aim, evoked particularly well by Catherine Wood's essay on performance and Michelle Kuo's on Rauchenberg's late-1960s organization, Experiments in Art and Technology, was to create, as Kuo writes, "an art that would envelop and respond to the viewer—a universe of sensory plenty and continuous change ... an art that was intelligent."

Merce Cunningham: Common Time, which has striking illustrative means to evoke performance, does not follow the development of Cunningham's career but instead organizes materials by type (e.g., essays, interviews, artist statements, and so on), though an extensive chronology is included. An essay by curators Fiona Meade and Alexandra Naranjo and Nara Schröder-Mailier and Art and architecture captures Cunningham's crucial realization that, as Cage once wrote, "underneath both music and dance was a common support time." This notion allowed the artists to produce work independently while sharing a creative space, and when Cunningham joined Cunningham, that space encompassed art objects, too. In a late interview, Rauchenberg called their idea "a kind of theory of respect for nonnesses, essentially.... I've always worked in theatre because of respect for the urgency of that particular moment, and existence in time. ...I try to make art like that." —CHRISTOPHER LYON

Born to a prominent banking family, Florence Steinhem (1871-1944) never had to worry about money (and, like both her sisters, never married), and it's tempting to interpret her poetry, paintings, and theater designs as expressions of the whimsy that such freedom allowed. ( "Like slipper gold! Like oysters rox/ and my garden of mixed flowers/ and the sky full of towers," she writes in one of her poems.) But her work is far more psychologically rich than its surface-ready—just look at the bouquet burning on the water in the undated oil-on-canvas Fern on the Lake or the syncretic colors of Heart, 1939. Eschewing the gallery/museum circuit, Steinhem established a regular New York salon that also served as a "birthday party" to debut her most recent compositions, drawing a circle of Jazz Age artists and cultural luminaries to her apartment and into her work. Her portraits of those famous friends—including Man Ray, Duchamp, Henry McBride, Alfred Stieglitz, and Virgil Thomson—portray them as androgynous, elongated, and arch, set within studies, parks, and city landscapes that defy gravity and scale. Steinhem didn't sell her paintings and asked that they be destroyed after her death, but her sister Ettie (also a subject of hers) rescued. Duchamp and McBride organized a show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946; in 1995, she was the subject of a survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. To these few-and-due between Steinhem exhibitions we can now add this summer's retrospective at the Jewish Museum, curated by Stephen Brown and Georgian Oyukai. In its compact catalogue, Florence STEINHEIM: PAINTING POETRY ( Yale University Press, $45), provides a solid introduction to her life, art, and a sisterly-colleagues along with the transcript of a lively conversation among seven women artists moderated by exhibition director Jeni Hoffmann. "She staked out a place for herself beyond all categories," artist Janna Koehler states in the catalogue's final line, "and there is nothing more contemporary than that, I think." —PRUDENCE PEPPER

Call Louise Lawler one of the sharpest claims against the image business. Over her forty-year career—with an output that's ranged from photographed portraits of artworks in situ to, most recently, black-and-white tracings of her own images—she has assessed and reassessed the visible value and meaning of art and photographs, photography and photographs. She also accomplished all this without ever stooping to understate art's particular power or presence (as we see in her Pictures generation colleagues have been wont to do). LOUISE LAWLER: RECEPTIONS (Museum of Modern Art, 860) is an elegant and engaging catalogue that accompanies the artist's current MOMA survey, "Louise Lawler: Why Pictures Now?" curated by Rosanna Macri. Essays by Rita Ester, Douglas Crimp, Rosalyn Deutsche, and others offer platinum-grade thinking on Lawler's most enduring subject: art's circulation, as well as its presentation and display; how an artwork can perform the political, and the coldly critical, while still radiating the personal; and how artist and viewer inevitably conspire to produce a thing worth looking at and thinking about. Engaging curators are thrown in essays by Ester, who, in her essay, suggests the importance of art's presence in the work of Louise's peers—Julian Stancil, who reminds us that Lawler's work, though seriously brainy, is also terrifyingly funny. Take Monogram, 1994, Lawler's now-iconic photograph of a
Jasper Johns white flag hanging in a collector's toy bedroom, where the sheets match the art—-or is it the other way around?—Author: Author — JENNIFER KRASINSKI

EXPLORERS' SKETCHBOOKS: THE ART OF DISCOVERY & ADVENTURE (Chronicis, $40) is a volume that constitutes an eventful exploration in itself. This collection of seventy illustrated journals, mainly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, tracks the lives of travelers who depicted temples, icebergs, flora, fauna, and people from around the globe. Familiar names—Becque Cherwin, Gertrude Bell, and Ernest Shackleton—are speared alongside lesser-known but no less adventurous journeys such as Welsh soldier Oblivian Tonge, who began her travels after turning fifty; Canadian mountaineer John Aylward, who immediately died off after summing Mount Blanc; and Godfrey Vigne, an English lawyer who avoided harm in Afghanistan and Pakistan by drawing pictures for angry chieftains. As you might expect, given the preoccupations of imperial rule, nearly all these explorers hailed from the United Kingdom. But via their meticulous devotion to recording the nuances of unfamiliar lands and people, many oftentimes exhibit a boundless passion that might be called cultural plurinational avant la lettre. Naval surgeon John Linton Palmer's rendering of the body art of an "Easter Islander" suggests more than mere clinical curiosity. By attending particularly to the face of his trade subject and capturing the man's candidly aloof regard for the artist, Palmer mitigates any sense of exploitative voyeurism. This exchange is one between equals. —ALBERT WOOLSEY

Al Taylor's artistic prowess was manifested in the careful off-handness of his compositions. His scupltered assemblages repose with sidewalk detritus, cast-off wood, and brightly colored bromoetinacs with an ensuing ease, as if challenging Vladimir Tatlant to a game of pick-up sticks. Taylor referred to these objects not as "sculptures" but rather as "drawings in space," recalling the two-dimensional works the late artist began his career with. All Taylor: EARLY PAINTINGS (David Zwirner Books, $45) surveys the little-seen abstract canvases he produced between 1971 and 1980, before switching over to the object-based practice for which he is now known. This little volume eschews analysis, opting instead to establish the artistic credo of his works by turning to his inner circle for insights into his influence. A warm reminiscence between Taylor's friends and fellow artists Stanley Whitney, Billy Sullivan, and Mimi Thompson is coupled with a personal chronology compiled by the artist's widow, Debbie Taylor. The memories collected here—the Old English etching named Wrecks; the obsession with Hawaiian masks; the T-shirt emblazoned with Cézanne's head, worn when Taylor "wanted to start trouble"—offer a glimpse into the inner workings of the artist's mind. But if the aim is to anchor his paintings, one need look no further than the reproduced excerpts from Taylor's sketchbooks, which reveal the meticulous calculations underlying his seemingly improvised abstractions.

After Mary Wollstonecraft's second attempt at suicide in 1795, the pioneering feminist's new suitor, William Godwin, advised her that "a disappointed woman should try to construct happiness out of a set of materials within her reach." In MOYA DAVEY: LES GODDESSES, HEMLOCK FOREST (Dancing Faces Press, $30) the artist applies a similar scrounging to address the acute desperation of motherhood and mortality. The book presents her titular pieces as a patchwork of photographs, film stills, and the artist's own meditations, braided with citations from sources such as Goethe, Louis Malle, and Kathe Kollwitz. Chief among these sources are the titular figures of Davey's 2011 film, Les Goddesse, that phrase being Aaron Burr's nickname for Washington's and Godwin's daughters and stepdaughters: Mary Shelly, Claire Clairmont, and Fanny Imlay. Davey forges parallels between these sisters and her own, turning the stories between her palms like two clay snakes rolled together until even the author herself loses track of their ends. Davey opens the text accompanying the film Hemlock Forest (2016) with a description of Chauntal Ackerman reading a letter from her mother aloud on film rather than answering it. Returning to Wollstonecraft's own unanswered missives, Davey questions the convention that letter writing can provide for women enduring the inward disappointment of motherhood or sterility. As an extension of this tradition, the artist has taken to mailing her photographs to friends, which accounts for their accrued creases, rumps, and stray bits of tape. At one point, Davey quotes Iain Dinsmore: "The reward of storytelling is to be able to let go." This book feels like Davey showing us her own folds in the seams of her grip. —KATE SUTTON