

David W Simpson

Seattle, Washington

harrisharveygallery.com/david-simpson

davidwsimpson.com

davidwsimpson@me.com

[davidwsimpsonart](#) (Instagram)

Artist Statement

I create artifacts marked by the passage of time, transforming them into contemporary statements. Working within a specific environment at a given time, I create structures, prints, other works on paper, altered photographs, and site-specific installations. Over the years the one constant is my use of wood.

Growing up I had an endless obsession with the material, often filling our garage with numerous found pieces, disregarding my mother's plea to stop. I also started making abstracted toothpick sculptures when I was 12, and created a few that were 3 to 4 feet tall by age 14.

Now years later living in Seattle near Puget Sound, I walk along the beach in search of various forms of wood, degraded and altered by saltwater, algae, changing tides and, of course, time. Upon moving here, my first body of work was a series of large relief prints made from various pieces of ocean-tumbled plywood that had washed ashore. Next, I built large 3-D structures using sticks collected along the beach, referencing those I created as a kid. I then covered a few of these with papier-mâché, informed by another childhood memory of art-making. After, I scaled down, making early versions of the *Cover* and *Covering* work for this exhibition.

In 2019 I lived for a year in Taiwan continuing this body of work. The onset of Covid-19 and a scooter accident gave me time to reflect on why I was making these structures. When I was able to work again, wrapping the paper strips over sticks felt like wrapping broken bones. The pieces became shields, or awkward, abstracted face masks. I now see the work as metaphorical armor, to cover and protect.

These images from a year in Taiwan, are several of the many steps involved in the work created both there and here.





Bio

Born in Davenport, Iowa, I was raised by a mother who encouraged art-making at an early age. With divorced parents, my father lived in nearby Chicago, Illinois, where I visited often throughout my childhood. The influence of the immense structures I saw there combined with my love for art and math, lead me to study architecture at Iowa State University. After a few years I changed to Graphic Design, receiving a BA in that curriculum, though also immersing myself with multiple drawing, painting and photography courses. These areas have all informed the work I create as a visual artist.

In Seattle, I am represented by Harris Harvey Gallery, and have been a visiting artist at the University of Washington, Western Washington University and University of Puget Sound. I have taught multiple print mediums at Seattle's Pratt Fine Arts Center and at other workshops in the Northwest. I have work in various public collections including the University of Washington Medical Center and Neiman Marcus, as well as in private collections in the Northwest, across the US, and in multiple other countries.

I have participated in a number of artist residencies, among them, Jentel, in Banner, Wyoming. I returned in 2019 for the solo exhibition *Reinterpreting the West* at Sheridan College's Whitney Center for the Arts. This and *The West, A Fragment*, exhibited 18 months earlier at Harris Harvey Gallery, both examined "the West" from an abstracted, archeological approach. Collecting sagebrush, cow dung, bones, branches and grasses, I created a series of photograms, molded paper works, and 3-D structures made of sticks and papier-mâché.

I received a 4 Culture Individual Artist Award Grant for my site specific, ephemeral 2014-2016 *Beach House*. Inspired by Native dwellings combined with modern frame-construction, I built a simple, square, stud construction house on the south end of Lake Union. I left window openings on three sides, a door opening on the fourth, and left the top open. To not allow entry, I placed another structure tightly inside. This was made of sticks collected along Puget Sound. A cyanotype solution was then applied to the interior walls of the house. Exposed to sunlight, the shadows from the stick structure cast its negative upon each wall, resulting in old world-like blueprints etched on the 4 walls. I had envisioned these wall impressions as a beach x-ray of the source material's origins. *Beach House*, given a beautiful interior offset by an unfinished exterior, was created to remind us of this region's history and natural beauty being quickly erased by massive development.

