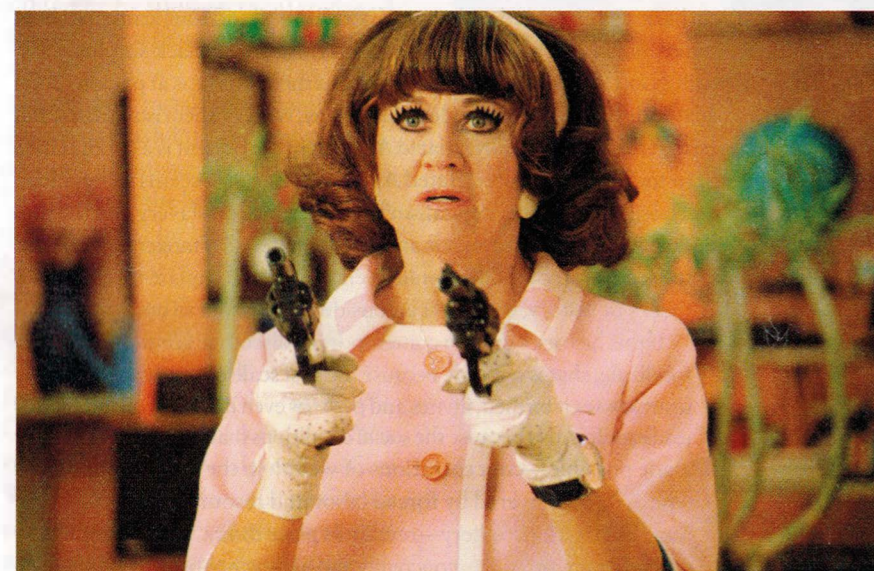
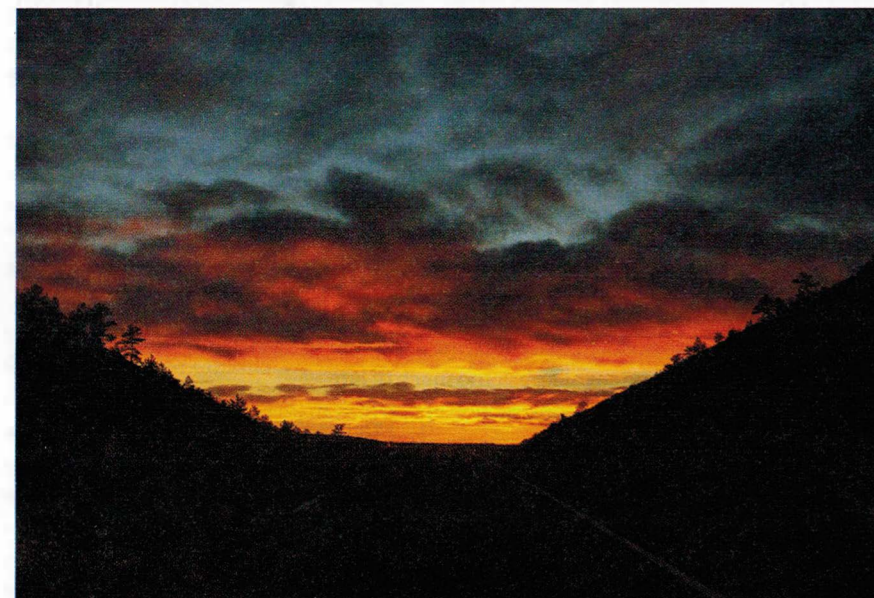


# Artful Volumes

BOOKFORUM CONTRIBUTORS ON THE SEASON'S OUTSTANDING ART BOOKS.



Clockwise, from top left: Paul Graham, *New York/North Dakota* (detail), 2005, thirteen ink-jet prints, overall 7' 1" x 16' 3". From the series "A Shimmer of Possibility," 2004–2006. Raulin Ogle Rogers's *Club 57* flyer *57 Boys*, 1980, Xerox, 11 x 8 1/2". Pedro Almodóvar, *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown), 1988, 35 mm, color, sound, 88 minutes. Lucía (Julietta Serrano).

