

About Thomas Wachholz

German artist Thomas Wachholz (b.1984) explores meanings and associations in the formal characteristics of mundane objects. Using the visual style and ideological foundations of Pop Art, Wachholz creates paintings that appropriate elements of matchboxes and matchbooks. Gathered over the years in hotels, restaurants, gas stations, cinemas and bars, the matchboxes act as ciphers, shifting the artist's perception from the object to a specific place and time.

Wachholz's formal abstractions are imbued with coded meanings. By removing information on the original shape and composition of a matchbox, he frees the imagery from its original context, elevating everyday objects to the realm of symbol. He creates a dense visual net of formal traces and personal memories, structured through opaque colour fields, where iconic symbols like stars or clouds and grids are contoured by geometric outlines. With their bright colours and clean lines, his conceptually playful paintings reveal ironic connections between both form and function, and sign and signified.

Wachholz's paintings reveal matchboxes and matchbooks as triggers of past moments and places. Engaging with the realm of abstraction, Wachholz frees found images from their objecthood, allowing elements and shapes to take on new life fired by our memories, art historical sources, as well as their prior functional heritage. Like a glimpse through the looking glass, his abstract works allow us to enter a world of multiplied meanings, shape shifting with the memories and emotions of the viewer.

Wachholz studied under Katharina Grosse and Marcel Odenbach at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany. He has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions and galleries worldwide. His work has further been exhibited at Art Basel Miami Beach (2014, 2015) and Art Basel (2021) .

Solo exhibitions include Soft Painting, Galeris Lange + Pult, Zurich (2018); Books and Boxes, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); CAPRI, Kunstverein Heppenheim, Germany, (2019); and Allumettes Amorphes, Galerie Ruttkowski;68, Paris, (2020).



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

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

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
 WAHNSINN, Kunstgruppe, Cologne, Germany
 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