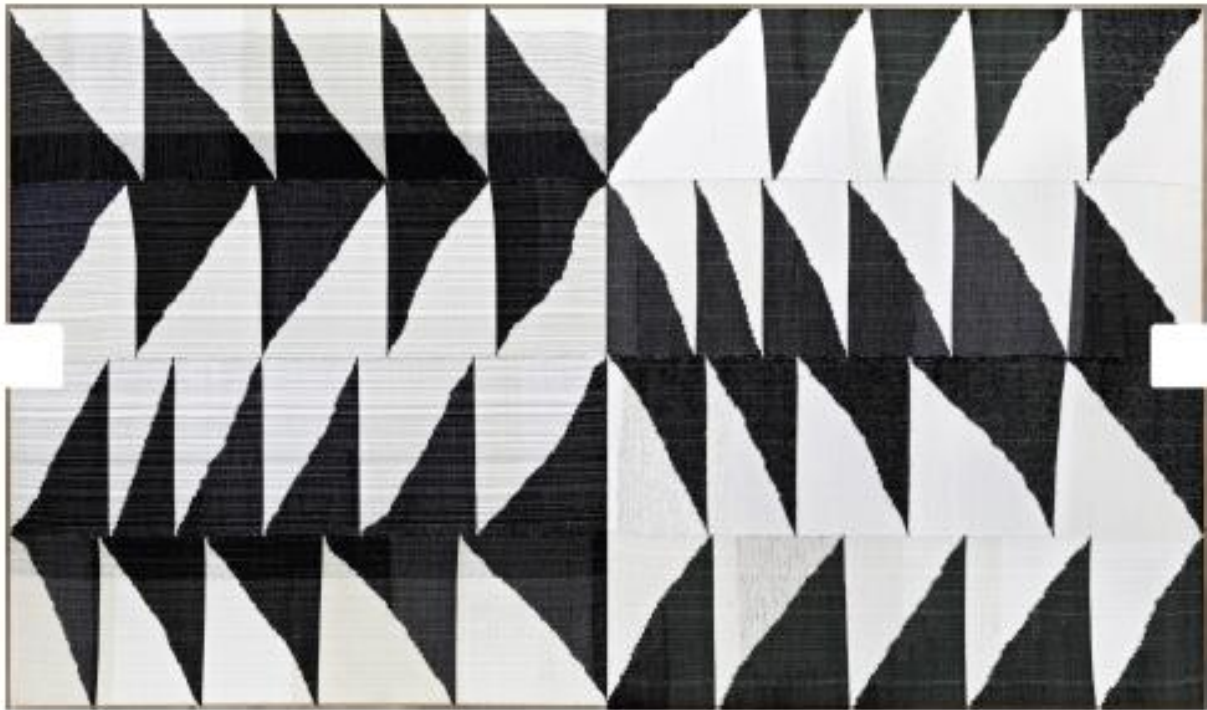


HUSK

Brent Wadden Solo Show – About Time

By Brent Randall

June 26, 2013



Canadian-born artist, Brent Wadden has been based in Berlin since 2005. His geometric abstractions and hand-woven fabric pieces colourfully blur the lines between traditional folk art and contemporary fine art, through his use and exploration of aboriginal, native or cultural totems. Within these intricate and complex geometric patterns, immediate references to traditional and tribal art challenge you to take a deeper look. The hidden geometry sort of tricks the viewers eye. With intense textures, complex patterning and the dissection of the canvass, Wadden plays with our focus; implanting abstracted portraiture within a framework of rigid geometry. Look a bit deeper into Wadden’s pieces and you’ll start to see the wild characters and totemic faces peeking back at you as they surface from the divisions.

HUSK: You were quite isolated as a child, growing up on an island which according to you “lacked culture”. Small towns usually force-out some pretty interesting subcultures. What kind of kid were you and how did you come to entertain yourself through art?

Brent Wadden: You would usually find me hiding in a corner drawing or playing with legos for hours on end. I was an introverted kid and gravitated towards activities that wouldn’t draw too much attention. Not much has changed. I started playing in bands in my teens and by default ended up designing all our tapes and flyers for shows.

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HUSK: Your work covers different mediums including: painting, illustration and weaving. Stylistically, can you take me through the elements which tie all these disciplines together in your work?

Brent Wadden: I try to not make the distinction when switching between different mediums. My paintings inform my weavings and vice versa while both retain their own unique flavor due to the limitations of the medium. My work tends to be laboriously handmade, consisting of repetitive geometric or organic forms.

HUSK: You've been weaving now for two years. It's not an easy or simple technique to master. Where did your interest in weaving start and what kind of technical training have you had?

Brent Wadden: One day a friend suggested we make a simple frame loom out of a cardboard box. The results were rustic but it got the wheels of curiosity spinning. Shortly after I emailed Travis Meinhof of actionweaver.com, he was generous enough to loan me a mini laser cut backstrap loom. Besides the internet and trial and error he's been my only source of information.

HUSK: There's a fluid geometry within your work. Grid structures, lines and symmetry are contrasted with looser organic forms. Some people see Navajo rugs, some see graphs and some see vintage semaphore flags. I think I see faces or masks— completely abstracted portraits. What do you want us to see and more importantly, what do you see?

Brent Wadden: The reference to portraiture is a conscious decision that I attempt to make as ambiguous as possible.

HUSK: If your works are abstract creatures or characters, where do you think they'd reside and what would they do with their days?

Brent Wadden: They only exist within the paintings so the objects actually become the physical characters. If the work is hung in a gallery, home or studio then its experiencing whatever you are experiencing. Chillin. Eating. Looking at art. Living. Loving. Being.

HUSK: I read that you use the exact same grid structures for every piece. What does this recurring base or starting point offer you, aside from comfort?

Brent Wadden: I've used it as a starting point for many works but not for every piece. It started as a way to connect a series of different sized works vertically which was later broken down into pieces and hung horizontally. By deconstructing the initial structure I was hoping to draw attention to the variations in size as well as how each work was initially connected to the others.

HUSK: Do you have any particular quirks or dislikes regarding materials, threads or colours?

Brent Wadden: I prefer natural over synthetic but will use whatever. I've been moving more and more towards earthy, dirty tones.

HUSK: Favourite geometric shape and why?

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Brent Wadden: The rectangle because it's what I'm most familiar with.

HUSK: You're currently based in Berlin. What are some of the localised influences you're starting to let filter into your work?

Brent Wadden: The availability of studio space as well as having access to materials and the time to experiment.

HUSK: You were indirectly referencing Canada's indigenous art and totems while you were there. Tell me about some of Berlin's more interesting totems or imagery which has your attention?

Brent Wadden: I'm mostly watching the graffiti and old faded abstract murals while trying not to roll through piles of broken glass.

HUSK: What do you plan to do after 'About Time'?

Brent Wadden: Keep the flow going. In September I'm showing some new weavings at 'Sorry Were Closed' in Brussels. I've recently started making some cement sculptures that I want to develop further. Hopefully, I'll find the time to relax by the lake with some beers.

HUSK: Weaving really opens up a world of possibilities. Have you ever entertained the idea of commercial production? Or would you rather avoid having your works presented in poncho or throw-rug-form during a sale at Anthropologie or Pottery Barn?

Brent Wadden: I would be more comfortable with producing a limited edition piece of one hundred or so and having them available in specific shops or websites.

Words and interview by Brent Randall

Images courtesy Peres Projects

Gallery Website

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bout Time is on from June 28th – August 16th, 2013

Peres Projects, Karl-Marx-Alle 82, 10243 Berlin, Germany

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm.