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Comics: Between The Panels



Synopsis

This lavish volume takes an in-depth look at the history of comics in a manner decidedly unlike the dry timelines and profiles of most reference-style titles. Via alphabetical entries, the authors take an irreverent, often hilarious, behind-the-scenes look at creators, companies, characters, collectors, and conventions, pulling no punches when exposing some of the darker sides of the industry. Containing countless stories gleaned from over 150 interviews of comics industry veterans, *Comics Between the Panels* is loaded with more than half a century of insider information on the talented and eccentric creators who forged the comics industry and art form. Features 670 illustrations and photos — including dynamic and bizarre cover art compiled under such curious headings as Atomic Bombs, Death with Indignity, Gorillas, Headlights, Hooded Menaces, and Skulls.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arrived with a different cover

This is an encyclopedia of comic book artists, writers and characters, jam-packed with history and little-known facts. It's the kind of book in which you can lose yourself for many happy hours.

It's a very subjective encyclopedia, with some blanks (don't speak about some old legends from the comics).

I know, that's a mouthful of a headline, but as a person who has been practicing and purchasing any and all material on comic art, I'm qualified: this book is fabulous. Somehow, the authors got the artists to speak candidly about their art, their craft, their swipe files, and the manner in which they were treated by the industry. As such, it's a primer for burgeoning cartoon artists on what to do and what not to do (sign over the rights of your creation). It's also very witty. Lastly, there are many well chosen samples, all beautifully reproduced in color on excellent paper stock. Get it, you will not be disappointed!

Please, please don't let the two negative customer reviews ("Marred by negativity" and "Too anecdotic, too unbalanced") dissuade you from finding and enjoying this wonderful book on comics. The more you love comics, the more you will love this book; and the more you know about comics, the more you will appreciate the information presented in this "encyclopedia," brilliantly edited by Jackie Estrada. The book's encyclopedia format deliberately mocks the serious, all-inclusive reference-book model. Entries are arranged alphabetically, yes, but the subject headings are often quite arbitrary and whimsical. Comics: Between the Panels is NOT intended as a comprehensive history of comics, nor has it any pretensions of being one. It is a bit of an insider's take, since co-author Mike Richardson is president of Dark Horse Comics, and a lifelong comics enthusiast and student of the medium. He is well acquainted with many of the comics creators profiled in these pages, and the entries contain excerpts from hundreds of interviews featuring personal recollections, reflections and minutiae that make the hobby come alive. Gossipy? Absolutely. The book has a very contemporary slant, and takes a geek's-eye view of the comics industry, comic collecting, comic book grading, and creators' peccadillos. If the tone is often breezy and irreverent, it is nonetheless witty, well-written, and sometimes poignant, as when recounting the tragic falling-out between longtime collaborators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. It can also be wickedly snarky, as in the entry for early mail-order comics mogul "Rogofsky, Howard." The book is chock-full of color plates, sidebars, photographs and drawings. It's visually exciting and invites casual browsing, with an attractive page layout and design. First published in 1998, the book holds up very well seven years later, validating Duin & Richardson's rather jaded view of the industry as a whole. Plus ça change... Still, it is a sense of joyful appreciation that comes through most clearly in this book. Comics: Between the Panels is an indispensable book for anyone who loves the medium, warts and all.

Despite being one of the best written books about the medium, Comics Between the Panels has a

sometimes TOO impartial look over comic book history's main events/actors. Though this makes it unique (and quite daring, I would say), a strange "hatred" against the "establishment" of comics makes this for moments a book for union workers of the field rather than for fans. Anyway, it looks really great and has very entertaining stories I never read about. I just can't forgive the authors for giving Batman around 15 lines, and giving unknown writers nearly two pages. Also, STAN LEE ROCKS! Fun to read and fun to look at, only excessively "political". Anyway, a must-have for a real lover of comic books and the magic behind their creation.

500 pages and 670 illustrations about comics might seem like a good deal for comic lovers, but think again before you invest in this encyclopedic volume, unless you have an obsession for details and writers of the 30s. No matter if you know a little about every Marvel, DC, EC and Image Comic book ever published, you will still find plenty of information about rare titles and anecdotic situations of the industry you never heard before. That on the positive side. On the negative side, it is not very encouraging to read only 50 or so pages about your favorite topics, and spend the rest of the book learning about rare cult titles and "legend" writers. Also, the book is a little or too much unbalanced. There are six pages, four illustrations and two text boxes devoted to the story of mile high comics. On the other side, there is less than one page dedicated to The Fantastic Four, one of the key titles to understand comic book history. Spider Man is mentioned only nine times in 500 pages, while Frank Frazetta (who?) appears 46 times. Jimmy Hendrix is mentioned one time. Good for a library. Too much detail for the average reader.

I have many reference books of comics but this new one is one of the best. It looks like an encyclopedia but it is rather background story book. Writers really know the comics reading and collecting world and they have made numerous interesting interviews. I have read some of the stories every night before going to bed - and I think I will do so for long. There are 500 pages, which include many of the best cover reproductions and other nice comic art. I found very much information about EC art and artists, which are my main interests. I think that every comics lover should have this lovely book.

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