

Artforum Review of Nick Hornby: Atom vs. Super Subject

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**Alex Goethe Gallery
7 Dover Street
London
United Kingdom**

The young British artist Nick Hornby produces alchemical structures: lanky, white, marble-dusted sculptures. He blends familiar art-historical echoes from Rodin, Calder, Newman, Hepworth, and Moore. “Atom vs. Super Subject,” the title of his latest exhibition, reveals a battle wherein individual fragments seem to both succumb to monumentality and resist absorption into the whole.

Plundering the canon, Hornby’s formal amalgamations reflect on modernism. He deploys the metaphor of food, as if following a recipe passed down through generations, but approaches it like modern fusion, altering expectations. Beginning with an assemblage of familiar forms, he arrives at a new, seemingly futuristic articulation.

To create the works seen here, Hornby used a fabrication method typically used to construct luxury yachts: a precision cutting technique that achieves curves and distinctive, bold forms. Crisp yet organic, and vibrating at the edges, these tactile surfaces shimmer. The sculptures are in a state of flux: Circumnavigate one and different angles reveal emergent references. The spectator is drawn into a web of sensual and alluring visual play, resulting in visceral pleasure or giddiness in this phenomenological experience. Here, Hornby affirms that it is the viewer who completes the work by approaching and encircling it, perhaps while recalling a memory. It is thus a game of art history but also an unraveling of our inner balance. Hornby’s confluence of perspectives defines him, as do his education and the art history he has learned. The show is to be unfolded like a sexy centerfold, but the revelation of cognitive dissonance is disquieting.

— Kathleen Madden