THK

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; Wentrup, 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 March 2026, Wachholz presented his second solo exhibition at THK Gallery titled Zackzack. This was followed by his presentation in After Fire at Aranya Art Centre in Beidaihe, China, April 2026. In early November, Wachholz participated in a group exhibition in the Art Cologne Art Fair. Looking ahead, he will be participating in a group exhibition titled 'LIGHT + SPACE III' at the THK Gallery in Cape Town, taking place from 10 December 2026 until 4 February 2027.



Thomas Wachholz



Thomas Wachholz. Untitled, 2022.

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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

2026
Zackzack, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

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

Group Exhibitions

2026
LIGHT + SPACE III, THK Gallery, South Africa
Art Cologne, THK Gallery, Germany
After Fire, Aranya Art Centre, China
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, THK Gallery, South Africa

2025
Art Cologne, THK x DOD Gallery, Cologne, Germany
Uber den Zäun, 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 warden, 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
Wertical 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 Automatisim, fused space, San Francisco, USA
First Flush, Bayer Kulturhaus, Leverkusen, Germany
20 Jahre Kunstgruppe, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany
5 Years ReabervonStenglin, ReabervonStenglin, Zürich, Switzerland