I always read the catalogs of exhibitions I see, but just as important are the catalogs of shows I miss. If it’s done right, these books can be every bit as engrossing as a museum presentation — and these days, in a global art world where none of us can catch every show, they offer an essential guide to cities and institutions abroad. Here are the art books I’ve spent the most time with this year, with art from Mexico to Russia, West Africa to East Asia — plus, if you’ll indulge me, one novel.

‘DAIDO MORIYAMA: RECORD’ Edited by Mark Holborn (Thames & Hudson). Between 1972 and 1973, the tenacious Tokyo photographer Daido Moriyama published five issues of his own magazine, which featured indistinct, gloomy images of motorcycles, subway grates and Tokyo at night. Unexpectedly, Mr. Moriyama revived the zine in 2006, and this striking book collates the early black-and-white images, shot with his trademark graininess, with new street photography from New York, Morocco and a Tokyo transformed.