

ALEX WISSEL

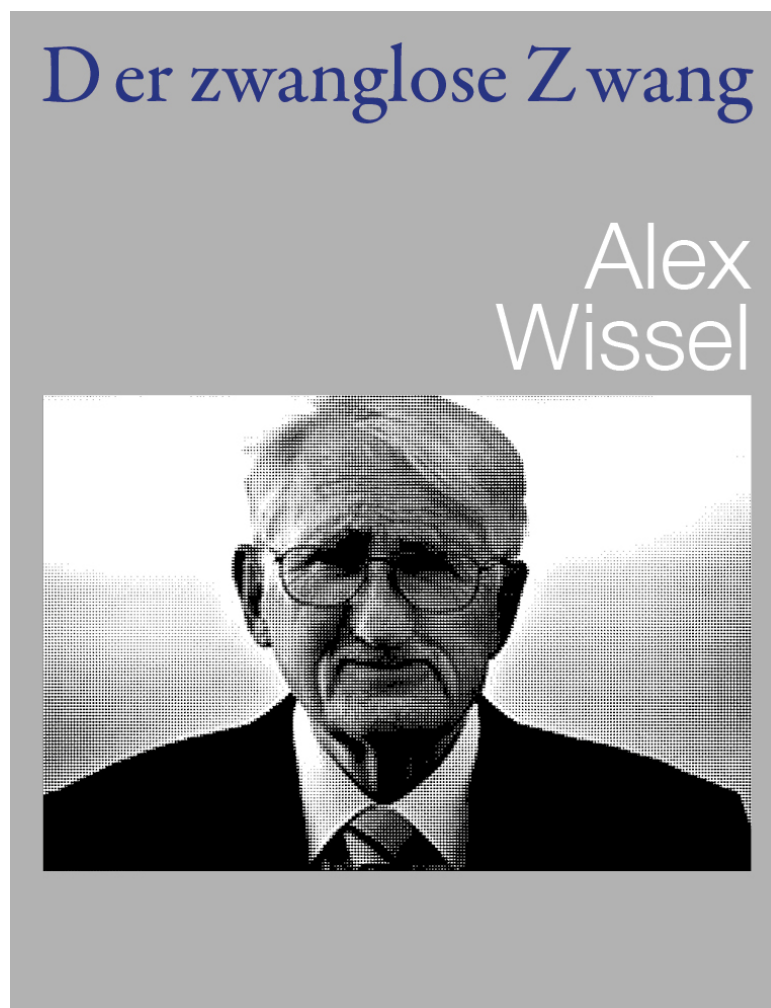
Der zwanglose Zwang

01.03. – 27.04.2025

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS CONFERENCE: 27.02.2025, 11 AM, the artist is present

OPENING: 28.02.2025, 7 PM



In the exhibition *Der zwanglose Zwang* (The Unforced Force) which takes place at Kunstverein Bielefeld from March 1 to April 27, 2025, the visual artist, set designer, and actor Alex Wissel continues his longstanding exploration of the origin of anti-democratic and identity-based politics of right-wing populism. This exploration culminates in new groups of installations specifically developed for this exhibition.

At the center of the exhibition is the figure of philosopher Jürgen Habermas, representing the communication theory he shaped, which has significantly influenced the cultural self-perception of public debates in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1945. In his *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas argues that the best argument prevails through rational persuasion without external coercion. Wissel juxtaposes this concept with our contemporary moment, shaped by neo-reactionary thinkers such as Nick Land, Peter Thiel, and Elon Musk. These figures no longer view freedom as part of democracy but advocate for a fully privatized public sphere, which Habermas would describe as a “destroyed public sphere.”

CV

Alex Wissel (b. 1983, Aschaffenburg) is a visual artist and was a guest professor for conceptual painting at the Kunstakademie Münster. As a draftsman, sculptor, set designer, actor, director, and initiator of performative community projects, he artistically examines the historical strands of nationalism concerning artists' festivals and national monuments, thereby revealing connections to historical revisionism and reactionary normalization strategies in today's populism.

He has held solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Siegen (2024), Philara Collection, Düsseldorf (2019), and was awarded with the Landsberg Prize in 2021, along with an exhibition at Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf. Together with director Jan Bonny, he has produced several films and plays, which have been presented at venues such as Volksbühne Berlin (2018) and Theater Basel (2021). Currently, the play *Man muss sich Mephisto als einen glücklichen Menschen vorstellen* (One Must Imagine Mephisto as a Happy Man) is running at Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus, for which Alex Wissel designed the stage.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

ARTIST TALK

Saturday, March 1, 2025, at 3 PM

Alex Wissel in conversation with Katharina Klang & Victoria Tarak

PRESS CONTACT

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OPENING HOURS

Thu – Sun, Noon – 6 PM

Mon – Wed by appointment