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The Dikeou Collection is one of Denver’s best-kept secrets when it comes to contemporary art. Tucked away on the fifth floor of an office building off of 16th and California, the collection has been known to catch even the most local of Denver locals off guard after years of perusing the city. But once you do find the Dikeou Collection, it is unlikely that you will ever forget you had been there.

The collection temporarily closed down in April of 2019 for the first time since it was opened in 1998 by siblings Devon and Pany Dikeou. Friends, family and art aficionados alike have since been waiting eagerly for its announced reopening, a retrospective exhibit reviewing owner and artist Devon Dikeou’s artistic career thus far. The **new collection-wide exhibit, curated by Courtney Lane-Stell, is titled *Devon Dikeou: Mid-Career Smear* and it officially opened last week.**

While the previously housed collection had often been described as leaving the viewer feeling “ripped from reality,” Devon’s retrospective that now fills the space felt almost completely the opposite. Walking down the office hallway to the beginning of the collection, **the entirety of the exhibit became sort of hyper-real, and the building itself became a part of the art.** Each room and work of art was a carefully chosen piece of Devon’s life (be it her past, present, or future) that had been saved for years and now presented to the viewer so as to completely break down the barrier between viewer, artist and art piece.

Many of her pieces called viewers to contemplate these liminal spaces, as in *Open Art Fax Line* which consists of a “functioning independent fax/phone line installed in Gallery for duration of the Exhibition and free/open to the public to fax in art/commentary for scatter presentation on the floor.” Or take *One Little Piggy Ate Roast Beef, One Little Piggy Has None*, which was performed during the opening reception — with handmade roast beef sandwiches made and served to guests, each labeled with a plastic wrapping noting the name of the work, the date, the number of sandwich out of 300 and Devon’s initials.

All of these works are surrounded by Devon’s personal memories and challenge the viewer likewise to consider their own relationship to memory and reality as they interact with each work. Rounding the corner from “Open Art Fax Line,” you’ll walk straight into the collection’s office-turned-artwork, complete with a water cooler that is part of an on-going piece titled *Water, Water, Everywhere, Nor Any Drop to Drink*. As I reached for a cup and poured myself a glass of water, **I became strangely hyper-aware of my own movements as they melded to become part of the artwork, which was then part of the office, which was then an overarching work in of itself.** It felt as though I was an actor on a set performing a play before an unseen audience.

My experience walking through the gallery seemed to be echoed by other guests. Several people turned to ask me “Are we supposed to touch this?” referring to one artwork after another as we continued through the collection.

While many of Devon’s works highlighted her own personal memories, two, in particular, seemed to call out a collective memory being created even as you read this article. In *Peacekeeping*, Devon perfectly replicates the green painted tiles that serve as the backdrop behind speakers at the U.N. This work is directly juxtaposed with another in an adjacent room titled *Make America Great Again*. The latter work consists of “faux marble painted tiles and light installed onto wall replicating a section of the Trump Tower.” Each of these two works can be seen through empty doorways while standing in either room. These two pieces call the viewer to ruminate on one question – which wall would you prefer to stand before?

Devon is a master of creating conversation with her art, whether she asks the viewer a question, or asks something of herself, or is in conversation with other artists through her work. Her deeply interpersonal creations challenge how far liminal spaces can actually reach before they extend into each of our own realities. By the time you finish walking through her *Mid-Career Smear*, you are sure to feel like you had been conversing the entire way with Devon Dikeou herself.

Devon Dikeou: Mid-Career Smear is free and open to the public from February 20, 2020, through February 18, 2021. It is located at [the Dikeou Collection](#) on the fifth floor of the Colorado Building at 1615 California Street, Denver.

All photography by Kori Hazel.











