



**BARRY  
ROSENTHAL**

[www.barryrosenthal.com](http://www.barryrosenthal.com)





# REDISCOVERING NATURE

*Do you remember those extremely small second-hand shops, full of old, bizarre and affordable objects? Now they are more and more hard to find, sometimes replaced by some fake-vintage shop. Barry Rosenthal has his own, very personal flea-market: a beach.*

EDITED BY Veronique Lared and Mavi Mazzolini

"Found on forgotten beaches, a prey to storms, these familiar shapes take new life". This is the concept of "Found in Nature", Barry's photographic series, who penetrates into swamps and stagnant waters to find models for his pictures.

We have interviewed him to better approach his artistic sensibility.

**I READ THAT YOU ARE A COLLECTOR, AND THAT THE BEACH IS YOUR FLEA MARKET. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ARTISTIC PROCESS?**

"'Found in Nature' are series in which I photographed the several objects I have found on the beach. It's a matter of luck, like when you go to a flea market or a vintage store...you take what you find. The idea comes to me on the beach: I walk and I have clearly in mind how I want the final shot to be. I keep on collecting and, back in the studio; I organize what I have, even though sometimes more and more visits to the beach are required in order to obtain all the necessary for a single project. 'Shoes' has been one of the hardest, for the following reason: I was collecting all the shoes I could find, but once I was back in the studio, I didn't like the way old and new shoes were looking together. I understood I needed more old-fashion shoes, I went to the beach a couple of times, and at the end I had enough."

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"Shoes", 2012, shoes found on beaches



*"Ocean Blue", 2012, blue plastic objects found on beaches*

#### IS THE COLLECTING PHASE ALWAYS QUICK?

"Far from that: collecting may take years. I always look for enough material to finish a project, but it doesn't always happen that way: I might go to the beach and all I see around me is green objects, which is how 'Green Bottles' was born."

#### IS COLOR VERY IMPORTANT IN YOUR ARTWORKS?

"It certainly is. However, the most important element remains the theme: at home, I have a bookcase filled with objects I can't use, filed by theme; bullets, seashells, little straws...In a way, I see objects as members of a society in which all must collaborate to make the picture a success. 'Blue Piece' is an example of what I'm saying: what happened was I had these objects, all in that particular blue shade, but they weren't connected between them. So I started working on it and I finally understood what was connecting them all: the game. Once I reached the theme, I knew the artwork would have worked just fine."

#### HOW CAN YOU FIND ALL THOSE OBJECTS ON A BEACH?

"It's a question many have asked: I don't know. I go to deserted places where nobody would go spend their Sundays relaxing. I take objects from swamps, hidden low waters. Time, salt and the sun have changed them, and it is interesting to see how. I like to see how elements change objects, and all I do is dry them. I don't take objects from the street or from the trash, because I wouldn't have this."

#### BUT GOING AROUND BEACHES TO FIND THE RIGHT SUBJECTS IS A TOUGH WORK...DO YOU EVER GET TIRED OF IT?

"No, I have chosen it, and there are many reasons. First of all, because in the beginning everything is easy in my head...And then because I choose works that no-one else would do. Finding and filing all those objects is a physically tiring job, I mean, you

have to go into swamps and stagnant waters, and no one wants to do that. But I want to be unique".

#### YOU DO PHOTOGRAPHS: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LIGHT IN ALL THIS?

"I work hard in order to make the light appear natural. Illumination and composition go hand in hand, they must respect each other. Light must be not abrasive, neither intrusive. It must only be. But simplicity is very hard to obtain. For instance, my camera is hung on top in the center of a black back ring in which I set out the objects. Little by little, I go behind the camera and check the improvements. It's not a very 'cultural' approach, if you take a good look at it. I build installations and then I photograph them trying to remain as more neutral as possible".

#### ANALOG- DIGITAL: WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES?

"I'm old enough to have worked first in analog and then in digital. As a start, it's been a great training for my art, before computers I was shooting and shooting until I was finally reaching the best result, same thing in the darkroom. I was looking for the weirdest techniques, in order to give vent to my creativity. All the tricks and techniques were my computer at that time.

Now I shoot with a high-resolution camera, I can instantly see the images on the screen without having to wait for the roll to be developed. But the road for the project to take shape is still long, there is post-production and so on".

#### SO, QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHY IS ALSO TECHNOLOGICAL, THEN.

"It's weird, because we always consider technology in the present. I do use a modern camera, but I also use elements from sixty years ago. I am half-way, a hybrid. I don't think digital photography is something that new. Technology is just another tool available. So why not use it?"



### *Life and inspirations of the "PHOTO-BOTANIST"*

Barry Rosenthal has now lived in Lower Manhattan, New York, for over 25 years. He has studied Photography at Dayton Art Institute, getting in touch with renowned photographers such as **EMMET GOWIN** and **GEORGE TICE**. For his botanic photographic series, he takes inspiration from what he sees on the sides of the road, when he drives. He loves the way in which plants can be interlaced and the shapes they can take, in a constant search of an **INTIMATE CONTACT WITH NATURE**.