

## A SUMMER COCKTAIL

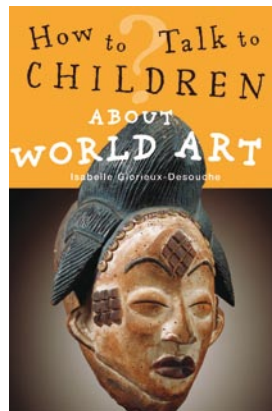
I don't know whom we're trying to kid with all these enriching recommendations for the summer months. Everybody knows that on a Venice Biennale off-year, the artworld gets as far away from culture as is humanly possible. So why don't you go find yourself a quiet spot, mix a...

### Negroni

- 1 part gin
- 1 part sweet vermouth
- 1 part Campari (with limited-edition labels designed by Vanessa Beecroft, hers pictured; Tobias Rehberger; and Assume Vivid Astro Focus)

...and relax in the sun, sending all thoughts of September off into a delightful haze.

www.campari.com, £17.49



## How to Talk to Children About World Art *By Isabelle Glorieux-Desouche*

Skulls, demons, two-headed pigs, hermaphroditism – if you (like me) are thinking this world-art stuff sounds like a fun summer day out, then think again. Colonialism, cultural rape, heritage theft, wholesale nudity, cock rings: what kind of parent who wanted to be admired by friends and Oprah as both politically correct and responsible would bring their pesky, inquisitive kids into a world like that? But now you're being racist and not politically correct at all. That's why you need this book – to even your karma out. Consequently, when your offspring, confronted by a Punu Okuyi mask at the Smithsonian, enquires, "What a good hairstyle. Could you have that for real?", you'll know that the answer is not "Don't be ridiculous, your mother's father was bald, so you will be too", but, as Isabelle tells you, 'Of course; hairstyles can be very sophisticated for both African women and men whose hair naturally lends itself to styling like this'. *MR*

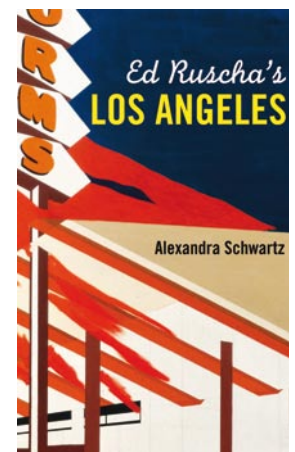
Frances Lincoln, £12.99 (softcover)

## Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles *By Alexandra Schwartz*

In her foreword Alexandra Schwartz notes that *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles* stems from a doctoral dissertation, and this plays out in the densely researched, heavily footnoted text. Readers looking for an artist's tourist guide to the city's landmarks should go elsewhere. Instead, Schwartz presents a surprisingly straight scholarly biography of Ruscha and his work, albeit framed by various LA-related chapters. So we learn about the underdog feel of the West Coast art scene circa the mid-1960s, compared to its booming New York counterpart, something the author puts down to the separation of LA Pop from the European tradition. Suggesting a Hollywood effect on Ruscha's painting motifs, the forays the artist made into Hollywood society via his friendship with Dennis Hopper are also covered.

Here Schwartz is guided by Ruscha's 1983 work *Hollywood is a verb* and goes some way to happily dividing Hollywood, the mythic construct, from its host, the geographic LA. Where the book really comes alive though is when Schwartz goes beyond mere historical documentation and addresses the artist's relationship to the vernacular modernist urbanism of the sprawling city. The links Schwartz traces between Ruscha's photographic work and architects Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi's formative writing on the subject are persuasive and, to this reviewer's knowledge, new. *OB*

MIT Press, £22.95 (hardcover)





## World Cup

11 July

For many, this summer means, quite simply, football World Cup. And as the artworld winds down for some well-earned rest before the season starts again in September, we've decided to host a little (art)World Cup of our own. With generous sponsorship from Nike (supporters of both the game and the arts), matches will feature customised kits, respirators and professional referees and coaches – there to ensure that things run smoothly and that we all shake hands after the games. Postmatch awards and alcoholic cooldown will take place at 1948, Nike's temporary store/hangout in East London, where we can all settle in to watch the official FIFA World Cup final with friends, family and the curator you nutmegged on the way to scoring your hat trick. Our talent scouts are out there as we speak, so get training. *Tom Watt*

More details to come on [www.artreview.com](http://www.artreview.com)



### A CROQUET SET IN A COFFIN

The summer croquet games of my imagination – mainly fuelled by BBC costume dramas set in large country homes – are not quite so morbid as those in Mark Dion's mind. Cumulus, a firm who fill the hitherto unprobed niche of artist-designed outdoor furniture and games, are offering, in an edition of ten, a full set of mallets, all carefully secured in a coffin-shaped trolley. Odd, but we like. *OB*

[www.cumulus-studios.com](http://www.cumulus-studios.com), \$6,600



### EVEN THE DOGS

By Jon McGregor

When packing the holiday reading, I always reach for something depressing: there's only so much frivolity I can take, you see. I first read Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in Fiji, before my sister's wedding, and the counterbalance was much needed. Consequently, I would happily set Jon McGregor's third novel, *Even the Dogs*, in the suitcase. It's the Leicester-based author's darkest work yet, centring on the homeless drug users of an unnamed town. He shapes the characters – and their fairly hopeless circular situation of waking up, finding drugs, taking drugs, finding a bed, waking up – with a poetic descriptive spirit. The result, a sad, nonjudgemental portrait of England's grey, drizzling nowhere-towns, a motif that runs through McGregor's previous titles as well. *OB*



### Our Tragic Universe

By Scarlett Thomas

You spend all your time thinking about complex art theory and curatorial strategies – give it a rest! What you're looking for is a novel to read on the beach – something light and a bit trashy, but with a dash of theory to keep you on your intellectual toes. *Our Tragic Universe* is a novel with 'big ideas' – Baudrillard, quantum theory, Lévi-Strauss, narrative theory, Propp, Chekhov. In it, we follow Meg, a novelist who's trying to finish her unwritten masterpiece while making a living ghostwriting formulaic sci-fi and obsessing about story structure in Devon. Thomas is skilled at breezily surmising theory, but if you're familiar with any of these ideas, then passages where people sit around and exchange them at dinner parties will make you wince like you've just caught your fingers in the cheese grater: 'Yeah, you've heard about the "death of the author", right?' – 'Is that the one where...' I hate to say this about an ambitious novel with some complex ideas, but there is a spectre haunting this book, and that spectre is chick lit. That said, if you're part of that niche audience and have been searching for the holy grail of chick-lit/literary-theory fusion, then search no more.

*Laura McLean-Ferris*

Canongate, £14.99 (hardcover)

Bloomsbury, £16.99 (hardcover)

