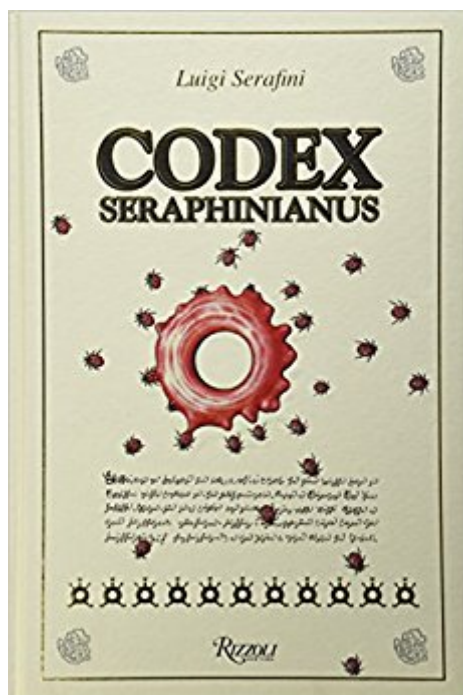


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Codex Seraphinianus



Synopsis

An extraordinary and surreal art book, this edition has been redesigned by the author and includes new illustrations. Ever since the Codex Seraphinianus was first published in 1981, the book has been recognized as one of the strangest and most beautiful art books ever made. This visual encyclopedia of an unknown world written in an unknown language has fueled much debate over its meaning. Written for the information age and addressing the import of coding and decoding in genetics, literary criticism, and computer science, the Codex confused, fascinated, and enchanted a generation. While its message may be unclear, its appeal is obvious: it is a most exquisite artifact. Blurring the distinction between art book and art object, this anniversary edition-redesigned by the author and featuring new illustrations-presents this unique work in a new, unparalleled light. With the advent of new media and forms of communication and continuous streams of information, the Codex is now more relevant and timely than ever. A special limited and numbered deluxe edition that includes a signed print is also available.

Book Information

Hardcover: 396 pages

Publisher: Rizzoli; Pck Har/Bk edition (October 29, 2013)

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 216 customer reviews

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Photography > Other Media > Conceptual #32 in Books > Arts & Photography > Individual

Artists > Artists' Books #43 in Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Art

Customer Reviews

the book really does live up to its reputation: The drawings are in turn hilarious, disturbing, bizarre and, sometimes, just flat-out incomprehensible, but all of them are annotated in Serafini's script. -Dangerous Minds- It's not the sort of thing that easily lends itself to classification, but probably the most accurate way to describe it would be as an encyclopedia of an invented alien civilization-the Codex is still a disorienting and provocative vision of inscrutable otherness. -Slate.com- "Codex Seraphinianus

is an art book in the most direct sense—there are big, beautiful drawings accompanied by indecipherable letterforms—and it is impossible to “read” in a literal way. The text has remained a mystery all these years, and perhaps that’s part of its draw as an art object. FineBooks Magazine “Is the best art book of the year one that is not only impossible for me to review, but one that is probably equally impossible for you to understand? It’s a handsome, hilarious and enduring puzzle that not only features wonderful art in it, but in its entirety captures another kind of human creativity—the encyclopedia, the result of compiling and collecting, and an unlikely medium for artists.” North Adams Transcript “Codex Seraphinianus: History’s Most Bizarre and Beautiful Encyclopedia, Brought Back to Life...a weird and wonderful masterpiece of art and philosophical provocation on the precipice of the information age....Undoubtedly one of the most intricate and beautiful art books ever created.” Brain Pickings “Wow. One of the strangest and most beautiful books ever published.” Faerie Tales “Codex Seraphinianus is in a sense the most elaborate book of doodles ever made. What makes it much more than that is not just the quality of Serafini’s drawings and the superior book-making craft, but its brilliant structure. Part of the genius of the Codex is that there is enough information to be familiar but not enough to make any sense.” Spectrum Culture “The intense strangeness of Codex Seraphinianus belies the joyous feel of the artistry. Even the oddest, most unnerving images are rendered with pastel beauty, and a softness that makes them almost endearing.”

