

Denverite

Devon Dikeou's sort-of secret art space has re-opened downtown

She's replaced her art collection with art she made herself. She calls the yearlong exhibition her "Mid-Career Smear."

Kevin Beaty
Feb. 21, 2020



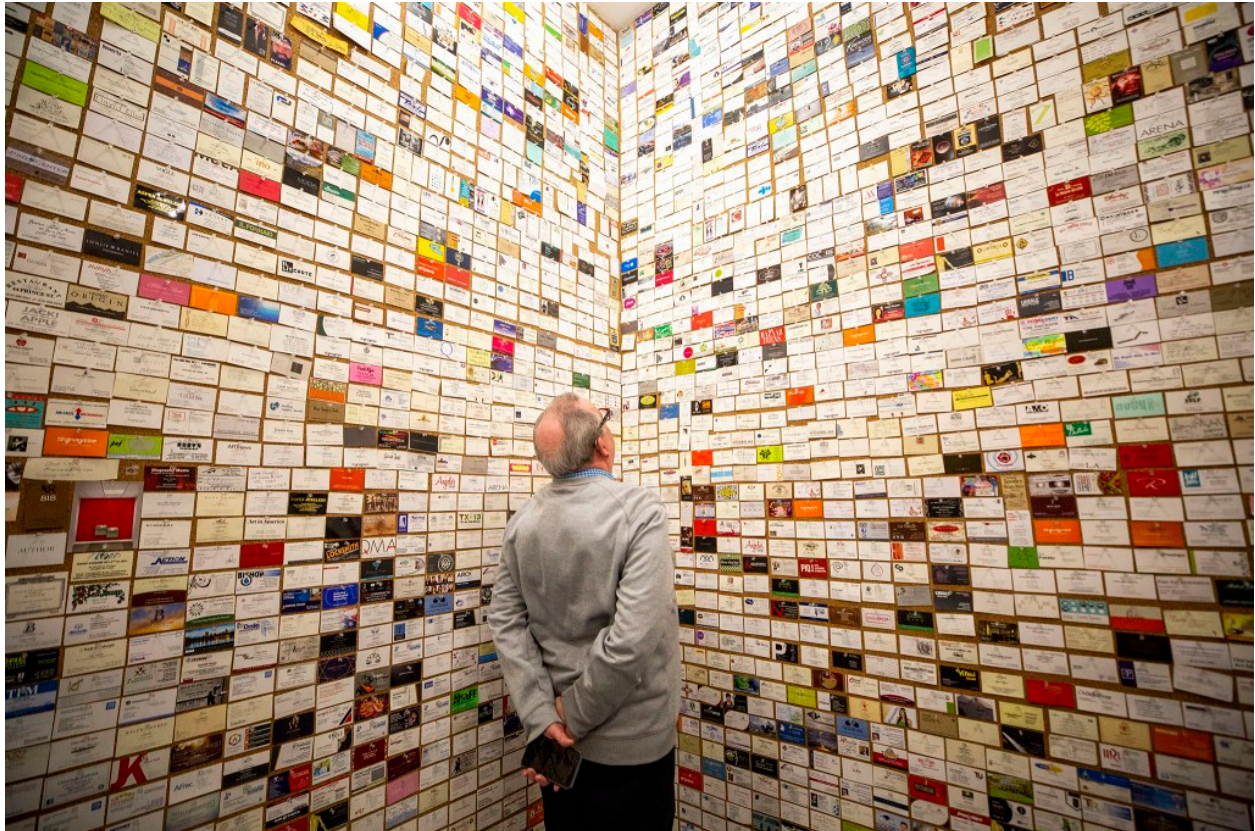
A look through a peephole into a room of mirrors, part of Devon Dikeou's "Mid-Career Smear" exhibition at her downtown art space. Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)

Since 2003, an entire floor of the regular-looking building at 1615 California St. has been filled with unusual art and open to the public for free. Some of you might remember we stumbled in there, mouths agape, in 2018.

