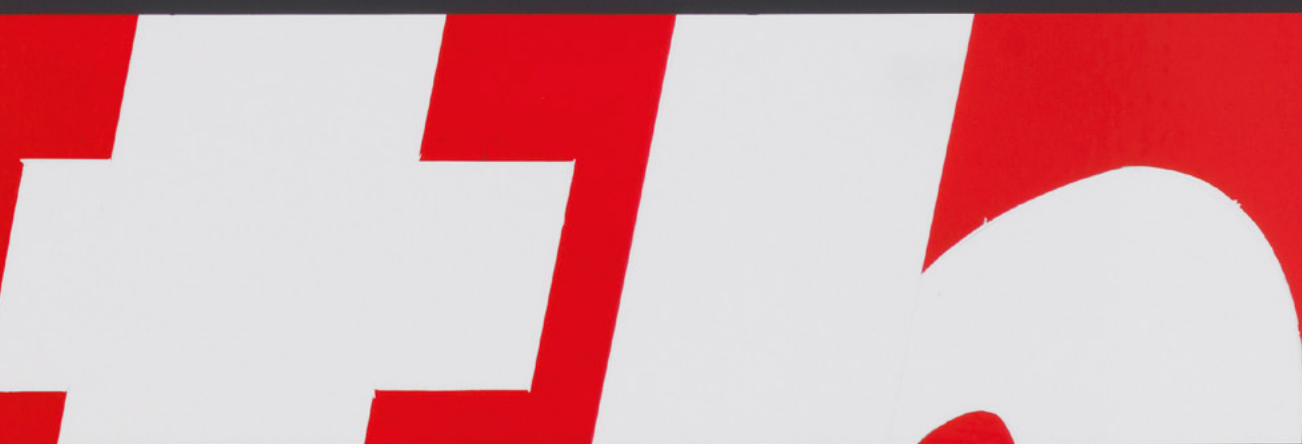


BorzoGallery



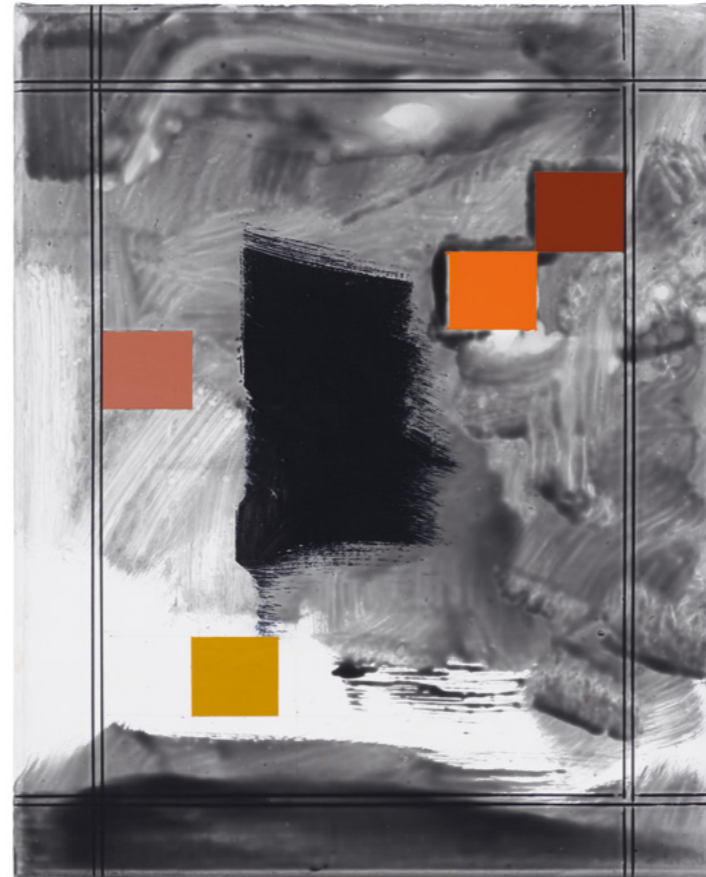
Ronald
de Bloeme

Alternative Facts

Introduction



Partie II, 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
50 x 40 cm



Partie IV, 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
50 x 40 cm

The day is very hot as we arrive in Berlin in late June 2016 and Ronald is waiting for us at the airport. On the way to his studio in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg, he talks enthusiastically about the city he has called home since 2000. As he drives he points out features of Berlin's urban development, tells us about East and West, about old, pre-war 'Viertel' and rebuilt and refurbished sections of this great city with so many reminders of its, often emotionally, controversial history. He draws our attention to advertising boards on façades, to election pamphlets stuck onto viaduct pillars and fences. De Bloeme is interested in the design of this street architecture, in the typography used for the poster or pamphlet.

