

Watch the birdie

THEODORE CROSS

Prudence Hone on photography

Tonight as teenagers and students head out to parties, pubs and clubs, they will be carrying their mobile phones and digital cameras; by tomorrow lunchtime (or teatime if it's been a particularly heavy night) they will each have loaded 40 or 50 photographs on to their Facebook pages. In a month, they will have taken, and appeared in, more pictures than their grandparents would have had access to in a lifetime. Everyone is a photographer now. Yet Massimo Vitali comments in *Photo-wisdom: Master Photographers on Their Art* edited by Lewis Blackwell (Chronicle, £35): "The fact that everybody is taking pictures today is interesting and not a problem for me. People can take their pictures, but when they see one of mine they realise it is different to theirs - and they are not going to take a picture like it easily."

This is an outstanding collection, with illuminating commentaries by the photographers, who range from grand old men of photojournalism such as Elliott Erwitt to celebrity-snappers Platon and David LaChapelle.

Vitali might recognise something of his style in *We English* by Simon Roberts (Chris Boot, £35); from the Camel estuary to Kirkby Lonsdale, the dreamy panoramas, with their sweeping skies and miniature figures, are a lyrical reminder of the beauty of the countryside. There is a tranquility and charm in these documentary shots which is in stark contrast to the up-the-nostril, harshly lit studies in *Luxury* by Roberts's stablemate Martin Parr (Chris Boot, £25). Parr also appears in *Photobox: Bringing the Great Photographers into Focus* by Roberto Koch (Thames & Hudson, £19.95), along with 199 others, some of whom also appear in *Photo-wisdom*. Split into categories such as reportage, war, nature and so on, it is a snappy run-through of famous names, with each spread showing an example of the work on the right and a brief summary and biography on the left. This is a beautifully produced and reasonably priced survey.

Steve McCurry (one of Koch's "greats") has an unerring eye for colour and form. Each image in *The Unguarded Moment* (Phaidon, £35) is perfectly composed, and although the subjects are familiar - the Taj Mahal, Tibetan monks, Angkor Wat - these views are surprising and fresh (the Taj is reflected in the water as a boatman plays a hand of cards, the monks are having a "debate" of a fairly physical



Nesting... the great blue heron, from *Waterbirds*

nature). Danny Lyons's *Memories of Myself* (Phaidon, £45) contains diary entries that are touching and instructive, revealing his engagement with his sitters, and accompanying photos of Haiti, Brooklyn and Knoxville, shot mostly in black and white, and bookended by colour sections on Cuba and Cartagena in Colombia. Lyons likes people; the Cubans are incidental in *Atados Al Mar* by Clive Frost (thePicture, £35), a record of the mainly Spanish colonial buildings that once stretched along Malécon Avenue on the Havana waterfront. Taken a couple of years ago at the start of a restoration project, this panoramic sweep is now a historical record as a third of the buildings no longer exist. Steve Bloom's *Trading Places: The Merchants of Nairobi* (Thames & Hudson, £24.95) has a similar continuous strip (along Langata's Kitengela Road) to introduce the exuberantly customised corrugated iron sheds that house shops, hair salons and even something that claims to be a "car wash (adults only)".

Ara Güler's *Istanbul* (Thames & Hudson, £32) and William Klein's *Rome* (Thames & Hudson, £65) are black and white homages to the city each loves. Street scenes, cafés, men chatting are common to both. Güler covers the period from the 1940s to the 80s, while Klein's is a record of a period in 1956 when, as an assistant on Federico Fellini's *Nights of Calabria*, filming was delayed and he was taken about the city by Fellini ("Rome is a movie and Klein did it"), Pier Paolo Pasolini and Alberto Moravia. A different traveller in an

antique land, Georg Gerster's *Paradise Lost: Persia from Above* (Phaidon, £35) is a magisterial sweep from the Caspian sea to the Gulf that was undertaken between April 1976 and May 1978, two decades before Yann Arthus-Bertrand's now ubiquitous *The Earth From the Air* became a bestseller. The tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae and the dimpled roofs of the bazaar in Esfahan are reminders of the awe-inspiring, and alien, beauty of Iran. *We Are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples* edited by Joanna Eede (Quadrille, £30) is an emphatic example of the fact that "we" are definitely not "one". A thoroughly worthy project in support of Survival International, with commentaries from Jonathan Porritt and Robin Hanbury-Tenison among others, this mixes a swath of lively, if sometimes familiar, images of indigenous peoples with some occasionally gnomic quotes: "Fine horses and fierce eagles are the wings of the Kazakhs."

Few photographers can equal Jane Bown's back catalogue. In *Exposures* (Guardian Books, £30) the most successful portraits seem to be those of writers, such as Jean Cocteau (clutching a Siamese cat) and Samuel Beckett, or painters (Graham Sutherland, looking mysterious), who do not perform professionally. The actresses, rock stars and opera singers are simply too practised at being in the camera's eye. Jessye Norman, whom Bown photographed in 1981, also appears in *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present*, by

Deborah Willis (WW). The most bizarre rep... a poster, from the 18... a torn photographic... a runaway slave. The... beneath it comments... "rather good looking... of teeth", and that sh... been enticed away by... The fierce silhouettes... by Ken Ramsay and o... Anthony Barboza cor... antidote.

Interiors by Yoo (C... offers a snoop inside... and hotel rooms of th... Although at first glan... to be a glossy puff for... designers who work... name, it has thought... ies on how to deal wi... importance of colour... a useful index. It is an... a white-tiled bathroo... bles nothing so much... is plonked in the "Ari... you "Eclectic" or "Bo... "Natural"? This book...

The natural world... better showing than... *Waterbirds* by Theo... Norton, £70), a lavish... study of nesting and... in bird colonies from... the coast of Newfoun... mas Island in the Pac... the little blue heron... noddy prance across... cate, balletic legs, wit... and pithy notes bring... into perspective: "Th... ibis is a baritone honk... say, sounds like the h... Chrysler."

Dogs in Vogue: A C... Chic by Judith Watt... £40) is a reminder th... British who are dotty... Americans were the... first edition of Vogue... use of man's best frie... able accoutrement. F... endpapers in hounds... is a dog-lover's deligh... raphers, from Cecil B... Newton (who hated b... tract to Vogue: "the u... of my life"), were per... pooches - the slinky... was an early favourit... that Vogue isn't alwa... women and clothes, ... ing portrait of a lugu... Hitchcock, taken for... Christmas issue in 19... paper, while Susan, h... terrier, looks on quiz...

To order books with free UK... service on 0330 333 6846.