

Art Review:

Contains 30% GREATNESS; 16% FLUORESCENT PANTONE 812; 18% OF A DAMIEN HIRST PRINT; 1 MYSTERY ILLNESS

**ANALIA
SABAN**
BY
**HOLLY
MYERS**

Because Analia Saban has a quiet way of going about things, an understated sense of humour and a refined, often elegant visual style that rarely makes use of many colours at a time – most of her work in recent years has been white, black or grey – it can be easy to mistake the sly and often radical nature of what she does. Though she works in painting, sculpture, photography and printmaking, she is in many ways more of a dismantler than a practitioner.

Like her art-school mentor and onetime employer John Baldessari, whose former studio she currently occupies, she has a penetrating interest in the way art works and a penchant for taking it apart to find out. In her early work, as a student, she unravelled paintings, thread by thread, and reassembled them into sculptures. Later, she scraped the pigment from developing photographs onto canvases to make a stark series of minimalist paintings. Recently she's been making moulds of bath towels and shopping bags, casting them in white acrylic paint and draping them over raw canvas to make paintings by way of a sculptural process. It was the latter work that she took to Art Basel Miami Beach last December, in a solo show with her LA dealer, Thomas Solomon: a laborious crafted acrylic replica of a perfectly ordinary plastic shopping bag, among other things, which she casually installed on the floor against a wall with an unprimed canvas tucked inside. One can only hope that someone got the joke.

**MITCHELL
SQUIRE**
BY
**THEASTER
GATES**

Truth is in the water – thick, Mississippi water. For those who have not forgotten her, she offers a particular kind of reflection, and when that water mixes with the challenges of the black contemporary, a work emerges that not only allows for transformative experiences, it creates a transformational practice. I have watched Mitchell Squire's practice invoke a depth of clarity that both informs his sense of self and allows him escape from

all the formalisms that keep artists loaded with the burden of particular histories. Mitchell's desire to engage the black imaginary has been evident throughout his strident career as an architect, and now there's no need for hyphens. He has the ability to deliver questions around the American narrative and dig deeper into the things that have no name, need no representational admonitions and most certainly fight quietly, giving us a great opportunity to see work that is not overly sympathetic to 'the cause', but that implicates us all, as viewers, as believers and sceptics. In many ways, Mitchell's practice has informed the work that I make. While I was attending school in Iowa, Mitchell was the only black faculty member in the College of Design. This is not uncommon in design programmes, but this fact, combined with a tremendous intellectual openness and shared interests, were launching points for deep mentorship. Mitchell's keen sense of design, his thorough engagement with the history of architecture and willingness to generate a dialogue between architecture and other forms of political engagement – including race and space – made me question my own disciplinary engagement, which at the time was urban planning. Critical generosity deserves recompense. Mitchell is an important artistic collaborator and exemplar voice unheard. He should be amplified!

plus FUTURE GREATS

25 artists for tomorrow selected by the leading artists and curators of today

**LEUNG
CHI WO**
BY
**MARK
RAPPOLT**

Based in Hong Kong, Leung Chi Wo is an artist who manages to pull off the difficult trick of combining the particular with the universal. Almost all of his work starts with the image and the imagination of a specific urban or architectural site and then transforms it into a complex network of ideas, histories and competing interpretations. *City Cookie* (1999–2003) is a collaboration with the artist Sara Chi Hang Wong that has had various iterations in urban contexts around the world. The work begins with the artist capturing the negative shapes (of the sky) that emerge when city skylines are photographed from below. These abstract forms are then turned into cookies and consumed (sometimes by the artists and sometimes by the public). The shape of the cookie is specific to a place, even though what that shape describes (a piece of sky) is universal. What takes place in the act of consuming the cookie is a form of transubstantiation: we normally assume that what gives a city substance is its buildings; here, whether you view the finished product as air or cookie dough, it's something less substantial. A group of

recent works comprises lightboxes housing close-up photographs of individual bullet holes (presumed to have been created when Allied forces retook Hong Kong from the Japanese during the Second World War) left in the walls of Hong Kong's Legislative Council Building (one of the last remaining colonial structures in the city). Looked at from an angle, the lightboxes reveal words (and collectively sentences) etched onto their fronts that offer various (and sometimes bizarre) interpretations of what a bullet-riddled building might 'mean'. *I'm Glad We Have Been Bombed* (2010) reads one set of six, quoting the British Queen Consort speaking after the bombing of Buckingham Palace during the Second World War (Aston Webb, who designed the Legislative Council Building, also redesigned the east facade of the palace and the Victoria Memorial that sits in front of it). *We Still Have to Fight* (2010), reads another set of five, this time rendering a quotation from representatives of the International Domestic Workers Network protesting outside the Legislative Council Building after a failed attempt to amend the Minimum Wage Bill in 2010. While the images Leung reproduces are about as specific as you can get (each bullet hole is different, and the group are in various states of attempted repair), the reading of them is as various and multilayered you can get. While Leung's work may be rooted in Hong Kong, you don't have to be to read it.