Beautified Afflictions: Pinning Misery down in a Moment of Transient Beauty

In Brazil, live glowworms used to be pinned onto ladies’ outfits as a decorative ornament. “Fame is a fine thing, but to the artist it is what the hairpin is to the insects”. So writes Thomas Carlyle, whom Vincent Van Gogh quotes in a passage found in one of his letters. At the time, the Dutch-born painter had been living in southern France, pouring his energy into a series of paintings that depict a wide variety of different botanical subjects, their beauty and their demise. What exactly does the act of piercing a flower with a pin signify? Sometimes, the clutch of flower petals takes on the appearance of an ornate hairpin that visualizes the human impulse to extract beautiful forms from a living organism into sharp relief. The pins that climb slowly up the stalk, just like an insect would, for it is what the artist does...
Namiko Kitaura Solo Exhibition
“Domestic Stills”

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