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PROCESS

BACKYARDS AND LIVING ROOMS

Analia Saban folds marble, scrapes photos, stretches a couch

FOR A PAIR of shows opening this month, Analia Saban has been thinking about paint's chemical materiality, domestic design, and decomposition. The first exhibition, "Backyard," filling both floors of New York's Tanya Bonakdar Gallery from February 19 through March 21, will include a new series: "Paintings," of a sort, made using photographs of paint cans taken in a New Orleans supply storage depot. Saban snaps the images, which she then has a New York lab print in large scale. As soon as the photographs are ready, she rushes them to her Hell's Kitchen studio, where she pours boiling water on the surface, then wields an X-Acto knife to scrape and excise bits of the image. Afterward, she uses these colorful scraps to form spare collages on canvas, shown along with the original (now defaced) photographs. Most of Saban's new works are similarly about the ways in which things can change form, like "construction materials that have been stored forever in your grandpa's backyard, which are disintegrating over time." A series of sculptures destined for New York, riffing on the idea of textiles hanging on a clothesline in that aforementioned backyard, find the artist hanging "rolled" and re-formed lengths of marble over wooden sawhorses as if they were towels. ("It's been interesting to think of marble as a flexible object," Saban says, noting that she has made similar works using concrete.) She's also

working on a photographic collage made of high-resolution scans of paint chips provided by the conservation department of the Getty Museum. These images enlarged from speck-size sources—culled from works by Leonardo da Vinci and Roy Lichtenstein, among others—got her thinking about the physicality of paint itself, and the ways in which its production has changed over time. "Pigment once came from glass or eggshells," Saban notes. "People were grinding anything they had and making colors. Sometimes now I open the fridge and think: Can I make green out of spinach? Or can I grind bathroom sinks and make a white pigment?"

At "Interiors," her Sprüth Magers show opening February 27 in London, Saban will look to the space's refined, quasi-domestic setting and present works that, she says, rest on the line between art and interior design. The centerpiece is a sculpture that is both a marvel of formal cohesiveness and a damn good joke, a hybrid of a painting and a couch that reflects on the varying uses of common materials while clearly lampooning collectors who are keen to find a masterpiece that matches their sofa. Saban commissioned an upholstery company to cover a

custom-made couch in linen, asking them to leave a long length of unstretched fabric at the top. When the furniture arrived at her studio, she pulled and stapled the excess linen over stretcher bars, generating a blank, unprimed "painting" that rests atop the couch. The end result: a sculpture that humorously and concisely pokes at the very definitions of art. "John Baldessari told me: 'I'm painting the wall, I'm painting the canvas, what's the difference?' Where is that line? Why is the painting so important, while the sofa has a different value?" She does wonder if a collector might end up using the sculpture as furniture. "And if you sit on it, and it gets a stain, what happens?" she wonders. "Do you call the dry cleaner, or a conservation company?" —SI



"Why is the painting so important, while the sofa has a different value?"

Analia Saban

ABOVE:
Draped Marble (Rasso Levanta), 2014.
Wood, marble mounted on steel,
33 x 36 x 19½ in.

LEFT:
Claim (from Chesterfield Sofa), 2014.
Linen canvas on stretcher bars and sofa
structure, 124 x 96 x 49 in.

BOTH IMAGES: ANALIA SABAN AND SPRÜTH MAGERS, BERLIN AND LONDON