

Tom Burr  
*Journal Works*  
09 Jan–28 Feb 2026  
The Upstairs

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Bortolami is pleased to present *Journal Works* by Tom Burr, his tenth solo exhibition at the gallery and the first show dedicated to his titular series. Of the twenty-nine works in the series, approximately half are on view.

Burr's new *Journal* works elaborate his practice of making wood-mounted collages, also called "bulletin boards" which the artist has produced in various formats since the late 1990s. Culling materials from art history, queer cultures, and his personal life as an artist, Burr places images, texts, items of clothing, and cultural refuse in productive relation to each other. He furthers his material exploration and accumulation using colorful powder-coated aluminum panels, affixing them atop each composition. These shapes are loosely derived from Ellsworth Kelly's 1957 *Sculpture For a Large Wall*.

Originally entitled *Transportation Building Lobby Sculpture* and commissioned for the Philadelphia Transportation Building Lobby, (whose office tower was coincidentally abandoned in the '90s), the work now resides in the collection of MoMA. As a commission, *Sculpture For a Large Wall* was initially site-specific, but practicalities and urban development commanded otherwise. For Burr, the pliability of the sculpture's site-specificity serves a pointed contrast to his *Journal* works, which as individual objects can be dispersed in a way that Kelly's monumental installation cannot.

The *Journal* works' exhaustive medium lists detail the broad range of materials Burr has tacked and nailed to his wood panels. His approach to gathering these items is variously citationist (an Andy Warhol catalogue raisonné; an essay by Douglas Crimp), populist (cast off clothing; pharmaceutical packaging) and retrospective (exhibition announcements featuring his work in the '90s and early aughts). The congregation of print and sartorial serves to instantiate the artist's intellectual, artistic, and social milieu, who constitute actors in the work no less than the artist does himself. Burr's accumulation is necessary for eventual dissemination, allowing for seemingly unrelated fragments to come together, only to be sent out like postcards from the studio.

Drawing from the history of minimalism whilst invoking certain personages—"gay forefathers"<sup>1</sup> like Andy Warhol, John Cage, and Scott Burton—Burr places Kelly in the foreground, a kind of queer figure for his material archive and personal effects to coalesce behind. Kelly's reinterpreted abstract forms both redact and reveal, enabling the viewer to speculate the connections between various documents based on what is seen and what is not. Seen together, the *Journal* series provides Burr with a kind of index as he reconfigures his sartorial and material archive not only to invoke certain figures, but also to "describe the space between objects and bodies, between specificity and abstraction."<sup>2</sup>

1 Joselit, David, "Ellsworth, Gregory, and Tom" in Torrington Project, Primary Information, p 299

2 Some Elements of Some Styles, Artforum XLIX n. 1, September 2010, p 267

Tom Burr (b. 1963 in New Haven, Connecticut) lives and works in New York and Connecticut. He attended the School of Visual Arts and the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. Burr's work revisits the formal vocabulary of minimalism and post-minimalism and examines the entanglements of architecture, identity, and public space.

Burr's work has been collected by major museums internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; MOCA, Los Angeles, CA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Musee Cantonal de Beaux Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland; Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland; MuMOK, Vienna, Austria; Sammlung Verbund, Vienna, Austria; Ludwig Museum, Koln, Germany; and FRAC, Champagne Ardenne, France.

*Torrington Project*, a major monograph dedicated to the artist's 2021-24 landmark installation-studio-exhibition space of the same name, was published by Primary Information in August 2025. Burr's work is on view in *ECHO DELAY REVERB*, an exhibition on American art and Francophone thought at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris through February 15th. Burr is a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow.