

One Every Day

November 5 – December 19, 2009

Curatorial Statement

It's the detritus that we find tucked under our windshield, the debris we empty from our pockets at the end of the day. It's the trading card from childhood that never appreciated in value, but we treasure nonetheless. It's the gig-poster that begs to be removed from the telephone pole and squirreled away in a drawer. We could name many varieties of print ephemera, each with its own obscure origins. Regardless of physical form, all these things share three characteristics: fleeting function, low-cost means of production, and the fact that somebody out there loves them.

In a strange contradiction, the moment that technology allowed for the production of cheap, mundane printed material, people began to collect it. The *Burdick Collection* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art houses approximately three hundred thousand examples of ephemera that can only be seen by appointment. This arrangement pits baseball card enthusiasts against curators from the Hermitage, each jockeying for table space. And with the urge to collect comes the need to classify; The Ephemera Society of America counts over forty categories of printed matter in its list of acknowledged forms of ephemera. Their list ranges from business cards and ticket stubs to newspapers and Valentines.

This compulsion to collect and classify may be a hard-wired neurological response to being human in a world full of stuff touched by other humans. Ephemera are the evidence of our shared history. Something rooted so deeply in our daily lives will inevitably stir the artist. And so this powerful affinity for the ephemeral inspires legions of 'creatives' to produce their own printed matter: bits and pieces of oddly vital flotsam, with hundreds of fleeting functions. The twenty-five artists and designers in *One Every Day* share a central interest in print ephemera, but each contributor to this exhibition presents his or her own nuanced take on what ephemera might signify.

Many of the contributors to this exhibition reproduce, mimic, or parody past and present styles of printed matter. These artists appropriate the primary visual language of modern times, and in turn they appropriate our own attachments to that language; as seen in the concept driven work of Adam Pendleton, Stephanie Syjuco. Similarly, culture workers have created a profound sense of dislocation by re-contextualizing print language, often just by placing it where it does not belong; for example Colby Bird's *Framed Poster* series, laborious recreations of youth culture graphics create a jarring response and art historical allusions when seen in a fine art context.

Some of these artists catalog printed objects according to form, applying a keen interior logic to the chaotic remnants from the world around them; for example, mining printed matter for raw material in the modern collage tradition, as illustrated in the works of Kim Rugg, Chad Kouri and taken to an extreme in the work of Lydia Diemer who seems to be building her own Merzbau in the gallery space from rustbelt detritus. Others use the printed object, whether found or created anew, to create relationships with the public; Geoff Hargodon's "Cash For Your Warhol" signs placed in front of the Rose Art Museum takes this tack. Sometimes this relationship involves an actual exchange of printed material, an act that creates an oddly symmetrical relationship between artist and audience. Temporary Services, Evan Roth and Packard Jennings all see this relationship with the audience as a crucial component in their participatory project.

And of course, many of these artists and designers created these objects for the same reasons ephemera have always been created. An efficient mode of production and distribution allows access to the widest possible audience. This is always the goal of anyone with an idea to share, an agenda to promote, a culture to subvert, or yes, even a product to advertise. You can see this in Post-Typography's innovative show poster screenprinted on silver mylar balloons. The work of Gary Kachadourian, who commodifies his art as cheap consumer products sold at bargain-basement prices to maximize the distribution of the work.

The universe of ephemera is expansive, and so is the work in *One Every Day*. The viewer will be treated to books, pamphlets, zines, stickers, merchandise, and other artifacts, but also subtle minimalist explorations, conceptual activism, and post-punk rock promotion. Similarly, the goals of our contributors are diverse: highly personal and comedic explorations of youth culture rest easily alongside overt critiques of consumer waste.

Even mundane printed matter contains reams of history and meaning, and the creative work assembled here is far from mundane. Is it possible for an expansive, ambitious survey like this to come together in a conversation of ideas? Will the work of artists, designers, and commercial printers cohere around an affinity for the ephemeral? We think so, if only for a moment...

- **Printeresting** (Amze Emmons, R.L. Tillman, Jason Urban)

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