



STUDIO BUILDING

#### Artist's Statement

My practice began in the storage basement of Tibor de Nagy in '85 where as an intern, sorting out old Artforums, I discovered a project by Lucas Samaras. As I recall it, it encompassed 3 full DPS's in which a Neo Abstract Expressionist skeleton was reproduced in various enlargements. The view zoomed with each spread, beginning with a full body representation, magnifying an enlargement of the head, and ending on a close up of the mouth. Printed across the entire skeleton was the word "artist"; on the head, "dealer"; and on the mouth, "collector". The images are powerfully embedded in my memory and their positions have continually influenced my art. How these associated parties (artists, dealers, and collectors), reclaim their identity through a piece of art, and combine/ combat their destinies is of importance and became the crux of my practice as an artist, curator, writer/publisher (zingmagazine), and collector (The Dikeou Collection).

#### Bio/Resume

Dikeou has been in over 130 group shows/20 solo or special projects. The series, "What's Love Got to Do with It," was shown initially with Kenny Schachter (91), then at Postmasters (98), the New Museum's NYC 1993 (13), and the Flag Art Foundation(10). She showed at Tricia Collins Grand Salon, an installation later featured in Art Basel 29 Statements and as a finalist: Mandarin Duck "Search for Art". She exhibited at Artmoving Williamsburg(07), and 179 Canal and Domy Books Austin(both 10). She was a resident at Artpace(11), and she will have a museum show at Arthouse AMoA (13), both curated by Heather Pesanti. She has made special artist's projects at International Art Fairs, including The Independent, NADA MB, NADA NY, and Armory. As part of her practice she founded zingmagazine (95), has edited/published 23 issues featuring over 300 curated projects, and created The Dikeou Collection featuring installations of 36 contemporary artists.



**STUDIO INTERIOR**



**STUDIO LOCATION**

# ART LIES

A Contemporary Art Journal

## Devon Dikeou

Risa Puleo

Devon Dikeou, an Austinite by way of New York and Denver, currently has work on view in San Antonio as part of Artpace's 11.1 International Artist-in-Residence program. Her work measures the physical, conceptual and emotional distances, intersections and moments of exchange between the various objects and subjects in the art world, including art objects, artists, collectors, dealers, critics and curators. She has also occupied many of these roles in various parts of her practice. For instance, Dikeou has edited and published *zingmagazine: a curatorial crossing* since 1995, for which she invites artists and arts professionals to "curate" multipage printed spreads. Similarly, her artistic voice continues to manifest as the curator, collector and patron of the *Dikeou Collection* (1998–ongoing), a platform for realizing *zingmagazine's* curatorial projects in physical, three-dimensional exhibition spaces. This photoessay attempts to recreate a studio visit Dikeou originally conducted for the Artpace selection process. In her Austin home, Dikeou staged a selection of her artworks in tandem with the function of each room, assuming the role of tour guide and interpreter of her own work.



### GARAGE

*Horn Please* (installation view), 2009; custom-designed bumper stickers inspired by the phrase "Horn Please," commonly painted on the back of Indian commercial vehicles; 3 x 5 inches; edition of 100.

When commissioned to create an artwork for a Bollywood-themed event at the Denver Art Museum, Dikeou reminisced on her travels to India. The result was *Horn Please* (2009), a bumper sticker edition that echoed the signs handpainted on commercial vehicles asking other drivers for a courtesy honk when passing. Here, *Horn Please* is shown on the bumper of Dikeou's car.



### **LAUNDRY ROOM**

*“Out, Out Damn Spot”* — Macbeth, Shakespeare, 1992–ongoing; relic of happening: professional waiter serving 300 warm towels to viewers, who used and discarded towels; 24 x 14 x 16 inches  
Considering the dilemma of how to stand out in a group exhibition, Dikeou was inspired by Lady Macbeth’s famous attempts to wipe the blood from her hands. Dikeou’s performance *“Out, Out Damn Spot”* involves a hired butler who serves hot towels to gallerygoers at the exhibition opening. A meditation on and metaphor for ambition, this gracious welcome quickly goes cold like the wet towel visitors are left holding.



## **KITCHEN**

*Shake: An Accumulated Gift Collection of Salt and Pepper Shakers* (installation view of entire collection), 1991–ongoing; snow globes altered to become functioning salt and pepper shakers (each is filled with salt or pepper and a shaker; when used, the diminishing salt and pepper reveals the accumulated gift collection of shakers); 12 sets in an ongoing collection; each shaker 3½ x 2½ x 2½ inches

An extra set of salt-and-pepper shakers in Dikeou's home caused her friends to think she collected them. When invited to exhibit work in a snow-globe themed exhibition curated by Jane Harris for P.S. 122 in New York, she created the series *Shake* (1991–ongoing). Dikeou divided and nested a pair of individual shakers inside two snow globes, each modified to be a shaker itself, filling one globe shaker with salt and the other with pepper to hide the original shakers. Over time, using the pair of snow-globe shakers reveals which salt-and-pepper set is hidden inside. Each pair of snow-globe shakers is named for the giver of the original set.



## **DINING ROOM**

*“One Little Piggy Ate Roast Beef, One Little Piggy Had None,”* 1991–ongoing; happening: 100 pounds of sliced roast beef, served in sandwiches and consumed in variable dimensions  
In response to an invitation to participate in *Decorous Beliefs*, a 1991 exhibition curated by artist Kenny Schachter for Natalie Rivera Gallery, New York in reaction to the political correctness of the culture wars of the late 1980s, Dikeou responded as a proud carnivore. She carved 100 pounds of roast beef and served the meat as sandwiches at the opening. The carver and accoutrements remained in the exhibition space in 1991. Photographer Erica Botkin and I enjoyed sandwiches on embossed napkins in Dikeou’s dining room.



## **BATHROOM**

*Entertaining is Fun (After Dorothy Draper)*, 2008; 156 Scott toilet paper rolls unrolled to a diameter of 3 inches and stacked in a cubic grid with an 8½ x 11 inch footprint of twelve rolls; 8½ x 11 x 62 inches.

Invited to take part in an exhibition of works on paper called 8½ x 11, Dikeou created *Entertaining is Fun*. First unraveling rolls of Scott brand toilet tissue down to a diameter of 3 inches, she then stacked these rolls to form a column measuring 8½ inches wide, 11 inches deep and 62 inches tall (the artist's height). Dikeou then rewound the toilet paper into rolls and repacked them into the original packaging in this tongue-in-cheek take on drawing and Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*.