"I Just Shot John Lennon," screams a headline from the December 9, 1980, edition of the *New York Post*. (If there's anything certain in our precarious world, it's the *Post*'s hoary sensationalism.) A facsimile of its front page appears as one of the endpapers in **CLUB 57: FILM, PERFORMANCE, AND ART IN THE EAST VILLAGE, 1978–1983** (MoMA, \$40), a catalogue that documents the sordid and celebratory goings-on of a time and place in Manhattan that seems fresher, queerer, and more illicit than the swipe-right chickenshit assimilationism of New York City today. Club 57 (and sister haunts such as the Mudd Club and the Pyramid Club) brought us Teutonic opera alien Klaus Nomi, drag artistes Joey Arias and John "Lypsinka" Epperson, New Wave beefcake John Sex—personalities who set very distinct models of living and making for future generations of artists and nightlife eccentrics. *Club 57* is a rich document—a blueprint for what a generous and fertile bohemia should look like.

In **THE JAZZ AGE: AMERICAN STYLE IN THE 1920S** (Cleveland Museum of Art/Yale University Press, \$60), there is an image of a platinum brooch by Van Cleef & Arpels encrusted with a blinding cascade of round- and baguette-cut diamonds and tipped at the bottom with a perfect white pearl. This marvel of icy chic is also practical, as it conceals a watch. That's not a surprising feature by today's standards, but it was an important one in 1927, when the piece was created. "The fact that a woman might want to keep track of the time herself was a new luxury of independence," write curators Sarah D. Coffin and Stephen Harrison in this catalogue, which accompanies a show that opened at the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York, and traveled to the Cleveland Museum of Art. More than four hundred modernist items from North America and Europe, made after history's first modern blood-

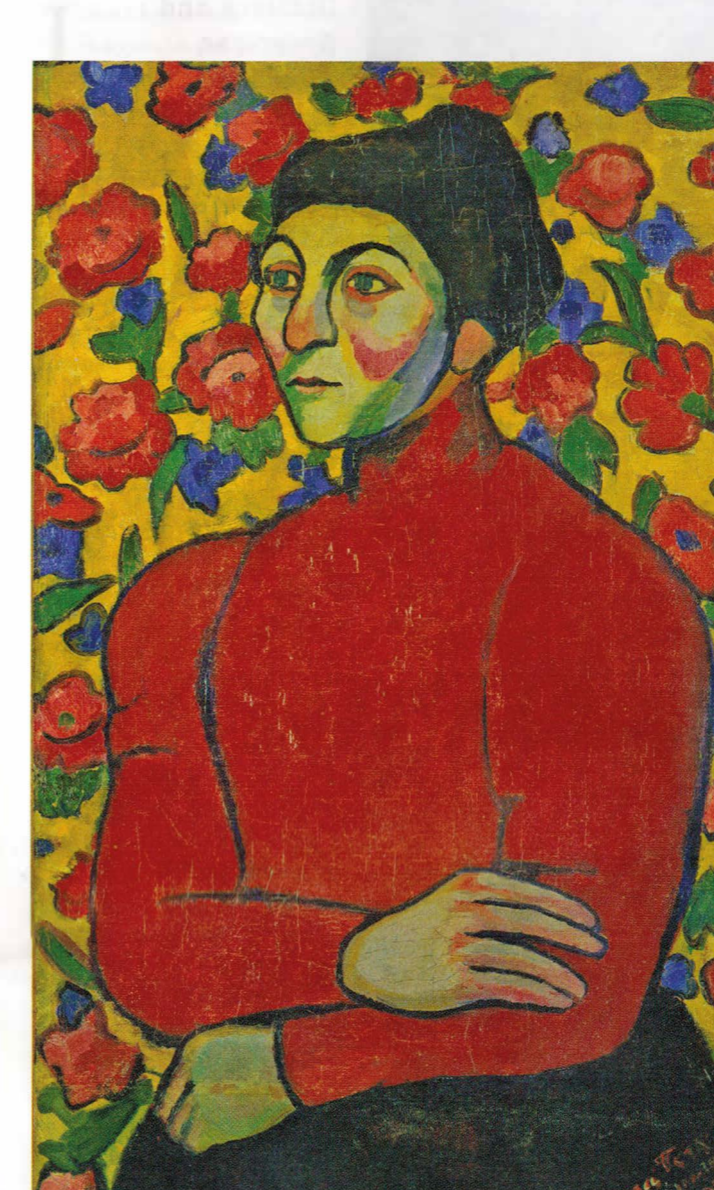
bath (World War I), are featured in this volume, which smartly reflects on the roaring decade that brought us Prohibition, Duke Ellington, and the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. The book scrutinizes a particularly glittering facet of the era with a subtle but steadfastly political eye, unveiling unseen depths behind the stunningly crafted bijoux and objets d'art. —ALEX JOVANOVIĆ

