

LOS ANGELES

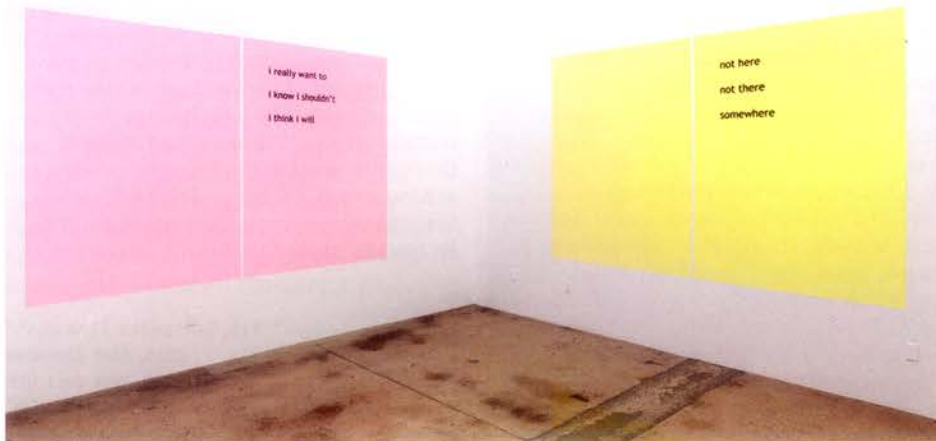
Rafaël Rozendaal:

"Abstract Browsing" at Steve Turner

"Abstract Browsing" is an extension for the Chrome browser that turns an ordinary web page into an abstract composition of bright colors. With the click of a button, any web page can be momentarily transformed, becoming a Mondrian-esque composition. This ingenious extension, conceived of by this quintessential new media artist Rafaël Rozendaal, does not render the web page inert, but rather changes the interface and therefore the expectations. Rozendaal has infiltrated the space of the World Wide Web in other projects—making and selling numerous domain names as art pieces with the caveat that the collector keeps the web site indefinitely accessible, as well as creating haikus that read like tweets. Rozendaal is one of those rare artists who can flow easily between mediums and scales. While over 200 haikus appear as three lines of HTML type on his website, three (numbered 192, 89 and 110) become vinyl lettering on post-it note pink, yellow and blue walls, respectively. These read as existential fragments: "not here / not there / somewhere" is the text of *Haiku 89*. The three lines of *Haiku 192* are as follows: "i really want to / i know i shouldn't / i think i will" and 110 states: "what i should do / what i can do / what i will do." These texts are very much Rozendaal's modus operandi, as he does what he wants, in any medium he sees fit, among them websites, books, room-sized installations, lenticular paintings and public electronic billboards.

Not every artist would think to translate electronic websites into woven tapestries (pixels into stitches), yet Rozendaal seamlessly transforms one medium into another. This process changes the formal properties of the work, as well as access to it. While "Abstract Browsing" is a free extension, Rozendaal's tapestries are large-scale Jacquard weavings, commodities made to grace collectors' or museum walls. The compositions come from specific instances of websites including Twitter, Gmail, Tumblr, Instagram, IMDb and Pinterest. While Rozendaal says he looks for unusual compositions—those an artist would not have made—the tapestries easily fit within the canon of abstract art. That they were created by an algorithm and commercially fabricated solidifies Rozendaal's role as a postmodern, post-internet artist—one who mines everything, looking for that perfect synthesis of form and content. Rozendaal's skill is in knowing what to make, not necessarily how to make it.

—JODY ZELLEN



"ABSTRACT BROWSING," 2016, Rafaël Rozendaal