

MEDIA RELEASE

Geoffrey James
CANOPY

February 10th – March 5th, 2005.

The TrépanierBaer gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new and recent photographs by Geoffrey James. Well known for his fascination with the bucolic and utopian landscape, these exquisite photographs capture the subject of aged trees from James' unique optical position. Taking the magnificence of the natural monument and the power of time as his subject, James captures the leitmotif of decay – one of the privileged subjects of picturesque art – in this new series. Having devoted himself to this repertory through numerous projects – such as his well known Olmsted and Kerguehennec series – James' depiction of the aged trees of parks and gardens reveals an insightful and diverse view of Southern Ontario's tree canopy. Avoiding recourse to simply lay claims to the majestic beauty of natural wonderment, James captures the craggy individualistic character of these majestically aged forms. Viewed individually, each of these photographic images reveal distinct characteristics of trees formed in the habit created by the decaying wood of trunk and main branches. Through the sharp precision of his photographic portrayal, James foregrounds the gnarled boles and overhung bows of a variety of tree species to reveal the anthropomorphic qualities of these ancient and veteran trees.

Geoffrey James was born in St. Asaph, Wales and studied Modern History at Wellington College and Oxford University before immigrating to Canada. Active as a photographer since 1970, James is well known, both nationally and internationally, for his numerous photographic essays embracing the picturesque as it relates to the European photographic tradition. His fascination with the bucolic and utopian landscape has informed his creative oeuvre. Beginning with his images of 17th and 18th century gardens, and old Roman aqueducts, James' photographs presents a fascinating portrayal of the landscape. The author of nine books and monographs on a range of topics including the Italian garden, the asbestos-mining region of Quebec, the Mexican-American border at Tijuana, the changing face of Paris, his most recent photographic essays explore a range of subjects that include the city of Lethbridge, Alberta and the town's surrounding environs. A retrospective of James' work was recently on view at The University of Toronto Art Centre and The Eric Arthur gallery, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design. This exhibition also featured a selection of works drawn from his extensive Olmsted series created over the course of the 1990's, and his current "905" series, taken in Toronto's outlying developing suburbs. The Americas Society recently presented a remarkable exhibition of James' photographs. Entitled, *Zones of Contact*, this exhibition examined James' exploration of the relationship between nature and the culturally constructed environment. Over the past two decades, James' work has been examined in major international shows on three continents and is held in numerous public collections in North America and Europe including the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In 2002 he received both the Roloff Beny Book Award for his book entitled, *Paris* and the Gershon Iskowitz Prize.

For more information please contact Yves Trépanier or Kevin Baer at (403) 244-2066, or email info@tbg1.com



Willow, Branksome Hall, 2000, edition of 10,
black and white silver print, 46" x 19".

Canopy

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Please join us for the opening of Geoffrey James' exhibition, **Thursday, February 10th, 2005, 5:00 - 7:00 pm.**

Artist in attendance.

Exhibition continues through to **March 5th, 2005.**

■ ■ **TrépanierBaer**

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Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
www.trepanierbaer.com