His studio is in a huge concrete building where the remains of shuttered windows still hark back to the days of East Berlin and that happens to be located exactly where the Wall once stood.

By now the endlessly hot summer has also raised the indoor climate to a tropical temperature. The oscillating fan is causing the many notes, sketches and cuttings stuck to the wall to continually move and rustle. Ronald talks about, explains and illustrates how he works, how the city inspires him, how he observes

urban images with advertising slogans in neon, on placards, on electronic billboards and in his studio strips them of their recognisable imagery and typography and transforms and silences them into abstract compositions.

He has hung up a few large canvases for us, impressive paintings with big black bars, and also a series of intimate, small canvases with red and black. The figurative source has disappeared entirely due to the elimination of identifying markers; they have been painted out with bars and areas in glossy enamel paint, whereby a totally new reality is created in a completely abstract visual language.

That evening we attend the opening of an exhibition in Bethanien, where he has been asked to place his work, along with that of a few fellow Berlin artists, in some of the rooms. The weather is still warm and humid and after the opening we enjoy schnitzel and beer outside on the terrace of an authentic Berlin 'Lokaal'. In the sixteen years that Ronald de Bloeme has lived in Berlin he has become a 'Berliner'.

That same evening we decide on the exhibition in Amsterdam, which is accompanied by this catalogue.

Paul van Rosmalen
Amsterdam, October 2017

(back)cover
Weekend Truth, 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
110 x 200 cm

Alternative Facts

Since January 22nd 2017 a fact is no longer an event or circumstance the truth of which can be taken as certain. This is when Kellyanne Conway uses the term 'alternative facts' during a press conference when defending her colleague Sean Spicer's statement on the number of people present for the inauguration of Donald Trump.

The day when reality was turned on its head.

In art this can be done. Indeed, the turnaround often creates the playing field for the maker. Somewhere he can offer an alternative for reality as we know it, or think we know it. But what happens when those in power make use of this form of storytelling? The bottom then falls out from under observation. You can no longer trust what you see, what you are told. And it is not without danger.

It is significant that Ronald de Bloeme entitles his exhibition at BorzoGallery *Alternative Facts*. He places the observation of reality at the centre of his work. He studies its reliability by appropriating forceful images from visual communication and painting reinterpretations of them.

He takes pictograms from brands such as T-Mobile, Google or Heineken, and also the design of packaging, websites or cycling shirts. He scans them and transforms them to the point where a convincing composition comes into being. He censors texts by replacing them with colour fields. Thereby pushing to the limit the boundaries of the legible and the identifiable.

On his computer De Bloeme manages a substantial collection of 'compositions in transit': compositions that are not yet finished, not yet ready to be translated into a large format. It can sometimes take weeks, months before he decides that a composition is good enough to be painted.

Once a picture has been decided on, he transfers it meticulously onto large canvases and then carefully paints it in different layers of paint, gloss and mat, opaque or transparent. He accepts little 'mistakes' and irregularities - where the paint has bled under the masking tape, an accidental slip of the brush, where the paint has 'run' - and consequently here and there the image appears to be breaking open.

De Bloeme calls the drawings that do not per se result in a painting and yet have a right to exist outside the studio, *Kurzstrecken*. The reference is to a taxi ride in Berlin, the city where he has lived and worked since 2000. For a short trip you ask the taxi-driver for a 'Kurzstrecke'. In his drawings De Bloeme can look for what he wants quickly and efficiently and respond much more directly to what is happening than in the slower medium of painting.

