

Up the Ante

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In a digital age when high-resolution images and instant content are just a swipe away, makers of print books—whether centuries-old publishers or your next-door neighbor—are uncovering ways to add value with more than just heftier paper stock. In fact, there is a mini-boom in art books underway, giving ample room for more experimental publishers (sometimes even galleries) to prove their worth with projects that raise the stakes in both content and form.

Marking anniversaries, three organizations revved up their intellectual output, rather than resting on laurels. In Hong Kong, trailblazing gallery Hanart TZ employed a 483-page super-catalog as a springboard to investigate China's most tumultuous century. Singapore's first independent alternative art space, the Substation, proving the efficacy of its collaborative approach, gathered as many perspectives as it is years old for an ambitious commemorative publication on its 25th anniversary. On the occasion of a major Billy Apple retrospective at the Auckland Art Gallery, the artist's longtime collaborator Wystan Curnow presents the story of a four-decades-long labor of love that is the artist's unique brand.

Several monographs released in 2015 yield the page to primary materials produced by their subjects, to the immense benefit of readers. In one, Beijing-born installationist Yin Xiuzhen shares previously unpublished writings and a photographic tour of her studio, captured by husband Song Dong. Meanwhile, in another volume, Japanese artist Koki Tanaka's 31 unfiltered journalistic entries

offer insight to his social, collaborative practice. A new monograph includes an exact reproduction of Kazuo Shiraga's actual scrapbook, opening a window into the Gutai world, just as the first book on the Philippines' most celebrated conceptual artist, Roberto Chabet, pays tribute to his ebullient practice with a playful design, including artwork pullouts and colorful inserts.

Publishers are looking further afield, no longer letting worthy subjects languish in places the art market forgot. *No Boundaries* lives up to its name, bottling the sheer adrenaline that drove an American couple to chase abstractions from Australia's Indigenous communities. In New Delhi, a private museum doesn't shy away from the raw, grainy, difficult-to-capture aesthetics of Nalini Malani's video and installation practice. An inquiry into the purpose of "the archive" taps disruptive voices from Afghanistan to Abu Dhabi, while a second-edition of a survey of Turkish art goes further back in time, to 1975, tracing the opening of a nation and its art. Tongue-in-cheek collective Slavs and Tatars, whose self-described area of focus is "east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China," present a publication accompanying their most recent cycle of work. It offers, on each page, bonus tips on ruling for future oligarchs and despots, à la Machiavelli's *The Prince*, because, well, why not? It might even be useful to one of those art mega-collectors out there, or someone they work for. Everywhere in the print world these days, more is more. *SB*

Precairous Practice

BANK

2015 "Artist of the Year" Koki Tanaka with the Los Angeles-based promises to review his [ly] as possible." In 31 accompanying images early years exploring and actions to later works le, participation and aka describes moments Pavilion at the 55th nd small (an unrealized me year, represented by ser attention to detail ed captions that are missing altogether, or the out that, while fitting, can s difficult to decipher. d to Tanaka's book of es not include a single rtist, this honest, personal imperfectly impactful. SB



Slavs and Tatars – Mirrors for Princes

EDITED BY ANTHONY DOWNEY

Slavs and Tatars's *Mirrors for Princes* is equal parts exhibition catalog, essay collection and medieval Uighur self-help book. The Eurasia-obsessed artist collective directs its attention to the titular genre of "advice literature" for leaders, focusing on the 11th-century *Kutadgu Bilig* ("Wisdom of Royal Glory") written by Yusūf Khāss Hājib for the prince of Kashgar. Quotes from *Kutadgu Bilig* in Uighur line the edge of pages along with their Arabic, German, Polish, Turkish and English translations. Elsewhere are images of Slavs and Tatars's pun-fueled interactive exhibitions, along with essays from academics and curators. Columbia University professor Manan Ahmed Asif relates how a 1990s TV drama drew ancient political philosophy into Indian nationalism, while University of Glasgow professor Lloyd Ridgeon investigates the intersection of hairstyles, Islam and power. Irreverent as always, Slavs and Tatars continue to challenge East-West binaries. SF

Roberto Chabet

EDITED BY RINGO BUNOAN

With artwork pullouts, plays on page sizes and surprise inserts of text printed on yellow notebook paper, the dynamic design of this first-ever monograph of Roberto Chabet (1937–2013) is fitting for the Philippines' most celebrated conceptual artist. This fastidious tribute begins in the 1960s, when Chabet entered the art scene with his abstract paintings and works on paper that responded to the WWII-incurred devastation in Manila. These drawings evolved into three-dimensional forms as he experimented with space, eventually maturing into the unconventional transformations of everyday objects and found materials for which he is now known. A wealth of artwork images, exhibition views and newspaper clippings accompanies textual reflections—by Filipino artists and curators—that contextualize Chabet's contributions to contemporary art, many of which paint a personal portrait of the revered teacher and mentor. ST

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