

# Serpentine Gallery

## Teachers' Resources

### Wolfgang Tillmans

26 June – 19 September 2010



Wolfgang Tillmans *Ostgut Freischwimmer, right* 2004 Inkjet print 231.1 × 607.8 cm Collection of Kunstmuseum Basel

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And

**sakenohana** 酒の花。

And those who wish to remain anonymous

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**THE TIMES**

## **Introduction**

These notes are designed to support your visit to the Serpentine Gallery, including planning prior to your visit and suggestions for discussion and activities back at school when you return. They are aimed primarily at Key Stage 3 and 4 but include activities that can relate to all key stages, enabling you to develop them to suit your needs and inspire discussion and practical work.

## **Contents**

- **Background**
- **Themes**

These include useful cross-curricular links, classroom discussions and activities

  - 1. Documentation**
  - 2. Constellation**
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- **Further reading and related links**
- **Planning a visit to the Serpentine Gallery**

## **Background**

Wolfgang Tillmans was born on August 16, 1968 in Germany. It was during his childhood that he first discovered his interest in photography when he began collecting photographs and magazine clippings. During his first visit to England as an exchange student in 1983, he discovered the British youth-culture and the local fashion and music magazines of the time. From 1990 through 1992 he studied at Bournemouth and the Poole College of Art and Design. After his studies he moved to London and then in 1994 to New York for a year. Since 1995, Wolfgang Tillmans has lived and worked in London, and since 2007 he divides his time between his studios in Berlin and London. His comprehensive and diverse body of work is distinguished not only by an attentive and insightful observation of his surroundings but also by an on-going, systematic investigation of photography and its possibilities. He was the first photographer and also the first non-British artist to be awarded the Turner Prize in 2000.

## 1. Documentation - The trace of human nature



Wolfgang Tillmans *Anders pulling splinter from his foot* 2004 C-type print 61 × 50.8 cm



Wolfgang Tillmans *Roy* 2009 C-type print 40.6 x 30.5 cm

## Activities and quotes

- Look at *Anders pulling splinter from his foot* 2004 and compare it to historical paintings of the classical figure *Spinario* (the boy with a thorn in his foot)
- See how this figure has been reinterpreted

through the ages to mean different things

- Look at *Roy* 2009, compare it to historical paintings of mother and child
- Find or make contemporary versions of iconic historical artworks

*"The experience of something in real life doesn't automatically make for good work, I can only really photograph things that I understand in some way or another. It's about whether you can look at something for 60seconds; it's very much about being able to bear reality."* Wolfgang Tillmans  
Frieze interview with Dominic Eichler, Issue 118 October 2008

*"What connects them, I think, is that, even though they are confident, one gets a sense of their awareness of their own vulnerability. The depiction of other people is terribly fascinating and even more so if it's a psychological undertaking or a lifelong focus on single people, like a few friends of mine who I have photographed for many years now."* Wolfgang Tillmans  
Frieze interview with Dominic Eichler, Issue 118 October 2008

*"There are people who have no joy in viewing – who have no joy in life, perhaps. I think people don't observe enough. I'm a great believer in observation. My first passion in life was astronomy."* Wolfgang Tillmans  
Frieze interview with Dominic Eichler, Issue 118 October 2008

- Take 10 photos of things that hold your attention for 60 seconds, every day for a week
- Discuss in the classroom whether anyone has taken similar pictures to you?
- Create walks by documenting images along the way, try and take pictures of things that people might not normally notice (this could be done in the school grounds for example or in the park when you visit the Gallery).
- Swap your photos with someone else and see if you can find their destination
- Have you noticed new things?

