

Westword



Sarah Staton shows off an artist-designed apron. / Susan Froyd

Sarah Staton's SupaStore — Human Brings Art to Denver's Masses

[SUSAN FROYD](#) | DECEMBER 15, 2017 | 6:30AM

When British artist Sarah Staton spearheaded the [SupaStore](#) as a retail experiment more than twenty years ago, it was in a London space not so different from Ghost Ship or, closer to home, Denver's DIY enclaves in limbo, Rhinocropolis and Glob. "At first," says Staton, "it was just a store where you could hang out — it had that kind of vibe."

But her DIY art-store concept was a success, generating a positive buzz from the community it served. Over time, the SupaStore has morphed into a traveling

emporium of artwork by artists at every career level, from students to big-name Artists, paired with artist-designed, limited-edition products and pieces, some functional and some simply artful, popping up in galleries, museums and public places around the world.



SupaStore, in part a response to the overarching rise of online commerce in the new millennium and how retail is losing its human touch, has now come to Denver, in the guise of *SupaStore Human — We Are the Product*, a singular iteration of Staton’s artist road show. Inspired, she says, “by the resurgence of figurative work, which has been enormous and is reflected in the range of stock I brought with me,” this version opens tonight — Friday, December 15 — at the Dikeou Pop-Up: Colfax, at the invitation of Staton’s Denver-raised longtime acquaintance Devon Dikeou.



Freee Collective

Westword chatted about the SupaStore with the forthright and sunny Staton a few days ago, as she unpacked one-of-a-kind treasures that will be available to purchase. "It's our policy to invite local people to participate in destination cities," Staton explains as she tears the wrappers off of aprons, T-shirts and trinkets. Though the overall mix of merchandise on the shelves here includes a little bit of everything — from everywhere — there's a Denver vibe in the space, too, as she uncovers "Praying Nail Tips (Malverde)," a pair of sculptures by Colorado artist Dmitri Obergfell, and a pile of original Dikeou Collection tees. Also on sale will be plaster-casted human limbs created locally at a community casting workshop on the evening before the show's opening.



Dmitri Obergfell, "Praying Nail Tips (Malverde)." / Dmitri Obergfell, SupaStore—Human

Beautiful items fall out of their wrappings as Staton continues to unpack: fabric sweatshirts splashed with paint and plaster by Tanya Ling, Cira Huwald's delicate bronze pine people, "Love and Anger" wool scarves by Britain's Free Collective, and sumptuous patterned cashmere and yak blankets from Saved NY, to name a few.

Staton says that price points are meant to be people-friendly. "We stock things that are affordable — nothing that requires a big budget or a disposable income, nothing that costs an arm and a leg to buy," she says, adding that SupaStore price points range from \$1 for a designer GIF to about \$1,500 for original artworks.

Because "shopping can be so exhausting and boring," Staton's goal is to restore egalitarianism and good times to the endeavor of everyday commerce — and building an art collection. "It's the act of going to the store that's waning," she says. Staton aims to bring it back.



Cullinan Richards, artist books. / Courtesy of the Dikeou Pop-Up

With that in mind, don't be surprised if you happen to run into a deity as you browse through the store. SupaStore, notes Staton, operates under the spell of Minerva (who, as the Roman goddess of war, wisdom, medicine, commerce, handicrafts, poetry, the arts, was a multidisciplinary sort of deity), "She's now the patron-saint goddess of the SupaStore Market." Minerva, it seems, has all of SupaStore's bases covered.



SupaStore tiny trinkets in ceramic. / Susan Froyd

SupaStore Human — We Are the Product opens with a free reception on Friday, December 15, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Dikeou Pop-Up: Colfax, 312 East Colfax Avenue; Staton will speak at 6:45 p.m., and Denver artist Mario Zoots will be spinning vinyl from the Dikeou vinyl collection. And, yes, there will be balloons. All SupaStore purchases will be processed via PayPal's Venmo mobile payment service. SupaStore will be available for shopping Wednesdays through Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment, through February.