## Echo of Petals in the Dark – Curatorial Statement

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.*
—Ezra Pound, *In a Station of the Metro* (1913)[[1]](#footnote-1)

The exhibition *Echo of Petals in the Dark* unfolds in the transient corridors of Telfer Subway, a historic underground passway in Edinburgh. Inspired by Pound’s imagist verse, the title reflects the fleeting nature of transit spaces and the momentary appearance of informal, elusive artistic gestures—works that surface briefly, without institutional framing, before vanishing into the fabric of the city. This exhibition seeks to explore such ephemeral practices and their spectral presence in overlooked urban spaces.

This exhibition introduces the term Ghost Art as a curatorial framework grounded in the intersection of *non-place* and *poor image* theory. The concept responds to artistic forms that emerge spontaneously within the lost spaces of supermodernity—spaces marked by transience, anonymity, and cultural invisibility, as theorized by Marc Augé.[[2]](#footnote-2) Telfer Subway, a utilitarian underpass defined more by movement than memory, exemplifies such a site. The framework also draws from Hito Steyerl’s notion of the *poor image*, embracing low-resolution, widely circulated, and degraded visual content.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Ghost Art refers to a range of ephemeral, informal, and unauthorized artistic practices that resist institutional frameworks and surface briefly in the margins of the urban landscape. Nomadic and unclassifiable, this form of art navigates between visual culture and social structure, challenging hierarchies of visibility, authorship, and aesthetic legitimacy. It operates as a resistance to institutional control, artistic tradition, and formal aesthetics, occupying the spectral zones between disappearance and exposure.

The exhibition features artworks by Maria Arena, Xu Tan, Toshio Matsumoto, Boris Achour, Hannah Black, Elaine Sturtevant, Jesse Darling and The Diggers that embody Ghost Art and respond directly to the spatial and material conditions of Telfer Subway. These include experimental film and video, underground publications, and installation sculptures, which are integrated into the site’s existing textures—damp concrete, residual graffiti, and echoing corridors.

Rather than beautifying the space, the works aim to activate its latent visual and acoustic memory, appearing subtly and momentarily. Often camouflaged or only partially visible, these interventions encourage a mode of encounter grounded in accidental discovery rather than passive viewing. For those attuned to wandering and observing the city—the urban flâneur—Ghost Art may offer a fleeting yet intimate aesthetic experience embedded in the everyday.[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. Ezra Pound, *Personae: The Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Marc Augé, ‘From Places to Non-Places’ (United Kingdom: Verso, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hito Steyerl, ‘In Defense of the Poor Image’, *E - Flux Journal*, no. Issue #10 (2009), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Walter Benjamin and Rolf. Tiedemann, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1999); Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Place of publication not identified: Prism Key Press, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)