



Post-pregnancy contemplation in Najla El Zein's furniture series

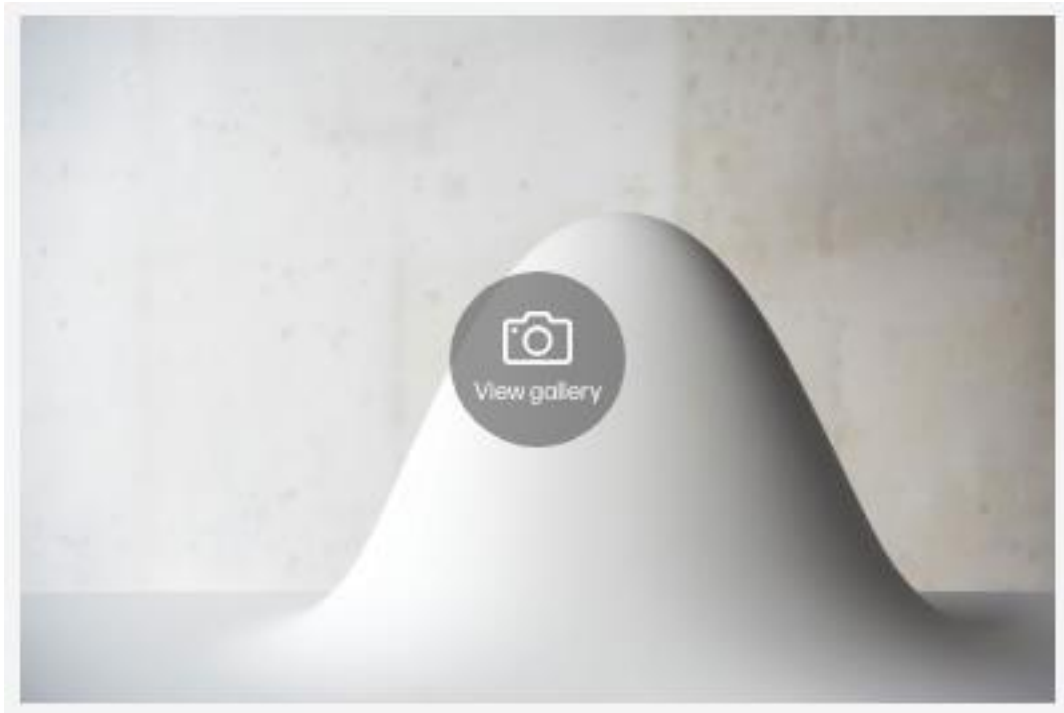
Lebanese designer Najla El Zein employed her emotional and physical transformation as inspiration for a new exhibition at Friedman Benda in New York.



The dialogue between form, practical use and the variance of space is paramount to Najla El Zein's latest body of work, on view in a solo exhibition titled "Transition" at Friedman Benda in New York City. This, her first solo show with the gallery, is the result of two years of post-pregnancy contemplation, and relates to her transformation as a mother, wife and lover. 'The pieces talk of my personal experiences with my body,' explains the designer from her studio in the Lebanese capital of Beirut. 'Both the internal and physical transformation, as well as its connection – or not – to others.'

Chemaly, Tracy Lynn. "Post-Pregnancy Contemplation in Najla El Zein's Furniture Series," March 4, 2019.

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El Zein is referring to the three collections forming “Transition”. ‘Distortion’ presents itself in the form of concrete benches alluding to a pregnant form at various stages of growth, while, in ‘Fragmented Pillar’, various cylindrical forms make up a not-quite-straight sculptural pillar that references fragility and the disruption of one’s stable foundation. El Zein explains how, because ‘Fragmented Pillar’ is constructed from sand and plaster, each element appears a little different to the other. “It has an uneven, cloudy finish,” she describes, likening it to “a bit of a confused material” that talks to the instability arising from changing circumstances.

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The 'Seduction' series of benches (one piece of which has been acquired by the Dallas Museum of Art for its permanent collection) is a story of human connection in its varying degrees. Its sculpted forms reference introversion and disconnection, as well as seduction and desire.

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