

WORDS AND PICTURES

What to read: the latest books chosen by SOPHIE DEVLIN



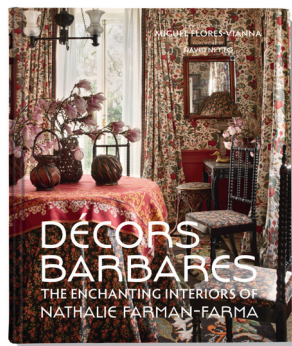
DÉCORS BARBARES BY NATHALIE FARMAN-FARMA (VENDOME PRESS, £50)

Nathalie Farman-Farma's interiors would not look out of place in a painting by Pierre Bonnard, with their artfully layered textiles and carefully chosen antiques striking a still-life pose at every turn. It helps, of course, that she does not have any clients to please here, allowing her creativity to run unfettered through her own and her family's beautiful houses. It is thanks to this style unrestrained that we can experience the French-American designer's vision at full tilt in this beautiful new book, each scene captured in painterly perfection by the photographer Miguel Flores-Vianna.

Ten years ago, Nathalie launched her own company, Décors Barbares, in London with a collection of printed fabrics drawn from everything she loves about Russia, Persia and Central Asia. For this voracious collector of antique textiles, there are multiple influences at work in the designs. These range

from the traditional garments and accessories of the Silk Road to 'barbarian' Russian style as seen through the eyes of the French in the 19th century, and the designer and artist Léon Bakst's remarkable sets and costumes for the Ballets Russes. From these folkloric origins emerge the beautiful worlds that Nathalie has created in London and the US. You will come away green with envy, of course, but full of inspiration.

There are great lessons to be learnt here for admirers of Nathalie's style, in which floral patterns clash politely with each other and disparate antiques find harmony in a shared space. The text focuses sharply on the evolution of her aesthetic, as seen through the history of items in her collection. In this way, we discover a huge amount about this extraordinary part of the world and its richness and romanticism that have so captured her heart. **Gabby Deeming**



THE LIVES OF OTHERS

BY SIMON WATSON
(RIZZOLI, £50)

I have spent two evenings in the pub with the photographer Simon Watson, but I have only scratched the surface of his many adventures. Here, he revisits 20 memorable projects, including decorator Roberto Peregalli's riad in Tangier and a winemaker's castle in the Dolomites. In this book, we have been given a gift: not only of Simon's sublime photographs, but also his touching reflections on these houses and their owners. He lifts the veil on the experience of stepping into some of the world's most incredible interiors for a day. **Owen Gale**



CRAFTLAND JAPAN

BY UWE RÖTTGEN
AND KATHARINA ZETTL
(THAMES & HUDSON, £24.95)

Craft is a vital part of Japan's national psyche, with an array of regional styles and countless iterations of each type of practice. For this book, the German-based designers Uwe Röttgen and Katharina Zettl travelled round Japan in a camper van to document some of the finest examples of craftsmanship - from urushi lacquer to papermaking, basketry and indigo dyeing. Their profiles of 25 artisans offer an outsider's view of centuries of tradition, expressed with skill and ingenuity by makers working today. **Emily Tobin**



THE ICONIC AMERICAN HOUSE

BY DOMINIC BRADBURY
(THAMES & HUDSON, £50)

In his latest book, Dominic Bradbury surveys 50 'architectural masterworks' built since 1900. He begins with Edith Wharton's neo-classical house in Massachusetts and ends with a recent project by Tom Kundig in Washington State. Dominic traces the evolution of US architecture, which seems to have responded to multiple waves of European influence. A prefabricated LA house by Charles and Ray Eames has a Mondrian-esque façade, while Gamble House in Pasadena suggests a Californian take on Arts and Crafts style. **SD** □