

REGEN PROJECTS

Ollman, Leah, "The mundane confronts the epic," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 2006, p. E28, ill.

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TOBA KHEDOORI

UNTITLED: *Toba Khedoori pulls the viewer in with the comfort of a hearth, but the methodical horizontal strokes surrounding it defy intimacy.*

The mundane confronts the epic

For the last decade, **Toba Khedoori** has had a large presence on the international drawing and painting scene, not least because she works on a monumental scale. Her pieces typically measure 20 feet in width, sometimes more, the size amplified by the starkness of her imagery — spare, vacant architectural spaces and structures such as railings, doors, bridges, fences, walls. The physical presence of her work is built largely on the visceral power of absence.

Khedoori's new paintings at Regen Projects — her first solo show in L.A. since a memorable 1997 exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art — expand upon familiar territory for the artist, to mixed effect. In several of the six paintings on paper, Khedoori orchestrates tension between affront and invitation, barrier and window. In two of them, she sheathes the surface in thick strokes of waxed pigment, in one case black and in the other a dirty white. In

the center of each work, she has painted rows of small but deep rectangular openings, as if perforating the thick wall with a geometric screen. The permeability and luminosity as well as the illusionism of the windows contrast dramatically with the more process-oriented reiteration of the paper's surface.

Another work is, again, all black, but for a deftly rendered gleaming fire in a fireplace, painted to scale, at eye level. The comfort of the hearth pulls the eye and body close, while the methodical horizontal strokes covering the rest of the painted surface defy such intimacy.

An untitled painting of clouds introduces a note of romanticism. Another painting, a vast white surface freckled with black spots, looks like a celestial panorama with values reversed. Bits of grit, stray staples and hair embedded in the waxy surfaces assert the raw physicality of Khedoori's materials and methods. The confrontations she has staged between the mundane and epic are graphically striking, but throughout, affectation threatens to overwhelm effect.

Regen Projects, 633 N. Almont Drive, (310) 276-5424, through Oct. 14. Closed Sundays and Mondays.