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Artist Popel Coumou plays with perceptions of materials and space at Dallas gallery

The show, “Popel Coumou: Paper Reality,” is on display at Keijzers Koning.



Popel Coumou's Untitled (2020) is on display at Dallas' Keijzers Koning gallery. (Courtesy of Keijzers Koning)

What *are* we looking at?

Dutch artist Popel Coumou keeps us asking. From a distance, three of the works on the walls at Dallas' Keijzers Koning gallery look like still-life photographs. Others look like crisply geometric painterly abstractions, or collages.

The answer is: all of the above.

They're all actually photographs — all untitled — but of collages of various kinds, textures and colors of paper. Three of the photographs are indeed still lifes, incorporating tiny clay containers and flowers that in enlargement look life-size.

The Dallas Morning News

Playing with perceptions extends to what first appear to be geometric abstractions, slabs of bright colors suggesting some DNA from the early 20th century Dutch art movement known as De Stijl. But to varying degrees they evoke spaces, with windows and sunlight streaming through. One image is identifiably a table and chair. Some of the collages were photographed with sunlight behind, or shining from above, highlighting contrasts between textured construction paper and smooth photo paper.

Look more closely, and you'll see deliberate little imperfections: slices of construction paper that aren't precisely aligned, tiny shadows or slivers of light between edges that lack machined perfection. Some collisions of colored strips lend an almost Escher-esque distortion of the implied spaces. A black Saarinen "Womb" chair visibly hovers above its construction paper backing, casting ambiguous shadows in three directions.

Coumou reminds us, repeatedly, that things often aren't what they appear.

Details

"Popel Coumou: Paper Reality" runs through May 6 at Keijsers Koning, 150 Manufacturing St., Suite 201. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; by appointment Monday and Tuesday. 469-961-5391, keijserskoning.com.



Popel Coumou's *Untitled* (2021) on display at Dallas' Keijsers Koning gallery. (Keijsers Koning)



[Scott Cantrell](#), Special Contributor. Former staff classical music critic Scott Cantrell continues contributing as a freelance writer on classical music and art. His classical music reporting is supported by the Rubin Institute for Music Criticism, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. The News makes all editorial decisions.