

JEAN PAGLIUSO

The Raptor Suite: seven owls & The Poultry Suite: large-scale prints



Owl IX, 2009



Owl V, 2009



Buff #3, 2009

From September 3 through October 5, 2009, The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present two concurrent exhibitions: **Jean Pagliuso -- *The Raptor Suite: seven owls & The Poultry Suite: large-scale prints***, and **Toni Ross: *touchstones***. A separate press release is available for the Toni Ross exhibition.

Jean Pagliuso's most recent photographs of owls and poultry integrate surprising subjects with her experience over thirty years as a noted fashion and formal portrait photographer. After a successful career as a commercial photographer, Jean Pagliuso turned her attention in the 1990s to photographing architectural monuments and ritual sites around the world. Several years ago, she returned to working in the studio setting, composing dramatic formal portraits of poultry that breeders brought to her New York City studio. Her interest in photographing fowl developed out of her exploration of childhood memories of her late father's lifelong hobby of raising chickens in Glendale, California. The tour de force series of head shots and life size images of white, black and variegated plumed chickens printed on thin, Thai paper washed with hand-painted silver emulsion comprised Pagliuso's 2006 exhibition at The Drawing Room. In the current exhibition, Pagliuso employs the same printing technique for seven portraits of owls from her most recent body of work, *The Raptor Suite* that are presented with three new poultry subjects printed as large-scale silver gelatin prints measuring 3 ½ feet tall.

The poultry portraits, remarkable for their distinct personalities, capture the proud pose of a Hennie rooster with a flared tail and ornamental markings, a plump, dressy Silky surrounded by a characteristic profusion of white feathers, and the delicate, variegated Frizzle caught in a hilarious wild action. Pagliuso endows the hens and roosters at once with glamour, nobility, arrogance and pathos. Contrasting her new poultry portraits, Pagliuso's owls are printed on hand-silvered Thai paper she mines in the darkroom for the rich and nuanced tonal range it offers. Pagliuso works quickly with her Hasselblad film camera to fix the intense gazes and characteristic postures of these magnificent raptors. *Owl V* presents a close-up view of a commanding owl she encountered in Scotland whose drooping eyelids suggest fatigue and boredom. Inspired by her meeting with a falconer there, Pagliuso returned to New York and arranged owl portrait sessions in the studio. In *Owl VIII* a seemingly shy, wide-eyed White Faced Scops Owl peers up with enormous circular eyes; velvety blacks and rich whites characterize the Barn Owl's strong anatomy and dark marble eyes in *Owl IX*. Pagliuso's portrayals of owls on studio perches evoke the 19th century photographic approach used by Nadar, who produced searing portraits of Baudelaire, Atget, and other illustrious subjects by posing them in black cloaks of the day against simple backdrops such as the wall in his courtyard or his sky lit Paris studio. In her similarly stark setting, Pagliuso composes photographs in which the owls and chickens show off with equal flourish their distinct attitudes and markings.

Jean Pagliuso, who divides her time between New York City and Santa Fe, summers in Sagaponack, Long Island. Her work has been exhibited widely in the United States and in Europe.

Gallery hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10–5; Sunday 11–4