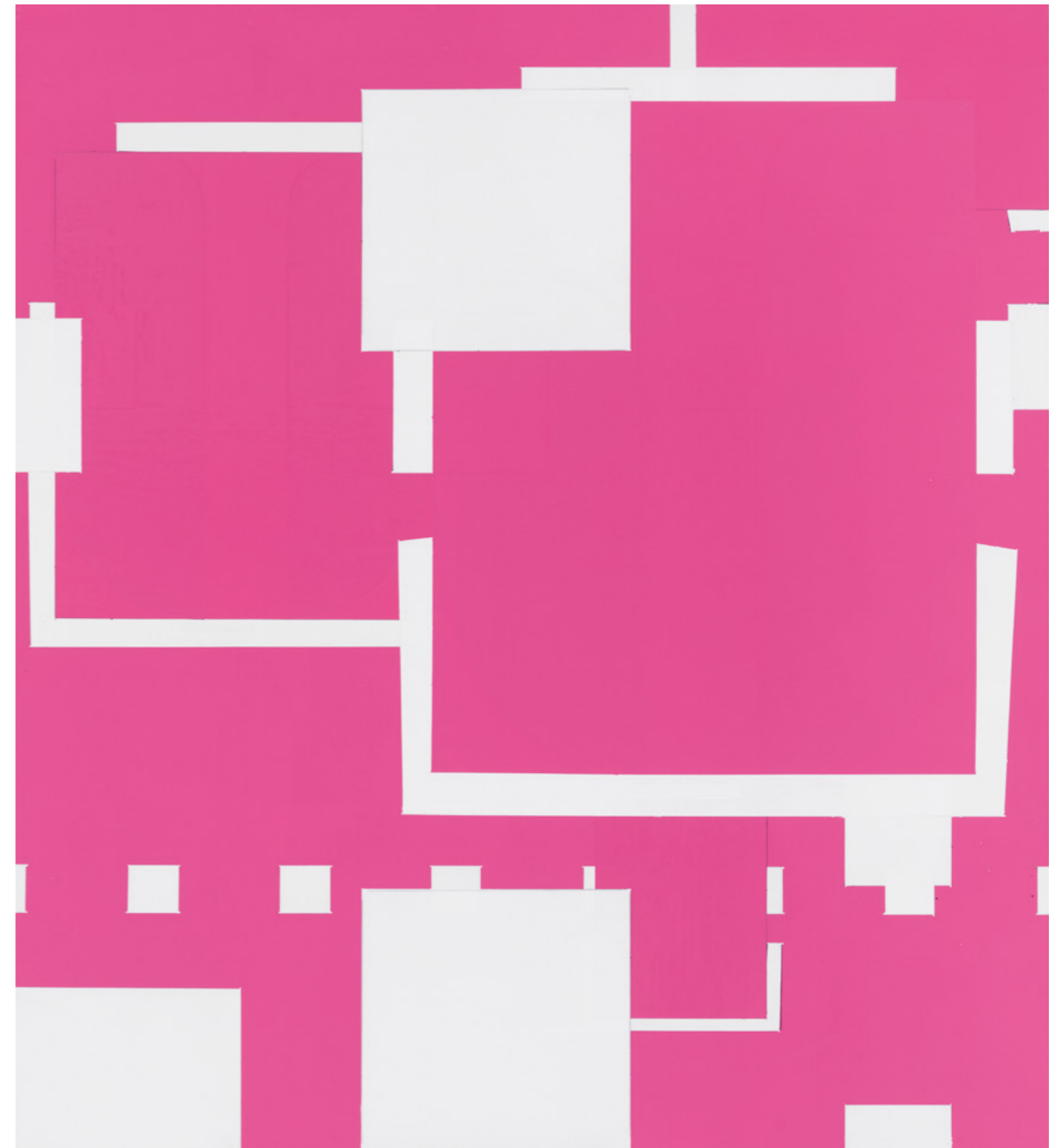
On September 19th 2016 the front page of *Der Tagespiegel* shows the results of the Berlin elections in an easy-reference histogram. For De Bloeme it is a ready-made painting: a translation of a complex reality into a simple and attractive colour chart. The colours are fixed: green for Die Grüne, red for the SPD and black always refers to the CDU.

De Bloeme takes it on and initially copies it in paint, with no text. However it remains immediately recognisable for anyone with a little knowledge. Maybe not easy to put a name to, but the communication method is clear. And once he has turned it into a painted reality, it gives him the freedom for a series of nine drawings. He replaces the colours with new ones, he varies the width of the bars, he shifts the white line between 'the distribution of seats before the elections and that for after the elections' to the centre and at one point he even paints the diagram upside down.