Since their audacious debut at the 2009 Venice Biennale, Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme have created ambitious, multipart installations that fill whole rooms with disparate materials, including videos (their primary medium), books, records, abandoned coffee cups, dried plants, and shattered pots. Their reigning aesthetic is broken but beautiful. They work through a process of constant disputation—they are a couple in art and life—and might argue for years over a single idea before finding the right form to capture their different opinions. A thread running through all their projects ties the condition of Palestine to an obsession with literary texts such as Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives*, and Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck." Rich's poem lends its name and narrative to Abbas and Abou-Rahme's **AND YET MY MASK IS POWERFUL** (Printed Matter, \$18), a book that manages to capture the experience of walking through the dark, sprawling, densely layered installation of the same title via a mesmerizing sequence of images and photographs of the artists' drawings and notes, screenshots of Web-browser windows, video stills, and details of historic artworks. Quotations from Rich's verse, in English and Arabic, pace the narrative. Loosely telling the story of a collection of Neolithic masks that were discovered in and around the West Bank and then 3-D-printed by young Palestinians who wear the replicas on excursions

throughout the territory, *And Yet My Mask Is Powerful* leads readers through a landscape of destroyed villages, accompanied by steady ruminations on ruins, masks, forests, and the return. —KAELAN WILSON-GOLDIE

Sonia Delaunay's paintings and decorative works are a riot of rhythm, movement, and color. In shades of yellow, cerulean blue, cerise, and sea green, the arcs on her canvases and textiles can look like simple abstract forms or rainbow depictions of breasts, plates, faces, or eyes. This style of abstraction was called Simultanism (or Orphism) and, unlike the more monochrome Cubism of Braque and Picasso, described a devotion to the optical vibrations created by overlapping, contrasting colors. In **SONIA DELAUNAY: ART, DESIGN AND FASHION** (Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, distributed in the US by ARTBOOK DAP; \$50), the catalogue for a recent show in Madrid, curator Marta Ruiz del Árbol examines the artist's time in Spain and Portugal, where she lived from 1914 until 1921. Originally from Odessa, Delaunay had studied fine art in Germany before moving to Paris, where she married the painter Robert Delaunay. At the start of the First World War, they decamped to the Iberian Peninsula, where Sonia designed costumes for a Sergei Diaghilev ballet and redesigned the interior of Madrid's Petit Casino. Her work in Madrid included bookbinding, set design, furniture-making, hand-painting hats, and couture fashion. Her garments layer fabrics like wool, taffeta, and silk to suggest shape and movement, much like her canvases. A 1916 sketch for a *Vogue* cover features the same yonic arcs and swoops of her paintings, recombined to create the volume and motion of a colorful coat, with exuberance to spare. —ANNA ALTMAN

When Paul Graham first published **A SHIMMER OF POSSIBILITY** (Mack, \$375) in 2007, he radically redefined the photobook.



Clockwise, from left: Sonia Delaunay, *Philomène*, 1907, oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 21 1/2". Spread from Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's *And Yet My Mask Is Powerful*, 2017. Erik Magnussen, *Cubic Coffee Service*, 1927, silver, gilding, ivory, overall 9 1/2 x 21 1/2 x 13 1/4". From *The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s*.

distilling his epic travels across America into twelve distinct volumes. Guided by a Chekhovian impulse, they are the photographic equivalent of a collection of short stories: unassuming—yet quietly moving—narratives of ordinary characters. Like Robert Frank before him, Graham was a foreign-born photographer (he is British) taking on the unwieldy and sprawling subject of America—especially its marginalized people. He was drawn to the banal but, unlike William Eggleston, didn't seek to amplify its inherent strangeness. Where Eggleston captures a bag boy pushing carts in a single flash of magic-hour light, Graham's camera lingers over multiple frames of a man mowing grass by a Pittsburgh freeway. Elsewhere his gaze is equally cinematic, with multiple images following a man cupping the back of his head as he walks many city blocks; a man shouldering two twelve-packs of Pepsi as he ambles home, past children playing and a graveyard; a man walking alone beneath an underpass. These small daily journeys, likely unnoticed by the drivers moving past, become arduous, monumental, epic. Viewed afresh in a new edition from Mack (the original book sold out in ten weeks and has been long out of print), Graham's brief encounters are resonant and full of anticipation, allowing for the prospect of grace implied in the book's title. When grace does arrive, it is fleeting yet sturdy enough to instill a flicker of hope: a game of basketball at dusk, a sunset flare striking a well-loved truck, a pink sky obscured by gas-station fluorescence. —REBECCA BENGAL

