

Books.

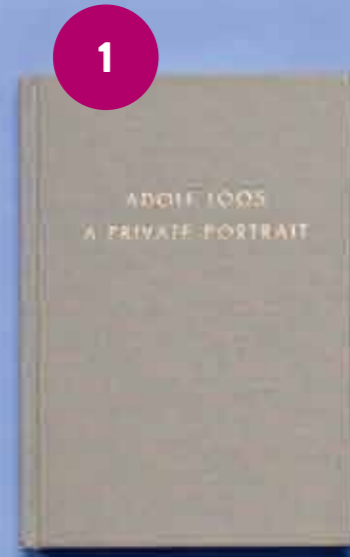
1 **ADOLF LOOS: A PRIVATE PORTRAIT** CLAIRE BECK LOOS

DOPPELHOUSE PRESS, 2011

Architects, especially modernist architects immortalised in austere black and white photographs and strict glass and steel buildings, are too easily reduced to a name, facts and a series of buildings. Their strident, vivacious, selfish or romantic personalities are clouded in architectural history. So this little book, *Adolf Loos: A Private Portrait*, is a welcome antidote to assuming severe buildings may imply a severe person. Claire Beck Loos married the famous architect in 1929 when she was 24 and he was 58, and this book is a personal memoir of her time with him before their divorce three years later. Originally published in 1936 in German, the book has only recently translated into English, a project led by Claire's nieces.

Adolf Loos is an extrovert, the caricature (or perhaps the original) of the architect who doesn't pay attention to client's budgets, changing plans in the midst of building, a luxury-loving socialist: "I am a Communist. The difference between me and a Bolshevik is only that I want to turn all the people into aristocrats, whether they want to turn them all into proletarians."

The book is separated into short paragraph-length tales of an afternoon or a conversation, making this unique in that you can pick it up at any point. You get a very clear sense of who Loos was as a person, or at least how Claire remembers him: an eccentric who flits between intense joy and fury, generous to a fault, unafraid to disagree intensely with a client, full of quips and contradictory ways of seeing the world. It is indeed a personal portrait, and a surprising, quite wonderful little book. **NICOLE STOCK**



2 **NEW RINGS** NICOLAS ESTRADA

THAMES & HUDSON, 2011

If a diamond solitaire is as adventurous as you would go with a ring, this book may not be for you. If, however, you're fascinated by the ideas contemporary jewellers are mashing around, you might just be enthralled with *New Rings*. Some are outlandish, some so beautiful you want to track the maker down and figure out how to get your hands (and fingers) on one. The variety found in here is inspirational. **ANNA FOOTE**



3 **ARCHITECTS' SKETCHBOOKS** EDITED BY WILL JONES

THAMES & HUDSON, 2011

I find one of the wonderful parts about architecture is that there are so many ways of coming to a final building conclusion. Some architects approach a building as a spatial problem, designing rooms that are all about space and feel beautiful to be in, while form is secondary. To others, architecture is an object in the landscape, a form drawn from cues from the site. Others

still ignore the site context, and create a mathematical or theoretical interpretation, a thesis made object.

This book, a collection of pages from architect's sketchbooks, reinforces this variety of approaches, and furthermore, continues to emphasise the different ways different architects see the world around them, how they sketch, what they sketch, how they sketch. In some ways it feels like coming across scrawled poetry, such is the intimacy of how these drawings and collages. At other times you can tell these are very



4 **FLORENCE BROADHURST: HER SECRET & EXTRAORDINARY LIVES** HELEN O'NEILL

HARDIE GRANT BOOKS, 2011

Little more than a decade ago, Florence Broadhurst was a forgotten unknown. After her gruesome murder in 1977, the wallpaper and textile business that she started had petered out, and was sold off, her archives of hundreds of screen-prints growing dusty and ignored, the bold oversized prints gaudy and out of fashion. Fast forward to present day, and Broadhurst is celebrated as one of Australia's design legends, her wallpaper patterns plastering top restaurants, boutiques and homes from Copenhagen to New York.

