

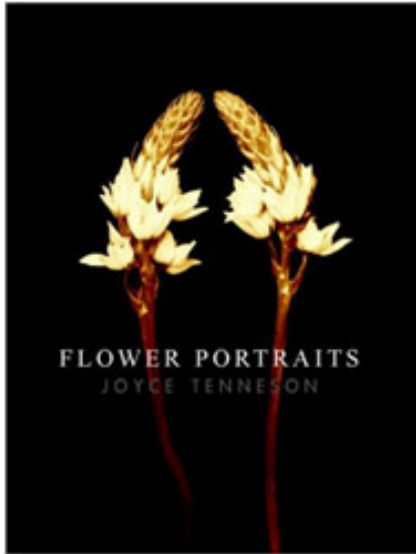


Book Review...

Flower Portraits: The Life Cycle of Beauty

Review by Tere Hendricks

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Joyce Tenneson, best known for her portrait photography, has turned her sights on flowers in *Flower Portraits: The Cycle of Beauty*. "As a portrait photographer, I see flowers not as mere decorations, but as distinctive personalities. When I make a human portrait, I try to discover some inner essence that helps crystallize that person's uniqueness. I photograph flowers with the same respect."

Not everyone will like this book. They will not see the "inner essence." They will see nothing more than old brown flowers on a black background. It may not be very appealing for those looking for flowers in full bloom and in glorious, eye-popping color. However, to see only dead or dying flowers in *Flower Portraits* is to miss the point entirely.

"The more we quiet ourselves to truly look at them, the more secrets they will reveal." From that intimate, meditative perspective comes clarity. For the photographer it's simplicity in light and form, with color an unnecessary distraction. For the viewer it can be a new insight into the lines, shapes and forms of flowers and a new appreciation of beauty.

After completing her seventh book, *Wise Women*, which celebrates the beauty of older women, Tenneson went back to photographing flowers. "I was no longer only interested in the perfect bloom; the moment, often ephemeral, of youth. I became mesmerized by how each flower changes over time, and is often equally beautiful as it completes the inevitable life cycle of birth, blossoming, and seeming decline."

The 103 images in *Flower Portraits* are mesmerizing. And if being mesmerized isn't enough, you'll be entertained by the "Notes on the Plates", which gives a brief written description of each flower along with some of the folklore and mythology that have evolved around them.

About the author: Joyce Tenneson is one of the most respected photographers of our time and has been described by critics as "one of America's most interesting portrayers of the human character." Tenneson was named "One of the Ten Most Influential Women Photographers in the History of Photography" in *American Photo* magazine's recent poll. Her work has graced the covers of *Time*, *Life*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Newsweek*, *Premier*, *Esquire* and the *New York Times Magazine*.

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