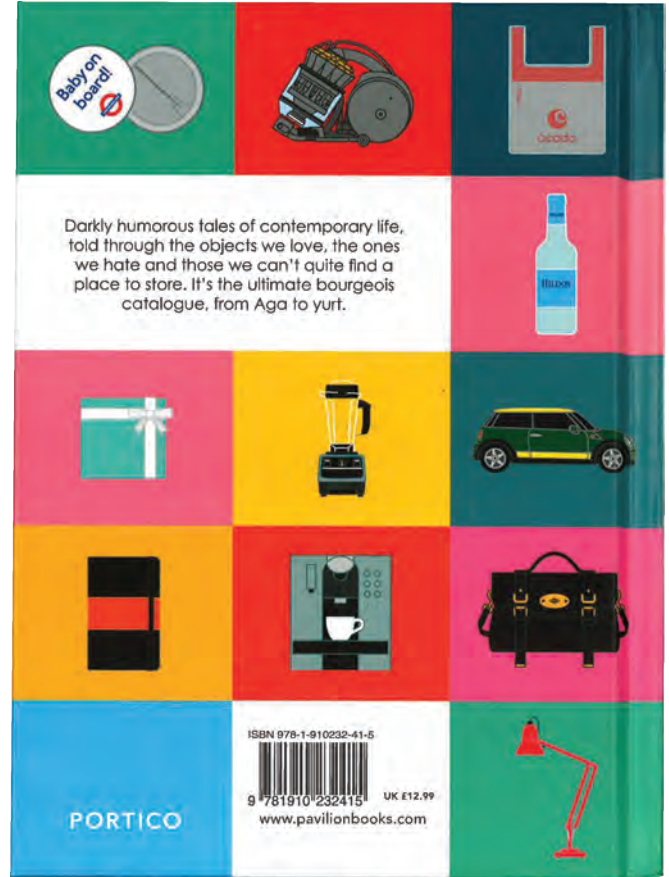


HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN 100 MODERN OBJECTS

Middle-class stuff (and nonsense)

Francesca Hornak



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PORTICO



SOPHIE THE GIRAFFE

Jo met Tamsin at NCI. The group gathers weekly at Costa with their three-month-olds, marshalled by Jo's emails, titled 'Playdate and cake!' She arrives first with Archie, chubby with formula and grinning gummily from his Bugaboo throne. Tamsin, a fan of 'baby-wearing', cradles Isla-Rose in an Ergobaby papoose. The child occasionally peers out with alarmed eyes. Both infants clutch Sophie the Giraffe.

Jo follows Gina Ford, and reminds a shattered-looking Tamsin how she got Archie to sleep through at 10 weeks. 'Gina says they need to learn to settle themselves,' she says, head tilted sympathetically. Tamsin gushes that she's just 'too soft' to leave Isla to cry, after reading 'all the research' on the neurological damage it causes. She confides that she co-sleeps to aid bonding, enjoying the horror that flashes over Jo's face.

Jo agrees that 'happy mummy equals happy baby', and that since she 'really needs her sleep', they had to have routine. Tamsin fumbles for a breast to stifle Isla's frantic screams. 'The trouble is Isla's just such a livewire,' she says. 'And so sociable. She's already babbling!' Jo removes Sophie's foot from Archie's nostril. 'Yeah,' she says, beatifically. 'We're lucky this one's so chilled.'