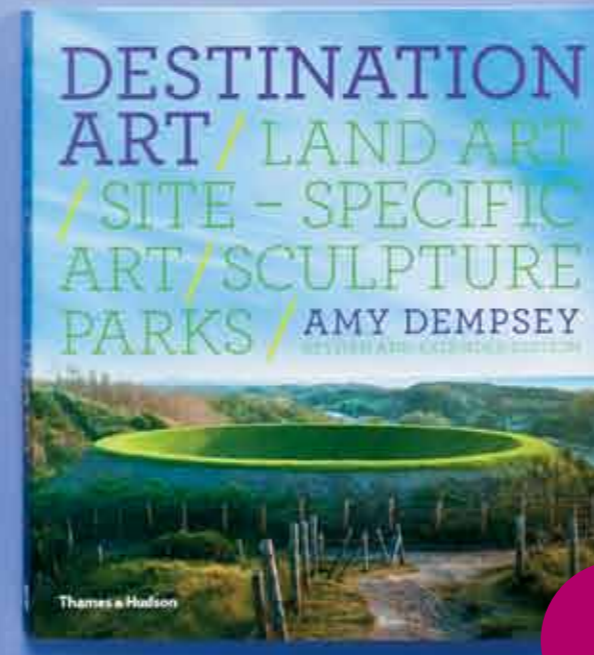
This book pulls together the novel-like biography of Broadhurst, with a sumptuous collection of Broadhurst prints and patterns into a single large-format book. The biography on its own (first released in 2006) is a fascinating read: girl from the Outback dances her way to the Orient, and on ships during World War II, landing up in London before returning to Sydney. Broadhurst wrote: "I don't think you can fully appreciate the importance of illusion in life ... Honesty is essentially a disintegrating force in society [and] the progress of civilization made possible only by vigorous lying." She was a chameleon, lying about her age, her homeland, her past. Well-researched, O'Neill plows through contradictory stories, snippets of information, gossips and rumours to tell Broadhurst's story. In this new edition, new light is shed on her murder, as well as the future of the Broadhurst collection.

While the text is a fascinating read, the prints are what make this. As well as the iconic, distinctive prints – Horses Stampede, Japanese Floral, Circles and Squares – there are many new, never-before-seen patterns. The printing is bold and crisp, making the colours pop in the same way the screenprints do in real life.

If you have ever admired a Broadhurst design, this is a book that you will read over and over. **NICOLE STOCK**

5 **COUNTER SPACE: DESIGN AND THE MODERN KITCHEN** JULIET KINCHIN WITH AIDAN O'CONNOR

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, 2011



Designers will like this. Designers who bake will love it. Frankly, even extraterrestrials will get a kick out of leafing through this whimsical homage to our beloved "heart of the home". Except it wasn't the heart of the home even when in the 1890s the kitchen moved from the servant's basement into the gas fire, so to speak. Once electricity and mass food processing took off, so did the scope for kitchen design. This book of the exhibition that showed at MoMA until May this year expertly highlights key objects and photographs from its vast archive, in a suitably retro-modern layout. From the ground-breaking Frankfurt Kitchen (1926-7) by Grete Schütte-Lihotzky to Tupperware and Warhol's Brillo Box; from Man Ray's rayograph of a grater to the Chemex Coffee Maker and Starck's lemon squeezer, *Counter Space* has the right balance of text and images to inform, surprise and entertain. It's cute but not kitschy. **FRANCES CHAN**

6 **DESTINATION ART: LAND ART / SITE-SPECIFIC ART / SCULPTURE PARKS** AMY DEMPSEY

THAMES & HUDSON, 2011

This is something we in the Antipodes seem to be attracted to: art in the wild. That crazy juxtaposition of something so man-made and manufactured placed within nature. If you ever thought that the be all and end all of this sort of art/nature collaboration was a few artworks scattered through a park, this book will impress with the variety, extravagance and beauty of the pieces.

From extraordinary parks where the park architecture becomes the sculpture like Park Guell designed by Antoni Gaudi, to Marfa in Texas, a landscape entirely defined by Donald Judd's art. There are exceptional pieces that use the weather as well as the land like *The Lightning Field* in New Mexico, created by Walter De Maria in 1977, where a field of lightning rods makes an electric landscape of bolts during a thunderstorm. Other works take the earth and place it within a gallery, like another of Walter De Maria's works *The New York Earth Room*. The large-scale works where the land has been moved, piled up, or cut away are some of the most arresting works in this book.

Beautiful imagery, enthralling ideas. This is a book that surpasses expectations of what Land Art may mean. **DI WRIGHT**