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## Palmer Museum Opens Retrospective Of Pennsylvania Artist G. Daniel Massad's Intricate Still-Lives

October 19, 2018

The Palmer Museum of Art is pleased to announce the opening of *A Small Radius of Light: G. Daniel Massad, A Retrospective*. This major loan exhibition, featuring 72 works spanning five decades, will be on view through Sunday, Dec. 9.

Massad has dedicated much of his career to depicting the world around him. His poetic, meticulously detailed still-lives, rendered in the medium of pastel, call to mind the work of the Old Masters. His work can be found in numerous private collections across the United States as well as in major museum collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Art, and the Palmer Museum of Art.

Dan is widely recognized as one of the most important contemporary artists working in the pastel medium, said Palmer director Erin Coe. This is the first retrospective dedicated to his remarkable career, and it features a significant number of works that have never been shown before. Massad was born in Oklahoma City, Okla., in 1946 and painted his first still-life at the age of 10. After earning degrees in English at Princeton University and the University of Chicago, he worked for several years as a psychotherapist before making the decision to pursue graduate work in painting in 1979. Since 1983, he has lived in Annville, Pa., where he is artist-in-residence at Lebanon Valley College.

The Palmer retrospective explores the full gamut of Massad's career, from early academic realist drawings from the late 1960s to his most recent pastel, *Memoria*, completed in early 2018 as an homage to the upcoming 100th anniversary of the armistice of World War I.

Since 1990, Massad's work has focused on architectural fragments of brick or stone supporting a dramatically lit array of natural and manmade objects, all set against a metaphorically potent expanse of pure black.

Each of these exquisite pastels takes the artist upwards of four months to complete, said Palmer curator Joyce Robinson. There's much more than meets the eye when it comes to Dan's work, she added.

The mature still-lives are filled with a remarkable array of data such as maps, words, numbers, constellations, references to literature and ancient history, as well as autobiographical symbols. Some of these ordinary things, the enticing objects featured in Massad's still-lives that are drawn from his studio and home, will be on view with the works of the remarkable artist, who wields shards of pastel rather than paintbrushes.

This is the most satisfying collaborative project I've ever had the good fortune to be a part of, remarked Massad, though I do wonder if there is life after a retrospective, he joked. There's already another work on the easel, he continued.

Organized by the Palmer, *A Small Radius of Light* features signature works borrowed from public as well as private collections.

Accompanying the retrospective is a major publication featuring a comprehensive essay by Robinson and 43 backstories, short memoir-like reflections on the genesis of major works, written by Massad over the past 30 years. The book is available in both soft and hard cover and is for sale in the Palmer Museum Store.

The Palmer Museum of Art on the Penn State University Park campus is a free-admission arts resource for the University and surrounding communities in central Pennsylvania. With a collection of 9,000 objects representing and spanning a variety of cultures and centuries of art, the Palmer is the largest art museum between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

For more information, visit [www.palmermuseum.psu.edu](http://www.palmermuseum.psu.edu).

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