

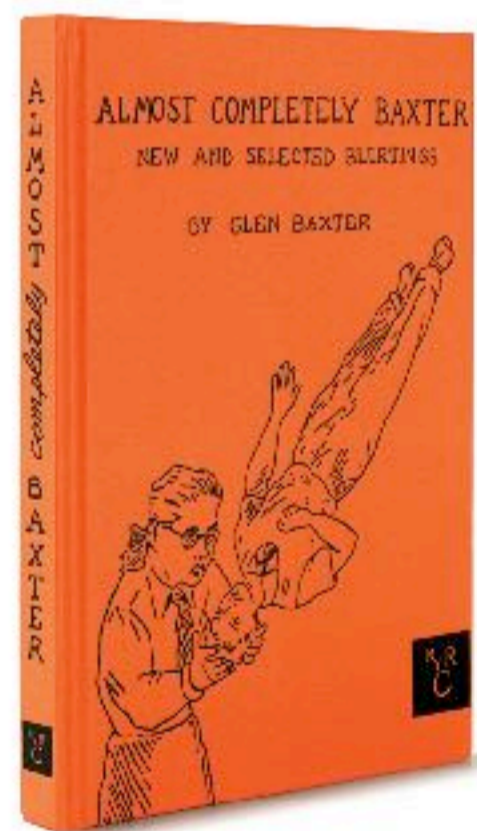


Books

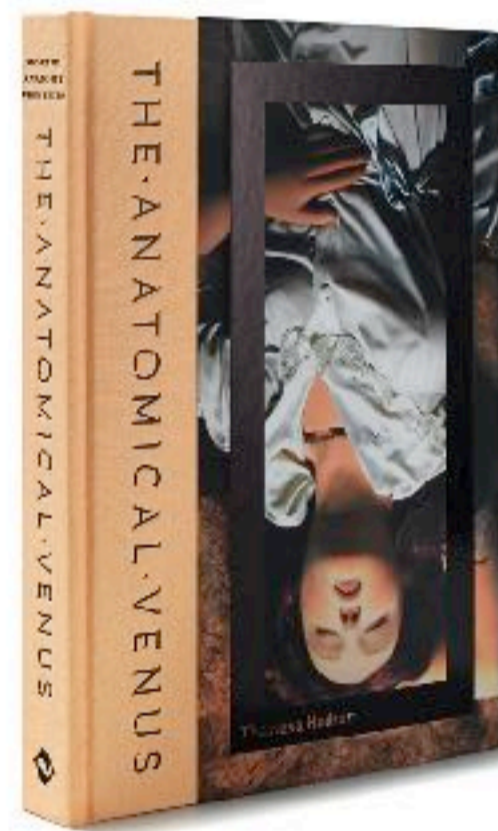
From trash hits to tache hits via curious cartoons. By Sebastian Shakespeare

STRAND BY STUART HAYGARTH (*Art/Books*, £28)

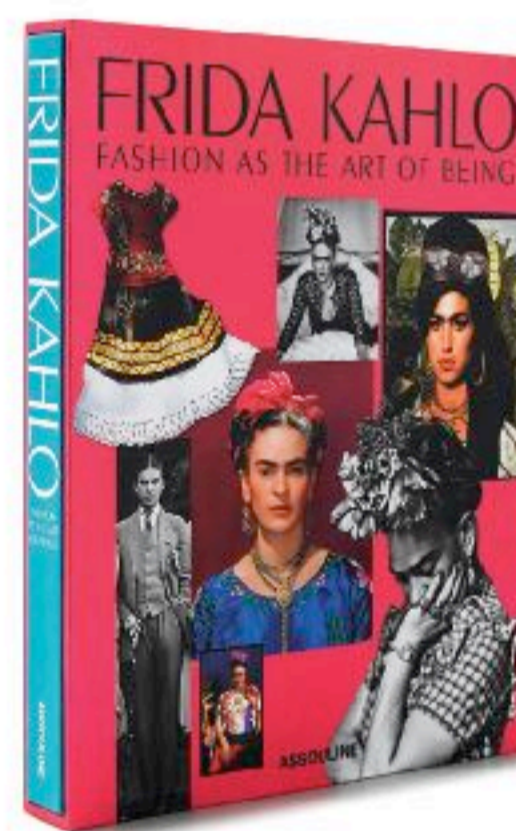
Who says you can't create a masterpiece out of litter? In 2011, the artist Stuart Haygarth walked 500 miles along the south coast of England and collected every manmade object washed up on the shoreline he came across: combs, lighters, dolls, tennis balls, flip-flops, fish hooks, spades, babies' dummies. So far, so humdrum. But back in his studio, he categorised the items by colour and type before arranging them into eye-catching compositions and photographing them. This fantastic book is the result. Resembling one of those 19th-century zoological-specimen drawers stuffed with quirky items, *Strand* (the Old English word for beach) elevates everyday detritus to art, for the rainbow harvest of plastic gathered here is spellbinding. The objects are bereft of information or picture captions, a ploy that makes you focus even more intently on the images. And that is the point: since everything is plastic, there is no point in attempting to discriminate between objects. Haygarth's book, which contains an incisive introduction by Robert Macfarlane, also highlights the pollution of our planet and is an eloquent indictment of our throwaway society. In 1957, the French philosopher Roland Barthes said that plastic is 'the first magical material that consents to be prosaic'. *Strand* has rediscovered its magic all over again.



