

Wolfgang Tillmans

Studio

29 April – 18 June 2016

In *Studio*, his twelfth solo exhibition at Galerie Buchholz, Wolfgang Tillmans (born 1968 in Remscheid) thematizes his place of production. The artist's studio, a classic trope from art history, here takes the form of an inventory, not a peek behind the scenes but an attempt to create a cartographical representation of what this space and its constituents mean to Wolfgang Tillmans. The studio's role as a complex entity or apparatus that is itself generative reflects back into the production.

"Studio" suggests a spectrum of designations: a photographic darkroom, a place for manual production, a viewing space where artworks are hung and seen (for the first time, but also revisited or viewed over a duration), a testing ground to place works in different configurations; a model room for developing projects; a social space in which different practices are carried out in immediate proximity to one another; and an archive in which the history of the artist's own work, and its present, are managed, engaged with, and housed. From the very outset, Wolfgang Tillmans has been a keen observer of the studio's role, looking closely at the space itself and the reality it creates. Frequently the studio appears as background in his portrait photographs, but unlike in traditional photo studios, no elaborate staged backdrop or lighting equipment are ever seen; instead, his studio rooms are filled with archives boxes, bookshelves, CDs and records, cardboard boxes, strange objects, artworks from the artist's collection, office furniture, newspapers and magazines, snippets of paper and notes, houseplants and flowers that make appearances in the artist's still-life photographs which are often created in these very spaces as well.

As the place where he spends the majority of his time, the studio inevitably bears the signature of the artist's inclinations, his daily routine, and the people who surround him. It is a space in which on-going work projects develop and leave visible traces. In a quote from 2007, Wolfgang Tillmans describes how his surrounding studio material, and above all his fascination with paper as a material, resulted not only in his collecting and archiving large quantities of newspaper, scraps of paper, and used photo paper, but also in their forming the basis of groups of works such as "paper-drop" and "Lighter":

"At some point I realized that everything you do is on paper, has to do with paper. And I walked around my studio at night and ... it's all paper... and the inkjet prints rolled up, the prints and paper, the newspapers that I read and collect (and I am on the verge of being a compulsive collector of everything) and ... because it's so amazing how much meaning can be in paper and how much charge gets into paper and into something that is obviously completely industrially manufactured and doesn't have any inherent expressive means. I mean like you would attribute that to a canvas surface, a painting, whereas paper attracts me exactly because of the lack of gesture. This is a stack of newspaper from '98, this is called 'paper wrapped' from 2000. Again this has been a slowly growing group which then in 2001 came into its full ... with this picture called 'paper drop' ... where the photographic paper itself is the subject of the photograph."

At his studios, in their different configurations and locations, Wolfgang Tillmans has also hosted various events including music sessions and legendary parties which eventually led to the 2006 opening of an exhibition space called "Between Bridges", run by the artist, first located in the entrance and stairwell of his London studio on Cambridge Heath Road and now relocated to Keithstrasse in Berlin. In this context, he also developed "Playback Room", a purpose-designed refitting of the space created to provide optimal conditions for listening to studio-recorded music.