The

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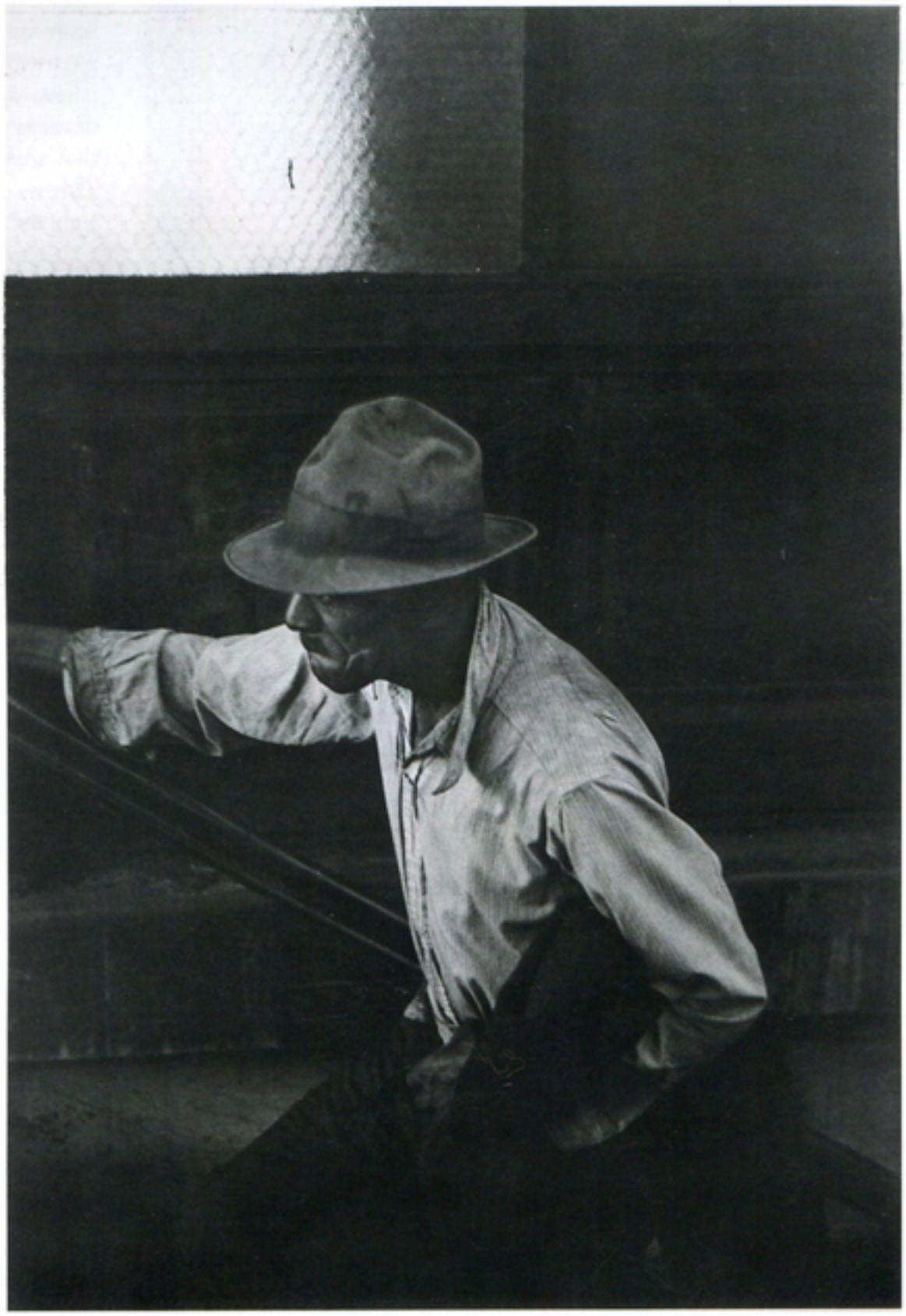
. . . a knowledge of photography is just as important as that of the alphabet. The illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the use of the camera and pen alike.

László Moholy-Nagy
1936



Roy DeCarava
Man Coming Up Subway Stairs, 1952

Timeline: Learning to See with My Eyes Closed. By Tom Young, (Staunton, VA: George F. Thompson Publishing, 2012), $50.00, hb.

