

artasiapacific

# Almanac 2014

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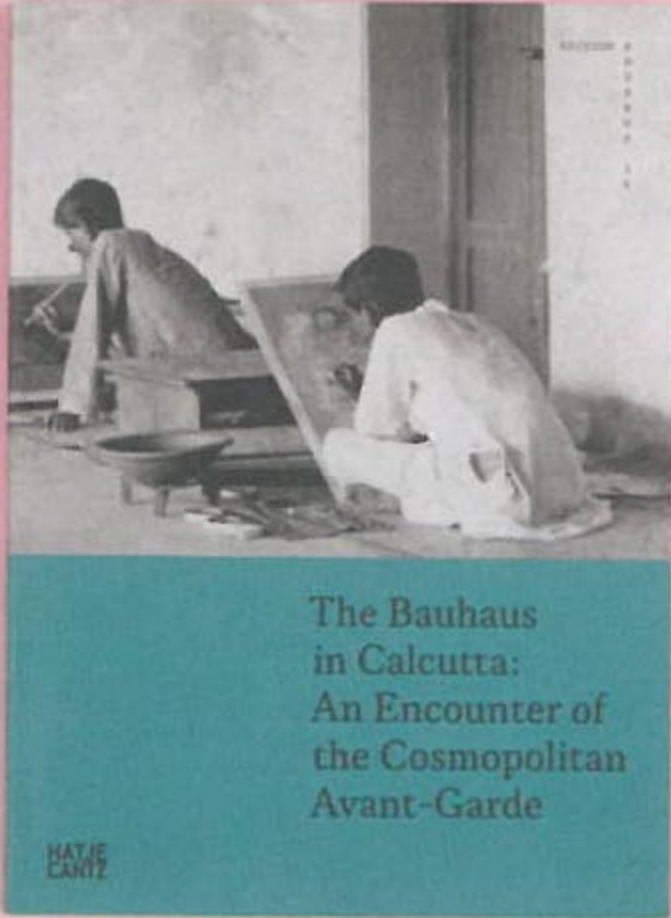
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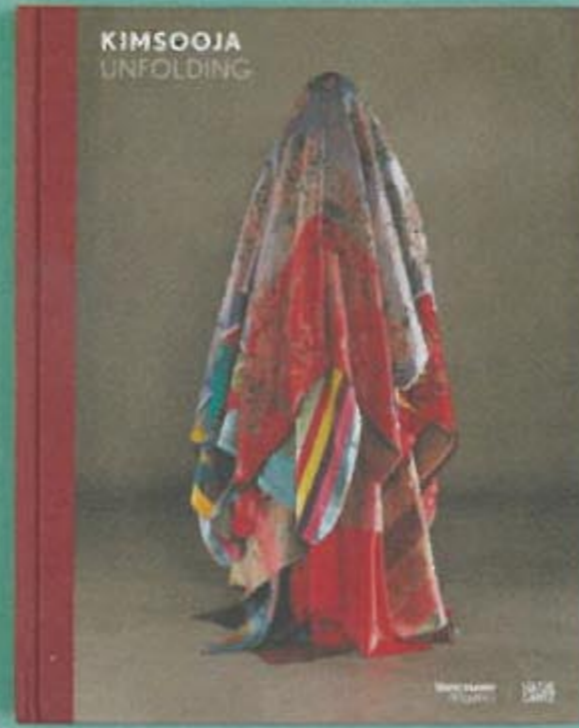
VOLUME IX

# Books

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**gutai**  
splendid playground

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HATJE CANTZ VERLAG

①

## The Bauhaus in Calcutta: An Encounter of the Cosmopolitan Avant-Garde

EDITED BY REGINA BITTNER AND KATHRIN RHOMBERG

A book detailing a show of early Bauhaus artists held in Calcutta in 1922 barely requires further enticement. Fresh from a rapturous reception in Germany the previous year, Rabindranath Tagore helped young Austrian art historian Stella Kramrisch, a teacher at his university at Shantiniketan, to bring work by the core of the European avant-garde, including Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky and Johannes Itten, to exhibit alongside a ragbag of late Bengal School artists that encompassed a few masters such as Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose. With no installation photographs and only one copy of the original catalog surviving, this austere, elegant volume, published alongside a show at Bauhaus Dessau, is a vital record of intertwining modernisms, unexpected diasporas, educational revivals and occasional misunderstandings across two continents. *JJ*

