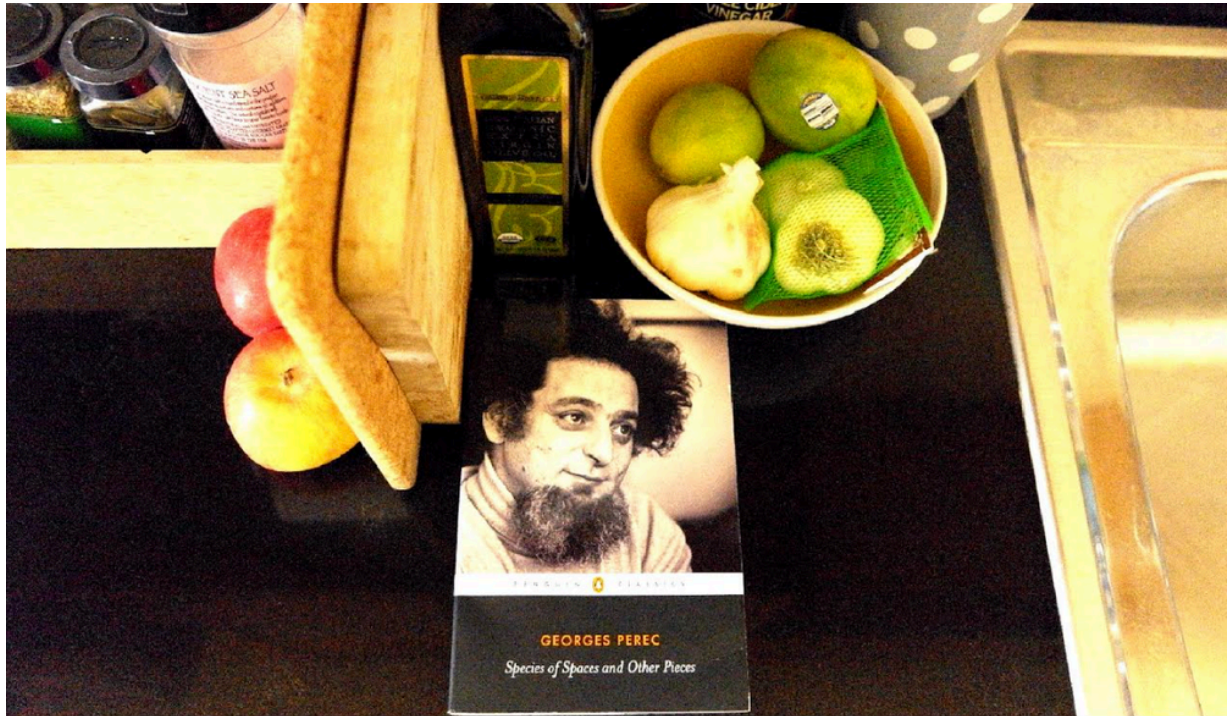


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George Porcari
Things: A Story
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by Jody Zellen



The subject of each photograph in George Porcari's exhibition "Things: A Story" is a narrative that is constructed from the relationship between what appears on the cover of a book and the objects Porcari has placed around. Shot with natural light in Porcari's Los Angeles apartment, the pictures have wide-screen proportions to reference cinema but are tightly cropped to juxtapose the books with carefully arranged commonplace household objects. While many of the volumes are about filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni or Roberto Rossellini, others are works of literature by authors like Joan Didion, Roland Barthes, Charles Bukowski and Georges Perec. The choice of books is specific and in many of his photographs, Porcari has chosen a book where a black and white portrait of the author or filmmaker is centered in the frame.

Though referred to as "still life's," the photographs in *Things: A Story* resonate as extended portraits that use the title of the book and its cover image as a point of departure. For example, in *Still Life With Books 2*, Porcari chose the edition of *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* where the author is depicted in a black and white photograph with his right hand gently placed below his lips as if in a moment of contemplation. The book rests on what appears to be a slim, silver DVD player or radio receiver next to a pair of headphones, a green ceramic bowl with

Asian calligraphy, as well as other miscellaneous objects that are cut off at the edges.

The focus of *Still Life With Books 40* is Joan Didion's *The White Album*. Porcari places the hardback book in an empty freezer and stands it upright on one of the shelves, perhaps in reference to this passage: "We live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the "ideas" with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience." During a conversation with Porcari at the opening, he intimated that he put the book in the freezer based on his close reading of it.

Still Life With Books 47 features a paperback version of *Godard on Godard* face up on a table surrounded by various computer cables and hard drives. The bright red lettering on the books cover is echoed by the round top of a pill bottle as well as the red heart in a "I Heart..." button that is partially obscured by the aluminum arm of a desk lamp. The black and white photograph surrounded by red text on the cover of the book depicts a couple gazing into each other's eyes with the woman's hand gently placed on the man's neck. Underneath the book is a drawing of a white gloved cartoon hand (perhaps from Bugs Bunny) on blue material, that appears to be an extension of the man's arm, adding a touch of humor and irony to his representation.

Still Life With Books 130 contains César Vallejo's *Aphorisms* placed in a grimy sink and shot from above. The book is next to the drain and adjacent to a soapy cup from which an orange handled utensil emerges. Again, Porcari selects a volume with a black and white portrait of the author with his hand curled around his chin. The grainy image has an affinity with the texture of the sink. Why it is placed there is anyone's guess, but like Didion's book in the freezer, this strange juxtaposition makes for an interesting image.

Although Porcari's photographs are filled with cultural icons and references, they are not one liners directed to those in the know. They are intimate and personal images that include books that are significant or have personal meaning for Porcari. They are beautiful and intriguing photographs that invite viewers to think about the bigger picture and perhaps the relationship between their books and the other objects that surround them.

<https://artillerymag.com/gallery-rounds-george-pocari/>