## BEDROOM

*The Niney Chronicles* (installation views), 2007–ongoing; (left) *Niney: Hospital*; C-print mapping all the sutures on Niney and the names of those who made them, mounted on aluminum with non-glare Plexiglas surface; 20 x 30 inches; edition 2, 1 AP; (center) *Niney: Calgon Take Me Away!*; 44 Gerber baby food jars,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cap of Woolite and 198 ounces of water containing the residue from washing Niney (one jar for each year of the artist’s life), displayed on Plexiglas shelves; dimensions variable; edition 2, 1 AP; (right) *The Niney Time Line*; a series of sign paintings commissioned by the artist to record the life and times of Niney; acrylic on canvas; dimensions variable; edition 2, 1 AP.

In a series of documents, photographs and text paintings, Dikeou details the life of her childhood security blanket as an art star. Dikeou brings both sweetness and humor to the project, while making serious nods to the high conceptualism of Joseph Kosuth and John Baldessari, and the abjection of Mike Kelley and Vito Acconci.



### **MEDIA ROOM**

*Touch of Greatness*, 1994–ongoing; autographed baseball from the artist’s personal collection, signed “To Devon: Reggie Jackson”; left unguarded to collect viewer’s fingerprints, diminishing in value as a collectible, while increasing in value as an art object; dimensions of a regulation Major League baseball.

Along with a display of the twenty-two issues of zingmagazine that Dikeou has edited and published in the past fifteen years, the media room also features the work *A Touch of Greatness*, an official Major League baseball signed “To Devon” by iconic player Reggie Jackson. Visitors are encouraged to handle the baseball and in doing so, the baseball's value as an art object increases, while simultaneously decreasing in value as a collectible.



## LIVING ROOM

"WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?" (installation view), 1991–ongoing; 10 boards (*Ho Hum All Ye Faithful*, *Obfuscation*, *Broken Tales*, *Needlepoint*, *Embroidery*, *Macramé*, *Crochet*, *On From Here*, *Manes*, *Home for June*, *AMO*, *Not a Lear*, *Under the Influence*); replicas of lobby directory boards announcing gallery listing of artists, curators, exhibition titles, and dates; each 18 x 24 inches; edition of 2, 1 AP Starting with her first group exhibition in 1991, Dikeou has catalogued all her exhibitions with a sign display that is an exact model of the display used by dealer Leo Castelli in the lobby of his 410 West Broadway building to announce exhibitions in the 1980s. Collectively entitled "WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?" each board functions simultaneously as a monument and a tombstone to Dikeou's exhibition. Together the boards comprise an archive of happenings in the art world in the past twenty years, as well as a résumé of Dikeou's practice.

Dikeou's art is a kinder, gentler strain of institutional critique mixed with some of the impulses of relational aesthetics. She understands the subject of her practice, the art world, as based in authentic relationships between people, objects and experiences. Works like "WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT" and others posit that generosity and love have everything to do with everything.

Devon Dikeou

**Do the right thing**Devon Dikeou, *Takes a Licking and Keeps on Ticking*, 1991

EMILY TSINGOU

Emily Tsingou: You have worked as an artist and curator for the past few years. How are these two reconciled?

Devon Dikeou: I don't know that I think of the practices as reconciled or as having to be reconciled. A lot of the artwork that I have shown has implicitly reflected the presence of others and this presence is a necessary element toward its understanding. The pieces often reflect the context of a "group exhibition" and the reflection of the group involved. The more I have involved others the more it seemed that the next natural step would be to curate an exhibition: hence "Between the Acts." In fact, the roles of an artist and curator have an interesting collaborative element, which allows the practices to re-fortify one another.

E.T.: Do you treat a curatorial project in a similar way to an art piece? Are there any elements constant in all projects (perhaps you can talk about "Between the Acts")?

D.D.: When I begin thinking about an art project, the first step is to consider its context, my constant. As context—context of viewership (gallery, show, space, city, etc.)—defines the work, other things attach themselves, such as literary or other cultural references. This context then defines the way in which the piece exists, and context is dependent on the references—artists, viewers, space etc.—which further exert their presence on the pieces. This position has made me very conscious of the position of the artist within the context of the group show, and more conscious of the role of the curator. Because of this awareness, I conceived of curating a group show. My idea came with the collaborative spirit and my inclination found me wanting to include the work of artists who were not necessarily familiar with the work of the others, and artists who were vastly familiar with each other's work. Recontextualizing the two groups seemed a logical step. This beginning premise quickly

made for interesting cross references, both in the formal context and in other associative ways. The title "Between the Acts" came in a roundabout way, and much less deliberately than the artists in the show. I remembered a postcard I had seen when I was reading the Virginia Woolf book *Between the Acts*. The postcard had been a vintage photograph of the Köln Cathedral standing alone, with everything else in sight decimated, as a result of the WWII bombing. I remembered a particular quote because I had written it on the back of the postcard:

"The other trees were magnificently straight. They were not too regular; but regular enough to suggest columns in a church; in a church without a roof; in open-air cathedral, a place where swallows darting seemed, by the regularity of trees, to make a pattern, dancing, like the Russians, only not to music, but to the unheard rhythm of their own wild hearts"

Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*

Though I didn't use this quote in the statement for the show, it

has the right feeling, the same feeling, that I was trying to capture: a feeling that you can't measure, see, anticipate or know, and that is hidden, but somehow linked, and common, and shared. In the end, I am most happy about the fact that the show was really a creation of these feelings. Of course, I had ideas about how it might exist but really had to renegotiate them conceptually and physically as the pieces and spaces (contexts) exerted their presence to create the final outcome. Certainly the many relationships between the artists and their work was examined as I arranged the show and space as curator, which is considerably similar to the way in which I work when making a piece for a group show.

E.T.: Your work is very closely rect or loose references. Could you possibly explain this "preference"?

D.D.: The direct or even loose references to literature in my work come as an addendum, directing the viewer toward a

reading that they can follow should they wish. Literary-referenced titling historically came from a Surrealistic game, in which the title was obtained by opening a book at random, and finding a quote. I embrace the "chance" element that this Surrealistic notion can bring to the work, but rather than literally following it, I use the literary references to layer the pieces with more meaning. Because when one reads something, it is theirs forever; all they have to do is remember it. At the very least, I hope that art, and the projects I do, can have this relationship with the viewer: that the viewer sees something and it stays with them, on some level. I am constantly aware that the viewer has a whole personal history that they bring to the viewing relationship, a history that necessarily will be read into the piece. When I create something for an audience, I instill a series of layers—from the title, to the installation (art piece and/or exhibition), to the relic/object. These include some intrinsic references that come with each stage/vision of formal representation as well as anything that I might attach, such as literary or other cultural references. To specifically elaborate, with the piece "Once upon a time . . ." I completely covered the gallery floor with prefabricated ceiling tin, and invited the viewers to walk on it. This destructive invitation actually created the piece, as the record of all the participants' footprints became imbedded in the beautiful but malleable ceiling/floor material. The historical relationship highlighted, points to the piece's intrinsic issue with minimalism, and yet it reaches beyond the scope of its model, taking on irony as a symbol of value—both in the context

of the tin as product and the minimalist masters' objects. As a relic, "Once upon a time . . ." exists as a series of drawings displayed on the wall or as a stack placed formally on a podium in evidence of the acts produced by the visitors' gaits and exhibited on the gallery's floor. Lastly, the title comes from the universal beginning of children's fairy tales and elicits a key element in the work: memory. Memory to tales, to stories, to childhood, to the tin, to sounds, to other art. Memory then reconnects the piece literally to the act involved: by the end of the installation, what was once upon a time perfectly fashioned ceiling tiles, has become decrepit and tattered with the worn treads of the viewers. Among all of these levels, if even one operates to intrigue or pique the viewers' interest, and stay with them, I feel the work has succeeded.

