

AQC0379

Nanopublication — Ephemeral Medium as Deliberate Choice

by Arnaud Quercy · The Sailer · 2022



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Ephemeral Medium as Deliberate Choice

I chose beach sand specifically for its impermanence. The [1] sculpture existed for hours before the tide and wind reclaimed it. This isn't a limitation of the medium—it's the point. The work was always meant to return to the beach. Permanence would contradict the piece's meaning.

CONTEXT

Beach sand as sculptural medium carries inherent impermanence. Tide, wind, footsteps, time—all work to return the carved form to undifferentiated beach. I chose this medium knowing the sculpture would last hours, perhaps a day at most. The Mediterranean [2] waves would reclaim it. This wasn't a constraint to overcome but a condition to embrace.

Permanence would fundamentally alter the work's meaning. A bronze cast of "The Sailer" would memorialize, would insist on persistence, would claim a kind of immortality. But the piece is about passage, journey, movement—the sailor doesn't stay, the vessel doesn't anchor permanently. The ephemeral medium enacts the conceptual content. The work's dissolution is part of its completion.

This positions "The Sailer" outside the traditional sculptural economy of museum preservation and market circulation. There is no object to sell, no artifact to conserve. The work happened, was witnessed by the few present, and returned to the beach. What persists is photographic documentation and the memory of those who encountered it—traces, not the thing itself. This choice places the work in dialogue with land art traditions (Goldsworthy [3]'s ice sculptures, Smithson [4]'s entropic interventions) while remaining distinct through its intimate scale and beachgoer audience.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2022). The Sailer — Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0379.html>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0379.html>
- [2] Mediterranean Echoes collection documentation, 2022 [nanopub reference if exists]
- [3] Andy Goldsworthy, ephemeral ice and leaf sculptures [URL to be added]
- [4] Robert Smithson, "Spiral Jetty" and entropic art [URL to be added]

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