

Reviews: New York

Sally Gall

Julie Saul

This selection of photographs by Sally Gall, taken over some 25 years, revealed a rigorous and romantic vision of the natural world, from her small images of formal gardens shot in 1980 with a Diana camera to her much

larger chromogenic prints of the ocean done this year—her first experiment with color. Consistent throughout are a sense of nature suspended in a dreamlike

reverie and the remarkable tonal richness in the printing that helps create this lush quality.

Gall's earliest images of groomed trees and fountains in gardens across Europe have an intentionally shadowy distortion around the edges, an effect produced by the Diana camera's crude plastic lens. The sultry mood persists in her later, more monumental and composed prints, such as *Montessor* (1988), in which the rigid formality of the repeated tree trunks that

line—and are reflected in—the lake stands in nice contrast to the languid overgrowth of the flora.



Sally Gall, *Sea Change*, 2005, C-print, 20" x 24".
Julie Saul.

Scale is an important element in several pictures here, including *Evidence of Wind* (1997). Seen from a high vantage point over the ocean, a sailboat in the bottom left corner looks like a toy under the dominance of a roiling cloud mass. Juxtaposed with this is *Ravello* (1983), in which a titanic large urn seems to bear down on the back of a diminutive male-nude statue in an outdoor garden. Only after sustained looking is it apparent that Gall visually compressed these foreground and background elements into the same plane through framing and the suppression of details in printing.

In *Sea Change* (2005), two little figures at the distant edge of the breaking surf serve as markers of scale, while the clouds above collect themselves into a form like a towering wave. Though unavoidably ominous, the picture is a gorgeous composition of pale, icy blues and purplish grays that show Gall's touch with color printing is as sensuous and deft as with the gray scale.

—Hilarie M. Sheets