



Art on the Shelf: December 2015

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by Kathryn Heine

December can be seen as the month of giving and what better thing to give than a new art book. Compiled below is a list of new and upcoming books on art that would make perfect gifts or a great read for you. Enjoy!

Included in this month's Art on the Shelf book list are: "Muse Mickalene Thomas: Photographs," "Richard Diebenkorn: The Sketchbooks Revealed," "Memory Work: Anne Truitt and Sculpture," "The Art of American Still Life: Audubon to Warhol," "Ice: 1986-2007," "The Artist as Curator: Collaborative Initiatives in the International Zero Movement 1957-1967" and "Wonder."

"Muse Mickalene Thomas: Photographs"



Mickalene Thomas, known for her large-scale, multi-textured and rhinestone-encrusted paintings of domestic interiors and portraits, identifies photographic images as a defining touchstone for her practice. Thomas began to photograph herself and her mother as an MFA student at Yale, studying under David Hilliard. This volume is the first to gather together her various approaches to photography, including portraits, collages, Polaroids and other processes. The work is a personal act of deconstruction and re-appropriation.

Working primarily in her studio, Thomas' portraits draw equally from memories of her mother, 1970s black-is-beautiful images of women such as supermodel Beverly Johnson and actress Vonetta McGee, Édouard Manet's odalisque figures and the mise-en-scène studio portraiture of James Van Der Zee and Malick Sidibé. The interior space of her studio, a reappearing character in many of her photographs and paintings, frequently takes on as much of a performative role as her models do. Thomas' work has been included in countless exhibitions worldwide.

BASIC FACTS: "Muse Mickalene Thomas: Photographs" is written by Mickalene Thomas. Published by Aperture. Release Date: November 24, 2015. Hardcover; 120 pages; \$65.00.

"Richard Diebenkorn: The Sketchbooks Revealed"



Throughout his long career, Richard Diebenkorn always kept a sketchbook—a portable studio, as he called it—to capture his ideas. Scattered across these books are deeply personal sketches of his wife, studies of the human figure, grand landscape studies, and evidence of the development and

maturation of Diebenkorn's signature approaches to figuration and abstraction. Taken together, these sketchbooks offer a nearly complete look at his career, from his twenties to the years just before his death at age seventy

"Richard Diebenkorn: The Sketchbooks Revealed" provides a unique look into this previously inaccessible trove of images. All twenty-nine sketchbooks are represented, including one reproduced in its entirety. More than 500 full color images show off gestural sketches and glimpses of the artist's lived experiences. Essays by Enrique Chagoya, Alexander Nemerov, Peggy Phelan, and Steven A. Nash offer insights in to the artist's career, working process, and the visual dialogues Diebenkorn forged with fellow artists past and present. Gretchen Diebenkorn Grant contributes a remembrance of her father and his artistry.

BASIC FACTS: "Richard Diebenkorn: The Sketchbooks Revealed" is written by the Cantor Arts Center (Editor). Published by Stanford University Press. Release Date: November 27, 2015. Hardcover; 295 pages; \$45.00.

"Memory Work: Anne Truitt and Sculpture"



"Memory Work" demonstrates the evolution of the pioneering minimalist sculptor Anne Truitt. An artist determined to make her way through a new aesthetic in the 1960s, Truitt was tireless in her pursuit of a strong cultural voice. At the heart of her practice was the key theme of memory, which enabled her not only to express personal experience but also to address how perception was changing for a contemporary viewership. She gravitated toward the idea that an object in one's focus could unleash a powerful return to the past through memory, which in turn brings a fresh, even critical attention to the present moment.

In addition to the artist's own published writings, which detail the unique challenges facing female artists, "Memory Work" draws on unpublished manuscripts, private recordings, and never-before-seen working drawings to validate Truitt's original ideas about the link between perception and mnemonic reference in contemporary art. De Baca offers an insider's view of the artist's unstinting efforts to realize her artistic vision, as well as the cultural, political, and historical resonances her oeuvre has for us today.

