

Anthology and Rhythm, Surfaces and Textures: View Camera Photographs by Allen Schill

– “Anthology” comes from the old Greek term for a collection of flowers. Rhythm, for its part, is manifest throughout the universe in structures, cycles, and patterns of all kinds. My fascination with pattern and texture inspired much of my early photographic efforts. Eventually, however, the ubiquity of suitable subject matter curtailed my work of this type. It was so easy to find this material, that the sameness of the whole process soon bothered me. I found other approaches and subject matters, but texture, pattern, and rhythm remained important elements in my work, even if they were no longer the subject itself.

– Using a view camera in the studio, as I have done to make these images, inclines one to assemble, create, or arrange a photograph, rather than to seek, find, and photograph an existing subject. This procedure is more like painting than most photography, more synthesis than appropriation. One makes photographs, as opposed to taking them.

– Most of the “anthologies” (most of the first ten or twelve images in this section of the website) are literally collections or arrangements of flowers, leaves, flower parts, and other vegetation. They are easily identifiable as such, and such beauty as they have is, I suppose, easier to appreciate. The usual dessication and decay in them reflect a morbid fascination of mine; the occasional lushness reflects a corresponding fascination with fertility and creation.

– The “rhythm” pictures that follow are clearly related even if their subjects are generally not flowers. They emphasize pattern and texture somewhat more, and verge on abstraction. At the end of the section they gravitate towards images of pure texture, with differentiation of form only on a smaller scale. These last are quite austere, and require a certain minimalist taste.

– In the following section, “Surfaces and Texture”, the idea is pushed to a further extreme. They also consist of bits of flowers and vegetation, but in most cases are incorporated into a medium of paper pulp or acrylic polymer, then photographed. Although my procedure was largely deliberate and non-random, my intention was to create something like the random arrangements which constantly occur in nature. Among many other things, paintings like those by Jackson Pollock and Mark Tobey have inspired me--although not realistic in the usual sense, they replicate the rhythms, patterns, and energy of life.

Allen Schill

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Anthology and Rhythm: <http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1e>

Surfaces and Textures: <http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1f>