### **Cross-curricular links**

Art & Design – PSHE – Politics – Psychology – Sociology- Media Studies – Music – Politics- Creative and Media Diploma- Photography

## 2. Constellation - collections and astronomy



Wolfgang Tillmans *in flight astro (ii)* 2010 Inkjet print 207.5 x 138 cm



Wolfgang Tillmans *Silver Installation VII* 2009 Unique C-type prints 306 × 843 cm

## Activities and quotes

*"Also I listen a lot to Lady Gaga. There's something hidden in her music, a hunger that makes it different to what it first appears to be, something very touching"* Wolfgang Tillmans, Interview with Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Serpentine exhibition catalogue, Koenig Books, 2010

*"There is this impulse to close things - to finish with all my constant thinking and reassessing -because once you've finished it you think you might have made it concrete. But that is, of course, something that's opposed to the creative process. Once it's finished, there's no more potential to it. It's all understood. Now, that's a ridiculous thing to aim for, because then something is dead, whereas the great artworks only survive because one sees new potential in them. So there are these contradictory impulses in me: I do want to finish something, put my hands on it and find an answer to what I'm doing, but at the same time all my work is about the impossibility of doing that! As hard as I try to control and understand the world around me, I know I can't control anything and the best things are given without control." If one thing matters, everything matters"* Wolfgang Tillmans, Interview with Mary Horlock, Exhibition catalogue , Tate publishing, 2003

- What are you fascinated in? Can you use photography to show this?
- In the Tillmans show you will notice he shows works alongside each other, some up close and some from afar. Look at music videos, imagine you are filming like this, panning in and out. What grabs your attention, what things do you shoot straight past?
- What do you collect? Images, lists, photos? Look at online collections of images such as Facebook and blogs
- Which other artists look at the everyday and routines in their work?
- Visual conversations, email someone images instead of words or draw images instead of speaking. Did you understand each other?
- Create a visual diary by collecting photos, tickets, drawings and responses, can you do this without any words, or as few words as possible?
- Look at *Space, Food, Religion (TYC) 2010* use them as inspiration for your sketch books

## Curate a show

- How would you position the artworks on the wall?



*Wolfgang Tillmans* Installation view Serpentine Gallery, Photograph by Gautier de Blonde 2010



*Wolfgang Tillmans* Installation view Serpentine Gallery, Photograph by Gautier de Blonde 2010



*Wolfgang Tillmans* Installation view Serpentine Gallery, Photograph by Gautier de Blonde 2010



*Wolfgang Tillmans* Installation view Serpentine Gallery, Photograph by Gautier de Blonde 2010

### **Cross-curricular links**

Art & Design – PSHE – Politics – Photography –  
Philosophy- Media Studies – Music –English Language  
- Creative and Media Diploma

