China. I've always been interested in borders and limits, and the question of when you notice a change. Taking the superficial view, you would think that Europeans and Chinese are very different. But when you look at that shift gradually – you go from Europe to Iran, then to Afghanistan, and you're neighbouring China – you see that everything is transitional. It's not clean-cut.

We are not as different as we are often taught to think we are. That is what I realised again and again in my relationship with Asia. That Europe and Asia are much closer than we think. Because I am a photographer primarily, there's the assumption that this needs to show in the work or in the subject matter, but I'm not sure that the photographs I take in Asia are really *about* Asia.

ARA *In the catalogue for your Hong Kong exhibition you have reproduced an email conversation with a printing company you contacted in response to a spam email. How did that dialogue start?*

WT It was just by chance. The email caught my eye because it was so unsophisticated and

innocent. I thought that, rather than malicious phishers, these might be real people. So I wrote back, and their response was quite touching. They explained they were young and sending out random emails to find customers for their printing business. We think of it as spam, but it is no different than a leaflet through the letter-box. They really were trying to find clients, but I naturally assumed that it was some terrible virus or phishing scam.

ARA *Why did you want to include this in the catalogue? It's a very beautiful story, very funny, even flirty.*

WT I see this catalogue as an artist's book. I like to explore different materialities in books, different ways of thinking. It's not just a representation of images, it's a book of poetry. When I was laying out the book, I thought of it as writing. I can't tell you the story in words, but I feel it in the sequence of pictures. The book is about language, but not necessarily a verbal or literary language. Text is included in my recent pictures, including the works exhibited in this show.

And I considered this exchange with [the printer] Klaus as a kind of concrete poetry.

ARA *The conversation reminded me of Manuel Puig's Kiss of the Spider Woman [1976]. It's about two inmates, a political prisoner and a thief, and in each chapter one of the guys tells the story of a film they've seen.*

WT I never understood myself as speaking only through photography. I feel like I can say almost everything I want to with photography, and I still haven't got tired of it, but on the other hand it is only one medium. More and more, I realise that language is something I care about and have developed more as a medium in the shape of interviews and lectures. The lectures are like 80-minute performances, with language, pictures and silence. This performative element moved into video and finally back into music. Music is a lot about words being spoken and sung.

ARA *The exhibition at David Zwirner's Hong Kong space will include images of Shenzhen, Macau and Hong Kong, all of which are political and geographical borders inside China. I'm curious about why you chose to photograph those places.*

WT The Macau picture is from 1993, which is the first time I was in Macau and the last time I was in Hong Kong, so there's been 25 years between my two visits. Back then I wanted to see the border with China. I'm interested in understanding the difference across a border when the earth – the ground, the matter – is the same. I never took borders for granted, and I don't necessarily want to tear them down, but I do want to understand them in their material reality. To feel them.

Clothes also interest me, this thin layer of fabric that conceals plain human bodies that are pretty much the same. The putting on of clothes changes so much. A uniform creates authority and distance, which is in a way ridiculous, because it's just a piece of fabric, it's nothing. A pair of ripped jeans is seen by a parent as something that should be thrown away, and by a teenager as the most beloved piece of clothing.

ARA *Clothes are an artificial border against your natural body.*

WT Yes. I acknowledge that there are borders between people, language and races. But I think that by looking at them, touching them, smelling them, feeling them, you can also see them for what they are. Strangely, that's the visible medium of photography. It's not a scientific way of looking deeper, but it does put me into situations where I can explore those limits, whether that's being at a border or looking through an extremely large telescope. I spent a weekend in Chile at an observatory, looking at the border of the visible.

ARA *The far end of the universe.*

WT Astronomy is located at the limit. Can I see something there? Is that a detail or is it just noise in the camera sensor? By going to the limits, to the borders, I find comfort in being in-between. I always felt held in-between the infinite smallness of subatomic space and the infinite largeness of the cosmos. It gives me comfort to feel infinity.

ARA *How does that experience, that feeling, relate to your high-resolution digital photographs, which are printed at a very large scale? Those images are so massive, contain so much detailed visual information, that they are overwhelming.*

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WT I wasn't originally interested in super-sharp, large format film, because I wanted my photographs to describe how it feels to look through my eyes. For that, 100 ASA 35mm film is close enough to how I feel things look. But since 1995 I have also shown very large photographs, the largest of which is called *Wake* [2001], recently shown at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin [the inkjet print is 545 × 807 cm]. Those pictures were made with 35mm negatives, but in 2009 I started to work with a high-resolution digital camera. Suddenly I found myself with an instrument in my hand that was as powerful as a large-format camera. It took me three years to learn how to speak with this new language. By 2012, the whole world had become high-definition. Being able to zoom in on a huge print, and still see detail after detail, is how the world feels now, through my eyes. I'm grateful that I was able to make that development from film to high-resolution digital, because it opened up a new language in the history of art.

One of the pictures, included in the Hong Kong exhibition, showing the texture of wood and an onion [*Sections*, 2017], is of such shocking clarity that you find yourself facing an idea of infinity. These pictures contain more information than you can ever remember. Only these large-format prints are able to display the full range of detail, colour and scale, and so digital has actually made the objects almost more unique. The object can only be experienced in the full depth of its presence and its material reality in that room at that time.

ARA *This material reality is only accessible through the picture. The eyes can't process so much information in one go.*

WT I find that miraculous. There's something deeply philosophical in having to learn to let go of information. It's an analogy for the information age, and the challenge of valuing things at the same time as being prepared to let them go. To understand everything as the same, and yet to decide that some things are more valuable than others. I choose to value certain things, and at the same time to understand that everything is materially equal, if we accept that things are infinite. That's a strange opposite.

ARA *Much of your new work, specifically the Neue Welt series [2009–13], is made while travelling. You've said that you're very conscious of your status as an outsider when taking these pictures, so how do you make them relevant to your own world and your own practice?*

WT It's a huge challenge, and much of what we've talked about is relevant to the *Neue Welt* series: learning a new language, learning a new subject.

ARA *What is the connection between yourself and the scene you've captured?*

WT The main thing is to understand desire. The desire to possess, the desire to own or to control, the desire to interpret: they all make for bad art. Only when I look without this possessive desire is there an understanding or a connection between myself and the subject. The camera is something that I put between myself and the subject; it is not a tool for possession or acquisition, but a recorder of what my mind sees.

Desire for beauty or for a person or for longing can, in itself, be a beautiful thing. The moment your art makes a claim to control, or claims sovereignty of interpretation, then it's just ugly. But if you are genuinely interested in something, it is difficult to go wrong. Your art is only as interesting as your thoughts about the world. If you have a boring mind, if you're not interested in the world, then you can't see anything interesting in it. Your pictures would only talk about the desire to see something, without actually seeing it. I find science and news photography inspiring because the takers are really *interested* in what they're looking at. They're not interested in being seen to look at something, but they are interested in looking at something. That's the danger of our time: that people are only interested in being seen as being interested. People taking pictures because they want to be seen taking pictures.

ARA *Your most celebrated portraits are of people that you are familiar with, with whom you have a relationship. But Neue Welt includes photos of strangers, and I'm curious about how that feels. You're not a photojournalist, and so I wonder if that brings its own pressures.*

WT I can't answer this straightforwardly because it really is very difficult to overcome or go beyond the circumstances I described: this possessive desire to capture, to own, to grab. A photograph, like other artworks, speaks very clearly about the intentions behind its making. When the intention is just to capture an exotic person, it's not interesting; when there are two strangers looking at each other without trust, affection or interest, then that is all you get in the picture. I'm not interested in a picture of misunderstanding. In the exhibition in Hong Kong, there are three portraits of strangers. Two took place in the few minutes after the total eclipse in Illinois, and there was maybe this shared experience that connected people.

ARA *How did you approach the subjects?*

WT For the portrait of a young woman in Kinshasa, Congo [*Patricia*, 2018], I came twice to her shop. It took some courage to ask if I could take her portrait. I needed to know that I wasn't intruding, that she was willing to give me her picture. You have to be given a picture. I don't take a portrait, I receive a portrait. It's only what

people are prepared to give you that you can capture. This cannot happen five times a day. Maybe five times a year; for me it's a very rare thing. I am respectful of this. If you want more, it *looks* like you want more. It's the same with a still life: it is only when I'm really interested in the objects that a good still life happens.

In a way, art is so easy. All you have to do is be honest and see what you're really interested in. As a young artist you think that your desire to express yourself is special, but among artists it is of course not special. The art is to *hide* your desire to express yourself. That is the single least interesting thing about yourself. We all want to look good, we all want to express ourselves, we all want to be unique, but what are you actually interested in other than yourself?

ARA *Why did you decide to bring the 25-year-old images that you took on your last visit to Hong Kong back to life for this exhibition? And what did those images mean to you?*

WT They were alive already. The photographs were first published in a book by Taschen [*Wolfgang Tillmans*, 1995], which included three pictures from Hong Kong. They were a kind of symbol, a placeholder for something I didn't understand. *Hong Kong TV Reporter* (1993) was a placeholder for the many situations that seemed to me staged and absurd, narratives I could never understand. My work up to that point had described communities that I felt close to. So these situations that are so intense and super-specific – the TV reporter in the meat market or the Filipino housemaids [*Hong Kong, Filipinas on street*, 1993] – were very strange. All I could do was show them as a fascination; as something that I had no power to interpret. I had nothing to say.

ARA *But these things drew your attention. Why did you take the photo of the same subject 25 years later?*

WT I'm very happy about the new picture [*Playing Cards, Hong Kong*, 2018]. Even though it's this very specific situation in Hong Kong, it really speaks about playing cards: this all-ages activity. The gestures of the hands and the depiction of details – the distribution of colours and fabrics – are almost mannerist. Artists have always understood the moment of play as a metaphor for human activity. A portrait is given but a scene from life has to be taken. And at some point you need the courage to take a picture, you know? Life plays by itself, and you have to recognise that as an artist. When you observe that moment, you have to do something with it. It's as simple as that. But that moment cannot be forced. ara

An exhibition of work by Wolfgang Tillmans can be seen at David Zwirner Hong Kong from 26 March through 12 May

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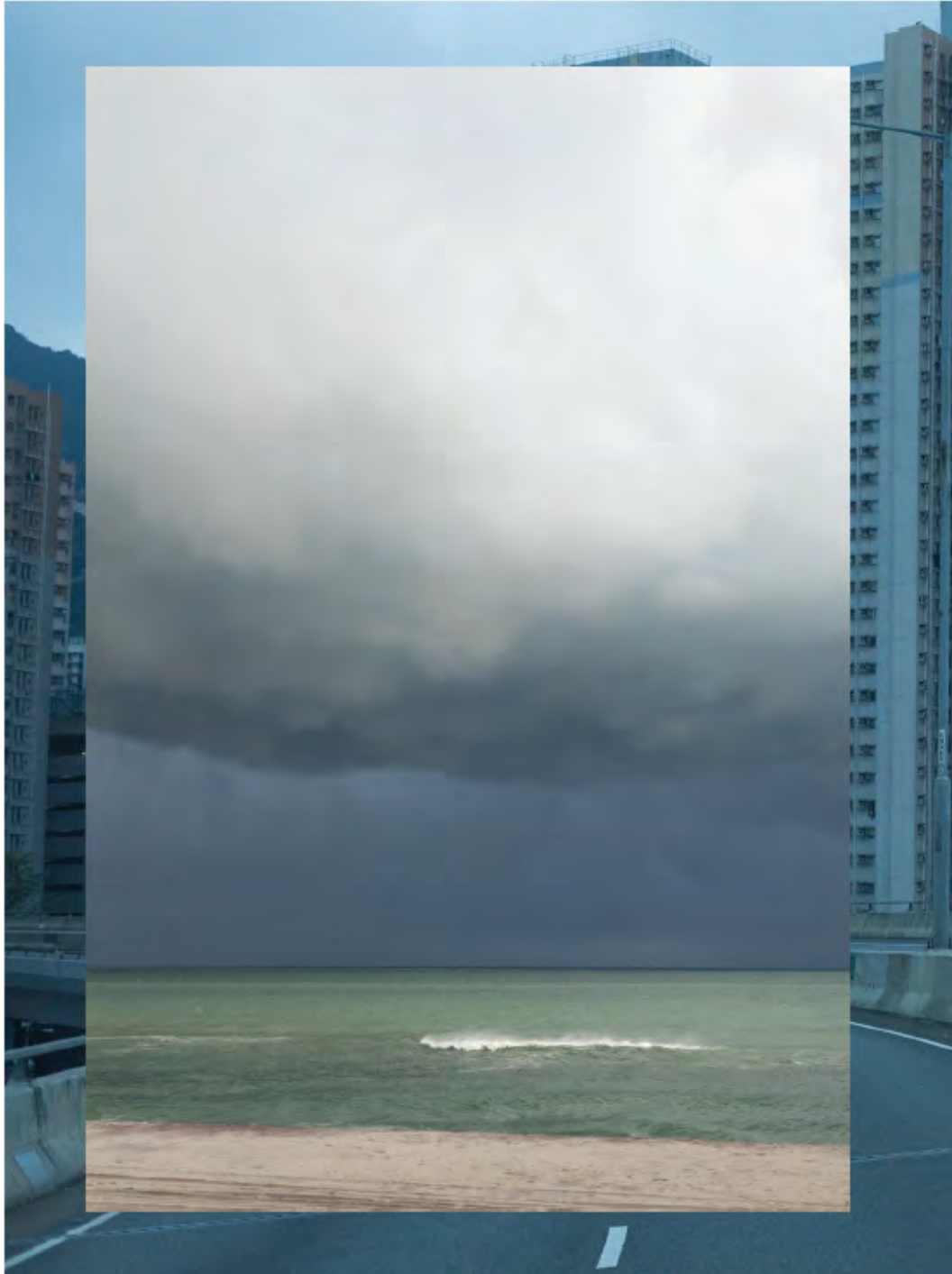
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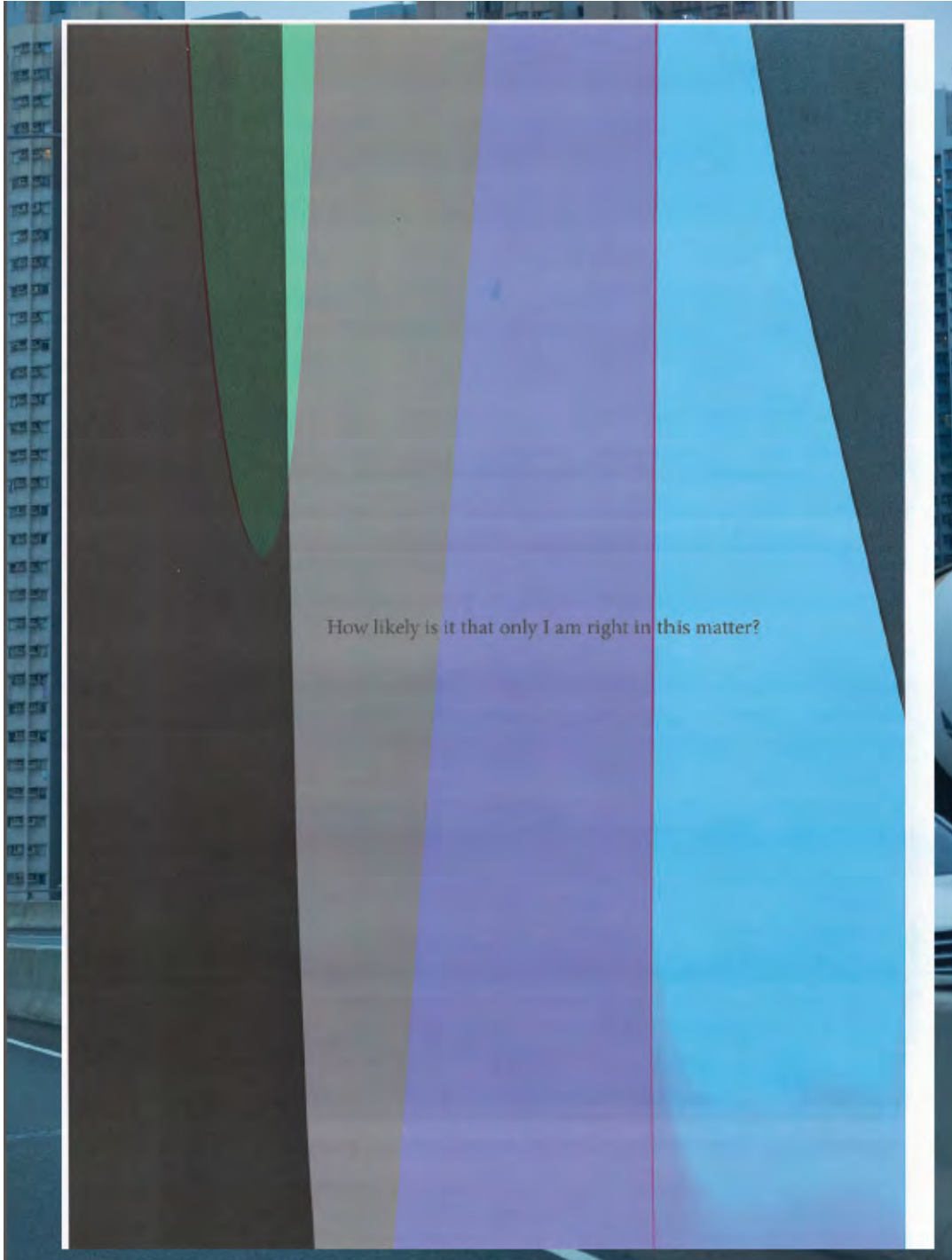
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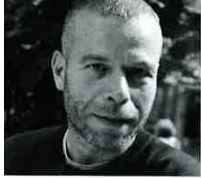


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ARTFORUM



WOLFGANG TILLMANS

WOLFGANG TILLMANS IS AN ARTIST BASED IN BERLIN AND LONDON. IN 2017, HE HAD SURVEY EXHIBITIONS AT FONDATION BEYELER, BASEL, AND TATE MODERN, LONDON. FORTHCOMING SOLO EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE A TRAVELING SURVEY THAT WILL OPEN IN JANUARY 2018 AT MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART CONTEMPORAIN ET MULTIMÉDIAS, KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, AND TOUR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

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1

HÉLIO OITICICA (WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK; CURATED BY LYNN ZELEVANSKY, ELISABETH SUSSMAN, JAMES RONDEAU, AND DONNA DE SALVO WITH ANNA KATHERINE BRODBECK) Before seeing the Whitney's retrospective I had thought that I knew a lot about Hélio Oiticica. However, this exhibition's vibrancy took me by surprise. The galleries were brimming with the energy of a multigenerational audience taking in the different facets of the artist's work, sensitively displayed and ranging from Concrete to Conceptual to participatory art to Happenings.

Co-organized with the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

2

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL (MET BREUER, NEW YORK; CURATED BY IAN ALTEVEER, HELEN MOLESWORTH, AND DIETER ROELSTRAETE) Kerry James Marshall's application of paint—layered on, and at times encroaching on the beings in his paintings—is a perfect example of form following function. The anatomical complexity of the depiction of the deer in *The Land That Time Forgot*, 1992, is astounding. The painter's translation of the physical weight of the slain animal into psychological weight is heart-wrenching.

Co-organized with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.



1



1. Hélio Oiticica, *Tropicália*, 1966-67, plants, sand, birds, poems by Roberta Camila Salgado on bricks, tiles, vinyl. Installation view, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2017. Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. **2. Kerry James Marshall, *The Land That Time Forgot* (detail), 1992**, acrylic and collage on canvas, 97 x 75". Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. **3. Alberto Giacometti, *The Dog*, 1951**, bronze, 18 x 39 x 6 1/2". Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. **4. Alexandra Bircken, *Storm*, 2013**, motorcycle suit, cotton and felt stuffing, 51 1/4 x 20 1/2 x 20 1/4". Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. **5. View of "Viron Erol Vert: Born in the Purple," 2017**, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin. Photo: Eric Tschernow.

3

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (TATE MODERN, LONDON; CURATED BY FRANCES MORRIS AND CATHERINE GRENIER WITH LENA FRITSCH, ASSISTED BY MATHILDE LECUYER) This retrospective reignited my enthusiasm for Giacometti's work. The show was super-impressive in its depth, ambition, and comprehensiveness. The deliberate narrowing-down of an artist's palette of forms and shapes has rarely allowed for more eloquence than in Giacometti's case.

Co-organized with the Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris.



4

ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN (KUNSTVEREIN HANNOVER; CURATED BY KATHLEEN RAHN) Bircken creates an intersection between two-dimensional picture/fabric objects and uncomfortably real bodily sculptures, leaving the viewer disarmed in the best possible sense.

Co-organized with Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany, and the Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry, France, where it is on view through December 17.

5

VIRON EROL VERT (KUNSTRAUM KREUZBERG/BETHANIEN, BERLIN) Künstlerhaus Bethanien (now Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien) has for decades been a venue known for the wide-ranging scope of its program. This summer, Viron Erol Vert created an ambitious exhibition of installations and individual works that was a proud continuation of this tradition. Drawing from a personal multicultural history, the Berlin- and Istanbul-based artist explores linguistic and cultural gestures, traditions, and differences, with a focus on the cosmopolitan capital on the Bosphorus.