At age ten, Tom Young had a medical procedure that left both his eyes fully bandaged for some weeks. During that time he explored his other newly heightened senses, and when it was time for his bandages to come off, he was struck by the power of light. *Timeline: Learning to See with My Eyes Closed* is a collection of photographic assemblages and collages that capture the power of light as it relates to memory. Memories, dreams, and imaginings all come together in Young's images to form a timeline in which everything merges and yet still has order, much like the way memory functions in reality. These photographs document Young's life — his wife's pregnancy, family members' serious illnesses — and yet are universal, allowing viewers to share the memories and images personally. Young's images are mysterious and evocative, requiring the viewer to look deeply at each photograph in order to understand and fully experience all that is portrayed.

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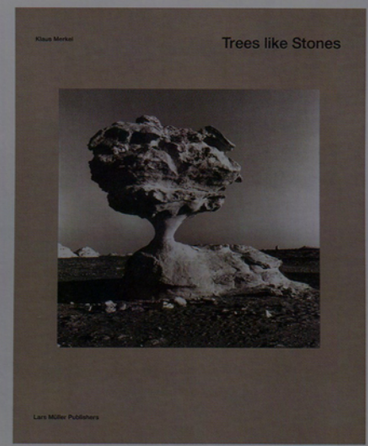
Trees Like Stones. By Klaus Merkel, (Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013), $70.00, hb.

Klaus Merkel opens his book *Trees Like Stones* with a quote by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: "The characters of Nature are large and beautiful



and I maintain that they are all readable." Merkel's photographs work harmoniously together to realize this quote: They illustrate the beautiful similarities and differences of stones and trees, guiding viewers to read them as majestic characters of nature. His opening pair of photographs are simple yet striking, serving as a wonderful jumping-off point to lead into a book of clever and imaginative pairs, ranging from the whimsical to the imposing. Merkel not only displays nature's magic through his photographs, but divides his book into sections separated by writings in which he describes the scientific processes that affect trees and the many historical and cultural associations and meanings given to them. By cohesively working his writings into this volume of 94 photographs, Merkel has created a book that is sure to give anyone a newfound appreciation for the detailed beauty of nature.

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Tall Poppy Syndrome. By Amy Stein and Stacy Arezou Mehrfar, (Seattle, WA: Decode Books, 2012), $60.00, hb.

"Tall Poppy Syndrome" is an Australian social phenomenon in which successful people, or "tall poppies" are cut down to size, ridiculed for standing out from their peers because of their unique talents or accomplishments. In 2010, Amy Stein and Stacy Arezou Mehrfar decided to investigate the phenomenon further, embarking on a month-long road trip around New South Wales, Australia's most populous state. They sought answers to their questions: Is Tall Poppy Syndrome real? Can it be observed? Stein and Mehrfar's book *Tall Poppy Syndrome* presents their resulting photographs, exploring the individual's relationship with the group in Australian society. From young surfers to miners, schoolchildren in the classroom to elderly women at their social clubs, these photographs present viewers with Stein and Mehrfar's findings, encouraging us to explore their questions, and find answers, through their photographs.

EP

Construction. By Brian Finke, (Seattle, WA: Decode Books, 2012), $55.00, hb.

Brian Finke's book *Construction* is a continuation of his work in the documentary tradition, flowing from his earlier projects *2-4-6-8: American Cheerleaders and Football Players* and *Flight Attendants*. As Whitney Johnson shares in her closing essay, for Finke it all "began with a simple idea: to focus, obsessively, on a single group of people." Finke began work for *Construction* in early 2008, at the height of the construction boom. He entered into the world of construction sites and found that these sites are otherworldly, completely removed from the frenzied atmosphere of New York City. The city creates the background for one of the shots, but otherwise never appears. The world of construction workers is made of crisscrossing bars, mountains of dirt, power tools, ropes, and trucks. Finke captures it all using square formatting and artificial lighting to heighten reality, always managing to make the person in the frame seem important.

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Serengeti Spy: Views from a Hidden Camera on the Plains of East Africa. By Anup Shah, (New York: Abrams Books, 2012), $40.00.

