

BOOKS

Here are current art books that make glorious gifts

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It's not hard to find wonderful art books to give as holiday gifts. The hard part is deciding which book to give. This season, as in past years, the selection is gloriously, confusingly varied.

To help clarify matters, here's a sampling of the wide range of the latest art books.

■ "The Art of Craft: Contemporary Works From the Baxo Collection" (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco-Buffinch, \$50) by Timothy Anglin Burgard includes background text. But the color reproductions of artworks in close-up are the book's most eye-catching feature, exploring a leading American collection of contemporary crafts.

The gleaming shapes of wood and ceramics, the textures of threads and fiber, the airiness of paper and glass vie for attention. Works are by such masters as Dale Chihuly (glass), Peter Voulkos and Michael Lucero (ceramics), and Diane Iler and Kay Sekimachi (textiles).

For devotees of popular art and illustration:

■ "Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People" (Abrams, \$35) by Maureen Hart Hennessey and Anne Knutson is the catalog from a traveling exhibition currently on show at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

The book reproduces 80 of Rockwell's well-loved paintings, from mischievous barefoot boys to heroic astronauts setting foot on the moon. It also offers a series of essays by curators and art historians, appraising the artist's life and work.

■ "The New Yorker 75th

Anniversary Cartoon Collection" (Pocket, \$40), edited by Bob Mankoff, is a book to settle down with after a holiday dinner, when chuckling is the only exercise one could possibly contemplate.

The great cartoonists are represented here, from Charles Addams and Peter Arno to Ed

Koren and Saul Steinberg, plus a host of others. Mankoff gives them a brief introduction, then leaves their contrasting styles to entertain you as you turn the rest of the book's pages in happy sequence.

For family reading:

■ "Exploring World Art"

(Getty, \$24.95) by Andrea Bolli is a fine introduction to world art for young readers. It is beautifully designed and well-planned, carefully and simply written with high-quality reproductions.

Page turning, from the illustrations on Greek vases to paintings of Van Gogh, from Flemish Renaissance painting to African

wood carving, would make fine browsing for all the family.

"The Art of Science: A Pop-Up Adventure in Art" (Candlewick Press, \$27.99), written by Martin Jenkins with paper engineering by Jay Young, is an action book and a fun book.

There are lots of things to watch spring out into three

dimensions, and to move and touch. All this is in the worthy cause of explaining the science behind decisions artists make about how to express themselves in their medium. The author delivers entertaining explanations of perspective, color, optics, illusion and other topics.

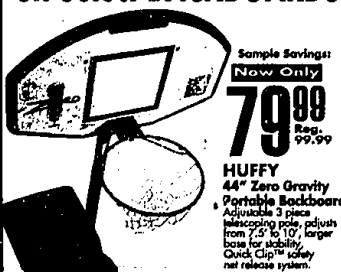
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