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 ***The Grammar of Television Production by Desmond Davis***  
**(review)**

Ray E. Knight

Leonardo

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REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

B00k.Y171 of colour photography to illustrate the author's designs is excellent, highlighting the harmonious rhythms possible in string designs. In contrast, Fig. 68 shows a poor design for the method and certainly does not merit full page treatment. Similarly, the book jacket design is weak, giving an experienced eye the feeling that various parts have been brought together without considering the overall effect. Shell Carving: History and Technique. Carson I. A. Ritchie. Barnes, Cranbury, N. J., Thomas Yoseloff, London. 1974. 298 pp.. illus. \$10.00, f4.00. Reviewed by Winefride Wilson\* Ritchie can always be relied upon to ferret out most of the relevant information about his chosen subjects and, when he describes techniques, he has usually practised them himself or watched other craftsmen at work. One cannot help wondering if such industrious research might not be better employed in a more worthy cause than she karving. Although I have throughout my career fought against the disparaging epithet of 'minor' as applied to any art form other than painting and

sculpture, I think that it can fairly be used of the crafts described and illustrated in this book. It seems a waste that so much time and consummate skill should have been squandered on such fussy and restless elaboration. Untampered with, the forms of shells are beautiful and mother-of-pearl is a perfect lining for an oyster shell; but no more hideous form of decoration was ever devised than a papier-mâché tray or a lacquer screen inlaid with nacre. It is astonishing to learn what risks men have incurred in diving for this meretricious material. The book may be lacking in aesthetic appeal, but its sidelights on history, geography, anthropology and zoology are enthralling. Shells have performed utilitarian functions as razors, scrapers, polishers, surgical instruments, cups and other utensils; they have been prized as fertility symbols; they have been burned to make lime and they have been used as money. Shell carving developed around 3000 B.C., but as a material for inlays it seems to have been superseded by ivory from about 1600 B.C. and did not really regain favour in the West until the late Middle Ages. I was interested in the microscopic examination of the so-called Royal Standard of Ur and of a gaming board from the same site. Tortoise-shell is the noblest of shells and seems to have inspired better taste in the craftsmen who worked with it, perhaps because its comparatively large scale offers fewer temptations to 'Lords Prayer on a sixpence' feats of virtuosity. As examples of popular art, the Dutch folk carvings (p. 140) have a rather endearing charm quite lacking in the convict work from New Caledonia, which is nevertheless an interesting rediscovery on Ritchie's part. I was surprised to find no mention of the use of nautilus shells in neji and incense-boats, but perhaps these were omitted because they usually owed their decoration less to carving than to their precious metal mounts. The 'Entry into Jerusalem' is not one of the iconographical series known as the Stations of the Cross, as stated in the caption facing p. 124. Boules de verre were used by other craftsmen besides ivory carvers and lace makers, as can be seen from many late medieval and Renaissance woodcuts and engravings. My husband once tested this device, using a brandy balloon, and found it quite effective. The semi-circular bench recess, called a grelle by the Dieppe ivory carvers, is not peculiar to them; it is used by goldsmiths and silversmiths who traditionally make a three-legged stool from the cut-out lunette of wood. The taquet is called a board-pin in England and a skin stretched underneath collects filings and sawings of precious metal. The textual errors in this book are so numerous that I began to wonder if the proofs had ever seen a reader. Sun Pictures: The Hill-Adams on Calotypes, David Bruce. Studio Vista, London, 1973. 247 pp., illus. Paper, £2.95. Hill and Adams on Photographs. Graham Ovenden, ed. Academy Editions, London, 1973. illus. £3.50. Reviewed by David Haberstich\*\* \*2 West St., Ditchling, Sussex. England. \*\*Div. of Photographic History, Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum, Washington, DC 20560. U.S...

of colour photography to illustrate the author's designs in effect on light-lighting the lacquerwork rhythms possible in string designs. In addition, Fig. 66 shows a poor design for the method and certainly does not merit full-page treatment. Similarly, the book jacket design is weak, giving one's eye a general idea of the feeling that minor parts have been brought together without considering the overall effect.

**Shell Carving: History and Technique.** Gordon I. A. Macle, Rachel Crabborn, N. J. Thomas Vinesoff, London, 1974. 295 pp., illus. \$10.00, £4.50. Reviewed by **Winifride Wilson\***

Ritchie can always be relied upon to ferret out most of the relevant information about his chosen subjects and, when he describes techniques, he has usually practised them himself or watched other craftsmen at work. One cannot help wondering if such industrious research might not, in better employment in a more worthy cause than shell-carving. Although *PEARL* has, throughout, been fought against the disparaging epithet of 'shell' as applied to any thing other than a shell and its products, I think that it can fairly be said, of the book's design and illustration in this book, it seems a waste that so much time and commendable skill should have been squandered on such flimsy and restless elaboration. Unimpressive with the forms of shells are beautiful and mother-of-pearl is a perfect lining for an outer shell but so more hideous form of decoration was ever devised. Just a page or two, any of a language screen-printed with a simple illustration to show what risks men have incurred in diving for the merchandise is preferred.