E.T.: How did you start up *zingmagazine*?

D.D.: As curating became an active pursuit of mine in developing my own artwork and working on "Between the Acts," I realized that curating itself could be an interesting format for a magazine. I have always been very much involved with writing about my own art pieces, so it seemed in line that I would develop a position, through a magazine, involving the written media. Specifically, the magazine would consist of rotating "curated" projects covering a myriad of diverse disciplines, and each curator would define everything about their particular section—both contentually and graphically. I was even interested in allowing normal definitions of curating to be challenged—because curating, as a format is about change and

juxtaposition, which further necessitates questioning. And this attention to format and its rotating curatorial flavor evolved in order to emancipate these same issues of change and juxtaposition, rather than to develop a formula, and follow it in a rote quarterly fashion. Of course, then juxtaposing each section against the others, and creating a constantly changing atmosphere or "curatorial crossing," both within each issue and between all of them as a whole, became the nexus of *zingmagazine*.

E.T.: To what extent is this move linked to your relationship with literature?

D.D.: I don't know that *zingmagazine* is really a move so much as an ongoing project that promises opportunity and came about in an effort to support and collaborate with people on a number of different creative levels. As far as my relationship as an editor/publisher to literature is concerned, I would say that it is very much like my relationship as an artist to literature: it is part of my background.

E.T.: What is the ultimate aim of the magazine?

D.D.: So far *zingmagazine* has proved successful in attracting an interested audience, and one of our aims from the beginning has been to present *zingmagazine* internationally. To accomplish this, we have made a concerted effort to travel to numerous art fairs around the world. At this point we don't have the capacity to be there simply as a "magazine" with all the "regulars" but a lot of the art dealers that I have been working with as an artist have showed their support by asking me to set up shop in their

booths, including IceBox at the Smart Fair, Hohenthal und Bergen at Art Cologne, AMO, Amanda M. Obering at Chateau Marmont, Kenny Schachter at his various ventures, both in NY and London, as well as Postmasters at the Gramercy. We will have a "home page" on the Internet through the Thing with a link to tractor (Internet servers and sites) so that projects can have different lives for different media (web crawling and page sifting). Ultimately, we hope that we can sustain a level of interest that coexists with the level of commitment given the curated projects.

E.T.: And how is this linked to your position in the art world in general?

D.D.: My position in the art world I hope will remain that of an artist and now emerge as an editor/publisher, who is committed to quality above all else, and recognized for that. I certainly hope that these roles can be recognized as integral and supportive of the audiences that they address. More than this, is for others to suggest or discuss.

E.T.: Do you see your involvement in multi-activities in the art world (artist, curator, editor) as a practice that will be followed by a lot of artists in the next few years considering the expansion of artistic practice and the potential of working in many areas as possible due to technology. e.g. you can actually put together a whole magazine in your computer? What is it like working "Between the Acts" and within them?

D.D.: I think that people in general, not just artists, will be further expanding their roles, and certainly you see this spirit

emerging plainly enough due to the accessibility of technology. The technology art world has made significant outposts with the emergence of a number of sites/servers. For example: The Thing (<http://www.thing.net>); Kenny Schachter (<http://www.newnyart.com>); C.A.S./tractor (<http://www.tractor.com>); ada 'web (<http://adaweb.com>.) These places have the role-changing/enhancement possibilities open and occurring: Web sites can become the global interface where artists, programmers, writers, editors, etc., can converse and create new forums (i.e. chat sessions) as well as provide tried and proven practices (review sections) in the quickest, most immediate manner. While the impact is unforeseeable, because education has to catch up, even a novice can sense the immense, almost overwhelming potential. Technology aside however, there is a whole history of artists involving themselves in multimedia efforts. Just the other day I was reminded of this when I noticed a TV trailer for an Andy Warhol "Biography" special, which had a factory collectivist conjuring up a memory of Andy so upset at not being able to procure tickets to the NY Film Festival that he started *Interview* magazine. Artists and curators have often engaged in multifarious activities—from the idea of the Renaissance man to the Russian Constructivists and beyond. Within even our contemporary history we have many examples of their efforts remaining—from *Verve* magazine and Barnett Newman's failed mayoral run, to Oldenberg's "Store," Gordon Matta Clark's restaurant cooperative "Food" and artspace "112 Greene Street," to Tricia Collins' and Richard Milazzo's magazine *Effects*, of the mid '80s, to Sarah Staton's "Supastore" of the '90s (a

project that openly critiqued the presence of marketing by selling artists' editions under the guise of installation.) And while technology can help facilitate any practice, it seems really the job of the artist to use the tools and language of their time, to establish these forums of communication.

E.T.: How do you view the response of the Greek public, as curator, artist, and of course as the editor of *zingmagazine*?

D.D.: I think that Greece has an amazing freshness and enthusiasm in its reception of contemporary art, which has included my work as an artist and curator. In particular, the response to "Between the Acts" was very supportive. We already had two interviews and a review, which of course can only amplify and introduce the work to a wider audience. This kind of exposure lets the show live on after actually coming down, and having a beautiful catalogue also documents the event in yet a different media (available through IceBox 151 Patision Ave., Athens, Gr. 30.1/3412.633). Speaking further than "Between the Acts," with this most recent visit, a lot of the excitement in Athens was due to the tremendous hysteria surrounding the opening of the Joannou collection. I think that the collection, among other things, can operate as a wonderful ambassadorship—drawing an international audience, as well as playing to the hometown crowd. As such, it can be the elixir for an appreciation and/or introduction to contemporary art, as well as act as an apotheosis of recognition. Greece is lucky to have such an ambassadorship in the collection, and such an ambassador in Mr. Joannou. Then, when something like the Joannou collection abounds it-

self to both the international community and the intrinsic local community, many other native epicenters make their presence known. This can be said of the excellent shows that were premiering at the time in Athens. As an editor and curator this was especially exciting to see. Look for the Greek experience in *zingmagazine*, where the international flair of the Athens art scene rocked.

