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THOMAS WACHHOLZ
STRIKE GENTLY

JANUARY 16 – FEBRUARY 26, 2016

MIER GALLERY is pleased to announce *Strike Gently*, a participatory installation by Cologne-based artist Thomas Wachholz. The exhibition will open Saturday, January 16, 2016 at 1107 Greenacre Avenue in West Hollywood, and will be on view through February 27, 2016. An opening reception will be held on January 16, 2016 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm.

Rules and the reduction of variables dictate Wachholz's practice, driven by a profound fascination for supposedly monotonous activities, marked by the endless repetition of reiterative movements. The exhibition, evolving throughout its six-week duration, begins with unmarked panels covered with a custom-blended red phosphorous paint – Wachholz's own chemical recipe. The panels are arranged in a horizontal line, mimicking the form of the red phosphorous strip on matchboxes. Half of the panels are monochromatic, as seen on American matchboxes and half are made up of the honeycomb pattern seen on European matchboxes.

All the senses are activated when entering the space: you smell the leftover scent of sulfur and burnt wood; you see the quick burst of light when the match head meets the surface, igniting a small flame; you hear the swift friction of the red match tips running against the red phosphorous panels; you feel the crunch beneath your feet of the discarded matchsticks. The striking movements will leave traces on the panels, similar to a drawing.

Wachholz suggests an unromantic image of the artist by delegating activities to other people, machines, or scientific equations. If others associate creativity with what is new and ingenuous, and marked by the individual, he counters this with his concept of creativity in allegedly noncreative activities while magnifying such activities in order to shift perception. The notion of the singular, individuated artist is thus challenged and broken down. It is not the artist's hand, but the activation of the work by participants that creates the work. The panels as a designed whole recede into the background when the specific creations by the individual visitors can take place.

The matchstick works open up entire compositions: the eye skips from ignition to ignition of these documentations, each of which, however, puts a small hiatus into our act of seeing. Wachholz's oeuvre leads us to the insight that fleeting glances do not reveal anything, that engaging with and focusing on an object may result in seeing the act of seeing. He is quite simply interested in the simple things that reveal their complexity when we take a closer look.

While the experimental setups for his works are marked by stoic precision, they ultimately still explore the realm of the poetic. The dimensions of everyday materials, events, and techniques are radically shifted and redirected, shedding light on the perceived notion of freedom we share in devising and executing everyday activities.

The public is invited to a finissage on the last night of the exhibition, Saturday, February 26 from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm to view the finished works.

Thomas Wachholz was born in Germany in 1984. He studied under Katharina Grosse and Marcel Odenbach at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany. His solo exhibitions include 'Whiteout', Nymphius Projekte, Berlin (2015); 'Alcohol Works', Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles (2014); 'Reibfläche', Raebervon Stenglin, Zurich (2014); and 'Alkoholarbeiten', An der Shanz 1A, Cologne (2013). In 2014 his work was featured in the group exhibitions: 'Not Abstraction', Yves Klein Archive, Paris; 'Backward/Forward', New Galerie, Paris; 'daseinsamegenie...', Baustelle Schaustelle, Essen; 'On & On & On', kunstgruppe, Cologne; 'Shortcuts, Videos in Art', Chu Galerie, Cologne; and Rundgang der Staatlichen Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf. He lives and works in Cologne.