

A detailed still-life painting of various flowers and vegetables on a dark background. The composition includes a large orange and yellow striped tulip, a pink and white striped tulip, a large pink rose, a white peony, a yellow flower, a blue flower, a corn cob, a green pea pod, a red chili pepper, and a snail. The background is dark, making the vibrant colors of the subjects stand out.

MICHAEL PETRY

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the Still-Life tradition*

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## Nature Morte

*Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still Life*

**Michael Petry**

**Publication date: 14 October 2013**

**Price: £35.00 hardback**

Thought-provoking and richly visual, **Nature Morte** brings together, for the first time, the poignant, provocative re-imaginings of the traditional still life by over 180 international contemporary artists. This visually stunning and timely book reveals how leading artists of the 21st century are reinvigorating the still life, a genre previously synonymous with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Old Masters.

Michael Petry's careful selection celebrates works by emerging and established artists alike, from all over the globe, including John Currin, Elmgreen & Dragset, Robert Gober, Renata Hegyi, Damien Hirst, David Hockney, Gary Hume, Sarah Lucas, Beatriz Milhazes, Gabriel Orozco, Elizabeth Peyton, Marc Quinn, Gerhard Richter, Sam Taylor-Wood and Ai Wei Wei. Short and compelling introductions begin each chapter and are followed by dramatic, visually led spreads that pair each work with a perceptive reading of its significance to the still-life tradition.

Petry's engaging, provocative text reveals how contemporary practitioners are revisiting the major motifs of the still life and translating them for the modern world. Petry explores the timeless themes of life, death and the irrevocable passing of time in these new works for our modern world; artworks that invite us to pause and reconsider what it means to be human.

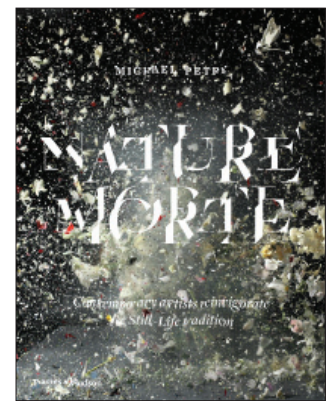
**Nature Morte** is designed by Barnbrook, a leading London studio at the cutting edge of graphic design. The cover is lenticular.

### Contents:

Introduction • Chapter 1: Flora • Chapter 2: Food • Chapter 3: House & Home • Chapter 4: Fauna • Chapter 5: Death

### Author

Michael Petry is an artist, curator, Doctor of Arts and Director of Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), London. He is the author of *Installation Art*, *Installation in the New Millennium* and *The Art of Not Making*, all published by Thames & Hudson.



### Extent

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**ABOVE**  
**Javier Pérez**  
*Carroña*, 2011  
 Murano glass chandelier  
 and stuffed crows

**OPPOSITE**  
**Marta Klonowska**  
*Large Kitchen Still  
 Life after Michel de  
 Bouillon*, 2009  
 glass and metal

**Javier Pérez** often uses dissonant materials (silkworm cocoons and ceramics; cattle intestines and blown glass) to confront the viewer with death, mortality and impermanence. In his work *Carroña* (Carrion), black crows seem to be disembowelling a smashed, red chandelier. Pérez notes that he likes to transform ready-made objects so as to provoke multiple interpretations: 'Here there are two different levels of opposed meaning; luxury, brightness, this aspect that characterizes glass, Murano glass in particular, [here] transformed into something desolate.'

**Marta Klonowska's** *Large Kitchen Still Life after Michel de Bouillon* consists of a glass hare modelled after a similarly positioned hare in a traditional still-life painting by Michel de Bouillon, a seventeenth-century French painter. Klonowska often bases her delicate sculptures of wild animals and pets (mainly dogs) on those depicted in historical paintings; there the animal in question, dead or alive, was often included as a symbol of status and wealth. Klonowska's creatures are usually the same size as their counterparts in the source images.







# Order Form

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 by Michael Petry is published by Thames & Hudson (RRP £35.00)

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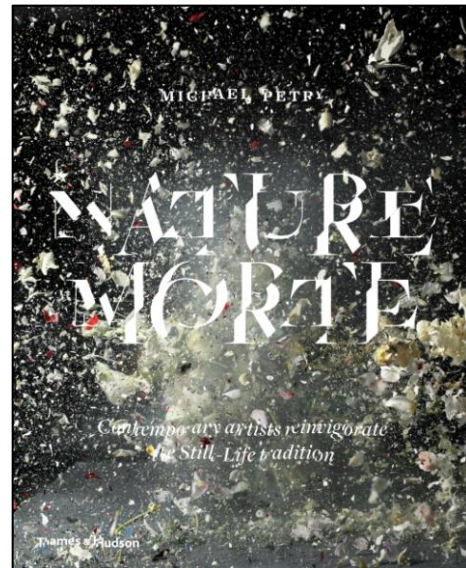
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# Nature Morte

by Michael Petry

This richly rewarding book reveals how leading artists of the twenty-first century are reinvigorating the still life, a genre previously synonymous with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Old Masters. The audacious still lifes celebrated here challenge that historical supremacy and redefine what it means to be a work of nature morte, or “dead nature.” Whether through painting, drawing, sculpture, video, or other forms, contemporary artists have drawn on the tradition to create works of conceptual vivacity, beauty, and emotional poignancy.



Michael Petry has structured the book according to the classic categories of the still-life tradition—Flora, Food, House and Home, Fauna, and Death. Each chapter explores how the timeless symbolic resonance of the memento mori—a reminder of death, change, and the passing of time—has been rediscovered for a new millennium. Among the artists represented are John Currin, Saara Ekström, Elmgreen & Dragset, Renata Hegyi, Damien Hirst, David Hockney, Gary Hume, Jeff Koons, McDermott & McGough, Beatriz Milhazes, Gabriel Orozco, Marc Quinn, Sam Taylor-Wood, and Cy Twombly.

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