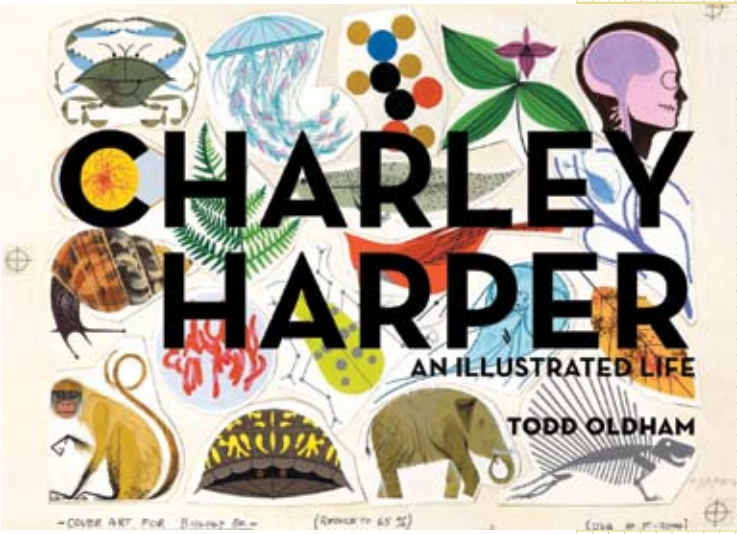
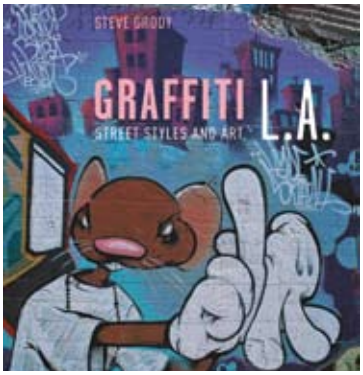


1 | *Charley Harper: An Illustrated Life*

by Todd Oldham
(AMMO Books)

Designer and *ReadyMade* contributing editor Todd Oldham has produced an exuberant, loving, and long-overdue tribute to the late artist Charley Harper. For nearly six decades Harper quietly churned out evocative portraits of nature—from microbes to mastodons and everything in between—in a style he dubbed minimal realism. Though his drawings, prints, and paintings (originally published in *Ford Times* magazine and *The Giant Golden Book of Biology*) inspire rabid obsession among his admirers, Harper's prolific output has tended to remain in the rarefied domain of midcentury-modern collectors. This 17" x 12", 420-page, 11-pound behemoth of a book may change that. Here's to hoping his work will finally garner the audience it so rightfully deserves. **—Derek Fagerstrom**



2 | *Bears*

by Kent Rogowski
(powerHouse)

There are metaphors at work here. Though the subjects of these portraits—ordinary teddy bears that have been taken apart, turned inside out, and restuffed—aren't human, they seem to exude as much personality and feeling as any living, breathing thing. Photographer Kent Rogowski has captured his sitters Richard Avedon–style: humble and exposed against stark white backgrounds. As distorted playthings, the bears are odd yet strangely familiar and as compelling as they are creepy; outlined in the furry scars formed by their seams, they continue to smile, wide-eyed and hopeful in the wake of disfigurement. **—Jen Trolio**

3 | *I Like Food, Food Tastes Good: In the Kitchen with Your Favorite Bands*

by Kara Zuaro
(Hyperion)

The indie-rock equivalent of a church cookbook, this savory collection of more than 100 recipes from such bands as Belle & Sebastian and the Decemberists offers an all-access pass to what touring musicians eat while on the road. Journalist Kara Zuaro has cooked up an epicurean anthology as unique as the bands themselves, rife with tour-weary anecdotes and offbeat instructions (which at times involve measuring cooking time by how many LPs play). Though not all the fare reflects the most discerning tastes—ramen noodles and boxed mac 'n' cheese both make repeat appearances—there's plenty for the more advanced palate (including the Violent Femmes' wild boar ragu). And while the book itself is only slightly taller than a seven-inch single, it's loaded with culinary hits. **—April Kilcrease**

4 | *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*

by Steve Grody
(Abrams)

In *Graffiti L.A.*, Steve Grody pays coffee table–book homage to the opulent murals and tags that dot the walls of Los Angeles, showcasing works by the megalopolis's most prolific street artists. Strongly influenced by Martha Cooper's reportage of New York City's subway art scene, Grody aims to tell the history of L.A.'s hybrid youth culture—which owes a three-way debt to cholo gang style, '80s-era hip hop, and freight-train hobos. In all, the book's richly hued photographs (including more than 900 archival and original shots from all over the city) steal the thunder from accompanying essays, but a bundled DVD does much to tell the story through audio interviews with the artists. **—Julia Cosgrove**

5 | *500 Ideas for Small Spaces: Easy Solutions for Living in 1,000 Square Feet or Less*

by Kimberley Seldon
(Quayside)

In a market that's teeming with titles on small-space living, Kimberly Seldon's *500 Ideas for Small Spaces* is one of the few that takes a realistic approach to surviving with a small footprint. Renters and budget-minders—for whom installing custom built-ins is not an option—will appreciate Seldon's reliance on methods that don't require an overhaul. (Make a space appear less crowded with open-backed chairs and see-through glass tables; avoid rugs with borders, which call attention to a room's boundaries.) While some of Seldon's space savers aren't exactly groundbreaking (choose a bed frame that incorporates storage), they're at least clever enough to stave off cramped cabin fever. **—JT**