Questions and answers via fax during February and March 1996.

COLORADO'S MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING - INSIDE & OUT



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2014

# MODERN IN DENVER

ARCHITECTURE • INTERIORS • ART • DESIGN • PEOPLE



CREATING, CURATING, COLLECTING, PUBLISHING - WHEW!

## ART-FULL

ARTIST DEVON DIKEOU SHARES HER EXTRAORDINARY HOME AND COLLECTION



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Momoyo Torimitsu  
"Somehow I Don't Feel Comfortable"



SHOU SUGI BAN AT SVPER ORDINARY • JACKSON POLLOCK AT THE DAM

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# IMMERSED

ART PERMEATES EVERY FACET OF  
ARTIST, COLLECTOR AND PUBLISHER  
DEVON DIKEOU'S LIFE AND YOU  
ARE INVITED IN.

**WORDS:**

SARAH GOLDBLATT

**IMAGES:**

DAVID LAUER (Apartment images)

CRYSTAL ALLEN (Collection Images)

**UNLESS YOU HAVE GROWN UP IN DENVER,** you may not recognize the name Devon Dikeou. Even then, you might not know that the third-generation native has indie-rock star status in the contemporary art world, or that she and her brother have a private collection of art's brightest stars in a downtown Denver office building, which is free and open to the public. What's more, in addition to collecting art, Devon is a prolific artist, curator, and founder, editor and publisher of *zingmagazine*. Her ground-zero position at the source of art provides her with a panoramic view and places her squarely at the confluence of creativity.

Museum curator, Heather Pesanti from The Contemporary Austin (where Devon exhibited her work "Please" last summer) acknowledges the clarity of her vision and says, "Devon has the ability to challenge and critique the workings of the art world and offer momentary glimpses behind the proverbial curtain, at times even slipping the art historical rug out from under us."

Luckily for Denverites, *Modern in Denver* has been granted some sanctioned voyeurism into Devon's own domestic and professional realms, which reveals the pure alliance between her art and life.

Devon's local landing pad at One Cheesman Place, designed by acclaimed Denver modernist architect Charles Sink, is a visual manifestation of her



One Cheesman Place, an elegant, modernist residential tower designed by Denver architect Charles Sink in 1968, is Devon's pied-à-terre when in Denver.



**FACING PAGE:** Three iconic Andy Warhol silk screen prints of Mick Jagger (1975) grace the walls of Devon's living room and welcome guests into her sublime sanctuary of art and furnishings.

**ABOVE:** "Suck" a Drinking Straw performance/relic by Devon flanks either side of the entry door and sets the stage for her lively assemblage inside. The piece is an exploration of art known as relational aesthetics where the viewer is invited to participate in the piece.



Devon's stylish, eclectic taste is on display in her sunny home overlooking Cheesman Park, which is filled with a collection of artwork that she has been given, traded for or purchased at benefit auctions. Some of the vintage furnishings are family heirlooms, including the pea-green and ochre sofa and chair set, which belonged to her grandmother (designed by Paul Lazlo or John Keal for mid-century furniture manufacturer Brown-Saltman). The 1930s Art-Deco side tables were purchased by Devon's mother from James Powell Antiques in Austin, Texas. A Verner Panton Fun Lamp (Design Within Reach) completes the ensemble. Other vintage lamps were locally sourced at Mod Livin'.



An array of mid-century Italian Murano glass ashtrays, collected by Devon's husband, Fernando Troyo, are displayed on a vintage 1950s coffee table.

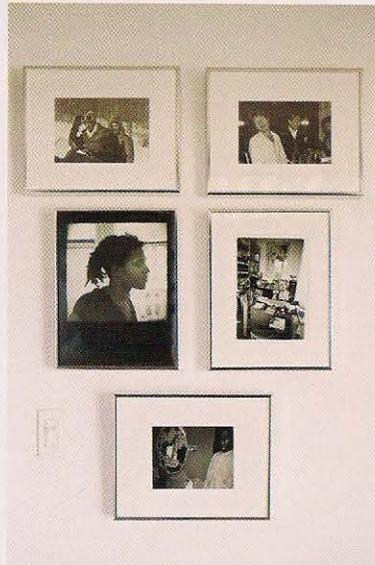
eclectic taste and a physical representation of the relationships she has cultivated within the art world. Each artwork in her Denver apartment is one that has been given to her, traded for another artist's work or bought at benefit auctions. Her divergent collection of art and furnishings include Andy Warhol prints, Pre-Columbian artifacts, mid-century Arne Jacobsen Ant Chairs and an 18th century English sideboard. Many of the art pieces in Devon's home have been incorporated into her piece titled "Not Quite Mrs. De Menil's Liquor Closet"—an

installation fashioned after famed art collector Dominique de Menil's secreted liquor closet, which will be exhibited in the Dikeou Collection's planned expansion this spring.

The 10,000 square-foot Dikeou Collection—a curated treasure trove of international contemporary art collected by Devon and her brother, Pany—occupies a raft of office suites within the Art-Deco style Colorado Building. Yet, for all its lively offerings to the public, including poetry readings and a jazz series—along with its stunning



The rooms in Devon's 6th-floor unit are connected by a continuous balcony that overlooks Cheesman Park and provides expansive views of the Front Range.



Devon's collection includes a series of photos taken by renowned Denver photographer Mark Sink (son of architect Charles Sink). Here, Sink's photos capture candid images of Mick Jagger, Charlie Watts, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol.

