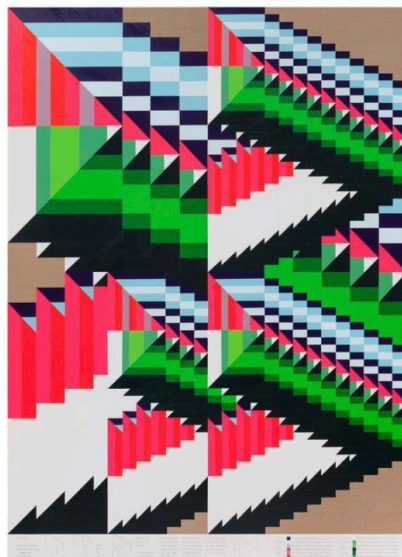


Tanya Leighton

The New York Times

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week



Andrew Kuo's "Trip (7/15/16)," at Marlborough Chelsea.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MARLBOROUGH CHELSEA

ANDREW KUO

Through Jan. 14. Marlborough Chelsea, 545 West 25th Street, Manhattan; 212-463-8634, marlboroughchelsea.com/chelsea.

It took me a while to understand Andrew Kuo's paintings in his new show, "No to Self," at Marlborough Chelsea. At first I thought they were vividly colored hard-edge abstractions. Some look like angled tides of digital lightning; others like riffs on Southwestern quilts; and some like pixelated Photoshop fails. They all include a few patches of brownish-gray unpainted linen, making the complicated patterns seem even more evanescent, like static washing across a screen. Each painting also has a demure white stripe across the bottom, a key that purports to explain the whole as a diagram of Mr. Kuo's inner life.

The one-liners on these white stripes range from confessional ("Conversations that don't end on a high note torture me forever") to notionally profound ("It all goes away if you close your eyes") and motivational ("Everyone knows everyone's making it up"). Yet they mostly come across as opaque non sequiturs, which made their relationship to the accomplished and appealing but more straightforward designs above them hard to make out.

That is, they were hard to make out until I realized that the point isn't what they say, but what they look like — they resemble PowerPoints, or the kind of helpful charts that appear in The New York Times Magazine. The paintings aren't actually abstractions at all, but landscapes, sensitive nature scenes of the world we live in now.

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