

style, Lydon comes across as a likable bloke who has no patience for pretense, hypocrisy, or phoniness, as well as someone with a genuine fondness for oddballs and misfits. Readers may be surprised to learn that he lives in Los Angeles and is now an American citizen; that he loves to read, especially history, but also Oscar Wilde and Dostoevsky; and that Gandhi is his “ultimate hero.” And Lydon takes writing seriously. “Words count,” he notes, “. . . words are actually weapons.” For anyone interested in the punk scene and the evolution of one of its finest. —*June Sawyers*

★ **The Battle of Versailles: The Night American Fashion Stumbled into the Spotlight and Made History.**
By Robin Givhan.

Mar. 2015. 320p. Flatiron, \$27.99 (9781250052902); e-book (9781250053855). 746.9.

Until the 1970s, fashion happened exclusively in France. “Whatever Paris said, women all over the world took heed,” writes Pulitzer Prize-winning fashion critic Givhan in this examination of the fascinating day that this dynamic shifted forever. On November 28, 1973, five rising American designers—Oscar de la Renta, Bill Blass, Anne Klein, Halston, and Stephen Burrows—were invited to showcase their work at a grand society gala at the palace of Versailles, sharing the evening’s runway with the giants of French haute couture, including Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy, and Dior. The night proved to be an extraordinary moment for the fashion world, pitting French tradition and artistry against an American individualism that privileged innovation, creativity, and diversity. As the visiting models, more than half of whom were African American, strutted and stomped down the runway to strains of soul music, the American designers authored a new era of contemporary fashion connected to performance and personality. Givhan’s entertaining history captures the high cultural stakes in the budding American fashion industry that led to the fateful showdown and makes a case for the event’s continued reverberations in the fashion world. Every reader with an eye to fashion will relish this. —*Lindsay Bosch*

Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater.
By Carey Perloff.

Mar. 2015. 250p. illus. City Lights, paper, \$16.95 (9781931404143); e-book (9781931404167). 792.023.

In a truly inspiring and rewarding read, Perloff recounts her tenure as the artistic director of San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theater. From the moment she came aboard, the theater faced many challenges: a dire financial state, internal dysfunction, and a literally crumbling infrastructure owing to an earthquake. Thanks to her endless energy, confidence, optimism, and thoughtfulness, Perloff transformed the theater into the cutting-edge institution it is today. She

meditates on being a woman in a largely male-dominated field, sharing incidents of hair-raising sexism. But she is modest, and her writing is lighthearted, and the anecdotes about her hectic life as a young parent are laugh-out-loud funny, as she describes the bizarre nannies she and her husband employed, or the time she hid her napping baby from Harold Pinter in the back of a rehearsal room because he didn’t like infants. Perloff’s story will certainly appeal to theater lovers, but her memoir will also engage any reader interested in the story of a professional pioneer and an individual working to reinvent a struggling organization. —*Sarah Grant*

Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War.
Ed. by J. Matthew Gallman and Gary W. Gallagher.

Apr. 2015. 256p. illus. Univ. of Georgia, \$32.95 (9780820348100). 779.

At the onset of the Civil War, photography was a relatively new medium. War photography, first widely used in the 1850s in the Crimean War, fully blossomed during the Civil War, with frequently stark images conveying the carnage of battle. This collection of images, many of them familiar to Civil War enthusiasts, were selected to serve as a jumping-off point for the essays of 27 scholars on topics suggested by the photos. The photos, topics, and essays are an eclectic mix. By themselves, many of the photos would seem unremarkable, but the often brilliantly written essays compel the reader to view the photos with a fresh perspective. An iconic shot of Robert E. Lee mounted on his horse, Traveller, leads to an essay by Ethan Rafuse that conveys both Lee’s nobility and his sense of impending defeat as the war drags on. A portrait of a flamboyant Jeb Stuart is accompanied by a Gary Gallagher essay examining the myth of the noble Confederate cavalier and the endurance of the concept of the “Lost Cause.” Together, the photos and essays make a superb addition to Civil War collections. —*Jay Freeman*

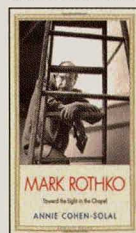
★ **Mark Rothko: Toward the Light in the Chapel.**

By Annie Cohen-Solal.

Mar. 2015. 224p. illus. Yale, \$25 (9780300182040). 759.13.

The artist we know as Mark Rothko was born Marcus Rotkovich in 1903, the youngest child in a secular Russian Jewish family and the only one enrolled in a traditional Talmudic school. This experience, Cohen-Solal (*Leo and His Circle: The Life of Leo Castelli*, 2010) argues in her tightly focused, profoundly clarifying biography, “is the key fact to understanding the life and work of Rothko.”

With unprecedented access to revelatory archives, a fresh interpretive eye, and a gift for briskly establishing richly textured histori-



cal and social contexts, Cohen-Solal tracks Rothko’s journey from pogrom-bloody Russia to Portland, Oregon, where, as a precocious high-school student, he protested discrimination against Jews. He went to Yale on a full scholarship but dropped out in disgust over blatant anti-Semitism. In New York, Rothko discovered his artistic calling, forged friendships with similarly radical painters, and took the lead in challenging the stodgy art establishment. Cohen-Solal illuminates Rothko’s intellectualism, “search for unity,” abiding ethics, and the evolution of his purely abstract, transcendently radiant, deeply emotional, and increasingly spiritual paintings. The first to reveal the secrets of Rothko’s “elaborate, almost alchemical methods” for creating his glowing, contrasting colors, Cohen-Solal also sensitively elucidates Rothko’s acute discomfort with success and the depression that led to his 1970 suicide. A defining and affecting tribute to a modern master. —*Donna Seaman*

Orson Welles’s Last Movie: The Making of The Other Side of the Wind.
By Josh Karp.

Apr. 2015. 352p. illus. St. Martin’s, \$26.99 (9781250007087); e-book (9781250016089). 791.43.

Picture Orson Welles, the director of *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and *Touch of Evil*, scrounging for money, filming in rented houses, and lying his way onto shooting locations, spending more than a decade trying to get a movie made. The saga of Welles’ last (and as yet unreleased) movie, *The Other Side of the Wind*, is an often-shocking portrait of a great artist on his last creative legs. Karp, who pieced together the story from interviews with some of the people involved in the movie’s production (which spanned the 1970s) and various other sources, charts the course of the movie from its early days as Welles’ would-be comeback vehicle; through its difficult, on-again, off-again production; to its rather dismal fate as an unfinished might-have-been. The text also charts the course of the end of Welles’ life, as his declining health and his frustrations at not being able to get his movie made without begging for money and equipment took their toll on him. A fascinating story, much more than your typical making-of book. —*David Pitt*

Sports & Recreation

Every Day I Fight.
By Stuart Scott and Larry Platt.

Mar. 2015. 320p. illus. Penguin/Blue Rider, \$26.95 (9780399174063). 070.4.

Scott, an ESPN sports anchor who famously incorporated African American cultural references into his upbeat, energetic reporting, passed away in January after a long battle with cancer. This is his account of that battle and his life. For those to whom

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