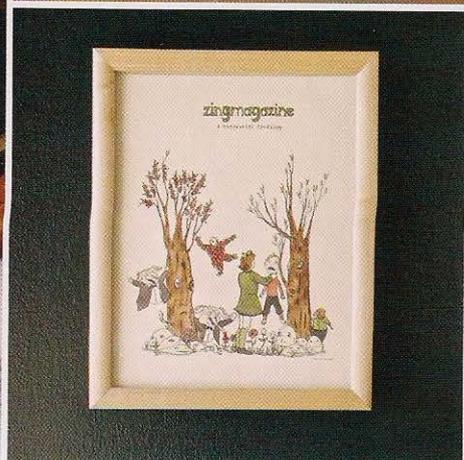
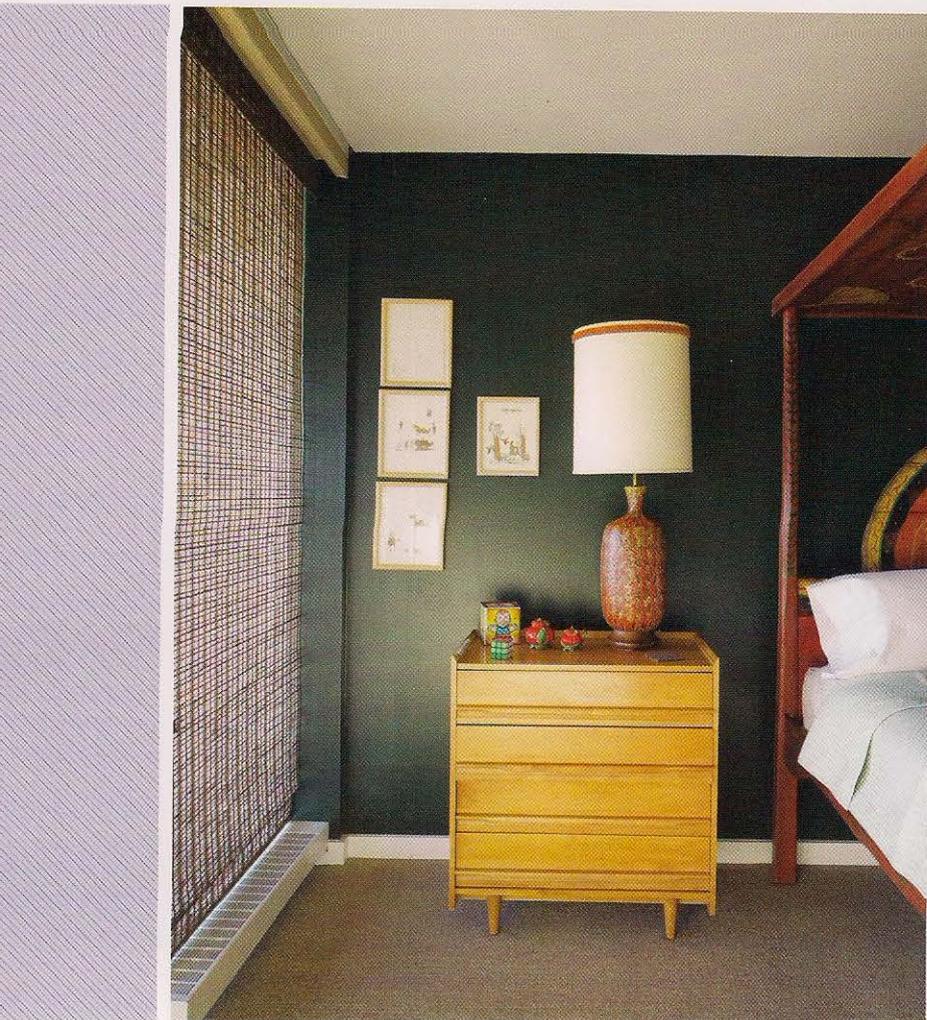
array of both emerging and established artists, the collection has flown under the radar of even some of Denver's art cognoscenti. John Grant, a Denver-based art consultant and curator comments, "Devon has quietly put together one of the hidden gems in Denver's contemporary art landscape. The Dikeou Collection offers those that take the time to visit, an opportunity to experience work by contemporary artists who, without the collection, would never find a place in Denver."

The gallery's serene atmosphere is interrupted by only the hum and rattle of the steam heat pushing through the pipes of the fifth floor 1891 building. As Devon describes her multifaceted engagement in the art world, a puckish smile and joyful glint in her eyes convey her passion for her artistic life. Her knowledge of art and its

players is encyclopedic, yet she is self-effacing and gracious, overflowing with an infectious Alice in Wonderland-like curiosity. The latter impression is magnified by artist Momoyo Torimitsu's two giant blow-up bunnies, albeit deflated, whose limp rubber bodies lay prostrate across the gallery floor on either side of her. Devon will tell you that context has everything to do with the experience of art.

When she is not crisscrossing the country between domestic-bases that include Austin, New York and Denver—tending to her role as editor in chief of *zingmagazine* (the publication she started in 1995), teaching, curating or collecting—she is creating her own art.

Although a self-proclaimed non-studio artist, she creates physical works of art that fall into the lexicon of a conceptual or installation



LEFT: Iconic children's toys are arrayed on a vintage Russell Wright bureau from Mod Livin' which looks remarkably comfortable next to an early 19th century Alsace-Lorraine hand-painted four poster folk canopy bed, which fills the bedroom.

ABOVE: Adjacent to the antique bed is a drawing by artist Marcel Dzama (2003) that the artist gave to Devon on the occasion of the publication of zingmagazine's #20, which included a section of the artist's paintings and drawings.

art, depending on the context in which they are shown. She says her artwork "is very much a self-portrait" and at the same time, a reflection of her existence in the art world as a viewer, collector, artist, curator and critic.

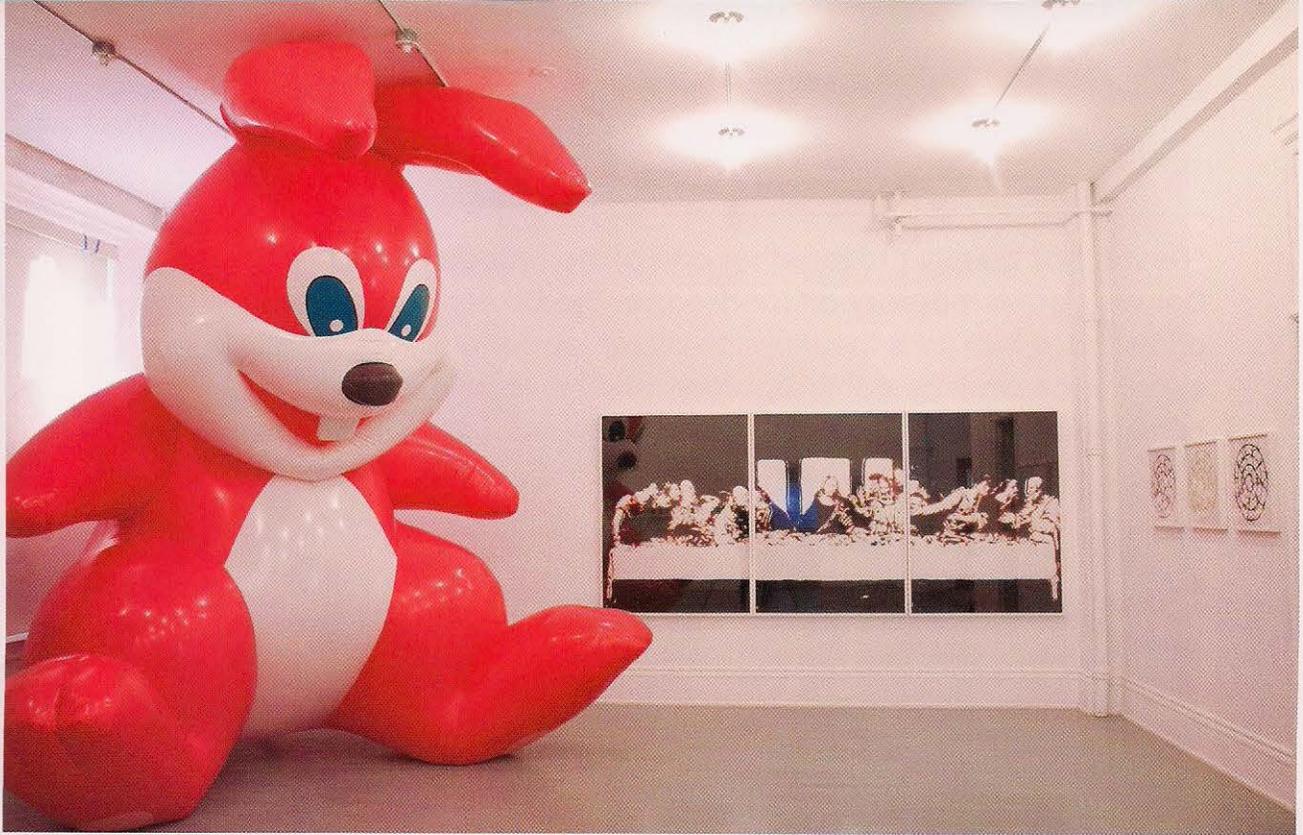
Devon's most recent work titled "Pay What you Wish" will be installed in the Dikeou Collection and was shown at NADA Miami, an invitation-only independent art fair. The piece is a direct comment on the commercial nature of the fair and a simultaneous riff on the old-school donation boxes that