KQED

Luigi Serafini is an architect, ceramist, glazier, painter, sculptor, designer, opera director, set designer, and critic who works in Italy and abroad. In 2007, the Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea in Milan dedicated a successful mostra ontological (ontological exhibition) to him. He has illustrated works by Franz Kafka and Michael Ende.

Italian artist Luigi Serafini’s “Codex Seraphinianus” is a gorgeous illuminated manuscript describing a world of the artist’s imagining. One that’s alien, yet familiar at the same time. The invented language he uses also recalls several all at the same time: Arabic, ancient Greek, and the Burmese alphabet. It demands that the reader take the time to carefully pour over each illustration and line of script in order to glean some insight into this unfamiliar world. Serafini’s description of the creative process recalls a cloistered monk carefully transcribing the mysteries of the universe by candlelight. This is a must-have for fans of the unusual or those who want to add wonder to their lives.

A beautiful art object that rewards infinite returns. It's like a portal to another world, honestly. I read that his intention in creating this book was to reproduce the feeling of being very, very young and looking through a book such as an encyclopedia, when the words are meaningless symbols and your mind can barely comprehend images that aren't directly associated with your tiny understanding of your world. Definitely achieved that effect.

Simply put, Luigi Serafini is a genius... "Genius" as defined by the quality and complexity of his works. Although Pulcinellopedia was fairly underwhelming to me, the Codex that predates it is clearly his magnum opus. As such, it deserves the attention it has received, and although incomprehensible, deserves a place in every school library where kids will become inspired by its imagery: I, for one, am drawn towards it more intensely than any phone or computer I own, and I'm growing up in this so-called "Computer Age"! [5/5]

This might be my favorite thing in my apartment. It never gets old and actually seems even crazier every time I get into it. It's truly a masterpiece and should be recognized as one of, if not THE, most important books of the last 100 years. It's a constant source of inspiration, humor, self-reflection and amazement. I don't know if there's enough words to describe a book with words that you can't read. Rizzoli did an amazing job on this repress and now it's possible for regular people to finally own a copy.

The drawings here are clever, thought-provoking, disturbing, sometimes incomprehensible. But the presentation of these images in conjunction with the book's (quite verbose) alien script is really quite fascinating. At times the text seems repetitive, with patterns that tempt me into the rabbit hole of trying to decipher the text. My copy is the 2013 Rizzoli (non-deluxe) edition. The publisher seems to have heard the complaints and used a better sticker on the back cover. Mine came off easily with no chemistry or particular care required. The paper does cause some problems as suggested by other reviewers. It's like corduroy with width on scale with some of the smaller squiggly letterforms, making them difficult to "read" (or rather to feel like you are reading). Also you can see through the pages to see a bit of pre-image of the next two pages. But these are small distractions. Otherwise the book looks and feels great. Some reviews have complained that their copy arrived damaged. Seeing that I got in touch with customer service, and begged to have the book treated carefully during packaging. This seems to have worked (thanks, Jeff) as mine arrived without dents or dings.

With the precious mood of an amanuensis, the Italian Luigi Serafini (Rome, 4 August 1949) use 30 months to write and draw your particular encyclopedia on your particular imaginary world. In December 1978, the architect finished the Codex Seraphinianus, which would publish in 1981 the aristocratic scholar Franco Maria Ricci. In this gem find in a fictional language and alphabet, about 400 interesting pages on topics as varied as botany and zoology, the art of machines and vehicles or ethnic groups in the world and its ways. This book is, in the end, an object of study for both cryptologists essential to designers, by the unusual set of issues and how the author portrays. I started to read it: I do not hear anything, but it is exciting.

Well.. can't say I've ever seen a book like it.. some sorta.. alien world codex I reckon. Not sure if it is worth \$80, but.. I am glad to own such a weird ass book. It'd be nice to know what the hell is written, although it sort of makes it more mysterious that way.. I suppose? Try not to look through it all at once. I've seen some weird s***, but.. too much of this book will melt your brain. haha! Enjoy!

This is an amazing book. It's pricey, but hands down one of the coolest things I own. I learned about it in an Art History class in college. I even did a research paper on it. I knew I had to have a copy of my own. It is more of an artbook than anything else. The surreal imagery is incredibly clever. I wouldn't actually keep it on the coffee table for fear that something would get spilled on it, but it's an excellent conversation piece.

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