

The Poetry Of Everyday Life

To exhibit in the Paris Salon one's work needed to fall under certain boilerplate categories: History, Mythology, Portraits.

Occasionally an artist would breach the boundaries and a new category would be devised; for Watteau the rubric "Fête Galante" was coined. Later in the century under the influence of Diderot, who championed him, Chardin was given his own style "Peintre de la Vie Quotidienne" - Pictures of Daily Life.

Photography long endured this type of hierarchy: Photojournalism?

Rita Barros, known for her photo-journalism since the publication of "Fifteen Years: Chelsea Hotel" – a compilation of portraits of the denizens of a louche NYC address has, with this new group of works, entered the subtler realm of "Pictures of Daily Life"

The works shown in "Presence of Absence" have some of the resonance of the Dutch *Fijnschilders*, a slow, calm meditation on her surroundings. These are *still* pictures - not product shots. They compel in an intimate way (one wants to say "Intimist" but since Barros does not like Vuillard...)

The images are not exactly self-scrutiny, which she has performed admirably in a series of tiny edition luxury books (if you want to see her naked).

Intimacy has been a difficult idea to incorporate into art history. Barros' scrutiny of her intimate surroundings is charged with gentle longing and solitude: privacy – a private experience that is a little painful and definitely erotic.

But the coffee cups will not break or the coffee boil over – I'm moving in.

Rene Ricard NYC

From the catalogue "Presença da Ausência" - Pente 10 Fotografia Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal

