



THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

“Stuff”



Jun. 28-Aug. 19

Pace
540 W 25th St Chelsea

Art work © Peter Hujar / Courtesy the artist / ARS / Pace Gallery

A portrait of Fran Lebowitz (pictured), taken by Peter Hujar, in 1974, in her childhood bedroom, where it looks as if she just woke up, opens the disarmingly wonderful **“Stuff,”** a description-defying exhibition at the Pace gallery through Aug. 19. The sculptor Arlene Shechet, who recently proved her curatorial chops in a similarly free-associative show at the Drawing Center, has corralled more than five dozen pieces by almost as many artists, spanning nine decades. (The earliest work on view is a Man Ray photo, from 1934-35, of a weird mathematical model; the newest is a starkly elegant sculpture, made this year by Arthur Jafa.) The tone is intimate, and so is the scale of most of what’s here; one towering exception is a dirty joke in lamp form, by the irrepressible Lynda Benglis. Claes Oldenburg, who died in July and is best known for gargantuan public monuments to the everyday, is represented by “Ghost Fan,” a two-foot-wide soft sculpture from 1967. “Stuff” is not for those craving N.F.T.-adjacent tech innovation (for that, go downstairs, where John Gerrard has a concurrent exhibit of portentous digital simulations). If Shechet’s show has a manifesto, Oldenburg wrote it, in 1961: “I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.”

— *Andrea K. Scott*