

Wolfgang Tillmans

March 26–May 12, 2018

Opening reception:

Monday, March 26, 6–8 PM

Press preview with the artist: 4 PM



Wolfgang Tillmans, *Wolkenbruch*, 2017. Inkjet print on paper.
12 × 16 inches (30.5 × 40.6 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present Wolfgang Tillmans's first exhibition in Hong Kong at its newly opened gallery in H Queen's, Central. Following the artist's solo exhibitions at Tate Modern, London (2017), Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2017), Kunstverein in Hamburg (2017), and most recently his first show in Africa at the Musée d'Art Contemporain et Multimédias in Kinshasa (2018), this presentation will feature a broad selection of works that respond to their surroundings and simultaneously embody a self-contained environment. Including many new photographs not publicly shown before, the exhibition will juxtapose pictures of friendship and affection with views and angles of the world at large. An audio work in the stairwell generated from sounds of nearby pedestrian crossings adds a distinctly local dimension.

Few artists have shaped the scope of contemporary art and influenced a younger generation more than Tillmans. Since the early 1990s, his works have epitomized a new kind of subjectivity in photography, pairing intimacy and playfulness with social critique and the persistent questioning of existing values and hierarchies. Through his seamless integration of genres, subjects, techniques, and exhibition strategies, he has expanded conventional ways of approaching the medium, and his practice continues to address the fundamental question of what it means to create pictures in an increasingly image-saturated world. Spread across the two floors of the Hong Kong gallery, the exhibition will present recent developments in Tillmans's portraiture and still lifes, beginning with an infrared self-portrait in which light is blocked out to allow for electromagnetic radiation to reveal thermal energy. Various other processing strategies are deployed throughout the works on view, with figurative scenes interspersed with abstract photographs composed on a photocopying machine and Xeroxes containing text fragments.

Moving between private, public, and natural spaces, the works in the exhibition continue the artist's investigation of the surface of the visible world and the limits of what can be seen. A wall-sized aerial view of the Sahara desert has almost infinite detail due to the high

resolution capacities of digital imaging, but it remains an enigmatic landscape; an image of women playing cards on an evening street in Hong Kong taken without flash would have resolution capacities of digital imaging, but it remains an enigmatic landscape; an image of women playing cards on an evening street in Hong Kong taken without flash would have been impossible without recent advances in photographic technology; a still life of aquatic plants and animals reveals what is otherwise hidden beneath the ocean surface; and images of border crossings depict territorial differences that are materially invisible.

The surface of the photograph itself is a persistent subject of interest for Tillmans, and his careful combination of small and large formats, and framed and unframed prints, serves to underscore the notion of the photographic image as an object subjective and idiosyncratic. The chalk dust covering the façade and grounds of a West Virginia limestone-grinding factory alludes to the photographic surface, as chalk is used in the printing process to absorb ink. This work is juxtaposed with a seascape in which a man plunges into the waves. Frozen at a fast shutter speed, the splashes of water another integral element in inkjet printing no longer appear liquid, but rather take on a solid mineral appearance.

At a time when photography is omnipresent, Tillmans offers a poignant reminder of its singularity. In line with his interest in exhibitions as amplifiers of a particular underlying perspective, each of the works in this presentation engages in an intricate system of relationships between its aesthetic elements, subjects, and the institutional setting in which it is displayed. Parallels and contrasts between compositions serve to compress a sense of both time and space, minimizing the importance of the distinction between the here and there, and the then and now. These connections, in turn, are played out within the discrete rooms of the exhibition, which comprise individual perspectives of their own. Seen together, the works implicate the viewer as an active part of the dialogue and advocate an experience of connectedness that is rooted in the process of looking.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue designed in close collaboration with Tillmans and published by David Zwirner Books. Titled *DZHK Book 2018*, the book will include an interview with the artist by Allie Biswas. David Zwirner Books will host a special book signing with the artist on March 28, 2018 at 2 pm at David Zwirner Hong Kong.

