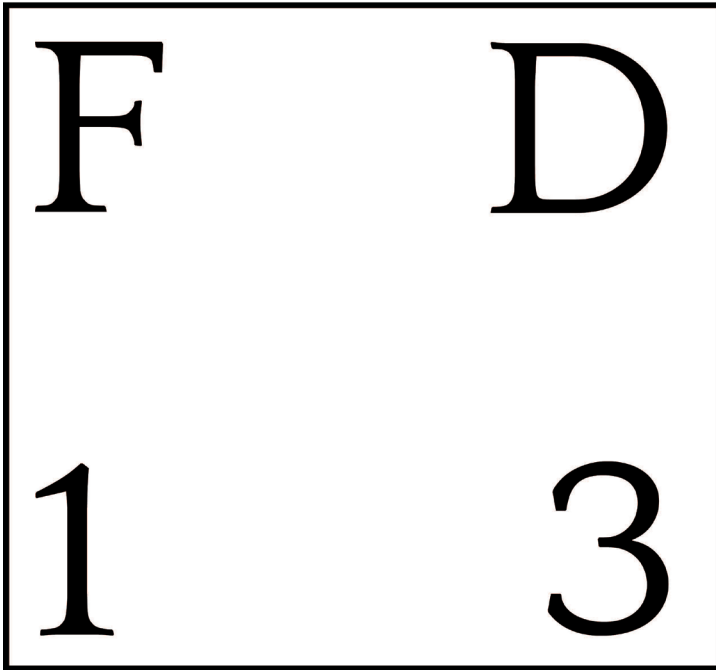


# ARCHITECTURE IN MOTION

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2019 @ 2 PM



THE FORMER FULLER MANUFACTURING BUILDING

DIANE SIMPSON

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
CHOREOGRAPHER  
CHRIS SCHLICHTING

PERFORMED BY  
MARGARET OGAS AND  
TORI CASAGRANDA

3300 5TH ST NE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
55418, USA

The structure, texture, and materials of clothing have continuously informed Diane Simpson's sculptural practice over five decades. In her works, Simpson combines clothing designs with forms that reference architecture, exploring the sociological roles and styles of the clothes we wear and the buildings that surround us.

FD13 residency for the arts presents *Architecture in Motion*, a new performance by Chicago-based sculptor Diane Simpson developed in collaboration with Minneapolis-based choreographer Chris Schlichting. Working over an extended research period of nine months, Simpson has designed her first costumes to be animated by two dancers in her very first performance work.

Her costumes take inspiration from the former Women's City Club of St Paul, designed by architect Magnus Jemne in 1931 in the Art Deco style. This building has an impressive social and performative history, growing out of a post-World War I movement which emphasized women's independence and new social

roles as workers, volunteers, and persons more fully involved in society. The Women's City Club were avid supporters of the arts bringing opera and theater companies to the Twin Cities, and notably Gertrude Stein who spoke there in 1934.

Taking inspiration from the building's history, Simpson's costumes reference key elegant details of the building – the slick, silvery sheen of the front door; the mobius curve of a brass banister; the geometric grid of a lighting fixture in the former Woman's Lecture Hall – translating these into sculptural costumes which simultaneously amplify and restrict the body.

In advance of the performance, Simpson and Schlichting have worked intimately together to set the costumes in motion exploring what possibilities their pleasurable, yet rigid, architectural forms make possible. In their respective practices, both artists share a propensity for researching and combining disparate sources into new forms, an economy of decision making, and an affinity for structural investigation, making them ideal partners.

Tori Casagrande: Performer  
Caitlin Dippo: Performer  
Mirabai Miller: Performer  
Margaret Ogas: Performer

Nicky Dolan: Designer  
Claire Loes: Production Assistant  
Justin Sengly: Photographer

On **July 25, 2019**, Diane Simpson and FD13 residency for the arts will present the second, performative iteration of *Architecture in Motion* at the **Graham Foundation** in Chicago (booking link available at <http://www.grahamfoundation.org>). This event will also include an artist talk by Simpson which traces the overall development of the project from her first research visit to Minneapolis and Saint Paul to today's performance at the Fuller Manufacturing Building. Documentation of this event and talk will be made available on the FD13 residency for the arts website and social media.



