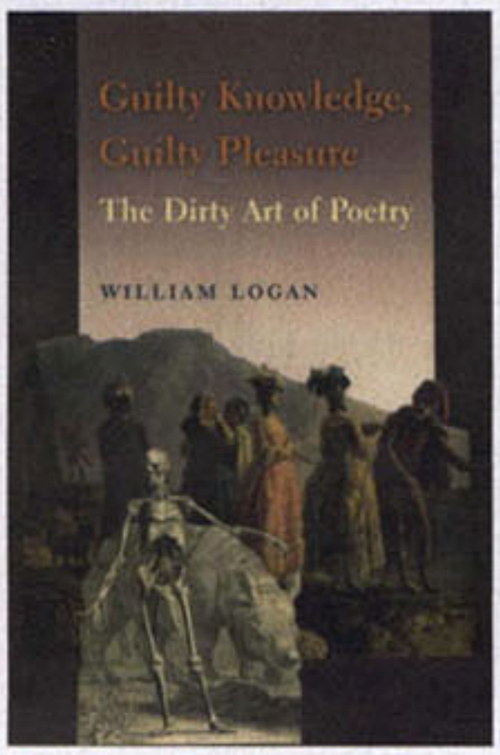
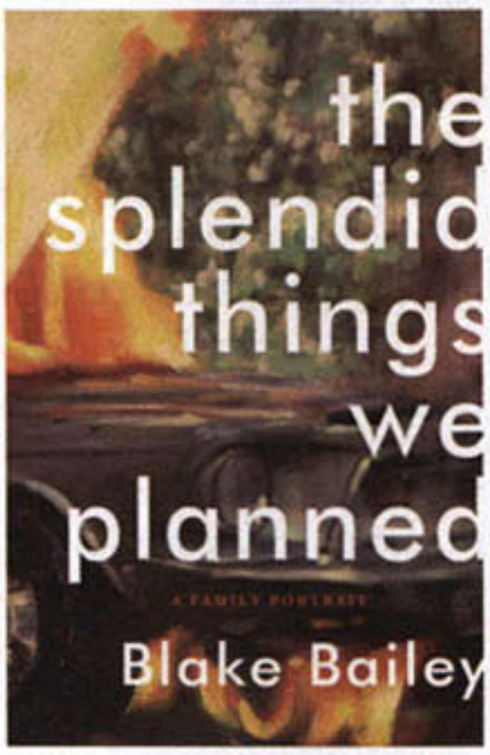
arts & humanities

FINE ARTS

Heartney, Eleanor & others. The Reckoning: Women Artists of the New Millennium. Prestel. 2013. 256p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9783791347592. pap. $39.95. FINE ARTS

The work of 24 international female artists born after 1960 is covered here by the coauthors of *After the Revolution: Women Who Transformed Contemporary Art* (2007). Heartney (contributing editor, *Art in America*), Helaine Posner (Neuberger Museum of Art), Nancy Princenthal (former senior editor, *Art in America*), and independent curator Sue Scott organize the work into four sections—"Bad Girls," "Spellbound," "Domestic Disturbances," and "History Lessons"—and analyze how feminism influenced artists Janine Antoni, Jane and Louise Wilson, Cao Fei, Wangechi Mutu, Mika Rottenberg, Cecily Brown, and Pipilotti Rist and how their work impacts visual and performance art. The women confront issues of gender and race, home and family, and history and globalization. While an extensive bibliography for general reference is included, for the individual artists, a bibliography contains their monographs, solo and group exhibition catalogs, and studies. Succinct essays on each person are complemented by color and black-and-white images of their output. **VERDICT** Suitable for anyone who wants to learn about contemporary art by women, as well as undergraduate and graduate students, scholars, and researchers studying visual and performance art.—**Tina Chan, SUNY Oswego**





Wresting with the state of contemporary poetry, language of loss & light, maddening memories

★**Mertins, Detlef. Mies. Phaidon. Jun. 2014. 544p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780714839622. $150.** ARCH