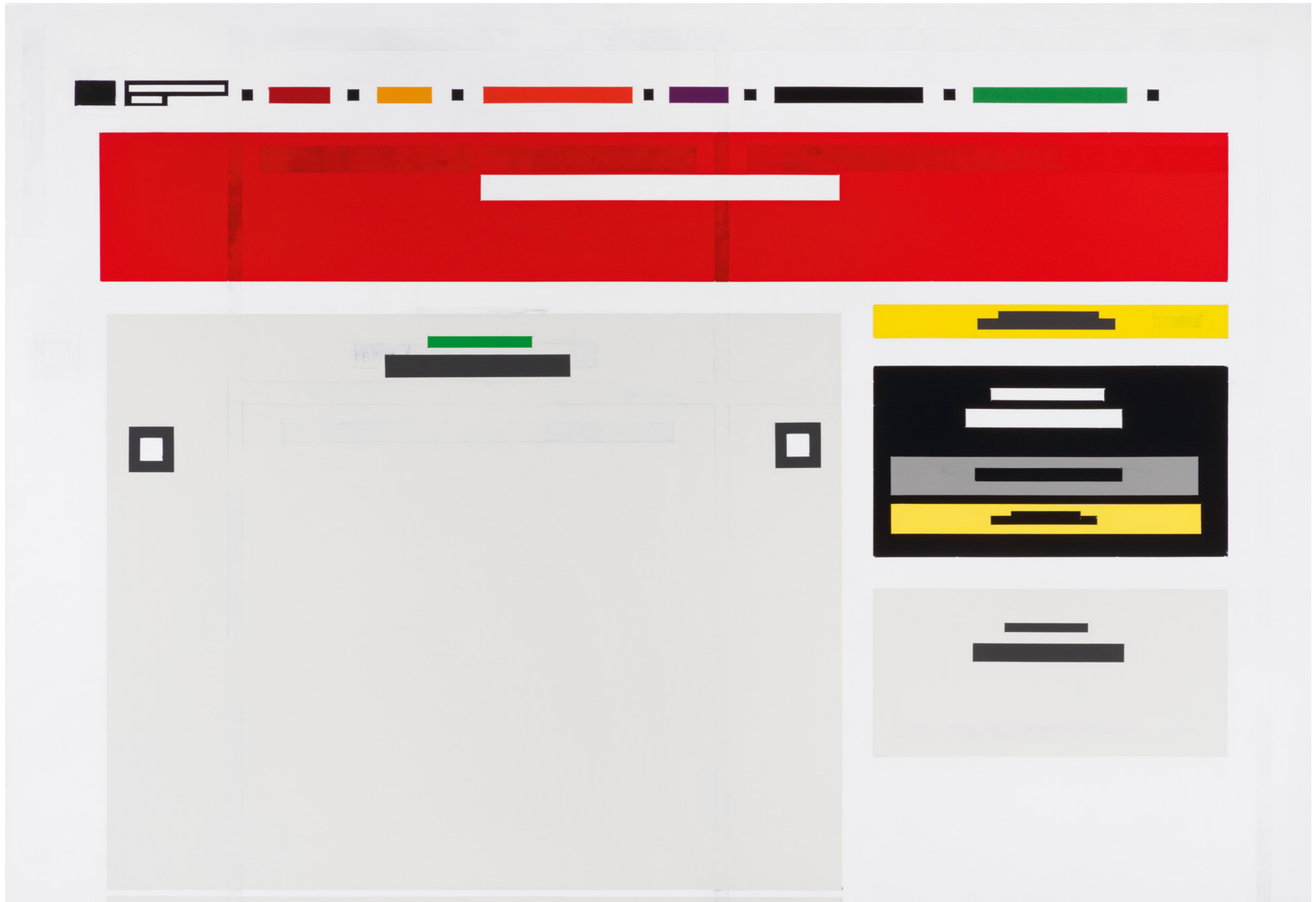
With the reinterpretation of logos, advertising and other slogans from the visual image culture De Bloeme is subtly playing with confidence in the observation of this reality. In Fact II (Google) he paints white bars over the word 'Fact'. The blue-red-yellow-green of the letters are the colours that the fact-finder Google has patented. Here, the cheerful, fresh colours are not at all harmless, but carry a meaning that has been paid for.

The game that De Bloeme is playing, his toppling of reality, cannot be ignored.

