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Striking Images: Vintage Matchbook Cover Art



Synopsis

From the 1920s to the 1950s, a small but useful advertising gimmick spread like wildfire into the purses, pockets, and kitchen drawers of millions of Americans. The give-away matchbook was one of the most pervasive means ever found of putting promotional images into the hands of the public. Small and disposable, matchbooks were not only a highly successful marketing tool for a wide variety of products, they were also the repositories for a wealth of anonymous design creativity. Fantasies of ocean travel, bathing beauties, regal leisure, and tropical locales adorned the covers, as did hand-lettered typography, stylized illustration, and eye-catching color. This red-hot celebration brings the ubiquitous matchbook's art to life in all its pulp panache and visual zing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Monte Beauchamp is the founder and publisher of the visual creativity annual BLAB! and editor of New & Used BLAB! (0-8118-4026-3). His work has appeared in numerous publications, and he is the recipient of five New York Festival Awards for excellence in print communications. He lives and works in Chicago.

I think all the books I've seen on this subject merit high praise, but *Striking Images* stands out for its layout and focus on the artwork itself. The juxtaposed covers allow for many great samples to be consumed by the eyes at once, while other blown up images assume a Pop Art painting quality. So do not mistake this for a book on vintage matchbooks; this is about the art on the cover. At this price

I feel this book's a deal considering the design and thought devoted to it by Mr. Beauchamp - well done! I've encountered his unique passion and perspective on other ephemeral subjects in various issues of Blab!, another book I've collected and highly recommend!!

I love this book, easy to flip through, colorful and quality, nicely edited images. my one year old son loves the transportation section!

This book is absolutely awesome and far better than I ever expected! I spent over an hour looking through it. There is so much to see, great variety, wonderful art. I won't go on and on, but I don't think anyone would EVER be disappointed in this book. I LOVE it!

The photos in this book are amazing, but the binding on the book fell apart!

Even if you don't care about matchbook art or matchbook collecting, this book is highly recommended. It collects these beautiful pieces of pop culture ephemera and presents them as art, which they truly are. Each page packs a graphic punch that will knock your socks off. Not only are the endless variety of matchbook designs visually stunning, but Mr. Beauchamp treats the medium itself as part of the piece, enlarging the images so the texture of the paper and even the impression the ink makes become art. A very tasteful and classy treatment for this disposable art form. (I was going to say "unmatched" but I stopped myself.) The selected artworks run the gamut from restaurants to mascot characters to cars to strip clubs. There's a whole chapter devoted to inspiring, art deco imagery from World War II, any one of which would make a great poster. Given the limitations of the medium and the printing budget, many of the matchbooks are designed with just two or three colors, making this a textbook for the graphics arts student. In an era in which any ink jet printer can reproduce millions of colors, it's fascinating to see what yesterday's artisans did with such a limited palette. Some of the matchbook covers are close to actual size while others are blown up to fill the page. Given that there are as many as four pictures on some pages and the book totals 272 pages, there are in excess of 500 pieces of art reproduced here. It's impossible to find a favorite among so many gems. If you're looking for a good summer book to enjoy at the beach, prepare yourself to read "Close cover before striking" a few hundred times. But if you want to soak your eyeballs in America's rich graphic heritage, Striking Images is a must have.

As the back cover says 'Striking Images is a must see collection of vintage covers...More than 500

images inside!' Good enough for me because I love books about popular visual culture and this one could join the other three I already have about match art. However I was rather disappointed in the book because of its production. The main problem is that every matchbook has been reduced to a square of either the front or back and then presented butted up (mostly) four to a page so they hardly look like matchbooks at all. It's as if a book about stamps had all the perforations cut off and then joined together. Many are shown whole page, making them too big and over-emphasising the crude printing quality. The book really ends up looking like a collection of badly printed, colorful and exuberant, advertising graphics. Though divided into eight sections there are no page numbers except on the chapter openers and with the covers crammed into all the pages it is annoyingly difficult to find a particular section. It could have looked so much better like the earlier Chronicle's Matchbook Art by Yosh Kashiwabara. Here many of the matchbooks have their front and back shown but the main thing is that they have plenty of page space surrounding each one. Another book: Close Cover Before Striking: The Golden Age of Matchcover Art (Recollectibles) is a handsomely designed title with thirteen chapters of well presented covers. Both books show how fascinating these throw-away bits of art are. ***FOR AN INSIDE LOOK click 'customer images' under the cover,

If a TOP 10 list of graphic ephemera collections were ever assembled, STRIKING IMAGES would get my vote for the #1 spot. Unlike one or two reviewers who have criticized the editor for doubling and quadrupling the size of the tiny matchcover images, I found Beauchamp's "easy-on the eye" approach not only refreshing, but respectful to me as a reader because I no longer need to squint my eyes to enjoy such images. Upon finishing the lavishly printed 272-page volume, I purchased two more copies to hand out as gifts. It's that GOOD.

This is the greatest book, and so inspiring. From goofy characters to pinup girls and more. Perfect size and a steal for the price. On par with a Taschen release, you can rest assured Beauchamp has the passion. I'm so glad I got this book- Grab it.

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