

Scott Hocking, Pushing Boundaries

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(Photo: Robert Hensleigh)

Audacity colors everything Scott Hocking touches. The man can't help it.

This is, after all, the Detroit artist who erected a huge wood-brick ziggurat in an abandoned car factory, and planted a small forest of 1970s TV consoles atop martini columns in the ruins of Albert Kahn's Packard plant.

With "OLD" at Detroit's David Klein Gallery through June 23, Hocking, a 2011 Kresge Artist Fellow, pushes his fascination with the ancient, the withered and the bizarre.

"Everything feels old," Hocking wrote in his artist's statement, referring to Detroit and the world at large. "This place feels old. I feel old."

Remarkable as always is Hocking's ability to warp the bizarre into the beautiful, as with the show's central installation, also titled "OLD."

Hocking's famous for grafting his art onto specific landscapes, often creating mind-blowing installations that echo with myth, mysticism and folklore.

At David Klein, the artist worked a preexisting support column in the gallery's front room into the composition by stacking a macabre pile of femurs, tibias and skulls around its classical base.

(Hocking is meticulous. He weighed the 1,000-plus gypsum "bones," which clocked in at exactly one ton.)

If the Paris catacombs pop to mind, which he visited in 2015, you're not far off base. In his artist's statement, Hocking also likens the pile to a Native American burial ground that's been unearthed.

Giving the composition real punch is its copper color, which covers bones and column alike, and ranges from dull bronze to bright verdigris.



Painted skulls and bones, made of gypsum, comprise the base of Scott Hocking's "OLD" at Detroit's David Klein Gallery. (Photo: Michael H. Hodges)

In the back gallery are large photos of Hocking's earlier installations, including his not-to-be-missed Ark outside Port Austin, "Celestial Ship." There's also a marvelous picture of the artist himself trying to mount a "dead horse" he's crafted out of bones and twigs -- not something you see every day.

'OLD' - Scott Hocking, Through June 23, David Klein Gallery, 1520 Washington Blvd., Detroit
6 p.m., June 7: Artist's Talk at gallery, (313) 818-3416, dkgallery.com