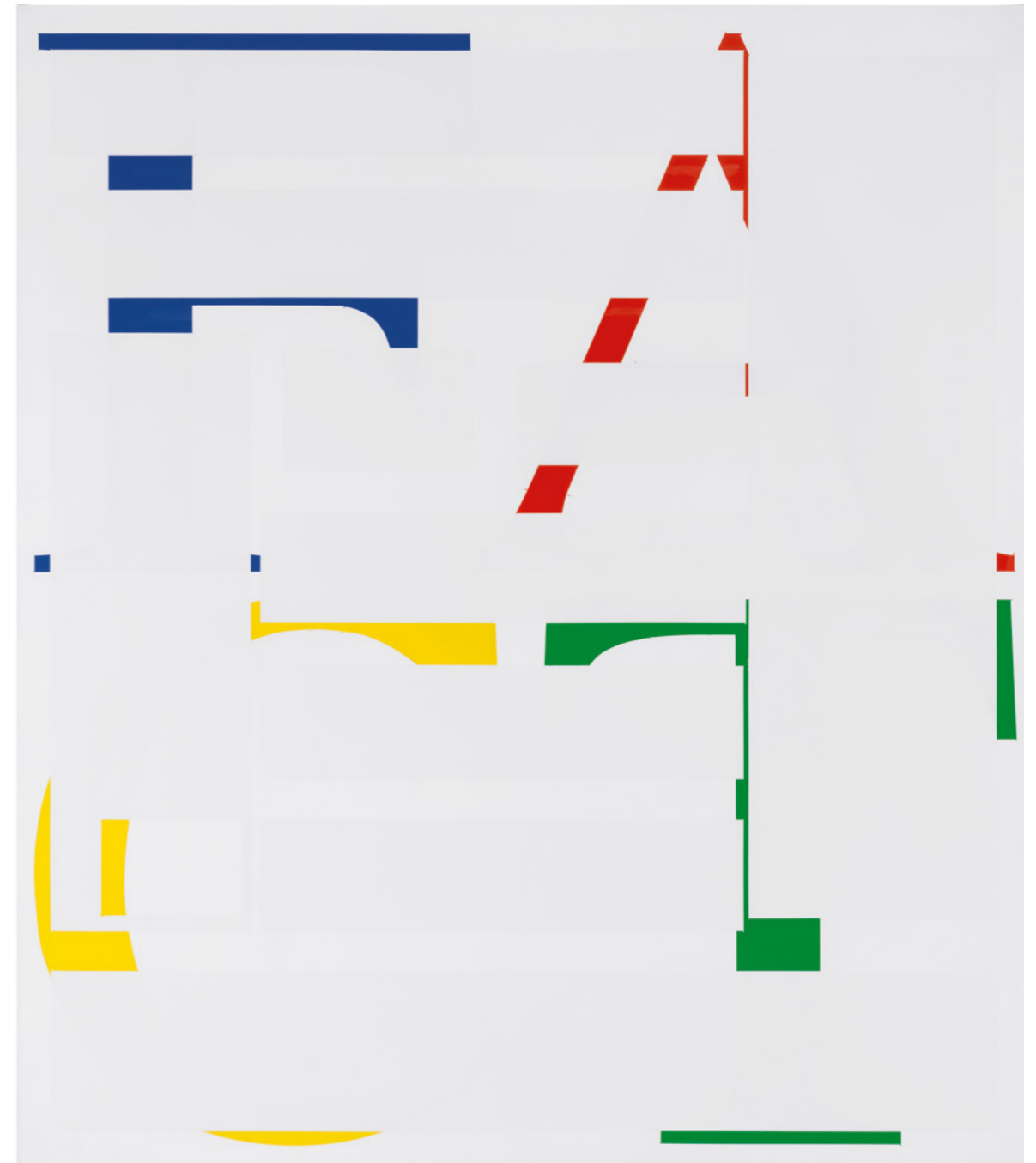
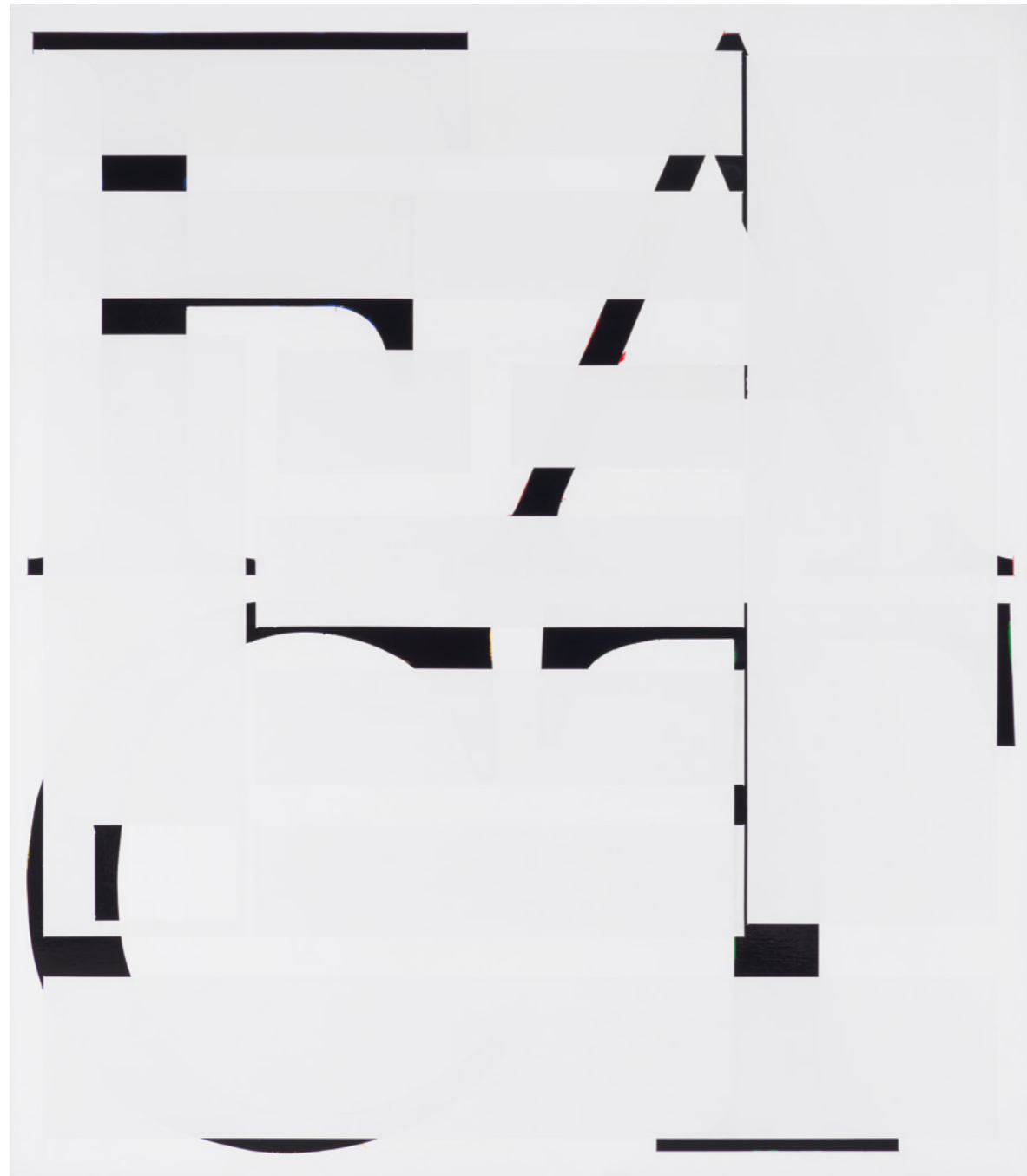
Jannet de Goede
curator Kröller-Müller Museum



