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Classic Pin-Up Art Of Jack Cole



Synopsis

This beautifully reproduced selection of quirkily elegant, sensual pin-up art from Jack Cole's 1950s career as the premier Playboy cartoonist shows that there was far more to Cole than his brilliant Plastic Man. In the rarefied realm of classic cartoon pin-up art, nobody did it better than Jack Cole. With his quirky line drawings and sensual watercolors, Cole, under Hugh Hefner's guiding hand, catapulted to stardom in the 1950s as Playboy's marquee cartoonist, a position he held until his untimely death at the age of 43. Jack Cole has been justly celebrated as the creator of Plastic Man and an innovative comic book artist of the 1940s (especially in Art Spiegelman and Chip Kidd's Jack Cole and Plastic Man: Forms Stretched to Their Limits). After finishing his 14-year run on Plastic Man, he found himself looking for something new. According to Cole, his savior was the Humorama line of down-market digest magazines. This girls and gags magazine circuit proved to be the perfect training ground to regain his footing and develop his craft at single panel "gag" cartoons. His ability to render the female form was already without peer. Though he signed his cartoons "Jake," Cole's exquisite line drawings and masterful use of ink-wash is a skill he carried over to Playboy and betrayed his pseudonym. In comparison to his contemporaries, however, Cole was probably Humorama's least prolific artist. Though his images were frequently used for covers, Cole's cartoons were few and far between, with scarcely a single drawing appearing every five issues. Along with a foreword by editor Alex Chun, this volume (originally released in a now out-of-print hardcover edition that now fetches high prices on the secondhand market) collects the best of these hidden gems, including several shot from Cole's stunning original art. Most of these drawings have not seen print elsewhere since their original publication. Illustrated throughout in color and black-and-white

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Customer Reviews

“Classic pin-ups from a giant of the comics field.... Jack Cole was a masterful comic book artist who helped define the golden age of his art form.” - The Village Voice
“The 100 pages worth of cartoons of comely, curvy cuties come culled from low-rent men’s digest magazines of the 1940s and 1950s – now-forgotten rags with happy-go-lucky names like Romp, Joker and Laugh Riot. But Cole’s contributions are visually indelible.” - Rod Lott, Bookgasm
“The top pin-up cartoonist of his generation.” - Forum
“A saucy joy.” - The List
“Cole was a leading figure of mid-20th-century popular culture.” - Terry England

Jack Cole was born in 1914 and died in 1958. Alex Chun is a longtime journalist living in Los Angeles. A former staff writer for the Los Angeles Daily Journal, he is currently a regular contributor to the Los Angeles Times where he covers pop-culture. He also edits a series of art books for Fantagraphics. In his spare time, he collects original cartoon pin-up art and maintains the website www.pinupcartoongallery.com. His books include The Pin-Up Art of Dan DeCarlo (two volumes), The Pin-Up Art of Bill Wenzel, The Pin-up Art of Bill Ward, The Glamor Girls of Don Flowers, The Glamour Girls of Bill Ward, Classic Pin-Up Art of Jack Cole, and The Pin-Up Art of Humorama.

This is the softcover version of the same (ALMOST!) hardcover book released by Fantagraphics in 2004 (if memory serves me correctly). There is VERY little difference in the two versions, each having ALMOST all of the same cartoons, in ALMOST the same order. I probably wouldn't have bought the softcover if the product description had disclosed this fact. BUT, since it was so cheap, I'll just gift it to a friend. They changed the cover, but left the title the same. Fantagraphics just trying to sell more books?? Or, just an "oversight" by the folks here on ? Either way, IF you already have the hardcover version, save your \$\$\$\$\$. BUT, if you don't, by all means purchase this great book. It's a real gem for the price! On another note, I wish Fantagraphics would give Cole a similar treatment as they did for Gahan Wilson by publishing ALL of his output for Playboy (in an absolutely amazing 3-volume set). Now THAT would be something to own, ALL of Cole's cartoons that appeared in

Playboy in one deluxe volume!!! (Hint, Hint, Fantagraphics!!)

Another look at the infamous artist of Plastic Man and other features. I've read a lot about Jack Cole over the years, and I was thrilled to see this release. The man's a master artist, and it's a great look at some of his more hard-to-find work.

Jack Cole was the most under rated pin up artist. He is my favorite and I'm in total love with all his drawings.

Great work but wish all the astonishing color works were in this volume. They all need to be collected. This is a nice start though.

I personally loved this book. I am a huge Jack Cole fan and enjoyed all of the gags in the book. If you are a fan of gag cartoons, don't pass this up.

Fans of Jack Cole's Plastic Man should do themselves a favor and seek this book out. These one-panel gags foreshadow the work Cole would do for Playboy in the 1950's. The line art, is of course, extraordinary but his experiments with ink wash really leap off the page. Cole's gals are breathtaking. As Art Spiegelman noted, "Cole's goddesses were estrogen souffles who mesmerized the ineffectual saps who lusted after them." I admit that I too was mesmerized flipping through the pages of this book. The gags are sometimes weak but Cole himself admitted that after having drawn comic books for so long he had to re-learn the art of the one-panel gag. Fortunately, this period drawing gags for the Humorama line helped him develop the talent needed to become Playboy's pre-eminent cartoonist in the early days. Alex Chun did a good job in condensing Cole's life down to a few pages. Which means more room for Cole's art! A few things to note. The book says Quality Comics later became DC Comics, however, when Quality folded they were actually purchased by DC and absorbed into their line-up. The editorial review above states that Playboy was Cole's last professional gig before his untimely death but in actuality he created the syndicated newspaper strip Betsy and Me in the final year of his life. It was being published in nearly 50 papers at the time of his death.

I wish it was in colors. Only 2 pages are printed in colors. It's sad because his color arrangement is powerful and missing in this book. Still nice to own.

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