

# WATERSHED

SEPT 19 - NOV 3 2008

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

ADRIENNE HERRON



### Early Initiatives:

I am blessed to live at the edge of the Gatineau Park where I frequently venture into the forest to make images. I notice that as soon as I am alone, surrounded by trees, stress drains from me and is replaced by a feeling of exhilaration. I marvel at the grandeur of the trees and the private, peaceful 'rooms' arranged by nature.

However, my early attempts at photographing the forest failed to capture the magic of the place. I initially wanted to create sharp, clear, detailed photographs. To accomplish this, I used medium and large format cameras and 35 mm cameras with fine grain, slow speed films. I mounted my cameras on tripods and used a cable release to avoid movement of the equipment so that I could achieve the sharpest image possible. I soon discovered that my pictures, although accurately documenting the subject, lacked spirit. They were static.

### The Decisive Moment:

My decisive moment came when I photographed Birch Trees, 1998 using slide film. For this image I removed my camera from its tripod. This gave me the freedom to move my camera while releasing the shutter. This is the best of several shots made at the time. This image is softer and less detailed than a traditional still photograph. Also the highlights and shadows blend, therefore minimizing the contrast. It possesses an energy that feels almost magical, even spiritual. I was pleased that I was able to add my own mark to the image -- to give it something beyond what the camera lens would normally 'see'. This slide won an "Award of Excellence" at the Camera Club of Ottawa that year.

### Affect on Future Work

After capturing this image I wanted to explore motion and the camera further. However, I could not use this technique freely because it required much trial and error, resulting in significant costs for film and processing, and a large number of images which were of such poor quality that they had to be scrapped. While I continued to make occasional images using camera movement, it was not until 2003 when I became familiar with my first digital camera (a Sony Cyber-shot 3.3 megapixels) that I decided to explore this technique more fully.

The camera had many limitations. It was not fully operable on a manual setting; I could not choose a shutter speed. It lacked a viewfinder and I could not see the tiny LCD screen in bright daylight, which made composing difficult and sometimes impossible. Therefore I was relegated to shooting in dim light. This reduced the shutter speed sufficiently to register the camera motion; also it allowed me to see the LCD screen well enough to compose my

image. In spite of these limitations, I found I was able to make some excellent photographs and enlarge them to a reasonable size without degradation of the image.

The digital camera freed me because I no longer had to worry about the cost of film and processing and I maintained a connection with the work between the shooting and printing that was lost with film because of all the time delays associated with the film processing procedure. Furthermore, the digital camera gave me immediate feedback concerning my exposure and technique. By reviewing a shot on the LCD screen, I could modify my technique until I was satisfied with the results.

Now I am on my 4th digital camera. I have graduated from 3.3 megapixels to 12 and my exploration of camera motion and the forest, inspired by my 1998 image, continues.

### Current Image

In this recent image, Sumac, 8567e, 2007, I am trying to express my reaction to these sumacs in winter. They have a tight overhead canopy and their twisted, arching branches reach eerily skyward. These small trees draw me in, as if they want me to venture under their "roof" to experience their mysterious inner sanctum. With the heavy snow and the dark branches they create a virtual black and white web. To express these observations I photographed the Sumacs using rotational movement. I was trying to control the area where the vortex would appear and maintain some of the detail of the branches.

Even though this is a colour photograph, I have to study it closely to see any colour. This emphasis on white underlines the cleanliness and purity of the place. The detail is soft at the edges and gradually sharpens toward the vortex where it is most sharp. The branches lean toward and tend to circle the vortex, thus forcing the viewer's eye and attention toward this area. For me, these features convey the sense of draw or pull that I felt when I was with these trees on that magical, snowy morning.

## BIOGRAPHY

Adrienne Herron is a prize-winning photographic artist and photography instructor living in Chelsea, Quebec. She has taught photography for more than 15 years in Canada and she taught for three summers in Giverny, France.

She acquired her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (magna cum laude) from the University of Ottawa in 2001. Earlier she studied photography at Carleton University, Algonquin College and Maine Photographic Workshops.

Adrienne's work has been published in books, journals, brochures, newsletters and web sites. She has exhibited in solo and group shows and her photographs are held in national and international art collections.

Adrienne Herron est une artiste photographe primée et instructeur en photographie qui habite Chelsea (Québec). Elle enseigne la photographie depuis plus de 15 ans au Canada et elle a donné des cours pendant trois étés à Giverny (France).

Elle a obtenu (magna cum laude) un baccalauréat ès Beaux-arts de l'Université d'Ottawa, en 2001. Elle a étudié également la photographie à l'Université Carleton, au Collège Algonquin et aux Maine Photographic Workshops.

Ses travaux ont aussi été publiés dans plusieurs revues, journaux, bulletins, catalogues et sites webs. Elle a présenté ses oeuvres dans des expositions en solo et de groupes, et ses créations se retrouvent également dans des collections nationales et internationales.