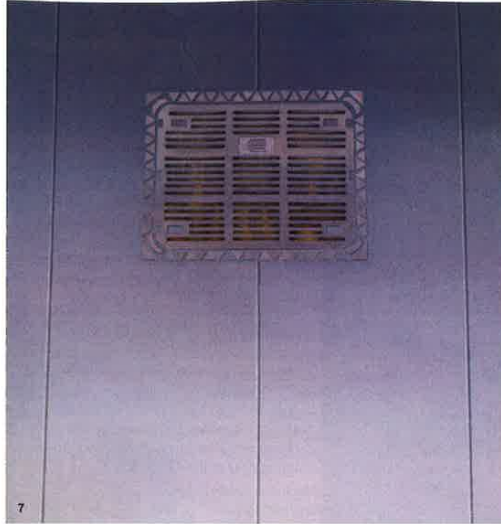


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6

"THE WHITE SHADOW" (PELES EMPIRE, BERLIN) Peles Empire is a nonprofit exhibition venue in London, Los Angeles, and, more recently, Berlin centered around artists Katharina Stoever and Barbara Wolff. Not shy about forging a space for their curatorial practice in the booming property markets of the aforementioned cities, Stoever and Wolff have managed to keep the spirit of a Transylvanian Eastern European gallery and faux palace alive. In this three-person exhibition, sculptural offerings were discomfitingly juxtaposed. Benedicte Gyldenstjerne Sehested's slumped figures joined Mariechen Danz's pseudosphere in confronting two fantastical "beings" from the mind of Mark Barker. Together, these works, a group of objects made in uncertain times, created an atmosphere of unease.



7

THOMAS EGGERER (PETZEL, NEW YORK) For his sixth solo show in New York, Eggerer shifted his focus to a mainstay of the visual experience of urban life: the manhole. Cast-iron covers, the central motif of each of the paintings in this exhibition, are the entrances to an endless, rhizomatic underground system of tunnels and pipes. Viewers were witness to a number of fictional social encounters, presumably taking place during the summer, on the city's pavements. Known previously for virtually two-dimensional renderings of the human body, Eggerer departed here to a nearly naturalist painting style.



8

JAMIE HAWKESWORTH (HUIS MARSEILLE, MUSEUM VOOR FOTOGRAFIE, AMSTERDAM; CURATED BY NANDA VAN DEN BERG) In this major solo exhibition we see an eloquent documentarian's voice emerge. The warmth of Hawkesworth's C-prints speaks of the generosity the photographer brings to his subject matter. Far from the occasionally finger-pointing idiom of his countryman Martin Parr, and bypassing the detached gaze of some contemporary American and German photographers, Hawkesworth's pictures feel genuinely refreshing.

On view through December 3.

9

"KITCHEN MIDDEN" (GRIFFIN ART PROJECTS, VANCOUVER; CURATED BY ANNE LOW AND GARETH MOORE) Group shows featuring more than fifty artists are often hard going—fun, yes, but difficult to make sense of. Located in a venue on the outskirts of Vancouver, Low and Moore's exhibition was a stimulating overload of sculptural and pictorial objects, all dealing with the kitchen, or the idea of it. The artists were local, and the variety of voices was a reminder of the simultaneity of artistic production. It gave me a sense of how we are connected not only in time but also through our concerns.



6. View of "The White Shadow," 2016-17, Peles Empire, Berlin, Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. 7. Thomas Eggerer, *ConEd*, 2017, oil on linen, 75 x 74". 8. Jamie Hawkesworth, untitled, 2011-15, C-print, 21 1/2 x 17 1/2". 9. View of "Kitchen Midden," 2016-17, Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver, Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans. 10. Barbara Kruger, *Belief+Doubt*, 2012, vinyl, Installation view, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, 2017, Photo: Wolfgang Tillmans.

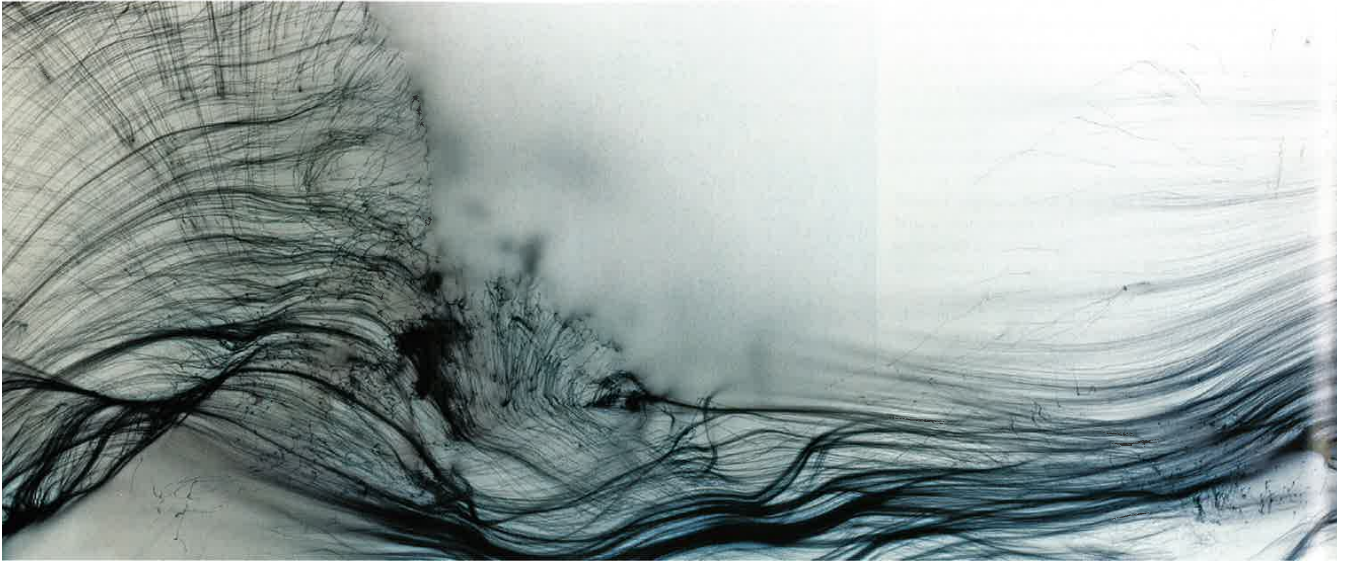
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BARBARA KRUGER (HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN, WASHINGTON, DC; CURATED BY MELISSA HO) Of the many artists who emerged in the 1980s, Barbara Kruger has a particular relevance to me, largely because of her architectural text/image installations. Positioned right on the National Mall, her words are beautiful examples of her political poetry as well as a sign of the independence of the Smithsonian, which is giving a stage to voices of doubt in a time when caution and skepticism, in many parts of the world, are denounced as treason. □



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247 Chloe Wyma on Betty Blayton
248 Suzanne Hudson on Helen Pashgian
and Brian Wills
Michael Wilson on Tim Youd
249 Alex Kitnick on Liz Glynn
250 Johanna Fateman on Travis Boyer
Jeff Gibson on Mark Mothersbaugh
251 Annie Godfrey Larmon on Willa Nasatir
252 Donald Kuspit on Lynn McCarty
Mira Dayal on Hudinilson Jr.,
Jessica Mein, Vivian Suter

BOSTON

- 253 Kevin Hong on Dana Schutz
PHILADELPHIA
Murtaza Vali on Mohamed Bourouissa
DETROIT
254 Matthew Biro on Charles McGee
SAN FRANCISCO
255 Gwen Allen on "From Counterculture
to Cyberculture"
LOS ANGELES
256 Erin Kimmel on Monika Sosnowska
Andy Campbell on William E. Jones
257 Leland de la Durantaye on "Fleeting
Impressions and Abundance of Detail"
LONDON
258 Elisa Schaar on Guy Mees
Barry Schwabsky on Vicky Wright
259 Sylwia Serafinowicz on Rachel Pimm
260 and on "Queer British Art 1861-1967"

PARIS

- Mara Hoberman on Marion Verboom
261 Riccardo Venturi on Cécile Beau
BERLIN
262 Jens Asthoff on Caleb Considine
COLOGNE
Noemi Smolik on
Christian Freudenberger
ZURICH
263 Adam Jasper on Marvin Gaye Chetwynd
VADUZ, LIECHTENSTEIN
264 Kate Sutton on Gorgona
MILAN
Giorgio Verzotti on Paola Di Bello
ROME
265 Ida Panicelli on Luigi Ontani
ISTANBUL
266 Mine Haydaroglu on Selim Turan

BEIRUT

- Kaelen Wilson-Goldie on Waddah Faris
DUBAI
267 Murtaza Vali on Amba Sayal-Bennett
MEXICO CITY
268 Phyllis Tuchman on Andy Warhol
Layla Fassa on Diego Pérez
SÃO PAULO
269 Camila Belchior on Valdirlei Dias Nunes
SHANGHAI
Arthur Solway on Zhou Tiehai
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ARTFORUM

Wolfgang Tillmans

FONDATION BEYELER, BASEL
Maja Naef

FOR A PREVIOUS EXHIBITION at the Fondation Beyeler in 2014, Wolfgang Tillmans was invited to pair his own pictures with works from the museum's collection. The artist showed two large, seemingly abstract landscape-format pieces—*Ostgut Freischwimmer*, left and *Ostgut Freischwimmer*, right, both 2004—alongside works by Picasso, Matisse, and Max Ernst. That installation was, in a sense, a precursor to Tillmans's vast new survey at the same institution: Both asked how and why his practice might respond to an architectonic and institutional setting built on modernist claims for the autonomy of the work of art. If the earlier exhibition allowed him to challenge the individuality of the artwork—and the medium specificity of photography and painting—by setting his pictures in dialogue with those of acclaimed modern masters, the

more recent show, by contrast, seeks to address the same challenge through a retrospective of his own work. That its opening coincided with the last day of the Beyeler's Monet exhibition only underscored how "casual" his presentation is, if at first sight considerably less experimental than his installations at Galerie Buchholz in Berlin in 2016 or Tate Modern in London earlier this year.

The foyer contains three works from different groups and periods, which together function as an introduction to the programmatic ambitions of the exhibition as a whole. In the large photograph *unscharfer Rückenakt* (Out-of-Focus Nude Back), 1994, the slightly blurred contours of the naked male body possess a painterly quality reminiscent of Gerhard Richter's works; it is only at second glance that a vulnerability evoking life at the margins of conventional society becomes evident in this image of a kneeling man with dirty feet, who is seen from above and contained in a narrow pictorial space. The small photograph *Night Jam*, 2013, is a study in color contrast, depicting gently creased strips of variously hued photographic paper arranged on top of a paper guillotine, bringing to mind series such as "Lighter," 2005—, for which Tillmans turns flat pictures into three-dimensional objects by bending, folding, or creasing photographic prints and exhibiting them in Plexiglas boxes; or the famous "paper drops," 2001—, for which he takes pictures of photographic paper gently furled into drop-like forms. The third work in this opening ensemble, *ceremony*, 2007, shows a performance space, presumably a theater. The photograph, a blown-up scan of a black-and-white photocopy of a color photograph, is permeated by a ghostly white. Instead of replicating an image, the process of copying here bleaches out the world. Together, these three pictures create an allegory of photography and how it opens onto the practices of painting, sculpture, and performance.

These attempts to reach beyond photography as such laid the groundwork for Tillmans's compelling engagement with the exhibition space in what followed. Across twelve rooms, some two hundred photographic images from 1986 to the present are brought together, grouped either by series or loosely by theme. The first rooms speak directly to the museological setting, featuring various genres of European art: portraits, still lifes, landscapes, and drapery studies of articles of clothing casually thrown on top of one another. Tillmans's portraits in particular stand out; they are direct and intimate, more gifts of friendship than documentary images or records of their subjects. If the artist has become well known for these snapshots of friends, passersby, and acquaintances, here their familiarity and utter singularity are amplified, in stark contrast to, say, Conceptual photography's use of typology, seriality, and repetition. Tillmans's is an art of the specific, never the generic. At the same time, however, traditional artistic genres evidently remain viable categories for articulating how individuals, social interactions, spatial settings, and objects offer different perspectives on a singular yet multifaceted world.

In other words, Tillmans's images are never simply his: They are historically and formally mediated. Let's look again at one of his portraits, albeit an atypical one: *Wilhelm Leibl painting*, 2002, is a black-and-white shot of a nineteenth-century oil painting by the eponymous artist, in which a boy sits on a chair looking somewhat anxious, as if he were about to slide off it. Tillmans's cropped photograph is decentered and includes part of the original picture's frame, undoing its traditional stabilizing function. Indeed, Tillmans's own pictures are often bordered by white strips above or below the image, or (sometimes) down just one side. These white bars articulate the transitions between picture and wall, allowing

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Opposite page: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Ostgut Freischwimmer*, left, 2004, inkjet print, 7' 11 3/4" × 20' 2 1/4". This page, below: View of "Wolfgang Tillmans," 2017, Fondation Beyeler, Basel. Photo: Mark Niedermann. Right, top and bottom: Two stills from Powell's 2017 video *Freezer*, directed by Wolfgang Tillmans. Right, center: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Non-toxic Foam*, 2017, two-channel HD video, color, sound, 3 minutes 54 seconds.



ARTFORUM

the photographs to stand on their own while at the same time relating them to their architectural support. White is, however, not only a framing or fixing element: It also repeatedly appears as a sign of overexposure, as in the aforementioned *ceremony* or the early studio photograph *o.M.*, from 1997. Many of the objects Tillmans photographed are also white, and can—like the crumpled T-shirt in *Sportflecken* (Sport Stains), 1996—be said to refer to the gallery's white walls.

But Tillmans also uses the wall as a screen for bringing together political images from various times and places inside the contemporary space of the exhibition. With subjects ranging from an LGBT protest in Berlin in 2006 to the US antiracism movement of the past few years, these works include several examples of the political activism for which Tillmans has become widely known since his anti-Brexit poster campaign of 2016. Here, however, the context of

Tillmans's is an art of the specific, never the generic.

the exhibition space again changes their emphasis. Take the picture of the palm of a raised hand titled *Black Lives Matter Protest, Union Square, b*, 2014, for example. When a detail of this image was reproduced on the cover of *Artforum* in March of this year, it was clearly a signal of resistance, but on the walls of the Beyeler, it above all tells the viewer to keep his distance, to pause for a moment.

To these pictures, Tillmans has added a small image of a pile of old newspapers (*Zeitungsstapel* [Pile of Newspapers], 1999). The simultaneity of nonsimultaneous images directs the gaze toward specific historical events, but then draws it away, to the mode of display itself—creating a palpable tension between the pathos of the depicted events

and the purity of the white cube. In *Silvio (U-Bahn)*, 1992, a clock at the center of the picture illuminates the scene like a pale moon floating above a landscape from the distant past; the photograph, seemingly bathed in red light, shows the temporary memorial built in a Berlin subway station in 1992 for the victim of a neo-Nazi murder. Tillmans includes this picture twice in the arrangement of images here—in two formats, one larger and one smaller—positioning it so that the strip lights in the underground passageway form a kind of horizon line, thereby changing the relationship of the entire installation to the museum wall.

In 1989, the critic Jean-François Chevrier remarked that the most important issue in regard to photography's status as art was not to raise the medium to the rank of painting but rather to find a form that can “reactivate a thinking based on fragments, openness, and contradiction, not the utopia of comprehensive or systematic order.” This would mean a more intense experience for the viewer, produced by the aesthetic distance between her and the photographic image (which allows a one-on-one relationship very different from flicking through pictures in books or magazines). Along such lines, Tillmans's exhibition insists on a particular kind of gaze that the artist has described as “open and fearless.” But while demanding the viewer trace a startling multiplicity of patterns and relationships, this dynamic way of looking is riven by sudden interruptions, moments when Tillmans's works use the gallery setting itself to confront the viewer as individual images that insist on being considered on their own terms.

Take, for example, *Chaos cup*, 1997, an unassuming picture of a white cup filled with tea. Here, it is hung between two doorways, one of them connecting two galleries, the other a photographic close-up of an entrance in *Schlüssel* (Keys), 2002, in which a cluster of keys hangs

from a magnet stuck to the lock of an old white door. From a distance, the dark liquid in *Chaos cup* appears as a black sphere against a white background. On closer inspection, however, the image reveals itself to be dense with meaning: a metaphor for contingency. The tea has apparently been left standing for some time, and a thin membrane has formed on its surface that looks at first like a cracked and fissured section of the earth's crust photographed from space. Perhaps, though, we can also see a tree reflected in this skin covering the tea, maybe even a face? Or gazing into the vessel might bring to mind the dark cup of coffee in Jean-Luc Godard's 1967 film *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, where the action of stirring sugar into the liquid accompanies the circular course of the dialogue itself, determining its length and cohering into an emblem of the mind dissolving into the world of things. But the porous and reflective surface of the tea also recalls the film, in various senses, through which the photographed world is rendered, which in Tillmans's work often turns opaque, either completely black or completely white—or even gray, orange, or turquoise, as with the monochrome drips of chemical residue in the “Silver” series, 1998–2015. What these pictures show is something quite different from a “comprehensive order.” They offer instead—as Chevrier puts it—a fragmentary, open-ended worldview given structure through movement and transformation but also by singularity: the unrepeatability of each picture as a moment of difference. □

“Wolfgang Tillmans” is on view through October 1.

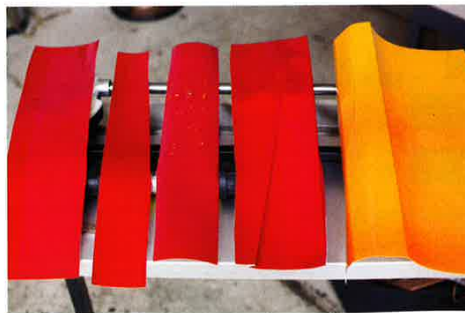
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Translated from German by Nathaniel McBride.

Visit our archive at artforum.com/imprint for Wolfgang Tillmans's cover feature (March 2017), an interview with Michelle Kuo (September 2012), and other articles about the artist's work.



From left: Wolfgang Tillmans, *unscharfer Rückenakt* (Out-of-Focus Nude Back), 1994, inkjet print, clips, 72 1/2 x 54 3/4". Wolfgang Tillmans, *Night Jam*, 2013, inkjet print mounted on aluminum, artist's frame, 25 1/2 x 29 1/2". Wolfgang Tillmans, *Chaos cup*, 1997, framed C-print, 15 1/2 x 11 3/4".



EXPOS

L'objectif d'un regard

Dans une lumineuse rétrospective, la Fondation Beyeler dévoile la grande diversité de l'univers visuel du photographe **Wolfgang Tillmans** et son souci de conjuguer distance et proximité.

Sur la pochette de son dernier album, *Blonde*, Frank Ocean, les cheveux teints en vert, dissimule son visage avec sa main d'un mouvement furtif. Très belle dans l'intensité de sa simplicité même, l'image illustre l'art du portrait que déploie le photographe allemand Wolfgang Tillmans, depuis le début des années 1990. Jamais spectaculaires ou guidés par un souci de mise en scène appuyé, ses portraits traduisent sa volonté de "décrire la sensation d'être en vie", plus que celle de sublimer le monde.

L'artiste, né en 1968, a construit sa notoriété – consacrée en 2000 par un Turner Prize – sur cette façon de saisir pleinement, sans artifice apparent, une présence humaine dépouillée de toute autre réalité que celle de sa propre nécessité. En errant dans les lumineuses salles de la Fondation Beyeler à Bâle qui lui consacre une magistrale rétrospective, succédant à celle de la Tate Modern de Londres, cet art du portrait revient aux yeux des visiteurs encore habités par les souvenirs de ses images parues, dans les années 1990, dans le magazine *I-D*.

Mieux que personne, le photographe allemand – vivant aujourd'hui entre Londres et Berlin – a concentré l'esprit d'une époque et d'une jeunesse alternative liée à la scène de la house music. Ses images captent l'énergie de ses moments partagés avec des clubbeurs, amis ou personnalités (Tilda Swinton, Kate Moss, Isa Genzken, Richard Hamilton...), comme des traces de liens affectifs.

À la fois généreux, dans la manière de commenter son œuvre, et discret dans la façon d'en préserver les mystères de fabrication, le photographe tient à rappeler que ses images ne procèdent jamais d'une stratégie cadencée. Prises sur le vif, au gré de ses complications

et de ses humeurs, ses photos ne surgissent pas non plus du hasard ; "tout est réfléchi", reconnaît-il, en laissant entendre que la réflexion s'ancre forcément dans l'expérience, dans un "mélange de hasard et de contrôle, de jeu et de mise en scène".

Pour autant, rien n'est si simple avec Tillmans, comme en témoigne l'exposition qui dévoile ses autres formes d'intervention : natures mortes, paysages, images abstraites, politiques... Comme le souligne la commissaire de l'exposition, Theodora Vischer, "le spectre de la production photographique de Tillmans est extrêmement large, à la fois sur le plan du contenu et sur le plan technique et formel. La stupéfiante diversité de cet univers visuel échappe à toute identification univoque au sein de la tradition photographique, a fortiori de la tradition picturale, faisant surgir au premier plan tantôt un aspect de son œuvre, tantôt un autre".