nudge museum goes to contribute to the institution's bottom line. She recreated 18 donation boxes from 16 different American museums and scattered them throughout the art fair. This multi-layered piece draws meaning from its context and is just one in a series of meditative juxtapositions that Devon has created.

In 2013, Devon displayed ten lobby directory boards from her regenerative series called "What's Love Got to Do With It?" as part of a group show at the New Museum Of Contemporary Art that featured

young artists who were making their mark on New York's art scene in 1993. The identically sized, 18x24-inch directory boards have grown to 120 in number and 81 of them now line the entry gallery of the Dikeou Collection. This concept of repetition radiates through Devon's artwork and also deeply influences how she approaches collecting, displaying and experiencing other artists' work.

In making choices for the Dikeou Collection, Devon and her brother subscribe to a similar school of thought as that of artist



ABOVE FOREGROUND: **Momoyo Torimitsu** "Somehow I Don't Feel Comfortable" 2000  
2 Rubber Inflatable Balloons, Ventilators, 16' x 10' in diameter each

BACKGROUND: **Vik Muniz** "Milan (Last Supper)" 1998 Cibachrome 3 panels, 48" x 60" each

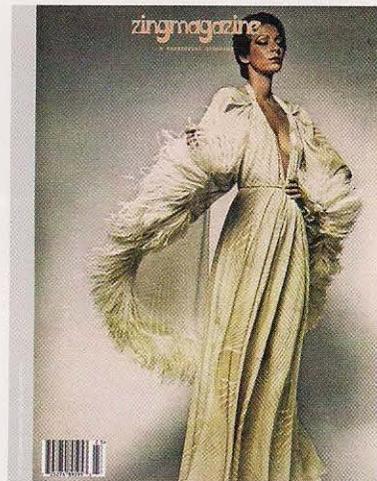
Donald Judd, who advocated for permanent installation of artwork within a specific context to allow the viewer to discover the art over successive visits. The siblings use the rich, meaning-laden words "generosity, breadth and longevity" to describe the intention of the collection and to guide their selections. "Regardless of the medium," says Devon, "each potential acquisition is evaluated for these qualities."

To begin the dialogue, she often first invites artists, to publish their work in *zingmagazine*, which she created to "give artists a platform for their ideas and work." The incipient relationships with artists are nurtured into enduring ones when she is sure that the medium and artist are represented fully and their work can be shown "in its truest form—even if that form itself might be challenging." Devon adds that "once an artist is in the collection, we are dedicated to bringing their vision to fruition and

helping to garner their voice in a public sphere."

*So dive in and take a look. No matter who you are, you are bound to find something intriguing. Get to know the Dikeou Collection (Hours: Wed-Fri 11:00 AM-5:00PM) and expose yourself to this Jewel in Denver's burgeoning contemporary art landscape. You will find it somewhere between the T-Mobile and Planet Sub along California Street in downtown Denver. Here you can slip through a pair of aluminum double doors and take the ambling elevator to the fifth floor of the Colorado Building—where the doors will part (not unlike going through the wardrobe to Narnia) and you'll be in the right place to partake in the magic of the Dikeou Collection.*

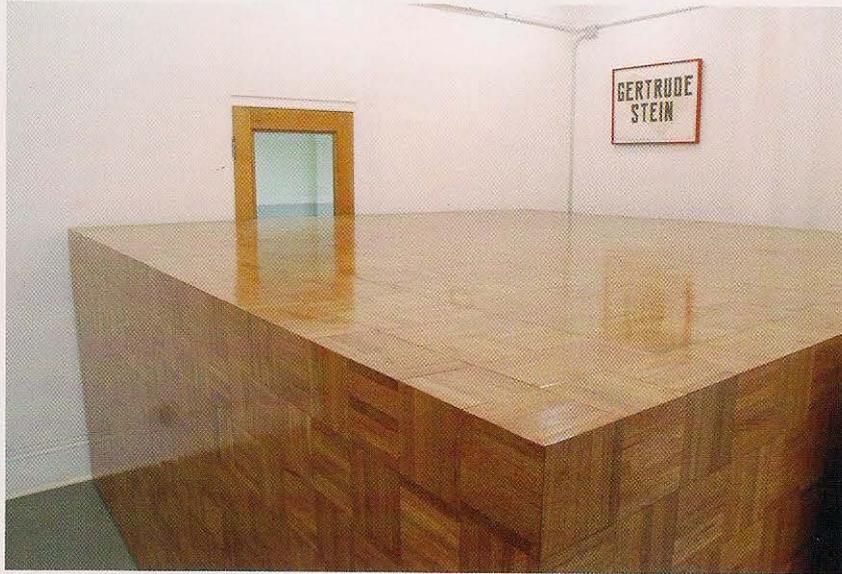
[dikeoucollection.org](http://dikeoucollection.org)



TOP: Cover of *zingmagazine*, Issue 23

BOTTOM: Devon Dikeou (photo by Lisa Kereszi)

“Devon has quietly put together one of the hidden gems in Denver’s contemporary art landscape. The Dikeou Collection offers those that take the time to visit, an opportunity to experience work by contemporary artists that, without the collection, would never find a place in Denver.” John Grant



