

Ben Hall's "Let's Don't Take No Chance" taking all kinds of chances at 2739 Edwin
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Upon entering the scene at 2739 Edwin Gallery, I was immediately gripped by nervous energy, invoked by "Let's Don't Take No Chance," a collection of sculptural pieces by Detroit artist Ben Hall. Put simply, I felt a little worried that they might collapse on me at any moment. When I spoke with him, Hall was deeply reassuring, both in mentioning that the pieces were rigged to remain sturdier than they seemed—most of them appearing to occupy an almost transitional state of delicate balance—and also positing that feeling nervous around art is a positive reaction. On that point, I agree.

The work is highly playful, with classic gags like rainbow clown wigs, oversized shoes and chatter teeth punctuating some of the installations. One wall of the gallery features "I'm waiting to see what you say before I answer," a series of laser-cut signs with messages that range from mere non-sequitur to baldly hilarious. On a higher level are the twin security bubbles, like one might see on the ceiling of a casino, busily surveying each other eye-to-eye, a subtly blinged-out Cleveland Indians cap, and a cinderblock construction seemingly balanced on little more than a stack of Kool cigarette packs.

Hall's *mélange* of materials is highly conscious and in some cases poignant—in one of the most powerful and precarious pieces, a grocery cart (among most anthropomorphic of commonplace items) is held in delicate and unlikely stasis atop a stack that narrows down to just a few aluminum cans.

The work is an astonishing collection of humor, physics and anxious energy, with large-scale installations reminding the nervous and engaged visitors of the power art can hold.