The Dikeou Collection was exactly what its name implied: the personal art collection of Devon Dikeou. After closing it last April so she could empty the space and fill it anew, the California Building's fifth floor reopened this

week, stocked for the first time with Dikeou's own work. She calls the show her "Mid-Career Smear."

It's a collection of more than 60 works by the artist. Many of them repurpose regular-looking objects and turn them into art.

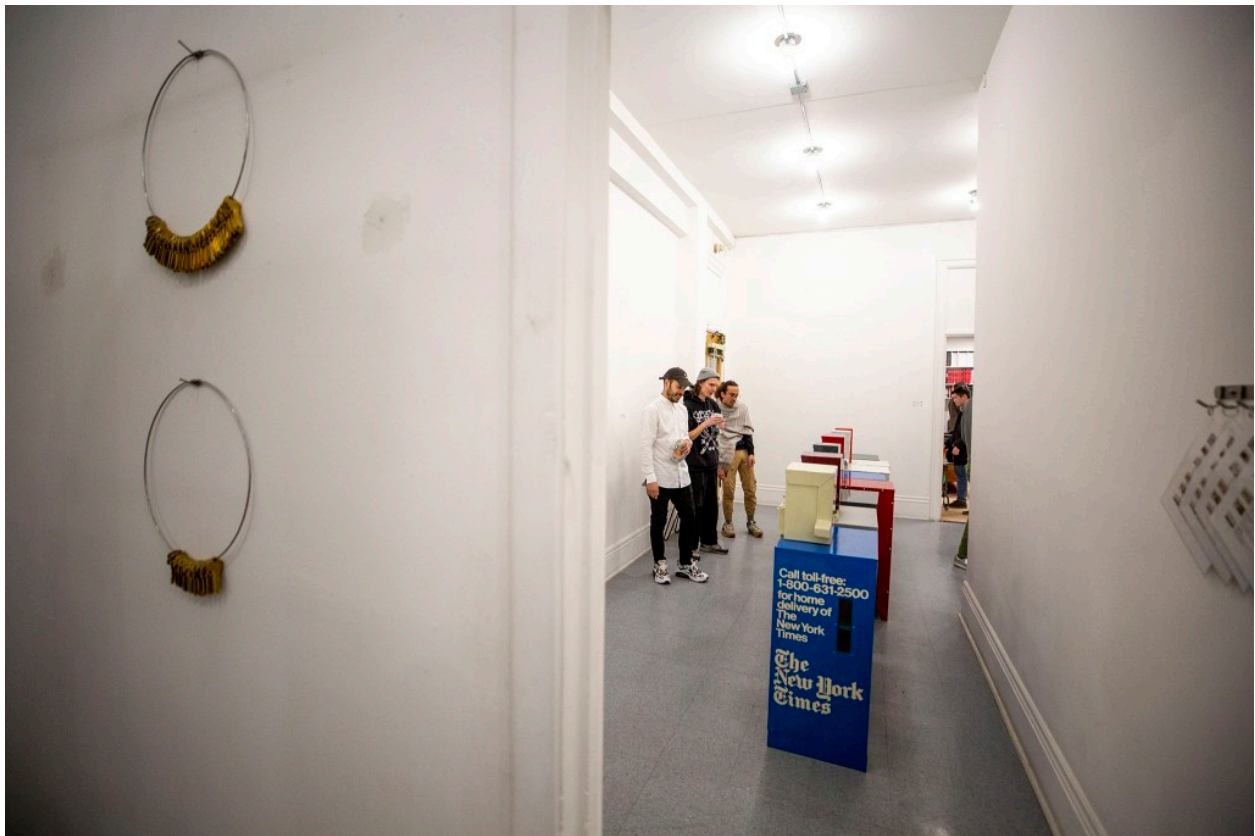


Kevin Benjamin examines a wall full of business cards. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)

Metal mailboxes line one white wall with keys hanging out of keyholes. One room is filled with white columns, each one topped with a Rolodex that invites you to flip through its pages. The walls of another are filled with business cards thumb-tacked into cork. There's a room within a room, surrounded by flat facades that force you to walk around a narrow corner and into a seemingly secret space filled with a table and mismatched glassware. The floor of one area is covered with old TV Guide magazines. There are boxes made with sliding metal shades, the kind a business owner might pull down at the end of a day to protect her merchandise.



