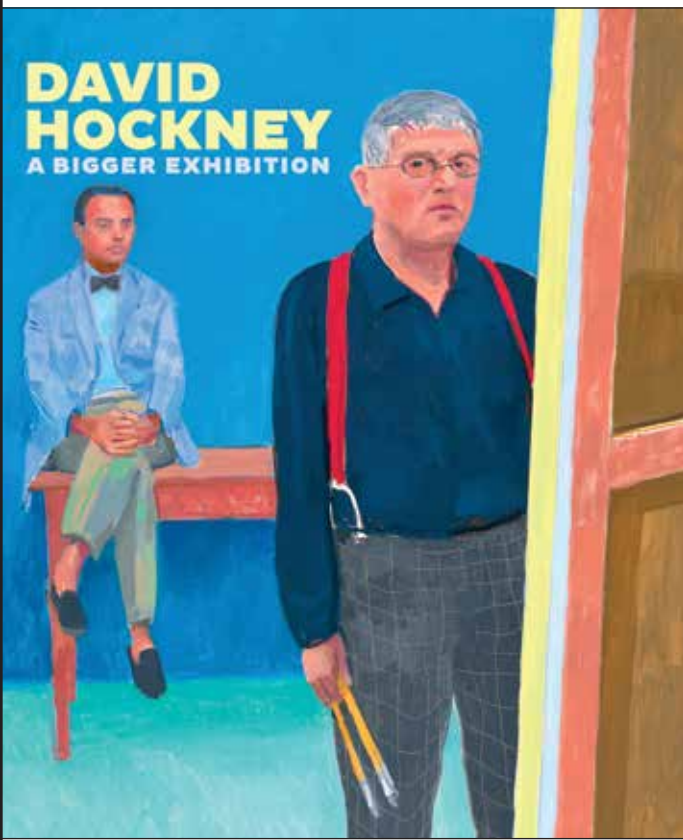


BEST BOOKS 2013

EACH YEAR *THE MAGAZINE* RECEIVES BOOKS FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PUBLISHERS FOR REVIEW CONSIDERATION. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE BRIEF REVIEWS OF OUR TWENTY FAVORITE BOOKS OF 2013. REVIEWS BY DIANE ARMITAGE, JON CARVER, GUY CROSS, KATHRYN M DAVIS, ELIZABETH HARBALL, HANNAH HOEL, IRIS MCLISTER, RICHARD TOBIN, LAUREN TRESP, AND SUSAN WIDER.



“Photography is alright,” David Hockney once remarked, “if you don’t mind looking at the world from the point of view of a paralyzed Cyclops, for a split second.” This quote might seem at odds with the work he’s been making for over a decade, which consummately relies on technology: his much-remarked-upon iPad drawings are catalogued in the handsome *David Hockney: A Bigger Exhibition* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Prestel, \$65). The most pronounced visual attributes of his practice have always been, at least thematically, rather innocuous by virtue of the sun-soaked, color-happy subjects alone: Technicolor swimming pools and cheery forest glens. This monograph is the first to unpack the septuagenarian’s fascination with digital media. Since 2002, Hockney’s been making enthusiastic and surprisingly complex pictures on his iPad, using just his fingers and a \$6 Apple program called Brushes. Hundreds of these works are spread across *A Bigger Exhibition*. Familiarly, orgiastically Fauvist, scribbly, and often touchingly personal, Hockney’s childlike gusto for picture-making, a twenty-first century grown-up’s answer to finger painting, is delightful and contagious. In his ruminative, and genuinely humble introductory essay, Hockney writes, “The relentless march of new technology offers hope... it might look like chaos; I don’t know. I simply offer a slightly different view.” Indeed. —**I.M.**

This lavish book—*It’s Modern: The Eye and Visual Influence of Alexander Liberman* (Rizzoli, \$65) about fashion impresario Alex Liberman makes a persuasive case for a central argument, expressed by curator James Crump in the foreword: “In his own right, Liberman was an accomplished and prolific painter and sculptor whose early work in the 1950s and 1960s was instrumental in advancing the tenets of Minimalism and the Pop and Op art movements.” Created by Charles Churchward, this



lavish book is a lush biography of the legendary Condé Nast editorial director told in two hundred and twenty-five pages of beautiful photographs tracing the multiple facets of Liberman’s life as influential magazine art director, arbiter of contemporary art, and gifted artist. Churchward has produced a book that mirrors that life in its seamless treatment of Liberman’s twofold career in haute culture and contemporary art. Liberman’s innovative fusion of photography with layout design reflects his larger feat of shaping the contemporary symbiosis of the fashion world and the fine arts. *It’s Modern* is enriched by its recourse to scholarly research and insights of several contributors. But what most recommends this volume is its attention to Liberman’s art, featuring some sixty black-and-white and color photographs of his monumental paintings and sculptures from 1950 to the 1990s, along with a penetrating 1993 interview with *THE* magazine publisher Guy Cross. The lean aesthetic that Liberman revealed in the interview pervades all the fields he influenced. Cross: “What makes a person an artist...what’s the bottom line?” Liberman: “You have to work with a medium that allows you risk and total chance.”—**R.T.**

The prolific and inventive collaborative pair known as Burning Books has tweaked Edith Hamilton’s mythology and plucked out of the head of Zeus this provocative graphic novel. *Twice Through the Maze* (Burning Books, \$21.95), with photographs by Michael Sumner and text by Melody Sumner Carnahan, leads us into, but not quite out of, a labyrinth of beguiling narrative possibility. What does it mean to chase down a postmodern Minotaur and subvert the motives of his Olympian cohort? This journey through a brain-teasing maze is an amusing one, yet it’s utterly serious in its haunting overtones as the reader and the viewer attempt to follow Ariadne’s thread only to arrive at a textual stonewalling or an image with too many people that you know—or could have known had you been invited to the right party with all those ecstatic myth-busters. Certainly, one of the most poignant of the photographs is of the late Celia Rumsey in the guise of The Cosmonaut’s Mother in the Underworld. And this strange and startling image contains its own labyrinth of prophecy and deconstruction. Throughout the twinning and the intertwining runs the brain-teasing specter of gods reborn in “The Unrepaired [and unrepentant] Synonym Theater.” —**D.A.**

Available at BurningBooks.org and [op.cit. books](http://op.cit.books) in Santa Fe

