

For immediate release

UTA BARTH

October 17 to November 16, 2002

Opening reception: Thursday, October 17, 2002, 6 to 8pm

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Uta Barth. This series of meditative images is loaded with vivid and random interruptions of inverted form and color, exploiting repetition and referencing retinal memory. Materially seductive when viewed individually, the images present a transcendent temporal and visual experience when viewed altogether.

Presented as a single line of photographs installed at a uniform height and spacing around the entire gallery, the series creates a nearly 360-degree ring of images surrounding the viewer. Each image represents a slightly different recording of a single subject, repeatedly photographed over a period of months through relatively little change. This imagery is used to simulate the physiological and cognitive aspects of observation. The subject (the denuded branches of a tree, at times featuring one or two birds, sitting or in flight) is meaningless as mere document, but serves as a template for a radically dynamic range of presentation. Near identical repetition is dramatically interrupted by fields of intensely vibrant color, referencing the effects of retinal memory. The images function doubly as abstractions and as the physical representation of the after-image. Rhythm and pace is built across and between each picture, then interrupted. A narrative is provoked, but it is one that exists exclusively in real time, both recreating and simulating the act of looking.

Further to Uta Barth's previous work towards establishing photography as a metaphor for visual perception, this work stands in contradiction to the dominant impulse in photography towards document of spectacle. The viewer is positioned as conscious actor and participant, narrowing the distance, and in fact blurring the distinction, between subject and object. The material nature of the work, extremely seductive in texture, depth and form, is utterly transparent and non-illusory. Further, the work is a starting point or catalyst for an understanding about the nature of seeing, and reading information. As in the earliest Ground series by Barth, and consistently presented throughout the artist's photographic investigations, the subject of the work is suggested, rather than revealed, and thus exceeds photography's inherent limitations. The final work exists in the experience of perception, memory and imagination.

Last year, Uta Barth's work was the subject of a traveling museum survey exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle and CAM, Houston. Recent group shows include *Looking at America*, Yale University Art Gallery, Hartford, CT; *Global Address*, University of Southern California; and *<stepping back, moving forward> human interaction in an interactive age*, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Barth's work is currently featured in *Visions of America: Photography from the Whitney Museum Collection*, Whitney Museum, NY; and *History/Memory/Society*: Tate Modern, London.