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Sex, Rock & Optical Illusions



Synopsis

The first career retrospective of one of the defining stylists of the 1960s. The 1960s are known as a decade of social and political unrest: The Cuban Missile Crisis, the struggle for civil rights, the escalating protests against the Vietnam war, the assassinations of JFK, RFK, and Martin Luther King, the formation of radical home-grown organizations such as the Weather Underground. It was also a time of cultural revolution, in music (The Beatles, the Stones, the ascendancy of rock 'n' roll), literature (Ken Kesey, Richard Brautigan, Kurt Vonnegut, et al.), journalism (Tom Wolfe's *New Journalism* and Hunter Thompson's Gonzo journalism), films (Mike Nichols, Bob Rafelson, Sam Peckinpah), and the heady conflation of Fine Art with the Pop Art movement (Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney). Comics were undergoing their own revolution and no one epitomized underground comix and psychedelia more than Victor Moscoso, whose posters for such bands as The Grateful Dead, Big Brother & The Holding Company and the Steve Miller Blues Band, stand as enduring works of art and instantly recognizable icons of their time. Moscoso (along with fellow artists Rick Griffin, Stanley Mouse, Wes Wilson, Alton Kelley and Peter Max) revolutionized the poster aesthetic and defined the visual culture of a generation. R. Crumb invited Moscoso to join the Zap Comix collective in 1968, and Moscoso's work has appeared in every issue from Zap #2 to present. His comix work contrasted with his fellow artists (R. Crumb, S. Clay Wilson, Gilbert Shelton, et al.) by his unique stylization, less confrontational point of view, hallucinatory visual rhythms, and wordless, dreamlike stories. *Sex, Rock 'N' Roll & Optical Illusions* is Victor Moscoso's first major, career-spanning retrospective, from his earliest poster work in 1966 to his most recent graphic experimentation. *Optical Illusions* contains his best posters that advertised bands playing in San Francisco's famous dance ballrooms of the time—the Avalon, the Matrix, and the Fillmore—as well as many of his Zap Comix contributions, and his solo comix work, many in Moscoso's signature color. This wide-ranging career retrospective—Moscoso's famous technique employing "vibrating colors" that he pioneered in his posters is impeccably reproduced with as much fidelity to the original as modern printing can achieve, his black-and-white and full color comix work is collected here for the first time—is an intense, vibrant, and revelatory experience. Full-color illustrations throughout

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Customer Reviews

I've been collecting rock poster books for about two years now, and have been awaiting this book's publish date the entire time. I collect the books, not the posters, because it's cheaper and I don't have the space to collect more than a handful of the real thing. I've got about 30 rock poster books now. Unlike a lot of the other poster books I've purchased, this one features every piece of artwork on it's own page, with no commentary. There's a small blurb about each work at the end of the book from the creator. It's a great way to showcase the work, and I wish more collections opted for the layout. The descriptions at the end don't use page numbers, but image numbers (which don't appear on the page, argh!) which is a minor inconvenience when trying to go back and forth. The color reproduction is excellent. I saw a handful of these at the Boston MFA recently, and the colors in the book are just as vibrant and real as the ones I saw on display. Moscoso is a master of vibrating colors and after image. In one of the forewords of the book (one is by Milton Glaser) it's mentioned that Moscoso only produced 60 "psychedelic" posters in an 8 month period of the 60s. I don't think all 60 of them are represented here (didn't count them), but there were a few I haven't seen in other collections yet. There's a couple of rough drafts used for some of the more famous posters leading up to the finished work. It's a shame that there wasn't more of these, as it helps to demonstrate the process used by the artist in the creation. A great example is the first Junior Wells poster he did for the Matrix. There's a black and white copy before he adds the colors, next to the finished one.

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