

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 solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Heppenheim, Germany, Wentrup, Berlin, Germany, Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Cologne, Germany, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA, Galerie Lange + Pult, Zürich, Switzerland, Ung5, Köln, Germany, Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, Germany, and RaebervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland.



Thomas Wachholz, Tulips (Palermo), 2024

CV

Education

2016

Meisterschüler / Master class of Prof. Katharina Grosse

2011 – 2016

Art Academy Düsseldorf with Prof. Marcel Odenbach, Prof. Katharina Grosse 2011 University degree / diploma, communication design

2006 – 2011

Communication design, University of applied Science Düsseldorf

Solo Exhibitions

2024

'TEMPO PRIMO', Wentrup, Berlin, DE
Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, United States of America

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, United States

2020

'Allumettes Amorphes', Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Paris, France

2019

'CAPRI', Kunstverein Heppenheim, Heppenheim, Germany
'Books and Boxes', Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, United States of America

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, United States of America

2015

'Whiteout', Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, Germany

2014

'Alcohol Works', Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, United States of America
'Reibfläche', RaebervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland

2013

'Alkoholarbeiten', An der Schanz, Cologne, Germany

Group Exhibitions

2024

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

2023

Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with THK Gallery, Cape Town, 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, United States of America

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, United States of America

OG OPEN, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany

Close Up: The ROCCA Foundation Dresden / Berlin, K Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden, Germany

WAHNSINN, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

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Marcel Breuer, Paul Czerlitzki, Jana Schröder, Thomas Wachholz, Natalia Hug, 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, United States of America

2015

Artists against Aids, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, Germany

Rundblick 2015, Kunstverein Kirschenpflücker, Cologne, Germany

Against Automatism, fused space, San Francisco, United States of America

First Flush, Bayer Kulturhaus, Leverkusen, Germany

20 Jahre Kunstgruppe, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany

5 Years ReabervonStenglin, ReabervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland

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

Deji Art Museum, Nanjing, China
US Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, United States of America
Frost Foundation, Santa Fe, United States of America

Grants & Awards

2016
Atelierstipendium Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany