



The Truth According to Tillmans

"It's from a queer festival in Copenhagen—like a gay pride festival, but more alternative," says Wolfgang Tillmans, of *We Summer* (above), the opening work in *Truth Study Center*, the artist's third book with Taschen. "It's the perfect opener," continues Tillmans, "because on the one hand it has some of the vibe of my first book for Taschen, from ten years ago—this communal spirit that I've always been close to, people enjoying themselves together and sharing themselves together in a non-branded and uncommercial environment; but at the same time it has this formal abstraction going on—the attention to light, which reflects the abstract pieces I've been doing in recent years, a formal development in my work that has allowed me to revisit some of those subjects I've dealt with in the past, and to come away with new pictures." *We Summer*, though, is merely the intersection of where these two approaches meet. Admirers will not miss what they've come to expect from Tillmans over the years—images of counterculture types at play in a nightclub, or enrapt in a lusty kiss, and even a gratuitous up-skirt shot of a hairy man's nether regions. But they will also be delighted to discover the artist evolving, and showing the same warmth and personality in aerial photos of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes, and even in a still life of flowers. "This decade has been a time of great experimentation with that," says Tillmans. "But it's the same attitude that I use when taking pictures of people—this interplay between exercising the most control and yet allowing chance to play a role in your work—that is something that only life can infuse, and that is exactly the spirit of the abstract work. I try not to have a final certainty about what I do, because I find certainty in people, and in art, really boring."

Jordan Heller

Truth Study Center is out this October from Taschen.