

The Moving Museum Artist Profiles: Rafaël Rozendaal and Zach Blas

Nicole O'Rourke / October 06, 2014

Rafaël Rozendaal

Born in the Netherlands and now living in New York, Rafaël Rozendaal is the kind of artist that makes people feel. Love or hate, he evokes something in almost everyone that encounters his work. The problem that people have with his work is the same problem many had with modernism, with cubism, and with impressionism: they find it absurd, or too 'easy' to be art, too abstract, too intangible. Rafaël does what can be called internet art, and he is one of the most famous artists working in the medium today. He does what a kid could certainly not do, and he does what most adults couldn't do either. He does what even he alone cannot do—he has been working with the same computer programmer for years. But, the strength is in the concept as much as it is in the end product. He makes websites that are and forever (loosely defined) will be available to anyone who cares to type in one of his urls. In fact, with over 40 million unique visitors to his websites each year, one could say that Rafaël's work is some of the most seen contemporary art in the world. Which makes it, again, fall back into that hate/love category.

But, he doesn't only make websites; he also does installation and sound works, and even guerilla curation in the case of his popular series BYOB. BYOB stands for 'Bring Your Own Beamer,' or projector—the product being many people projecting their chosen image or moving image onto the walls or ceilings or floors of a chosen space. A project that ends up looking like a reflection and microcosm of the internet itself. For The Moving Museum he will do yet another iteration of this celebrated series, as well as something he will set up for their site that he vaguely and appropriately calls, "abstract browsing."

Go to www.newrafael.com to check out his websites and other projects.

Zach Blas

While Rafaël relishes in the vastness and approachability of the internet, and protests art world hegemonies by using it as his medium, Zach Blas is an artist and a researcher who is interested in things like 'dark nets' and the autonomous online networks. His work is an act of protest against the commercialism and the invasive nature of the internet. To call Zach only an artist would be to disengage with the importance of his work. His work is about surveillance and biometrics, about protest and dissidence, about the act of invisibility and disappearing, (and if that is possible), and the role the internet plays in that; all heavily researched and thought after. For his Facial Weaponization Series for which he produced collective masks, one example shown here, he creates a form to go over a person's head that makes them digitally unrecognizable, invisible—effectively creating both a beautiful work of art and an act of revolt at once.

At a time when we are constantly hearing about a new privacy invasion of a much-used app, Zach's work is particularly relevant; further, it's particularly relevant in Turkey, where as he put it, "the internet is really fusing with modes of governance. The government turned off Twitter during the Gezi protests, for example." His interests lay in alternatives to the internet, how they are created and why, and he searches for the space where there can be no governmental control over what is actually happening, where surveillance isn't possible, and where the idea of protest or revolt overrides the desire to create this 'other' internet, specifically by artists or activists. Zach is looking for what he calls "the queer bars" of the internet, the un-chartered spaces, and the self-sufficient internet run by a small network of individuals all concerned with the same objective and the same level of comfort or safety.

For The Moving Museum, Zach is looking into several different ideas, but was still in his research stage when we met to talk to him. What we might expect though, is something related to Turkey's rebellious youth, specifically those who take to the dark corners of the internet. To follow Zach's work, visit [*www.zachblas.info*](http://www.zachblas.info).