

# Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

“Alice Neel: The Early Years”; Diane Simpson’s enigmatic sculptures; and 17 artists explore the concept of space in “Convergent Evolutions.”

## Diane Simpson

Through Nov. 13. JTT, 191 Chrystie Street, Manhattan. 212-574-8152; jttnyc.com.



Diane Simpson’s “Two Point Enclosure” (2020) at JTT gallery. Diane Simpson, JTT, New York, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and Herald St, London; Charles Benton

At first sight, I thought Diane Simpson’s exhibition “Point of View” looked like the set of an absurdist play. To the left, a window frame on the wall; to the right, a transom without a door. In the middle, a piece of a banister and two hard-to-categorize shapes. The works looked polished yet handmade, whole yet distorted. They could have been bespoke architecture toys enlarged to human scale.

For decades, Simpson, who is based in Chicago and continues to make art at the age of 86, has been finding inspiration in constituent elements: parts of outfits or items of clothing, bits of buildings, fixtures of furniture. These are the starting points for objects that she imagines and draws using axonometric projection, which means they’re shown at an angle to the surface of the page, allowing for a better sense of their form. Simpson then turns the drawings into sculptures made from mostly hard, humble materials like fiberboard: from three dimensions to two and back to three, with abstractions and distortions incorporated along the way.

This process helps explain why Simpson’s works seem to exist in some liminal state between recognizability and foreignness. The free-standing ones especially, like “Two Point Enclosure” (2020), confound your perspective as you walk around them, trying to reconcile conflicting points of view. Their weirdness and whimsy are offset by the meticulousness of their construction, from neatly fitted joints to the careful pencil lines on “Grained Chimney” (2019). Simpson’s art suggests an unwavering commitment to what’s often considered fanciful — the details of the world that many of us need prompting to see.

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