

NYU's Independent Daily Student Newspaper
WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

Gallery art inspired by flowers

Audrey Deng, Staff Writer
October 30, 2014

For fans of art that embraces the ephemeral, “The Floral Ghost” is a must-see gallery show. Unlike most pieces of art, which are in some sense permanent, the artwork in Planthouse Gallery’s Plant District space reflects the fleeting quality of nature. When visitors step into the gallery, they first see a pattern of colored-pencil flowers drawn on the wall in 15 shades of gray, appropriately titled “Farewell.” When the show is over, this piece of art by Katia Santibañez will be erased from the wall, and this is just what she intended.



Audrey Deng
For “The Floral Ghost,” a new show about art based on plants at Planthouse Gallery, artist Katia Santibañez, posing with her work, has created a colored-pencil drawing that will be erased when the show ends.

The other works of art in the gallery range from minimalist to whimsical. Anton Würst’s engravings on woven paper contrast the softness of the paper with the extreme permanency of engraved designs, while other works focus more on the cerebral, such as Fred Tomaselli’s blooming flowers, which look like nerve endings. At the end of the gallery, 60 silkscreened monotypes on newsprint paper dominate the entire wall in a burst of color that contrasts with the gallery’s grey opening. Florian Meisenberg and Simryn Gill also contributed pieces to the gallery – the bright floral piece “Text me if i feel better next week! (working hard to pretend working hard)” and the scenic matte paper print “Scale or Tasha and the Tree,” respectively.

Despite the thoughtful juxtapositions, it is difficult to fully appreciate each individual piece of art, as visitors are simply given a piece of paper just short of a checklist that denoted the works. A lack of any description at all makes some

works difficult to understand. The experience would have been more interesting if onlookers had known what the artists' take on this "Flower Ghost" project was.

Overall, "Flower Ghost" is based on clever ideas from talented artists, but the gallery lacks stability. The idea of impermanence was perhaps too enthusiastically embraced, and one could feel the consequences of this ghostliness in the gallery – it is lucid, but transparent. Still, it is more often powerful than not, and the works come to take on a life of their own for viewers that can understand the art's ephemerality.

It is difficult to accept the transience and impermanence of most art, but despite its problems, this show bravely captures this sentiment, doing so with a sense of self-awareness that makes this collection visceral. Like the flowers and ghosts of the exhibition's title, most of the artwork on view is evanescent.

"The Floral Ghost" is on view at Planthouse Gallery, 107 W. 28th St., through Dec. 12.

A version of this article appeared in the Thursday, Oct. 30 print edition. Email Audrey Deng at entertainment@nyunews.com.