The Best Photo Books from Les Rencontres d'Arles 2022

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / ANOTHER LIST

From Viviane Sassen and Emanuele Coccia, Modern Alchemy (JBE Books/Perrier-Jouët, 2022)
© Viviane Sassen. Courtesy of JBE Books/Perrier-Jouët

As the bushy-tailed photography festival gets under way in the south of France, we flip through some of the most alluring titles – from hot-off-the-press releases to rare, collectible finds

JULY 05, 2022

TEXT Alex Merola

Dayanita Singh once said "a book is a conversation with a stranger in the future." That's a beautiful thought. It reminds us that the psychic life of a book is always growing somewhere else, somewhere inside you, the reader – or destined to do so. At the 53rd edition of **Les Rencontres d'Arles**, the venerable photography festival set in the evocative Roman town in the south of France, there are literally thousands of yet-to-be-had conversations that await attendees. Staging a stellar line-up of publishers – from the blue-chipped to the underground – the fair is bursting with photo books for all tastes. Meanwhile, dotted throughout the shady squares and well-trodden thoroughfares, you can find a host of "off" stands, pop-ups and launches (and you may well leave with a signed

Stay in the know with the latest stories from AnOther treasure if you're lucky). Here, we give you a run-down of the necessary additions to your bookshelf.

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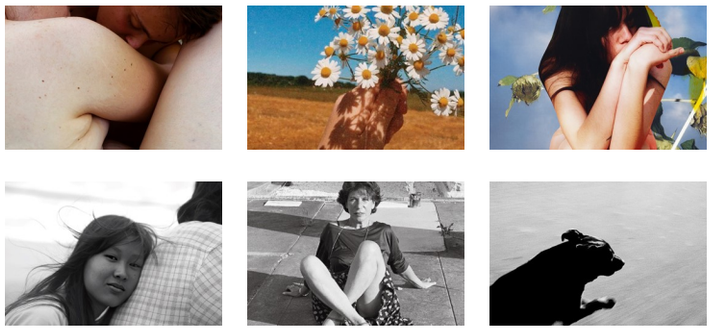


GALLERY / 13 IMAGES

Les Rencontres d'Arles 2022

Modern Alchemy by Viviane Sassen and Emanuele Coccia, 2022 (lead image)

Pungent with printer's ink, this stunner from JBE Books is a smart, surprising and fruitful dialogue between photographer Viviane Sassen and philosopher Emanuele Coccia, ruminating on art, planetary interconnectivity and the history (and future) of sentient life.

Naked, 1961, from Masahisa Fukase, Kill the Pig (the(M) éditions/IBASHO, 2021)
© Masahisa Fukase. Courtesy of the Masahisa Fukase Archive

Kill the Pig by Masahisa Fukase, 2021

Going back to the very beginning of one of the most remarkable archives out there,

IBASHO and the(M) éditions have done a tremendous job translating Masahisa Fukase's 1961 exhibition of the same name, which has languished in the shadows until now. This dark beauty presents experimental nudes of Fukase's pregnant wife in conversation with photographs of a Tokyo slaughterhouse; the two series are punctuated by a splash of red pages, on which sit two renderings of the couple's stillborn child, one positive and one negative. A hair-raising brooding on the two poles that bracket our existence – executed with Fukase's usual sense of play – *Kill the Pig* has already become a classic, so move fast to catch a copy.

From Anne Morgenstern, Macht Liebe (Hartmann Books, 2022)
© Anne Morgenstern. Courtesy of the artist

Macht Liebe **by Anne Morgenstern, 2022**

Translating to "make love", Anne Morgenstern's *Macht Liebe* pursues beauty across the body: beguiling, unheroic, unclassified. Throughout the German's seductively tight crops, which centre on gender and identity confusions, photography becomes a matter of decisive distance between intimacy and detachment – in a very contemporary way. The book is one of the most startling of the year so far, and can be found at Hartmann Books' stand. You won't miss it: the cover is hot pink and packs a tender punch.

From Kishin Shinoyama, Sadistic Play of Bondage (Haga Shobo, 1971)
© Kishin Shinoyama. Photo: Clément Kauter

Sadistic Play of Bondage by Kishin Shinoyama, 1971

If you're after the rarest of the rare, make a beeline for the booth of Clément Kauter, the owner of Paris's unrivalled vintage bookshop Le Plac'Art Photo. While one could spend forever thumbing through all the titles on offer, worthy of considerable attention is this erotic super-book by the great Kishin Shinoyama – produced in collaboration with Oniroku Dan, the "king" of Japanese SM novels, and Hiroshi Urato, the master rope binder. Engaging with *kinbaku* – the ancient Japanese art of bondage – with astounding versatility and artistic ingenuity, the book walks the line (or rope) between the covertly disturbed and the outrageously comical (it gets extra points for the shots of Yakuza gangsters tied up). Shinoyama deserves credit for many things, and this wildly transgressive tome – better suited to your night table than your coffee table – is right up there.

