

April Gornik: *Bower*

Bower combines two of April Gornik's signature motifs: a sense of nascent mystery and dramatic tension, and an emphasis on using the physicality of a medium as a vehicle for emotional impact. *Bower's* cluster of slender trees stretch from a densely shadowed horizon to a sky that is almost entirely filled with a cloudlike mass of foliage. The arterial network of their trunks conveys an ambiguous sense of movement, implying both an upward growth and a rivulet-like descent. There is a weight, an unnamed presence in the cloudlike density of their upper portions which suggests a metaphysical realm, an ethereal unknown space. The sky's brief swath of light acts as a moat, traversed by the trees as if by a series of bridges linking this shadowy realm with the corporeal firmness of the earth below. Meanwhile, the scale and presence of the tapestry enables the viewer to engage with Gornik's imagery on a somatic level. The mystery and quiet tension of the charcoal drawing upon which *Bower* is based permeate the work's layered fibers to the point of saturation: the tapestry acts as a body, charged with the compelling animism of Gornik's composition.

I make art that makes me question, that derives its power from being vulnerable to interpretation.

-- April Gornik

About the Magnolia Tapestry Project

The Magnolia Tapestry Project emerged from artist John Nava's commission to decorate the vast interior walls of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, which required a consideration of the acoustical demands of the space: the decorative element was to function practically by reducing unwanted reverberation, prompting an inquiry into the use of textiles. Nava and Magnolia Editions co-director Donald Farnsworth subsequently collaborated on a series of woven experiments which grew into an unorthodox approach to Jacquard weaving, whereby work by contemporary artists is translated into a digital "weave file" using custom calibrated color palettes developed at Magnolia Editions. The completed weave file is woven in Belgium on a double-headed Jacquard loom using 17,800 available warp threads.



April Gornik, *Bower*, 2006 - Jacquard Tapestry, 78 x 105 in. Edition of 9

In the same way that Tamarind and Gemini put the commercial lithographic technology of the 19th century into the hands of fine artists in the fifties and sixties, the Magnolia Tapestry Project is putting the electronic Jacquard loom to work in unexpected ways for contemporary artists. The Project includes tapestries representative of several generations and numerous art movements: the Pop princesses of Mel Ramos; the monumental, Expressionistic figures of Leon Golub; the hyper-realism of Alan Magee and Guy Diehl; the playful poetics of Squeak Carnwath and William Wiley; the post-Surrealist visions of Bruce Conner, and the abstractions of Ed Moses and George Miyasaki are all re-envisioned in striking new editions. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Chuck Close, Lia Cook, Lewis deSoto, Donald and Era Farnsworth, Rupert Garcia, D.J. Hall, Diane Andrews Hall, Gus Heinze, Robert Kushner, John Nava, Nancy Spero, Katherine Westerhout and others. ■