With 849 title entries on "Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig—1886–1969" in WorldCat, the union catalog of 72,000 libraries, do we need another book on the master of universal space, heir to the Platonic ideal, and pursuer of the perfectly understated environment? For those interested in the intellectual context of the work—in Mies as philosopher-architect—the answer is "yes." Tracing a chronological arc, *Mies*, with its suitably terse title, is divided into five chapters highlighting his development as seen in the Riehl country house, the visionary glass skyscrapers of the 1920s, the Barcelona Pavilion, the campus for the Illinois Institute of Technology, and such high-rise buildings as 860-880 Lake Shore Drive in Chicago. Both storyteller and documentarian, the late Mertins (Univ. of Pennsylvania; *Modernity Unbound*) can in one paragraph adroitly describe a building with exceptional accuracy—he visited each of the architect's extant projects—and in the next relate it to Vitruvian and Gothic Revival traditions, Walter Benjamin's concept of mimesis, or plant growth. Unfortunately, the book's two-column design results in handsome white space but overly small illustrations (all black and white), and dense, undersize typography. **VERDICT** Written at a level that serves graduate students and faculty, this title is essential only for comprehensive architecture collections.—**Paul Glassman, Felician Coll. Lib., Lodi, NJ**

Stilgoe, John R. Old Fields: Photography, Glamour, and Fantasy Landscape. Univ. of Virginia. 2014. 544p. photos. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780813935157. $34.95; ebk. ISBN 9780813935164. PHOTOG

Landscape historian Stilgoe (visual & environmental studies, Harvard Univ.; *Train Time: Railroads and the Imminent Reshaping of the United States Landscape*) here presents an academically in-depth but uniquely personal view of the history of photography as it pertains to the genres of landscape and "glamour." This eclectic but fascinating volume masterfully draws from such seemingly disparate sources as women's magazines, American Southern gothic landscape photography, fantasy literature, and the technical implications of the medium-format camera. Stilgoe's passion for photography emerges on every page—along with anecdotes, memories, and detailed footnotes. Although the book is short on illustrations, Stilgoe's writing is precise, thorough, and interesting. With encyclopedic accuracy, the author references specific artists and images and supplies a hefty bibliography. Drawing on both experience and extensive archival sources, Stilgoe evaluates and theorizes on the significance of the idea of glamour in the context of landscape. His hope is that ideal beauty and natural simplicity still exist, regardless of the massive paradigm shifts within photography. **VERDICT** A quality work for scholars of photo history and those interested in the changing landscape of rural America.—**Shauna Frischkorn, Millersville Univ., PA**

Time. MIT. (Documents of Contemporary Art). 2013. 237p. ed. by Amelia Groom. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780262519663. pap. $24.95. FINE ARTS

Modernist art has long been understood in terms of a linear and progressive notion of time, with a radical avant-garde leading the charge of history. This formulation has come under pressure in recent decades, owing to not only post-modernism critiques from the academy, but broader technological and economic forces, including digital communication networks, which speed up and fragment time, and globalization, which brings an ever-greater number of people into a state of contemporaneity. The diverse temporal models that have emerged in modernism's wake are the subject of this anthology. Groom's introductory essay chronicles the ways in which artists and theorists have rethought time in recent years; the rest of the book is organized around three basic temporal dis-

is too often bland and sometimes ungrammatical. Few poems sing. This is only for dedicated readers. [See "What's Coming for National Poetry Month in April?" Prepub Alert, 11/18/13.]—**Doris Lynch, Monroe Cty. P.L., Bloomington, IN**

I Am the Beggar of the World: Landays from Contemporary Afghanistan. Farrar. Apr. 2014. 160p. tr. from Pashto by Eliza Griswold. photos. ISBN 9780374191870. $24. POETRY