Above: Rolodexes on display atop white columns. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)
Below: Keys and newspaper boxes. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



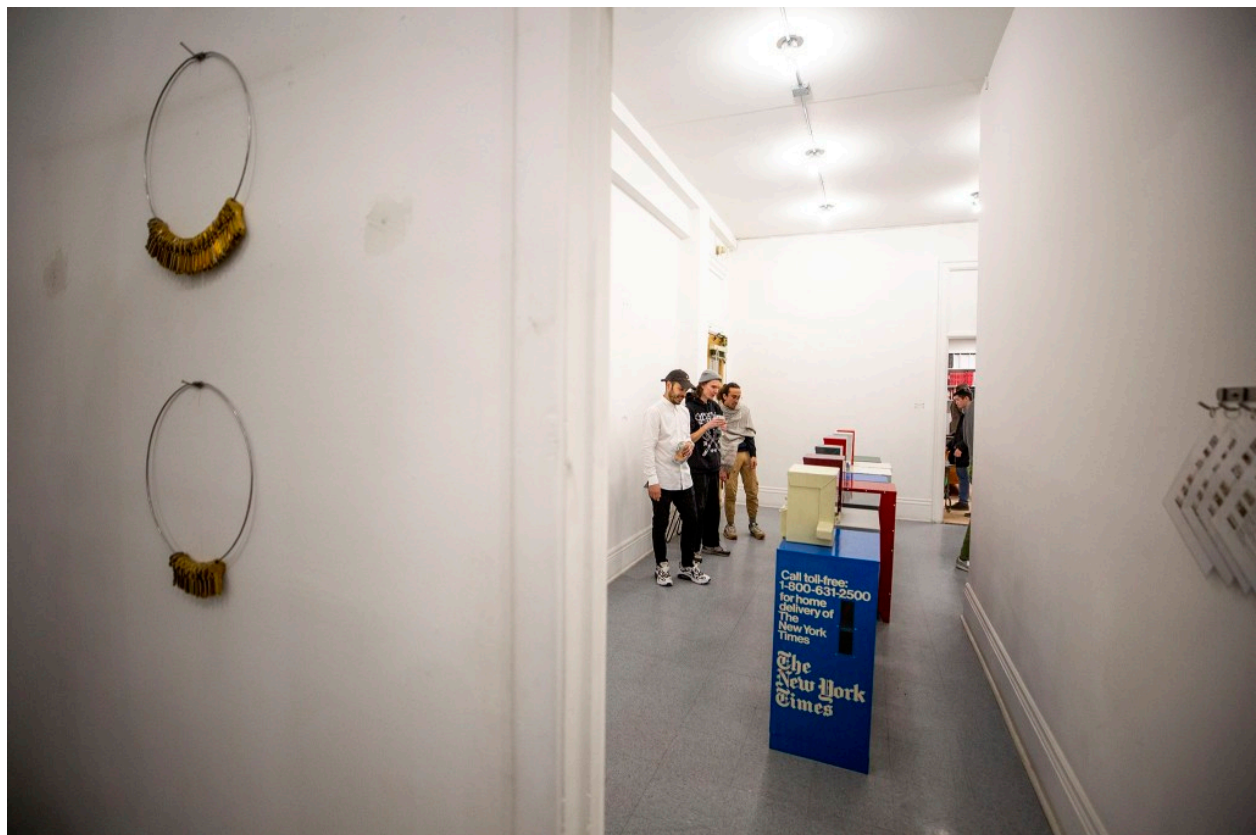
Cortney Lane Stell, Dikeou's curator who helped her select pieces for this year-long show, said the body of work demonstrates a "fascination for the human-made world." The pieces, she wrote on Dikeou's website, "smear the boundaries between art and life," and draw from the idea of "in-betweenness."

At her opening reception on Thursday night, Dikeou reached into pop culture to try to put it all into words.

"There's a guy named The Dude. He's the main character in the movie 'The Big Lebowski.' He's a little out of it," she told the crowd.