Komposition I (T-mobile), 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
100 x 90 cm

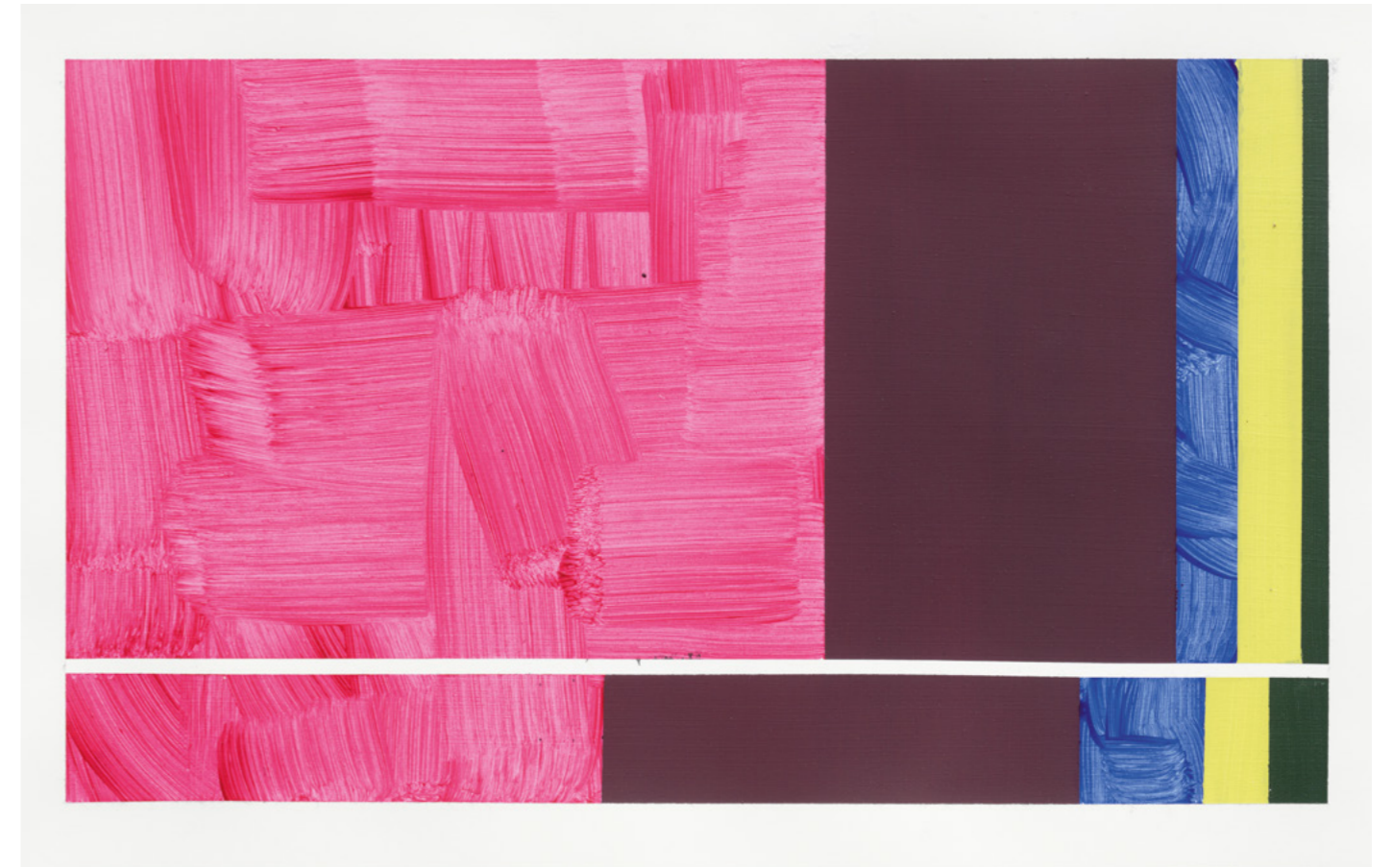
