

Matthieu Martin
Cover Up, la suite

Exhibition: 18 - 27 May 2017 (by appointment)

Vernissage: Thursday, 18 May, 6-9 pm

Finissage: Saturday, 27 May, from 7 pm

Totem
Maxstraße 1
13347 Berlin

Totem is pleased to present the exhibition *Cover Up, la suite* with new works by Matthieu Martin.

In his works, Matthieu Martin often explores urban environments and the effect that certain interventions within an environment have on our own perception.

In his eponymic long-term project *Cover Up*, which Martin started in 2009, the artist deals with the common practice of city cleaning companies to overpaint graffiti of any kind in order to seemingly making them disappear. Clearly, the authorities are not just aiming for invisibility of the illegal graffiti and a return to the clean wall, this process rather indicates a power play of municipal authority. The covered areas are far from discreet, their colour often contrasts with the prior wall paint or occupies large parts of the previously 'daubed' surface. Thus, they both withhold space for new graffiti and mark their own urban territory, creating a distinct aesthetic that Martin captured photographically over years in different cities.

For *Cover Up, la suite* Martin projects two parallel running slideshows onto the wall of the exhibition space. One presents 205 photographs that the artist took of such overpainted graffiti, the other shows 37 newspaper articles from 1984 to 2017 that make this particular form of removing graffiti their topic. The projecting equipment remains visible within the exhibition space, emphasising the juxtaposition of the textual approach towards this phenomenon and its visual opponent. Similar to an archive the work offers an insight into a practice that emerged as an immediate reaction to a subculture and solely exists through its appearance.

Another work consists of several old construction site panels that Martin mounted onto the exhibition wall. These *objet trouvé* again show covered graffiti traces but, removed from their urban context, appear like abstract paintings. Here, Martin takes a step further, institutionalizes a gesture of political action and thus makes it his own.

Matthieu Martin was born in 1986 in Bayeux (France), he lives and works in Berlin.