The landay is a two-line folk poem invented and shared by Afghan women, an old form still very much alive. These present-day landays offer a peephole into the society of those who have taken great risks to write them. While poetry writing is now permitted in Kabul (it was banned previously by the Taliban), it is still frowned upon in rural areas; authors often refuse credit for their work. Love, oppression, war, and politics are the prime topics. Along with Seamus Murphy's photographs, translator Griswold's commentary decodes the messages, which are not always this clear: "Darling, come down to the river/ I've baked you bread and hidden it in my pitcher." Griswold recounts her difficulties collecting the landays and relates a horrific story of one suicide. Less grim is the fascinating mix of old and new: "Daughter, in America the river isn't wet./ Young girls learn to fill their jugs on the Internet." **VERDICT** Following up on a *New York Times Magazine* article ("Why Afghan Women Risk Death To Write Poetry"), Griswold and Murphy, along with their heroic Afghani interpreter, Asma Safi, have documented an artistic movement that is at once delightful and courageous. [See "What's Coming for National Poetry Month in April?" Prepub Alert, 11/18/13.]—**Ellen Kaufman, New York**

★**Leo, Teresa. Bloom in Reverse. Univ. of Pittsburgh. 2014. 104p. ISBN 9780822962977. pap. $15.95.** POETRY

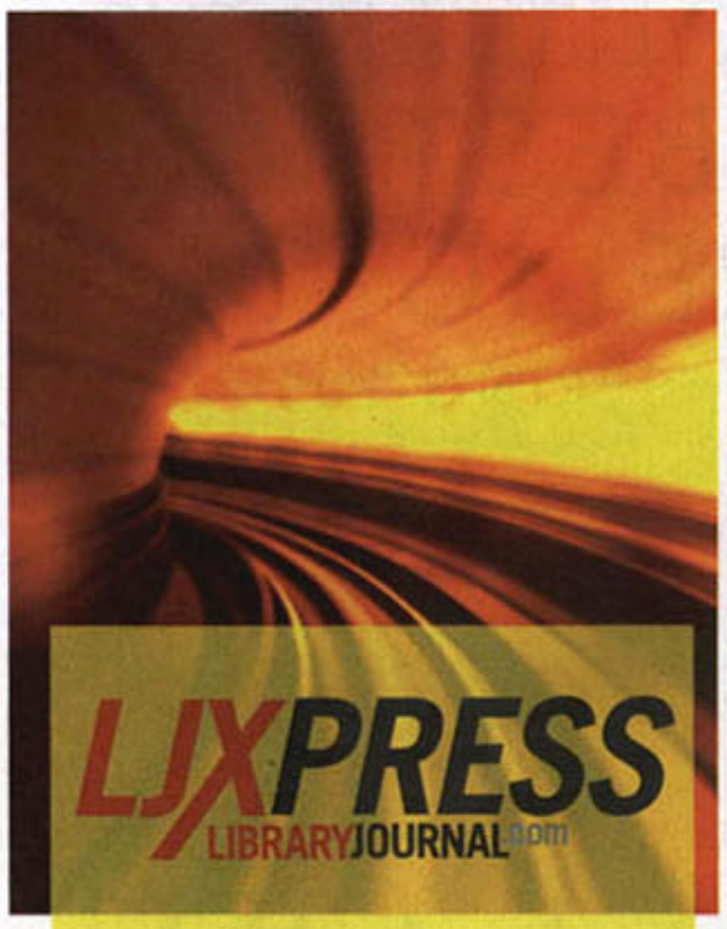
In language both fierce and lovely (She… knew the names of beautiful things/ to describe the trauma of such a room"), Leo transforms the suicide of a friend and the end of a relationship into something elegiac and moving. Using a sort of reverse chronology, Leo (*The Halo Rule*) writes poems that begin in loss and death and finish in revival and renewal: "If there are tears in things,/ then tonight everything begins and ends// in water." Perhaps the poet needed to reconstruct what was lost in order to make sense of it. And perhaps she needed to control the language and structure as a way of controlling emotion, for while sometimes lines and breaks seem scattered and fragmented, most of the poems are fashioned in couplets or tercets. And perhaps Leo needed to bring light into the lines, to allow the poet and poem a place to breathe once more: "If I could only call up her image/ when I wanted I would.// But she comes and goes/ as she pleases, and won't stop// until she is everything/ that ever came and left at once—." **VERDICT** This is a deeply meaningful book that has something for all readers. [See "What's Coming for National Poetry Month in April?" Prepub Alert, 11/18/13.]—**Karla Huston, Appleton, WI**