N'importe quel visiteur étranger à son travail sera ainsi surpris par la variation des images de Wolfgang Tillmans, rétif à toute possibilité de réduire un système

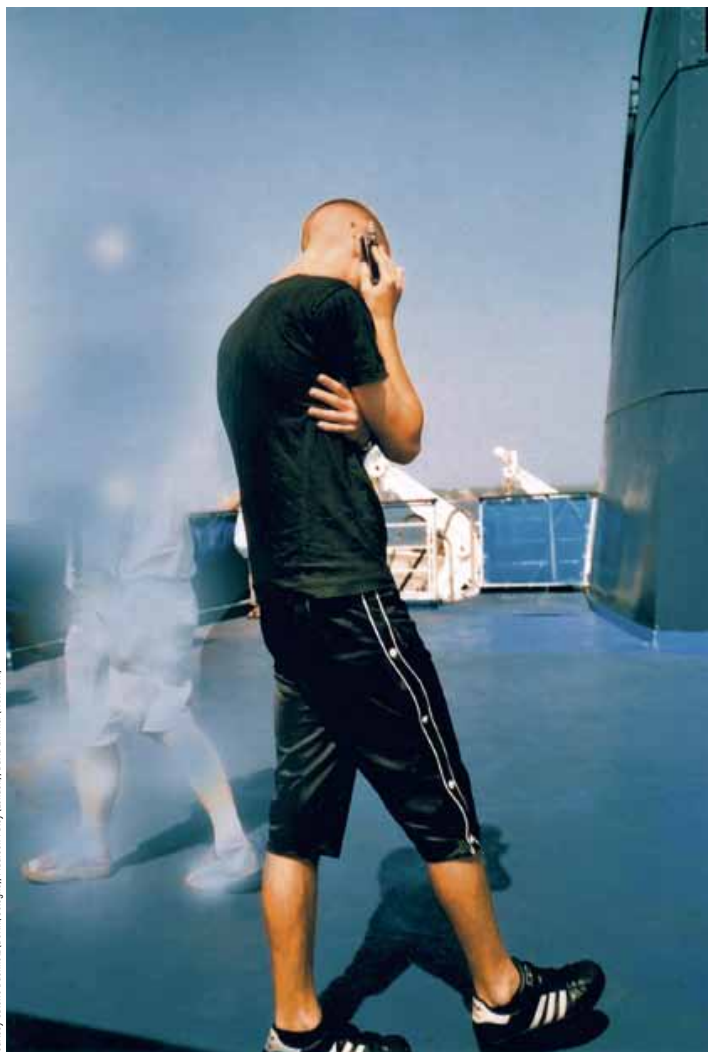
courtesy Galerie Buchholz (Berlin/Cologne), Maureen Paley (Londres), David Zwirner (New York)



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



courtesy Galerie Buchholz (Berlin/Cologne), Maureen Paley (London), David Zwirner (New York)



Sportflecken,
1996
(à gauche)
et *Gedser*,
2014
de Wolfgang
Tillmans

esthétique à quelques traits homogènes. Fascinante par l'éclectisme révélé des images, autant que par la délicatesse d'un accrochage inspiré – ajusté à l'architecture douce et imposante du lieu –, l'exposition joue de cette multiplicité propre à ces deux cents images pleines de corps de jeunes garçons nus autant que de vagins, de fruits ensoleillés que de coques de noix brisées, de mégots de cigarettes que d'épluchures d'orange, d'un kiwi coupé en deux que de peaux à vif, de T-shirts tachés que de nuques de garçons, de drapés suspendus que d'arbres solides, de nuages que de vagues, de bords de mer que d'avions en perdition, de soldats que de manifestants...

Intimes, politiques, abstraites, conceptuelles, figuratives, les images de Tillmans ne sont au fond qu'une traduction élastique du monde visible, d'un réel à la fois frontalement abordé et subtilement déserté. Contempler le monde, c'est autant s'approcher au plus près de la main sèche d'un militant de Black Lives Matter

que de jouer avec les couleurs de figures abstraites. Entre réalité nue d'un corps et projection visuelle d'un rêve.

Eparpillées sur les murs sans organisation logique apparente, en grand format ou minuscules, imprimées sur photocopieuse ou tirées en format argentique, les images de Tillmans se font face dans un chaos maîtrisé. A la première impression d'un vertige plastique indexé à l'impossible appréhension d'une cohérence stylistique, succède vite celle de l'évidence d'un dialogue permanent entre toutes ces images disséminées.

Ce fil, qui relie la plupart d'entre elles à la mesure des rayures qui traversent

quelques images énigmatiques, procède d'un regard que Tillmans qualifie lui-même "d'ouvert et sans peur", ajusté aux situations multiples de la vie. Theodora Vischer parle de "la proximité de celui qui fait partie de ce monde et la distance du regard détaché qui scrute, observe, enregistre, en accordant aux détails secondaires la même attention qu'à ce qui saute aux yeux. C'est précisément cette dualité de proximité et de distance qui constitue la marque spécifique du regard de Tillmans, ajoute-t-elle. Jamais voyeur, jamais complaisant : attentif, ouvert, plein d'amour et de curiosité."

Cet amour et cette curiosité se déploient dans l'intensité calme de ses images où, l'air de rien, vibre la présence des êtres, des objets, des idées, des luttes et des rêves. "Jusqu'aux hommes" : le nom même de Tillmans porte la promesse d'un regard posé sur cette part d'humanité qui résiste à tout ce qui tend à l'effacer. **Jean-Marie Durand**

"jamais voyeur, jamais complaisant : attentif, ouvert, plein d'amour et de curiosité"

Theodora Vischer, commissaire de l'exposition

Wolfgang Tillmans jusqu'au 1^{er} octobre, Fondation Beyeler (Bâle)

INTERVIEW

Artist

Tillmans has installed his own work at the Beyeler



'It's the great album tracks that didn't become singles'

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

The Fondation Beyeler picked a versatile artist for its first major photography exhibition. German-born Wolfgang Tillmans has tested the medium over his career since the 1990s, applying photography to art-historical genres such as still-lives, landscapes and abstraction. He has experimented with techniques, from using photocopiers to forgoing the camera entirely and creating chemical reactions directly on paper. He has also always been directly involved in the installation of his work for exhibitions, hanging different images together to draw connections and comparisons. "The photographs do not all hang at the same height next to one another, but seem to be installed in a loose configuration on a wall: large and small, figurative and abstract, unframed and framed," says Theodora Vischer, the show's curator. It is probably because of this building of relationships that Tillmans refers to his various photographic series as "families". And at the Beyeler (until 1 October), we get to join the reunion.

Wolfgang Tillmans reveals the ideas behind his Beyeler show—the Basel museum's first photography exhibition.

By Helen Stoilas

THE ART NEWSPAPER: You have a very distinct way of presenting your photographs: not chronologically, but by grouping things and drawing connections between them.

WOLFGANG TILLMANS: Yes, it's not all without direction. There are connections and recurring themes and *modi operandi*. I just didn't approach it 25 years ago [with the aim] to spell everything out in one series after another. It's becoming more and more clear over the years.

There isn't a room only of still-lives. Normally, still-lives have a tendency to cancel each other out—I don't like it in Old Master museums, when in a side room there's nothing but still-lives. At the same time, it is valid to want to look at them and maybe compare them. But I'm actually proud of two [in the Beyeler show]: in the first room, there is a long wall, which has two equal-sized big still-lives on it. They are two of my favourites and they are so within their own sphere that they sit comfortably and strongly together. One is called *Nite Queen* [2013], and the other is called *Osaka Still Life* [2015].

What was it like going back and looking at some of that earlier work for the show?

It was a great pleasure to really look at work that I haven't shown much in the last decade. The Tate Modern show [closed 11 June] is deliberately not a retrospective; it looks at the last ten years or so. But here at the Beyeler, there are works from the 1990s and the early 2000s that I might have shown a lot at the time. For example, the still-life called *Still Home* from 1996 [of discarded pomegranate, orange peel and pistachio shells], in the light of *Astro Crusto* (2012), the lobster shell still-life, suddenly somehow becomes its unknowing predecessor. And I literally haven't shown that work since 1998.

So there'll be a lot of surprises. And it's a retrospective that makes do without a lot of the greatest hits, so I think it will be a surprising exhibition for people who know my work well.

So if it's not the greatest hits, is it the B-sides? Maybe that is an analogy too far. It's the great

Continued on p18

A SOLID RELATIONSHIP

Wolfgang Tillmans's *Nite Queen* (2013, right) and his *Osaka Still Life* (2015) "sit comfortably and strongly together" at the Beyeler show, according to the artist



INTERVIEW

Artist

"[There] is a very new film of sea foam—it's non-toxic, it's natural"

Wolfgang Tillmans:
In his own words



As well as installing the exhibition, Tillmans has collaborated with the show's curator Theodora Vischer to create a unique book that pairs reproductions of works from throughout his career with his writing and texts from talks and interviews. "I love making books, but I don't want to make redundant museum publications," the artist told us.

After realising a few years ago that if his collection of "untranscribed tapes and cassettes, faxes and emails, unedited texts and interviews" was not catalogued, it could be lost, he hired a researcher to sort through the material. Vischer then selected and edited the texts to create the catalogue "because I have reader's block", Tillmans says, although he adds: "Words play an important role in my work: The interviews and the lectures I do, I feel they are actually part of my output and they are a valid medium in my work as an artist. It's just that I can't quite fathom computing all of that, so I'm glad I found ways to let that filter in."

But make no mistake—this is not a catalogue raisonné. "It's not complete in any way. There are families and types of work missing," Tillmans says. "But it looks at a good portion of the work that I make and delves in deep and doesn't shy away from making them comparable." **H.S.**

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Continued from p17

album tracks that didn't become singles. When you have a good album, you can only ever have three singles, but what do you do when there are six good songs?

And even though this exhibition has 100% different work from the Tate's, it still excludes so many other great works that I wish I could show. It's a huge exhibition and it's still vastly incomplete.

Well, you've got to leave something for down the line.

Yeah, it's really been a great process to look at 30 years of work and to make decisions. It creates connections and ways of looking at other work that would not have been the same without this particular set of decisions.

One thing I was really reminded of was how important it was that I didn't do more of things that worked well; that I never followed the "let's make another one" instinct.

For example, the male nude; you would think that there are more, but actually they are extremely rare, and there's one called *Unschärfer*

From left: Tillmans's *Eleanor-Lutz* (2016), *Leaf for Architects* (2013) and *Crease shiny* (2001)

Rückenakt [1994], an out-of-focus nude of a back, and that is singular and it's tight. And if I had somehow done more, it would have [made it less special].

Even [with] *Concorde*, I incubated the project for four years, then I finally did it and then I never touched it again. And that was the right decision. I feel now that there are a lot of unique pictures even though they are part of larger families. For example, the keys on the door with the magnet, that is a unique picture and you immediately remember it when I mention those three words to you.

And you're showing a video installation in one of the downstairs galleries?

The downstairs is an exciting part of the exhibition. There is a never-shown-before, 50- or 70-metre-long row of seven *Concorde* pictures from 1997, so it's marking the 20th anniversary of the book [on the series]. The last seven pages of the book turned purple from the exhausted



chemicals that I used [in printing] and, instead of going full black, it became purple. So this bleak suburb of London became this purple dreamscape in the very last pictures. But because these were unique prints—they were not editions, they were only in the book—the ones that are exhibited are seven enlargements from the unique print and I'm showing [them] here for the first time.

In the adjacent room, there is a 20-minute video and sound programme focusing on a few vocal pieces. And there are two [previously] unseen videos, one of which is for Oscar Powell, who is somebody I'm working with on music. I made a video for a track of his, which is the only piece of music in this programme that isn't mine. And a very new film of sea foam—it's non-toxic, it's natural, just white foam that sometimes happens when algae are being whipped up in the water. And they shake like creatures in the wind.

You know, making a picture or a film of something very general and simple like the sea is very difficult—and over-prescribed and obvious—and to do it anyway is of course the greatest challenge. There is something—excuse the pun—very deep about the sea.

ELSAHNE-LUTZ: WOLFGANG TILLMANS; LEAF FOR ARCHITECTS: ANDREAS SCHMIDT; UNREINLICH: ANDREAS SCHMIDT

Mousse Magazine

CONVERSATIONS

Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel

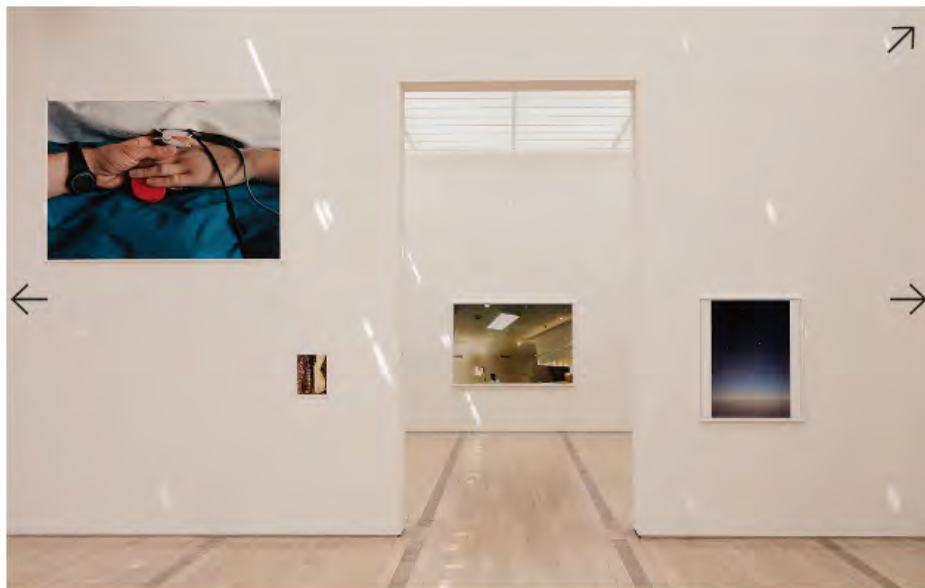
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Wolfgang Tillmans in conversation with Riccardo Conti

Wolfgang Tillmans has become one of the most important artists of his generation. He had a recent solo exhibition at Tate Modern in London until 11 June and now, as well, the Fondation Beyeler in Basel has dedicated its summer show to him, focusing for the first time on the medium of photography. This major solo exhibition, curated by Theodora Vischer, features around two hundred artworks. In these photos Tillmans reveals moments of beauty, nature, friendship, and desire, and documents scenes of activism and social and political life. This and the Tate installation perfectly embodies Tillmans's intense oeuvre, and his utopian idea of a non-hierarchical society.

Riccardo Conti: In the Tate and the Fondation Beyeler exhibition, some of your works are attached to the wall with small clips, while others are exhibited in frames. How do you decide how to present each photo?

Wolfgang Tillmans: It comes from my understanding that photographs are "objects." The sheet of paper is inseparable from the image it carries, not just a vessel of information. Thus, instead of hiding the body of the photograph I choose to show it as



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2017

Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Cologne / Berlin / New York; Maureen Paley, London; David Zwirner, New York / London

Mousse Magazine

an object. This is why I place some pictures naked on the walls, letting the viewer perceive them for what they are.

RC: Can you explain further how you arrived at this open form of presentation?

WT: Yes, it was minimalistic—the purest approach, in a way. Yet after ten years of having exhibited only unframed photographs I felt that it had become expected. And so I thought it would be interesting to add frames because they remind the eye of these different statuses. I didn't just add *random* frames. They are the result of precise research for a model that can lend purity to the object one is working on over time.

RC: Did your relationship with reality change between your early analog works and the advent of the digital era?

WT: I think photography just offers realistic depictions of reality. I see myself using photography in the way any artist looks at the world with the means of his or her own time.

RC: What are your thoughts about the reproducibility of the medium, and its implications in the market?

WT: The market and its demands have never been compelled me to do more. I have always believed that the intention behind of the making of an artwork is encapsulated in the artwork. For example, the first airplane wings were a one-to-one direct negotiation of thousands and thousands of pictures I took years and years before the first time I exhibited that photo. But when I realize the perfect image of a subject, there is no need to have that experience again, because there is no remaining innocence in repeating it.

RC: So when you achieve a result, it's time to move on to something different?



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2017

Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Cologne / Berlin / New York; Maureen Paley, London; David Zwirner, New York / London

Mousse Magazine

RC: So when you achieve a result, it's time to move on to something different?

WT: Sure. But if you put that way, it sounds like an active decision. It wasn't necessarily that "conscious" for me. You have to make yourself open to things. You have to be prepared for chances.

RC: It's hard to circumscribe the range of your subjects to a single theme, but if I had to name it, I should say "freedom." What does freedom mean to you?

WT: Actually freedom has a precise meaning to me. First, it comes from the awareness that the freedom we enjoy is something that others fought for. If we can live freely, it's because other people in history did serious, radical, challenging things. And I'm not just talking here about the LGBT community; I'm thinking about even more basic rights that today we take for granted. The big question of our time and for the younger people is to protect those achievements.

RC: Would it be safe to say that one of your art books, *Soldiers: The Nineties* (1999), conveys a certain desire toward bodies in uniform?

WT: Perhaps, but it's a contradictory attraction, a double feeling, that could be affirmative or subversive. Uniforms are designed to look a certain way, to display masculinity, in ways that are never actively discussed. If you look at those bodies wrapped inside the uniforms with a sexualized glance, you immediately remove the power and the authority they represent.

RC: At the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the exhibition *Eternal Youth* includes some of your photographs. Do you think that part of your work is misleadingly connected to or entrapped in some cult of "eternal youth"?



1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8

Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2017

Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Cologne / Berlin / New York; Maureen Paley, London; David Zwirner, New York / London

Mousse Magazine

WT: In the first place, I do not speak about youth. When I was twenty-four, my main thing was to speak to being alive, being human, and to do that I spoke through the people who were close and accessible to me, and they happened to be young. When my first book came out in 1995 it got a lot of attention and people started to describe it as "a portrait of a generation," but that was never my aim, because when you are young you are not really aware of this condition. It's a matter of perspective. I realized I wasn't young anymore when I was thirty-one years old. And I certainly don't consider "being young" a particular value, because it is a moment of great vulnerability, crisis, and confusion.

RC: Do you think you contributed to some change in the ideals of beauty with your work for magazines such *i-D*?

WT: Maybe. But what goes on in 99 percent of fashion publications is not influenced by that. A real alternative of bodies and beauty is not fulfilled because there is always a sense of perfection there. I'm not so optimistic in that sense. I think that we are just carrying forward a small detail of what people did in far more radical ways in the 1960s and 1970s. And our tolerance for different bodies is definitely lower than it was twenty-five years ago.

RC: An ethical question persists in photography: How to operate in a world of heavily consumed visual imagery? Why should a photographer want to take another picture in a photo-saturated world?

WT: Exactly. It's the reason I slowed down my photography in the late 1990s, when I turned more to abstract pictures made without the camera in the darkroom. If you think about a balance, a justice regarding what lives are worth representing, I wonder why we should have 10 percent of the world be portrayed every minute and other people from the same Earth not at all.

RC: Is that why you usually take photos of people you personally know, and not just bodies without any story or context...

WT: I was always critical about it, and aware of the complications that come with depicting people. I had problems with how young people were depicted in the late 1980s; they were always presented as not serious, making funny faces or funny gestures, like they had to excuse themselves for being young, and I never felt that that generation should be taken anything other than seriously. The people I knew were quite deep, not superficial. I personally felt very serious at eighteen, or twenty-one, with sincere interests in fine arts and music as well as pop culture, magazines, and fashion.

RC: Now that your artworks belong to some of the world's most important art institutions, what kind of relationship do you have with the Old Masters?

WT: I have never regarded the Old Masters as completely out of my reach or my real experience. When you talk about Gustave Courbet, first of all I think of him as a human being. That's because of my fundamental belief is that all people are born equal. There are variations in how we use a tool to represent a wave—for instance with painting or photography—but we are still looking at the same subject in different moments in history.

at Fondation Beyeler, Basel
until 1 October 2017

Mousse Magazine



Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2017

Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Cologne / Berlin / New York; Maureen Paley, London; David Zwirner, New York / London

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Wolfgang Tillmans at Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2017

Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Cologne / Berlin / New York; Maureen Paley, London; David Zwirner, New York / London



5

CARTE BLANCHE À

Wolfgang Tillmans.

LE PHOTOGRAPHE ALLEMAND, FIGURE DE L'ART CONTEMPORAIN, EXPRIME SA LIBERTÉ DE TON AVEC DES IMAGES QUI MÉLENT ABSTRACTION ET RÉALISME DOCUMENTAIRE. UN UNIVERS INTIME ET ENGAGÉ QU'IL PRÉSENTE JUSQU'À L'ÉTÉ.

Galerie
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Vue de l'installation, Fondation Beyeler, 2017.

Patty, Félix. « how did wolfgang tillmans become one of the defining photographers of his generation? », *i-D*, June 5, 2017.
https://i-d.vice.com/en_gb/article/how-did-wolfgang-tillmans-become-one-of-the-defining-photographers-of-his-generation



PHOTOGRAPHY | Félix Patty | 5 June 2017

how did wolfgang tillmans become one of the defining photographers of his generation?

As his second Tate retrospective draws to a close this weekend, award-winning artist, photographer and musician Wolfgang Tillmans reflects on the politics, photography, and musical endeavours that have defined the last fifteen years of his career.



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Headlight (d), 2012.



This article originally appeared i-D's The Family Values Issue, no. 347, 2017.