Anonymous, hand-coloured, 1982, from Thomas Sauvin, Xian (Beijing Silvermine, 2016) © Thomas Sauvin. Courtesy of the artist

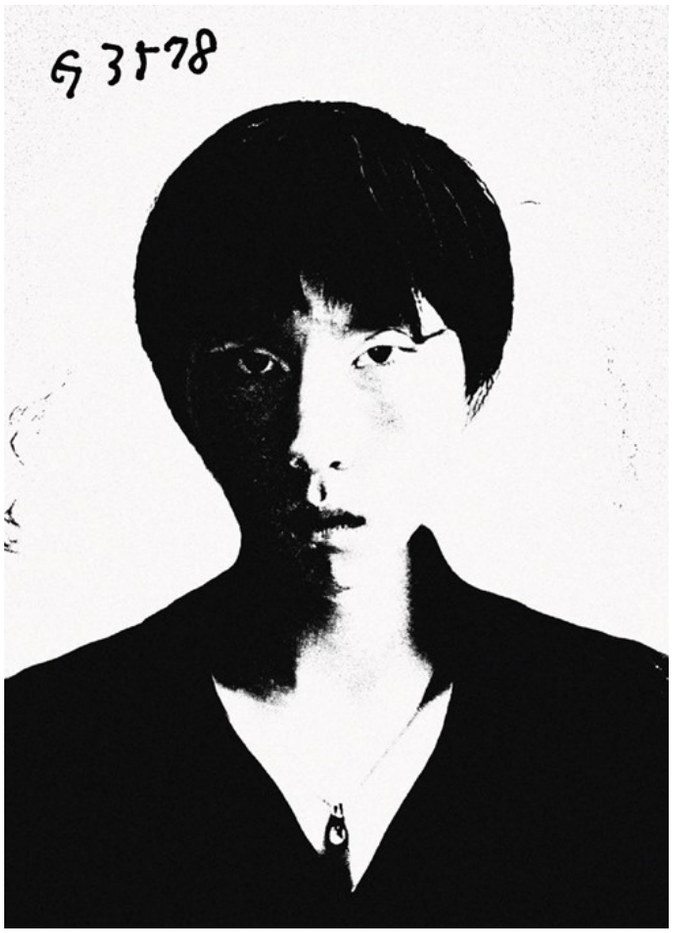
Xian by Thomas Sauvin, 2016

The acclaimed artist-archivist Thomas Sauvin has travelled south in his car, packed with all the books he has published through Beijing Silvermine, his mega-collection of negatives salvaged from a Chinese recycling dump. It's hard to choose, but *Xian* is a truly breathtaking achievement in design terms. With its 59 hand-folded origami boxes allowing readers to rearrange 90 facsimile prints – and thereby replot the tale of modern China as they wish – this travelling mausoleum speaks wonderfully to the in-progress of memory.

From Samuel Fosso, Studio Photo Nationale (Sébastien Girard/Maison Européenne de la Photographie, 2021)
© Samuel Fosso. Courtesy of Sébastien Girard

Studio Photo Nationale
by Samuel Fosso, 2021

Comprised of photographs rescued from Samuel Fosso's studio after it was raided by looters, this trove fills in a key gap in the Cameroonian-born photographer's early history – not to mention the rich history of African studio practice. The space Fosso opened in 1975 in Bangui, Central African Republic when he was 13 years old – and serves as the setting for these performative photographs, which introduce a dapper cast of characters who all come alive against the same curtained backdrop. A big shout out to Sébastien Girard, whose risograph printing, plate numbering, ring-binding and silkscreened slipcase makes this book a total pleasure to peruse. All editions are signed by Fosso, and you can snap one up at LUMA Arles, along with other gems at the African book fair.



A Young Man, No. G3578, from Kenji Chiga, Hijack Geni (Reminders Photography Stronghold, 2022)
© Kenji Chiga. Courtesy of the artist

