

PHAIDON

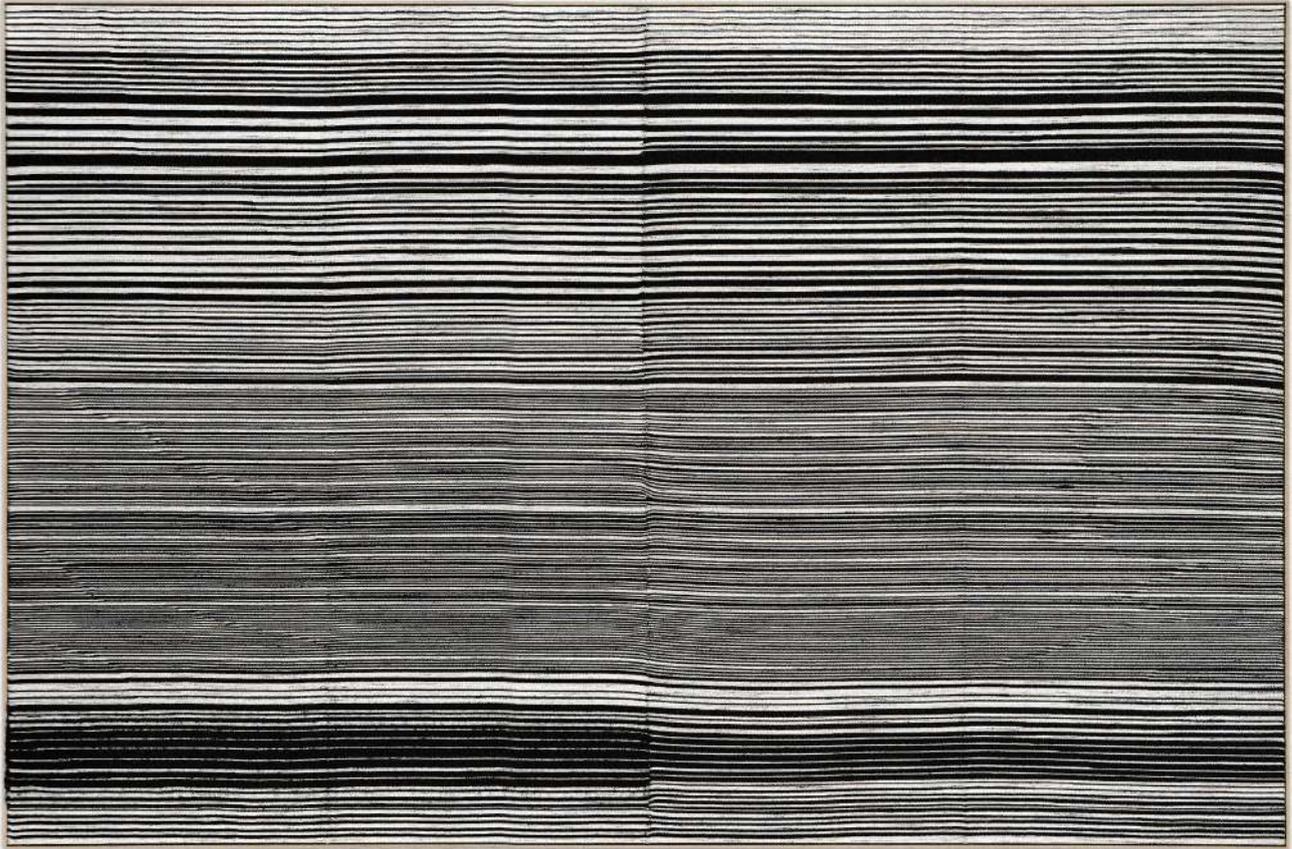
In the early years of the Bauhaus in Weimar Germany following the World War I, there was a shortage of raw material's, and the Women's Department had to make do with scraps of fabric collected from local people, mostly creating appliqué work until a loom was made available to them and the economic situation improved. This approach, fused with developments in abstract painting, resulted in the celebrated geometric, abstract woven textile pieces and wall hangings of artists such as Gunta Stölzl, Lena Bergner, Suse Ackermann and Ruth Hollos-Consemuller. A century later, we not only find the combination of textiles and abstraction inspired by painting alone and well in the work of an artist such as Berlin- and Vancouver-based Brent Wadden, but also discover that he likewise often uses recycled - or perhaps up cycled - materials in the creation of his pieces. Indeed, it is well documented that Wadden regularly sources materials in the form of second-hand clothing, old blankets and the like, unravelling the fibres and bringing them back to life as woven works of art.

Wadden's background is in painting and considers his textile works to be paintings. Some critics and viewers find this classification problematic, and it is certainly an interesting debate. Presumably for the artist, though, his interest and knowledge are simply more focused on painting - both historical and contemporary - and his readily confessed novice weaver status (he is self-taught) is one that he tries hard to maintain, despite undoubtedly becoming more experienced with each new work. Mistakes, glitches and inconsistencies are all welcome in Wadden's oeuvre, and it is arguably these nuances keeping perfection at bay that give the works both their handmade feel and their idiosyncratic charm. In 'Untitled' (2016), the joins between the repeated, alternating white and blue curved forms are not perfectly aligned, gently confirming that we are not looking at something industrially produced. The colour blue itself varies across the canvas, ranging from cool sky blues to cobalt and ultramarine (it is said that when Wadden runs out of a particular colour fibre, he just moves on the next colour). The resulting optical effect is one of fading through sunlight or bleach, of strong colours draining away over time, of analogue slippage like in a piece of old 16mm film or an ageing photographic print. Similarly, a piece such as 'Untitled' (2017) - a monochrome work of long, thin, black-and-white horizontal stripes - might inspire thoughts of radio waves or the lines of interference across an old-fashioned television screen. Other recent works look like wave forms teetering on the brink of early computer graphics of landscapes. Indeed, one might venture to say that Wadden's abstractions slowly and casually speak to us of the dawn of the digital era.



-----Matthew Price

PERES PROJECTS



Untitled---2017---Handwoven fibres, wool, cotton and acrylic on canvas---205 x 369 cm---81 1/2 x 145 1/4 in



Untitled---2017---Handwoven fibres, wool, cotton and acrylic on canvas---121 x 368 cm---47 5/8 x 144 7/8 in