Wolfgang Tillmans is standing in front of a giant photograph, detailing in high-definition an arse and a pair of balls, and laughing. When pressed for an interpretation of the image, he says, with another laugh: "It's just the facts of life." One of his assistants is listening to the theme music from *Indiana Jones* in the background, the sounds of triumphant violins drifting in from another room, lending a surreal air to our discussion. It's just over a week until Wolfgang's second Tate retrospective opens, and in the galleries he's busy putting the finishing touches to the show. There are assistants methodically working away on boxes of prints. There are pictures resting against the walls. Plans for arranging small prints plastered around the space. One room is still full of building materials.

The image we're discussing is *rackt, 2 (nude, 2)* from 2014. Upon a deep blue carpet rest a pair of testicles, legs splayed slightly open, a semi-circle of arse cheek covers the top half of the image. It's shot with the crystal sharpness and intense clarity that's defined the artist's recent work. Every hair is visible. Wolfgang states it's not on display as a provocation, it's simply "what we are. It's free of charge and it doesn't hurt anybody. To look at a bum and a pair of balls from this angle is not harmful, yet it seems completely scandalous. It's very difficult to photograph nudity in a new way, but it warrants its place in the exhibition, or so it seems."



The Cock (Kiss), 2002.



Galerie
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JAL, 1997.

It may surprise you that Wolfgang, for all his unflinching representations of everyday life, sex, dancing, love, and politics, is a photographer who gets easily embarrassed and has to overcome shyness to take even a clothed portrait, but especially to take a picture such as this. "It's very embarrassing! Very!" he states. "That's why there aren't many nudes here. In the 2003 Tate Britain retrospective there were two penises in an exhibition of 350 photographs. Three reviews in the newspapers described the show as being 'littered with genitalia', but I very rarely take sexual pictures, or nudes, because I get so embarrassed." So does his self-consciousness ever hold him back? "No, embarrassment is a good thing," he states. "It's a threshold you have to cross if you want to take a picture. Photography has to be painful almost. I have to want to make that picture so much that I have to overcome my embarrassment."

Wolfgang's second Tate show, simply titled *2017*, is not a strict retrospective as such, more a survey of the work he's created since his first Tate Britain retrospective, *If one thing matters, everything matters* in 2003. So there are no images of Alex and Lutz, no Concordes, no *Deer Hirsch* and none of those ground-breaking early images from i-D that made his name either, just 14 years of work by maybe the best artist-photographer in the world; densely beautiful abstractions, blown up black and white photocopies that revel in grain and noise, delicate and humanistic portraits and luxuriously detailed still lifes. Wolfgang is, of course, rightly heralded and lauded for his work. In 2000 he became one of the youngest ever winners of the Turner Prize, as well as being the first non-Brit, and the first photographer to win too. He's almost 50 now, yet still full of boyish charm and enthusiasm, his work still propelled forward by a genuine engagement in the world around him. *2017* feels an apt title for the exhibition. *If one thing matters, everything matters* might be a mantra for those of us trying to find ways into the beauty of Wolfgang's work, defined by its lack of visual hierarchy and openness. *2017*, then, is more about Wolfgang "looking for a sense of now" and "uncovering the state we're in." It's the work of an artist uncovering the world around him.

Patty, Félix. « how did wolfgang tillmans become one of the defining photographers of his generation? », *i-D*, June 5, 2017.
https://i-d.vice.com/en_gb/article/how-did-wolfgang-tillmans-become-one-of-the-defining-photographers-of-his-generation



The state we're in, Wolfgang suggests, began in 2003, with the Iraq War and the massive global demonstrations against it. In particular the "wilful ignorance of the evidence," that propelled us towards war, and "the disconnect between people and politicians," when the protest proved unsuccessful in preventing it. It was an event that ended Labour's post-Thatcher honeymoon years and proved a political millstone around the neck of a generation. "You know the whole 'post truth' thing that we're supposedly living in now?" Wolfgang asks. "Back then that was something that drove me and concerned me very much, and that's how the *Truth Study Centre* projects came about."

The *Truth Study Centre* is a series of works arranged on mazes of overlapping narrow tables. It presents a constellation of fragments; newspaper clippings, emails, images, quotes and pieces of text curated from 2005 to the present day. *Truth Study Centre* is of course a tongue-in-cheek title, but the series isn't about finding meaning in a confusing world. Instead, the alternative-facts and fake-news era we're currently crashing through has put these works into stark relief. In response, Wolfgang has created a new *Truth Study Centre* work for the retrospective that explores "the backfire effect" which is "the psychological effect observed in people who hold a belief that might not be supported by facts, and when they are faced with the facts about it, it will not change their view, but reinforce it."



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Faltenwurf (skylight), 2009.



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Nackt, 2 (nude, 2), 2014.

Politics is never far from Wolfgang's work; something evident last year when he took an active and very public role in campaigning for Britain to stay in the EU. 2016 also saw him actively take a stand against Trump's presidential campaign; utilising his public platform to try and prevent the slide towards racism and nationalism we're experiencing right now. But in the last two years Wolfgang has also immersed himself in his work as a musician. He was in a band in Germany in the mid 80s before he even picked up a camera, and recently returned to it, fronting a 'traditional' band, called Fragile, and also embarking on an electronic project under his own name; one of his songs appearing as the coda to Frank Ocean's *Endless* visual album. "I didn't embark on all these projects last year because there was a stagnation or a vacuum in my art practice," he begins. "The music just wanted to find a way out." But even now, back "concentrating on the main thing I do" as he puts it. Politics and music are always inescapable for Wolfgang. In the exhibition itself, music finds form as a listening room dedicated to work of the 80s avant-garde pop group Colourbox. Part of his mission to get people to take pop music seriously as an art form, something he's been pushing at his Between Bridges project space in Berlin. But music is there in many of his photographic works, *2017* features portraits of musical idols old and new, from Morrissey to the aforementioned Frank Ocean, through to images of clubbers lost in passion.

"In some ways I see myself as an amplifier," Wolfgang explains. "It's not the only role I have, but photography lends itself to amplifying things because it is a medium of mechanical multiplication. I felt from early on in my career that I could give physical space to ideas through my work. That was what my early work in magazines was about, in particular i-D. I wanted to use photography to give that space over to something I liked, like the peace movement.

Or, for example, we're sitting in front of this portrait of Patti Smith, a very unusual portrait because she's being portrayed on a 15 metre digital screen at Glastonbury. To place that here is giving her space, giving Glastonbury space, giving what Glastonbury means to people that space. Or the picture next to it, which I think will move by the time the exhibition opens, of six or seven people in intense conversation in a bar in St Petersburg. It's giving space to the very human act of talking to each other, instead of the act of buying designer handbags."



For all this talk of politics, music and space, it's easy to lose yourself in the beautiful imagery Wolfgang creates - even if he insists, "beauty is only a concept, a definition, something different to different people." Specifically the large scale, super detailed photographic works he's been creating recently. Wolfgang started using a digital camera in 2009, and stopped shooting analogue in 2012. One image that stands out from this recent period is a simple shot of a bright green weed sprouting out of concrete, captured in hypnotic high resolution. The detail these images capture gives them an almost 3D quality in the way they squash together depth and flatness. Another image, almost entirely white, called *In A Cloud*, was taken through a plane window as he flew through a cloud. "Every photograph is an experiment," Wolfgang continues, whether it's of a person, an object, wildlife, or the whiteness inside a cloud. "It was an experiment to see whether I could take a picture of it. People are afraid of using the most common subject matter - and that's what I get accused of doing by some critics - but it's really about seeing whether I can take a picture that captures the nature of something, but also the very specific feelings of that moment, in this time, in this place." It's this that lends such simple subject matter such resonant emotion, such depth, beauty and visual complexity.

It's hard to describe what gives Wolfgang's portraiture its essence, its *Wolfganginess*. You can recognise his work a mile off, somehow. There's a humanity and simplicity to the way he captures people. There's no trickery, no showy concepts, just an image that captures the soul. One photograph, of an artist called Philip, is particularly memorable, especially amongst the more famous names on the walls. And we could discuss all the famous names he's shot over the years, but this image seems more *him*, in its humbleness, openness, heart and soul. Dressed casually in a green baggy T-shirt and jeans, Philip is staring right into the camera, fiddling with his hands.



Philip Wiegard, 2011.



"It's so fascinating about photography, isn't it? That you can tell from a mile off who a picture is by," Wolfgang laughs. Not that there's a formula to the way he works, each portrait "has to be felt new each time." And this portrait of Philip, for all its apparent simplicity, took years to shoot. "I had been observing and noticing him, and wanting to take a portrait of him for some years, so in my mind it matured. But because I was embarrassed, I could never ask him if he would sit for me. Then this picture was taken backstage at a Meadham Kirchhoff show at London Fashion Week, the most unlikely setting for such a personal portrait. It took me literally five minutes, but years as well. That's the amazing thing about photography, it can condense years of thinking into a moment."

Wolfgang is not one of those photographers taking pictures all the time. "I'm not walking around all day, every day, with a camera," he says, standing in front of a portrait of an anonymous young man, dressed in purple robes, in front of a purple car in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah. There's something sphinx-like and intriguing in the man's expression and circumstance. "I have a strong sense of embarrassment, which means that only occasionally is there a clarity that overrides it, that means I can take the picture. In this moment, in the old town of Jeddah, when there was a lucidity. I was seeing everything with such clarity. I just felt I had to take these photographs."



Young man, Jeddah, (a), 2012.

"I thought Saudi Arabia would be the worst place to ever go to as a gay person," he continues. "Then, when you are there, you realise there are five million people living in Jeddah, and the people I met were, of course, nice human beings. Wherever I go that's been my experience. People are people, as the Depeche Mode song goes. This whole demonisation of the other doesn't work when you are up close and face to face." Which maybe stands as a nice closing mantra for the exhibition, for Wolfgang's work and his approach to photography. It's all about finding the humanity and universal emotional centre of us all, collapsing us and them together.

As I leave Wolfgang to his boxes of prints, wall plans and hard-working assistants, he seems remarkably calm, but then he's done this all before of course. Few people get two Tate retrospectives. Less get them whilst they're still alive. So if he doesn't seem particularly nervous, maybe it's because he's rightly confident in the power of his work, it's there for all to see. Before leaving he points to a large, beautiful, abstract print. "A lot of people want to know what these works mean," he says. "They want a manual to read it correctly, but it's just about accepting and bearing what is in front of us. The irrationality and absurdity of life is so powerful that sometimes you have to embrace it."

Read: [From one icon to another, Arc4 is shot and interviewed by Wolfgang Tillmans.](#)

Credits

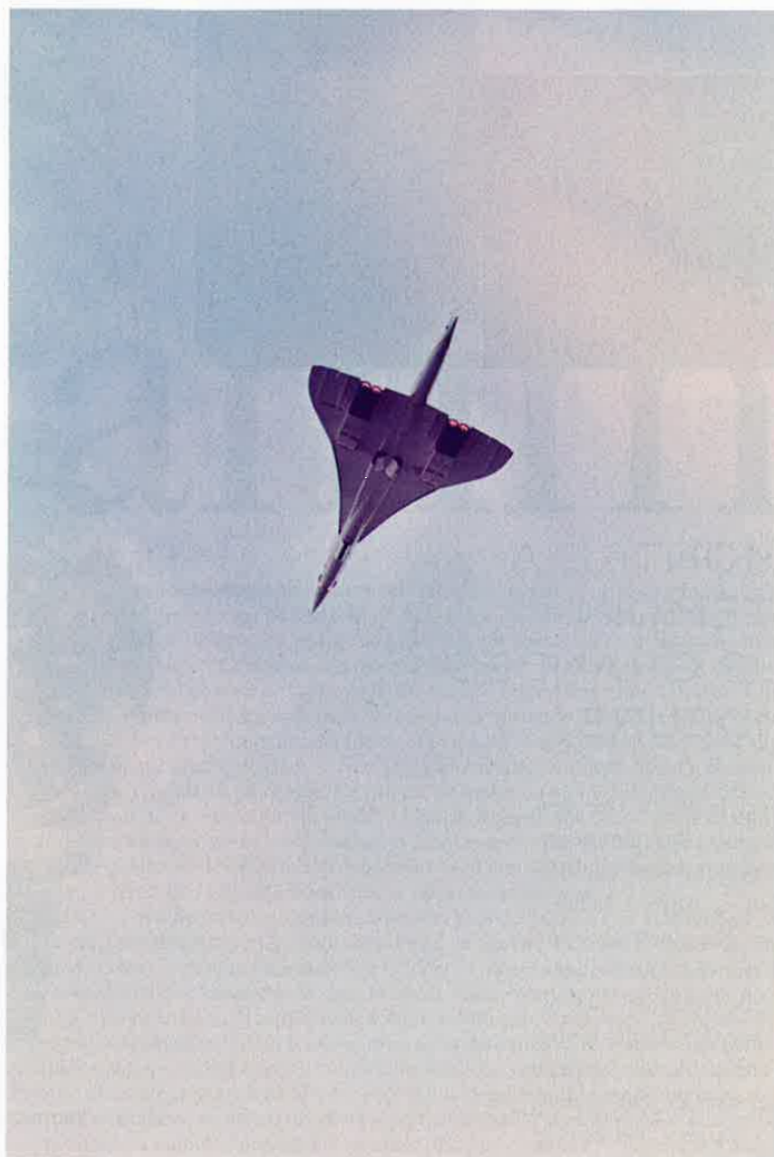
Text Félix Petty
Photography Wolfgang Tillmans



CARTE BLANCHE À

Wolfgang Tillmans.

LE PHOTOGRAPHE ALLEMAND, FIGURE DE L'ART CONTEMPORAIN, EXPRIME SA LIBERTÉ DE TON AVEC DES IMAGES QUI MÉLENT ABSTRACTION ET RÉALISME DOCUMENTAIRE. UN UNIVERS INTIME ET ENGAGÉ QU'IL PRÉSENTE JUSQU'À L'ÉTÉ.



Il y a vingt ans, Wolfgang Tillmans a réalisé son projet *Concorde*. Un livre poétique qui traite du résultat magnifique de l'esprit d'équipe et de la coopération dont ont fait preuve les partenaires européens.

Concorde L449-19, 1997.

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Making of



2



3

Wolfgang Tillmans, l'irrévérencieux.

DEPUIS SES DÉBUTS DANS LES ANNÉES 1990, LE PHOTOGRAPHE ALLEMAND BOUSCULE LE BON GOÛT AVEC DES IMAGES QUI REVENDIQUENT UN MODE DE VIE DÉGAGÉ DES CONVENTIONS. PARALLÈLEMENT, IL CRÉE DES COMPOSITIONS ABSTRAITES ET POÉTIQUES. "M" LUI CONFIE JUSQU'À L'ÉTÉ SA "CARTE BLANCHE".

PAR CLÉMENT GHYS

Dans les années 1990, le milieu de l'art européen voit débarquer un jeune Allemand, né en 1968, Wolfgang Tillmans. En quelques expositions, le jeune homme aux cheveux ras et à l'allure décontractée (veste de surplus militaire, short en Lycra) dépoussière le monde de la photographie. Il punaise ses images à même les murs des galeries, les photocopie sur du papier lambda, ajoute des coupures de journaux. Les tenants du bon goût de l'époque sont choqués par cette audace, comme par les images elles-mêmes : des instantanés des amis de Tillmans, parfois nus, en pleine forêt, accrochés à des arbres comme le Baron perché d'Italo Calvino. Ou encore de jeunes hommes s'embrassant goulûment, urinant sur une chaise de bureau ou regardant l'objectif avec un œil moqueur. En Allemagne, au Royaume-Uni ou aux Pays-Bas, le photographe collabore avec des revues indépendantes, qui croisent l'art, le graphisme et la mode : *The Face, i-D, Butt...* Son travail porte en germe toute la désillusion et la radicalité des années 1990.

Mais Wolfgang Tillmans est de ces artistes qui savent s'adapter à l'époque, étendre sans cesse leur spectre. Ainsi, si son travail a un aspect documentaire et défend fièrement un mode de vie supposément marginal, il lorgne aussi vers l'abstraction. Il photographie la mer et les vagues comme une fresque, le ciel comme un monochrome, passe des heures à saisir une goutte d'eau sur du papier ou à attirer une mouche sur des fruits de mer. « *Les natures mortes sont un mélange de hasard et de contrôle, de jeu et de mise en scène* », commente-t-il. Ces deux facettes, documentaire et abstrait, ne s'opposent pas. Elles se complètent et forment une œuvre qui, le succès et les récompenses venus (notamment le prestigieux Turner Prize en 2000), a influencé la photographie contemporaine par sa liberté de ton.

Wolfgang Tillmans, 48 ans, vit entre Londres et Berlin. À partir du 28 mai, une exposition lui est consacrée à la Fondation Beyeler, à Bâle. Et jusqu'au 11 juin, il fait l'objet d'une rétrospective à la Tate Modern, à Londres. Quelques mois avant son ouverture, le Royaume-Uni était en pleine campagne sur le Brexit, et l'artiste signait des affiches pour appeler les électeurs à voter pour l'Union européenne. Sur des images d'aubes ou de crépuscules, selon les interprétations, il imprimait des slogans comme « *We are the European family* » (Nous sommes la famille européenne). Un énième pas de côté pour celui qui a fait sa carrière en les accumulant. En août 2016, le rappeur américain Frank Ocean, dont le coming out avait fait parler en 2012, tant le geste est rare dans le milieu du hip-hop, sortait un album, *Blonde*. Tillmans en signait la pochette. Un portrait de Frank Ocean, les cheveux teints en vert fluo. Une manière de sortir l'art des musées et des galeries, et de prouver que la politique se niche aussi dans la pop culture. ☺

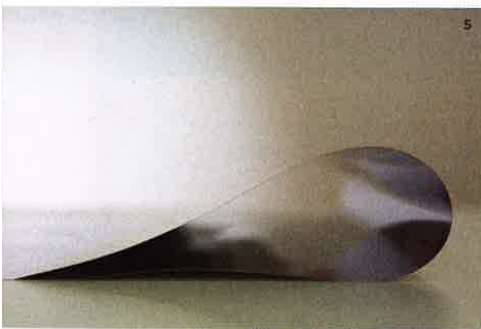
Wolfgang Tillmans, Fondation Beyeler à Bâle, du 28 mai au 1er octobre; et à la Tate Modern à Londres, jusqu'au 11 juin.

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4

Wolfgang Tillmans (1) explore deux registres différents : la forme documentaire et l'abstraction. *Faltenwurf Bourne Estate*, 2002 (2); *Armpit*, 1992 (3); *Lutz & Alex; holding cock*, 1992 (4); *Paper drop, Oranienstrasse, a*, 2017 (5); *Peaches V*, 2001 (6).



5



6

ARTFORUM

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BASEL

WOLFGANG TILLMANS

Fondation Beyeler

May 28–October 1

Curated by Theodora Vischer

Few artists working today illuminate the politics of everyday life with the subtle insight and devastating versatility of photographer Wolfgang Tillmans. He turns seemingly casual observations of simple subjects, like friends or flowers, into potent symbols of youth, community, mortality, and hope. The implicit social engagement of Tillmans's work pervades the vast but carefully chosen survey now at Tate Modern. But a second exhibition, opening this month at the Fondation Beyeler, offers a more introspective view. This show, focusing on the artist's studio-based work, will include portraits, still lifes, and staged shots, plus films and music. Look for Tillmans—an ingenious installation artist and quiet provocateur—to activate the complicated meanings in his own work, slyly tweaking the foundation's patriarchal canon of blue-chip modernist masters.

—Brian Wallis

Aesthetica

Wolfgang Tillmans: Societal Discourse



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As far as timely exhibitions go, Wolfgang Tillmans' (b. 1968) current exhibition at Tate Modern, London, is charged with the heartbeat of today's news and societal hot topics. 2017 features work from Tillmans' portfolio since 2003. If not a retrospective, the prominent subjects his work explored from over a decade ago are still the issues of discourse and the media today.

Matters of war, gender politics and gay rights, immigration and the refugee crisis are embedded throughout his photographs and in the mixed materials of the vitrines filled with the artist's own images and media clippings. Specific themes are not followed, and the visual and supplementary stimuli on show is like scrolling through news-driven social media feeds. The presentation is not all serious, more sprightly challenging, and emphasises the biased perspectives on what is seen as truth – which is now the ubiquitous “fake news” raising controversy at present. The work is evocative in an enticingly captivated form and it has an underlying sense of urgency that encourages its audiences to pay attention to what is happening in the world around them.

Whilst politics are a part of Tillmans' career and personal life, his main focus is making art. The variety of images on display is vast, as is the way that they are presented. Mostly unframed, clipped or taped to the walls, some are high, some are low, some are in the corners of the galleries. The photographs are small and large-scale, and of portraits, landscapes, film abstractions, cities, deserts, TV static, car headlights, bedrooms, drains, plates of food, tropical birds, airport customs – all are individual vignettes of deeper stories or commonplace scenes carefully cropped.

Aesthetica

Each individual piece channels a reflection of our world, and together represents its chaos, contents, and beauty. These snapshots resonate beyond their surfaces on many levels. His work is given further accreditation from the aforementioned political references to art historical associations, such as the photo of a meal of lobsters alluding to Dutch still life paintings. Its pink, yellow, orange, white and red palette is offset by a black fly, a symbol with negative connotations. There is no doubt in the talent Tillmans holds in producing striking imagery.