Diane Simpson, *Window Dressing (Window 4 with Apron VI)*, 2003 / 2007. Gatorboard, enamel, wood, crayon, ink, and wallpaper. Installation view MCA, Chicago, 2016. Photo: Tom Van Eynde. Courtesy Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago.

## DIANE SIMPSON

Diane Simpson is a Chicago-based artist who creates sculpture and preparatory drawings that evolve from a diverse range of sources, including clothing, utilitarian objects, and architecture. She received an MFA in 1978 and a BFA in 1971 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work is currently on view in the 2019 Whitney Biennial and can be seen at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle in September 2019. In 2010, a 30-year retrospective exhibition of her sculpture and drawings was held at the Chicago Cultural Center. Recent one and two-person exhibitions were held at Herald St, London, UK; JTT, New York; Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Perez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL; and the Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, FR. Diane Simpson is represented by Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago; JTT, New York; and Herald St, London, UK.

Chris Schlichting, research still for *Period*, 2017. Performed by Tristan Koepke and Maggie Zepp (pictured) as well as Laura Selle Virtucio at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography.



## CHRIS SCHLICHTING

Chris Schlichting is a Minnesota-based choreographer and performer who believes in a flexible definition of dance. His choreography expresses itself as a tensile inclusion of dichotomies. Schlichting was named Best Choreographer in 2013 by City Pages for his work *Matching Drapes*, which also received two Sage Awards, including one for "Best Performance" and one for "Best Design". He is a 2015 McKnight Fellow; a multi-year Jerome Foundation recipient; and has also received an NPN Creation Fund; an NDP Touring Grant; the inaugural Solange McCarthur Award for New Choreography; and support from the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography. Commissions have included the Walker Art Center, MN; Danspace Project, NYC; and the American Dance Institute, MD, among others. Schlichting has created works for Zenon Dance Company, James Sewell Ballet, Carleton College and the University of Minnesota. Schlichting's work has toured to Austin, TX; Cedar Rapids, IA; Chicago; San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; New York, and Washington D.C. Schlichting advises undergraduates studying architecture; landscape design and planning; and Product Design, at the University of Minnesota. He has taught courses in the School of Architecture on the intersection of choreography and architecture.

# DIANE SIMPSON: PERFORMANCE, ORNAMENT, AND CRIME

ROSS ELFLINE

Recently I executed a search through the Avery Index for Architectural Periodicals for the term “performance” in an attempt to gauge how the field of architectural history conceives of and maps this term borrowed from an adjacent, artistic discipline. Beyond the obvious hits that quickly emerged—reviews of new spaces designed for music, dance, theater, and other time-based, live art forms—it was immediately obvious that architectural criticism evokes the term “performance” most often to describe the utility and durability of particular materials, as in “high-performance” steel, glass, or concrete. In short, “performance” has become for architectural discourse another synonym for vaunted modernist notions of efficiency, consistency, and, it must be said, power. “Performance” is something toward which a building should strive in its effort to satisfy its primary function, and if the materials employed exhibit such “high performance,” they are resourceful, cost-effective, and, most importantly, long-lasting.

I would like, however, to submit the term “architectural performance” to a sort of stress test. I want to see what might happen to this phrase that speaks to such notions of strength and permanency if one applies some of its other connotations from the live, time-based arts of theater, dance and related fields. Here, one witnesses a different kind of “performance” entirely, one of short, limited duration. “Performance” is not built to last, and for this reason “you had to be there” to see it, as what remains after the fact are mere remnants, evidence of some event, or, if we are lucky, some documentary images of what took place. Yet the object of inquiry itself is gone. Poof. The materials in this variety of “performance” are shot through with a kind of pathetic instability or vulnerability. Those “Roman” columns on stage? Papier-mâché. The “villa” to which they are attached? Just a flimsy scrim. Thus, the “performance” of these temporary or provisional architectural forms would appear to fail our modernist test of economy and durability. More pointedly, though, this version of “performance,” in general, would seem to be antithetical to an architectural discourse that privileges permanence and, ultimately, authority.

