

Ε

Last year, for an exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut, Adelphi Associate Professor Carson Fox created an installation of fire and ice. It existed within two rooms adjacent to one another, separated by a doorway that acted as a portal between the extremes of color, heat and human personality. The two rooms together were titled Bi Polar. For Ms. Fox, the two rooms represented the depths of emotion and the refusal to let go of our most primal relationship-the one between child and parent.

Inside one room-the Ice Room-were 112 clear cast resin icicles suspended above sharp, faceted clouds of snowflakes covering the walls and two snow mounds on the floor. "The image of the icicle was taken from a vivid dream I had of my mother shortly after her death," Ms. Fox says. "I met her outside of my family home in a landscape covered with ice. As we spoke, the ice melted, and I realized soon she and the icicles would be gone. Although irrational, a question kept resurfacing in my mind: If I fixed the ice in time, could I keep her from slipping away?"

The focal point of the Fire Room was a translucent red, pink and orange woodpile in the middle of the floor, surrounded by hand-printed flames covering the walls. The room was inspired by a specific memory of her father.

Rewind to an episode in Ms. Fox's childhood, and we find her on a family outing cutting down trees. She and her family packed the logs into the back of her father's inherited Cadillac and stacked them neatly in their yard

"[My father had] decided we couldn't afford to heat our home anymore. He cut off heat



in the house, except for one room, which was his," Ms. Fox recalls. "My father couldn't follow anything through. The next step of splitting the logs so they'd fit in the fireplace just couldn't happen...the log pile sat there my whole life," she says. "The log pile rotted in our backyard."

That log pile focus piece, framed in eternity by cast resin, is her father's bipolar nature, his mental illness and the destructive effects it had on her childhood.

Her parents died very close to one another, Ms. Fox remembers in her open-ceilinged office at Adelphi, where, just on the other side of the wall, her students work on various projects.

Relationships, of course, extend beyond death as does art. Reflecting on her piece, Ms. Fox says, "Here, the viewer can hold an exaggerated view of nature in leisurely focus without fear of it slipping away." 🗚

By Jordan Chapman