

Argentea Gallery

PRESS RELEASE:

A Thousand Fallen Blossoms

Aliki Braine

Physical exhibition

17th April - 14th May

Online exhibition

26th March – 14th May



From the series *A Thousand Fallen Blossoms* (2019) © Aliki Braine

Eagerly anticipated after its postponement in 2020, Argentea Gallery is thrilled to present *A Thousand Fallen Blossoms* by London-based artist Aliki Braine. Exhibited for the first time, this exhibition brings elements of Japan to Birmingham through a series of uniquely crafted photographs.

Inspired by a trip to Tokyo and Kyoto during the Sakura cherry blossom season, Braine has created extraordinary images that offer a fresh sense of awe and original interpretation of the immersive experience of Hanami, the traditional Japanese custom of viewing and honouring the transient beauty of cherry blossoms. In recognition of this phenomenon, these photographs convey both the profusion and fragility of the blossom petals from their magnificence on the branch to their life's end on the ground below.

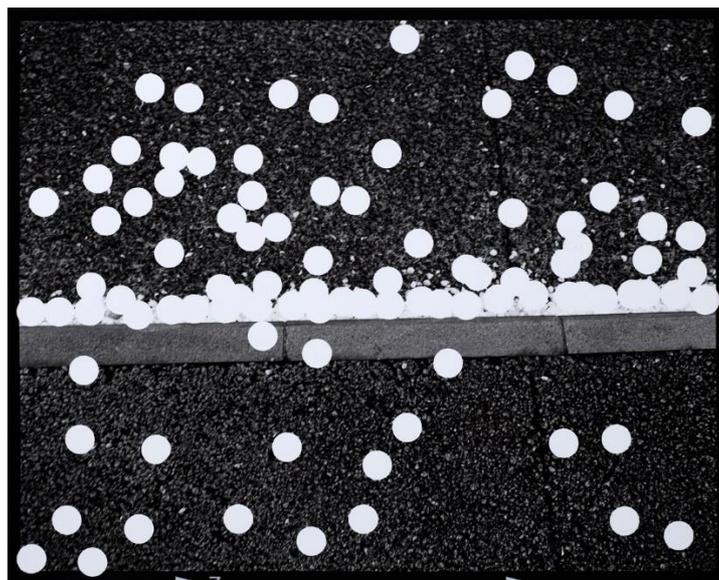
For her series, *A Thousand Fallen Blossoms*, Braine first photographed the pink blossomed tree branches. Although appreciative of photography's 'wonderful and magical capacity for exactitude', it is the abstract qualities produced by manipulating the negatives that she finds so alluring. Imitating the ruination of the laden branches when the petals give way to the force of the breeze, Braine took a holepunch to her colour negatives and created hundreds of tiny discs containing fragments of the original blossoms. Dropping them like 'negative confetti' onto the negative holder of the darkroom enlarger, Braine's process echoes the flurry of falling petals. The random and unpredictable fall of the confetti creates a unique composition that is printed only once before repeating the process.

'There's something very satisfying about the temporal nature of the subject, which is a mere two-week window of time in Japanese culture; the act of scattering these confetti negatives reflects its essential ephemerality.'

Braine applied this same technique to photographs of the blue skies framing the blossom and the rainwater on the ground upon which they fell.

Intrigued by the abundance of scattered petals covering the pavements, Braine also made a series of only 17 black and white images that form the basis of *10,000 Fallen Petals*. However, frustrated by the too descriptive nature of the images she applied tiny, Japanese stickers to the negatives, individually covering each one that had fallen to the pavement. For each blossom, a sticker; 10,000 in all. Wanting to create a sense of journey and passing time, she states:

'the spaces covered by the stickers, which read as white in the printing process, become both an abstraction and a kind of memory of the shape that the petal made on the floor.'



From the series *10,000 Fallen Petals* (2019) © Aiki Braine

The title of this series references a 17th century Chinese ink painting called *10,000 Ugly Ink Blots* by artist and monk Shitao and draws on Braine's expertise in art history.

A hand-bound limited-edition book accompanies the large-scale prints. Structurally mirroring Shitao's diptych painting, double and triple pages offer beautiful little diptychs and triptychs of the images, complete with a short text by artist, writer and curator Duncan Wooldridge.

About the artist:

Aliki Braine (b.1976, Paris) studied at the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford University, the Slade School of Fine Art and The Courtauld Institute, where she gained an MA distinction in the History of Art.

For her visual arts practice she was awarded the Salon Art Prize, Matt Roberts Arts in 2012. She has exhibited nationally and internationally including London, Paris, Madrid, Vienna, Geneva and Jakarta. Her work has been published in numerous books and magazines and is held in both private and corporate collections worldwide.

About Argentea Gallery:

Argentea Gallery is located in the Georgian splendour of St. Paul's Square in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. It is dedicated to showing the very best contemporary photography from both British and international artists.

Our aim is to support the careers of both emerging and established artists by promoting an awareness and appreciation of contemporary photography and by providing a platform where ideas and practices can be explored and tested. In pursuit of this we will present a programme of well researched, stimulating and thoughtful exhibitions supported by appropriate events and publications.

In addition to the curated programme, we also have a Print Room holding portfolios of works for sale by selected artists across a broad price range.

For any further details or press images please contact:

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Opening times: Wednesday – Saturday, 12noon – 6pm

A Thousand Fallen Blossoms opens Friday 26th March (Online and physical, restrictions permitting) We will adhere to strict social distancing guidelines so the opening reception will take place throughout the day from 12noon - 6pm. If the physical opening is delayed beyond 26th March, this will be communicated via our social media channels.

Argentea Gallery, 28 St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1RB