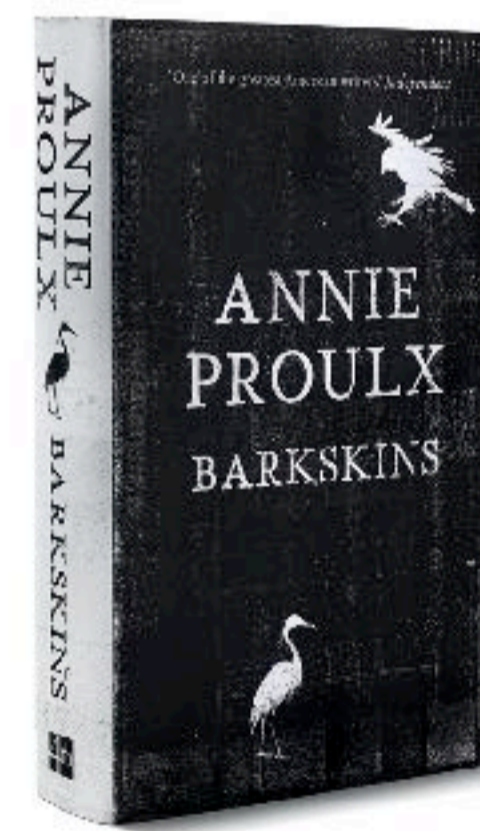
ALMOST COMPLETELY BAXTER BY GLEN BAXTER (*New York Review Books*, £14.99)
A comprehensive selection of cartoons from the man hailed as the heir of Lewis Carroll and Magritte. His work is a weird and wonderful mash-up of pulp fiction, high jinks and outright absurdity. The line drawings are simple, but the captions provide oddball, very funny punchlines ('A lonesome cowboy confronting the latest in modern art', or a couple kissing: 'He took her in his arms and gently squeezed her goatee'). Wonderful.



THE ANATOMICAL VENUS BY JOANNA EBENSTEIN (*Thames & Hudson*, £19.99)
The Anatomical Venus, a life-sized, dissectible female waxwork, was conceived in 18th-century Florence for teaching human anatomy. This fabulous book by the co-founder of the Morbid Anatomy Museum features over 250 images of seductive yet disquieting waxworks – many never before published: golden tiaras crowning real hair, glass eyes with real eyelashes. A mesmerising marriage of art and science.



FRIDA KAHLO: FASHION AS THE ART OF BEING BY SUSANA MARTINEZ VIDAL (*Assouline*, £130)
She may have died in 1954, but the Mexican artist with the monobrow and the tache continues to exert a powerful fascination. Abundantly illustrated with Kahlo's striking self-portraits, Vidal's book assesses her enduring influence as a cultural and fashion icon. This is a glorious and vibrant tribute to Kahlo's indomitable character, style and art.



BARKSKINS BY ANNIE PROULX (*4th Estate*, £18.99)
The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Brokeback Mountain* and *The Shipping News* has written an American epic. Initially, it follows the fortunes of two men who make their way from 17th-century France to New France in America and work as woodcutters; it's their travails and the adventures of their descendants over 300 years that this sweeping novel is concerned with. Vivid characterisation, haunting prose and a plot rich with incident. □

STILL-LIFES: PIXEYES