In the movie, The Dude (played by Jeff Bridges) is on a quest, in part, to get a nice rug back into his apartment after a series of mishaps.

"The rug, in his words, pulls the whole room together. And that was the dude's whole mission, to get back to that rug, that thing, that object he thought had somehow exceptional value that served as a segue for his vision," Dikeou continued. That feeling, that value, she said, is "the thing that's in between. The thing that most people don't see but is valuable just the same. There's that here."

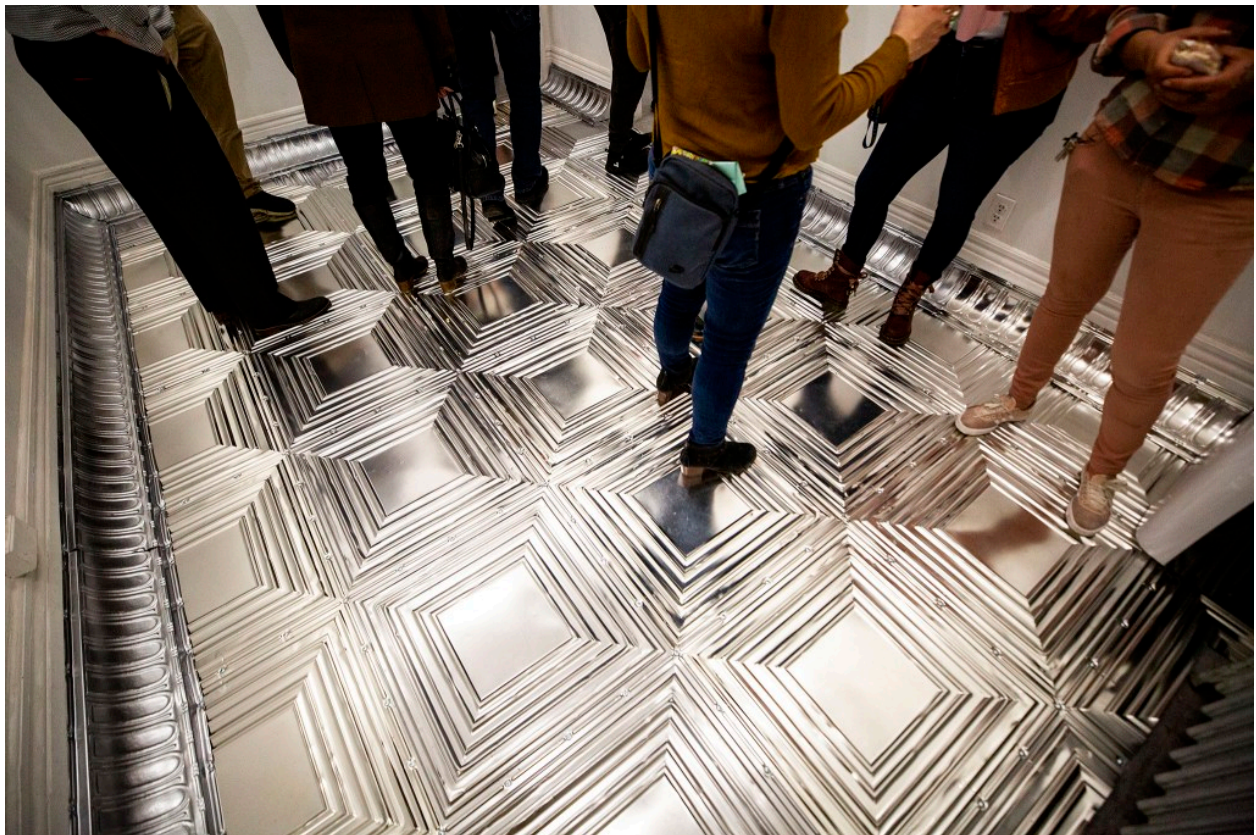




Jeffrey Podalsky, Devon Dikeou's "best guy friend from Brown," surprises her during the show's opening. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)

It's clear, wandering though the space, that the ordinary stuff inside has been transformed into something not so ordinary. You may get a similar feeling about the building itself: just a normal office building, until it's not.

