

# BOOK REVIEWS



## POEM OF THE PILLOW AND OTHER STORIES BY UTAMARO, HOKUSAI, KUNIYOSHI AND OTHER ARTISTS OF THE FLOATING WORLD

by Gian Carlo Calza  
Phaidon

'Pictures of the floating world', or *ukiyo-e*, is a genre of Japanese woodcuts and paintings produced from the mid-17th century to the end of the 19th century. *Poem of the Pillow* is a beautifully illustrated collection of erotic art, or *shunga*, from this period, a genre that constitutes at least half of all *ukiyo-e* art, and boasts most of its masterpieces. Featuring such celebrated artists as Utamaro, Hokusai, Harunobu, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi and many others, over 350 vibrant artworks have been compiled in this large, hard-covered book by one of the world's most respected specialists and scholars of Japanese art and culture. Organised chronologically with a detailed list of works, artist biographies and an extensive glossary, this is a comprehensive overview of traditional Japanese erotica – a captivating body of artwork and cultural artefacts well worth investigating.

## BOARDING HOUSE

by Roger Ballen  
Phaidon

New York-born photographer Roger Ballen has lived in Johannesburg since his 20s in the 1970s, when he started off photographing small *dorps* of rural South Africa. His globally renowned work has since traversed the fields of documentary photography and fiction, presenting "a form of radical, disquieting subjectivism, a psychology of the world itself". *Boarding House* is his eighth published book and the third by Phaidon. It features 75 dreamlike photographs, many devoid of a subject but all highly evocative of a story, always implicating a subject in their emotiveness. Each black-and-white photograph reverberates with a degree of abstraction and ambiguity, and you're left with a sense that you've just witnessed something rather dark, but can't put your finger on what. Something tells me that this is exactly what Ballen is after. An intriguing collection, to say the least.



## CREAMIER: CONTEMPORARY ART IN CULTURE: 10 CURATORS, 100 CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS, 10 SOURCES

curated by Elena Filipovic et al.  
Phaidon

The fifth addition to the *Cream* series, this one's captioned "The most up-to-date global survey of today's most significant emerging artists." Its intriguing newspaper-style format (albeit with thicker paper and in full colour) makes for a wonderfully engaging experience and it's hard not to pore over and physically touch each one of the 700-odd images. The format is also a constant reminder of art's potential ephemerality – making the news one minute and lining a bin the next. The ten artists extensively showcased here, from a variety of media, are ones deemed by these curators (harking from ten major cities) to show promise of standing the test of time, and also, in fact, of changing the future of contemporary art. Whether or not they accomplish this, *Creamier* is undeniably a vital art-lover's resource.



## DECADE

edited by Eamonn McCabe, with text by Terence McNamee  
Phaidon

A sequel to Phaidon's award-winning *Century* (1999), this hefty hardcover is another trenchant collection of imagery, this time documenting the most momentous events of the last ten years in 500 photographs. Its scope falls into the 'newsworthy' and ranges from war, politics, science and religion to sport, celebrity, arts and culture. More than just a photography book, *Decade* serves as a memoir and chronological historical archive of our launch into the new millennium. It simultaneously evokes the forever-changed nature of photography, from an elitist artform to an activity engaged in by millions. Here, the first decade of the 'citizen journalist' and its profound implications are revealed, as incidents of unrivalled significance are witnessed over and over again by the camera. Thought-provoking essays on the major categories covered, summaries of each decade, and explanations of each event serve as rich accompaniments to this fascinating volume.

## POP (ABRIDGED EDITION)

edited by Mark Francis  
Phaidon

This large-scale paperback examines the rise of pop from the Beat era of the 1950s through to the swinging sixties' counterculture movement. It features the artwork of the most important artists of the time, like Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, and that of photographers, avant-garde filmmakers and architects whose influence was equally pervasive at the time, and as crucial in breaking the commercial-vs-fine art divide. Covering both American and European sides of the coin, logically subdivided into key time segments, and accompanied by a 24-page overarching writeup by the London-based curator, writer and director of Gagosian Gallery, Mark Francis, the extent of this book is broader than most overviews of the roots of pop, and a useful resource for art fundis and pop culturists alike.



## LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL ART

edited by Jeffrey Kastner  
Phaidon

Land and environmental artists are famed for having made the move from representing the land (e.g. in landscape painting) to making their mark directly on the environment. Famous examples include Robert Smithson's 'Spiral Jetty' of 1970 and Christo's 'Surrounded Islands' (in which he surrounded 11 Miami islands with kilometres of pink fabric in 1983). Artworks like these and lesser-known ones, all particularly emblematic of the movement that emerged in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, are featured in this large softcover by Phaidon, in the same series as *Pop*. Other featured artists include Nancy Holt, Andy Goldsworthy, Dennis Oppenheim and Richard Long. Examples are illustrated with colour photographs, sketches and project notes, and the book is prefaced by New York art curator Brian Wallis.

