Delve Deeper into Iris
A film by Albert Maysles

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Penny L. Talbert, MLIS, and Rebecca Lawrence of Ephrata Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary Iris.

Iris pairs the late documentarian Albert Maysles (Grey Gardens, Gimme Shelter), then 87, with Iris Apfel, the quick-witted, flamboyantly dressed 93-year-old style maven who has had an outsized presence on the New York fashion scene for decades. More than a fashion film, the documentary is a story about creativity and how a soaring free spirit continues to inspire. Iris portrays a singular woman whose enthusiasm for fashion, art and people are her sustenance. She reminds us that dressing — and indeed, life — is nothing but a grand experiment. "If you're lucky enough to do something you love, everything else follows."

ADULT NONFICTION

Boman, Eric. Rare Bird of Fashion: The Irreverent Iris Apfel. London: Thames and Hudson, 2007. As the art critic Roberta Smith commented in The New York Times, 'Before multiculturalism was a word, Mrs Apfel was wearing it.' More than ninety sumptuous colour plates, photographed by Eric Boman, show off a selection of extraordinary outfits on wittily posed mannequins, styled by Iris Apfel as she would wear them, while detailed captions describe all elements of the ensembles, including their designers, fabrics and accessories.

Cohen, Ari Seth. Advanced Style. Brooklyn, NY: powerhouse Books, 2012. Replete with grace and style, Cohen provides readers with contemporary images and succinct biographies of everyday fashion icons over the age of 60. His text is a refreshing reminder that art, creativity and style occur at any age.


Halbreich, Betty. I’ll Drink to That. New York: Penguin Books, 2015. Eighty-six-year-old Betty Halbreich is a true original who could have stepped straight out of Stephen Sondheim’s repertoire. She has spent nearly forty years as the legendary personal shopper at Bergdorf Goodman, where she works with socialites, stars, and ordinary women off the street. But, Halbreich’s personal transformation from cosseted young girl to fearless truth teller is the greatest makeover of her career.


ADULT FICTION


Norwich, William. My Mrs Brown. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016. During an estate inventory a modest 66-year-old Rhode Island woman sets on a quest to acquire a garment designed by Oscar De La Renta and subsequently changes her life.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Amoruso, Sophia. #GIRLBOSS. New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2014. #GIRLBOSS proves that being successful isn't about where you went to college or how popular you were in high school. It's about trusting your instincts and following your gut; knowing which rules to follow and which to break; when to button up and when to let your freak flag fly.
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Barcella, Laura. Fight Like a Girl: 50 Feminists Who Changed the World. San Francisco: Zest Books, 2016. By providing a brief history of feminist activism in the U.S., Barcella introduces readers to the icons that played an important role in shaping the feminist cause. The book includes short biographies of a diverse group of women, including the stories of trans, black, Middle Eastern, Native American and many other women.


Gevinson, Tavi. Rookie Yearbook One. New York: Razorbill, 2014. This compilation of both fun and serious feminist literature includes contributions from Lena Dunham, Zooey Deschanel, David Sedaris, and more. By addressing the issues that many young women face—from love to street harassment—this book provides an alternative to the destructive advice that young women often get.

Selby, Todd. The Selby Is in Your Place. New York: Abrams Books, 2010. Conceived when fashion and interiors photographer Todd Selby began taking portraits of dynamic and creative people—authors, musicians, artists, and designers—in their home environments and posting them on his web site. Nosy by nature, he wanted to see how personal style was reflected in private spaces. Each profile is accompanied by Selby’s watercolor portraits of the subjects and objects from their homes, and illustrated questionnaires, which Selby asks each sitter to fill out.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Ashburn, Boni. I Had a Favorite Hat. New York: Abrams, 2015. The narrator of this charming picture book loves her summer hat, but as the seasons change, her hat isn’t always appropriate for every occasion. She must use her crafting skills to turn the hat into a work of art, perfect for every season and holiday.


Matthews, Elizabeth. Different Like Coco. Somerville: Candlewick Press, 2007. Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel was always different. And she vowed to prove that being different was an advantage! Poor, skinny, and orphaned, Coco stubbornly believed that she was as good as the wealthier girls of Paris. Tapping into her creativity and her sewing skills, she began making clothes that suited her (and her pocketbook)—and soon a new generation of independent working women craved her sleek, comfortable, and practical designs. Now an icon of fashion and culture, Coco Chanel continues to inspire young readers, showing just how far a person can come with spunk, determination, and flair.


Spinelli, Jerry. Stargirl. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2000. Stargirl, a teenage girl, enters high school after years of being homeschooled, but she is quickly shunned by her peers for her nonconformity. In this book, Spinelli explores issues of peer pressure, individualism, loyalty to oneself, and love.