



Octavia Spencer, Emma Stone, Viola Davis, and Bryce Dallas Howard in *The Help*, photographed by Brigitte Lacombe.

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

As Kathryn Stockett, a struggling novelist, was trying to get her first book, *The Help*, published, her best friend, Tate Taylor, acquired the film rights and began work on the screenplay. After being rejected by more than 60 literary agents, *The Help* was finally published in 2009 by Amy Einhorn Books and Putnam and spent more than 100

weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Set in Jackson, Mississippi, during the early '60s, the book examines members of the affluent white community and the black women who work for them.

This August, DreamWorks will release the film version, adapted for the screen and directed by Taylor. Emma Stone stars as Eugenia

"Skeeter" Phelan, a recent college graduate and aspiring writer who returns home and decides to write a book about the experiences of the maids and nannies who raised her and her friends. Viola Davis stars as Aibileen Clark, and Octavia Spencer co-stars as Minny Jackson, with Bryce Dallas Howard as the town's queen bee, Hilly Holbrook. —KRISTA SMITH

HOT TYPE

The 2000s, music critic Simon Reynolds argues in *Retromania* (Faber and Faber), should be dubbed the "Re" decade: the age of revivals, reunion tours, and slavish sequels, of sampling and mashups, reissues, and fetishistic commemorative box sets. Is imagination dead, as Reynolds fears, or did someone just slip it a roofie? In the same groove, Western culture's crippling obsession with celebrity and the hazards of mass media and technology drive the late J. G. Ballard's fiction. With the posthumous publication of *Millennium People* (Norton), the father of cyberpunk goes out with a Ballardian

bang. In the key of family: Sapphire picks up where *Push* stopped with *The Kid* (Penguin), the story of Precious's son. Michael Sims goes back to Zuckerman's farm, to weave *The Story of Charlotte's Web* (Walker). In *The Suspension of Time* (Milkweed), 44 writers, performers, and composers chart the universe

contained in Simon Dinnerstein's *The Fulbright Triptych*, an evocative modernist, figurative portrait of father, mother, and child—a tableau, a landscape, a still life, a meditation on the creation of art, inspiration, influence, and the family.

The murder of an attractive but chilly coed at an elite private school ensnares the entire community in Charlotte Bacon's *The Twisted Thread* (Hyperion). Alice LaPlante's riveting *Turn of Mind* (Atlantic Monthly Press) assumes the shifting points of view of a woman suffering from dementia who is suspected of killing her best friend. Anthony M. Amore and Tom Mashberg catalogue history's most notorious art heists in *Stealing Rembrandts* (Palgrave Macmillan). —ELISSA SCHAPPELL

Carเมลu Giuraru pens the history of the *Nom de Plume* [Harper]. Alison Thompson documents her relief efforts abroad in *The Third Wave* [Spiegel & Grau]. Paul Farmer surveys Haiti After the Earthquake [PublicAffairs]. Two society girls go west in Dorothy Wickenden's *Nothing Daunted* [Scribner]. Georgia O'Keefe and Alfred Stieglitz correspond in Sarah Greenough's *My Faraway One* (Yale). Gully Wells remembers Mama and The House in France [Knopf]. Jason Zinoman goes for the Shock Value [Penguin]. Paul Collins executes *The Murder of the Century* (Crown). Wayne Koestenbaum feels our pain in *Humiliation* (Picador). Ben Mezrich depicts Sex on the Moon [Doubleday]. Christopher Turner gets turned on in *Adventures in the Orgasmatron* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Craig Kelllogg showcases top-drawer antique Dealer's Choice homes [Architecture/Interiors Press].

Untitled, 1992, by Donald Judd, from *Malевич and the American Legacy*, by Yve-Alain Bois [Prestel].



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Hardy Amies suits, from *Icons of Men's Style*, by Josh Sims (Lourence King).