TOP LEFT: **Wade Guyton** “The Room Moved, the Way Blocked (Stage 1)” 1998 Parquet Wood Floor 16’ x 15’ x 5’ (Photographer, Michael Myers)

TOP RIGHT: **Lawrence Seward** “1989” 2001  
Foam, Paint, Wood, Sculpt-A-Mold, Plaster 68” x 35” x 77”  
(Viewer: Saniego Sanchez, Director of Dikeou Collection)

BOTTOM LEFT: **Devon Dikeou** “Reserved for Ileana Sonnabend: Buddha or Machiavelli” (Brenda Richardson about Ileana Sonnabend as quoted by Calvin Tomkins—The New Yorker 2010, Ongoing, Wall: C-Print Wall Mural of Name Plate Reserving a Table in Perpetuity for the Preeminent Art Dealer Ileana Sonnabend Floor: 1 Table and 2 Chairs from the Restaurant Mezzogiorno Variable Dimensions (Photographer, Michael Myers)

BOTTOM RIGHT: **Johannes VanDerBeek** “Newspaper Ruined” 2008 Mixed Media 42” x 96” x 192” (Person: Jenna Dwyer, Intern at Dikeou Collection)

# HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

MUSEUMS

## A Private Collection Dedicated to Conceptual and Cumbersome Art

by Devon Van Houten Maldonado on August 18, 2016

Like 1.2K



Momoyo Torimitsu, "Somehow I Don't Feel Comfortable" (2000, left), two rubber inflatable balloons, ventilators, 16 x 10 ft in diameter each and Vik Muniz, "Milan (Last Supper)" (right), Cibachrome, 3 panels, 48 x 60 in each (all photos courtesy the Dikeou Collection, Denver) (click to enlarge)

DENVER – Over the last 18 years, a small but loud contemporary art collection has been brewing in the Mile High City, with a mission to bring together artists' most difficult pieces. The result is the [Dikeou Collection](#), a diverse and ephemeral institution that's open to the public and includes a rotating cast of special projects alongside early work from artists who went on to become internationally renowned. Devon Dikeou operates the collection as an extension of the quarterly publication [Zing Magazine](#), of which she is the founder, editor, and publisher. The collection has been a critical part of Denver's budding contemporary art scene

and continues to be the most important private collection in the city.

Even though the collection is open to the public, you have to know where to look to find it. Installed on the fifth floor of the Colorado Building, the collection cascades through vintage office spaces, with room after room of large- and small-scale works by Agathe Snow, Chris Johanson, Jonathan Horowitz, Janine Gordon, Juan Gomez, and several dozen more artists. Some galleries are jam-packed with work by multiple artists, while some works are installed in spacious rooms all their own. The collection is unique in that several complete environments are installed in full, and other works threaten to disintegrate before your eyes. There is much more to see in these offices than paintings hanging on walls or sculptures on pedestals; in fact, there are only a few paintings in the collection, which leans toward the impermanent and fragile.



*Agathe Snow, "Sludgie the Whale" (2007), installation with tarp, foam, cotton, spray paint, found objects, wire, dimensions variable (click to enlarge)*

"Sludgie the Whale" (2007), an installation by Snow, invites visitors to the collection to walk through the imagined innards of a beached whale, a kind of contrived, post-apocalyptic amusement park attraction. Unlike the precious and conservation-first attitudes of most contemporary art institutions, the Dikeou Collection forces you to walk over and through this hulking, fragile work of fabric,

foam, string, and paint. It feels wrong, but wonderfully welcoming. Another piece, by [Johannes VanDerBeek](#), exemplifies the ephemeral nature of the exhibition and the mission to collect difficult works: an imagined world made completely of yellowing *New York Times* newspapers threatens to disintegrate before your eyes, or to be blown away by your breath. One of the collection's recent acquisitions, a self-portrait ice sculpture by [Lizzi Bougatsos](#), literally melts away, an ironic comment on buying and collecting contemporary art, which becomes distilled to the monetization of ambiguous ideas and the right to reproduce them.



Wade Guyton, "the Room Moved the Way Blocked (Stage 1)" (1998), parquet wood floor, 16 x 15 x 5 ft (click to enlarge)

The collection includes a formative work by [Wade Guyton](#), which he originally made for his MFA graduation show at Hunter College. Although Guyton's inkjet paintings have since achieved astronomical prices at Christie's and Sotheby's, his "the Room Moved the Way Blocked (Stage #1)" (1998) broke new ground long before he made headlines. The installation commands one whole room to itself, blocking viewers' paths and forcing them to climb up on top of the stage, thereby performing the work themselves. In contrast to

the ephemeral nature of much of the work in the Dikeou Collection, Guyton's piece feels brutal for its awkward and immovable solidity.

Unstable materials are especially prevalent throughout the selections from the collection currently on view — papier-mâché, cardboard, and pipe cleaners included. Rather than equating fragility with luxury, the pieces in the Dikeou Collection are evidence of a theoretical gesture toward art objects as residues of their conception, creation, and presentation. In other words, the collection doesn't seem to romanticize the provenance of artworks or their unattainability, but offers insights into the beginnings of art practices and artists who gave shape to today's contemporary art landscape.



*Johannes VanDerBeek, "Newspaper Ruined" (2008), mixed media, 42 x 96 x 192 in, edition 1 of 3  
(click to enlarge)*

An early work by Johanson inconspicuously occupies a small floor space in one gallery. Two small paper mâché sculptures called "Mountain Fortress" show how Johanson began to combine his graffiti practice with folk and craft aesthetics, a merging of sensibilities that went on to define the Mission School and his work to this day. An early piece by Jonathan Horowitz, from 2001, is made up of nothing but laser prints on office paper displayed in cheep gold frames. The pink pages contain lists of actors who appeared in movies that starred Julia Roberts. One page is mysteriously blank. A full-scale cardboard replica of a racecar by [Chris Gilmour](#) fills an entire gallery. The seemingly solid object would disintegrate in water. Its uselessness is its saving grace — an imitation of a luxury item that makes light of its illegitimacy.



Lizzi Bougatsos, "Self-Portrait" (2012), ice  
(click to enlarge)

Furthermore, the connections between the New York-based publication *Zing* and the collection in Colorado create a dynamic exchange of ideas, projects, and texts, which keeps the works relevant and brings Denver into a far-reaching conversation. Many artists represented in the collection, along with many who aren't, have also submitted publication projects to *Zing* and a number of works are presented alongside editions of the publication, offering deeper insights into the artists' practices and the collection.