### 3. Experimentation - playing with light



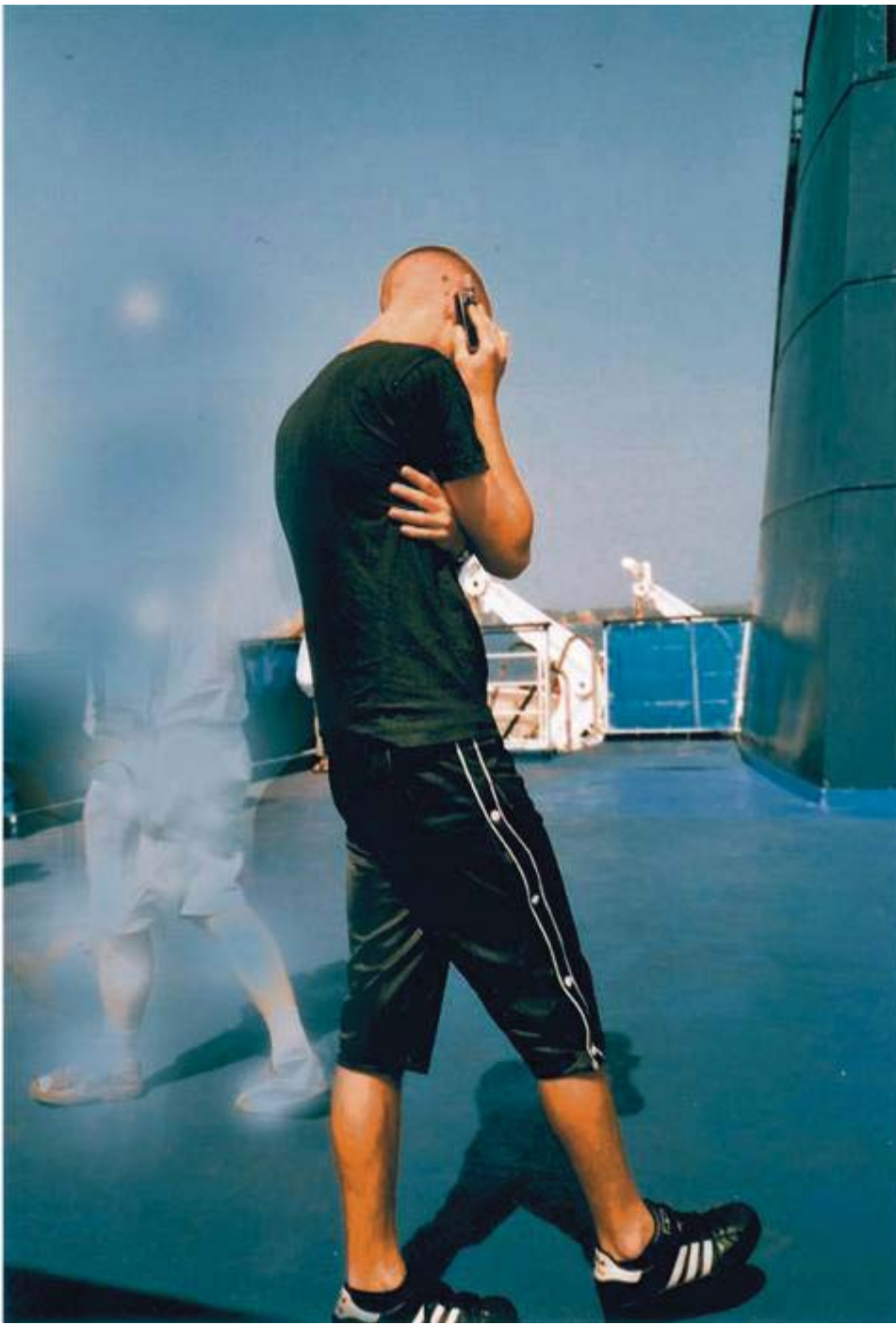
Wolfgang Tillmans *paper drop (Roma)* 2007 C-type print 145 x 212 cm



Wolfgang Tillmans *Lighter, blue concave I* 2008 Unique C-type print in Plexiglass hood 64 × 54 × 12.5 cm



Wolfgang Tillmans *Urgency XXII* 2006 Framed C-type print 238 × 181 cm



Wolfgang Tillmans *Gedser* 2004 C-type print 40.6 × 30.5 cm

## Activities and quotes

*"I was interested in, was fascinated with this 500 year old tapestry at the Cloisters branch of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. How people knew 500 years ago how to depict greyscale through pixels"* Wolfgang Tillmans, Interview with Mary Horlock, Exhibition catalogue, Tate publishing, 2003

- Look at Tillmans' photocopied images of newspapers, he enlarges small pictures, they become very grainy and pixelated, this gives them a different feel. Design your own garments, look at contemporary fashion designers such as Erdem and Prada that have used pixelated and enlarged imagery.
- Photocopy a picture and halfway through pull the image to one side, this will create distortion and movement, try inverting your image into negative.
- Experiment with contrast and brightness levels to abstract your image by using a photocopier or Photoshop
- Play with different techniques of creating imagery
- Cynotypes
- Pin hole cameras
- Light sensitive paper (see *Urgency XXII* 2006)
- Photoshop (see *Gedser* 2004)
- Cameras, long exposures

## Cross-curricular links

Science- Art & Design – ICT- Graphic design – Textiles  
– Music – Photography



Wolfgang Tillmans *haircut* 2007 C-type print 40.6 x 30.5 cm

## 4. Text based activities

### Cross-curricular links

Drama- English Language- Philosophy- Art and Design- Photography

### First word responses

- Ask your group to give you one-word responses to the work, this can be done very fast and no one can repeat a word.
- Add the words to the list here and then ask your group to discuss them

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## Mix and match

- Give one word to each member of your group, asking them to choose one artwork that most fits the description. Reconvene as a group and then go through words one at a time, ask the group to guess which artwork had been chosen. Were they the same?
- This might show that people in your group are thinking in the same way. It also might show that people interpret works differently and that many of the words could fit many of the works.

