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**Two News Books for the Japanophile: “Drainspotting: Japanese Manhole Covers” and “Idle Idol: The Japanese Mascot”**

*MBP adds two more titles to our popular selection of distinctive Japanese subculture books*

New York, NY – May 5, 2010 – Mark Batty Publisher announces the latest additions to its ever-growing collection of unique books about Japanese subcultures. Japan’s visual history is one of unparalleled beauty and design, which today inspires a stunning and surprising array of subcultures, ranging from matchbook art, bento boxes, graffiti, colorful manhole covers and 3D mascots.

***Drainspotting: Japanese Manhole Covers***

The first book to document this distinctive aspect of contemporary Japanese visual culture, *Drainspotting* showcases vibrant photographs of Japan’s city-sanctioned manhole covers, or *manhoru*. Today, nearly 95% of the 1,780 municipalities in Japan sport their very own customized manhole covers, with imagery that evokes each region’s cultural identity, from flora and fauna to landmarks and local festivals.

As a testament to the Japanese aesthetic sensibility in all aspects of life, these pieces of urban art are colorful, intricately designed, and unique to their locale - from Kanto to Chūbu to Disneyland Japan.

“This innovative method of brightening up a locality and cheering up its citizens proves how public art can impact everyday life, no matter what form it takes,” says author **Remo Camerota**. “And the humble manhole cover is no exception.”

***Idle Idol: The Japanese Mascot***

Whether plastic or fiberglass figures modeled after celebrities, deities, animals, corporate logos, or good luck charms, Japan teems with 3D mascots that are used to attract attention and sell products. In *Idle Idol*, discover antique advertising characters, modern mass-produced mascots and unique one-off designs, with photographs and stories by brothers **Edward and John Harrison**.

*Idle Idol* presents these quirky and cute figures in all of their plastic glory, divided into thematic chapters: Hero, Legend, Spokesperson, TV Star, Entertainer, Chef, Doctor, Meeter and Greeter. Ranging from Japanese myths to corporate identities and sporting fan fanaticism, each idol’s story is unique: from Totoro and Pipo-Kun, to Ultraman and the ever-popular Doraemon, Hello Kitty and Astro Boy.

Keep up with the authors at their official companion website: <http://idleidol.net/>

Other MBP titles sure to appeal to the Japanophile include: *Vending Machines: Coined Consumerism*; *Face Food Recipes* and *Face Food: The Visual Creativity of Japanese Bento Boxes*; *Crazy, Wacky Theme Restaurants: Tokyo*; *Graffiti Japan* and *Matchibako: Japanese Matchbox Art of the 20s and 30s*; as well as the forthcoming *Menko, Fuzz and Fur*, and *Kicks Japan*.

About *Drainspotting's* Remo Camerota

Tokyo-based Remo Camerota is an award-winning artist, filmmaker, and animator. His work is often political and social, attacking government issues, flash-in-the-pan fads, and censorship, aiming to create interesting concept-based communications indicative of contemporary visual trends occurring locally and globally.

He is also the author of *Graffiti Japan* and the forthcoming *Menko: Art of the Japanese Card Game*, both for MBP.

About *Idle Idol's* Edward Harrison and John Harrison

*Idle Idol* was written and photographed by What What, a design and interactive studio comprised of twins Edward and John Harrison. When not taking photos of mascots they design, illustrate, animate, and make badges. John lives in London while Edward lives in mascot heaven; Tokyo.

About Mark Batty Publisher

Mark Batty Publisher (<http://www.markbattypublisher.com>) is an independent publisher dedicated to making distinctive books on the visual art of communicating, showcasing the visual power and innovation of contemporary culture in all of its varied poses. Today, the visual comes at us from more places than ever, and its dissemination is faster and more advanced every year. Books from Mark Batty Publisher capture this acceleration on the pages of every book. Affordable, well designed, thoughtfully created, and produced to last, MBP books are artful products that readers want to hold onto forever.

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*Drainspotting*

**Page Count: 96 pages**  
**Size: 6.25 x 6.25 inches**  
**Format: Casebound**  
**Publication Date: June 2010**  
**Price: \$14.95**  
**ISBN: 978-0-9820754-7-0**

*Idle Idol*

**Page Count: 144 pages**  
**Size: 5.5 x 7 inches**  
**Format: Casebound**  
**Publication Date: June 2010**  
**Price: \$16.95**  
**ISBN: 978-0-9841906-1-4**

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