It is this sense of an architecture rendered provisional, playful and, yes, even a little pathetic, that I might suggest one consider the work of the Chicago-based artist Diane Simpson, whose practice over the last several decades has played with architectural form but has only



Diane Simpson, *Robe*, 1986.  
Oil stain, colored pencil on  
MDF and wood furniture  
inserts.





Women's City Club building and vestibule door designed by Magnus Jemne in 1931.



recently with her FD13 residency for the arts commission, *Architecture in Motion*, incorporated the ephemeral nature of live performance in a direct fashion. Often, what one sees in Simpson's sculptures is a fragment of an architectural detail that has been stripped down, abstracted, and then carefully rendered in an axonometric grid drawing, that stock-in-trade of the architectural profession. In such drawings, a three-dimensional space can be effectively viewed from a bird's eye perspective, though without any diminishment into deep space, thus rendering every detail precisely. Finally, the uncanniness of the flattened axonometric drawing is then extruded into three-dimensional space, though what one sees is an object canted at a 45-degree angle, attempting to show us both front and side elevations at once but without the recession into space. In brief, what Simpson provides is a drawing of an impossibly precise object now present in our space, though, perhaps, just barely.

This strange, optical sensation has bodily ramifications. We are propelled around the work in an attempt to make sense of this bewildering and mind-twisting form. It is here that we see the first instance in which "performance" enters Simpson's work. As Michael Fried noted in his account of so-called "literalist" or minimalist art of the mid-1960's, the viewer traversing such three-dimensional forms participates in what he termed a "theatrical" aesthetic situation in which one's understanding of form is conditional upon one's bodily relationship to the object. And so it is with Simpson's work where the firm gestalt sensation of the solid, architectonic form melts away into tracery in the air as we view it from another angle and realize the form is only negligibly three-dimensional. However, and this is the crucial point, it is our body—in time and space—that makes that realization possible at all: our performance, which is necessarily temporary and fugitive, prompts the aesthetic experience.

With other works, though, Simpson starts not with architectural details but with fragments from historical fashion: a renaissance cape; a turn-of-the-century, seal-fur collar; a 1920s apron; an Amish bonnet. With these, the body returns to the aesthetic situation once more but now as the sculptural object to be delectated upon rather than viewing subject. Again, Fried's account of Minimalism is instructive, as one of the hallmarks of such works is their latent anthropomorphism and the way in which the viewer invariably feels a sort of affinity for the object because of the scalar relationship between the object witnessed and one's own body. With Simpson's work, however, this is made uncanny and uncomfortable; one's initial view may lead the viewer to feel a brief instance of intimacy, as if one might wish to don the sculpture, but this impulse quickly fades as the object's stiff materials and flattened-out shallowness make the prospect of wearing it discomfiting.

Ornamental details of buildings, everyday design objects, and clothing: these constitute Simpson's source material, though in her trans-



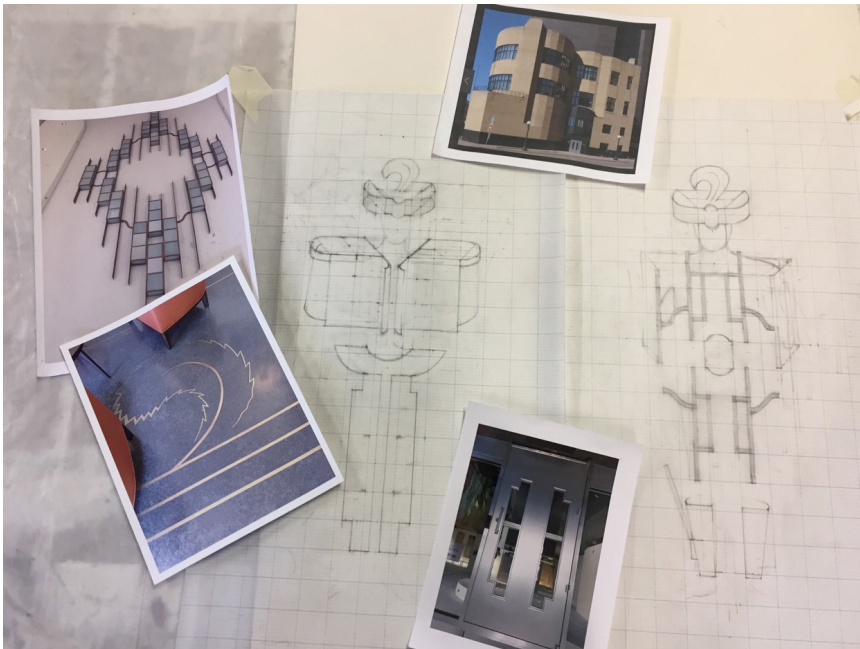
Clockwise from top: Inlaid floor design by Elsa Jemne, wife and partner of Woman's City Club architect Magnus Jemne; Continuous, mobius curve stair railing; Lighting Fixture in the Woman's City Club lecture hall.