★**Wright, Charles. Caribou. Farrar. Mar. 2014. 96p. ISBN 9780374119027. $23.** POETRY

Like those in Wright's 2009's *Sestets*, the lyrical meditations in this latest collection consider the impermanence of human existence within the relative permanence of the natural world. On the threshold of 80 ("This is an old man's poetry"), the poet faces mortality with a candid, if often deflating, awareness that eventually we find ourselves "surrounded by everything we have failed to do," our memories "merely the things we forgot to forget." A generic setting of creeks, clouds, trees, moons, and stars, Wright's strangely depopulated world takes on a haunting yet familiar presence, inspiring both Zen wisdom ("empty yourself of yourself") and dark wit ("...you've said your piece. Now rest in it."). **VERDICT** Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Critics Circle Award, National Book Award, among other honors, Wright offers up a spare, no-nonsense approach that serves his subjects well, enabling a kind of spiritual poetry for those who resist spirituality. Pointed as ever, his work continues to engage and explore life's unsolvable mysteries. [See "Ten Essential Poetry Titles for Winter 2014," Prepub Alert, 9/30/13.]—**Fred Muratori, Cornell Univ. Lib., Ithaca, NY**

Zucker, Rachel. The Pedestrians. Wave. Apr. 2014. 160p. ISBN 9781933517896. pap. $18. POETRY

These diary-like, mostly dark prose poems focus on the events of daily life yet never seem real. The closest they get is a kind of Daliesque quality with the iconic watch melting in the poetic desert. National Book Critics Circle finalist Zucker (*Museum of Accidents*) writes as though she's waiting for the other shoe to drop. Most of the poems engage in a subtle—sometimes too subtle—humor. In "real poem (personal statement)," for example, the poet writes, "I skim sadness like fat off the surface/ of cooling soup." In the next line, she says, "Don't care about/ metaphor," but obviously she does. It could be that she's aware of the contradiction and means her comment to be ironic. If so, it never comes across. **VERDICT** Many of these



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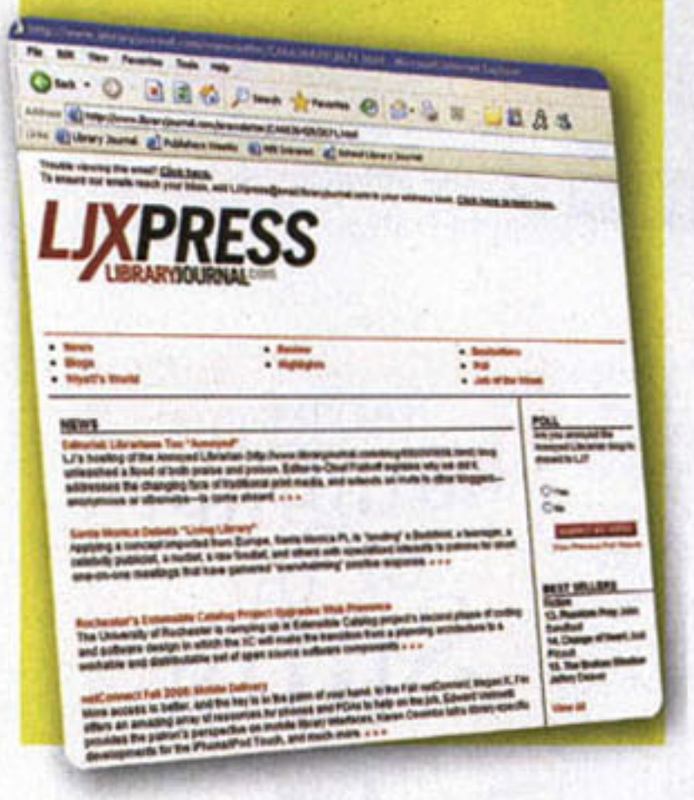

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