

About Thomas Wachholz

Thomas Wachholz (b.1984, Cologne) is a visual artist who lives and works in Cologne, Germany.

Wachholz's paintings are intricate visual networks of formal traces and personal memories, structured through opaque colour fields, iconic symbols like stars and clouds, and grids outlined with geometric precision. By exploring the hidden dimensions of everyday materials, Wachholz distills the objects that inspire his work into a restricted palette of colours and shapes.

Many of his works feature striking surfaces created through the application of red phosphorus. At times, this element blankets an entire painting; in others, it takes abstract forms such as suns, radiating vertical lines, or the contours of larger shapes. The phosphorus grid, nearly dissolving into the composition's geometry, symbolises the viewer's role in "activating" the paintings through personal associations and memories.

Wachholz's work examines how mundane objects—such as matchbooks and postcards—become imbued with personal memory and material history. For years, his pieces have appropriated the formal layouts and functions of matchboxes and matchbooks, once ubiquitous souvenirs from hotels, restaurants, gas stations, cinemas, clubs, and company lobbies. Now increasingly rare, these objects, like postcards displaced by smartphone photography, carry a potent nostalgia—both for the specific moments and places in which they were collected and for the fading era in which they were commonplace.

Wachholz studied under Katharina Grosse and Marcel Odenbach at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany.

His works are held by notable collections and institutions including Deji Art Museum, China, the Marciano Art Foundation, USA, the Kilbourn Collection, South Africa, and the Frost Foundation, USA. Institutional exhibitions include Centre d'Art Contemporain Meymac, Yves Klein Archive, Marciano Art Foundation, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Krefelder Kunstverein, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, and Bundeskunsthalle.

His work has been exhibited widely, and has held notable solo exhibitions at Kunstverein, Heppenheim; Wenstrup, Berlin; Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Cologne; THK Gallery, Cape Town; Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles; Galerie Lange + Pult, Zürich; Ung5, Cologne; Nymphius Projekte, Berlin and Raebervon Stenglin, Zürich, Switzerland.

In April 2026, Wachholz will feature in *After Fire* at Aranya Art Center in China.



Thomas Wachholz



Thomas Wachholz. Zeta, 2025.

CV

Education

2016

Meisterschüler/Masterclass with Prof. Katharina Grosse

2011 – 2016

Degree: Communication Design, Art Academy Düsseldorf with Prof. Marcel Odenbach & Prof. Katharina Grosse

2006 – 2011

Communication design, University of Applied Science Düsseldorf

Solo Exhibitions

2024

TEMPO PRIMO, Wentrup, Nino Mier Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2022

Keep the fire burning, Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Cologne, Germany

Square Dance, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2021

Let's Get Lit: T.Wachholz & D.Renggli, Wentrup Gallery, Berlin, Germany

CHA CHA CHA: T.Wachholz & D.Renggli, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2020

Allumettes Amorphes, Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Paris, France

2019

CAPRI, Kunstverein Heppenheim, Heppenheim, Germany

Books and Boxes, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2018

Soft Painting, Galerie Lange + Pult, Zürich, Switzerland

2017

LIGHT, Natalia Hug, Cologne, Germany

Fire Walk with Me, Ung5, Cologne, Germany

2016

Strike Gently, Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2015

Whiteout, Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, Germany

2014

Alcohol Works, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, USA

Reibfläche, RaebervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland

2013

Alkoholarbeiten, An der Schanz, Cologne, Germany

2014

TAU, KIT - Kunst im Tunnel, Düsseldorf, Germany

Not Abstraction, Yves Klein Archive, Paris, FR Backward / Forward, New Galerie, Paris, France

daseinsamegenie..., Baustelle Schaustelle, Essen, Germany

On & On & On, kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

Shortcuts, Videos in Art, Chu Galerie, Cologne, Germany

2013

abstract on paper, Galerie Chaplini, Cologne, DE 17/13, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

2012

Full House, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

Collections

Scheryn Collection, South Africa

Deji Art Museum, Nanjing, China

US Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, USA

Frost Foundation, Santa Fe, USA

Grants & Awards

2016

Atelierstipendium Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany

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Group Exhibitions

2026

Investec Cape Town Art Fair, THK Gallery, South Africa

2025

Art Cologne, THK x DOD Gallery, Cologne, Germany
Über den Zaun, THK x DOD Gallery, Cologne, Germany
 Enter Art Fair, THK Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, THK Gallery, South Africa

2024

Light + Space II, THK Gallery, Cape Town
 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, THK Gallery, South Africa

2023

Investec Cape Town Art Fair, THK Gallery, South Africa

2022

Varia, Centre d'art contemporain Meymac, France
PAPIER.SALON.II, Wentrup Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2021

Mixed Pickles, 10, Michael Horbach Foundation, Cologne, Germany
Let's Get Lit: T.Wachholz & D.Renggli, Wentrup Gallery, Berlin, Germany
This Must Be The Place, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany
 Wentrup am Feenteich, Wentrup Gallery, Hamburg, Germany
Surfaces, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
 Inaugural Exhibition, Nino Mier Gallery, Brüssel, Belgium

2019

The Abstract Cabinet, Eduardo Secci Contemporary, Florence, Italy
Wer kann, der soll, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany
Rämistrasse 27, Galerie Lange + Pult, Zurich, Switzerland
Neighbours 8, Riot, Gent, Belgium

2018

NAK Benefiz Auktion, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany
 Ansichtssache. Wie Bilder werden, Kunstraum Alexander Bürkle, Freiburg, Germany
Burnt it !, Krefelder Kunstverein, Krefeld, Germany
Ausstellung zur Benefizauktion, Kunsthochschule für Medien, Kunsthaus Lempertz, Cologne, Germany
Neighbors 7, Jan Colle Gallery, Gent, Belgium
 YOUTUOO, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

2017

Jahresgaben 2017, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany
Unpacking: The Marciano Collection, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, USA
 OG OPEN, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany
Close Up: The ROCCA Foundation Dresden / Berlin, K Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden, Germany
 WAHNSINN, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

2016

Vertical I, Michael Horbach Foundation, Cologne, Germany
Running Time, Marres Currents #4, Maastricht, Netherlands
 NAK Benefizauktion, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany
The Snoring Princess, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany
hues, tints, tones, Soho House West Hollywood, Los Angeles, USA

2015

Artists against Aids, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, Germany
 Rundblick 2015, Kunstverein Kirschenpflücker, Cologne, Germany
Against Automatism, fused space, San Francisco, USA
First Flush, Bayer Kulturhaus, Leverkusen, Germany
 20 Jahre Kunstgruppe, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany
 5 Years ReabervonStenglin, ReabervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland