

chapter. The collection was curated by his children, Martha, an art history professor at Concordia University, and John, a political scientist at the University of Victoria. **VERDICT** Recommended for history buffs.—Shauna Frischkorn, Millersville Univ., PA

Vollauschek, Tomi & Agathe Jacquillat. The 3D Type Book. Laurence King, dist. by Chronicle. 2011. c.240p. photogs. ISBN 9781856697132. pap. \$29.95. GRAPHIC ARTS

This is the third volume from Jacquillat and Vollauschek of FL@33, a multidisciplinary studio for visual communication. The previous two titles (*Postcard; Made and Sold*) followed a scheme in which the authors invited designers to contribute examples of pieces that convey the aspect of visual communication around which the book is based. For this project, the authors expanded their scope by also soliciting additional artists through an open call for contributions. The result is a richly illustrated volume showing letters of the alphabet created from an extremely wide variety of materials—shoelaces, cheese, tire tracks, moss, the human body, and much more. A short foreword by 3-D type specialist Andrew Byrom puts the work in context, and a closing section includes pertinent information on the contributors. **VERDICT** This is the most comprehensive study to date on this unique corner of the graphic arts, and while it has a quirky quality that will appeal to some casual readers, it is really for graphic design and typography specialists. This well-produced and reasonably priced work should find a home on most designer's shelves.—Mark Woodhouse, Elmira Coll. Lib., NY

Weissman, Terri. The Realisms of Berenice Abbott: Documentary Photography and Political Action. Univ. of California. 2011. 264p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780520266759. \$60. PHOTOG

Berenice Abbott's name immediately brings to mind her impressive 1935–39 *Changing New York* photographs, but as Weissman (art history, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) adroitly points out, they are only one facet of her interests and accomplishments. Abbott brought a critical eye to the real world, a keen sense of the changing politics of the decades, and a willingness to adapt as times altered. Looking at her early Paris portraits from the 1920s, the more familiar images from her field trips and the ever-changing faces of New York, and finally her scientific “photophysics” works, one can see the interaction between the artist and the world of the subject. Certainly, realism for this photographer was a reflection of the world at a particular moment, not a mode of thinking. **VERDICT** From a

wealth of primary material, much of it long buried in archives and libraries, Weissman has created a fine documentary. Abbott's life, her ideas of herself and of the political and social world around her, and her singular vision of the interaction of these are all presented with clear prose and scholarly consideration. Photography fans will find much here.—Paula Frosch, Metropolitan Museum of Art Lib., New York

LITERATURE

Codrescu, Andrei. Whatever Gets You Through the Night: A Story of Sheherazade and the Arabian Entertainments. Princeton Univ. Jun. 2011. c.200p. bibliog. ISBN 9780691143378. \$22.95. LR

The publisher's blurbs call this a “retelling” of *The Arabian Nights*, but Codrescu's subtitle is more accurate. In other words, Codrescu (*The Poetry Lesson*), a wildly popular and prolific author and also a commentator on NPR's *All Things Considered*, isn't offering a retelling of the original Arabic tales, but is presenting an independent story featuring Scheherazade and referencing the title used in the earliest English translations, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. In short, this book is a sort of riff on the original themes. The stories share some characteristics and plotlines with *Arabian Nights* but always with a twist or new metaphysical take. They also have a different sense of the fantastic. Genies become Genuises, for example, and the original frame itself isn't really there. Interesting and witty footnotes about translations of the *Arabian Nights* and the culture of the story are added as a kind of bonus, contributing to the narrative. **VERDICT** Codrescu's fans will love this book, and Arabists will be charmed by this new take on the classic. Most libraries will have a readership for it.—David Azzolina, Univ. of Pennsylvania Libs., Philadelphia

Foster, Thomas C. Twenty-Five Books That Shaped America: How White Whales, Green Lights, and Restless Spirits Forged Our National Identity. Harper: HarperCollins. Jun. 2011. c.352p. ISBN 9780061834400. pap. \$14.99. LR

Foster (English, Univ. of Michigan, Flint: *How To Read Literature like a Professor*) is quick to admit that selecting just 25 books to discuss how they helped shape and define a nation is “obviously insane,” but he writes that these 25 are simply to be illustrative, not definitive. If you can get past how arbitrary this all seems, Foster's actual writing—breezy, smart, and funny—is a pleasure if a bit too cute. For example, he admits that he would prefer to write about *The House of the Seven Gables* (“it has a character named Hepzibah, and how often does

one of those come along?”) over *The Scarlet Letter*, but “all the world thinks otherwise,” so discusses the latter. Nonetheless, Foster's chapters, which include overviews of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, *Little Women*, *My Antonia*, *The Crying of Lot 49*, and *Song of Solomon*, may make you want to read, or reread, the books themselves. Foster concludes by briefly mentioning 15 additional books. **VERDICT** The book is a delight to read, but the author is not brave in his choices and doesn't take any stands. Not for scholars, but entertaining enough that people familiar with the titles may well enjoy it as much as readers new to many of the books covered.—William D. Walsh, Georgia State Univ., Atlanta

Rodden, John. The Unexamined Orwell. Univ. of Texas. Aug. 2011. c.400p. illus. index. ISBN 9780292725584. \$45. LR

Can there be anything new to say about George Orwell? Longtime Orwell scholar Rodden (communication studies, Univ. of Texas, Austin) thinks there is, but his book largely recycles themes from two of his previous works, *Scenes from an Afterlife* and *Every Intellectual's Big Brother*. Yet he does add new perspectives in these 18 chapters (he calls them “reception scenes”), or case studies, on Orwell's literary afterlife. He discusses the work of five writers considered successors to Orwell, politically and culturally: Dwight MacDonald, Lionel Trilling, Irving Howe, Christopher Hitchens, and John Lukacs; he takes a close look at Orwell's impact in East Germany (how its totalitarian world replicated *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). In the final section, a bit of a miscellany, Rodden examines some of the Orwell myths that have endured (e.g., did Hemingway really rescue Orwell in Paris in 1945?—probably not), assesses utopian fiction, proposes how Orwell might have reviewed his own biographies, and, most interestingly, considers “The Life Orwell Never Lived?” **VERDICT** Rodden's writing is always accessible to both scholars and general readers. This collection, however, does not break much new ground and will primarily appeal to those who collect everything written about Orwell. With extensive notes.—Thomas A. Karel, Franklin & Marshall Coll. Lib., Lancaster, PA

Zanganeh, Lila Azam. The Enchanter: Nabakov and Happiness. Norton. May 2011. c.256p. illus. index. ISBN 9780393079920. \$23.95. LR

Zanganeh, who has taught humanities at Harvard, presents an idiosyncratic appreciation of the life and accomplishments of Vladimir Nabokov. Although labeled as literary criticism, the book is more about

The latest in the "Simple Stitches" series focuses on basic projects for machine sewing. Owen (*Candle Making*) collects projects for a variety of housewares and accessories and provides step-by-step photographs to boost beginners' confidence. Though the projects are aimed at beginners and the sewing is simple, the finished goods are attractive. The focus is on the projects, so there's no information on sewing machine operation; however, there are plenty of good sewing machine books on the market.

Stiefel, Vicki & Lisa Souza. **10 Secrets of the LaidBack Knitters: A Guide to Holistic Knitting, Yarn, and Life.** Griffin: St. Martin's. May 2011. c.176p. illus. index. ISBN 9780312612009. pap. \$24.99. FIBER CRAFTS

Writer and knitting enthusiast Stiefel and dyer, spinner, and designer Souza present a guide to enjoying the process of knitting as much as, if not more than, the finished product. Each of the ten secrets has its own chapter containing inspirational interviews, anecdotes, tips, tricks, and patterns. Often touching and funny and consistently educational, Stiefel and Souza will remind knitters of the beauty we create with needles (or a hook) and string.

INTERIOR DESIGN

GAYLE A. WILLIAMSON, Fashion Inst. of Design & Merchandising, Los Angeles

Lemieux, Christiane with Rumaan Alam (text) & Melanie Acevedo (photogs.). **Undecorate: The No-Rules Approach to Interior Design.** Clarkson Potter: Crown Pub. Group. 2011. 256p. photogs. index. ISBN 9780307463159. \$40. INTERIOR DESIGN

Lemieux, founder of DwellStudio and a contributor to blogs Apartment Therapy and Design*Sponge, invented the term "undecorating" after viewing numerous websites and blogs created by do-it-yourselfers who exemplify a fearless and passionate decorating process but possess no formal training. She here visits apartments, lofts, and houses throughout the United States to illustrate (with 200 photographs) 19 interiors, including her own apartment. Lemieux describes how the inhabitants have designed their homes with an eclectic flair to suit their lifestyles—some undertaking extensive renovation, others simply sprucing up with paint, decorative accessories, and furniture. Amateurs will be inspired by the variety of decorating ideas.