The installation is open Wednesdays through Fridays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dikeou's work will remain in the space until Feb. 18, 2021.



A shiny floor. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



A shiny ceiling. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)

But that's not all!

Dikeou also has a space on Colfax Avenue, between Grant and Logan streets, where more of her work will be on display, beginning March 19.

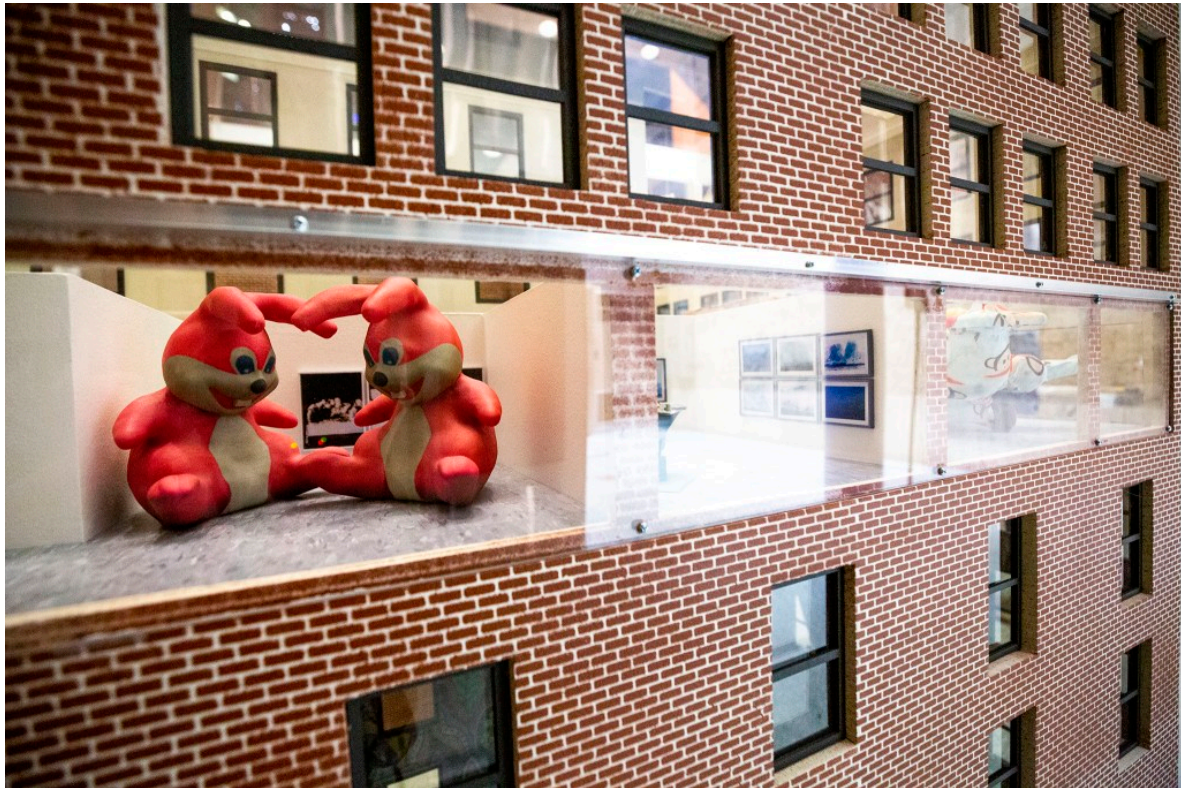
They also have a “vintage Airstream” trailer, currently at 12th Avenue and Cherokee Street, that will show off some of Dikeou’s work with Zingmagazine.

Her website lists a bunch of events, from workshops to cookouts, through the next year.

One standout from that upcoming list is a trip to Tiny Town, the collection of miniature buildings in Morrison. Dikeou and team recreated the California Building in miniature, complete with her original collection on the fifth floor. They’ll install it in Tiny Town this spring; it’s set to be unveiled there at noon on June 6.



