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Alina Cohen, "13 Art Dealers Share the Books That Helped Them Navigate the Art World," *Artsy*, March 20, 2020.

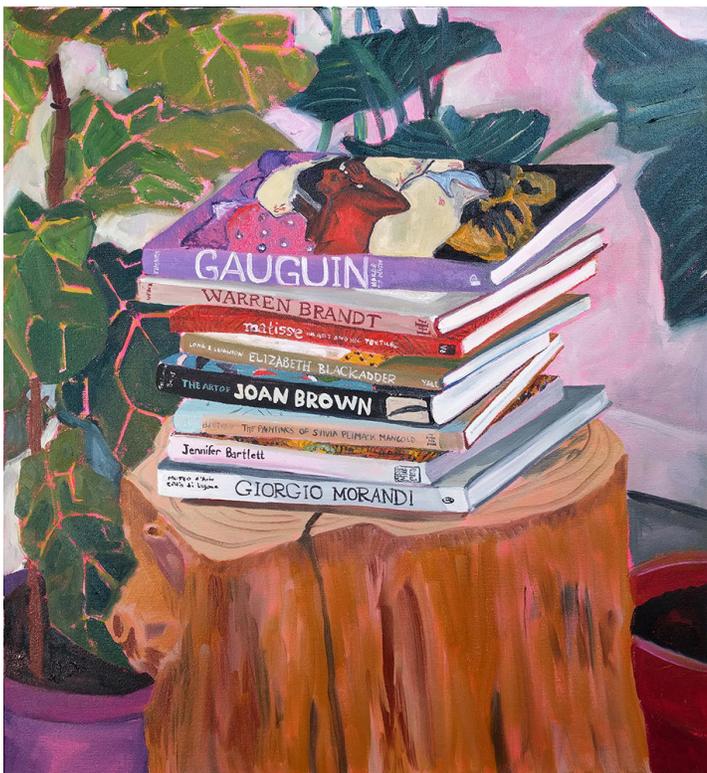


Art Market

13 Art Dealers Share the Books That Helped Them Navigate the Art World

Alina Cohen

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Anna Valdez *Stack*, 2015 Hashimoto Contemporary

Most of us suddenly have lots of reading time on our hands. As museums, galleries, and auction houses close shop in light of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), in-person art viewing goes

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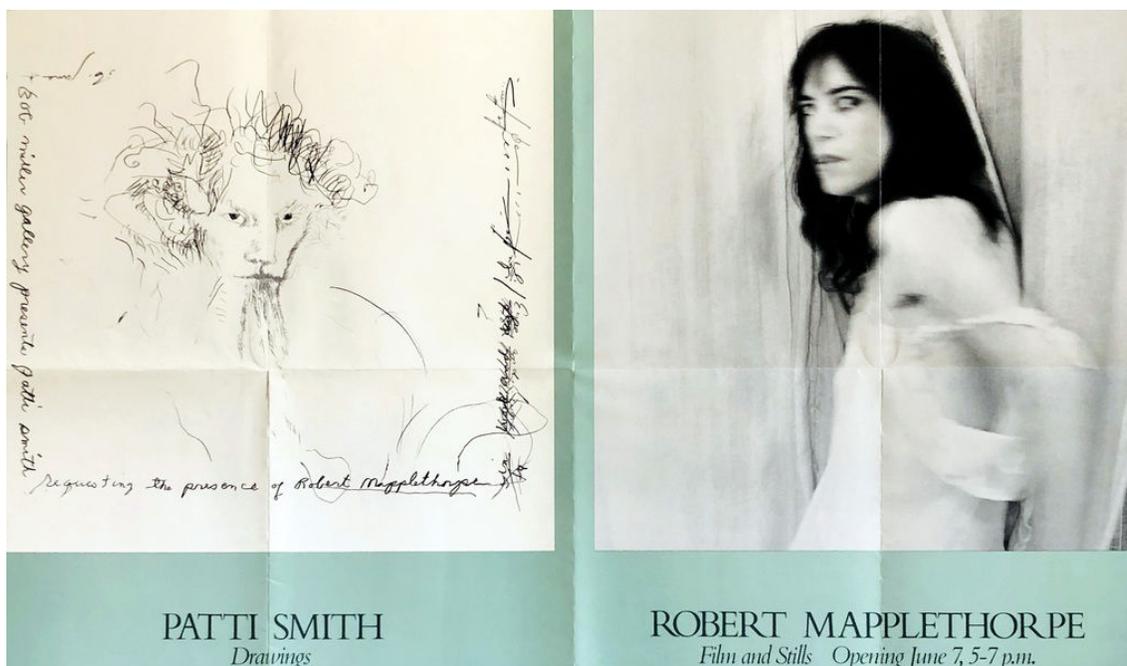
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on hiatus. This is a spiritual and financial hit for many of us whose lives revolve around the social and physical spaces of the art world. The paintings, sculptures, and performances that move us will no longer be at arms' reach.

When I started working on this article a few weeks ago, I simply wanted to hear dealers recommend books that helped them navigate the art world. Yet when their answers began pouring in, I was surprised at the diversity of their picks (some dealers offered additional recommendations, included below). To navigate the art world, their selections suggest, one must have an imagination cultivated by fiction, a sense of romance about the business, and a keen curiosity about underlying social structures—and, apparently, an ability to broadly interpret a pretty straightforward prompt. As the news media bombards us with frightening updates at lightning speed, it's as good a time as ever to find solace in language and storytelling of a very different kind.

Book: *Just Kids* (2010) by Patti Smith

Recommended by: Davida Nemeroff, founder of Night Gallery, Los Angeles



Robert Mapplethorpe Patti Smith 1978 exhibition poster, 1978

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Davida Nemeroff recommends Patti Smith's *Just Kids* (2010) to “artists looking for inspiration” and “people who missed the 1970s.” The National Book Award–winning memoir traces the poet and musician’s relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

They met, of course, when they were “just kids,” broke, hungry, and discovering their creative, sexual, and intellectual selves. The memoir follows the pair through their residency at the Chelsea Hotel and their interactions with the artists that came to define New York in the 1970s. It highlights, Nemeroff says, the “importance of friendship and solidarity as one starts a career in the arts.”

It’s a feel-good book, too. “Smith’s determination and loyalty to her loved ones is deeply inspiring,” says Nemeroff. The writer’s words “remind readers to see beyond the smoke and mirrors of the zeitgeist and devote themselves to the most honest work they can make.”