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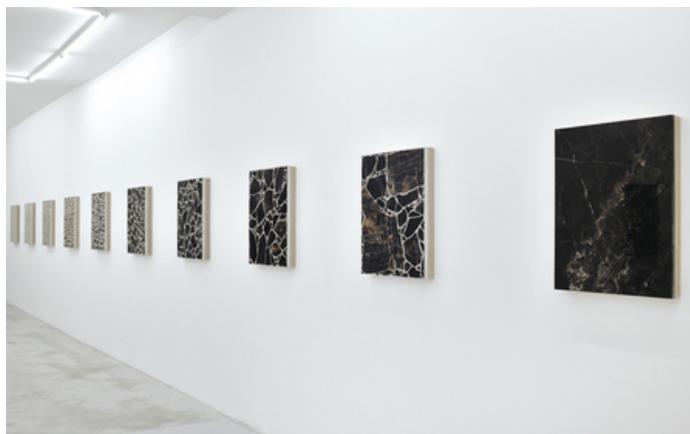
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## Analia Saban



Analia Saban, *Big Bang Series (in Ten Steps)*, 2014, ten slabs of concrete and marble on canvas, 26 × 20 × 2 1/2" each. Installation view.

Analia Saban's two recent suites of work, both from 2014, blend techniques and materials traditionally considered exclusive to either painting or sculpture. Belonging to neither practice entirely, they comment on both. *Big Bang Series (in Ten Steps)*, for example, which spanned the gallery's front wall, puts sculptural materials on top of a standard painting support. The work consists of ten twenty-by-twenty-six-inch canvases, each coated with a thick layer of cement and inlaid with fragments of black marble. Taken in sequence, these objects demonstrate several simultaneous progressions. In the first, flecks of black marble no bigger than fingernail clippings are scattered across a field of gray cement. Steadily increasing in size, the marble morsels cover more and more area, soon evoking miniature tectonic plates that appear to eventually fuse in the final canvas's seamless polished marble surface. Appreciated left to right, the abstract imagery gradually shifted: light to dark, dilute to concentrated, entropic to orderly. In addition to referencing the cosmological development referred to in the work's title, Saban evokes a (pointedly paint-free) time line of artistic styles, from Cézanne's matrix of constructive brushstrokes through Pollock's all-over compositions to Reinhardt's black paintings.

Also illustrating a powerful blast, *Outburst (Living Room)* depicts a single domestic setting across four laser-cut drawings and, facing these, their corresponding burned-out "negatives," the leftover forms excised from them. Made using graphite and an industrial laser cutter, these blackened filigrees offer different spatial and temporal perspectives of an unpopulated modernist living room that is in the process of exploding. An overview of the room shows a boxy sofa and armchair, floor-to-ceiling bookcases, scant decorative objects and artworks, and a small rectangular coffee table. A visible system of orthogonal lines calls attention to the drawing's one-point perspective; notably a technique used to create the illusion of depth on a flat surface, the lines are here actually carved out of paper by a laser, suggesting cartoon-style rays emanating from a detonation that has already caused books to fly off the shelves. Elsewhere, elements from the room reappear in more close-up vignettes. In one scene, a tumbling amphora-style vase and hardcover book hover in front of a section of shelving. In another, an upended floor lamp soars over a curious reproduction of the *Mona Lisa*.

The inverse black-and-white images created during the laser-cutting process have the ghostly presence of photograms and bear scorch marks that link Saban's fiery subject matter to her medium. Further evidence of the fragility shared by the depicted scene and the works themselves are the bits of blackened paper that have fallen from the cuttings and accumulated at the bottom of the frames. Narratively, these ashes suggest fallout from the implied heat of Saban's mysterious traumatic event. This debris, however, also recalls the artist's droll 2006–2007 series of "Collapsed Drawings": laser-cut copies of works by masters of line such as Sol LeWitt, whose too-delicate marks inevitably tumbled from the surface into a pile of pick-up sticks. Now, with her own drawings visibly crumbling, Saban is even more directly confronting the fragility of sculptural lines.

—Mara Hoberman

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