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Bushwacking through 'Overgrowth' at the deCordova in Lincoln

On view through Sept. 18, "Overgrowth" fills galleries on the second and third floors of the deCordova's museum building. Photography, painting and sculpture - all drawn from the deCordova's permanent collection - tackle the notion of human excess.

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Jedediah Caesar, Untitled, 2012, urethane, pigment, wood, and bone Courtesy Photo/deCordova

By Keith Powers/Daily News Correspondent

Posted May. 15, 2016 at 8:26 AM

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LINCOLN - Growth sounds like a good thing. Overgrowth - not so much.

The ideas brought forth by expansion and excess, and the images that those ideas inspire, form the core of the current exhibition at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum.

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ed inkjet print, "Self-reveals a vision in made up of food containers, the obvious remnants of too many

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take out evenings (a separate comment,

perhaps, on the life of an artist).

The artist herself poses behind the symmetrically piled containers, hidden from view, like the consumer who expects, picks up, then discards the squeaky plastic containers. Visually, everything appeals. The idea of it all does not.

Not all the works make such overt social commentary. Alex MacLean's overhead photo of a auto junkyard, adjacent to a rural Maine stream, seems colorful, appealing and hardly ominous. His photo of a Kansas City subdivision looks painfully and inhumanely symmetrical at first glance; closer examination shows that each of the inhabitants has modified their homes slightly - a swing set here, a fence or fire-pit there - making it their own, stating their individuality.

Chris Taylor employs clever trompe l'oeil craft. His collection of crushed food packaging and dirty plastic cups turns out to be blown glass creations - turning the elegant finish of glasswork on its head.

The cosmos will not entirely escape human development, and artists know it. A huge sponged acrylic by Yeffe Kimball, "Blue Space Concept," dominates a themed section called "Cosmic/Atomic." High-speed photography pioneer Harold Edgerton's composition from one of the first nuclear blasts darkens the mood in this corner of the exhibition.

Darkness emerges in another way, with Nancy Burson's "Visualize This," the simple electron microscope blow-up of two T cells - one healthy, one infected with HIV - a public art presence that did much to galvanize political and social response to the medical crisis.

Sculpture by Jean Arp, Henry Moore, Kieff Antonio Grediaga (who goes simply by Kieff) and Harold Torvish - especially Torvish's series of bronze skulls - are beautiful to see, but seem a curious adjunct to the exhibition's organizational principals (they are collected under the thematic "Creative Cultivation").

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