

Talia Dorsey

Introduction

The ponderous question of ephemera is that it is at once that which is fleeting and, by a simple shift of the frame, that which remains. It is that which is transitory, that which *is* by the constancy of time's passage; however, it is too, by the very same definition, that which offers the semblance of duration by this precise capacity to move *beyond* or *with* time. The objects, moments and conditions by which we define and engage our age is constructed by the very things, by which it will become obsolete. In an era in which time and speed are so complicit in the constitution of our cultural awareness, where and how might we begin to locate the foundational registers by which to measure their effect?

In a relativistic model of existence, the operative nature of these registers becomes a point of question. If we are to examine the flux of our times, then we must seek to find the static points, modes, frames, axioms or objects by which it can be rendered. Conversely, if we are to

seek the engagement with the flux of our times, then we must necessarily move with it, in the attempt of creating co-temporal portals to insight and experience, rendered stable by their paralleling dynamism. Such is the crux of ephemera's internal dynamic, constituted by the relationship of ephemera—the subjects and objects of a localized permanence, and the ephemeral—the temporally-engaged modes by which to establish, if even momentarily, these very registers of permanence.

This issue of thresholds is dedicated to this dynamic. It is a composition of works shifting in scales, scope and media, located throughout this circular spectrum. They are works actively and collectively engaged, through content and/or intent, in the consideration of the complex workings of time and the constructions it allows. Their methods and sites of questioning are manifold: looking at the objects that remain—the scrapbooks¹, the detritus², the depictions³, the architectures⁴, the images⁵— as a means of

investigating and contextualizing their constitution and the re-constitutional potentials they imply; interrogating specifically the procedural logics⁶ that underlay such artifacts towards a disciplinary understanding of their relevance⁷; detecting the suggestive fissures in emergent cultural conditions and constructs in which enduring paradigms of experiential engagement⁸ might take hold; creating⁹, extracting¹⁰, documenting¹¹ and deploying¹² the constituents of experience to uncover and offer permanence to their qualitative meaning; and lastly pondering the yearning means¹³ of this, so very human, endeavor.

This issue, comprised by the collective spirit of its works, is intended to offer an open-ended portrait, a register of this time, a site of experience and contemplation, of the interwoven dynamics of ephemera. And only by the journal's ultimate and inevitable participation therein, is it truly.

NOTES

- 1 see Charlie Hailey, *Scrapbook* (1923)
- 2 see Jennifer Gabrys, *The Quick and the Dirty : Ephemeral Systems in Silicon Valley*
- 3 see Cecilia E. Ramos, *Caillebotte's On the Pont de l'Europe : A Transversal Vista of Modernity*
- 4 see Irene Sunwoo, *Taming the Farnsworth House* and Jesse Vogler, *4132 United States Post Offices*
- 5 see Mark Cottle, *Seven Views of Twelve Months: Ephemera, Phenomena and Experience*
- 6 see John May, *Such as that Elegant Blend of Philosophy and Hardware : Preface to a History of Geographical Autonomy*; Scott A. Sherer, *Remains : Smithsonian's Partially Buried Woodshed after 35 Years*; Monika Codourey Wisniewska, *Manuscript : Technologies of Space and Body in Transit*; and R. Shane Williamson, *Scalar*
- 7 see Lydia Kallipoliti, *Materials off the Catalogue*; and Kiril Ass, *A Watch-Tower*
- 8 see Louise Pelletier, *Architecture of Events : Reconfiguring the City*; and Lydia Kallipoliti, Alexandros Tsamis, Ioannis Zavoleas, John E. Fernandez, M. Alexandra Sinisterra & Vana Tentokali, *Fecund Cityscapes: Ephemeral Structures for the Athens Olympics 2004*
- 9 see Lukasz Lysakowski, Keiko Uenishi & So Takahashi, *In Real Time*
- 10 see James Boxer, *MVI_0376*; Claudia Westermann, *Waiting*; Ben Dalton, *hello ... hi ... hi ... er ... hello*; and Tomer Reiss, *Tukim*
- 11 see Bert de Muynck, *Ephemera and Experience*
- 12 see David Serero, *Variable Geometry : Acoustical Domes*
- 13 see Natasha Ruiz-Gómez, *Essence and Etranscendence in the Hands of Rodin*; and Jennifer Rhee, *Time Embodied : The Lived Body in On Kawara's Date Paintings*