

Antonio Pozojević, Still Life

According to Norman Bryson, still life is an obvious and elemental part of the culture, much like history paintings and landscapes. The presence of images depicting inanimate or immobile beings, fruits and things has never generated theoretical concepts to the extent that some other motifs and genres have proved amenable to discussion. However, still life has been inscribed in the visual code of Western civilization since ancient times, reaching its greatest popularity in the Netherlands in the 18th century, when the term still life, or stilleven in the Dutch form, was born. The genre developed over time, certain motifs carried strong symbolism, and a new Flemish form of still life - animal still life - was born. It was mastered by the painter Frans Snyders in the 17th century, who often painted dead wild animals, the hunter's catch. Although such paintings do not explicitly deal with any specific topic, they implicitly speak about the life of people of certain periods and stand on their own as cultural artefacts with their own history.

In this sense, Antonio Pozojević's series of photographs titled Still Life is a continuation of this civilizational fascination with dead and decaying animal bodies. His photos show his intrigue with the textures and shapes of animal carcasses when creating artistic compositions, which he emphasizes by enlarging film negatives. By not showing the positive of a photograph, the artist denies the possibility of literal interpretation and opens up a field for thinking about motifs that go beyond the spectrum of topics that appear at first glance. By looking at the negatives, one can discern the kind of animals they feature from the textures and shapes, which provides different insights when thinking about these animals in general. Some of them represent archetypes and symbols ubiquitous in the collective consciousness. Therefore, it is unusual to discern the potent and powerful body of a horse, the archetype of time and memory of the world, lying lifeless, in stark contrast to the usual representation of a galloping horse inscribed in the visual code of Western culture. Still Life series of photographs by Antonio Pozojević requires a patient gaze and involvement in the photograph, but this is why it provides an intense reflection uncharacteristic of the still life genre.

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