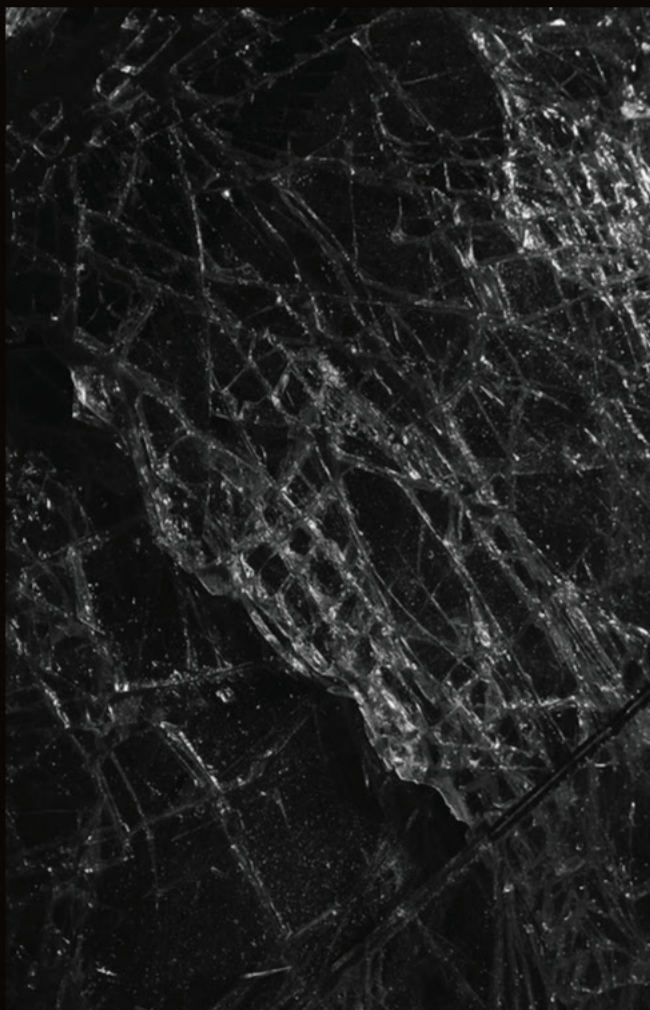


THE PRISMATIC QUALITIES OF SIVAN DAYAN

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When I first arrived at Sivan Dayan's studio at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, it was with trepidation that I proceeded to enter. Immediately noticeable were the shimmering, small pieces of broken glass on the floor – at once inviting and dangerous. Hailing from Israel, Dayan is a conceptual artist whose work with safety glass embodies fragility, transparency, and risk.

“I was attracted to the safety glass because it's glass that is built from two glasses that are connected to each other with glue. So I saw that as a very romantic relationship between the two glasses and the thing that holds them together when they're breaking, that keeps them from not breaking and just shattering together,” explains Dayan of her fascination with safety glass. She has spent the last two years working with this material and through her project I Want to be Transparent, Dayan blends vulnerability and a revelation of inner complexity through sculptures of broken glass. Now in her final year at SVU, Dayan has ventured further into her relationship with safety glass to a place of renewal. She is now taking the broken pieces and creating something entirely new, having produced a body of work teetering between the exposed and the daring. We met up at the Soho Grand Hotel in New York where we talked about heartbreak, the origins of her work with glass, and Boards of Canada.

J.L. SIRISUK: What sparked the creative part of your brain?

SIVAN DAYAN: I don't think something sparked it. I think it's something that I just grew up with, and through the years you understand that you have this thing and then you start to develop this natural awareness.

SIRISUK: Did you always want to be an artist?

DAYAN: I was always doing that but I wasn't really thinking, “Oh, I want to be an artist.” I was doing that all the time I went to

undergraduate school, to art school. I was creating day by day and not really thinking, “I have this great dream that I want to be an artist.” I was just doing what I know to do, but after graduation I was going through a really hard breakup. It just hit me when I was heartbroken that the only thing that makes me feel better is doing art and choosing this to express how I feel. So then I realized that this is what I want to do all the time, this is what I should do and it's just a place where you can escape to when everything doesn't make sense.



T-Shirt: H&M - Denim: Artist own - Belt: Artist own - Boots: Dr. Martens

SIRISUK: What was the first thing you created after the heartbreak?

DAYAN: The first thing I created was a space to work because I needed a studio. I have no studio so fortunately my family has an abandoned space that my grandfather used for his business. I fell in love with the place because it's very authentic and I cleaned it, did really small renovations like electricity and stuff like that. I made this space my working space.

SIRISUK: Is this when you started to work with glass?

DAYAN: Yeah, more into glass and it started by me using the overhead projector as a tool to work with something. I was putting transparent papers to project the image onto the transparent paper and then before I was putting the paper I noticed that the glass of the

projector, with the help of the lights showed scratches and dust - things that we can't see with the naked eye. I thought it's very beautiful how the light is helping to show something that we don't see and it doesn't exist. Then I started to develop this idea of transparency and what I can discover in that.

