

**ANAT EBGI**

# Los Angeles Times

**Review: Folded, pleated, burned, torn: Artist Samantha Thomas' tactile webs of intrigue**

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Samantha Thomas' fabric wall works at the L.A. gallery Anat Ebgi are steeped in art history. Their folded, stitched and cut surfaces evoke all manner of abstraction, from the sliced canvases of Lucio Fontana to the gestural webs of Jackson Pollack and the evocative volumes of Eva Hesse.

There is nothing new here — reworking art historical traditions in thread and cloth is a well-trodden path — but Thomas takes on her project with an assured hand.

The handsome works proceed in basically two directions. Impressively sculpted pieces of folded canvas have been pleated and pressed into raised volumes that protrude from the surface. Here, geometric abstraction is rendered in crisp, origami-like folds. In another mode, Thomas stitches thick networks of black or red lines across the canvas, pulling out the threads a little to make the lines fuzzy and tactile. She manages to get a nice complexity and sense of motion from a medium that lacks the viscosity of paint.

Thomas refers to this equivalence directly in “Drip,” a length of rope whose looped end has been coated in bright red acrylic. It's both a paint drip and a blood-dipped noose.

I wish Thomas' work explored these bodily references a bit more freely. The best works are two pieces in which she stitched burnt and torn cloth over burlap and dark blue fabric. They evoke old, topographical maps, but also damaged or stained domestic fabrics, combining the macro and the micro in a way that feels beautifully unpredictable.