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# Magic: 1400s-1950s



## Synopsis

Illusion, enchantment, and wonder: The world's greatest magicians from the Middle Ages through the 1950s — Magic has enchanted humankind for millennia, evoking terror, laughter, shock, and amazement. Once persecuted as heretics and sorcerers, magicians have always been conduits to a parallel universe of limitless possibility—whether invoking spirits, reading minds, or inverting the laws of nature by sleight of hand. Long before science fiction, virtual realities, video games and the internet, the craft of magic was the most powerful fantasy world man had ever known. As the pioneers of special effects throughout history, magicians have never ceased to mystify us by making the impossible possible. This book celebrates more than 500 years of the stunning visual culture of the world's greatest magicians. Featuring more than 850 rarely seen vintage posters, photographs, handbills, and engravings as well as paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and Caravaggio among others, *The Big Book of Magic* traces the history of magic as a performing art from the 1400s to the 1950s. Combining sensational images with incisive text, the book explores the evolution of the magician's craft, from medieval street performers to the brilliant stage magicians who gave rise to cinematic special effects; from the 19th century's Golden Age of Magic to groundbreaking daredevils like Houdini and the early 20th century's vaudevillians. — Text in English, French, and German

## Book Information

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Magic Studies

## Customer Reviews

Beautiful art book containing wonderful poster images and history of magic. Just to clarify some of

the differences between this and the earlier book:1. The original book had 650 pages, this edition has 544.2. This book is also in 3 languages (English, French and German).It still weighs around 14lbs. and is a large format art book. (Page height is nearly 15.5 inches). It's gorgeous, fairly heavy, and I'm happy to have it! Honestly, if I hadn't read about the earlier version of the book I would never guess this was "scaled down". It's still a very impressive book!From

<http://www.wildabouthoudini.com/2013/06/magic-1400s-1950s-released-in-new.html>UPDATE: Re the differences between this and the larger edition, the following is from the editor of the book, Noel Daniel:"The smaller version is meant to offer readers the chance to discover the wonderful world of magic for a great price. To be able to offer a smaller version of the first edition (the larger book) at a trade price, we did need to reduce its physical size, which meant also reducing its page count and therefore the image count. Even though the smaller version is reduced by ca. 150 images of the original 900, it is still a fantastic, illustrated overview of 500 years of magic. This material has never been brought together in this manner before, and much of it has never been published. I spent many, many months personally visiting archives and incredible private collections to select these images from the original 30,000 that I gathered. Both the large and smaller versions are important publishing events in the history of magic.In terms of the images that I cut from the original larger size, of course, it was very hard, as all of the images mean a great deal to me.

If magic is your passion this book will knock your socks off. Lots of bang for the buck here. This is a huge book, choc-full of wonderful, vintage posters and photos. The posters and advertising pieces are all presented in a super-sized format and all in brilliant color. Five hundred and forty-four pages, that's less than a penny a page. At forty bucks you could buy an extra copy to decorate a family room or office. The book is very attractively bound and comes in a sturdy, decorative slipcase and an eye-catching dust jacket (as shown). I must confess, I am not a magic aficionado. I am as fascinated as the next guy at seeing a lady cut in half and put back together or miles of colorful silk scarves appear out of a pants' pocket - but that's not what attracted me to this book. I collect advertising and graphic art and thought this would be a nice addition to my collection. I was not disappointed. Not every image is museum worthy but the few that aren't are the exception. The material on Houdini is particularly interesting and quite extensive. It will take me a while to finish reading this behemoth as the pictures are quite a distraction, but that's not a bad thing. I scratch my head every time I see one of these Taschen mega-books. How do they produce such quality at the prices they do? held up shipment on this book for a while and I am not exactly sure why. My copy was not as tightly bound as some books I own in this oversize format but it otherwise seemed just

fine. A previous comment suggested there was some missing material from this new edition (150 images out the original 900). I never saw the earlier edition and frankly, at my age, another 150 pages would render this book unliftable.

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