

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sharon Core: *Understory*

March 24 – May 7, 2016

Opening Reception with the Artist: Thursday, March 24, 6-8pm



The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Understory*, an exhibition of new photographs by Sharon Core exploring the theater of growth, decay and predation in a cultivated closed landscape environment created by the artist. The stage for these works is a large geodesic dome constructed by Core on her property in the Hudson Valley. The environment serves not only as a vivarium for plant, reptile, amphibian and insect life, but also as a living studio – one containing an elaborate staging of the conceit of art as the mirror of nature.

In her earlier series of still lifes *Early American* and *1606 – 1907*, Core examined the play between photographic truth and painted illusion. In *Understory* she looks beyond the frame, outward and downward into the environment itself.

Teeming with shrubs, vines, weeds, exotic and native cultivars along with decomposing wood, mosses, insects, snails and creatures collected from Core's adjoining forest, the dome provides a platform on which Core acts as curator, constructing a landscape simultaneously natural and artificial. The botanical elements such as the fig tree, datura, passiflora and opium poppy, go beyond the decorative, selected instead for their biblical references and psychotropic properties that allude to their inherent power to expand consciousness.

Referencing the *Sottobosco* work of 17th century Dutch painter Otto Marseus van Schrieck, in which the complications and significances of the natural world “under the woods” evolved into its own intricate genre, Core's new photographs investigate the micro specifications of this partially engineered world not necessarily seen at first glance. Rejecting the use of faux vegetation, taxidermy and cinematic devices to create the fictional narratives often seen in recent 20th and 21st century photography, Core's process of picture-making maintains a deep interaction with the materials and subjects she photographs and an insistence of authenticity. Her work is not a fiction, but an extension of what could be viewed beyond the actual frame, allowing the viewer to be immersed in its “understory”.

The photographs of *Understory* were made in the first year of cultivation of the dome environment, the construction of which was supported by a grant from The Shifting Foundation.

Sharon Core was born in New Orleans in 1965. She holds a BFA in painting from the University of Georgia and an MFA in Photography from Yale University. Her work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the Guggenheim Museum, J. Paul Getty Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, Princeton Art Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, among others. In 2012 Radius Books published *Early American*, Core's first monograph.

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