lation of these objects from object to image and back to object again, they are rendered gratifyingly strange, unhomey, and difficult. The Modern Movement in architecture also saw ornament as a problem. What remains the most lucid and lively account of Modernism's anxiety around extraneous embellishment is Austrian architect Adolf Loos's 1908 essay "Ornament and Crime." In this text, he laments the "tortured, strained, and morbid quality of modern ornaments," which for Loos represents a regression into an earlier stage of development. Early in the essay he describes, "The first work of art, the first artistic act which the first artist, in order to rid himself of his surplus energy, smeared on a wall." Ornament, then, is borne of excess erotic energy that must find an outlet: ornamentation is pathological. It is also uneconomical and ultimately unsanitary as it represents "wasted labor power and hence wasted health." Such expenditure is unnecessary for an advanced society that has discovered other, more valuable outlets for its creative energies, and any attempt to devote resources to ornamenting an object both overly taxes the worker and is a drag on the national economy as well. In summary, for Loos and for many of his contemporaries as well, ornament leads to poor social and economic performance. It is the very essence of inefficiency and ultimately detracts from the final function of the object, building, or body.

For Simpson's newly commissioned work, *Architecture in Motion*, developed in collaboration with Minneapolis-based choreographer Chris Schlichting, what audiences are set to witness is a celebration of the modernist bugaboos of excessive ornament and debased performance. For a pair of sculptural costumes, Simpson has once again abstracted, drawn, and extruded a set of ornamental details—this time from the Magnus Jemne-designed Saint Paul Women's City Club building. Dating from 1931, the former Women's City Club features a treasure trove of Art Deco elements, and while the movement is often termed "Streamline Moderne," the gilding, curlicues, and patterned stalactites would certainly provoke Loos's ire in their blatant superfluity. Even worse, by Loos's standards, Simpson's sculptures adhere to the bodies of the dancers as so much gaudy wastefulness. What was once subtle and even restrained in the Women's City Club is exaggerated to the point of impeding the body's effective movement. And so, as clothing or as building material, it could be said that Simpson's works perform badly.

Indeed, in Loos's famous essay, his anxiety around ornamentation is often fixated upon the body. In an early, outrageous passage, he claims, "The modern man who tattoos himself is either a criminal or a degenerate. There are prisons in which eighty percent of the inmates show tattoos. The tattooed who are not in prison are latent criminals or degenerate aristocrats. If someone who is tattooed dies at liberty, it means he has died a few years before committing a murder." A sort of ethics of the ornament, then, plays out upon the body that is both corrupted and corrupting. With Simpson's work for FD13, the body becomes

