

Arbor Vitae (Tree of Life)

In the exhibit Arbor Vitae (Tree of Life) I am presenting a series of photographs that reveals the mysterious beauty of trees. My images are printed onto transparent film and displayed in light boxes. I use the circle as a framing device to both capture trees in their natural state and create enigmatic montages. In some of the images I pierce tiny holes in the film allowing pinpricks of light to shine through the images. The holes create the appearance of stars, molecules and flows of energy, and as such are intended to emphasize the spiritual connection we have with trees. I hope that my tree portraits will encourage the viewer to reflect on the tree as a symbol that ignites our imaginations and increase their awareness of how trees shape and enhance our physical environment. This series of tree portraits are a direct result of my experiences exploring the Junction neighbourhood in Toronto with my dog. As we walked through the city together I became more conscious of my surroundings, and in particular I noticed the quiet beauty of the trees. I marvelled at how the trees transformed the urban landscape and over a period of several years I felt compelled to photograph them so I could share their beauty with others. Over time I felt my sense of connection to individual trees deepen. One particular maple tree that has a magnificent yet battered canopy struck me as a symbol of perseverance - despite being fenced in, its roots competing with a fire hydrant and surrounded by concrete it continues to provide a haven for mammals, birds and insects. The process of observing and photographing trees throughout the seasons has given me great respect for how much they contribute to the environment. In this ongoing tree portrait project I want to emphasize that not only do trees provide pleasing forms for the eye to enjoy but they also enhance life for all beings by cleaning the soil and air and providing shelter and shade.