A meander is a winding curve or bend, as in a river or road. But as a design motif, it's all straight lines and right angles—think of the angular borders on a Greek vase. **ANNI ALBERS: NOTEBOOK 1970–1980** (David Zwirner Books, \$30), the sketchbook of the Bauhaus-educated artist best known for her abstract weavings, has both. Bound in a kraft-paper-esque cover, the book, made

when Albers was in her seventies, skillfully reproduces 106 pencil sketches on greenish graph paper. The lightness of the pencil marks and the visible erasures can make the drawings feel tentative, but these repetitive studies in line and pattern also show the meticulous attention Albers honed as a master weaver. Students of her work will recognize the graphic themes that preoccupied her throughout her career, like the continuous angular line of *Red Meander* (both a 1954 weaving and a pair of prints from 1969–71) and the series of drawings of elegant (though much-erased and redrawn) stringlike lines intersecting as loose knots, harkening back to gouaches from the 1940s and prints from the 1960s. While Albers, who died in 1994 at the age of ninety-four, never intended for these sketches to be seen, they provide a rare look into her process: As the erased marks and sometimes-speculative lines show, all who meander are not lost. —LISA DARMS

Ed Ruscha's long-standing fascination with the visual life of text animates **EXTREMES AND IN-BETWEENS** (Gagosian, \$80), a catalogue from a 2016 show in London. Most of the paintings present typeset-style white print against a plain brownish field and, depending on the varying intensities of that background, the letters appear to be either carved into the canvas or floating just above it. Ruscha depicts a familiar experience: Human expression recedes even as it attempts to reach us. The artist has taken inspiration, it seems, from Charles and Ray Eames's *Powers of Ten* (1977), a film in which the point of view zooms out from the Earth by orders of magnitude to the furthest reaches of the cosmos and then slides back down to the level of subatomic particles. In *Universe with Wrinkles*, Ruscha arranges the geographic locales "Universe America Tampa, Florida 10414 N. Newport Circle Back Bedroom Top Left



Dresser Drawer Rear Right Dust Bunny" in decreasing font size (in fact, the text that follows "Dust Bunny" becomes so small that it is almost illegible in the reproduction). Reversing perceptual gears, *Silence with Wrinkles* ascends the auditory scale: "Silence Roomtone Whisper Commotion Racket Peak Volume." Again, the illegibility of the final word is telling. As we strained to see what is smaller than a dust bunny, we now squint to know what is louder than peak volume. In both cases, we are reminded that language—despite its ability to denote with great specificity—remains a limited and uncertain mode of communication. —ALBERT MOBILIO

"When I finish a film," Pedro Almodóvar says in one of the playful "self-interviews" that punctuate **THE PEDRO ALMODÓVAR ARCHIVES** (Taschen, \$70), "I need to dive into another project right away." Neither he nor his characters stay still; this lavishly illustrated anthology of autobiographical reflections about his twenty feature films—each paired with short texts by critics and writers—is a tribute to his eager, irresolute mind. The artists, madmen, nuns, sex workers, wives, and mothers who fill his movies often sound the way that Almodóvar does—gushy, mischievous, and ironic—in these pieces, which include a bemused journal of his 2002 travels in New York and L.A., a diary of the shooting of *Volter* (2006), and a reminiscence of his mother written shortly after her death. The bereft tone of that last essay recurs surprisingly often throughout this otherwise vibrant, colorful, and gregarious collection. "The solitude of each one is as deep as the roots of an ancient tree," Almodóvar writes of the three women at the center of *Volter*. "Have you ever realized," he asks in a self-interview about the loneliness of the characters in *Talk to Her* (2002), "that you were talking to yourself?" "Right now," he answers. —MAX NELSON