The show follows its own energised beat, including a room where audiences can listen to the recorded music by the band Colourbox. This space was curated by the German-born photographer, with his reasoning that studio recorded music does not receive the same acknowledgement as live music. It is unexpected, as is discovering a video of Tillmans dancing in his underwear. Although, nowadays in our constant flux of change, it is the dynamism that keeps it interesting. And, if there is also the playfulness and beauty as in the works produced through the lens, now could be the time to take advantage of the moment.

Ashton Chandler Guyatt

Wolfgang Tillmans: 2017 runs until 11 June at Tate Modern, London. For more information:

www.tate.org.uk

Follow us @AestheticaMag on Instagram and Twitter for the latest in contemporary arts and culture.

Credits:

1. *Wolfgang Tillmans La Palma (2014)* © Wolfgang Tillmans.

Posted on 3 April 2017

Mercier, Clémentine. « Wolfgang Tillmans «A la fin, la seule chose qui reste d'une civilisation est l'art» », *Libération*, March 17, 2017.

http://next.libération.fr/arts/2017/03/17/wolfgang-tillmans-a-la-fin-la-seule-chose-qui-reste-d-une-civilisation-est-l-art_1556465



INTERVIEW

WOLFGANG TILLMANS «A LA FIN, LA SEULE CHOSE QUI RESTE D'UNE CIVILISATION EST L'ART»

Par Clémentine Mercier
— 17 mars 2017 à 17:56

Wolfgang Tillmans explique son rapport à la photographie, son implication politique et l'évolution de son travail sur trois décennies.

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Toucan (2010). Photo Wolfgang Tillmans



On le célèbre ici comme un enfant du pays. Premier artiste non britannique à avoir reçu le Turner Prize en 2000, Wolfgang Tillmans (photo Anders Clausen) a vécu près de vingt ans à Londres, et en a adopté le mode de vie. Né en 1968 à Remscheid, en Allemagne, l'artiste habite désormais Berlin. Ce printemps, il occupe près de 14 salles à la Tate Modern, à l'aise comme un poisson dans la Tamise. Rencontré la veille

de l'ouverture, Wolfgang Tillmans, presque 50 ans, décontracté et généreux, s'allonge sur un banc au centre de l'expo, large sourire aux lèvres, et prend le temps d'expliquer sa vision du monde et de la photographie, qu'il veut poétique, expérimentale et engagée. Difficile de résister au charme doux du photographe, pleinement concerné et à la nonchalance déconcertante.

Pendant PhotoLondon 2016, vous vous êtes engagé contre le Brexit...

C'est une campagne que j'avais commencée seul au début de l'année. C'est la première fois que je suis devenu activiste politique. J'ai toujours été politisé dans ma vie, et mon travail l'a toujours été dans un sens, mais pour la toute première fois, je suis devenu militant. Je me suis rendu compte que personne en Grande-Bretagne ne défendait avec chaleur l'Europe. On parlait surtout des dangers qu'il pouvait y avoir à la quitter, mais il n'y avait personne pour rappeler que, peut-être, l'Europe était une bonne idée. Pour moi, cela a été une chose tellement forte de vivre ma vie comme un Européen, de voyager en France, d'apprendre les langues, d'étudier puis de déménager en Grande-Bretagne... J'ai toujours eu conscience qu'il y a soixante-dix ans, l'Europe n'avait pas ce visage.

Mercier, Clémentine. « Wolfgang Tillmans «A la fin, la seule chose qui reste d'une civilisation est l'art» »,

Libération, March 17, 2017.

http://next.liberation.fr/arts/2017/03/17/wolfgang-tillmans-a-la-fin-la-seule-chose-qui-reste-d-une-civilisation-est-l-art_1556465



Vous avez pensé cette exposition au moment où vous êtes devenu un activiste, est-ce que cela a changé votre manière de la concevoir ?

Cette campagne d'affichage était tournée vers le résultat de l'élection, qui était important pour moi. Cela n'avait rien à voir avec l'art. L'exposition de la Tate parle d'art et pas de Brexit, pas de Trump non plus. Elle raconte la façon dont je regarde le monde. Dans ce regard, je transmets différentes sensibilités. J'espère que je présente les choses de façon non sexiste, non raciste, non xénophobe, avec un point de vue opposé à l'extrême droite. Certaines photos ont une charge plus politique que d'autres. L'urgence continue et j'aimerais montrer mes posters contre le Brexit dans d'autres pays européens [*ce qu'il fait d'ailleurs ces jours-ci aux Pays-Bas, ndr*]. La mauvaise ambiance est partout maintenant.

Militez-vous dans un parti ?

Non. Mais j'ai l'impression de faire plus de choses en n'étant pas affilié à un parti en particulier. Pour résumer, nous devrions tous nous impliquer davantage dans les endroits qui comptent. C'est bien différent que de poster des trucs sur Facebook ou d'émettre une opinion dans un bar. On pense toujours que l'art est marginal et qu'il n'a aucune influence. Or, ce n'est pas vrai. Les cultures sont définies par l'art et par leur production culturelle. Et, à la fin, la seule chose qui reste d'une civilisation est l'art... Il compte donc. Et comptent aussi les problématiques sur lesquelles il se focalise. C'est pour cela que j'ai commencé *Between Bridges*, un espace d'exposition non-commercial dans un local à Londres en 2006...

Vous en montrez les cartons d'invitation dans l'expo. Que représente ce lieu ?

A l'époque, je réfléchissais à l'art des jeunes artistes à Londres et tout me paraissait si formel... alors que le monde est plein de sujets intéressants pour lesquels on pouvait se passionner. En 2006, déjà, ce n'était pas un monde parfait qui autorisait à être apolitique : on avait la guerre en Irak, le fondamentalisme. J'ai été obligé de montrer dans ce lieu alternatif des artistes qui étaient d'une façon ou d'une autre assez politiques.

Vous avez commencé par montrer David Wojnarowicz (artiste et militant homosexuel dans les années 80 à New York)...

Il m'a paru être le choix parfait. C'était un artiste excellent qui ne mâchait pas ses mots. Il parlait avec beaucoup de colère. Je l'ai exposé comme un exemple et comme un rappel pour tous - et surtout pour moi-même d'ailleurs - sur le courage que l'on peut avoir en tant qu'artiste. On a aussi montré Charlotte Posenenske, dont les sculptures en carton et en aluminium, éditables à l'infini, ont un positionnement politique sur la valeur des choses... Par ailleurs, mon projet *Playback Room*, la salle de musique, donne de la valeur à la musique enregistrée...

Vous vendez un disque dans la boutique du musée. Vous êtes devenu musicien ?

Oui, c'est bien ma musique. C'est quelque chose que j'ai commencé à l'âge de 17 ans, puis je me suis arrêté pendant vingt-huit ans et, il y a deux ans, mon côté performatif est revenu. On peut voir dans l'expo la première vidéo où je me mets en scène. Et je me suis mis à refaire de la musique. J'ai utilisé des paroles écrites il y a trente ans... C'était fascinant.

Mercier, Clémentine. « Wolfgang Tillmans «A la fin, la seule chose qui reste d'une civilisation est l'art» »,

Libération, March 17, 2017.

http://next.liberation.fr/arts/2017/03/17/wolfgang-tillmans-a-la-fin-la-seule-chose-qui-reste-d-une-civilisation-est-l-art_1556465



Vous avez une grande confiance pour vous lancer ainsi dans la musique...

Oh non ! Pas du tout. Je me sens encore très peu sûr de moi avec ça...

Quand avez-vous vécu en Grande-Bretagne ?

Je m'y suis installé dans les années 90, cela fait donc vingt-six ans. Puis je suis retourné à Berlin il y a dix ans et j'y ai déménagé mon studio il y a quatre ans. Mon *boyfriend* y vit, et c'était la meilleure solution pour nous. Londres est si intense. Mais la vie y a changé et tout y est devenu commercial. Il n'y a plus rien de gratuit à part les collections permanentes de certains musées.

Pouvez-vous expliquer votre succès en Angleterre alors même que vous avez refusé de vendre des photos au publicitaire Charles Saatchi ?

Cette histoire est tout à fait mineure. Je n'aimais pas ses campagnes. Je n'avais juste pas envie de faire partie de cela. Mais bien sûr, la Grande Bretagne représente beaucoup plus de choses que Charles Saatchi. On a toujours l'impression de l'extérieur qu'il occupe le terrain, mais c'était il y a vingt ans. Je n'ai pas l'impression que mon succès ici soit plus grand qu'à New York ou en Allemagne. J'ai toujours été étonné par le fait que mon travail puisse se traduire dans différents pays, comme au Japon par exemple. Il y a quatre ans, j'ai même exposé et fait un grand tour en Amérique du Sud. J'ai compris que j'avais beaucoup de fans là-bas.

Vous avez commencé à travailler avec le magazine I-D...

Pour revenir aux années 80, il y avait peu de médias qui montraient une scène alternative et une culture jeune non commerciale. J'ai commencé en 1989 pour eux, et j'ai été un contributeur régulier à partir de 1991. En 1995, le magazine a beaucoup changé pour devenir plus mode, ce qui est encore le cas aujourd'hui. Mais jusqu'à cette date, c'était très underground. Malgré cela, *I-D* reste un magazine intéressant. Ils sont conscients de cet héritage, de cette voix de la rue, de la culture jeune dans toutes ses couleurs et sous toutes ses facettes. Quand j'étais impliqué, c'était de petites publications de 96 pages et c'était pré-Internet. On regardait ces pages comme la seule source et la seule nourriture visuelle possible. J'ai reçu de là un grand sens de l'énergie, de la culture dance, de l'acid house...

L'utopie de la club culture ?

Pour moi, cela a été une vision politique, et même si j'étais intéressé par les beaux-arts, j'ai toujours aimé l'énergie qui venait de la musique pop, des night-clubs, de tout ce qui s'y passait...

Allez-vous toujours en club à Berlin ?

Bien sûr. Une bonne chose à Berlin, c'est que l'âge importe peu et il n'y a pas de fermeture aux plus âgés... Les gens de plus de 30 ans qui sortent encore, c'est possible, ce n'est pas un truc bizarre et c'est normal là-bas.

Mercier, Clémentine. « Wolfgang Tillmans «A la fin, la seule chose qui reste d'une civilisation est l'art» »,

Libération, March 17, 2017.

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Vous avez affirmé être «heureux de ne pas connaître l'histoire de la photographie»...

Je ne connaissais pas si bien l'histoire de la photo au moment où j'ai élaboré mon propre style. C'était une réponse aux critiques de certains photographes. Bien sûr, je n'étais pas totalement sans culture, mais je ne fais partie d'aucune école. Je n'appartiens pas à l'école de Düsseldorf, Eggleston n'a pas non plus eu un impact très fort sur moi. Il est formidable, il n'y a pas de doute là-dessus, mais ce n'est pas ma religion.

C'est pour cela que vous photographiez plein de choses différentes comme cet écran, ce monumental cul masculin ou le blanc absolu, comme sur ce tirage immaculé ?

La photographie toute blanche ? C'est un nuage, j'ai photographié l'intérieur d'un nuage ! Cela m'a pris trente ans pour faire cette photographie. La chose intéressante à propos de l'art, c'est qu'avec la maturité, on ne fait pas la même chose qu'à 25 ans. Je suis heureux de travailler dans le champ des arts visuels, car c'est un espace où l'on peut grandir. Avec la musique pop, vous êtes *out* quand vous avez 35 ans. Vous avez sans doute vu déjà ça, une photo prise depuis un hublot d'avion où l'on ne voit rien du tout. Au moment particulier où j'ai pris cette photo, c'est ce que j'ai vu. C'est vraiment ce que l'on voit à l'intérieur d'un nuage ! Etais-je capable de prendre cette photo ? C'est toujours la question qui précède chacune de mes images. Parce que c'est hautement improbable finalement que l'on puisse prendre une photo de cela. Dans un monde de milliards et de milliards d'images, pourquoi ma photo pourrait-elle ou serait-elle importante finalement ? C'est toujours un défi que je me lance.

Qu'est-ce qui motive encore votre désir de faire des images ?

Je ne travaille pas toujours avec le même *modus operandi*. Par exemple, la photo de cette main tendue à New York pendant une manifestation du Black Lives Matter : là, je suis motivé par l'idée d'amplification, j'aime l'idée d'être un porte-voix. Je peux prendre la photo et la mettre sur le mur : des milliers de personnes vont la voir pendant les quatre mois de l'exposition. Pour d'autres images, c'est un jeu pur. J'adore jouer dans la chambre noire avec les lumières et le papier photosensible. Enfin, cette photographie statique d'écran est politique et poétique en même temps. Normalement, on ne peut pas photographier un écran car il y a toujours des barres noires qui apparaissent - j'avais déjà essayé sans réussir il y a trente ans. Mais j'étais à Saint-Petersbourg et j'ai vu un vieil écran plat dans ma chambre d'hôtel. Là, j'ai enfin trouvé la façon de photographier correctement un écran sans barres noires. Chaque image est une expérience. C'est à chaque fois un nouveau challenge.

Et la photo de ce cul monumental ? À qui est-il ?

Je ne sais pas. Enfin si, je sais très bien, mais je ne peux pas vous le dire. C'est un cul qui doit rester secret. ◀

Clémentine Mercier

Sooke, Alastair. « Never mind the politics, feel the lobsters - Wolfgang Tillmans 2017, Tate Modern, review », *The Telegraph*, February 14, 2017.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/what-to-see/politics-lobsters-wolfgang-tillmans-2017-tate-modern-review/>

The Telegraph

Never mind the politics, feel the lobsters - Wolfgang Tillmans 2017, Tate Modern, review

★★★★



Wolfgang Tillmans's Juan Pablo & Karl, Chingaza 2012, on display at Tate Modern CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

By **Alastair Sooke**, ART CRITIC

14 FEBRUARY 2017 • 9:30AM

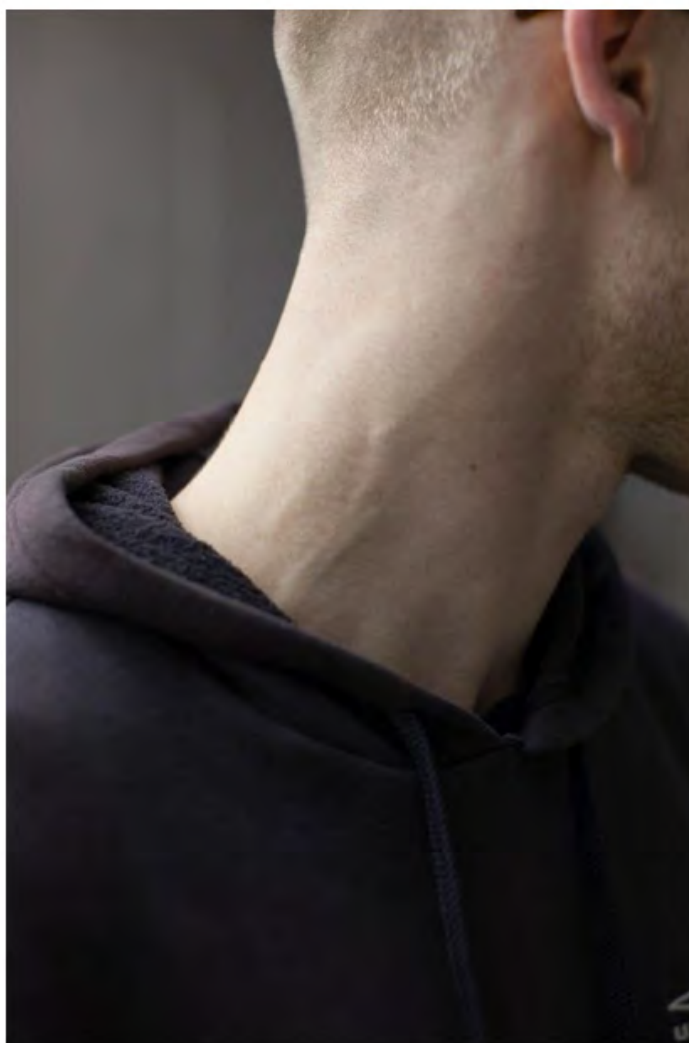
It is almost two decades since Wolfgang Tillmans became the first photographer, and non-British artist, to win the Turner Prize, back in 2000. The German, then, is hardly a new name. Indeed, now 48, he is very much in middle age.

Don't get the wrong impression, though: there's no cocoa-and-slippers cosiness about his fresh and invigorating new exhibition, arranged across 14 rooms at Tate Modern. Walking through it is like putting your fingers on the beating pulse of now.

Call it a retrospective at your peril: everything about the show, which presents Tillmans's output using a high-resolution digital camera since 2003, when he had a solo exhibition at Tate Britain, broadcasts his questing, restless desire to innovate and do things differently.

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The Telegraph



Wolfgang Tillmans's *Collum*, 2011 CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

So, with one or two exceptions (towards the end, for instance, we find a gallery of portraits), there are no themed rooms. Instead, in the spirit of his artistic hero Robert Rauschenberg (currently the subject, coincidentally, of another retrospective at Tate Modern), Tillmans delights in thumbing his nose at hierarchies and smashing apart conventions.

He is known, for instance, for his unusual approach to showing work, and here he does not disappoint. Photographs are presented every which way: large, small, high up, low down, above doorframes and windows, squeezed into corners, stuck next to fire escape signs. A few are framed, but most are not. Typically, they're attached to bulldog clips hanging from tacks. Some are even taped directly to the wall.

The presentation is crucial, because it broadcasts an important message: Tillmans's art is anything but stuffy or pompous. Rather, it's all informality and casual flair. At times, he flirts with visual anarchy. But he also subtly corrals the exhibition so that it flows with enviable rhythm.

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The Telegraph



Wolfgang Tillmans's Iguazu, 2010 CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

He is no stranger to art history, either. Walking around, I totted up references to, among other things, Courbet's *Origin of the World* (later, there is a corresponding and provocatively blown-up close-up of a naked man's buttocks and testicles), and the *Sleeping Hermaphrodite*, a notorious, gender-bending ancient marble statue that Tillmans co-opts as an emblem of his own queer politics.

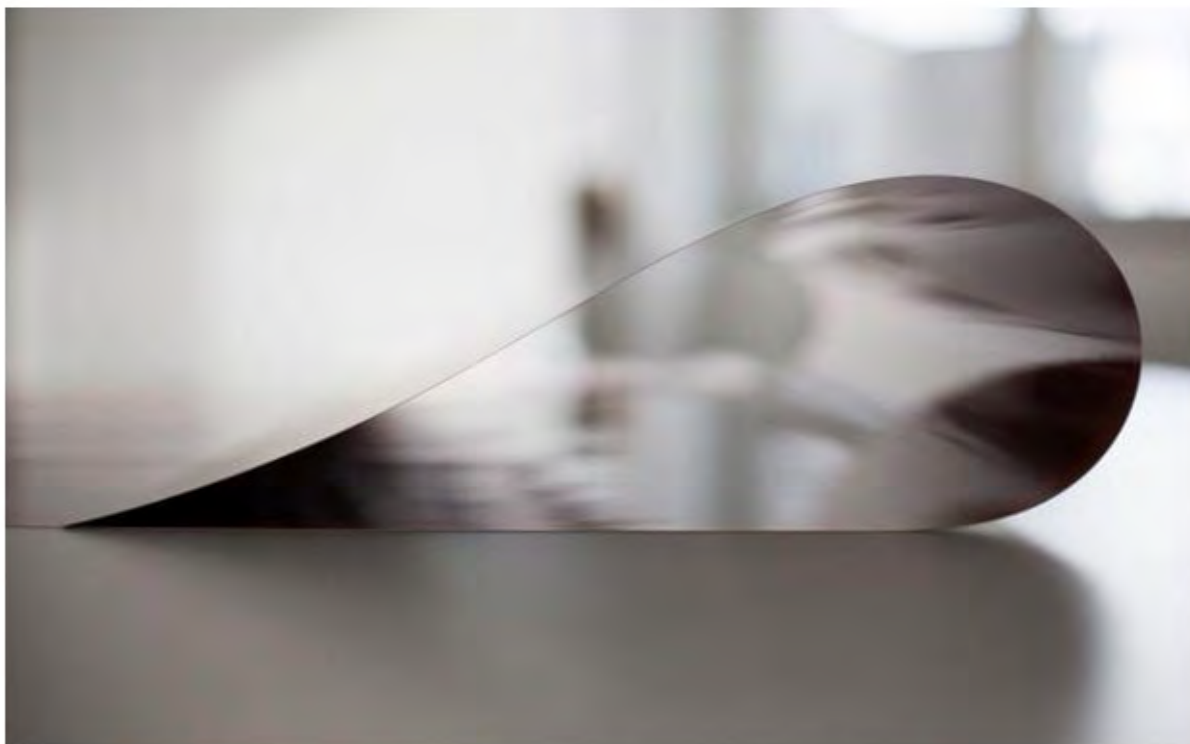
A vast black-and-white print of a semi-naked male youth, wearing only Adidas shorts, pulling a splinter from his foot restages another famous statue from antiquity, known as the "Spinario", or *Boy with Thorn*.

I doubt that many people will get the reference, and fewer still will care – but such allusions suggest that beneath Tillmans's modishness and freewheeling invention, a solid bedrock underpins his art.

What, then, of the work? Above all, Tillmans is a gorgeous colourist. As befits an artist who made his name in fashion photography during the Nineties, he has a sensuous eye, and can make even the most unremarkable subject, such as the folds of a jacket above a pair of jeans, compelling.