<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Unguarded</b>
<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Consciousness</b>
<b>Nonchalance</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>Humble</b>
<b>Open-ended</b>	<b>Fragmented</b>
<b>Object</b>	<b>Impressions</b>
<b>Optimistic</b>	<b>Freeform</b>
<b>Unframed</b>	<b>Powerful</b>
<b>Grandeur</b>	<b>Banality</b>
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Analogue</b>
<b>Cliché</b>	<b>Dominant</b>
<b>Emphasis</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>
<b>Humanity</b>	<b>Conceptual</b>
<b>Trace</b>	<b>Astronomy</b>
<b>Casual</b>	<b>Potential</b>

<b>Psychology</b>	<b>Aura</b>
<b>Changing</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Selecting</b>
<b>Arranging</b>	<b>Manipulating</b>
<b>Passing</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Fluid</b>	<b>Alchemy</b>
<b>Chemicals</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Politics</b>
<b>Truth</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>Sexuality</b>	<b>Entangled</b>
<b>Reflective</b>	<b>Inevitability</b>
<b>Everyday</b>	<b>Openness</b>
<b>Air</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>Eggs</b>	<b>Back of ear with freshly cut hair</b>

## **Opposites**

- Give out a pair of opposite words to your students and ask them to find either one or two artworks that relate to them. Discuss as a group whether one artwork can have both words in it? See if people can guess which artworks were chosen. Are there other artworks which also fit the words?

**Dark/Light**

**Static/motion**

**Love/hate**

**Discomfort/comfort**

**Ambiguous/clear**

**Emotive/cold**

**Everyday/extraordinary**



Wolfgang Tillmans *Venus, transit* 2004 C-type print 40.6 × 30.5 cm

All works courtesy of Wolfgang Tillmans and Maureen Paley, London; Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York and Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne, except where otherwise stated.

### **Contemporary photographers**

Look at the following artists, are there any similarities or differences with the work of Wolfgang Tillmans?

Thomas Demmand

Jeff Wall

Cindy Sherman

Andrea Gursky

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Carey Young

### **Selected Biography**

1968 Born in Remscheid, Germany  
1987–1990 Lives and works in Hamburg, Germany  
1990–1992 Studies at Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design, Bournemouth  
1992–1994 Lives and works in London  
1994–1995 Lives and works in New York  
1995 Ars Viva Prize, Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e. V; Kunstpreis der Böttchestraße, Bremen, Germany  
Since 1996 Lives and works in London  
1998–1999 Visiting professorship at the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg  
2000 Turner Prize, Tate Britain, London  
2003–2010 Professorship of interdisciplinary art at Städelschule, Frankfurt a.M.  
Since 2004 Also lives and works in Berlin  
2006 Opens Between Bridges exhibition space in London  
2009 Kulturpreis, The German Society of Photography  
Since 2009 Artist Trustee on the Board of Tate, London