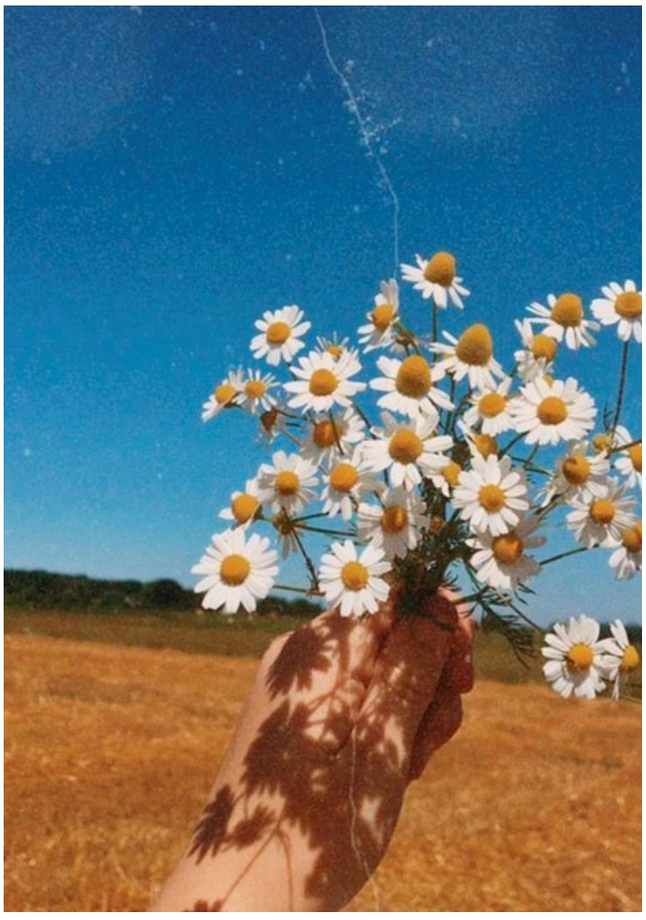
Hijack Geni by Kenji Chiga, 2021

This is one of those books you almost don't want to say anything about because to experience it is to be totally thrust outside of a typical experience. On sale at Tipi Bookshop and shortlisted for the Luma Rencontres Dummy Book Award, Kenji Chiga's *Hijack Geni* is a mind-altering account of the Japanese "It's me" scam, told across 612 yellow-edged pages.

Dogs Chasing my Car in the Desert, D24F17, 1996–98, from John Divola, Scapes (Skinnerboox, 2022) © John Divola. Courtesy of the artist

Scapes **by John Divola, 2022**

This handsome hardback, hot-off-the-press via Skinnerboox, brings together important monochromatic series by Southern California artist John Divola. It's worth picking up for chapter three alone. You'll find those mythic dogs, chasing Divola's car across the ash-white wilds in a no-win act of territorialism. It's a time-honoured, David-and-Goliath battle – man and beast, civilisation and nature – not unlike Goya's bullfighting scenes. This is a haunting fable of the western world, and surely some of the greatest photographs that have ever been made.



From Zoé Aubry, #Ingrid (RVB Books, 2022) © Zoé Aubry. Courtesy of the artist

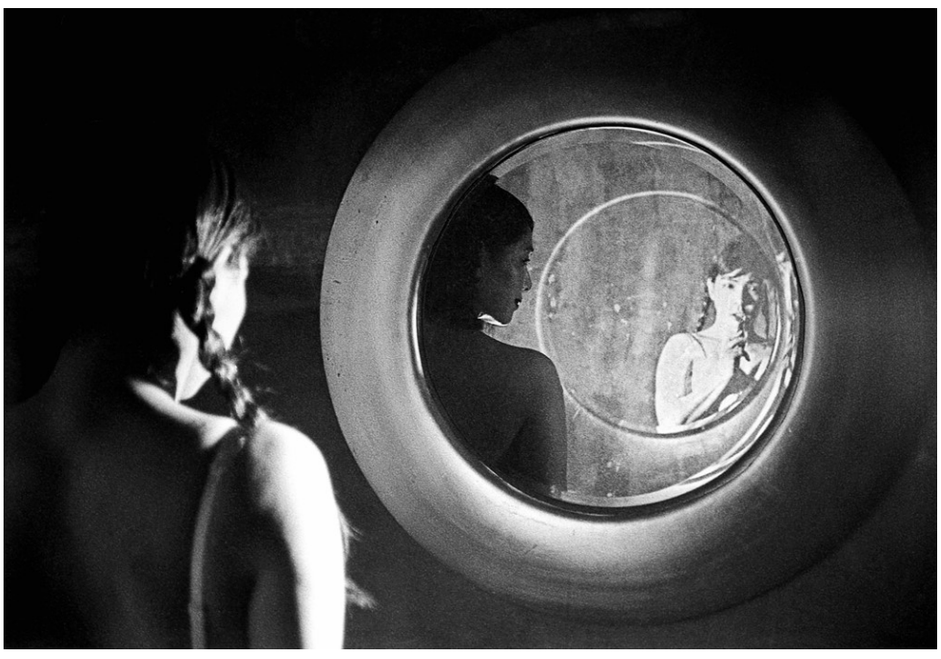
#Ingrid by Zoé Aubry, 2022

RVB Books are always one of the strongest contenders at fairs, and their latest release certainly doesn't disappoint. Zoé Aubry pays homage to Ingrid Escamilla Vargas, a Mexican woman who was brutally murdered by her husband in 2020. In condemnation of the gruesome and theatrical imagery flaunted by the gutter press across their front pages, social media users around the world flooded the internet with "beautiful things". *#Ingrid* is a powerful continuation of their efforts by a young and convincing artist.

