

# READING EAGLE

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## For photographer in upcoming Albright exhibit, home is where the art is

**By Anthony Orozco**  
*Reading Eagle*

An artist who finds beauty in elements of wear and tear is practicing her craft in one of Reading's most inconspicuous studios - an abandoned home.

Amanda C. Mathis is dissecting and photographing the literal layers of history found in the walls of an Oley Street house, exposing decorations and renovations made by families who once called it home.

While conventional photographers may have multiple lenses and flashes, Mathis counts crowbars, handsaws, screwdrivers and box cutters among her tools. She peels away wallpaper, rips up carpeting and precisely smashes through walls and ceilings.

Mathis will photograph the structural elements as her contribution to the upcoming Albright College Center for the Arts exhibition "Interrogations, Interventions, and Modifications: Four Artists Employ Architectural Strategies."

Working in the abandoned house at 131 Oley St., donated by Our City Reading, the 31-year-old artist is creating a photographic collage of textures, tiles, colors and fabrics. A Pratt Institute graduate, Mathis said she's interested in dwellings and how they relate to socioeconomic issues.

"I'm really interested in the story of the families that lived here," she said after tearing plaster from a wall.

Erin Riley-Lopez, curator of the Freedman Gallery at Albright, said the installation will facilitate a discourse about how people interact with their surroundings.

"Hopefully, the visitors will be pleasantly surprised by the interaction and the opening up of these spaces, revealing a different story than what we usually see," she said.

The four artists featured in the exhibition have all visited Albright, the gallery and the Reading area to gather inspiration for their installations. But Mathis is having an extended stay to develop her creations.

"I try to glean as much information as I can about the home," she said. "When I come into these homes, it's about the people that lived here - not just about the materials, but their lives."

The architectural exhibition, which runs from Sept. 20 to Nov. 11, also will feature installation works by Sonya Blesofsky, Tracey Goodman and Alison Owen.



*Reading Eagle: Susan L. Angstadt*  
**Photographer Amanda C. Mathis of Brooklyn, N.Y., removes layers of drywall from a house on Oley Street in Reading. Mathis, who says she finds beauty in wear and tear, will be a featured artist in an upcoming Albright College Center for the Arts exhibit.**