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Sage Sohier **Witness to Beauty**

Texts by Marvin Heiferman, Sage Sohier
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30 x 27 cm

108 pages

95 color and b/w ills.

English

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Sohier's series about her mother, a glamorous ex-fashion-model, confronts a disappearing world of exquisite beauty

Witness to Beauty is Sage Sohier's series about a glamorous ex-fashionmodel, her mother, as she engages the challenge of aging and confronts a disappearing world of exquisite beauty. Both funny and moving, the book addresses changing realities between generations in a visually captivating life of privilege. Images of Sohier's mother in her youth, posing as a model for renowned fashion photographers such as Irving Penn and Richard Avedon, provide a poignant contrast with Sohier's photographs of her mother as time passes, even though she defies expectations and achieves a quality of timeless perfection.

Sage Sohier has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Four other books of her photographs have been published, and she has exhibited widely. Her work is in many important collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

As a child, I liked to sit beside my mother on the sofa, imagining the other side of the conversation while she talked on the phone; she imbued even humdrum subjects with great drama. I also sat beside her while she worked on her albums, making my own with reject snapshots and copies that she gave me. I was obsessed with her albums, feeling that these pictures and documents held important clues to my past, and would somehow reveal who I was

now. I also joined her—sitting on her furry pink toilet seat in my blue school uniform—while she took her evening bath. She lay in regal splendor, a pink face cloth covering her breasts, a pink shower cap framing a face full of earnest concentration as she listened to my journalist stepfather's voice on the radio while he read his daily commentary.

– from the afterword by Sage Sohier

We see Sohier's mother first as a child and then as a woman, as a wife and a widow, on the Eiffel Tower and on Central Park South, in gardens and bubble baths. She is pictured draped in gowns, fantasy costumes, cashmere and pearls, and in the nude. Details in early snapshots, passport ID photos, tear sheets, wedding and vacation pictures, and Sohier's more contemporary images point to a life of privilege. Photographs taken on treatment tables, at the edge of sick beds, and in Arlington cemetery—revealing literal scars and moments of sadness and reflection—remind us that no one makes it through life untested, unscathed or, for that matter, alone.

– from the essay by Marvin Heiferman

Exhibition

Carroll and Sons Gallery, Boston
Spring 2017

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Press images



1 Mum applying make-up, Washington D.C., 1994
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2 Mum in her bathtub, Washington, D.C., 2002
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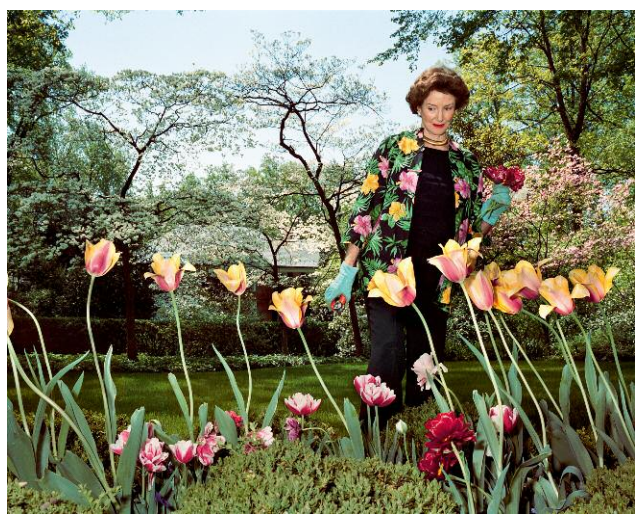
3 Shopping with Mum, Washington, D.C., 2003
With Walter



4 Mum and Laine making me up, Washington, D.C., 2004
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5 Cedar enzyme bath, Osmosis Spa, Freestone, CA, 2010
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6 Mum in her garden, Washington, D.C., 2003
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7 Mum and Laine in front of family portrait, Washington, D.C., 2011
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8 Sunrise dolphin watch on eco-cruise, Baja California, 2007
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9 Back together with Robert, at Laine's 63rd birthday dinner, Sebastopol, CA, 2014
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10 With Walter
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11 With me just before her wedding ceremony, 1960
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12 With Hugo
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