### **Selected Exhibitions**

2010 Serpentine Gallery, London  
2008 *Lighter*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; *Tegenwoordigheid van Geest*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City  
2007 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; *Bali*, Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover; *Beugung*, Kunstverein München, Munich  
2006 Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Helsinki-Festival, Taidehalli, Helsinki; *Freedom from the Known*, P.S.1 / MoMA, New York  
2004 *Freischwimmer*, Tokyo Opera City Gallery, Tokyo  
2003 *if one thing matters, everything matters*, Tate Britain, London; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, Netherlands; *View from Above*, Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Denmark  
2002 *Vue d'en Haut*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris; *Veduta dall'alto*, Castello di Rivoli—Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli, Turin; *Wolfgang Tillmans: still life*, The Fogg Art Gallery, Busch Reisinger Museum, Harvard; Cambridge, Mass; *Partnerschaften II* (with Jochen Klein), Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin  
2001 *Aufsicht*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; *Science Fiction|hier und jetzt zufrieden sein* (with Isa Genzken), Museum Ludwig, Cologne  
1996 *Wer Liebe wagt lebt morgen*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg  
1995 Kunsthalle Zurich; Portikus, Frankfurt a.M.  
1994 Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York  
1993 Daniel Buchholz – Buchholz & Buchholz, Cologne; Maureen Paley, London  
1988 *Approaches*, Café Gnosa, Hamburg

### **Selected Publications**

1995 *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Taschen, Cologne, reissued 2002; *Wolfgang Tillmans*, exh. cat., Portikus, Frankfurt am Main; *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, reissued 2008  
1996 *For When I'm Weak I'm Strong | Wer Liebe wagt lebt morgen*, exh. cat., Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern-Ruit  
1997 *Concorde*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne  
1998 *Burg*, Taschen, Cologne, reissued as *Wolfgang Tillmans*, 2002  
1999 *Soldiers: The Nineties*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne; *Total Solar Eclipse | Totale Sonnenfinsternis*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne; *Wako Book 1999*, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo  
2001 *AC: Isa Genzken | Wolfgang Tillmans*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne; *Portraits*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne; *View from Above | Aufsicht*, exh. cat., Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern-Ruit; *Wako Book 2*, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo  
2002 *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Phaidon Press, London and New York; *Wolfgang Tillmans: Still Life*, exh. cat., Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass  
2003 *if one thing matters, everything matters*, exh. cat., Tate Publishing, London  
2004 *Freischwimmer*, exh. cat., Opera City Gallery, Tokyo; *Wako Book 3*, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo  
2005 *truth study center*, Taschen, Cologne  
2006 *Freedom From The Known*, exh. cat., PS1 and Steidl Verlag, New York and Göttingen; *Wolfgang Tillmans*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Yale University Press, New Haven and London; *Why we must provide HIV treatment information*, HIV i-base, London  
2007 *Manual*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne; *Wolfgang Tillmans and Hans Ulrich Obrist: The Conversation Series 6*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne  
2008 *Lighter*, exh. cat., Hamburger Bahnhof, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern; *Wako Book 4*, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo



Wolfgang Tillmans *Heptathlon 2009* Inkjet print 208.5 x 138 cm

### **Awards**

2000 Turner Prize 2000, Tate Britain, London

2009 Kulturpreis 2009, The German Society of Photography, Heidelberg, Germany

### **Online research**

<http://www.tillmans.co.uk/>

<http://www.maureenpaley.com/>

<http://www.galeriebuchholz.de/>

<http://www.andreirosengallery.com/>

<http://www.betweenbridges.net/>

<http://www.berlinerposterverlag.com/014WT.html>

[http://spikeart.at/index.php?option=com\\_magazine&func=show\\_article&id=25&lang=n](http://spikeart.at/index.php?option=com_magazine&func=show_article&id=25&lang=n)

[http://www.frieze.com/issue/print\\_article/look\\_again](http://www.frieze.com/issue/print_article/look_again)

# Planning a Visit to the Serpentine Gallery

## Contact Details

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Serpentine Gallery  
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Email [jocelineh@serpentinegallery.org](mailto:jocelineh@serpentinegallery.org)

## General Enquiries

Tel 020 7402 6075  
Fax 0207402 4103  
[www.serpentinegallery.org](http://www.serpentinegallery.org)

## Transport

The nearest tube stations are South Kensington (1.25 km walk), Knightsbridge (1.25 km walk) or Lancaster Gate (1 km walk)  
Bus routes 9, 10, 52, 452, 94 and 148 stop near the Gallery

## Group Visit Guidelines

To make your visit as enjoyable as possible, please read the following:

### Before your Visit:

- Adult supervision of students under 16 is required at all times, including in the shop. An adult student ratio of 1:5 for under 5's, 1:10 for 5 - 11 year olds, 1:15 for 11 - 16 year olds and 1:20 for 16 - 18 year olds is required.
- We recommend a preliminary planning visit, as for some exhibitions there may be works that you consider unsuitable for your group.