The book is lacking in aesthetic appeal, but its sidelights on history, geography, archaeology and technology are interesting. Shells were perforated with fine fanciful patterns, scrolls, pinheads, complex instruments, cups and other utensils; they have been pierced a delicate symphony; they have been buried to make lime and they have been used as money. Shell carving developed around 2000 B.C., but as a material for objects it soon is to have been superseded by ivory from about 1000 B.C. as I did not really begin to flourish in the West until the late Middle Ages. I was interested in the micrographs, a description of the so-called Royal Standard of 15 and of a garter's band from the same time.

For shell is the matter of shells and seems to have inspired never more in the craftsmen who worked with it, perhaps because its comparatively large scale offers fewer temptations to 'Lord's Prayer on a sixpence' than of virtuosity. As examples of popular art, the Dutch folk carvings (p. 140) have a rather enduring charm as to looking in the correct work from New Caledonia, which is especially an interesting reference to Ritchie's part. I was surprised to find no mention of the use of shells as a substitute in wood, stone, horn, but perhaps these were omitted because they usually used their decoration into to carving them in their precious metal remains.

The 'History into the world' is not one of the cartographical series known as the Normans of the Cross, as stated in the caption facing p. 124. *Shells de orte* were used by other craftsmen besides ivory carvers and lacquer makers, as can be seen from many late medieval and Renaissance woodcuts and engravings. My husband concluded this does not only in the way but also and found it quite effective. The semi-circular bench rest, called a *gros* by the Dieppe ivory carvers, is not peculiar to them, it is used by goldsmiths and silversmiths who traditionally make a three-legged stand from the cut-out handle of sword. The *gros* is called a board-pin in England and is skin stretched underneath collect things and sawings of precious metal.

The textual errors in this book are so numerous that I began to wonder if the proofs had not seen a rack.

**Sun Pictures: The Hill-Adamsen Calotypes.** David Bruce Smith & Vicky, London, 1973. 247 pp., illus. Paper. £2.95. Hill and Adamsen Photographs, Graham Goodwin, ed. Academy Edition, London, 1973. illus. £7.50. Reviewed by **David Holmwood\*\***

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David McCloskey Hill and Robert Adamsen were the fine photographic artists to be studied seriously by the art historian the rich Stewart. Indeed, many critics consider them the first artists of the medium, so far as together fitting that their work has experienced a resurgence of interest and acclaim during the last several years. Not only have prints by Hill and Adamsen appeared on the auction block and in galleries with some regularity, but a number of articles and monographs have begun to study the previously rather badly available literature. *Sun Pictures* is an excellent publication, against which the second book suffers by comparison.

The remarkable partnership between the painter Hill and the chemist and photographic technician Adamsen lasted only from 1843 until Adamsen's early death in 1848. They produced calotypes (paper negatives yielding paper prints) of a style and quality that reflect an aesthetic sensitivity to the technical limitations of the medium. The pairing of their creative subjects was managed in such an ingenious manner that a calculated but convincing unselfish emerged, despite the lengthy exposure times, which contrasted with the quasi-predictable rigidity found in the majority of the daguerreotypes of the period. In only 12 pages of introductory text, Bruce gracefully and concisely discusses their artistic achievement, places it in the context of the Scottish art and culture of the period, denotes the technical background of the then-new photographic invention, answers the apparent relative critical failure of each of the partners to the work, provides biographical data, describes the circumstances to which jointly produced the Hill-Adamsen photography and collaboration with Adamsen and suggests the sociological and documentary value of the work beyond its visual impact. Forty thoughtful captions accompany the reproductions, describing scenes and recording circumstances under which they were photographed and identifying portrait subjects with some biographical detail.

In Goodwin's book, Marina Henderson's introduction is fascinating and a lack of attention to detail, such as the incorrect hyperonym of William Henry Fox Talbot's name, gives the impression of an unduly hasty compilation. For the reproductions, Goodwin provides titles of only very few words, frequently omitting even the names of well-known subjects. He offers a picture book, with a minimum of text, and perhaps in this regard it is moderately successful, because the captions, of which there are 88, seem generally superior in their shapeliness and richness to those in *Sun Pictures*. However, Bruce reproduces 130 pictures and therefore has much more information, both verbal and visual. *Sun Pictures* is a superb, immensely useful publication.

**Ferns and Twines: A Photographic Portfolio.** Ned Harris. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1973. 102 pp., illus. Paper. £0.95. Reviewed by **Michael Thompson\***

Ned Harris is a beachcomber whose camera does not pass over beach or river, forest, only industrial. The camera permits him to collect not just objects and textures but ideas, situations. In a museum, in a wood, in a factory yard, he looks for unusual objects. Particularly fascinating to him are modern man-made products such as bottles, paperboard boxes, toys, etc., either as incongruous elements in scenes or in close-up views of them after they have undergone transformation in the sun. Tax forms and test-tubes of optical geography, astronomy and built landscape are not missed.

The book is probably intended for those already committed to the subject and for students, for he includes the maximum number of photographs in the available space. The book is not beautiful, but it and the book by P. Brundage Toews (New York: Dover, 1966), *Book Review, Leonardo* 5, 261 (1975) complement each other and are useful for reference.

**The Grammar of Teleskopic Production.** 3rd ed. Desmond Davis. Revised by Mike Wootley, Harris & Jenkins, London, 1971. 60 pp., illus. 11.75. Reviewed by **Ray E. Knight\***

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