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“Thomas Wachholz ‘WHITEOUT’ at Nymphius Projekte, Berlin”

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Thomas Wachholz “WHITEOUT” installation views at Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, 2015. Courtesy: Nymphius Projekte, Berlin and RaebervonStenglin, Zurich.

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WHITEOUT is a natural condition, found in polar regions, in which uniform illumination from snow on the ground and from a low cloud layer makes features of the landscape indistinguishable, causing a loss of orientation. WHITEOUT also refers to Thomas Wachholz' technique of whiting out the color on the canvas with ethanol.

The industrial printer is the most natural artistic medium for Thomas Wachholz. The production-related peculiarities of this machine define automatically the formal basic conditions of his work: the picture sizes are determined to a maximal width of 140 cm. For printing the artist uses only standard ink colours from the CMYK spectrum (cyan, magenta, yellow, key) in 100% chroma.

From the very beginning Thomas Wachholz has been experimenting with the technical capabilities of industrial printers, testing the limits of what is feasible. He is part of a relatively young tradition, starting with Christopher Wool's use of print, leading to calculated failprints, overlays and erasements in the work of Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker. Where for the Americans the work on the artwork is finished, the artistic procedure starts for Wachholz. The composition of the image which normally marks the unremovable beginning of graphic design, is shifted to the end and claims herewith a new positioning for graphic design.

For Thomas Wachholz the canvas is completed with its monochrome print, therefore he has nothing else to add. Thus, it is only consequent that he goes the way back and opens or "whites out" the coloured surface with a subtractive method: starting in the middle, he works on the canvas with a flat brush and ethanol. The strokes of the brush leave hardly visible marks, which gradually extend towards the borders of the canvas. The solvent carries off the colour with extreme slowness and exposes not only the canvas but also an underlying indefinite space.

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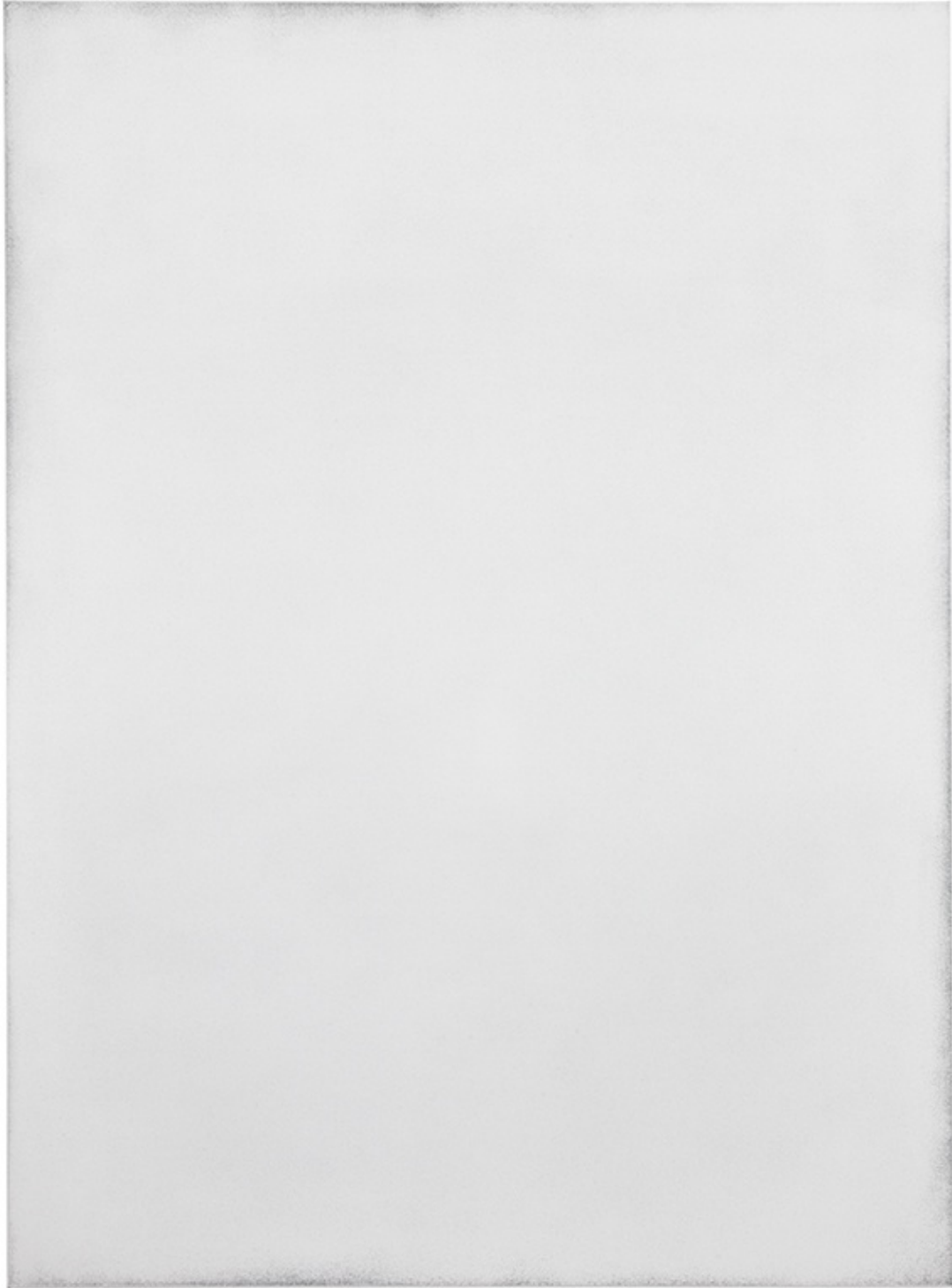
These alcohol works are serially generated in a theoretically infinite method, which is emphasized by the lack of passepartouts and frames. This, however, is countered by the fact that they become successively lighter and dissolve into nothingness. On a far endpoint only white surfaces will be on display, which are circumscribed by the lucid CMYK colours. Just like the light phenomena of the whiteout, the reflection of the exposed white background makes the field of vision disappear in the fog. Horizon, ground and sky melt, contours, nearness and distance merge to one. On the edge of the visible, the paintings of Thomas Wachholz absorb the viewer into an immaterial delimited space where only remains of colour give hold.