A miniature version of the Colorado Building downtown and the Dikeou Collection inside it. Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



A miniature version of the Colorado Building downtown and the Dikeou Collection inside it. Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



Art at the Dikeou Collection inside the Colorado Building at California and 16th Streets, Sept. 26, 2018. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



A miniature version of the Colorado Building downtown and the Dikeou Collection inside it. Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



Art at the Dikeou Collection inside the Colorado Building at California and 16th Streets, Sept. 26, 2018. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



Ephemera. The Dikeou Collection has re-opened for an exhibition of Devon Dikeou's work, Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



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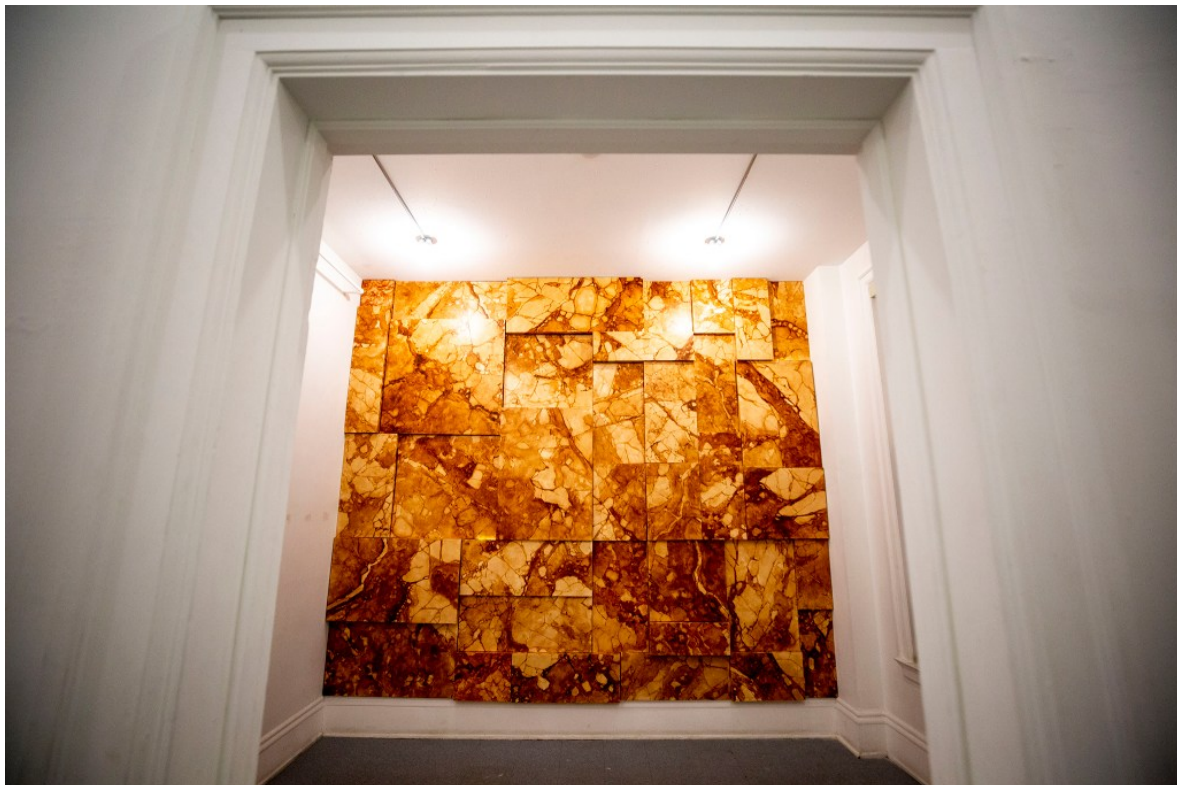
Caitlin d'Agostino (right) and Jessie Iwaszek jimmy the locks on some mailboxes installed at the Dikeou Collection. (Kevin J. Beauty/Denverite)



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Tim Gemperline and Anna Santoro look at art inside the Dikeou Collection on its re-opening day. Feb. 20, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)



A "vintage" Airstream trailer currently parked at 12th Avenue and Cherokee Street, Feb. 21, 2020. (Kevin J. Beaty/Denverite)