

Devon Dikeou: Mid-Career Smear

The Dikeou Collection
1615 California Street, Suite 515,
Denver, CO 80202

February 20, 2020-February 2022

Admission: Free

Curated by Courtney Lane Stell

Review by Tameca L Coleman

Walking through the Dikeou Collection's *Mid-Career Smear* with director Hayley Richardson and artist Devon Dikeou this spring felt like an initiation into a particular artist's aesthetic, worldview, and process. The exhibit is also like a portal by which we can travel in-between (and often experience all at the same time) what usually separates the present and the past, the personal and the public, the art and process of its creation, and even the artist and the viewer and/or collector, historian, and consumer of art.

Further, *Mid-Career Smear* continually invites us to participate, testing the idea of "immersive art," and I would say in many ways it flips that concept on its head. It offers experiences that do not solely exist inside of a room, building, medium, technology, or ruleset, but morphs depending on who arrives, what they notice, and how they interact with the space, its information, and its contents. Even viewers' knowledge of and relationship with the artist plays a part, and what they do with any pieces of the exhibit they encounter once they are out on the street.

You start with coins or dollars, if you want to, with **PAY WHAT YOU WISH BUT YOU MUST PAY SOMETHING.**



Above: An installation view of Devon Dikeou, *City Gates* (6 total), 1989-ongoing.

Below: Devon Dikeou, *Ring Sizer (Maybe)*, 2013-ongoing, ring sizer with 35 different ring sizes on a loop, dimensions variable. Images courtesy of the Dikeou Collection.



It's an installation of museum collection boxes inspired by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's entry policy which requires local entrants to pay something, even if it's a penny, to see some of the world's greatest art. The cash at the bottom of the collection boxes also leads you forward between walls bedecked with framed menu boards containing the details of past exhibitions and the artists' names, many of whom were once emerging, often now very well known, and some having passed. They are now archived and on display in community along with Devon Dikeou's name. In a sense, the hallway has become a portal as well as an archive, positioning us in multiple places at once and without boundary, so long as we read the boards.

When we come around a corner into the next installation, I do not

immediately recognize it as such. A series of gates—recently shown at James Fuentes Gallery in New York—is positioned inside a brightly lit room. The gates look polished. I learn that the gates represent a lot of what's seen in the city every day that is taken for granted as we rush past. "The compositions are real compositions that I found on the street while wandering from The Village to Soho," Dikeou tells us. For most of us, the kiosks, gates, and other structures we pass predominantly go unnoticed, serving as little more than partitions barring entry. But as a Dikeou art installation, we might forget that we are being subtly trained on the immersive and interactive qualities of what's to come. If you scan the full length of the gates, you will notice that each of them is without a lock and may be partially open already.

In so many instances, we are invited to participate with the items in a space, not just to simply be present with them. I admit that without Dikeou's gentle nudges, I might not have otherwise known that I could touch, move, and interact with, say, the ring sizers in *Maybe*, or shuffle through the donated grab bag of