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Wolfgang Tillmans's Paper Drop Prinzessinnenstrasse, 2014 CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

Indeed, his instinctive knack for creating memorably ravishing images is a sort of ocular superpower – the essence of his talent, akin to, say, David Hockney's exquisite draughtsmanship.

This is evident after the preamble of the exhibition's opening two rooms (the second of which, focusing on Tillmans's studio, functions as a composite, introductory self-portrait). The third gallery – hung with seven substantial prints – stops you in your tracks.

Here is a close-up of a glittering car headlight, surrounded by an expanse of glossy red bonnet: automobile bodywork has never looked so sexy. There are the cracked remains of a lavish meal of lobsters: the panoply of oranges, reds, yellows, pinks, creams, and whites provides a succulent visual feast, reflecting the one consumed.

Lest we surfeit, though, a plump black fly – a classic symbol of mortality – strikes a troubling note. There's that engagement with art history again.

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The Telegraph

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Wolfgang Tillmans's *Astro Crusto*, 2012 CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

Throughout the exhibition, there are countless instances of similarly lush and sumptuous images. The graceful young man from Jeddah wearing a loose pink robe, leaning against a garish pink car. The brilliant, insouciant toucan, with a curving orange beak. The majestic weed thrusting through the cracks of Tillmans's London patio with puffed-chest vigour, presented on an epic scale, like a portrait of Napoleon.

Then there are the stunning *Blushes* – a series of sublime abstract images on which Tillmans has been working since 2000. (Abstraction is an important strand of his artistic DNA.) With startling originality, Tillmans produces their quasi-painterly marks without a camera, by manipulating light directly onto photographic paper.

Elsewhere, he is great on texture, as well as colour. In *Dusty Vehicle* (2012), desert sand covers a Mercedes like a thick and tactile pelt. In *La Palma* (2014), foaming waves have the consistency of double cream. Spherical specks of spray levitate in mid-air like a juggler's balls.

I could go on. But there is another side to Tillmans – and one, I sense, which he encourages deliberately, to temper the facility of his innate gift for image-making, lest people accuse him of producing superficial pictures that appeal only to the eye. And that is his tendency to talk politics.

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Wolfgang Tillmans's Shit Buildings Going Up Left, Right and Centre, 2014 CREDIT: © WOLFGANG TILLMANS/TATE MODERN

There are many photos here about war, gender politics and gay rights, the refugee crisis. A smashed-up boat lies wrecked on a beach on Lampedusa. An aerial shot documents the catastrophic effects on Port-au-Prince of the earthquake of 2010.

All this is fine: Tillmans is free, of course, to express his concerns and beliefs. For many people, his crusading political sincerity will only add urgency to work that already feels remarkably contemporary.

Sometimes, though, his political work feels like an exercise in virtue-signalling. Moreover, even his most ardent fans would surely concede the weakness of his “truth study center” installations, featuring itsy-bitsy photographs, clippings from newspapers and magazines, and print-outs of online articles, all presented beneath glass on wooden tables.

Sure, they remind us that the world is horribly violent, divided, and fragile. They also skewer our era of “fake news”. But they have the subtlety of thought of a sixth-form debate, and none of the arresting visual aplomb which won Tillmans acclaim.

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The Telegraph



Wolfgang Tillmans in 2013 CREDIT: ANDERS CLAUSEN

By the end, I was also tired of Tillmans's disruptive aversion to the conventions of retrospectives. He deliberately disregards chronology, by jumbling up different bodies of work, but this means that there is little sense of artistic development.

Consequently, although Tillmans is a sophisticated and supple designer of exhibitions, the final room, for instance, feels similar, in terms of overall tone and effect, to the preceding ones. An exhibition two thirds the size would, arguably, have had more impact.

These, though, are quibbles. Few artists navigate the complexities of the world today with such honesty as well as style, presenting both the dazzle and the muddle of our overloaded modern lives. Tillmans may not be a new name, but he remains a very special talent.

From Feb 15 until June 11; information: 020 7887 8888

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REVIEW - 14 FEB 2017

Wolfgang Tillmans

Opening tomorrow, Wolfgang Tillmans's major retrospective at Tate Modern shows an artist coming full circle

BY LAURIE TAYLOR

'Wolfgang Tillmans: 2017', which opens tomorrow, is the artist's first solo exhibition at Tate Modern and is part of the institution's push to expand their contemporary photography collection beyond the canonical 'black and white fine print' tradition. Born in Remscheid, West Germany in 1968, Tillmans first gained attention in the early 1990s for his photographs, which documented the gay scene and club culture in London for magazines such as *i-D* and *Spex*. He went on to win the Turner Prize in 2000 – the first photographer and non-British artist to do so – and has since continued to work along an increasingly conceptual axis. The exhibition begins in 2003, a year that marked a fundamental change for Tillmans. The second Iraq war, the fall out of which is still being felt today, and its peripheral issues of religious fundamentalism, capitalism, migration and anti-globalism had a profound effect upon the artist, markedly influencing his artistic practice.



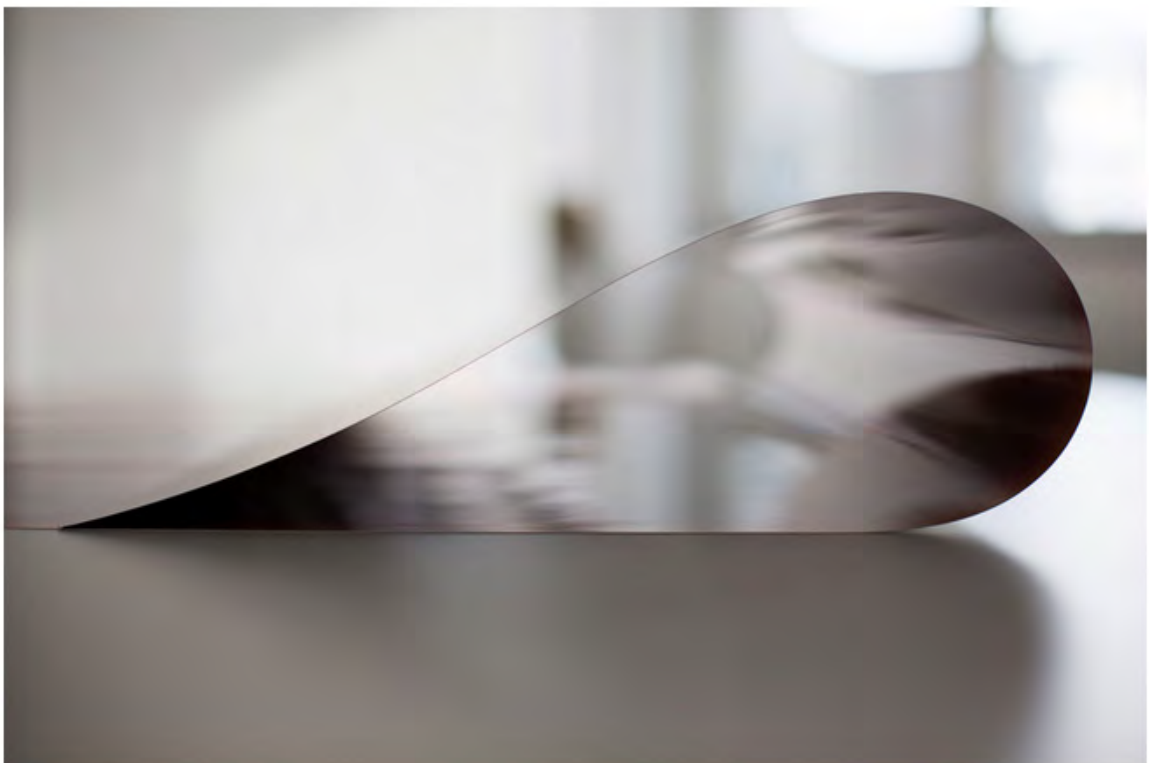
Wolfgang Tillmans, *Juan Pablo & Karl, Chingaza*, 2012. Courtesy: © Wolfgang Tillmans

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His is a practice that can be difficult to categorize as Tillmans's work often fails to fit into traditional boxes. First and foremost a photographer, his early interest in the medium's documentary capabilities have given way to a more inward-looking approach, whereby he *makes* photographs, causing the images to happen, rather than *taking* them from what is already there. In his abstract series, such as 'Paper Drop' (2001–08), 'Greifbar' (2014–15) and 'Silver' (1998–ongoing), Tillmans explores the serendipitous effects that occur when light, chemicals, dust and photographic paper are combined in unconventional ways. These works, which range in size from A5 portfolio prints to 2m wall-size prints, are evidence of Tillmans's fascination with photography's unique materials and processes, but they also represent a different form of photographic record, created but nonetheless true. As if to highlight their central significance to Tillmans's practice, these abstract works are scattered throughout the exhibition, appearing in different rooms, sometimes framed, sometimes hung with bulldog clips, alongside other seemingly unrelated works.

In a departure from purely photographic work, Tillmans also uses newspaper and magazine clippings, postcards and pamphlets alongside his own photographs, presenting them not on the wall, but rather in custom-made table displays. The 'Truth Study Centre' (2005), in addition to being more multi-media than previous work, was also Tillman's first overtly political work. The project, which features in the exhibition, functions as a critical engagement with propaganda and the assumed veracity of visual and printed materials. Produced just two years after the invasion of Iraq, 'Truth Study Centre' was motivated by Tillmans's own desire to do more than watch from the side-lines; this pull towards activism was one he hoped would translate to viewers, inspiring further active engagement.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Wolfgang Tillmans, *paper drop Prinzessinnenstrasse*, 2014. Courtesy: © Wolfgang Tillmans

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These days, Tillmans is discovering new creative vehicles through which to express his political and social interests. He runs an exhibition space, 'Between Bridges', which opened in London in 2006 as a showcase for young artists with a notably political edge to their work. Tillmans relocated the space to Berlin in 2014, where it continues to feature installations, talks and performances, concentrating most recently on addressing the refugee crisis in the EU. In his latest venture, Tillmans is reinvented as a songwriter and vocalist. In 2016, with help from a revolving line-up of studio musicians, he put out two techno-influenced EPs. *Device Control 2016/1986* was released in September and was quickly followed in December by *That's Desire/Here We Are*. The latter features a synth-pop/post-punk musical style straight out of 1983, but Tillmans lyrics, particularly the Brexit and Donald Trump-inspired 'Naive Me' are all too current. The EP has also been released as a 'visual album' in which Tillmans and a cast of guest performers sing and dance (and hula-hoop) to each track. In making the albums, Tillmans wanted to remind us that amidst the need for activism and awareness, we must also leave room for living life and seeking out happiness wherever we can.

Tillmans's musical endeavours form part of his latest exhibition, as Tate Modern turns its underground chamber, 'The Tanks', into a makeshift listening room. For ten days, beginning on 3 March, Tillmans will take over the south tank for a series of music and video events designed to provide an immersive and contemplative environment for the appreciation of music and sound – not unlike the spaces created by museums and galleries for visual art.



Wolfgang
Tillmans, *astro crusto*,
a, 2012. Courtesy: ©
Wolfgang Tillmans

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With this latest foray into music, there is a feeling of Tillmans coming full circle. It was club culture, after all, that first sparked his rise to international fame. But in those early photographs of ravers, Tillmans existed as observer, looking outward and bearing witness to the world around him. In his more recent works, however, he seems to be playing an increasingly active role. Is this just the natural evolution of contemporary artistic practice, where the artist slowly becomes the art or rather did the events of the early 2000s initiate this participatory turn in Tillmans? By starting in 2003, the Tate Modern show suggests the latter. Perhaps it was only when the world around him began to change that the artist was able to do the same.

- ['Look, again'](#) – Wolfgang Tillmans talks to [Dominic Eichler](#) about observation, perception and translation
- [Listen: Wolfgang Tillmans talks to Julia Peyton-Jones, Adrian Searle, and Jane & Louise Wilson](#) about London in the '90s
- ['EU Campaign'](#) – Saim Dermican on Tillmans's [pro-EU poster campaign](#)
- [Listen: Wolfgang Tillmans discusses two decades of his practice](#)

['Wolfgang Tillmans: 2017'](#) is on view at Tate Modern, London, 15 February-11 June. Main image: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Collum*, 2011. Courtesy: © Wolfgang Tillmans

LAURIE TAYLOR

Laurie Taylor is a writer and editor based in London, UK.

theguardian

Wolfgang Tillmans review - a rollercoaster ride around the world

★★★★★

Tate Modern, London

Cities from the sky, cigarette still lifes and sunset drives ... the German's swirling show has got the lot - even a room to dance in



Wolfgang Tillmans with his work *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast V*, 2014 at Tate Modern. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

Room after room, turn after turn, [Wolfgang Tillmans' Tate Modern exhibition](#) teems with images large and small. Images alone and arrays of larger and smaller photographs, framed and unframed and attached to the wall with bulldog clips, hung high over doorways and shuffled on a table.

A young man's neck, a knee, a hand stuffed down a pair of shorts. A glimpse of flesh as someone turns. A boy looking at his phone at a London roundabout, a young man in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, all in fuchsia next to his shiny purple car, mobile phone in his hand. A pair of balls and anus, close-up, huge on the wall. A city seen from the sky from an aeroplane window; another city, veiled in pollution. You can get very close or not nearly close enough. Or even too close.

These shifts in distance and proximity, scale and presentation let Tillmans' photographs, in all their variety, breathe. Such stratagems are familiar from [earlier exhibitions](#) of the German artist's work, but are more than just a way of amassing his material. They take account of our mobility and insatiable hunger for the next thing, in order to slow us down and pay attention.



Headlight, 2012, left, and Munuwata sky, 2011 by Wolfgang Tillmans. Photograph: Guy Bell/Rex/Shutterstock



There is music. There is dancing. Bewilderment is part of the pleasure, as we move between images and photographic abstractions. [Tillmans' asks us to make connections](#) of all kinds - formal, thematic, spatial, political. He asks what the limits of photography are. There are questions here about time, place, belonging, voyeurism, affection, sex. After a while it all starts to tumble through me.

Here is a laser print of a faded fax, itself a print of a photograph of a young man crouching, in a position like praying. Through all its technical reproduction, the image assumes a new quality, both degraded and as delicate as a pen and wash drawing, the faded memory of something seen or encountered, bought back to mind.

Then we are swept away on a drive down Sunset Boulevard, rear lights flaring in the night, then trudging down the grey-carpeted slope of an airport corridor, heading towards Immigration, beyond the sign that reads "Rest of World". OK. Where next? To the studio, with its messy desk, a still life of monitors, laptops and cables, beer bottles, cigarette packs and ashtrays. Some images give you only blankness, pure colour pocked and marked by a dirty printer, a corrupted purity.

theguardian



📍 Sunset night drive, 2014. Photograph: © Wolfgang Tillmans



When Tillmans won the [Turner prize in 2000](#), he used some of his winnings to buy an expensive colour printer. In 2011, he dismantled the by now defunct machine, screw by screw. A thing of silvery panels and grey shadows, the parts clutter his studio floor, surrounding the printer's disembowelled carcass. What that thing has seen, how much use and abuse it has suffered. Then he took its photograph, as if he were looking for some secret there, some image lost inside. A little later we come to a gutted lobster shell, a fly working at a scrap of uneaten flesh in the upturned carapace on the table.

[Tillmans' work](#) is all a kind of evidence - a sifting through material to find meaning. Now the camera is staring into a big cardboard box, half-filled with pharmacist's tubs and packages, 17 years' supply of antiretroviral and other medications to treat HIV/Aids. I imagine the sound that box would make if you shook it, what that sound might say about a human life, its vulnerability and value.

A whole world is here. A filthy drainpipe in Buenos Aires, a Delhi morning, Shanghai nights, Port-au-Prince and Lima seen from the air. Anders, half naked, bent over and pulling a splinter from his foot, a timeless moment of attentive self-care. Everything collides in this warren of 14 spaces. Tillmans' 2017 is not a retrospective so much as a realignment of images and preoccupations. Reconfiguring his work, introducing pauses and interruptions, is a way of telling the story new each time.



Market I, 2012, on show at Tate Modern. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images



Making a show is as much a part of Tillmans' work as taking pictures, making a video or an installation. Or, one might add, creating exhibition spaces in London then Berlin, championing other artists, and making the best case for remaining in Europe, as Tillmans did in a [series of posters](#) he created, and which could be downloaded and distributed for free, last year.

An arrangement of home-made tables fills one room. Begun in 2005 his truth study center is an ongoing project that collates all kinds of visual and written material as a kind of tabletop scrapbook of archived articles and images. It functions as a litmus test of the present moment. There are studies in brain research, and how hard it is to change people's political opinions; global warming evidence and why it riled doubters; the cognitive process, and why it is that that people don't care that Donald Trump lies. Here's a pamphlet on anal play for men and women. There is too much to take in, in these background rumbles of the personal, the public and the private.



Lampedusa, 2008. Photograph: © Wolfgang Tillmans



Later, music leaks into the gallery, and we are led into a blue room with acoustic baffles mounted on the walls and ceiling. A serious sound system blasts the music of 1980s British band [Colourbox](#) into the space. This is a kind of release. Colourbox was a studio band that never performed live, and the speakers reproduce their music as close to the quality of the original master recording as possible. Tillmans' [Playback Room](#) was first set up in Three Bridges, the studio/gallery space he set up in Bethnal Green, then again when he moved to Berlin. The room is cluttered with rows of old GDR school chairs. Ignoring them, I danced alone by the window, looking out at the grey river light on a winter day.

In another room, wearing only his underpants, Tillmans dances too, to the beat of his bare feet as he moves left and right before a mark on a wall, in the video [Instrument](#). Maybe the black mark is a glory hole. On an adjacent screen we see his shadow cast on a different wall, making the same moves, slipping in and out of synch with his other self. Dancing for himself, dissolving in the rhythm, he is both instrument and player, catching up with himself, lagging behind. This second room, we learn, is in Tehran. What a strange and compelling work this is.

Among a number of portraits - including artist Richard Hamilton, singer Frank Ocean and ex-British Museum director Neil McGregor - we find Tillmans' own reflection, fractured in a scarred, dented and distorting metal mirror in

Reading jail (taken for his participation in the [Artangel project](#) there last year).

And here is artist [Gustav Metzger](#), who first arrived in Britain as a refugee on the [Kindertransport](#), almost a lifetime ago. The colourful wreckage of boats beached on Lampedusa marks a more recent transit of fleeing refugees. In a further image the spotlight of an Italian coastguard helicopter is cast on a dark sea in a rescue mission off the coast.

Someone stands beneath the Gaza wall, as if they were waiting for something. White paint is hurled over the screen of a Spanish ATM in a gesture of rage and obliteration. We are coming to the end. The last room in the show is dominated by an empty ocean, heaving with contrary currents and undertows. The image is called [The State We're In](#). In a corner hang four modest pictures of a small apple tree, growing outside Tillmans' old London studio, the fruit ripening. Around, the world roars on.

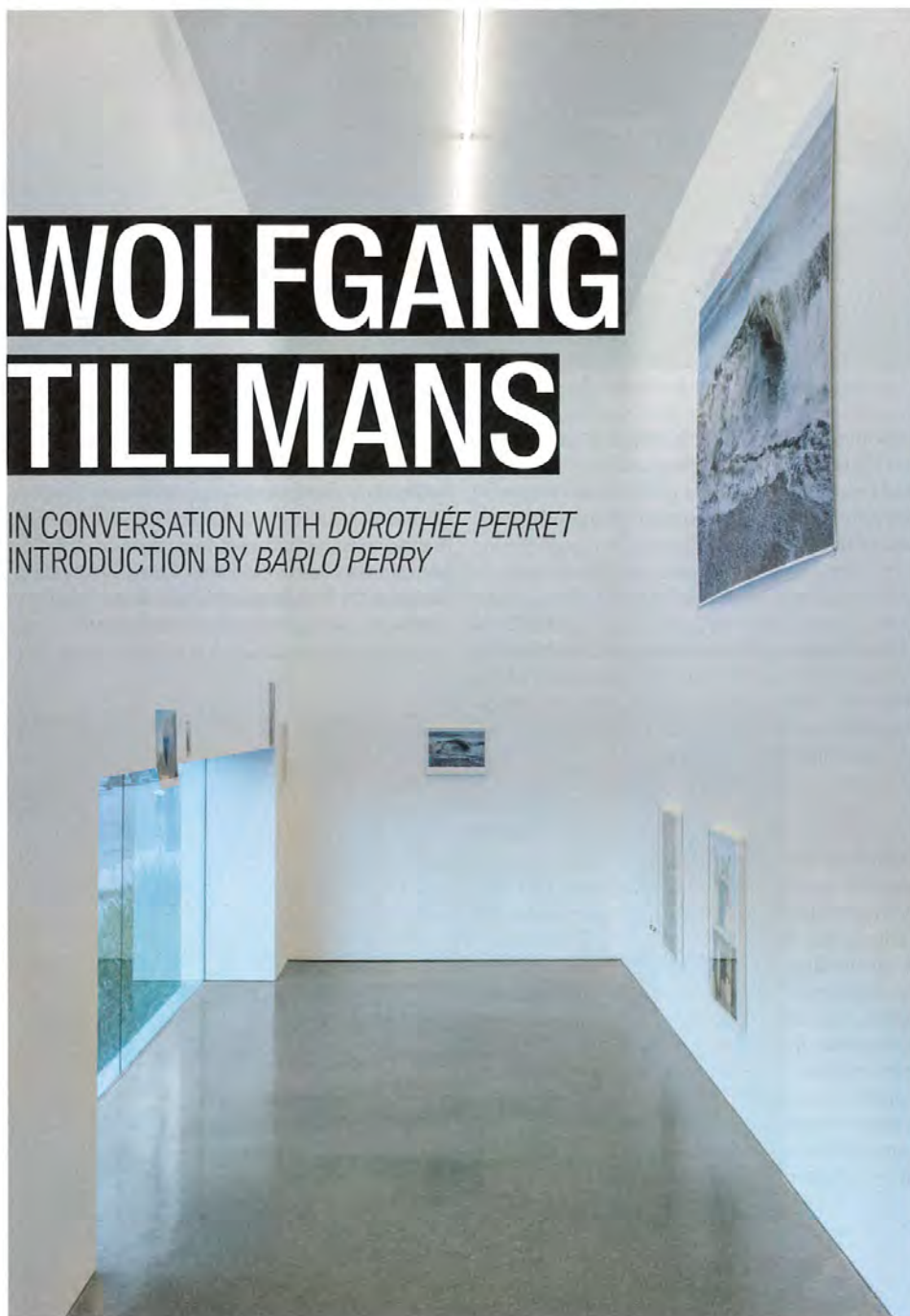
● [Wolfgang Tillmans: 2017 is at Tate Modern, London, 15 February-11 June](#)

PARISLA

**SOUND
AND VISION**

**WOLFGANG
TILLMANS**

IN CONVERSATION WITH *DOROTHÉE PERRET*
INTRODUCTION BY *BARLO PERRY*



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

PARISLA



The new Wolfgang Tillmans show at Regen Projects in Los Angeles opened three days before election night 2016, a jolting aftershock to the pro-Brexit vote the previous June. Maintaining their “special relationship” by mimicking one another’s worst instincts, the United States and Great Britain have both taken a “populist,” nationalist leap from a cliff, exit Right.