Zanganeh's obsession with "VN" and her pursuit of his biographical and literary essence in places associated with him. Her theme is that Nabokov is the great writer of happiness, even though his are not happy stories. Each of the 15 chapters focuses on one type of happiness found in his works and how his life permeated his fiction. Zanganeh's own life story becomes entwined with Nabokov's as she sets out to emulate him. There are traces of *Alice in Wonderland* in her imaginings and adventures. **VERDICT** Nabokovians will be charmed by Zanganeh's single-minded pursuit of how Nabokov found happiness in the use of language and joyful imagery. Those not familiar with Nabokov may become confused between him and the author. They should, instead, read *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov's autobiography, as well as his major works. This slight but charming book treads ground familiar to many academics but may prove revelatory to general readers to whom it is primarily addressed. A flight of imagination that should appeal to anyone who has ever obsessively devoted him- or herself to a favorite author.—Morris Hounion, New York City Coll. of Technology Lib., CUNY

PERFORMING ARTS

★Beaumont, Daniel. **Preachin' the Blues: The Life & Times of Son House.** Oxford Univ. Jul. 2011. c.224p. photogs. bibliog. ISBN 9780195395570. \$24.95. MUSIC

Eddie "Son" House is an iconic figure in blues music. As a participant in a legendary 1930s Paramount recording session with fellow pioneer Charlie Patton; mentor to Robert Johnson; performer on Alan Lomax's 1941 field recordings, which introduced Muddy Waters; and a forerunner of the blues revival of the early Sixties, he qualifies as the Flying Dutchman of the genre. Aside from his brilliant lyrics and stunning musicianship, House is perhaps most distinguished as the only major blues figure to forsake the pulpit for the juke joint (usually it was the other way around). Documentation of his career is minimal, fanciful, and at times contradictory. Beaumont (religion & classics, Univ. of Rochester) seeks to redress this neglect with meticulous scholarship masterly applied. Beaumont's work shines especially in his depiction of House's nonrecording years, culminating with a chilling revelation of a self-defense homicide in a Rochester, NY, work camp that echoes the share-cropping community House thought he had escaped via northern migration. **VERDICT** Beaumont expands on the scholarship of Robert Palmer (*Deep Blues*) and Ted Gioia (*Delta Blues*) to present the definitive portrait of this unjustly

neglected lion of American music.—Dave Szatmary, Univ. of Washington, Seattle

★Cann, Kevin. **David Bowie: Any Day Now; The London Years, 1947–1974.** Adelita, dist. by D.A.P. 2011. 336p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780955201776. pap. \$45. MUSIC

What a treasure! Cann published his first Bowie bio, *David Bowie: A Chronology*, in 1983, but he has surpassed that book and all others on the subject with this engaging and comprehensive look at a captivating cultural and musical chameleon. From his birth as David Robert Jones in 1947 London through his Sixties songwriting and pop-star aspirations (one story has the then unknown leader of Davie Jones & the Manish Boys appearing at Paul McCartney's front door in 1965 and handing him a copy of his first single, "I Pity the Fool") to his first success with "Space Oddity," his role as Ziggy Stardust, and his ultimate move from the UK in 1974, Cann details it all. The book is rich on ephemera—baby pictures, handbills, glam shots—and wonderfully detailed. The format echoes Mark Lewisohn's excellent *The Complete Beatles Chronicle*. **VERDICT** Almost 900 photos are included here, and the graphics and production are superb. The only thing missing is the sequel. The definitive collection of an icon's memorabilia, this book will entertain all who are interested in Sixties London and Seventies pop.—Bill Baars, Lake Oswego P.L., OR

Cateforis, Theo. **Are We Not New Wave?: Modern Pop at the Turn of the 1980s.** Univ. of Michigan. (Tracking Pop). Jun. 2011. c.304p. photogs. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780472115556. \$70; pap. ISBN 9780472034703. \$28.95. MUSIC

Closely connected to the decline of punk, springing up independently in America and the UK, and with acts ranging from power pop revivalists to deadpan synthesizer ensembles, new wave is a notoriously tricky genre to define. Cateforis (music history & cultures, Syracuse Univ.) first sets out to trace the origins, evolution, and ultimate incorporation of the movement into the dominant musical paradigm of the late 1980s. He then explores several new wave themes, such as the deliberate "nervousness" of vocal and stage performances and the shifting role of the keyboardist in the synthesizer era. These explorations each focus on a small number of artists or groups. That narrow scope makes the work's thesis, that new wave was a fundamentally modern (as opposed to postmodern) movement, difficult to trace. Taken as a collection of "essays on" rather than a "history of," this book raises many notable points. **VERDICT**