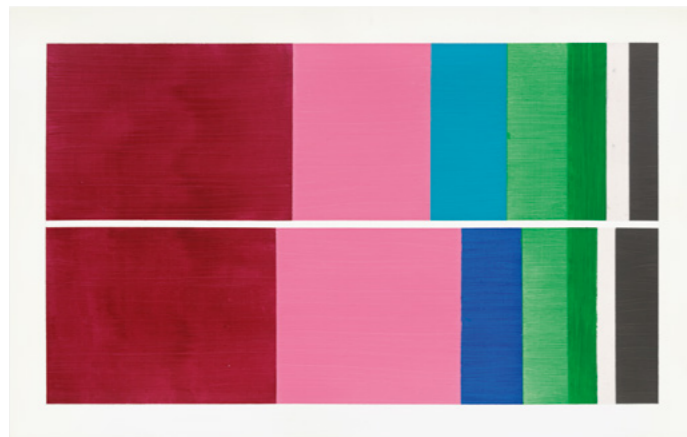
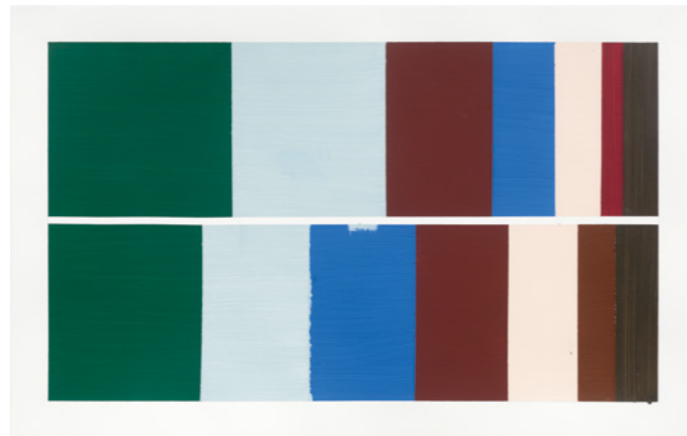
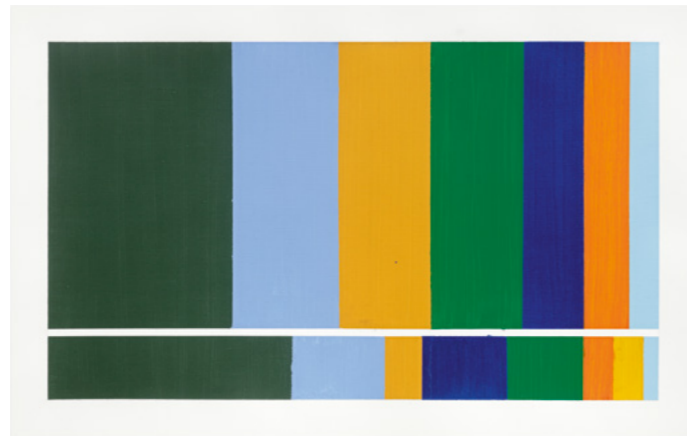
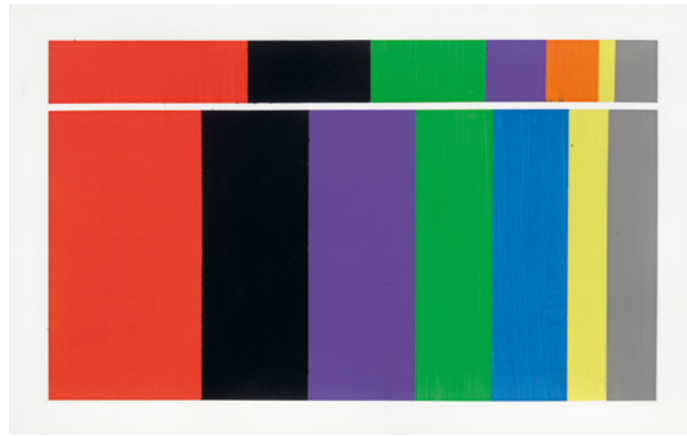