In many ways this feels like terra incognita. But it also feels familiar. Certainly Wolfgang Tillmans—creator of anti-Brexit posters and a recent *Artforum* ad for his Regen Projects show which he repurposed as an anti-Trump message—has been somewhere like this before. At a London anti-Iraq war demo over a decade ago, he carried a large sign with the words: *the axis of evil goes right thru George W.’s juicy manhole*.

Born in Remscheid, Germany in 1968, Wolfgang moved to Hamburg in his late teens—where he had his first show, at Cafe Gnosa, an artists’ café—and left for England in his early twenties, where he attended the Bournemouth College of Art and Design. London has been a chief base of operations since 1992, and he won Britain’s Turner Prize—the first photographer and first non-U.K. citizen to do so—in 2000. In Berlin he is identified with a rich work-and-play relationship with the Ostgut and Berghain techno clubs. In 2016, Wolfgang returned to music making with the *2016/1986* and *Device Control* EPs, both on Fragile. The former includes remixes of three songs he recorded in 1986, and the cut “Device Control” also appeared on Frank Ocean’s *Endless* album.

A thoughtful, intelligent confidence has guided his long, successful journey, but Wolfgang has claimed that he would be lost without the strong sense of doubt that defines his photography, from the representational documents of his community to his abstractions. He is highly engaged in the international discourse around politics and power. Yet, as he told writer Paul Flynn in 2009, “purposelessness is quite crucial to art.” These contradictions are the connections that inform Wolfgang’s body of work, most recently in the half-hour visual album *That’s Desire/Here We Are* by his band project Fragile, shot in Los Angeles in autumn 2016. Featuring improvisations by actors Bashir Daviid Naim and Hari Nef, joyous hula-hooping by Karis Wilde, and Wolfgang’s lyrics and deep-voiced *Sprechgesang*, it’s a bittersweet celebration and affirmation of individuality, cosmopolitanism, and desire.

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DOROTHÉE PERRET

I first encountered your work through magazines like *i-D* and *Purple*. That was the culture at that time, that's how I got information in my youth. You somehow managed to start from magazines, and kind of bridged, crossed over. And you did it, like, twenty-five years ago.

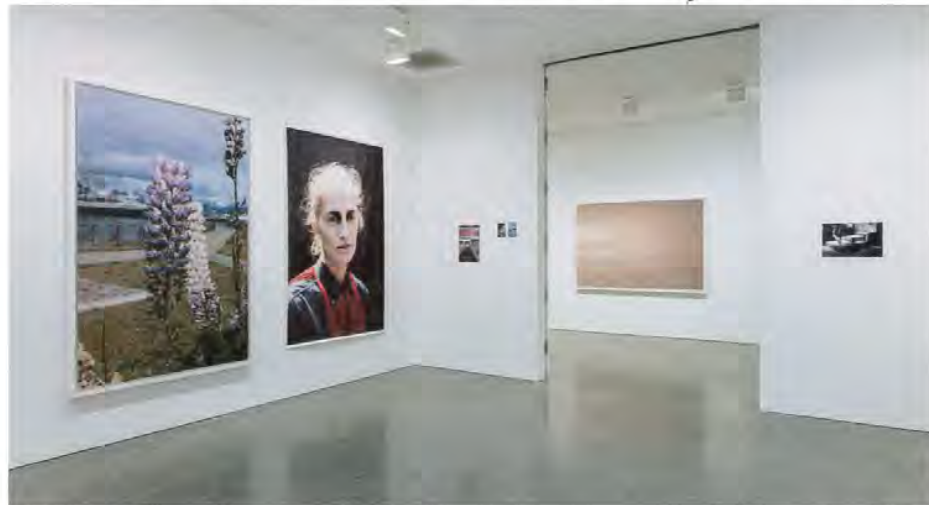
WOLFGANG TILLMANS

But that's really a very long-lasting misconcep-

WOLFGANG

tion, a misunderstanding. I always saw myself as an artist, but I was equally drawn to youth subcultures, their music and street styles. I saw no reason, other than hierarchical "high-art/low-art" narrow-mindedness, to not engage in *The Meaning of Style*, as the subtitle of Dick Hebdige's book from 1979 goes. From the start, I equally showed in galleries and magazines, and I still do so today. For me nothing changed from that.

But I also wanted to speak with clothes. I was always working with a sense of purpose. Maybe "mission" is too much, but actually, yes, it was [a] mission. Like the Alex and Lutz story, for example. That was in 1992, and when you look at the magazine, the opening page is a T-shirt that I made with a flyer that I collected in Los Angeles in 1990. And it says, "Fuck Men! Fuck Male Domination! They don't destroy their selves... they aim to destroy me and you. The freedom



we seek, to live, to love, to do," will explode us. We want the freedom to love, to live.

DOROTHÉE

Yeah, I don't think you came from fashion at all. But you were very influential on fashion. The Alex and Lutz pictures, the camouflage story...

WOLFGANG

They were all for *i-D* in the early '90s. I was given exceptional freedom in a short time window, maybe a couple of years.

DOROTHÉE

I remember the Alex and Lutz series burned in my mind as a symbol for gender equality. You were exposing through one image all sorts of different forms of sexual exploration. It was definitely not fashion [per se].

DOROTHÉE

That was already there.

WOLFGANG

It's always been there. I'm only in media because, on the one hand, I have felt a great energy from it myself, growing up with feeling the power of record covers, the power of a magazine. And I wanted to be there because I wanted to represent my ideas, my *ideals*, of what I felt was missing.

DOROTHÉE

Did you collaborate with magazines because you missed the representation of the people in your community?

WOLFGANG

First of all, everything worked out great. [LAUGHTER] I'm very happy. But I did go a more difficult route. I did a lot of things that were not necessarily considered high art in the broader art world, and from the beginning my audience

PARISLA

was not limited to the art world. I started making exhibitions in 1988, when I was not even twenty. And they were black and white, grainy photocopies.

DOROTHÉE

So in fact you started as a “purely disciplined” artist.

managed to tune in to many ways of looking at the world. And you’ve opened the spectrum for us. I wanted to talk about music because I know it’s been one of your big passions for a long time. How does music interact with photography? Is it one big thing? Is it separate?

WOLFGANG

I mean, definitely, the making of music is a new thing because, for twenty-eight years, I haven’t done music. I just hope we’re okay.



WOLFGANG

Yes. It was studying the abstraction of a photograph. It was, like, gray surfaces. I was studying the nuances of these toners on paper. Why was a photocopy, to me, suddenly more valuable than my paintings? I stopped drawing and painting. I stopped making music. I moved into these photocopies.

DOROTHÉE

Did magazines invite you to shoot fashion, and you refused?

WOLFGANG

No, I wanted to. In 1990 I did a story for a Hamburg *Time Out*-type magazine called *Prinz*, and it was about styling it. So all the relevant fashion things that I did I styled myself. It came from the clothes.

DOROTHÉE

The culture around the queer scene in the '90s in Berlin, with techno and house parties, was your lifestyle. And your images, your photos, in all formats, that document that era, do what music does when it opens senses. Because of your purely disciplinary way of working, you’ve

DOROTHÉE

This summer [2016] you performed on Fire Island and in Brooklyn. Can you share the experience? Did you enjoy the performative aspect of it?

WOLFGANG

In Fire Island I spent the summer writing songs with musician friends under the name of Fragile, my teenage nom d’artiste, which has kept a curious currency in today’s world. We performed on the beach at the BOFFO Performance Festival, and later at Union Pool in Brooklyn. In the beginning I was very afraid to take it live, but thanks to band members Juan Pablo Echeverri, Jay Pluck, Kyle Combs, Tom Roach, and Daniel Pearce—who all have live experience—I soon overcame my stage fright, and we did a surprisingly confident set. The feedback was genuinely positive.

DOROTHÉE

Did you receive a musical education, or did you do your own research?

WOLFGANG

Music is something that I was never trained in.

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SOUND AND VISION

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I was never good, *supposedly* good, at it. I never had confidence. But I grew up with music. Classical music with my parents, and the Neil Young and Beatles records of my brother and sister, before I discovered Italo Disco, haha. My passions were astronomy and then music.

DOROTHÉE

You [first] composed music twenty years or...

WOLFGANG

I mean, I see the life *politic*, the life that we live all together as people, is the sum of what people throw into their world. And, ultimately, culture is hugely important. There's commerce, there's food, there's housing, there's, for some, religion. But culture is a huge thing, and it is often treated as an extra, as a marginal thing. But, ultimately, it's the clay of culture that holds our life together and nurtures it, and then moves it this way or that way. And, ultimately, I care about the



WOLFGANG

Thirty years, like '85, '86. And then exactly two years ago I started to think about this again. I wanted it not to be something that is amateurish. I want musicians to think this is okay, this is serious. Even though my recognition as an artist is obviously indivisible from what I do as a musician, I don't want to rely on that. I have to live with it, of course, and use it. It is there. It gets me more attention, but it also gets me a more critical attention, and it's, of course, *that* [attention] that interests me. That it's not just written off as, "He should stay with his primary talent."

DOROTHÉE

Yeah, and I wanted to talk with you about something that's always constant in your work: the political involvement, and the care that's been there from the very beginning. You always had that conscience that is carried through the work. And today, you open a show, and it feels that politics is still a huge concern for you. It's still omnipresent. And, to me, it's maybe what finally links the music, fashion, photography, and fine art. Finally, your whole *œuvre* is political in that sense.

life that we live and that we are allowed to live, and how free we are allowed to live our lives. Because the story of mankind, at least of, say, Christian history that I can maybe refer to, has not always been a free world, a free life.

DOROTHÉE

To me, you're a true contemporary aesthete. You take the time to look at the world, and you point us in directions with your photography and video work. I remember the video with the little peas that felt intense, and quite dramatic, yet it was only a video of little beans boiling in a pot.

WOLFGANG

Peas (2003) is also about people, like a crowd being agitated, and then calming down when the fire is taken off. I don't work in symbolism. I like the work to speak, but not speak symbolically. So, on the one hand, the waves and clouds and horizons in recent pictures are political in their poetry, but on the other hand, they are not symbols. Even, of course, in the form of the invitation poster and the *Artforum* ad, with that slogan. ["Only the Americans have the power to stop Trump."]

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SOUND AND VISION

DOROTHÉE

Do you feel a political sense in every aspect of life?

WOLFGANG

Yes. I mean, I don't feel guilt, but we are always in a society with everybody else. One has to question what it means, what we do. What does this constant self-expression mean? Is that maybe a terror of self-expression? It's a lot about taking space—this sort of Western creative scene is taking a lot of space. For example, I questioned in the early 2000s, why should there be so many pages devoted to a young, Western lifestyle? How many more pictures of people standing in their Converse and jeans does it need? I know we give air, but we are also possibly sucking [up air]. And we're occupying a lot of space on the server farms of Instagram, etc. And it's not enough to just be a little politically aware. Everyone has to really think: What does it really mean? A big lifestyle does use up a lot of natural resources. It uses up a lot of labor in developing countries, and maybe it's a good thing that it creates jobs. But you have to think, like, there are more repercussions to how we live [with] these bottles of Fiji water floating around L.A. everywhere. And in L.A. and in America you often hear, in general, "Ah, it's crazy," or "It's a circus." But everybody still runs around with Fiji water bottles that are shipped halfway around the globe.

DOROTHÉE

To me, the bottom line is education. To educate oneself, and others on the way—and you've shown us a lot about that. It's a complicated world now because there is all this flux of information, and it's hard to know what's true from what's fake. That's what the [American] election has shown, and what Brexit was. Western societies have made some progress, but it's complicated right now.

WOLFGANG

Yeah, we have to be very clear [that] whatever social progress we are enjoying has been fought for by the generations before us.

DOROTHÉE

Can you talk about the spontaneous energy around the making of *Fragile*'s visual album, and the collaboration with Ash B., Hari Nef, and the other performers?

WOLFGANG

I try to make music that is, on the one hand, poetic, and should be listenable and, sometimes, danceable. I like that it can have content. One thing I regret a little bit about the whole techno-electronic thing is that it basically didn't have lyrics. I always liked lyrics, and the house music that really changed my life from 1986 to '89 was all with lyrics—you know, Inner City's "Good Life." They all had lyrics. Even when it was only one line—as in Bam Bam's "Where's Your Child?" They said something. And then the last twenty years or more it's like, no words. I also love non-vocal hardcore techno music like Underground Resistance. I love protest songs, but I also love nonsensical lyrics. On the *Fragile* EP I wanted to work in a number of musical styles, and the lyrics stem from a wide variety: my own, and those of a 95-year-old Swiss liberation theologian, and the young New Jersey rapper Ash B. [*PARIS, LA*'s cover star for this issue]. She is an extraordinary talent! I met her for a portrait sitting, which was scheduled to take place at the recording studio in Greenpoint where we worked on this summer's material. We had just finished a spontaneous session around a bassline that Tom, the bass player, presented to us. Whilst we were listening back to it in the control room, Ashley came in, and she felt inspired to jump into the booth and record a one-take response to the song we just did. "That's Desire" is basically the result of a recording session that took no more than 30 minutes in total.

Image credits: *Fragile* live at Union Pool, Brooklyn, September 2016. Photograph by Luis Nieto Dickens (p.51). Installation view of Wolfgang Tillmans at Regen Projects, Los Angeles, November 5 – December 23, 2016. Photographs by Brian Forrest (p.48 – 52). Ash B., 2016 © Wolfgang Tillmans (cover). All images courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles.

Songwriter-vocalist-rapper Ash B. is originally from Newark, New Jersey. Her debut EP *Infinity & Beyond* was released in early 2016, and she's at work on her upcoming project *Memoirs of an A.G.* Her single "Are You Serious?"—"a dedication to all those who doubted me"—is out now, and she's featured in *That's Desire/ Here We Are*, Wolfgang Tillmans' 2016 visual album with *Fragile*. Ash B. also collaborates with the Qween Beat crew. <https://soundcloud.com/kandy-crush> <https://soundcloud.com/qweenbeat>.

frieze

1998



Wolfgang Tillmans
friends

‘Each photograph Wolfgang Tillmans takes and prints is part of a collective,’ wrote Julie Ault. Tillmans himself has said: ‘I do want each picture to be understood as its own self-sufficient entity.’ *friends* embodies both of these positions. Three male heads on an orange-red pillow: two of the men (one with a prominent safety-pin earring) are cuddling, while the third faces the opposite direction. Although he is partially cropped out of the scene, his hair softly touches the shorn skull of one of his friends and he seems very much part of a moment of union and warmth. The constellation feels personal, but it’s also an iconic representation of three people challenging both monogamous norms and the assumption that males are supposed to bond without getting too intimate. Taken in the year Northern Ireland entered the Good Friday agreement, the Kosovo War commenced, and the year after Tillmans lost his partner, Jochen Klein, to AIDS, this picture, and the people in it, are a self-sufficient entity *and* part of a collective.
— Jörg Heiser

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

PHAIDON

Wolfgang Tillmans takes over the Tate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Silver Installation VII (2009) by Wolfgang Tillmans

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

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

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

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Astro Crusto, A (2012) by Wolfgang Tillmans

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

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

PORTO, PORTUGAL

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

Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves

January 29–April 25

Curated by Suzanne Cotter

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

—Julian Rose



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

REALIST ESTATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULIAN ROSE IS A SENIOR EDITOR OF ARTFORUM.

DAMN°50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS



Between the Blur and the Flicker

Tillmans on TV

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

ANNA SANSOM

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

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

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

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



DAMN 50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS

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

OTHERWORLDLY

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

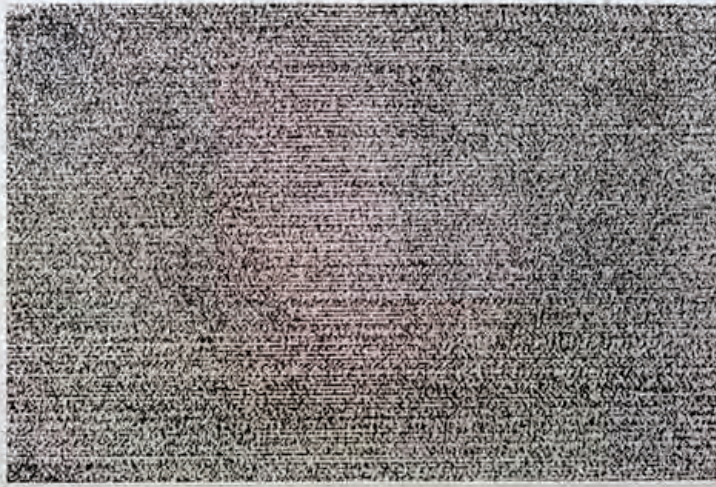
from the mass of lines of tiny squares. "The patterns are even like a kind of language when you study the lines – it could be Arabic or Hebrew or a musical code – and that of course happens all the time without us actively noticing that we're seeing stuff we don't understand", says Tillmans, 46, about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

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

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



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



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

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

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

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

TEMPORALITY

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

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



DAMN50 magazine / WOLFGANG TILLMANS



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



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

Portrait of Wolfgang Tillmans
by Carmen Brunner

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

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

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

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

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

PARIS

Wolfgang Tillmans

Galerie Chantal Crousel / 18 avril - 23 mai 2015

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

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

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



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

Étienne Hatt

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

Ci-dessus/above:

« Lignine Duress », 2015.

Vue de l'exposition / Exhibition view

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

2014. Impression jet d'encre sur papier,

non encadrée, pinceau. 208 x 138 cm

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

Unframed inkjet print on paper, clips

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

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



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

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

Translation, C. Penwarden

ENTRETIEN

PAGE
06

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

Propos recueillis par
Emmanuelle Lequeux

WOLFGANG TILLMANS, ARTISTE

« Faire la paix avec cette inquiétante étrangeté du monde »

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

L...

ENTRETIEN

WOLFGANG TILLMANS, ARTISTE

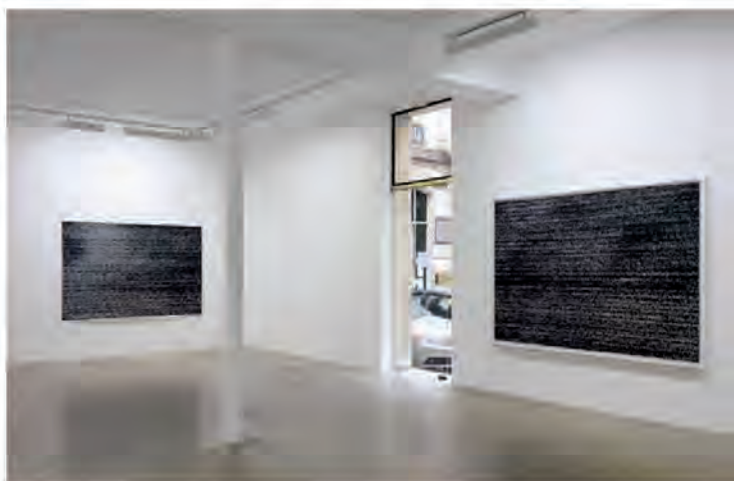
SUITE DE LA PAGE 06 rhétorique plus ardue, et je ne ferais sans doute pas cette exposition à Chelsea [New York]. Mais elle n'est pas plus expérimentale qu'une autre : toute exposition est un laboratoire.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

avec cette inquiétante étrangeté du monde.