The play between collecting art objects as an elite pursuit and contemporary art's idealistic attempts at immateriality is key to understanding this collection. Dikeou's mission to acquire only artists' most difficult works results in a distinctive grouping, with unique pieces not likely to be seen in other museums or public spaces. Nowadays, work by these artists — with a few exceptions, most notably Johanson, who's been successful within an alternative independent community — is highly institutionalized and the collection in Denver gives viewers the opportunity to interact with the work in an intimate way, which is key for encouraging critical thinking about contemporary art in new spaces and regions.

# BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors

Week 41, 2013 • Collectors

## Interview with Devon Dikeou *The Dikeou Collection - Denver, USA*



**What was the first piece of artwork you purchased, and when was this?**

Let me state that I am firstly an artist. However, the first piece of art I "collected", I "earned" as thank you/compensation for my work as an intern at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1985.

That internship basically shaped my life as an

artist/publisher/editor/viewer/collector. One of the jobs I was assigned to do was sort out old Artforums in the gallery basement—which was really a disused Ladies' bathroom between the 7th and 8th floors, but that exercise was the best contemporary art education for any young artist, and I just couldn't get enough. Then paging through an issue, I came across an amazing art project by Lucas Samaras. As I recall, it encompassed six double page spreads featuring a neo-abstract expressionist skeleton. The first image was a full view of the skeleton and underneath was printed the word, "Artist". The next dps was a close up of the skeleton head and underneath was the word, "Dealer", and the third spread zoomed into the mouth of the skull and bore the word "Collector" underneath. (As it turns out, I have had the chance to see the Samaras project again and instead of "Artist" the word below first skeleton was "Critic"—my "curatorial" mistake!).

Nonetheless, these positions, artist, dealer, collector, critic reflected to me the "who, what, why, where, and when" of the art world and became what my practice

would encompass. It is because of my internship that the idea of these positions entered into my lexicon of art—viewing, making, publishing/editing, and collecting art related things and ideas.

The first art work the gallerist, Tibor de Nagy, and director, John Post Lee, gave me upon the completion of my summer internship was Robert Goodnough's "One Two Three". It is a magical surreal red and red/pink silkscreen and is the first piece I acquired as an artist, a collector, and a critical eye.

### **Why do you collect?**

As mentioned above, I am an artist. "Collecting" is an extension and subject matter of my art practice, which also includes publishing zingmagazine ([www.zingmagazine.com](http://www.zingmagazine.com)). Zingmagazine is published on an annual basis and presents curated projects of artists, architects, musicians, fashion designers, collectors, curators, any creative types. From the pages of zing it became clear that the next step was to be able to bring the visual publication of zing to life, and so the real public aspect of collecting followed. This was accomplished through a collaborative practice with my brother, Pany Dikeou and advanced through a public space, the Dikeou Collection in Denver, Colorado.

But in answer to the "why", well collecting is a function of a creative exploration and what it means to operate within all the realms of our visual culture. I used to work for the curators Collins & Milazzo—basically the curatorial team that mapped out the idea of "curating" in the contemporary art world and gallery culture. I learned from them that curatorial co-mingling, including collecting is really part of our visual DNA, that curatorial selections we make in every aspect of our visual life reflects our vision and that is something I cultivated and expressed in my art making, art publishing, and art collecting practice. Working and learning to think like this has also allowed me to examine context as much as process, where art is shown, bought, sold, viewed, and under what auspices.

### **Does your collection follow a concept or a specific theme?**

There is no theme per se. We are interested in presenting artist's visions completely—whether the artists are installation artists, photographers, painters, sculptors, artists who draw, etc. What we try to show or give the artists is, is an opportunity to present a wide range of their work that will represent their vision over time. We look for breadth, longevity, and generosity in artists and their work. These ideas are also intrinsic to zingmagazine and my art practice.

**Who are the artists you are currently following?**

Naturally we follow all the artists in the Dikeou Collection and of course we keep tabs on all of the many artists that have graced the pages of zingmagazine. The collection opened to the public in 2003. zingmagazine has been going since 1995, so the list is quite significant. We like getting to know artists as early in their career as possible, and zingmagazine has published many artists who have had little or no exposure before. And we have had the luxury of being exposed to artists early works, before many works were shown in gallery settings, or curatorial environments. We follow curators work and also have published many of their ideas and projects in zingmagazine, including Tricia Collins, Kenny Schachter, and Heather Pesanti and many others.

**Do you have a personal relationship with the artists you collect?**

We currently have 37 artists in the Dikeou Collection. Lots of the artists we collect are friends already or become friends through the process of doing projects in zingmagazine, and then being presented at the Dikeou Collection.

Besides showing the art work we have collected of each artist, we want to eventually have complete archival documentation of each of the artists in the collection, which will be available to the public through an on site library. We are in the process of inviting each Dikeou Collection artist to the collection to make lectures and engage with the public, which will be recorded and archived. And for something on the flip side so to speak, we currently have a collection of over 8000 LP albums which we have available for the public to use, and we hope to invite each Dikeou Collection artist to DJ and compile a Dikeou Collection Artists mixed tape. We do programming like jazz series and poetry series, which help initiate the visual work of our artists into the creative worlds of other imaginative professionals. Basically, it is our hope to continue our friendships and support the artists in every way appropriate and possible.

**Why did you decide to make your collection publicly accessible?**

It only made sense to have the collection open to the public. As an extension of my art practice and of zingmagazine, two already public venues and practices, having the collection on public view was a natural segue. But I'd like to mention art collecting venues and what it means to have a private collection as opposed to a museum or public institution because I come at this from the perspective of the artist, it works very much to my advantage to present work as we curate things and find them in the visual world. I have no conflicts of interest or feel that the visions put forth are anything other than collaborative exchanges that represent artists' visions and what it means to get to those points of mutual curatorial exchange. In

fact, I very much embrace these exchanges and like to address their formal qualities to the hilt. A collection is an easier venue for artists. Because there is a complicit understanding that works will be shown or exhibited. What happens when those trust barriers are broken or ignored? What happens when an art work is longer on exhibit. What happens if it is de-accessioned, or sold? The Dikeou Collection follows traditions of artist collectors such as Donald Judd. All the work is on permanent view. Nothing has been sold or de-accessioned.

**Which publicly accessible private collection would you recommend visiting?**

The Dikeou Collection of course! But beyond that there are many private collections that are very nicely highlighted in the BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. I quite liked getting to know about the Dallas Collections—the Rachofsky House and Warehouse and the Goss Michael Foundation. Or the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio. Linda Pace was a visionary collector and started the world renowned artist’s residency in San Antonio, Artpace. Her personal collection is housed in her loft space in San Antonio and is an exceptional preserve of her artistic will, presense, and vision. Other collections I love are the West Collection outside Philadelphia, and Vicki and Kent Logan Collection in Vail, Colorado.