Anup Shah is a wildlife photographer who has been based in Kenya and England for more than 18 years. *Serengeti Spy: Views from a Hidden Camera on the Plains of East Africa* is made up of a collection of his fantastic photographs taken in Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and the Maasai Mara Natural Reserve in Kenya. Shah accomplished the task of capturing these spectacular images by hiding remote cameras in key locations in the plains, disguising them with mud and grass, and watching from his distant truck. This method allowed him to document the animals behaving without the influence of human presence, as they would naturally in their environment. Viewers are brought face-to-face with snarling lions, pacing elephants, dashing herds of wildebeests, and preying vultures. Shah's work capture the dynamic and vibrant quality of life on the plains, each photograph accompanied by a brief description of the image or a fact to complement it, bringing us into the breathtaking world of the wildlife.

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Photography and China. By Claire Roberts, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013), $29.95, sb.

Beginning with daguerreotypes of the 1840s and extending to the present age of digital photography, *Photography and China* is the first English overview of Chinese photographic history As Claire Roberts explains in her introduction, the book focuses on Chinese photographers who have "used photographic media for news, commerce and propaganda, as well as personal and artistic expression." Roberts carefully selected photographs that represent photography's role in China's history as both a witness and vehicle of historical change. She ensured the accuracy of her explanations and descriptions by using only those photographs for which the photographer, subject, when, where, and why could be reliably identified. The book is separated into chapters based on themes, and the photographs, which are arranged in gallery-like sequences, are accompanied by Roberts's thematic essays. Containing 131 images, this rich and evocative volume is a significant contribution to the literature on Chinese art history

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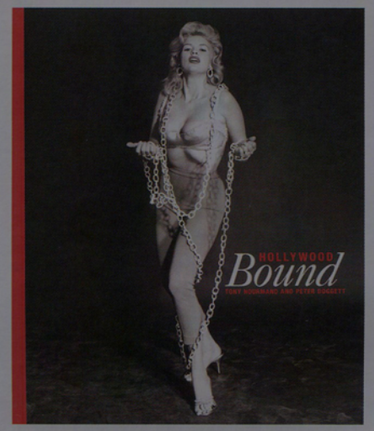

Hollywood Bound. By Tony Nourmand and Peter Doggett, (London: Reel Art Press, 2012), $29.95, hb.

Hollywood Bound! We all know what that means: heading off to the movie capital of America to pursue a big dream of becoming a big star. But in *Hollywood Bound*, by Peter Doggett, edited by Tony Nourmand, the phrase takes on another meaning. As Peter Doggett explains in his lively introduction, the Hollywood of the early 20th century had a much less glamorous side to it than what most perceived. Stars were at the mercy of their directors, often signed into contracts that really did bind them to Hollywood and the big producers. Just like Hollywood itself, the movies were dynamic, and the outburst of emotion and release of inhibition required an equal measure of restraint. Thus, in many films and shows we find the victims of the story bound to train tracks, chairs, tables, poles, and, of course, each other. Matched with explanatory captions, *Hollywood Bound* allows a more insightful look at the photographs, encouraging one to wonder what other agenda may have been at work behind the scenes of these fabulous shots.

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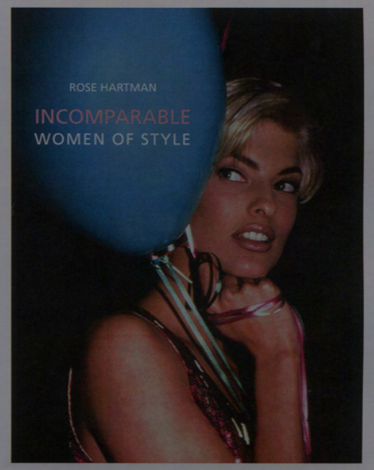

Incomparable: Women of Style. By Rose Hartman, (New York: ACC Editions, 2012), $49.50, hb.

When looking at photographs of models, one always wants to believe they are real, that there's no Photoshop involved, that each photograph is a portal into the real world and real lives of its subjects. *Incomparable. Women of Style* is a book that accomplishes just that. Rose Hartman never photoshops her images, and she never stages them, either. Instead she becomes part of the world of models, designers, fashionistas, and actors. When she wants to dance she hides her camera away, but makes sure it's always ready for the "decisive moment." Considering herself a social historian, she looks for the more vulnerable expressions, seeking to portray the humanity in her subjects instead of their more famous, fashionable shells. Hartman's photographs are uninterested in celebrities with smiles plastered on their faces. Her images capture moments of spontaneity of conversation, laughter and genuine smiles, a casual glance over the shoulder transporting us into the dazzling world of high fashion.

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