

Artnet News: 'Brussels Gallery Beat: Jan Fabre's Marble Brains and More Major Shows This Month', by Alexander Forbes, May 1st, 2014

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Alexander Forbes, Thursday, May 1, 2014

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Brent Wadden, "The Decline" installation view.
Photo: © Sven Laurent Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery.

Brent Wadden, "The Decline," Almine Rech, closes May 24.

Where most young artists who see sudden success have a tendency to stick to what got them attention in the first place (if not downgrade due to productivity pressure), Wadden has taken bounds forward with each of his most-prominent showings: First at Berlin's [Peres Projects](#) and now at Almine Rech. Wadden's central themes endure in these latest additions to his *Alignment* series: an interest in indigenous art-making in his home province of Nova Scotia, a heavy dose of punk culture, and a drop of the psychedelic. But what started as many meter-lengths of knitted, black and white triangles and rhombuses, and were subsequently stitched together and placed on stretcher bars have, in Rechs' Brussels space, morphed into around 20 weavings in his favored neutral tones as well as salmons, deep and robin's egg blues, yellow, and kelly green.

An affinity for Abstract Expressionism emerges in these latest works. The Rothko-esque shade-shifts are striking. The forms within the weavings have become looser, less strictly geometric, and more contemplative. As Wadden has perfected his laborious weaving process, the surface of the works has become more uniform, making it easier for viewers' eyes to be tricked into thinking that they're looking at oil paintings. If they were, however, they wouldn't be nearly as interesting. The play at work here is one of balancing associations with brawny abstraction and with emotionally charged handcraft, though this is not your grandma's knitting. The works look effortless and thoughtless—and, indeed, an element of automatic drawing comes about in the seams between colors—when in fact great sums of human capital, all Wadden's, have been expelled in their creation.