

## *Ephemeral*

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projected exhibition date: August 15 – October 30, 2013

At its core, the ephemeral defines the nature of human existence, yet it is an inevitability that humanity continues to deny and struggle against. In much of art-making, material is a stand-in for what cannot be held. Moments in time are captured in photographs that may outlast the subjects they portray. The labor of building, constructing, and crafting art, are clear measures for the time it demands to accomplish these tasks. But when we pause to truly contemplate the expanse of the human experience, we realize nothing is permanent. Artists such as Dieter Roth have explored this theme by creating works that deliberately incorporate decay into the process. Others, such as Swoon, Andrew Goldsworthy, and Patrick Dougherty, challenge the notion of the art object as immutably fixed in the material world by exposing it to environments that ensure its eventual decay. Still others like Oscar Munoz, Mary Temple, and Christian Boltanski express aspects of experience that refer directly to the irretrievable: images of dead strangers, light arrested from movement, the empty clothing of absentee wearers; all of which address the ultimate questions of human mortality, loss, and our ephemeral nature.

The *Ephemeral* exhibition at Adelphi University will feature art that addresses the transitory, either due to its material composition, its installation environment, or use of subject matter. Such work raises questions about our expectations of the art object, our experience as viewers, and the function of creation in the lives of artists. Ideas that might be raised include: Does something need to be permanent to be “real” and impactful? What is our understanding of permanence in the world? Who should the object serve, the maker or the viewer, and how does this impact meaning?

*Ephemeral* has the potential to extend beyond its visual dialogue to engage the Adelphi University population in a wider conversation. Within its theme, there is the opportunity to ignite creative synergy and collaboration between schools,

while attracting broader attention from the greater academic community. The ephemeral can be found within every subject, including history, literature, philosophy, the health sciences, education, and environmental science. Here, the subject could serve as a catalyst to inspire conversation, symposia, and events across the campus.

Multiple projects have been proposed to extend the exhibition beyond the gallery walls to create more interactive experiences for its participants. A university “Chalking Day” is in the planning stages that would entice the full Adelphi population out of doors to create temporary works that would express a wide range of disciplines. Art students would lead different groups for competitions between sites for the best chalk renderings. Area high school students will be invited to campus to participate, thereby extending our recruitment efforts. The interplay between image and text will be explored as Adelphi poets, historians and philosophers work together in unity.

Artists will be invited to the campus to foster greater excitement. Sand artist Joe Mangrum will create a performative, outdoor work of riotous color and complexity the public may observe during its process. “Yarn bombers” will be invited to campus to leave their gleeful marks. Noteworthy artist Portia Munson will create a work inspired by one of Adelphi’s distinctive hallmarks: its magnificent flora that will speak uniquely about the Adelphi University campus. Other projects are under discussion that could further enhance the theme and garner attention for our institution.

Symposia and panels will accompany the affairs and culminate with a catalog featuring scholarly essays and pictorial documentation. Ideally, every college and every department at Adelphi University would have something to contribute. Somewhat ironically, *Ephemeral* has the potential to create a lasting impact on its participants and the reputation of the school with the dialogue it sparks, the cross-disciplinary collaborations it inspires, the excitement and unity it builds for the student population and faculty. As a temporal celebration, *Ephemeral* could leave a significant mark.