

Radio 2 and watch the customers buy vast quantities of potatoes.

Next to Eric and Mavis was Mr Watkin the butcher. Mr Watkin was an old man, Kate estimated probably seventy eight. He was a nice man with a nice wife, but very few people bought their meat from him any more. Kate thought this possibly had something to do with the way Mr Watkin stood in his shop window swatting flies against the sides of meat with a large palette knife. It was also perhaps a self-perpetuating situation, in that the fewer customers Mr Watkin had, the less meat he stocked, and the less meat he had, the less he looked like a butcher, and the more he looked like a crazy old man who collected and displayed bits of flesh in his front window. The previous week Kate had passed the window to see it contained only a single rabbit (and Kate was sure the only

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person alive who still ate rabbit was in fact Mr Watkin himself), some kidneys, a chicken, a side of pork and a string of sausages. This in itself was nothing too remarkable for Mr Watkin, but what caused Kate to stop and stare was an apparent new marketing initiative by the butcher. Evidently he had become a little embarrassed by the minimal nature of his window displays and so perhaps in order to make them seem less odd (and this is where Kate felt he’d really miscalculated), he had arranged the items in a jaunty tableau. Thus it appeared that the chicken was taking the rabbit for a walk by its lead of sausages, over a hillock of pork under a dark red kidney sun. Kate looked up from the grisly scene to see Mr Watkin nodding at her in amazement from inside the shop, thumbs aloft, as if taken aback by his own flair.

On the other side of Kate’s house was Mr Palmer the newsagent. Mr Palmer worked alongside his son Adrian, who was the closest Kate had to a best friend, and was also the first and so far only client of Falcon Investigations. Adrian was twenty-two and had been to university. Mr Palmer had wanted Adrian to get a ‘proper career’ after graduation, but Adrian had no such ambitions, and was happy to spend his days reading behind the counter and helping to run the small business. The Palmer family lived in a modern semi on the outskirts of town, but the mother and sister rarely visited the shop – sweet selling was left to the men of the family. Adrian treated Kate like an adult, but then Adrian treated everyone the same. He wasn’t capable

of putting on a different face for different customers as his father did. Mr Palmer could switch from an avuncular ‘Now then, young man’, to an utterly sincere ‘Such a shocking headline, isn’t it, Mrs Stevens?’ in seconds.

But, whatever Adrian’s enthusiasms were, he tended to assume they were shared by all, or at least would be if he spread the word. He spent his afternoons buried in the *NME* or reading books about musicians. He would earnestly recommend albums to his customers, seemingly blind to the improbability of Mrs Docherty suddenly switching from Foster and Allen to the MC5, or Debbie Casey and her giggling teenage pals ever finding much of significance in Leonard Cohen. As soon as Mr Palmer left him alone in the shop, Jimmy Young’s radio show would be switched off and Adrian would slip a tape into the tinny radio cassette player. He thought that the reason

no one ever asked him what was playing was because they were a little shy, so he would always put a scrawled sign on the counter: ‘Now Playing: Captain Beefheart, *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*. For more information just ask a member of staff’.

With Kate, though, Adrian liked to talk about crime detection, about classic detective movies, about which customers might be killers, about where they might have hidden their victims’ bodies. Adrian would always come up with the most inventive body dumps. Sometimes Kate would go with Adrian to the wholesalers, advising him on what sweets to buy, and they would look at the burly warehousemen and assess which of them had criminal records.

End of book extract

What Was Lost. © Catherine O’Flynn 2008.

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New Art Releases

Niki de Saint Phalle

Edited by Carla Schulz Hoffman
Prestel

This book is a wonderful resource on Niki de Saint Phalle. Throughout her 40-year career, Saint Phalle explored female roles in society and myth, basing many of her depictions and sculptures on personal experience. The full range of Niki de Saint Phalle’s work is honoured in this retrospective collection, which features new images and an extended biography.

The book celebrates Saint Phalle’s work and life (1930 –2002). The edition is made more comprehensive by the addition of the artist’s handwritten comments and whimsical sketches.

Arranged chronologically, this updated book takes readers from the visceral and controversial “shooting paintings” and her playful “nanas” to the impressive installations and elaborate sculpture gardens, such as *Tarot Garden* in Tuscany, the *Sun God* in San Diego and the *Stravinsky Fountain* in Paris. This collection is a must have for any fan of expressionist or modern art.



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Art and the Moving Image

Edited by Tanya Leighton
Tate Publishing

Art and the Moving Image gives a full analysis of the emergence of moving image from the black box to the white cube in the 1960s to the present day.

There has been a shared interest between art and cinema, while the love/hate relationship involving the two has informed contemporary culture, excited the social and political, as well as changed the way in which we view art. Galleries and museums are using moving images more and more. How does this challenge the perception of contemporary art? How does moving image effect more traditional forms such as sculpture and painting?

Although text heavy, this book provides a clear picture of the development of moving image in the gallery and in social consciousness. With essays and critical texts by Giorgio Agamben, Serge Daney, Rosalind Krauss and Peter Wollen, this book offers an essential overview to this multifaceted field of art.



Shirley Stevenson