SIRISUK: When did you start breaking the glass? What brought you to this next phase in your relationship with glass?

DAYAN: I was finding broken glass on the streets so I was painting those cracks, but then when I arrived here to New York and my studio at SVA, I had to break it by myself to get the cracks that I'm talking about. I was starting to do it by myself.

SIRISUK: How did you feel the first time you smashed glass?

DAYAN: Very powerful. I was also thinking about this act of breaking something with a hammer, which where I come from is very 'machoism.' Israel is an interesting place. It's like I was trying to prove something that I'm as strong as a macho man. I can do it by myself, gestures like that. But then I stepped away from it because it wasn't interesting anymore to try to prove something like that for myself. I didn't need to prove it anymore.

SIRISUK: And when did your focus start to shift to transparency?

DAYAN: First of all I was attracted to the safety glass because it's a glass that is built from two glasses that are connected to each other with glue. So I saw that as a very romantic relationship between the two glasses and the thing that holds them together when they're breaking, that keeps them not breaking and just shattering together. I was looking at that and seeing as a metaphor a very strong and honest relationship where the glass compliments each other. I also started to project videos because of the use of the

light, so I thought projecting the light on the sculptures creates another layer and shows the cracks even better. I was projecting videos of myself doing actions that to me seem very exposed and transparent to myself. I was in the glass. It was a metaphor that I want to be as transparent as the glass because this is how I see a pure relationship. I want to be like that.

SIRISUK: Did you discover some new things about yourself while working with glass. Good things? Scary things?

DAYAN: Very scary.

SIRISUK: What are some things you discovered?

DAYAN: First of all I discovered that I'm really putting myself in the work which cannot be so good sometimes, but it's very exposed and I reached some moments where I felt like it's too much for me, like I don't want to expose so much pain which is hard. It's hard to be very exposed and transparent, a very fine line between how much you want to do it and how much until you start hurting yourself. I discovered that when I look at my work eventually, if I take a step back from the concept that I built on this glass and start to look at the materials as they are, it's very sharp and it's dangerous and I create these very dangerous spaces that I invite people to be a part of. The sculptures and the shapes I'm creating are very destructive.

SIRISUK: Have you found elements of calm in your work?

DAYAN: Not really because a lot of times people came to my studio and said, "You're probably so angry and where you come from you probably have so much anger and you put it into glass when you break it." It's really not where I come from. I was finding the calmness after I was breaking it, when I saw the beauty of the broken glass, when I saw it becoming stronger in a way because it holds itself now.

But looking at the sculptures and seeing the repetitive act of breaking it, while I see myself in it I started to think that I'm doing some kind of self-destruction to the work and probably to myself that I was not aware of. Since then I started to do the opposite.

SIRISUK: So the next step is taking broken pieces and putting them together?

DAYAN: I'm trying to – all the pieces that I broke already. I'm now doing this very meditative, repetitive gesture of trying to create, to recollect it, re-organize it, not to glue it all together like a new glass but to create something new from the broken pieces.



