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Gina Beavers in her studio.
Photo: Macy Rajacich

GINA BEAVERS ON TARGETING COMFORT IN CONSUMER CULTURE IN HER NEW SHOW

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Artist [Gina Beavers](#) is primarily known for her straightforward tridimensional painting objects, or relief paintings, that take their subjects from the endless flux of online commercial visuals that inspire our daily consumption of products and experiences: exaggerated lips, glossy makeup palettes and visually appealing junk foods artfully arranged are among the advertising icons you'll find in her work. But for [her new solo show](#), which opens at Marianne Boesky Gallery on September 5, Beavers has conceived a far more abstract and comforting body of new works. These new "Comfortcore Paintings" were inspired by the endless variety of sheets and towels available online and their seductive power to activate our senses and desires.

The landscape of online communication has rapidly evolved since the artist started painting social media-derived narrative subjects in the aughts, when users exercised a greater degree of control over what they saw on Instagram, Amazon and elsewhere. "The algorithm has changed a lot, which has changed how we interact with the internet and the kinds of images you can come across," Beavers told Observer during a studio visit. "I was appropriating food images or makeup tutorials for a long time, but now I don't receive that content. Everything is tailor-made to offer you what you are looking for. I was looking for new bed sheets and towels when I started to conceive the works in the show."

The exhibition, titled "Divine Consumer," relates to Beavers' way of intuitively reading, appropriating and remediating those digital images of commercial products which, from the flatness of their digital presentation, are brought back to their seductive tactility, sensuality and physicality that communicate the concept of comfort. She explores this in the series by focusing on the comforting range of patterns, textures and colors that function as psychological triggers to encourage us to indulge in a purchase, prompted to buy by the promise of softness.

Beavers translates the concept into simulacra with her signature tridimensional surrogates that, here, are already something more like painting objects: physically molding and reshaping those images, Beavers brings them back to life with uncanny closeups that stimulate our senses. The works in "Divine Consumer," in particular, engage even more with tactility. They look soft, and one naturally wants to touch and caress them. These new relief paintings also represent an evolution in Beavers' art-making process. The resulting pieces are less heavy with less paint—she uses foam, braiding it to emulate texture, molding the movements of the fabric and later painting them into an image. Despite being static physical objects, her works activate multisensorial reactions in the same way flat images on screens do as we passively scroll.



Gina Beavers, *Knit weighted blanket landscape*, 2024; Oil, acrylic, foam and wood stain on panel, 73 1/2 x 107 x 9 inches / 186.7 x 271.8 x 22.9 cm. Copyright of Gina Beavers. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery

Although she does not apply any ready-made technique, the hyperrealism of Beavers' works directly links her practice with Pop and New Realist artists who similarly commented on consumerism and popular cultures, like [Robert Rauschenberg](#) or [Claes Oldenburg](#). She readily acknowledges these direct references and embraces them as continuing a legacy of a practice that is deeply rooted in the American culture of mass production and mass communication. It is, for her, the only way to experience this current reality: "I don't know how to experience living without stuff," she said. "I don't know how to talk about life without everything we consume or the fact that we spend so much of our life in these consumption networks."

More than that, her hyperrealistic compositions serve as a commentary on an entire cultural attitude. "In America, you go to someone's house and you get the nice set of towels, which is how they're marketed—it's the capitalist kind of system that forces you to get more than one," she reflected as we previewed the works in the show.

In pursuing her visual and semiological research into the culture of consumerism, Beavers applies the technique of collage, which, as in its cubist and Dadaist origins, combines materials stemming from different contexts to coexist and draws new trajectories of meaning from their dialectic juxtapositions. For the artist, collage is both a way to confront the chaotic, random flow of images we are all overexposed to and to find new vocabularies with which to decode this flux and find some order. It's how she claims creative agency over a barrage of materials and messages. "It reflects my inability to pick up on a narrative from the internet and social media because it is chaotic," Beavers explained. "There's this idea of divine inspiration when you're collating, as you're putting things together. I'm creating something independently from this chaos."

Scrolling through Google and Amazon, Beavers selects and captures images of comforters, towels and all those textile accessories of a domestic world meant to communicate care, coziness and comfort. She then pulls them out of their online environment and combines them via Photoshop into collages that rework them, mostly through intuition, drawing connections with traditional painting genres, particularly still life and landscapes.



Gina Beavers, *Blue gingham still life (pie and casserole covers, crib sheets)*, 2024; Oil, acrylic, putty, paper pulp, foam and wood stain on panel 60 x 45 1/2 x 7 inches / 152.4 x 115.6 x 17.8 cm.
Copyright of Gina Beavers. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery

In translating images into a third dimension for the upcoming show, her signature object paintings appear in fewer works and there are more objects modeled with foam directly on wood panels. Some pieces slated to show at Marianne Boesky Gallery are materially more elaborate than others, depending on the fabric of the subject. For instance, Beavers meticulously braided and weaved foam as fabric to replicate the intricate texture of red wool blankets. “I’ve used linen on my paintings because I wanted them to have a conversation about the history of painting,” she mused, “but for this series, I just started to question why it mattered.”

Beavers has also been experimenting with scale. The larger works seem to envelop the viewer, while the minor works are studies in which it’s easy to get lost in the details of the interplay of light and shadow. There’s something obsessive yet extremely comforting in her precision. Indeed, it’s this precision—her extreme and almost obsessive hyperrealism—that makes Beavers’ work unique. It not only reflects on but also isolates and remediates fragments of the endless flood of digital images, bringing them back to the physical world and the human needs that created them.

The new series Beavers is presenting at the gallery represents a new stage of maturity in her work: she appears to be much more confident with her language and choice of subjects, as well as with her artistic research into the contemporary materialist imagery that has invaded our lives, totalizing our experience of the world and promising to heal all our problems with “retail therapy.” Amid the uncertainty of our time and rising political tensions, the artist reflected, ads for home goods can appear “safe,” as they contain no hidden agendas, no misleading propaganda. They ask us to buy, promising some version of fulfillment in return. After all, beyond our desire for transcendence or justice or hope, we all have physical desires that objects can help us satisfy.

Gina Beavers’s [“Divine Consumer”](#) opens at Marianne Boesky Gallery on September 5 and remains on view through October 5.