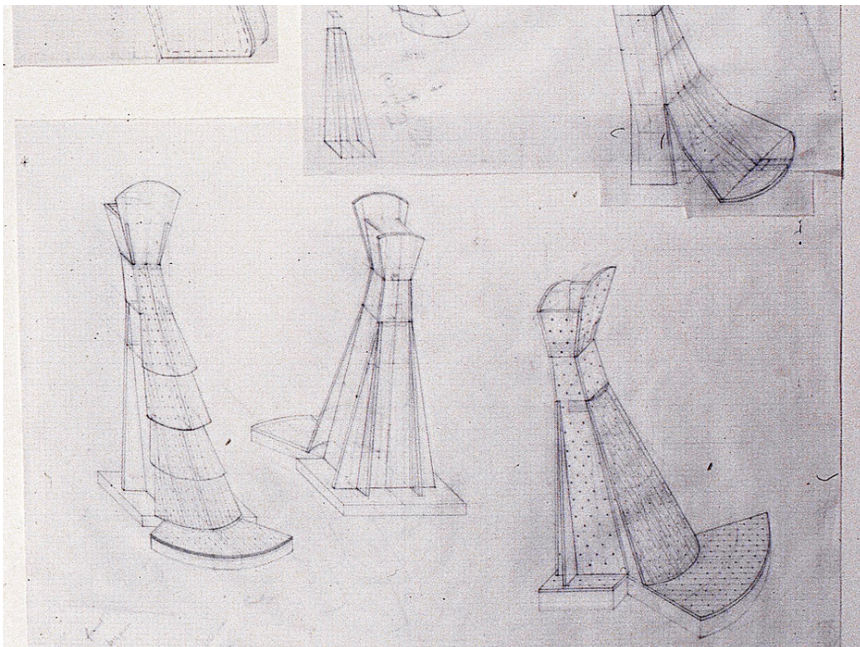




all ornament, as if that planar illustration coextensive with the skin is both projected into space (as with her other works) but now animated. And as with the Loos's architectural decoration, Simpson's ornament becomes a hindrance to efficient performance. The bodies of the dancers must conform their movements to the exaggerated, bulky forms that limit their range of motion. Their hands must be tucked back by their asses (which partially hang out) to cup the rear of the awkward costume for support.

But with her hyperbolic ornament, does Simpson not enact ornament's revenge on modernism? For while the architectural detail does not serve functional efficiency, such a decorative flourish does claim a place for the excessive, the superfluous, the erotic, and the uncanny. And, as Loos indicates in his fretfulness around the tattooed criminal, bodily ornament contains within it the possibility to disrupt established loci of power and authority. Ultimately, one must then wonder at the critical potential of ornamental energies that spill out from the corners of buildings—or the collars of coats, or the skins of our bodies—and into our space. In such a return of the repressed, might the play of ornament challenge high-performance building and expose the cracks in modernism's pristine, polished edifice?

Ross Elfline is an art historian whose research focuses on radical architecture practices in Europe, America, and Japan that exist at the intersection of design and art. He teaches at Carleton College.



Top: Diane Simpson, source images from the former Saint Paul Women's City Club, designed by Magnus Jemne in 1931, with *Architecture in Motion* costume drawings, 2019. Pencil on graph paper. Courtesy the artist and FD13 residency for the arts.  
Bottom: Diane Simpson, composite drawing for *Robe*, 1986. Pencil on graph paper

# ABOUT FD13 RESIDENCY FOR THE ARTS

Founded in 2014, FD13 residency for the arts supports the commissioning of new live work by inviting artists to take up residence in the Twin Cities, prototype an idea and present it live.

Launched out of a 19th-century converted St. Paul firehouse, or Fire Department 13, the program quickly became nomadic. FD13 presents projects in a variety of public spaces, at local institutions and artist-run-spaces across Minneapolis and St Paul. While our residents come from across the globe, we operate with a strong sense of local purpose aiming for each project to grow organically out of the unique contexts and communities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

## THE FD13 TEAM

Sara Cluggish, Director of FD13 residency for the arts  
Bruno Freeman, Chair of the Board and Artist Liaison  
Jeremiah Collatz, Treasurer of the Board  
Sarah Petersen, Board Member and Artist  
Sandra Teitge, Board Member and Founder of FD13

## PROJECT SUPPORTERS

Diane Simpson's residency and performance were made possible through support from Nor Hall and Roger Hale, as well as Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago. Special thanks to the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts in Chicago for their generous support, via the Foundation's Research and Development funding strand.

## THANK YOU TO

The FD13 Board for their continuous enthusiasm, encouragement and stewardship.  
First-First for generously opening the Former Fuller Manufacturing Building for this project.  
Ever-Green Energy for allowing us repeated access to the Magnus Jemne Building and Former Woman's City Club in St. Paul.  
Elizabeth Redleaf for kindly hosting Diane and Ken Simpson while in town.  
David Bartley, Pavel Pyš and Evan Reiter and the Walker Art Center for facilitating research of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company Costume Collection.  
Many thanks to Hair + Nails Gallery in South Minneapolis for the loan of their chairs.

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