Thomas Wachholz' investigation on the limits of painting generates an art of opposites: machine vs. manual, fullness vs. void, color vs. non-color. He is questioning standards (of painting) and converts them. From the chosen restriction of his technical devices, he creates an infinite variety of types. The materiality of Wachholz works is dissolved in alcohol. Analogies to Yves Klein's proceeding from a blue monochrome to the blank space are imposed: both artists try to carry their art out into the world, ignoring the limits of any frame or gallery space. Art, the immaterial "...doesn't have borders nor dimensions. It is everywhere, nowhere; in the past, present and the future." (Yves Klein, Paris, 1958)



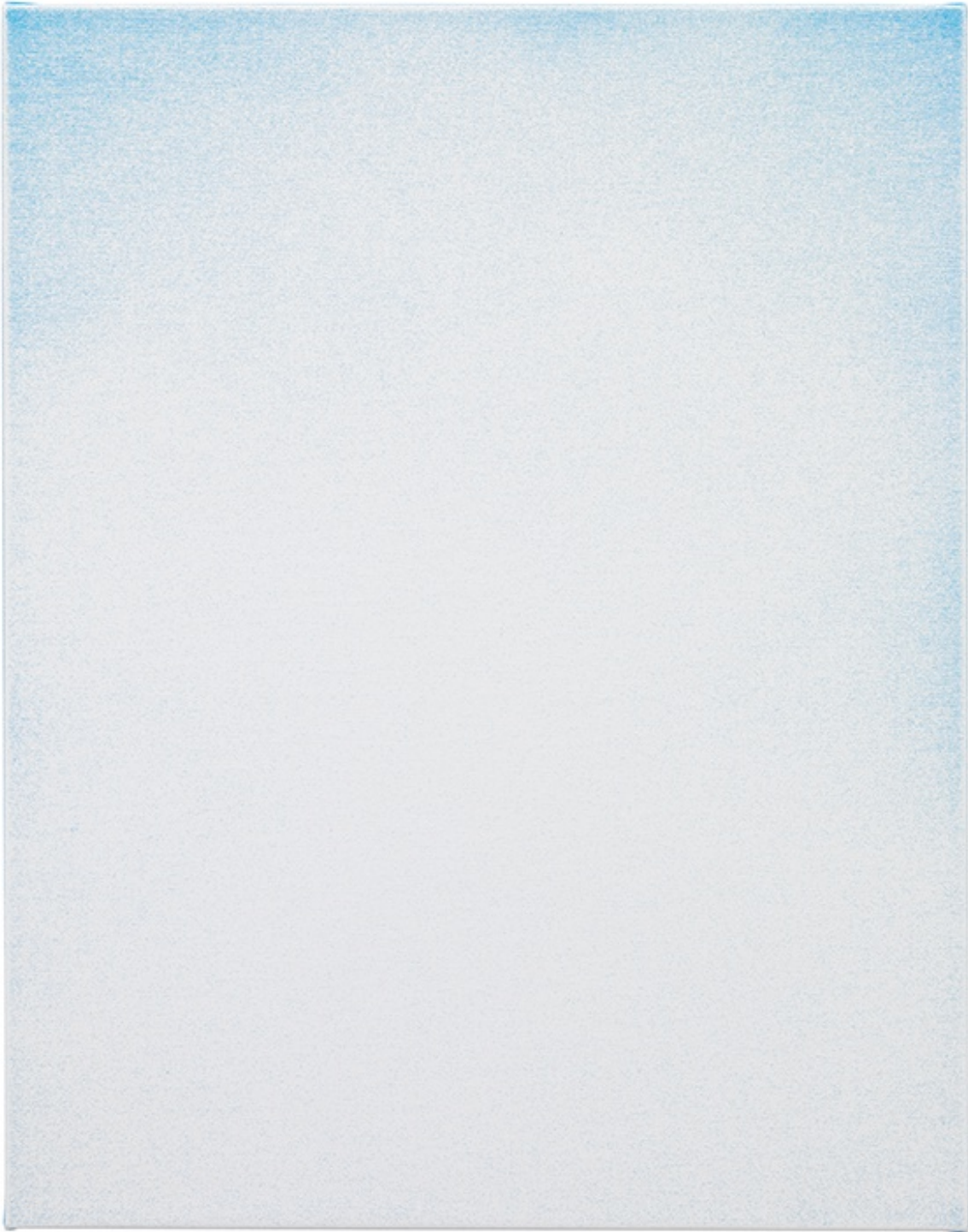
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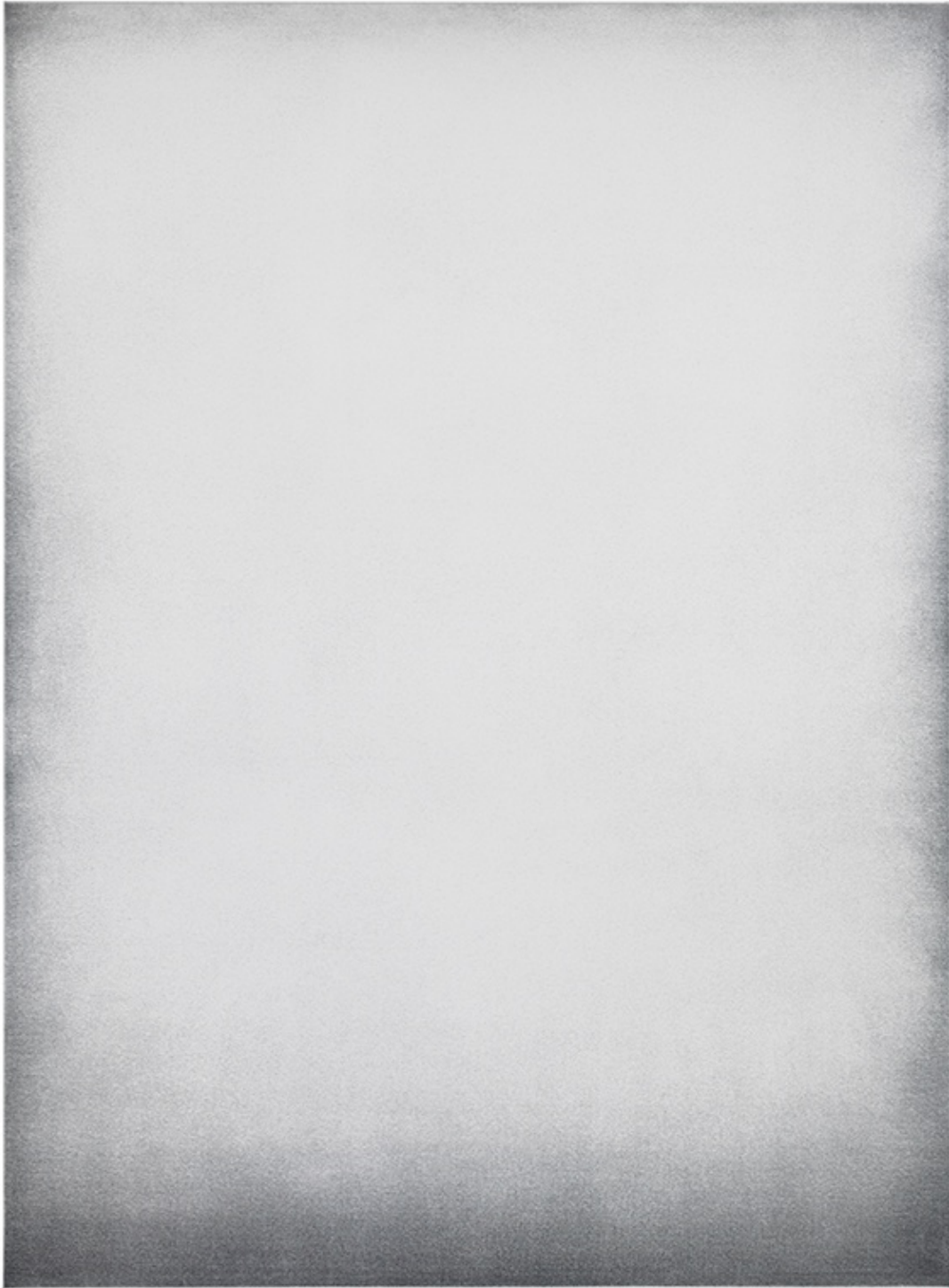
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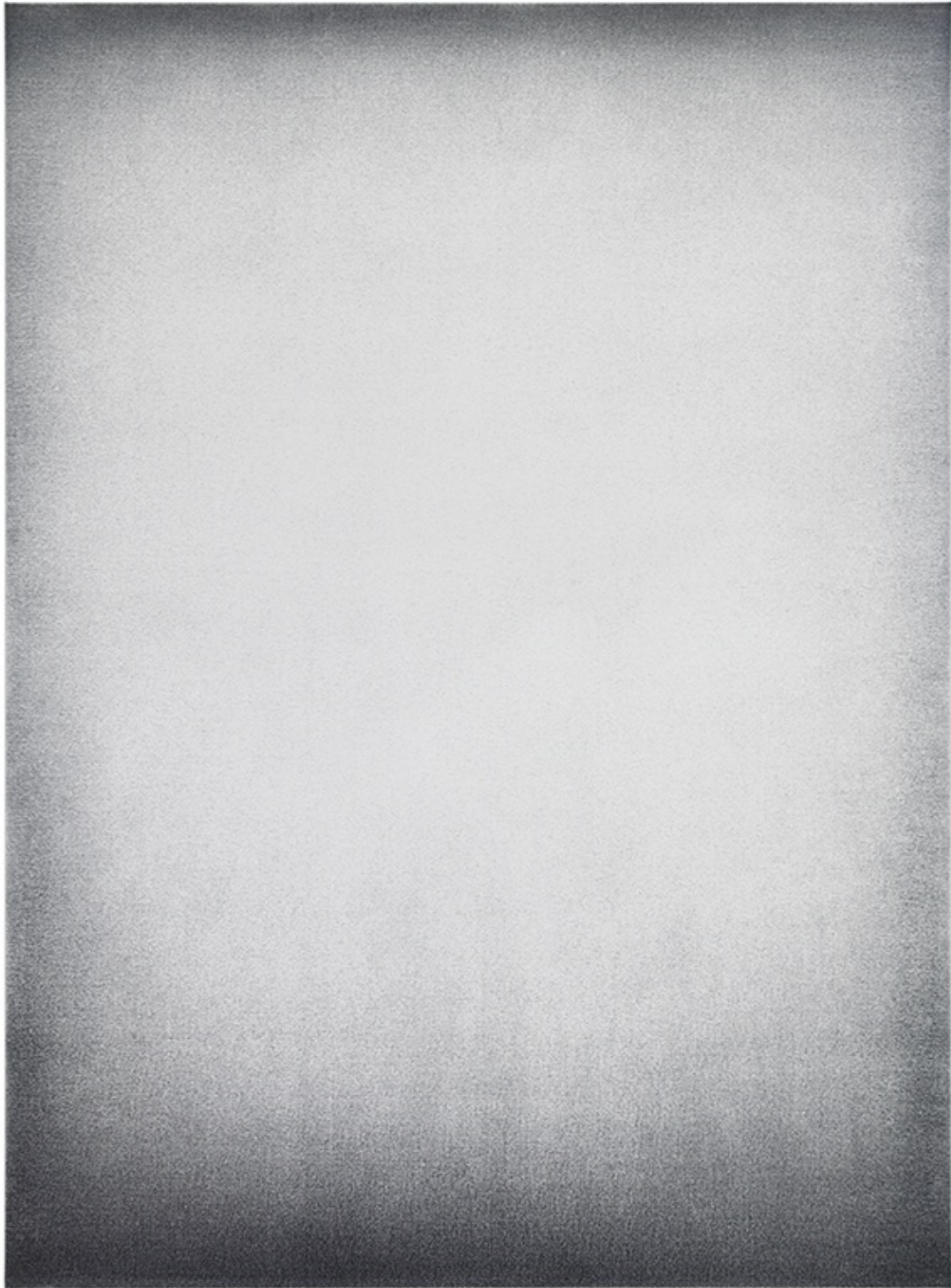
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