New and Noteworthy

A Matter of Memory: Photography as Object in the Digital Age
Foreword by Bruce Barnes, text by Lisa Hostetler, William T. Green
Charting the shift away from physical media such as film and paper toward digital images and the increasing dependence of memory on images.
George Eastman Museum, 176 pages, 160 colour illustrations, hardcover, $50.00 US, November 2016

The Canadians
Edited by Roger Hargreaves, Jill Offenbeck and Stefanie Petrilli
Drawing on *The Globe and Mail*'s 500,000-print archive, *The Canadians* re-imagines Robert Frank's iconic twentieth-century book *The Americans*.
Bone Idle, 172 pages, 79 colour illustrations, softcover, $40.00 US, September 2016

Erik Kessels: Image Tsunami
Edited by Erik Kessels
Highlights the phenomenon of image-sharing on the Internet and questions the meaning and status of individual images in a sea of visual information.
RM, 304 pages, 500 colour illustrations, softcover, $27.50 US, September 2016

Jon Rafman: Nine Eyes
Edited by Kate Steinmann

Nine Eyes presents fifty-eight full-page images, selected by Jon Rafman, from his ever-proliferating collection that constitutes *The Nine Eyes of Google Street View* (2009, ongoing). In a project that refers to the nine lenses of the camera that sits atop the vehicles perpetually roaming the globe in the service of Google's mapping project, Rafman peruses Google's fixed online landscapes in order to capture the extraordinary images that Google's automatic eyes indifferently record.

This monograph assembles a diverse range of images, from romantic, painterly landscapes to blurry scenes of shocking violence: a wounded cow drags itself from the highway; a body, covered by a sheet, lies in the middle of the road. The ominous ambiguity of these images is accentuated by a consistently warped sense of depth and blurred faces – formal characteristics that Rafman describes as "Street View's visual grammar."

Rafman's larger project can be found on a Tumblr account. Accordingly, the book's landscape orientation accommodates the reproduction of screenshots in a format that mimics that of a web browser, and each image is stamped with navigation icons and a Google watermark. However, this transposition from computer screen to book is burdened with the clunky-ness that so often plagues the display of Internet art in a material format.

The book also includes five excellent critical essays, some of which, situating Rafman in the tradition of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Walker Evans, contrast the practice of the street photographer with that of the "cyber-flâneur." Sohrab Mohebbi wonders whether Rafman's screenshots should be considered photographs at all, suggesting that his labour constitutes, rather, the "collect[ion of] the photographic."

Other essays crucially and insightfully investigate the neoliberal interests of Google Street View, pointing out that the automation of the camera does not necessarily result in a benign image. Following Rafman's own claim that "we often see too much and register nothing," Gabrielle Moser takes up Ariella Azoulay's recommendation that we stop looking at photographs and start watching them. – Alex Borkowski

New Documents, 96 pages, 48 colour illustrations, hardcover, $65.00 CA, May 2016

Artificial Darkness: An Obscure History of Modern Art and Media
By Noam M. Elcott

Elcott conceptualizes an archaeology of artificial darkness by re-envisioning the history of photography, early cinema, Victorian occult performances and Bauhaus theatre, as well as some work by contemporary artists. Artificial darkness is constructed and controlled. The darkened spaces of cinema auditoriums come to mind as obvious examples of artificial darkness, but Elcott diligently historicizes artificial darkness by first considering the architectural spaces that were required by early photographic processes and devices, such as Étienne-Jules Marey's chronophotography or Thomas Edison's proto-cinematic Kinetoscope projector, which was housed in a deliberately darkened, tunnel-like studio structure. Elcott cleaves physiological black from the darkness of media by employing the Foucauldian concept of the *dispositif*; that is, the institutional, physical and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures that enhance and maintain power within the social body.

Elcott also examines the deliberately darkened screens deployed in Victorian phantasmagoric performances in early twentieth-century spirit photography. He then segues into a discussion of Georges Méliès, who, although widely recognized as a pivotal figure in French cinema, made singular and heretofore unrecognized contributions to black-screen techniques, and therefore to the creation of artificial darkness. According to Elcott, Méliès emerges as the veritable overlord of darkness.

Elcott proposes a counter-history to traditional archaeologies of cinema, which have habitually ignored artificial darkness. Repositioning various instances of and contributions to constructed and deliberately darkened spaces in a near-perfect analysis that merges photographic, cinematic and modern and contemporary art practices, Elcott rescues darkness from its association with the sinister and categorically theorizes it in positive terms. He disassociates artificial darkness from its obvious relation with death and captures and elaborates the radical alterity of blackness and its positive contributions in the development of photographic, cinematic and other media-art practices. – Carmen Victor

The University of Chicago Press, 312 pages, 145 b+w illustrations, hardcover, $45.00 US, May 2016