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ART STARS

5 Art Stars You Need to Know

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PORTRAITS BY JOE HUME

#5

VIRGINIA
OVERTON

At this point, Virginia Overton can't help but succeed. After a pair of hectic years—since 2010, her work has appeared in no less than 29 exhibitions—she's now preparing for solo shows at The Kitchen, a well regarded nonprofit, and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, one of the most successful galleries in the city.

The attention is deserved. Overton's sculptures and installations are exceptionally well executed, formally beautiful, and easy to like. Most often, they take the form of a minimal object placed under duress, or put somehow in structural doubt. In one work shown at Mitchell-Innes & Nash last year, a giant triangle, made of three thick poplar boards, outlined a space between two of the gallery's columns; it commanded attention, as bare wood and simple constructions and Fred Sandbackian space do, but was also tenuous: the boards weren't attached to each other by anything other than gravity and friction. Overton had created a sense of the monumental out of nothing more than empty

space and a few lines, and then thrown it away again, as if the whole affair were nothing more than a happy accident; in truth, it was anything but.

Overton has a preternatural ability to hit that note again and again. Some works seem so perfectly geared to the space around them that they must be site-specific, but then show up in a different exhibition, in a different space, and work just as well. Others seem so carefully calculated that they must be the result of some long engagement with the material, but turn out to be the only work in that medium Overton has ever produced. How she does it, we don't know, but we're eager to see more.

