As I write this an enchanting snowstorm has enveloped central Missouri and our town, and I am admiring the snow-globe effect surrounding my third-floor corner apartment. I admit my attention is frequently pulled away from the screen, drawn toward the whirls of white outside my windows. At times the snow and wind are so intense it appears as if a dense fog has descended on the city; at other times the air is surprisingly clear with only the faintest wisps of powdery snow dancing upon a breeze. My description is such a poor substitute for experiencing the ever-changing qualities of this storm; were I a more powerful wordsmith . . .

Such fleeting effects of weather have captivated artists from across cultures and centuries. True to the aphorism that a picture is worth a thousand words, visual artists have succeeded in capturing weather phenomena in manifold mutable variations. **Variable Atmospheres** will feature depictions of the ephemeral qualities of skies and environments in works on paper—prints, drawings, watercolors, and photographs—all produced with materials that are highly vulnerable to environmental variation and susceptible to change over time. Showcasing all four seasons and examples of what the postal service promises to endure, this exhibition will explore the representational methods artists have used to convey atmospheric effects, rendering the impermanent more permanent for future generations to appreciate.

Much like today’s snowstorm, these artworks allow us to enjoy the compelling visual power of our natural world. But unlike the weather, their conditions can be well preserved, an essential facet of our Museum’s mission.
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