Altar documents the widespread human urge to elevate secular things to the status of “ritual objects” and combine them to form private altars. Whether they’re dust catchers, knickknacks, souvenirs, found objects, meaningful artworks or earnestly and deeply revered objects, they all tell a peculiar story — not in words, but in things — about whoever built the altar.

For some time now, Rosa Schamal has been pursuing her fascination with “insignificant” things which, when displayed, exert a sometimes banal, sometimes stirring effect, through the lens of a camera.

Peter Schneider’s essay outlines various ways of understanding the implicit order in these “little things”. Manuel Süess designed and laid out the book, fusing text and photos into a harmonious whole.

“Nothing has more directly to do with my life than these found, fortuitous, selected things.” (D.H. in B., 35 years old)

“My loved ones. I wish I could have had them all around me. But then came strife, divorce, illness, death. Here on the dresser they’re all united, regardless of where they ended up.” (B.Z. from H., 82 years old)

“The essentials often come together in a single object: love, faith, hope, beauty... homeland!” (C.H. from K., 58 years old)
Press Release

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Altar

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