Born in 1968 in Remscheid, Germany, **Wolfgang Tillmans** studied at Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design in Bournemouth, England, from 1990 to 1992. In 2000, Tillmans was the first photographer and first non-British artist to receive the Turner Prize, an award given annually by Tate in London. In 2009, he received the Kulturpreis der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Photographie and was selected to serve as an Artist Trustee on the Board of Tate. He has been a member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, since 2012 and was appointed a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2013. Tillmans was the recipient of the 2015 Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography and in January 2018, he was awarded the Kaiserring (or "Emperor's Ring") prize from the city of Goslar in Germany. The artist joined David Zwirner in 2014, and PCR marked his inaugural exhibition with the gallery in New York the following year.

Since the early 1990s, Tillmans's work has been the subject of prominent solo exhibitions at international institutions. In 2003, his first midcareer retrospective, if one thing matters, everything matters, was presented at Tate Britain in London to much critical acclaim. In 2006, Tillmans's first New York museum exhibition, titled *Freedom from the Known*, was hosted by P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City. On view later that year was his first American museum survey, consisting of approximately three hundred photographs, co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. It traveled to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, in 2007, followed by the Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, in 2008. In 2010, the Serpentine Gallery, London, organized a major survey of the artist's work that subsequently toured through South America in 2012. The exhibition traveled to the Museo de Arte del Banco de la República, Bogotá; Museo de Arte de Lima; and the Museo de Artes Visuales, Santiago. In 2012, the Kunsthalle Zürich presented photographs from the artist's body of work *Neue Welt*, which traveled the following year to Les Rencontres d'Arles in France. Also in 2012, the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, displayed a selection of works spanning twenty-five years; the show traveled to the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, in 2013. In 2015, *Wolfgang Tillmans: Your Body is Yours* was presented at The National Museum of Art, Osaka. Also in 2015, *Wolfgang Tillmans: Book for Architects*, a two-channel video installation, was on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as well as a solo show at the D mUmění – Galerie Sou asného Umění eské Buděj ovice, Czech Republic. In 2016, a solo show of the artist's work was hosted by Museu Serralves, Porto. In 2017, Tate Modern in London held a major survey exhibition of Tillmans's work. The artist also presented a new immersive installation featuring his work in music and video in the South Tank at the museum. Later that year, solo shows of Tillmans's work were on view at the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, marking the institution's first comprehensive examination of photography as a medium, as well as at the Kunstverein in Hamburg.

Most recently on view this year was *Wolfgang Tillmans: Fragile*, a major solo exhibition of the artist's work at the Musée d'Art Contemporain et Multimédias in Kinshasa, organized by the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), Stuttgart; Goethe-Institut Kinshasa; and Académie des Beaux-Arts, Kinshasa. The show will travel to Nairobi and Johannesburg.

The artist has operated the non-profit exhibition space Between Bridges since 2006. First located in London until 2011, Between Bridges has exhibited a range of work by artists, including David Wojnarowicz, Ull Hohn, Charlotte Posenenske, and Charles Henri Ford. In January 2014, it reopened in Berlin with a solo show of work by Patrick Caulfield. From 2003 to 2009, Tillmans served as a professor at the Städelschule in Frankfurt.

Tillmans considers the printed page to be an important venue for his work. He is deeply involved in the publication of artist books and monographs, and regularly contributes to magazines. Recent publications that have been designed and edited by the artist include *Wolfgang Tillmans: manual* (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2007); *Wolfgang Tillmans: Lighter* (Hatje Cantz, 2008); *Wolfgang Tillmans: Abstract Pictures* (Hatje Cantz, 2011); *Wolfgang Tillmans: FESPA Digital / FRUIT LOGISTICA* (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2012); *Neue Welt: Wolfgang Tillmans* (Taschen, 2012); and *Wolfgang Tillmans: The Cars* (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015).

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In recent years, Tillmans has been more directly involved in political activism. In tandem with his ongoing *Truth Study Center* project (begun in 2005), he has created posters for the anti-Brexit campaign in Britain and in response to right-wing populism in Germany.

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tillmans lives and works in Berlin and London.

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