

# The Detroit News

## Idiosyncratic sculpture & collage at Simone DeSousa Gallery

By Michael H. Hodges, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019



"Untitled" by David Klamen at Detroit's Simone DeSousa Gallery. (Photo: David Klamen)

Simone DeSousa's side-by-side galleries in Midtown Detroit have somewhat different personalities. The one on the right is a classic white box, and hosts her largest exhibitions.

But the EDITION space on the other side is more informal -- still all white and gallery-like, but with one wall lined with items for sale, and a small area for shows that often involve more-accessible art at lower prices.

The current EDITION show, up through July 28, features works that are unusual for the two artists involved, each best known for paintings. Chicagoan David Klamen has created three porcelain sculptures, while Detroiter Timothy van Laar gives us a group of cryptic and whimsical collages.

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Klamen's sculptures are each a pile of disparate parts -- in one case a rooster, a cat, a dog and more -- all produced from individual molds.

Each pile -- call them vertical collages, if you will -- is about two feet tall, but their personalities are very different. The rooster-topped ensemble is unglazed, dull, and populated with realistic animals.

By contrast, a silvery pile features a friendly cartoon cat waving from the summit. The third, with a prominent figure of Christ near the top, is off-white and marked by "crazing," a network of fine lines where the glaze has cracked.



The glazed-porcelain "Untitled" by David Klamen at Detroit's Simone DeSousa Gallery. (Photo: David Klamen)

They're oddly mesmerizing works, each absorbing in its own peculiar fashion.

Van Laar, until his recent retirement the chair of fine arts at Detroit's College for Creative Studies, has 10 collages mostly created from "found images" -- colorful pictures snipped from, variously, shelter magazines and books on deserts.

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The work is playful and irreverent, combining like shapes in spare designs that may or may not have symbolic import.

Adorning each of the five framed collages at the front of the gallery (there are also unframed ones well worth a look down a hallway), is a small, precise line drawing -- here a globe, there a geodesic dome, and in another case, an empty, open box.

Individual words punctuate the collages -- in one case, "whisper" and "rub."

Is there a deeper meaning? Who knows? Like most of van Laar's work, they conjure more questions than answers, but are darned hard to take your eyes off.



Timothy van Laar's "Arid Lands V" at Detroit's Simone DeSousa Gallery. (Photo: Timothy van Laar)

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