www., 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
200 x 290 cm



Fact I, 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
230 x 200 cm

Fact II (Google), 2017
Matt and high gloss lacquer on cotton
230 x 200 cm



Kurzstrecke 01-09, 2017
Acrylic on paper
each: 35,4 x 44,8 cm

Ronald de Bloeme

13 juni 1971 Leeuwarden, Friesland
1992-1996 Willem de Kooning Akademie,
Rotterdam
Lives and works in Berlin, since 2000

Collections (selection)

Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar
CBK, Rotterdam
Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam
Schunck, Heerlen
GASAG, Berlin
Berlinische Galerie, Museum für moderne
und zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin
Vattenfall, Berlin
Espacio 1414, San Juan
Galerie Neue Meister, Albertinum, Dresden
Safn Collection, Reykjavik
Sic!, Stavanger International Collection

More information and images:

www.borzo.com

Alternative Facts

Ronald de Bloeme

Paintings and works on paper

24 November – 23 December 2017

Opening Friday 24 November

5 pm – 9 pm | The artist will be present

Special opening hours during

Amsterdam Art Weekend

Friday 24 November | 10 am – 9 pm

Saturday 25 November | 12 am – 8 pm

Sunday 26 November | 12 am – 6 pm

BorzoGallery

Keizersgracht 516 1017 EJ Amsterdam NL

T +31 20 626 33 03


info@borzo.com www.borzo.com


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