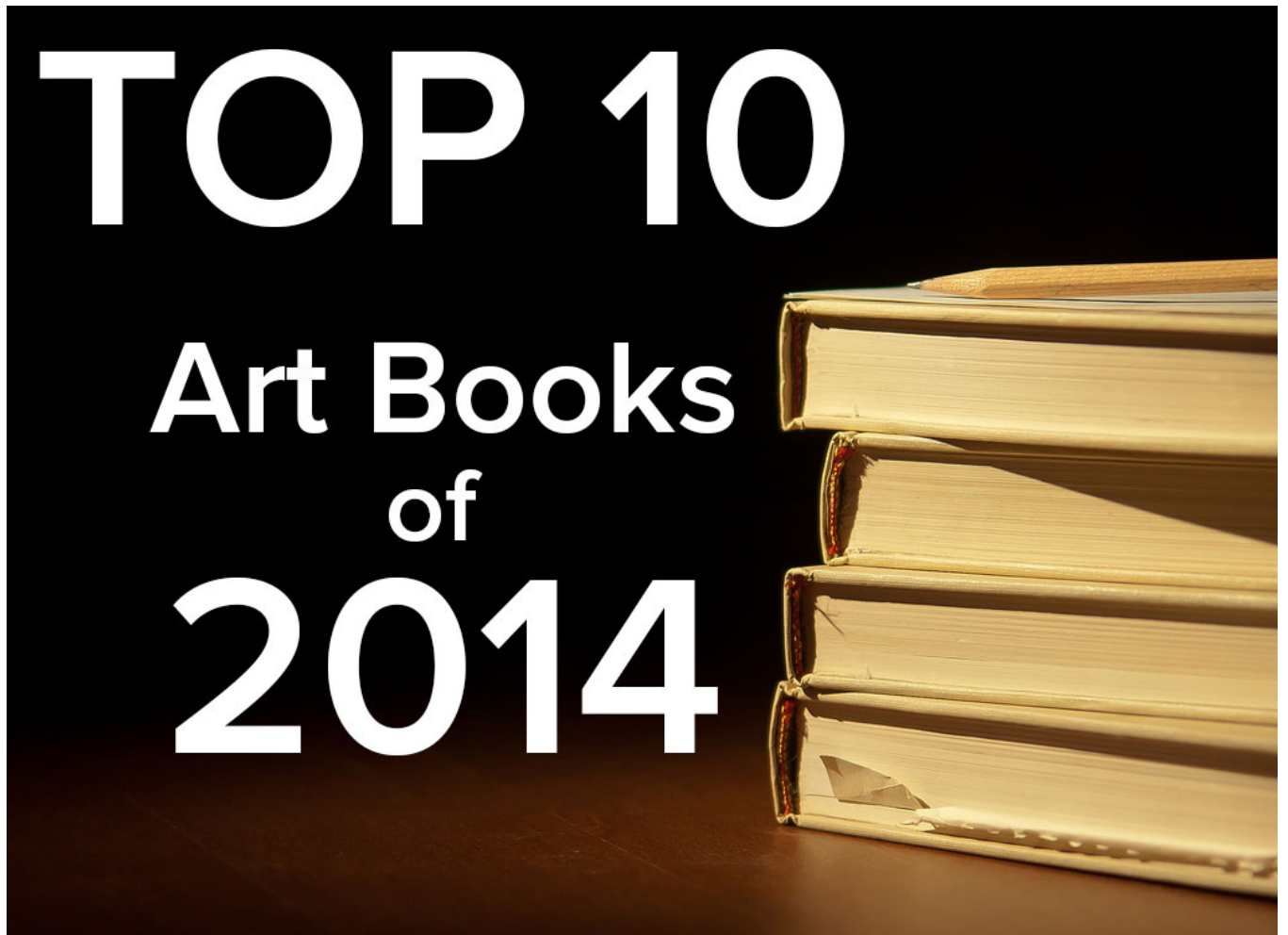


Best of 2014: Our Top 10 Art Books

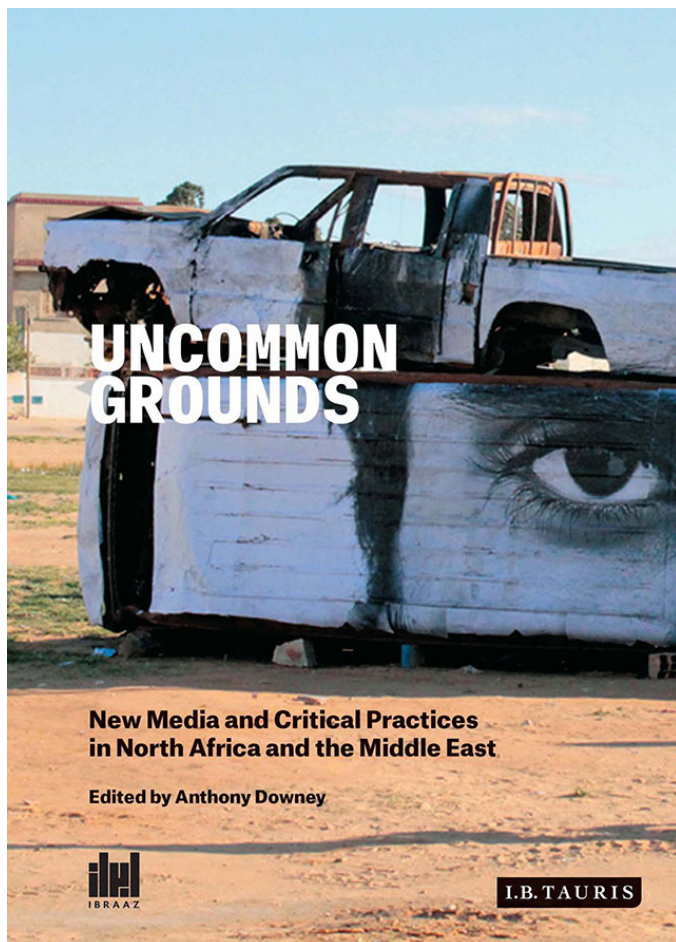
by [Hyperallergic](#) on December 31, 2014



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There's never a shortage of art books, but it is often hard to find the best in a field flooded with vanity projects, sales tools, and books that promise so much more than they deliver. With that in mind, we've asked Hyperallergic staff members to offer their suggestions for books that are not only notable, informative, and interesting, but worth your time and money.

#1 – Uncommon Grounds: New Media and Critical Practices in North Africa and the Middle East (Ibraaz)



Some of the most powerful images of the last few years have been coming out of North Africa and West Asia. Images of decapitation, war, revolution, protest, and upheaval from MENA nations have been seen on countless screens the world over. Edited by the always insightful Anthony Downey, *Uncommon Grounds* is a good place to start for those seeking to understand the role of new media in the region. This isn't a conventional art book, but an exploration of new media and its impact on a land often manipulated and colonized (particularly through images) by foreign forces. Omar Kholief writes about politics, media, and art after the Arab Uprising; Franco Berardi considers the ability to activate networks of solidarity outside of the sphere of the economy; and Nat Muller thinks through the meaning and impact of death on social media. Downey explains why all this is crucial: "If artists are going to respond to the immediacy of events, and who is to say they should not, we nevertheless need to remain alert to how the rhetoric of conflict and the spectacle of revolution is deployed as a benchmark for discussing, if not determining, the institutional and critical legitimacy of these practices." — *Hrag Vartanian*

#2 – Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse, *Ponte City* (Steidl)