Dan Herschlein’s exhibition, *Plain and Sane*, contemplates the tension between light and dark as a means of examining ideologies. Indications of scarcity and accumulation peek out to the viewer, but the artist leaves the scene largely ambiguous.

Herschlein’s practice involves hand building, sculpting, and drawing, using common materials such as cedar planks, foam insulation boards, plaster, milk paint, pencil, and ink. Almost life-sized yet altered, their sculptural installation fills the Artpace gallery with anxiety or excitement.

The centrally located house-like structure has one side cast in darkness and the other cast in light created by car headlights as if a vehicle is approaching or leaving the house. The contrasting sides of the house are a continuation of the artist’s exploration of how dark and light are represented in art and ideologically. In other words, darkness is often used to depict bad scenarios, while light is associated with something positive. As you walk through the thin house, two figures stand inside a pantry, passing sacks to each other. Are the figures hoarding, or are they preparing for some inevitability? Are they looking out for themselves exclusively, or are they helping others? Herschlein told Artpace, “I’m trying to show a few of the rotten aspects, like having these pantries and finger flies. You have a stockpile that may be rotting from the inside, and maybe that rottenness is your intention. But at the same time, there’s nothing wrong with having what you need.

As you approach or retreat from the house-like structure, you meet details such as finger flies on the windows that speak to a past presence or objects in the yard. This new work is the first time the artist has created a pass-through interactive artwork. “I want the scenario not to be a didactic one. I want it to be a descriptive and let the viewer bring whatever that makes them feel to it... It’s a situation that either has some excitement or some anxiety tied to it.”

Finally, a resting point to the tension might be found in Herschlein’s drawings, which illustrate the human relationships with our architectural world and the greater system of capitalism. The title is inspired by the Ted Lucas song, “Plain And Sane And Simple Melody,” which the artist also contemplated during the creation of the exhibition. “I think that he [Ted Lucas] is a romantic...but I like thinking about that song about being about ideology in general.” More specifically, Herschlein is reminded about how nation broadcasts ideologies through narratives that people then enact. “There are moral values, prescriptive ideas, and you get to have a sense of identity based on how well you live up to these narratives.”

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### ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

### GALLERY MAP & WORKS LIST

1. **The Rough Patch**  
   Wood, milk paint, paste wax, graphite, plaster, joint compound, foam, enamel

2. **Moth**  
   Epoxy dough, paper clips, wire, milk paint, color pencil

3. **Fence**  
   Paper, graphite, butcher block conditioner

4. **The Worm**  
   Paper, graphite, butcher block conditioner, epoxy dough

5. **Moth**  
   Epoxy dough, paper clips, wire, milk paint, color pencil

6. **My Body, The Bulb**  
   Paper, graphite, butcher block conditioner

7. **Moth**  
   Epoxy dough, paper clips, wire, milk paint, color pencil

Herschlein received his BFA from New York University in 2010.