

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA TO PRESENT NEW YORK'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE MUSEUM SURVEY OF THE WORK OF WOLFGANG TILLMANS THIS FALL

***Wolfgang Tillmans: To look without fear* Will Display Unique Groupings of Approximately 350 of Tillmans's Photographs, Videos, and Multimedia Installations**

NEW YORK, February 17, 2022—The Museum of Modern Art will present ***Wolfgang Tillmans: To look without fear***, the artist's first museum survey in New York, from September 12, 2022 through January 1, 2023, in the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Center for Special Exhibitions. Unique groupings of approximately 350 of Tillmans's photographs, videos, and multimedia installations will be displayed according to a loose chronology throughout the Museum's sixth floor. Informed by new scholarship and eight years of dialogue with the artist, the exhibition will highlight how Tillmans's profoundly inventive, philosophical, and creative approach is both informed by and designed to highlight the social and political causes for which he has been an advocate throughout his career. *Wolfgang Tillmans: To look without fear* is organized by Roxana Marcoci, the newly-named David Dechman Senior Curator of Photography, with Caitlin Ryan, Curatorial Assistant, and Phil Taylor, former Curatorial Assistant, Department of Photography.

From the outset of his career, Wolfgang Tillmans (b. 1968, Germany) has revolutionized the prevailing conventions of photographic presentation, making connections between his pictures in response to a given context and activating the space of the exhibition by hanging photographs in a corner, above a doorframe, on a free-standing column, or next to a fire extinguisher. In developing his own language for these overall installations, Tillmans's practice verges into a sculptural dimension. The decisive logic of his practice is a visual democracy, best summarized by his phrase "If one thing matters, everything matters."

Tillmans considers the role of the artist to be, among other things, that of "an amplifier" for social awareness. His approach to making pictures foregrounds the ideas of human connections and togetherness, with his work reflecting a deep care for his subjects. Tillmans has pictured survival and loss amid the AIDS crisis, mined the media's aestheticization of military forces, given voice to LGBTQ+ communities around the world, and tracked the diffusion of globalism—and, in so doing, contested claims to absolute truth.

"Tillmans's value system revolves around some central questions," said Marcoci. "What can pictures make visible? What can one know at all? Who deserves attention? How can one connect with other people? How might we foster solidarity? In what do art's political potential and ethical worth reside?"

Spanning the artist's production from the 1980s to the present, MoMA's survey will present iconic photographs alongside his rarely seen significant bodies of work. From ecstatic images of nightlife to cameraless abstractions, sensitive portraits to architectural studies, documents of social movements to windowsill still lifes, astronomical phenomena to intimate nudes, Tillmans has explored seemingly every genre of photography imaginable, continually experimenting with how to make pictures meaningful.

To look without fear will present these bodies of work and reflect Tillmans's distinct strategies of display—from unframed prints taped precisely to the wall to constellations of images grouped on tabletops as photocopies, video projections, and magazine pages. "I see my installations as a reflection of the way I see, the way I perceive or want to perceive my environment," Tillmans has said. "They're also always a world that I want to live in." Such attention to the physical manifestation of his work extends from a longstanding investigation of the poetic possibilities of the photographic medium.

Following its presentation at MoMA, *Wolfgang Tillmans: To look without fear* will travel to the Art Gallery of Ontario (spring–summer 2023) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (autumn 2023–winter 2024).

ARTIST BIO:

Since the early 1990s, Wolfgang Tillmans has lived and worked in London, New York, Berlin, Cologne, and Fire Island. He first came to prominence as a chronicler of youth culture and nightlife with images that celebrate alternative expressions of sociability. Over the past decade his activities have extended into musical recording and songwriting, as well as significant engagements with architecture and design. His foundation, Between Bridges, supports the advancement of democracy, international understanding, the arts, and LGBTQ+ rights; previously Between Bridges was a nonprofit exhibition space in London (2007–11) and Berlin (2014–19) directed by Tillmans.

CURATOR BIO:

Roxana Marcoci joined The Museum of Modern Art in 1999, and since 2005 has curated and co-curated a wide range of major exhibitions with extensive publications. In 2013, she was named Senior Curator of Photography. In 2022, she became the inaugural David Dechman Senior Curator, a newly created title to recognize the extraordinary vision, generosity, and support that Mr. Dechman has dedicated to the Museum and its Department of Photography. Marcoci holds a PhD in Art History, Theory and Criticism from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU.

PUBLICATIONS:

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive scholarly publication, edited by Roxana Marcoci, that offers new perspectives on Tillmans's work. Essays by Marcoci, Clément Chéroux, Keller Easterling, and Sophie Hackett survey major through lines of the artist's career, while contributions by Quentin Bajac, Yve-Alain Bois, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Durga Chew-Bose, Stuart Comer, Paul Flynn, Michelle Kuo, Oluremi C. Onabanjo, and Phil Taylor engage with specific, focused topics. A prose chronology by Taylor and Andrew Vielkind provides an intellectual biography and contextualizes the artist's life, and a new text by

Tillmans illuminates his philosophy and methodology with regards to printing, paper, and the display of photographs. This visually rich and timely publication tracks Tillmans's contributions to art in tandem with the social and cultural shifts of the past 30 years. 320 pages, 400 color illustrations. Hardcover, \$75. ISBN: 978-1-63345-111-7.

In December 2021, in advance of the exhibition and forthcoming catalogue, MoMA published *Wolfgang Tillmans: A Reader*, edited by Roxana Marcoci and Phil Taylor. This volume offers a panoramic collection of interviews and writings from an artist for whom language has always been a significant means of creative expression. Arranged chronologically, the assembled texts reflect Tillmans's thinking on photography, music, politics, nightlife, astronomy, spirituality, and activism. 352 pages, 100 illustrations. Paperback, \$45. ISBN: 978-1-63345-112-4.

Wolfgang Tillmans: To look without fear and *Wolfgang Tillmans: A Reader* are published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and will be available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Both publications are distributed to the trade through ARTBOOKID.A.P. in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada.

SPONSORSHIP:



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