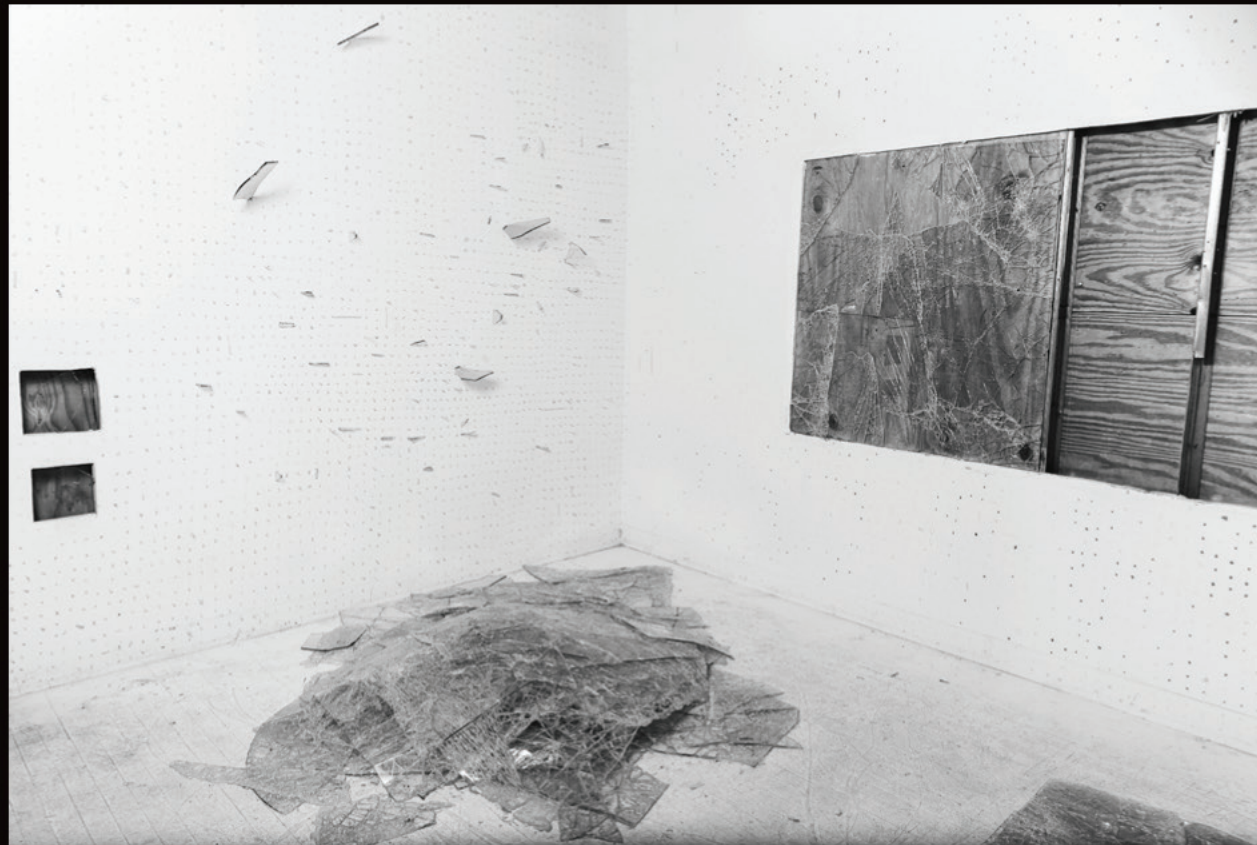
Mens Shirt: H&M

SIRISUK: Are you revealing another part of yourself?

DAYAN: At some point I felt like I don't want to be transparent so much anymore because I was calling the whole project I Want to be Transparent and I was pushing myself to the limit of what I can, so it changed my thought about it. I'm trying not to put my personal life inside the work and trying to go back a little bit to the material as it is and work with what I have. But then it all comes back to conceptualizing it because it's hard to escape it.

SIRISUK: You used to smash glass in your studio, so has the environment changed?

DAYAN: Yeah, no one wants to come in when I'm breaking with a hammer. It's quite scary



and it's not welcoming. It's a very aggressive act, but I feel the difference when I sit in front of the wall and I glue thousands of pieces, that it's changing me as well. People are feeling welcome to be in my studio and I start conversations that I usually don't because I can be not nice all the time [laughs]. I have my moods. So it's changing me as well. I feel like this work is also about time and meditation. It's a very meditative state of mind and I listen to a lot of new music.

SIRISUK: What have you been listening to?

DAYAN: Boards of Canada.

SIRISUK: I love them. They're wonderful.

DAYAN: It's so good. I feel like it's so complicated that it's making my mind work.

SIRISUK: Do you listen to music while smashing glass?

DAYAN: No, I was listening to the glass because the sound of the break is so mesmerizing. Lately, I noticed that a lot of

music is using the sound of shattering glass. It's in Nicolas Jaar's new album.

SIRISUK: With your body of work so far, what do you hope people take from it?

DAYAN: Being in art school we always have this conflict of doing political work especially in those days where it's relevant to talk about issues that are happening in the world, and I always think of myself like, "Should I be more relevant to what's happening?" In my work I create a space for people to really feel something, be able to escape to another place where you don't have to deal with all the shit that's happening around us and this is how it works for me. I go to see a show and if it's really political then of course it makes me think – when I go to see an amazing show let's say like the Pipilotti show now in the New Museum - it's so good that this gives me the answers of why I'm doing art because I want to have this space where everything connects together and gives you an answer to give you a sense of when it's so fucked up and this is the right thing.

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PHOTOGRAPHER



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Shirt: Thom Browne



Shirt: CP Company
Jacket: EFM Engineered For Motion





Shirt: SAGE DE CRÊT
Jacket: SAGE DE CRÊT
Pants: Sacai
Shoes: Thom Browne



Shirt: CP Company
Jacket: EFM Engineered For Motion

Shirt: Thom Browne
Jacket: SAGE DE CRÊT







Coat: Sacai
Pants: SAGE DE CRÊT

Shirt: Thom Browne
Jacket: SAGE DE CRÊT
Pants: Sacai
Shoes: Thom Browne



Jacket: CP Company
Shorts: SAGE DE CRÊT



Shirt: Thom Browne
Shirt (around waist): Thom Browne
Shorts: EFM Engineered For Motion
Shoes: Thom Browne



Shirt: Thom Browne
Jacket: CP Company



Shirt: Thom Browne
Jacket: CP Company

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