

# BOOKFORUM

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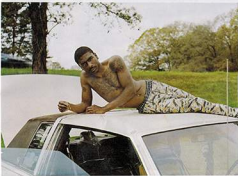
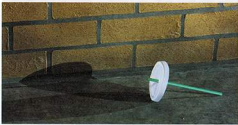
## Vince Aletti: Disco Aficionado

BY MELISSA ANDERSON



# Artful Volumes

BOOKFORUM CONTRIBUTORS ON THE SEASON'S OUTSTANDING ART BOOKS.



Clockwise, from top left: Thomas Demand, *Only 438, 2002*, framed diptych on paper, 21 1/2 x 21 1/2"; Anna Zemanková, *Infanta flower, ca. 1960*, pastel, tempera, and India ink on paper, 33 1/2 x 21 1/2"; Deena Larsen, *Corolla, 2008*, ink on print, 40 x 50".

The catalogue raisonné **THOMAS DEMAND: THE COMPLETE PAPERS** (MoMA, \$45) follows the German sculptor-turned-photographer's twenty-five-year paper trail—literally. The artist built and photographed elaborate and eerily convincing life-size scenes entirely from colored paper and cardboard, often drawing inspiration from mass media images. His photos of empty, unpeopled spaces, with titles such as *Archieve*, *Stativseite*, and *Rosen*, are mind-bogglingly lush. *Bino* (Officer), 1993, is based on a photo published in the West German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, showing a generic—yet chaotic—room with a plain desk and floor covered in sheets of blank, scattered paper. It's an archive's worst nightmare. (This turns out to be the East German secret police headquarters, which had just been ransacked by protesters after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Demand is not interested in the "decisive moment" so much as the moment just afterward, when all the key players have left the frame. The more recent "Dailies" series is based on snapshots from Demand's iPhone: a stack of gaudy American cheese slices, perfectly arranged cigarette butts stubbed out in sand, two brown cups stacked forlornly in a chain link fence. These pictures lack the freighted histories of Demand's earlier work but are somehow more unsettling. As Hal Foster writes in one of the book's essays, they "appear so artificial and so automatic as to be almost posthuman." Flipping through another page of Demand's bureaucratic imprints, pathetic apartments, and deadpan shots of urban detritus can be numbing, perpetuating a sense of uninspired overload in an image-heavy

era of TMI. You can also find yourself lost in the details. As Demand says, "Things must be slowed down." —**LESA DARMIS**

Famous for her enigmatic line, "I grow flowers that grow now here else," Czech artist Anna Zemanková gets the deluxe treatment in **ANNA ZEMANKOVÁ** (J&K, \$95), an exquisite three-hundred-page monograph that celebrates four periods of her prolific work: *Dramatic*, *Triumphs*, *Fantasia*, and *Ethereal*. Ten essays, as well as poems and quotes by the artist, accompany lavishly reproduced, full-color plates. Zemanková started drawing at age seventeen, passing to work, pay bills, and raise a family from the 1920s through the '50s. Personal crises, including six miscarriages, led her two adult sons, who found a suitcase of her artworks in the basement, to encourage her to draw again. Until her death in 1986, she drew with synthetic joy during the morning's wee, silent hours, cranking Beethoven, Leoš Janáček, Bach, and Charles Lloyd, whose music, she claimed, expressed "all the deep and emotional things that are in my flowers." Why mention her miscarriages? Because fertility, fecundity, and nascent, primordial life are Zemanková's true subject matter. The book pushes her legacy past the gendered and the personal, shedding light on her endurance and professionalism: She held exhibitions of her own work in her apartment, hosted salons with fellow artists, and was an active consensus builder. The outsider-artist narrative doesn't suit her—sure, she skipped academia in favor of motherhood, but that's nothing new.

Labels saddle artists, particularly female ones, with confining expectations, and this volume questions an historical category that are in dire need of revision. Zemanková's pictures pulse and breathe, depicting an inner life that willfully combated oppressive external circumstance. —**TRINIE DALYTON**

**HARMONY KORINE** (*Rizzoli Electa*, \$45) is a juicy reexamination of the filmmaker/artist/author/boardwalk provocateur's amazingly incongruous Centre Pompidou exhibition: a tallman halfway between a roadside accident shrine and a set of horse-ovation Polaroids. Korine embraces chance processes he calls "Mistakist," an all-purpose anti-technique covering his stained-and-primed, poetically blasphemous, and outsider-art-posturing. The result is an imaginative bubble of nail paintings, evaporated photos, poetic scribbles, junkyard gags (I'm especially fond of the "Kill Whitney" skateboard), and freaky flicks. From the *Kids* screenplay to the inspired pop-tabloidism of *Spring Breakers*, Korine has forged a conduit from the Andy Warhol/Werner Herzog/Larry Clark universe to the TMZ/hacked self-portrait/crystal-meth aesthetic. Alicia Kozick's accompanying essay puts a painfully respectable spin on these Enzo-Philippe-meets-Mike-Kelley antics, while the works undercut credibility even if you half-believe Korine's mock-transcendental cocktail of marginalia and glossolalia. Harmony's Playhouse of heavy-cardiac miscreants, "trash hangers," celebrity impersonators (does James Franco count as a "James Franco" impersonator?), and phantoms of