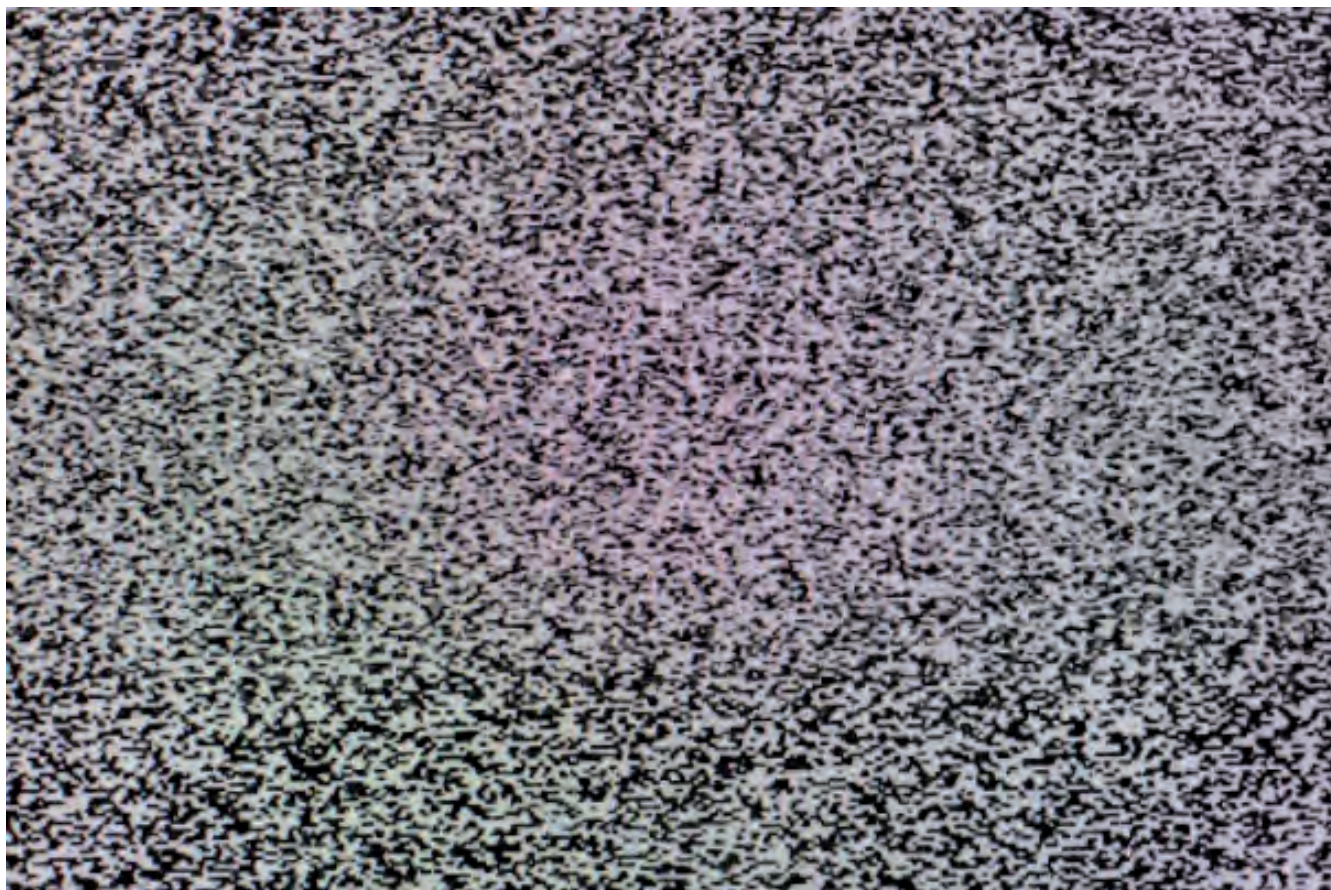
WOLFGANG TILLMANS. *LIGNINE DURESS*, jusqu'au 23 mai, Galerie Chantal Crousel, 10, rue Charlot, 75003 Paris, tél. 01 42 77 38 87, www.crousel.com





Le top 5 des expos de la semaine

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



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

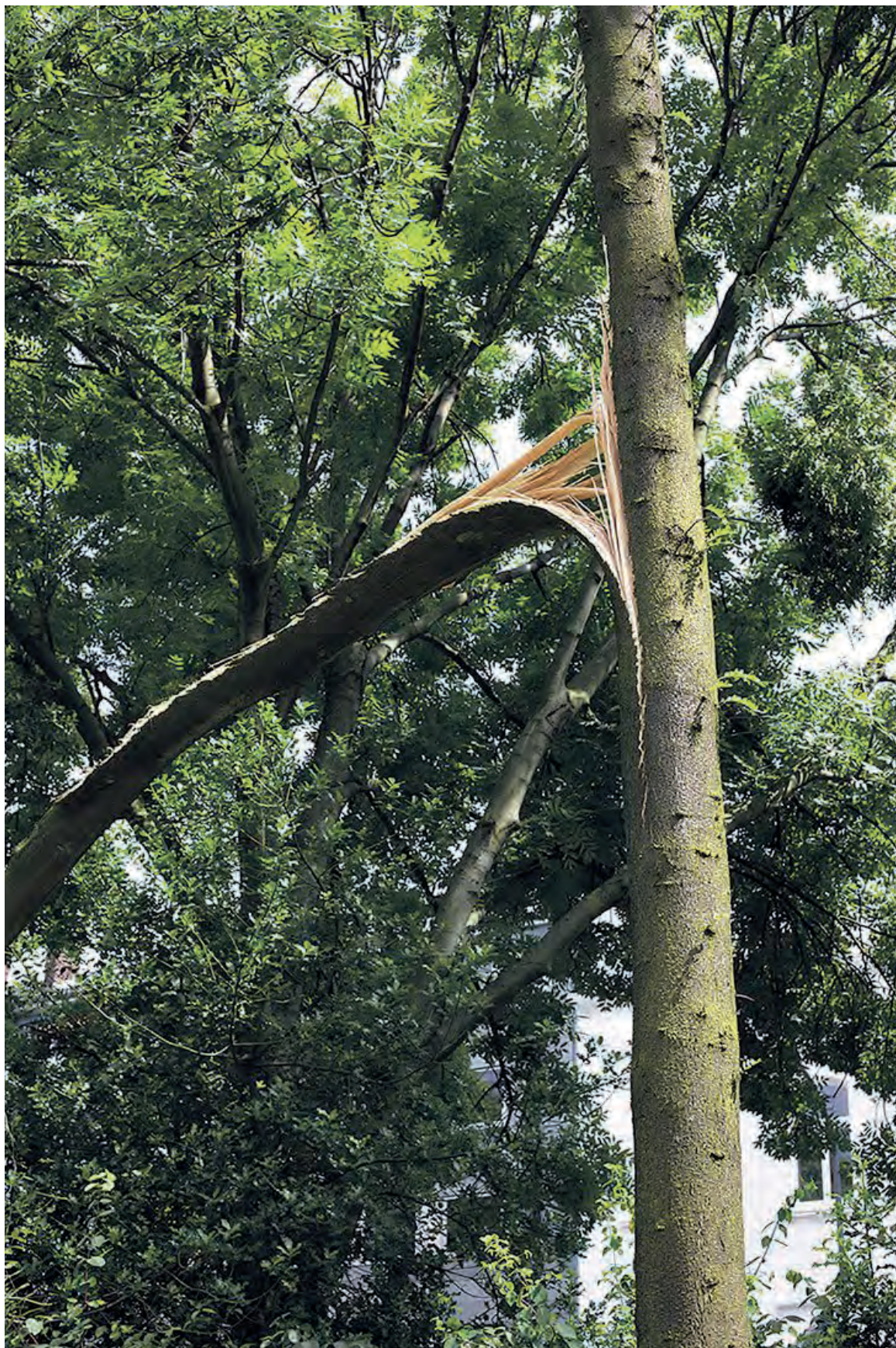
Chaque semaine, le meilleur des expositions art contemporain, à Paris et en province.

Wolfgang Tillmans

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

Wolfgang Tillmans en ligne de mire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ISSUE 67

APRIL 2013

Art Review:

Contains 5% NATHANIEL MELLORS; 3% SAM GILLIAM AND RASHID JOHNSON;
27% PANTONE 811; 1 BAND OF ITALIAN WRITERS

Berlin

THE FINAL INSTALMENT
OF OUR THREE-PART GUIDE TO
THE CITY'S ART SCENE

Wolfgang Tillmans

THE WORLD
THROUGH MY LENS

Design

A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN DESIGN AND ART,
FEATURING MAURIZIO CATTELAN,
KARL LAGERFELD, KONSTANTIN GRICIC
AND MANY MORE

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

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

MARTIN HERBERT

When did you first get a camera of your own?

WOLFGANG TILLMANS

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

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

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



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this page from top: *Silver 92*,
2012; *Silver 94*, 2012; *Silver 97*,
2012
facing page: *Freischwimmer 230*,
2012



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

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

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

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

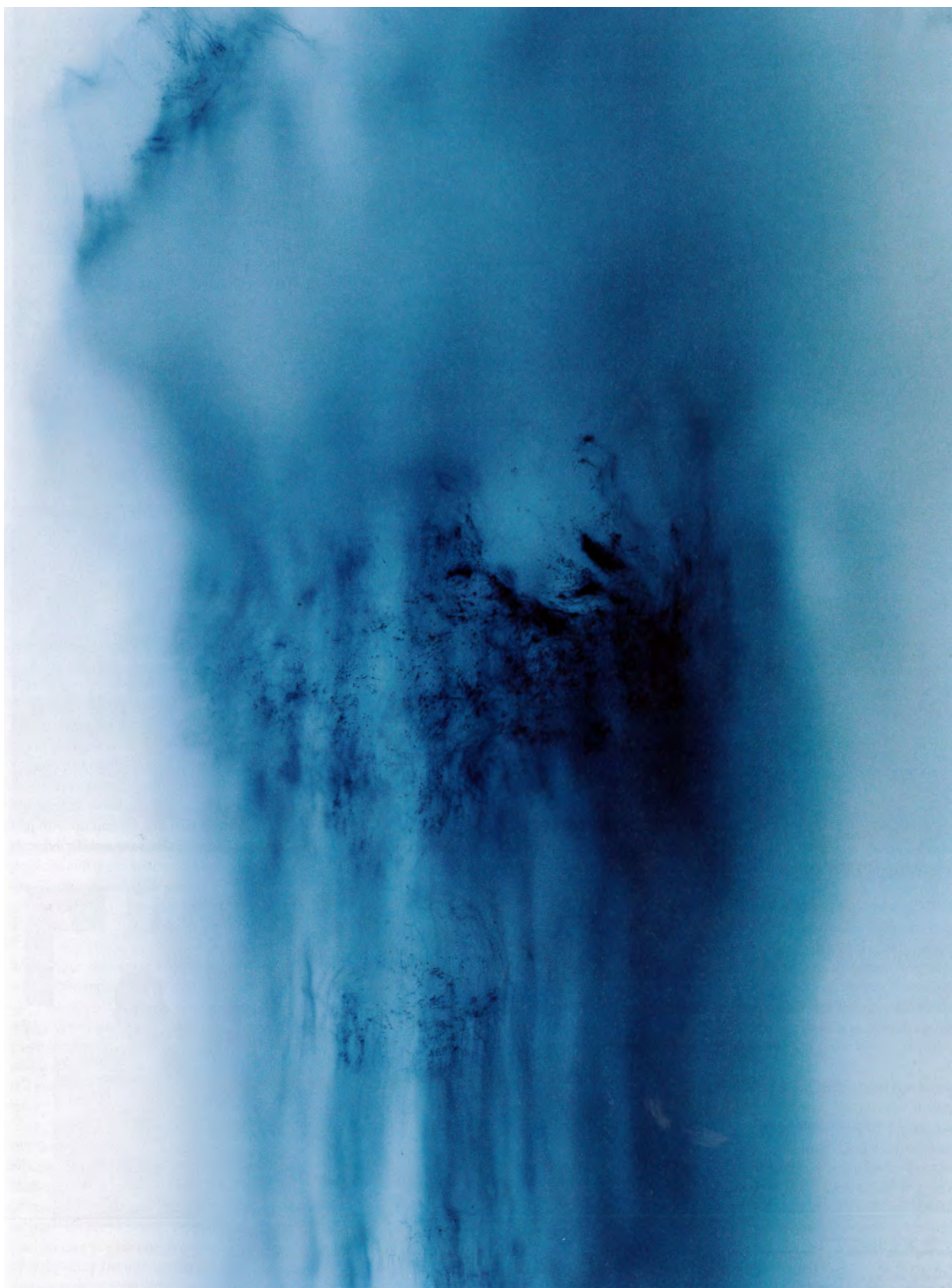
When you gathered those together in a book, you also included works like Edinburgh Builders: again, the starting point was earlier - your work doesn't divide neatly into sections. But from 1998 you did spend a decade focusing on abstraction

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

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

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

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



MY PHOTOGRAPHY BEGAN THROUGH USING THE FIRST DIGITAL PHOTOCOPIER

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



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

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

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

Car headlights...

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

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

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

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

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

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

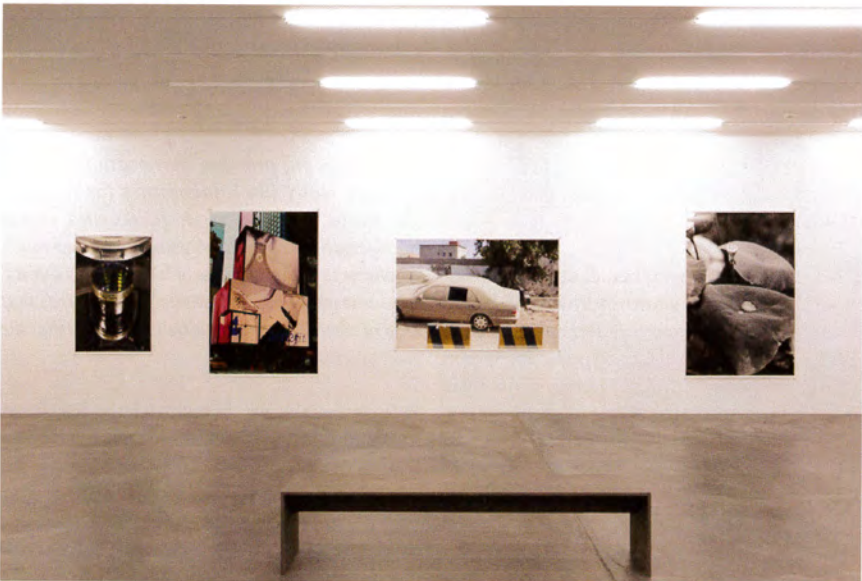
hand we're extremely the same, and at the same time we are insurmountably different.

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

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

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

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MY APPROACH TO
PHOTOGRAPHY AS
A MEDIUM HAS ALWAYS
BEEN THAT I WANTED
TO APPROXIMATE
WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO
LOOK THROUGH MY EYES

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As you've made this marker of 20 years of work, do you feel your vision - your actual ability to look - has changed in that time?

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

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

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

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

So this is about truth...

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

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

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

For example?

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

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

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

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

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

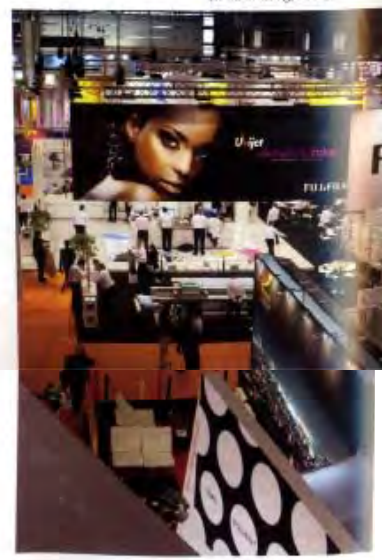
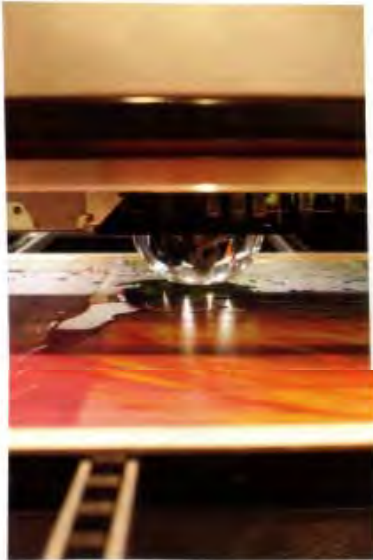
Work by Wolfgang Tillmans is on show at K21, Düsseldorf, until 7 July and at Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI) until 16 June. Neue Welt is available in a limited portfolio edition (signed and numbered) from Taschen

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

Step into Liquid

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

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



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

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

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



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Fischschwimm* 151, 2010, inkjet print on paper, 12' 5" x 38' 4" installation view, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wolfgang Tillmans, *Let's stick* 1992, inkjet print on paper, 63 x 47 cm installation view, Museum of Contemporary Art, London © 2012





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

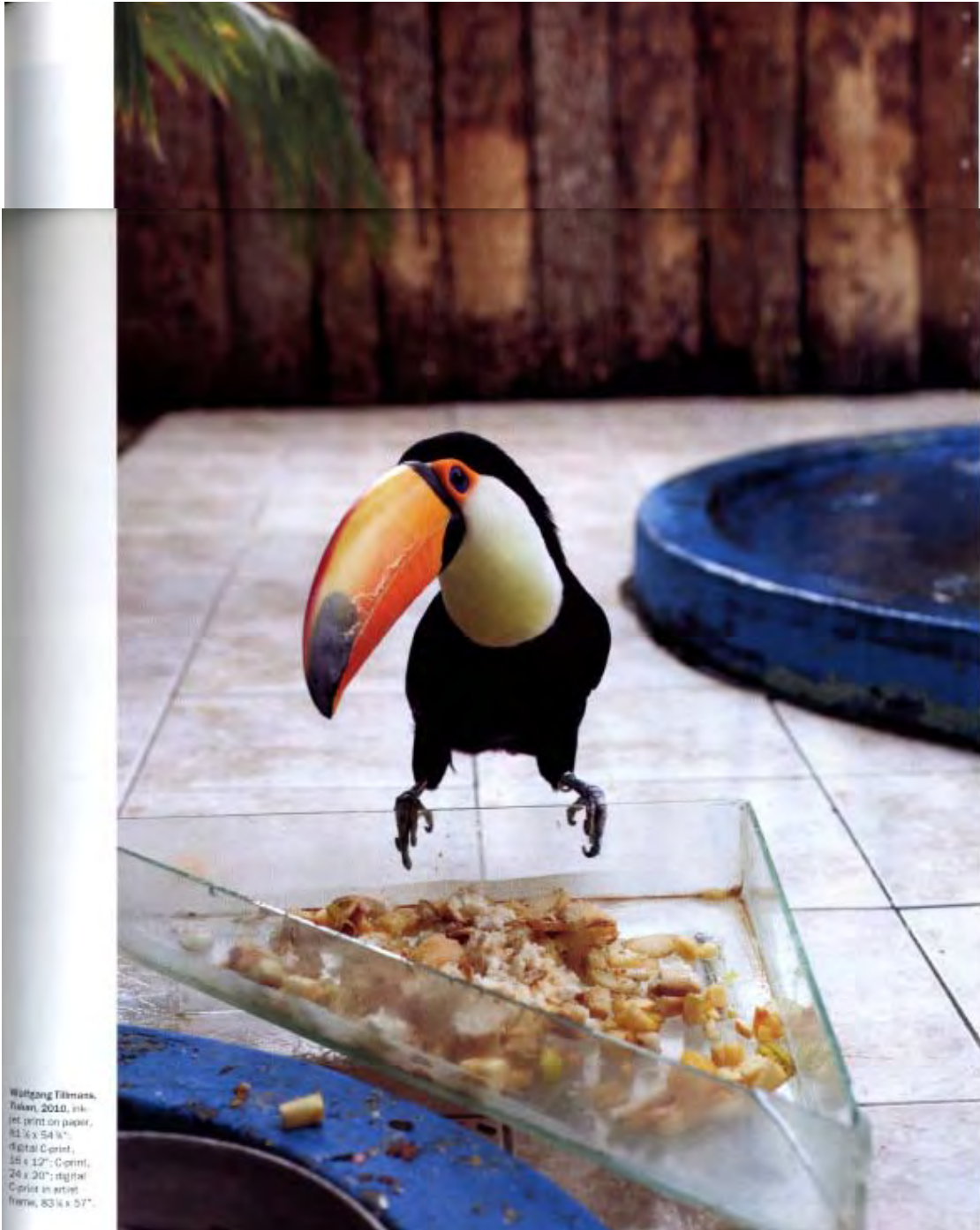
WT: It's mind-boggling. Digital has allowed an advance in quality at the same time as it has created an incredible degradation of standards and of expectations. Just think of how we only watch *trivia* in fuzzy YouTube quality.

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

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

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

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Wolfgang Tillmans,
Toucan, 2010, ink-
jet print on paper,
81 x 54 1/2".
Digital C-print,
26 x 20"; digital
C-print in artist
frame, 83 1/2 x 57".

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WOLFGANG TILLMANS IS AN ARTIST BASED IN BERLIN AND LONDON.

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

