

Sharon Core
Facsimile
February 27 – April 12, 2025



Yancey Richardson is pleased to present *Facsimile*, an exhibition of new work by Sharon Core, the artist's fifth solo presentation with the gallery and one that continues her ongoing interrogation of the meaning of authenticity and authorship in her work. The exhibition will be on view from February 27 through April 12, 2025. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, February 27th from 6–8PM with an artist walkthrough at 5:30PM.

Through the meticulous recreation of historical still-life paintings, along with more recent artworks rendered through the medium of photography, her work explores the tension between reality and its photographic representation. In *Facsimile*, Core expands these

themes by subverting her usual process. Rather than reproducing painted still-lives through photography, she has instead turned to Irving Penn's iconic *Flowers* series—a masterful collection of photographic still-lives—and reinterpreted them through painting. This ambitious project both deepens and reframes Core's exploration of the still-life genre by posing questions not only about photography in the digital age, but about material specificity and the status of the reproduction as well.

At the center of *Facsimile* is a hand-made reproduction of Penn's 1980 book *Flowers*, which originated from a commission for Vogue magazine for its annual Christmas edition in 1967. Each year from 1967 to 1973, Penn focused on a different flower—beginning with tulips and moving on to poppies, peonies, roses and other blooms—capturing their ephemeral beauty in various states of perfection and decay. In 1980, these images were compiled into the popular and widely available book *Flowers*, published by Harmony Books, now out of print. Core's *Facsimile: "Irving Penn, Flowers"* resurrects and reimagines the book as a tactile, meticulously handcrafted object that visitors are invited to handle. Alongside this edition, Core presents a selection of her 73 hand-painted recreations of Penn's photographs, displayed throughout the gallery to offer a closer look at her reinterpretations of the original works. Rather than a departure, we might see this as a return for Core, who originally trained as a painter. The interplay between painting and photography has always been central to her practice and *Facsimile* brings this dialogue into sharper focus.

Core's process for *Facsimile* is as intricate as it is conceptually layered. Each of Penn's photographs is recreated as a painting using Epson UltraChrome inks on Canson Photo Rag paper, materials typically associated with digital photographic printing. Through this method, Core subverts the intended use of contemporary materials, transforming them into tools for painting. She then photographed her painted pages, designed a layout replicating that of the original book and bound the final prints into an edition of seven. In Core's words, "the book is a multiple sculpture or a three-dimensional print that must be handled and touched to experience. My name is nowhere in the 'book,' therefore it is not an artist book, per se, but in fact a converted replica or facsimile." By humanizing and rarifying a mass-produced object, Core's "three-dimensional print" calls for a different kind of attention from the viewer. It cannot be experienced via a screen and must instead be encountered physically. In this generous gesture, the now out-of-print

book is given a new lease on life, taking on a different meaning through a complex process of conversion: transforming photographs into paintings, which are then re-photographed, printed and bound into a book.

Visually, *Facsimile* diverges from Penn's original photographs through Core's expressive, painterly approach. Unlike her earlier series, in which she precisely reproduced certain still-life paintings in three-dimensions and photographed the results, effectively posing questions about the boundaries between illusion and reality, here Core seeks to emphasize the handcrafted nature of all photographs. As she notes, "Ever more so, the photograph is manipulated and collaged and is printed not through time and light, as in analog process, but with a fluid medium on paper. It becomes a machine assisted drawing or painting." In *Facsimile*, Core makes explicit the artistry behind the work: the hand-lettered text is visibly imperfect and the images, while faithful to Penn's compositions, are imbued with the texture and fluidity of the artist's brushwork. Even the colors in the paintings result from a rigorous process of mixing and diluting the digital hues of cyan, yellow, magenta and black.

There is no trompe l'oeil effect at play here, nor any photorealist painting technique either and the result is therefore not an exact replica but a layered gesture that urges us to reflect on the evolving nature of representation in the digital age. By moving from a mechanical form of reproduction to an analogue process, while using a medium of mass production, Core questions the role of materiality in image-making. This finely crafted body of work seems to slip between painting, photography and sculpture, casting new light on Penn's original photographs and book, while posing deeper questions about image-making technologies and their supposed ties to representing reality in this post-truth era.

Sharon Core was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1965. She received her BFA in painting from the University of Georgia in 1987 and her MFA in photography from Yale University School of Art in 1998. Core began exhibiting her photographs in New York City in 1998 and has since shown her work in numerous solo and group exhibitions both in the United States and abroad. Her work is included in major public collections including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth; The Phillips Collection, Washington DC; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio. She was the recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Art Grant in 2000. Her monograph, *Sharon Core: Early American*, was published by Radius Books in 2012. The artist lives and works in Esopus, New York.

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Image: Sharon Core, *Peony: Tempest*, Page 66, 2023. Epson UltraChrome ink on Canson Photo Rag paper, 20 x 22 inches.