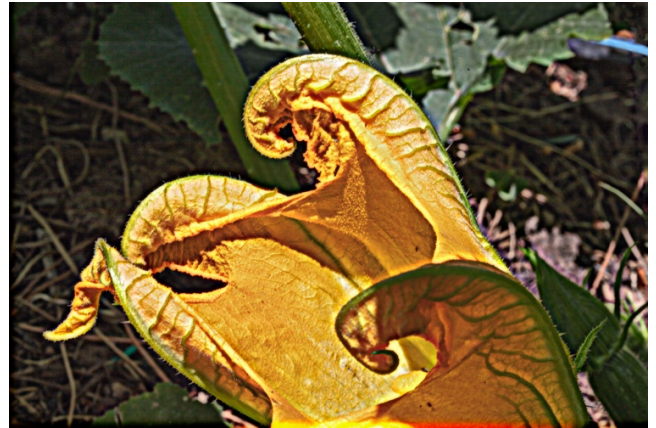


## JAMES WELLING

*Thought Objects, Italy and France*

17 January – 8 March 2025  
79 & 66 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris



James Welling, *Zucchini Flower, Rome*, 2024. UV-curable ink on Dibond aluminum; 28 x 42 x 1 7/8 in. (106.6 x 161 x 4.8 cm)

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present the third exhibition of work by James Welling in Paris. An artist widely acclaimed for his unclassifiable approach to photography, Welling has worked with the materiality of the medium since 1975. After using a wide array of analog photographic processes, Welling turned to digital technologies in 1998. His *Thought Objects*, 2023-24, whose title is borrowed from Barbara Ess and Glenn Branca's anthology of photographs published in 1987, embodies his evolving quest for discovery. New *Thought Objects* photographs made recently in Italy are presented at 79 rue du Temple, and at 66 rue du Temple, three *Thought Objects* from 2023 are hung with his 2009 series devoted to the Maison de verre, an iconic glass and steel domestic building built by architect Pierre Chareau in Paris in the late 1920s.

On the ground floor of the gallery, Welling's new photographs, made in the spring of 2024 during a month-long residency at the American Academy in Rome, encompass a myriad of themes. The images deliberately elude classification or typology and recall his *Light Sources* series (1992-2001) where Welling explored several subjects. Detailed or partial views of recognizable buildings, such as the MAXXI Museum, the Church of Sant'Agnese in Agone, Rome, or the arcades of the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, accentuate uncommon attributes within the architecture. The mathematical order of the tessellated paving stones in the Piazza Navona, or the Fibonacci spirals found in photographs of artichoke and zucchini flowers provide a visual analogue to the underlying mathematical basis of digital photography, or *photo numérique*, numerical photography.

As Welling explains: "To my mind, *Thought Objects* are images whose meanings detach from the photograph's nominal subject to suggest multiple readings." The massive wooden door of Michelangelo's studio for example, can alternate from being either an ordinary entryway or a pulsating network of colorful afterimages hovering at the doors of perception. In *Thought Objects* Welling uses a digital variation of 70's "equidensity processing" that had its origin in analog photography. Similar to solarization or posterization, this process consists of combining positive and negative images to change the visual texture and color of the image. *Thought Objects* are UV prints, an innovative digital printing process that affixes pigment permanently to thin aluminum panels. These panels are hung using an "frame" designed by the artist that creates the effect of the work floating off the wall.

At 66 rue du Temple, three 2023 *Thought Objects* depict quintessential French architectural elements: the circular staircase in Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, entrance columns of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's Saline Royale d'Arc-et-Senans and a half-painted typical Parisian door. For *Staircase, Villa Savoye*, 2022, Welling photographed a sheet of paper coated with blue and orange ink, and digitally superimposed it over a view of the villa's spiral staircase. For *Royal Salt-Works, Arc-et-Senans*, 2023, Welling further extends the equidensity process to exaggerate the contours of the columns, thereby generating a bas-relief effect reminiscent of the outlines in a Herge's Tintin cartoon.

A selection of Welling's earliest digital color transformations can also be found in 66 rue du Temple. The Maison de verre, an architectural landmark built between 1928 and 1931 in the 7th

arrondissement of Paris for Doctor Jean Dalsace, is transformed in an interplay between artificial color, metal and glass, where all three elements form a creative dialogue. Welling over saturated certain areas of the fifteen photographs in the series and altered light and shadow in others. These interventions create a visual experience in which the architecture is both subject and material for transformation.

The gallery is pleased to invite you to an artist's talk by James Welling, Saturday January 18 at 5 pm at the gallery, 79 rue du Temple. His presentation will be followed by a conversation with Simon Baker, director of the MEP, Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris. Admission is free upon reservation.

James Welling was born in Hartford (Connecticut), USA, in 1951. He lives and works in New York. He studied fine art at Carnegie-Mellon University and modern dance at the University of Pittsburgh before obtaining his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in 1974. Welling was a professor in the Department of Art at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) from 1994 to 2016 where he ran the Photography Area. Since 2012, he has been a lecturer with the status of Professor at Princeton University in New Jersey. In 2014, he received the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography in New York and in 2016 the Award of Excellence from the Julius Shulman Institute at Woodbury University in California.

Welling's protean photographic work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions since the late 1970s. In 2017, *Metamorphosis*, a major retrospective of his work, was presented in Europe at the Stedelijk Museum voor Aktuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) in Ghent, Belgium, and at the Kunstforum in Vienna, Austria. Recent exhibitions include *Dark Matter*, combining his work with that of Thomas Ruff, at the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany (2022), *Cento* at the Musée des Arts Contemporains du Grand Hornu (MACS), Hornu, Belgium (2021), *Choreograph at the George Eastman Museum*, Rochester, New York (2020), *Monograph*, at the Cincinnati Art Museum and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2013), *Autograph* at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland and *Mind on Fire* at the MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, England, the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain and the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (2012). Recent group exhibitions include *Reverberations* at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles (2024); *Medardo Rosso Inventing Modern Sculpture*, at Mumok in Vienna, Austria (2024); *Epreuves de la matière* at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF) in Paris (2023); *True Pictures? Contemporary Photography from Canada & The USA* at the Sprengel Museum Hannover in Germany (2021), *In Focus: Platinum Photographs*, at the Getty Center in Los Angeles (2020).

Marian Goodman Gallery champions the work of artists who stand among the most influential of our time and represents over five generations of diverse thought and practice. The Gallery's exhibition program, characterized by its caliber and rigor, provides international platforms for its artists to showcase their work, foster vital dialogues with new audiences, and advance their practices within nonprofit and institutional realms. Established in New York City in 1977, Marian Goodman Gallery gained prominence early in its trajectory for introducing the work of seminal European artists to American audiences. Today, through its exhibition spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris, the Gallery maintains its global focus, representing some 50 artists working in the U.S. and internationally.

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