BASIC FACTS: "Memory Work: Anne Truitt and Sculpture" is written by Miguel de Baca. Published by University of California Press. Release Date: December 1, 2015. Hardcover; 236 pages; \$49.95.

"The Art of American Still Life: Audubon to Warhol"



"The Art of American Still Life" reconsiders the development and cultural significance of still-life

painting in America, exploring renowned treasures alongside recently discovered works in unexpected ways. Taking an innovative approach to the genre, this survey newly divides American still life into four discrete eras, each characterized by a predominant form of vision: describing, indulging, discerning, and animating. Works are grouped in “conversations” and explored in accompanying texts to reveal wider cultural meaning.

Introductory essays investigate the many interactions between still life and American culture, examining the close connections between still-life painting and other visual discourses, including natural history, illustration, and commercial photography; the roles objects have played in American literature and art; the Philadelphia region’s defining and lasting impact on the genre; and the reception of still life in American art and art history.

BASIC FACTS: “The Art of American Still Life: Audubon to Warhol” is written by Mark D. Mitchell (Editor). Published by Philadelphia Museum of Art. Release Date: December 8, 2015. Hardcover; 288 pages; \$65.00.

“Ice: 1986-2007”



“Ice” features fifty-eight of the American photographer Lynn Davis’s black-and-white images of the Jakobshavn Glacier facing Disko Bay in Greenland, which she captured over a twenty-year period beginning in 1986. Whether they take the shape of spires, arches, or cliffs, each formation captures what Davis refers to as the “changing alchemy of ice and water that created such monolithic forms.”

Over time, the glacier has retreated, and so too have the icebergs, reminding us that nature as we have known it and taken for granted is now disappearing faster than we had ever imagined. It is Davis’s hope that “by witnessing and recording such a transcendent phenomena that it is not too late to change what now seems like an irreversible fate.” Included is a foreword by Patti Smith.

BASIC FACTS: “Ice: 1986-2007” is written by Lynn Davis. Published by Melcher Media. Release Date: December 22, 2015. Hardcover; 136 pages; \$50.00.

“The Artist as Curator: Collaborative Initiatives in the International Zero Movement 1957-1967”



This massive publication, initiated by the ZERO foundation in Düsseldorf, presents the result of several years of collaboration by an international group of scholars composed of art historians from Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The texts are based on extensive research in various archives in Europe and the United States that has brought to light unpublished material. They reflect the cooperation of the ZERO foundation with other institutions, foundations

and private archives.

Formed at the beginning of the 1960s, the ZERO group was an international network of like-minded artists from Europe, Japan and North and South America that included among its ranks such artists as Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, Yayoi Kusama, Piero Manzoni, Almir Mavignier, Jan Schoonhoven and Jesús Rafael Soto.

BASIC FACTS: “The Artist as Curator: Collaborative Initiatives in the International Zero Movement 1957-1967” is written by Dirk Pörschmann and Francesca Pola. Published by AsaMER. Release Date: December 29, 2015. Hardcover; 472 pages; \$49.95.

“Wonder”



“Wonder” celebrates the reopening of the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery following a major renovation of its historic landmark building, the first purpose-built art museum in the United States. Nine major contemporary artists, including Maya Lin, Tara Donovan, Leo Villareal, Patrick Dougherty, and Janet Echelman, were invited to take over the Renwick’s galleries, transforming the whole of the museum into an immersive cabinet of wonders. Mundane materials such as index cards, marbles, sticks, and thread are conjured into strange new worlds that demonstrate the qualities uniting these artists: a sensitivity to site and the ways we experience place, a passion for making and materiality, and a desire to provoke awe.

A wide-ranging essay by Nicholas R. Bell connects these artworks to wonder’s role throughout Western culture, to the question of how museums have evolved as places to encounter wondrous things, and to the symbolic weight of the moment as this building is “dedicated to art” for the third instance in three centuries.

BASIC FACTS: “Wonder” is written by Nicholas R. Bell and Lawrence Weschler. Published by GILES. Release Date: December 29, 2015. Hardcover; 220 pages; \$59.95.

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