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VANCOUVER ART GALLERY AND HATJE CANTZ VERLAG

②

## Kimsooja: Unfolding

DAINA AUGAITIS, KATHLEEN S. BARTELS, MARY JANE JACOB, DAVID MORGAN, SELENE WENDT AND SUH YOUNG-HEE

The luscious, gem-like hues of Korean textiles will captivate readers of this monographic catalog surveying the 30-year practice of Kimsooja, South Korea's multifaceted representative at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Kimsooja, who is based in New York, Paris and Seoul, has gained international recognition with sculptures, performances, videos and installations that address identity, memory and displacement. In the early 1980s, she began exploring the potential of sewing, using fabric and clothing to connote notions of the body; this ultimately led to her signature motif of the *bottari*, a traditional means of storage and transport of goods, which has had various manifestations across her oeuvre. Rich in color photographs, this publication includes strong thematic essays as well as an artist interview with Daina Augaitis, chief curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery, all providing astute perspectives into Kimsooja's practice. *ST*

PHAIDON PRESS

③

## The Chinese Art Book

COLIN MACKENZIE, KEITH PRATT, JEFFREY MOSER AND KATIE HILL

Despite a seemingly overambitious scope, the contents of *The Chinese Art Book* are remarkably well ordered and thoughtfully elaborated, earning it a place on the shelf as the definitive Chinese art publication of the year. An interesting trope sets each of its 300 art objects, dating from the fifth millennium to the present day, in tandem with a carefully chosen companion across a generously proportioned color spread. Unexpected resonances emerge when contemplating these diptychs—be it a Qing dynasty vase juxtaposed with a conceptual art piece, or a woodblock print next to a silver funerary mask. The book is prefaced with a brief but descriptive introduction, each entry is written in an accessible manner and a thorough, picture-based timeline is provided. With its unconventional, nonlinear presentation, high-quality images and text, readers may draw their own conclusions concerning continuities and dissonances over 6,000 years of Chinese art. *ML*

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS

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## Gutai: Splendid Playground

EDITED BY MING TIAMPO AND ALEXANDRA MUNROE

This catalog of the groundbreaking show at New York's Guggenheim Museum is a comprehensive study of the history, philosophy, works and legacy of the Gutai Art Association, one of the most influential artistic movements of postwar Japan. The book is organized thematically and chronologically, with dedicated chapters exploring Gutai's experimental approach to material, concept, process, performativity and environment. Thoroughly researched essays by co-curators Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe argue against the notion of postwar modernism being a Western-specific phenomenon through close analyses of Gutai's emergence and ascendancy in the 1950s and 1960s. Richly illustrated, the publication also provides a generous survey of 120 objects by 25 artists—including lesser-known works alongside iconic pieces—as well as photographic documentation of the collective's various exhibitions in Japan and abroad. *HK*

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

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## Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method

JOAN KEE

Despite the daunting subtitle, this book offers a fastidiously constructed history of Korean art and politics from the 1950s to the 1990s and beyond. Joan Kee, who teaches modern and contemporary art history at the University of Michigan, and also holds a law degree from Harvard, builds on *tansaekhwa*, or "Korean monochrome painting," an abstract, minimalistic style executed by means of nontraditional methods. *Tansaekhwa* flourished in the 1960s and 1970s but has endured as an iconic identifier and touchstone of all subsequent Korean contemporary art. Rich in analysis and description, Kee's book traces the development of Korean painting and issues of national artistic identity as a reflection of the country's economic growth and political turmoil over the past five decades. This pioneering, generously illustrated tome deserves a place in every serious collection of books about modern art in Asia. *DC*

MODERNA MUSEET AND KOENIG BOOKS

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## Tala Madani: Rip Image

EDITED BY ANDREAS NILSSON AND JULIA BJÖRNBERG

Tala Madani's 2006 painting *Rip Image* adorns the catalog for her recent show at Malmö's Moderna Museet and sets its tone—a burly but obscured man holds an image of himself torn in half. Inside, Madani's explorations of doubleness, self-reflexivity and the innards and outwards of flesh are dissected by some sharp minds. Five vantage points are proffered on Madani's works of eroticism and repulsion: two essays, an artist interview and a short story extract by writer Nam Le that brings Madani's clumsy male protagonist briefly to life. Occasionally the voices get lost in a soup of generalizations concerning the Arab world, global paternalism and American propaganda, but perhaps it's not so bad to be talking in circles—for Madani, the spiral is a motif that highlights the passage but perhaps not the progress of time. *CM*

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