

ELEPHANT

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ESSENTIAL ART BOOKS

These Are the Essential Art Books You Need to Know Right Now



With the cold drawing in, there has never been a better time to hunker down with a book of art and photography. A glut of new releases sees everything from occultism to queer photography hit the shelves, as chosen by Elephant's editors.



Heaven is a Prison, Mark McKnight (Loose Joints)

Bodies tumble and entwine in an otherworldly desert landscape in photographer Mark McKnight's latest book, the recipient of the 2020 Light Work Photobook Award. Shot in austere, high-contrast black and white, the sensation of the fantastical is heightened. The formal qualities of the human body are overlaid with those of the surrounding landscape, as naked limbs are contrasted with the arid grass, rocks and shrubbery. Nature is shown as boundless and yet curiously claustrophobic, and intimacies play out upon its all-encompassing terrain. Described by McKnight as a "queer purgatory", there is an inherent tension at play between freedom and liberation, violence and affection, with no beginning or end in sight. **(Louise Benson)**

