

**RENATE ALLER: dicotyledon**

March 24, 2012 – May 31, 2012

For Immediate Release:

Adamson Gallery is pleased to present *dicotyledon*, an exhibition of new pieces by photographer Renate Aller. Like its namesake, a flowering plant that grows in pairs, the exhibition presents photographs that have been grouped as multiples; both calling attention to the way that meaning is constructed through photographic representation, and placing the viewer within this address. As Aller notes, “Playing with the effect an image has on us by putting two visual representations together, a grid of multiple images, the viewer is asked to make the connection of multiple experiences as we would in the linguistic world where the placement of multiple words create the meaning depending on their placement and relationship to each other.” Aller’s photographic language of forms invites a meditative response as the viewer is taken in by her remarkable photographs.

Aller’s work, which takes inspiration from Romanticism’s relationship with the natural world, brings to the foreground issues of proximity, distance, perspective, and affect. Aller’s camera captures the interplay between sky and trees, between light and water, and between different forms of life. Her beautiful, large-scale images often highlight texture and color: one piece shows the sprawling roots of a group of trees growing against an uneven, dusty terrain as shadows of the branches above mimic the shapes. An arresting diptych pairs the head and tattooed back of a young man, arms raised, with the green leaves at the very top of a tree, set against a bright blue sky. Each subject is truncated, the abbreviated depiction focuses on almost intangible motion and limbs. The images seem disparate, but they convey a similar gesture: reaching, stretching. Aller’s color palette is dominated by cool tones, suggesting calm, but also concentration and contemplation. These works are deeply interior, and elicit this response from viewers. The whole composition is balanced yet in tension, like nature itself. In its sustained study it reflects and extends Aller’s ongoing project “oceanscapes – one view – 1999 to Present,” compelling images which likewise investigate the mutability of nature.

According to art historian, David Anfam, Aller’s *dicotyledon* evokes “Rilkean acuity towards a latent unease about our place in the scheme of things.” In his essay, *Transience* he states “Aller orchestrates a strange colloquy in which the participants congregate but do not converse. Ancient roots oppose empty blue sky; a bird of prey hovers, ambiguously, above a nest; a dreamer lies beside a dark wood; and a child turns his back on a twilight landscape, confronting us. There seems to be a plot without any narrative. The parts have an order though they are not in order. What is missing is a larger whole, a site in which these isolates can be at home. Instead they are refugees from an absent *Heimat*. Beauty, desire and loss are at stake. They were, too, when Sigmund Freud took a summer walk through a ‘smiling countryside’ in 1913 on the eve of the Great War. The result was his meditation, *On Transience*, in which the gloomy thoughts of his fellow traveler that day—disturbed ‘that all this beauty was fated to extinction’—led Freud to conclude that transitoriness increases, rather than diminishes, the value of existence and things. It may be coincidence that the psychologist’s companion then was the young Rilke. More certain, however, is that Aller’s vision is a twenty-first century heir to this ancestry of loveliness and poignant longing.”

This is Renate Aller’s third exhibition with Adamson Gallery. Aller’s work has been exhibited internationally, in the Parrish Art Museum, the New Britain Museum of American Art, and the Houston Center for Photography, among others. Her photography is in the permanent collections of the Lannan Foundation, New Mexico Museum of Art, Museum Hamburger Kunsthalle, and the Yale University Art Gallery, among others. Aller lives and works in New York.

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