From Lieko Shiga, Blind Date (T&M Projects, 2017) © Lieko Shiga. Courtesy of T&M Projects

Blind Date by Lieko Shiga, 2017

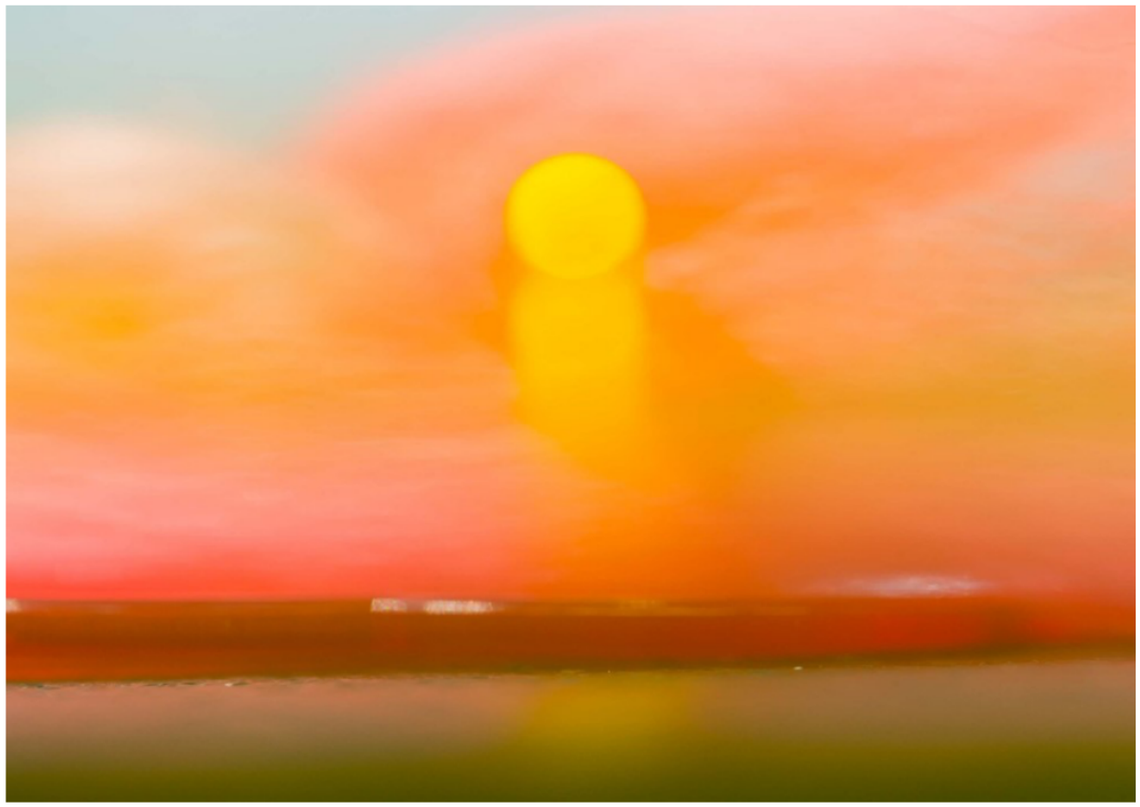
At L'Ascenseur Végétal's pop-up shop, you can become the owner of this mini-masterpiece by Lieko Shiga. Mesmerising photographs of Thai couples zooming past on motorbikes are printed across long, panoramic pages. This is a truly timeless book, that will sweep you away every time.



No. 00 Core, 2014, from Tokyo Rumando, Orphée (Zen Foto Gallery, 2014) © Tokyo Rumando. Courtesy of the artist

Orphée by Tokyo Rumando, 2014

Enter the dark world of Tokyo Rumando at Galerie Écho 119's table, which is showcasing a handful of titles by the provocative Japanese photographer. *Orphée* is undoubtedly Rumando's most accomplished, and, like the best photo books, a total immersion into the author's subconscious. Drawing on the traditions of *rakugo* – a form of storytelling that involves a lone performer – as well as her experiences working as a model for Nobuyoshi Araki, Rumando transports us into a room where an enchanted mirror reflects her own fantasies, or indeed the fantasies she imagines other people to have about her: geisha, stripper, femme fatale. Her disconcerting transformations remind us that real life is always elsewhere.



From Paul Rousteau, Seascapes (Loose Joints, 2021) © Paul Rousteau. Courtesy of the artist

Seascapes by Paul Rousteau, 2021

This pick sees French artist Paul Rousteau at his brilliant, alchemical best, plunging