### During your Visit:

- The artworks in the *Tillmans* exhibition are extremely fragile. Please take extra care to follow the Gallery Guidelines at all times:

No running  
No touching  
No leaning against walls  
No shouting  
No photography

- Teachers/group leaders and accompanying adults are responsible for their group's behaviour whilst at the Serpentine Gallery.
- Many contemporary artworks are fragile and damage easily. Please make sure that your group understands that this is why they are not allowed to touch the art.
- Lecturing: If your group is larger than 20 please split them into smaller groups in the exhibition space and do not lecture in rooms where talks are already in progress.
- Drawing: If you would like to draw please check with the gallery what materials you will be able to use in the exhibition.

The *Wolfgang Tillmans* Teachers' Notes are also available to download free at [www.serpentinegallery.org](http://www.serpentinegallery.org) along with Teachers' Notes for the previous exhibitions:

**Nairy Baghramian and Phyllida Barlow** 8 May- 13 June  
**Richard Hamilton: Modern Moral Matters** 3 March 2010 – 25 April 2010  
**Design Real** 26 November 2009 – 7 February 2010  
**Gustav Metzger: Decades 1959 – 2009**, 29 September – 8 November 2009  
**Jeff Koons: Popeye Series**, 2 July – 13 September 2009  
**Luke Fowler**, 7 May – 14 June 2009  
**Rebecca Warren**, 10 March – 19 April 2009  
**Indian Highway**, 10 December 2008 – 22 February 2009  
**Gerhard Richter**, 23 September – 23 November 2008  
**Richard Prince: Continuation**, 26 June – 7 September 2008  
**Maria Lassnig**, 25 April – 8 June 2008  
**Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty**, 23 February – 13 April 2008  
**Anthony McCall**, 30 November 2007 – 3 February 2008  
**Matthew Barney**, 20 September – 11 November 2007  
**Hreinn Fridfinnsson**, 17 July – 2 September 2007  
**Paul Chan: The 7 Lights**, 15 May – 1 July 2007  
**Allora & Calzadilla**, 17 – 29 April 2007  
**Karen Kilimnik**, 20 February 9 April 2007  
**In the darkest hour there may be light, works from Damien Hirst's murderme collection**, 25 November 2006 – 28 January 2007  
**Runa Islam**, 25 October – 5 November 2006  
**China Power Station: Part 1**, 8 October – 5 November 2006  
**Uncertain States of America**, 9 September – 15 October 2006  
**Thomas Demand**, 6 June – 20 August 2006  
**Ellsworth Kelly**, 18 March – 21 May 2006  
**Elmgreen & Dragset**, 26 January – 26 February 2006  
**Ilya and Emilia Kabakov**, 19 October 2005 – 8 January 2006  
**Oliver Payne & Nick Relph**, 6 September – 2 October 2005  
**Rirkrit Tiravanija**, 5 July – 21 August 2005  
**Andreas Slominski**, 26 April – 12 June 2005  
**Tomoko Takahashi**, 22 February – 10 April 2005  
**Monika Sosnowska**, 5 December 2004 – 16 January 2005  
**Glenn Brown**, 14 September – 7 November 2004  
**Gabriel Orozco**, 1 July - 30 August 2004  
**Cy Twombly**, 17 April – 13 June 2004  
**State of Play**, 3 February – 28 March 2004  
**Hiroshi Sugimoto**, 18 November 2003 – 18 January 2004  
**John Currin**, 9 September – 2 November 2003  
**Cindy Sherman**, 3 June – 25 August 2003  
**Takahashi Murakami**, 12 November 2002 – 26 January 2003  
**Kutlug Ataman**, 11 February – 9 March 2003