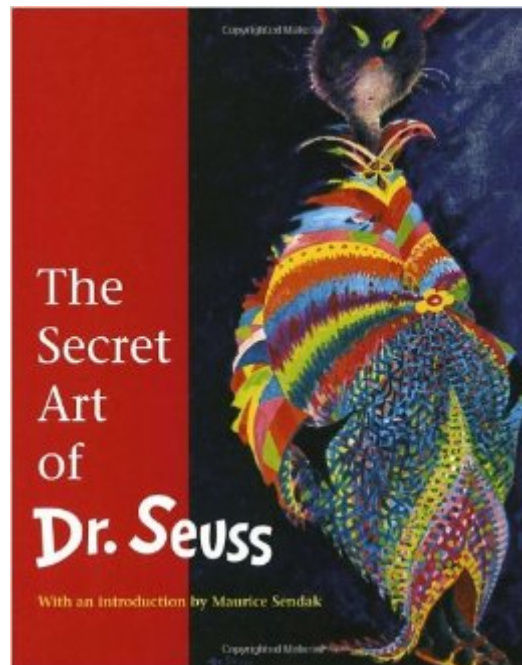


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The Secret Art Of Dr. Seuss



Synopsis

These fabulous, whimsical paintings, created for his own pleasure and never shown to the public, show Geisel (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss) in a whole new light. Depicting outlandish creatures in otherworldly settings, the paintings use a dazzling rainbow of hues not seen in the primary-color palette of his books for children, and exhibit a sophisticated and often quite unrestrained side of the artist. 65 color illustrations.

Book Information

Hardcover: 95 pages

Publisher: Random House; 1st edition (October 3, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679434488

ISBN-13: 978-0679434481

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.6 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Best known of course for his dearly beloved children's books, Theodor Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss) was also an supremely talented artist, as this collection of his paintings and sculptures attests. Far more detailed than the illustrations of his books, the paintings in particular range from gently witty to absolutely dazzling. Many great painters use the canvas to tell a story; Seuss goes a step farther. Each of his paintings are like a portal into an amazing little world. "Cat Detective in the Wrong Part of Town" evokes a seedy 50's mystery story, but with cats. Cats, by the way, are a major theme of this collection. They pop up everywhere, doing everything: Dancing the night away in "Cat Carnival in West Venice", playing pool in "Cat from the Wrong Side of the Tracks", even taking a shower in "Cat in Obsolete Shower Bath (Study)". Seuss packs a lot of feeling into his subjects; "Lonely" sums up isolation about as well as anything I've seen, and several untitled pieces each show one lone bird flying serenely above a stormy sea. My favorite painting is entitled "I Dreamed I Was a Doorman at the Hotel del Coronado". With its dreamy South American feel and bright colors it

reminds me of an old Technicolor movie from the forties. I can't recommend this book enough, the paintings are just wonderful. I never get tired of looking at them. A complete must-own for any Seuss fan, or just any lover of the whimsical. A+

While few would contend at the genius Seuss put into his writing, with distinctive meter, use of words and rhyme, sometimes overlooked is the artwork that illustrated this strange world. Theodor Geisel was an accomplished illustrator. Unfortunately, most of what we saw of his work was only what was published in the books. This volume introduces you to a wider range of his work. There are not only his paintings, but his studies in 3-D of some of the whimsical cross-bred characters that were his hallmark. But there is also a sense of the adult audience in these - with jokes and puns aimed squarely above the kid level. For many of us, we delighted in Dr. Seuss as children, and delight with our children today, but this book shows us that Seuss was speaking to everyone, not just the kids, and we are richer for it. An impressive collection of artwork to make you smile.

I have been fascinated with Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel) since I was a kid and my Mom and Dad would read Seuss stories to me. I had an interesting perspective of Seuss from a young age, though. My father, an English Professor, was writing his Doctoral dissertation on "Transformational Grammar in the Works of Dr. Seuss". In this treatise (which involved a good bit of math, it turns out: my Dad's undergraduate education was in Metallurgical Engineering) my Dad approached Seuss from a very adult point of view. Even after growing up, I would continue to marvel at the seeming simplicity of the Seuss tales, while grasping the incredible complexity underlying them all. Needless to say, my late father deserves credit for initially exploring these facets with me. With that background, I had been looking forward to a compendium of the Seuss "adult" art. This is it, and it is glorious. These pieces are at once similar stylistically to his animation for kids (although I really do believe that kids of all ages love Seuss), but on the other hand are much earthier and adult. To my delight many of these pieces feature cats, but some of the cats are decidedly not friendly, witness, for instance "Cat from the Wrong Side of the Tracks" (1964). I am particularly fond of his more avant-garde paintings like "Impractical Marshmallow-Toasting Device", a piece that I would not have been able to identify as a Geisel if not for the telltale handwritten inscription. There is no doubt that Dr. Seuss is for adults as well as children (I also recommend checking out his World War Two political cartoons), and I am delighted to finally have this book (with introduction by the wonderful and whimsical Maurice Sendak) available to see what Ted Geisel did in his spare time. I recommend this book highly.

I love the art work, but the image resolution in this book doesn't allow for the intricate details of Dr. Seuss pieces. As examples, in "Lion Stroll" you can't make out the faces of the lions and in "Green Cat in Uleabourge Finland Subway" you can barely distinguish the figure let alone recognize it as a cat. If you saw the "Dr. Seuss & The Art of Invention" exhibit, don't expect the images in the book *The Secret Art of Dr. Seuss* to capture the full magic of the originals. I am hoping that a higher quality book is available or in the works.

One of our local art galleries had several choice examples of the art of Dr. Seuss, not just the cartoon drawings that made their way into his wonderful books, but the paintings and other artistic efforts presented here as "The Secret Art of Dr. Seuss." This work extends from a series of four pencil and watercolor illustrations about Peru done in 1925 to an ink drawing entitled "The Economic Situation Clarified" in 1975. That means a half-century of art the beginning of which predates his first publication, "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street," by a dozen years. As I said, these are more than just paintings, including the heads he did in the 1930s, including my favorite, the Blue-Green Abelard. The commonality of all this artwork is the fertile imagination of Ted Geisel. The creatures in these illustrations will seem familiar (you will spot Horton and other beloved visages) but what will strike you is the way Geisel started incorporating brilliant colors and abstract designs into his artwork. I am not pretending that this is serious artwork, but just that Geisel was serious about his art. He was not a great artist, just a beloved artist, who could twist and tangle pictures the way he could words and rhymes. We appear to have run out of his books, but "The Secret Art of Dr. Seuss" give us something "new" to enjoy. You might even find something you would like to get a copy of and put up on the wall in the children's bedroom.

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