

Rita Barros - Saved by New York's Bravest



Rita Barros must have landed at the Chelsea at a very young age because she has been here 21 years! If you haven't done so yet check out her book [Fifteen Years: Chelsea Hotel](#). You can see more of her work at

<http://www.ritabarros.com/>

Photo: Rita at home on the 10th floor.

What do you do?

I am a freelance photographer and right now I am also doing a Master's Degree in Photography at NYU.

How long have you lived at the Chelsea?

I have been living here for the past 21 years.

Why did you decide to move into the Chelsea?

I really did not decide to move in. I stayed here with my ex - when we returned from a long trip to India and Nepal - while looking for an apartment in the city. But somehow we stopped looking and stayed here.

Describe your initial interview with Mr. Bard?

My ex was the one who dealt mostly with Mr. Bard who was very nice and funny.

Do you think there is a creative energy in the Chelsea?

There is a very laid back and friendly atmosphere that is somehow conducive to creative energy.

How has living in the Chelsea affected your creative development?

I photographed here for many years (the book Fifteen Years: Chelsea Hotel), and met incredibly interesting and accomplished people who have had, for sure, their impact in my development.

What other creative people at the Chelsea or elsewhere have influenced your development?

People like Arnold Weinstein at the Chelsea who was extremely generous with his time and ideas. The early books of Salman Rushdie, the purity of vision of Agnes Martin, Becket's genius, the poetry of Koudelka's images and the brilliant lightness of Fred Astaire.

Who is the most famous person you've ever ridden in the Chelsea elevator with?

I would say Courtney Love.

What's the best/worst thing that has ever happened to you at the Chelsea?

A big fire. By the time the firemen came and got me I thought I was already dead.