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The Art Of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos



Synopsis

This full-color volume collects the best art from Fantasy Flight's acclaimed Call of Cthulhu collectible card game, as well as from 25 years of Chaosium's legendary line of Call of Cthulhu role-playing game products. In these pages are glimpses of the most terrible beings ever to exist, whose very names are spoken of in whispers, if at all: Mighty Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth the Crawling Chaos Nyarlathotep and He Who Shall Not Be Named. Strange and alien races swarm here: the Fungi From Yuggoth, the star-headed Elder Things, the slithering Formless Spawn and awful chthonians. The Art of H.P. Lovecraft's The Cthulhu Mythos contains hundreds of full-color pieces of art, from fan favorites such as Patrick McEnvoy, Michael Komarck, Jean Tay, Thomas Denmark, John Gravato, Aaron Acevedo, James Ryman, Felicia Cano, Linda Bergkvist and dozens more. Once you see these blasphemous visions, you will never forget them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don't get me wrong, most of the art in this book is quite stunning, with only a few amateurish pieces mixed in. The problem is, the book should be more accurately titled "The Art of the Call of Cthulhu Collectible Card Game," as 90% of the art seems to come from that source. Unfortunately, that means pages of art that is not Mythos-related at all, portraits of human characters who exist only in the CCG game world and not in the larger Lovecraftian literary circle. Some of this is evocative for the time period and provides decent visuals for CoC role-players, but I do feel we would have been better served by more monsters and fewer gangsters and flappers.

I love art and SF fantasy illustration and I am an admirer of Lovecraft's writing skill and imagination. The cover art on the book is great! The interior work does not suffer for quality, so why the low review? Because I found the book itself disappointing, it lacks inspiration. I have seen most of the images online. I don't doubt that many of the artist are fellow fans of Lovecraftian lore and imagery, but they (as far as I know) got paid to paint these illustrations for the CoC card game, hardly a paeon to the muses. To be fair, I was warned by several of the reviewers of what the contents amounted to, it was the reviewers who were gushing about a book with a fair amount of mediocre art work that I could have paid less heed to. If you are desperate for Cthulhu related images, get it. If you are merely curious, let it pass.

When I think of Lovecraft, the first thing I think of is of course his nightmarish creatures. Unfortunately, while there are some great paintings of them in this book (including the amazing cover art!), I was very disappointed to find that most of this book was in fact uninteresting paintings of flappers and gangsters and such. -- In other words human secondary characters created for the Call of Cthulhu CCG. I was expecting much more in the way of monsters and cults, etc., but the vast majority of the paintings have little to do with this. Still, the ones that I did like were so good (my fave was the painting of Shub Niggurath) that the book still earns a passing 3-star rating from me. If buying this book, be prepared to get only a very minimal creature fix, along with a large dose of the irrelevant.

When I first saw this on the bookshelf, I saw the title and thought the book would be a comprehensive collection of art inspired by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft. Since the publisher is Fantasy Flight Games, it comes as no surprise that there is ample art from the Call of Cthulhu collectible card game published by the selfsame company. The art is quite fine, but there is disappointment upon realizing that the art is almost exclusively from the card game, with a few images from game books of the makers of the Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game, Chaosium. Other reviews have pointed out that since these games have created their own settings and characters and situations, many of the art pieces featured in the book actually have little to do with Lovecraft outside of being set in the 1920's, and it's true. The irony is that some mythos-specific art from the games were not included. Furthermore, since many of the illustrations were created to appear in an area smaller than a playing card, the reproductions can only be blown up to a certain size before the illusion is lost. That being said, there are a lot of paintings to look at since they can fit several to a page, and many are quite nice.

Considering the increasing public awareness of HP Lovecraft and his infamous Mythos, I fully expected an 'art' book having a much wider variety of Cthulhu Mythos creatures represented as I had found in the Barlow's Guide to the Cthulhu Mythos (I think I may be a bit off on the title but I also think this book is out of print). In any case, a surprising number of the prints offered are of normal humans, presumably characters in a Mythos role playing game (I'm basing this assumption on the credits given to each picture). The painting/drawings of the Mythos creatures range from the nicely done to the uninspired with the later being the most frequent. I really can't see myself recommending this book unless you happen across it in a 1/2 off bin.

I just received this for a Christmas present from my sister-in-law and her husband (who told me they flipped through a few pages, got freaked out, and wrapped it up to hide it). I enjoy almost all of the art, although not all of it is to my taste (but about 80% of them are to my liking), and a few works seem only vaguely related to the Mythos (but many are still good and disturbing). Many of the works are outstanding, and I really enjoyed seeing the various looks or takes on a few of Lovecraft's more well-known beasties, such as Cthulhu himself. It's nice to know that there are so many disturbing methods of depicting a vaguely anthropoid body with an octopoid head covered in tentacles. Contrary to one of the other reviewers here, I appreciated the gangster and flapper section, since I often play the Call of Cthulhu RPG in the 1920's, and these images will make some great reference material for me and my players. The book comes in hardcover, has slick pages with lush colors, is well laid out (the two-page spreads are almost all uniformly insanity-inducing, and I mean that in a good way), and there are bios of almost all the artists in the back, many of whom have webpages (which was great, as I am attempting to contact one to see if I can get a print of one of his paintings that I saw in the book). There's also a LOT of artwork in here, so I had to study this a few times to take them all in. My complaints are minor: some of the art slides onto the amateurish side, and much of those lesser quality pieces look like they were concept art for a computer game (slightly cheesy). About half of the human forms in here aren't realistic (even when they are deformed hybrid-humans), but then, you get this book for the monsters, not the people. So whether or not you are a fan of the game or simply the Mythos of Lovecraft, I highly recommend this book, which is a steal for the price.

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