

The Art of Noir



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著者:Muller, Eddie

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From Publishers Weekly

Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* touted as being "In All Its Fury and Violence...Like No Other Picture Since 'SCARFACE' and 'LITTLE CAESAR'!" Bay Area mystery writer Muller (his novel *Shadow Boxer* will be reviewed in the Dec. 9 issue of PW) describes the various styles employed by the studio system, all designed for, in the charming vernacular of theater owners, "putting asses in the seats"; the idiosyncratic promo for *Sudden Fear* has Joan Crawford staring luridly over a male figure's shoulder at a miniaturized Gloria Grahame embracing Jack Palance. With a clear love for and

expertise in his subject matter, Muller tracks the evolution of the form through 275 posters (338 full-color illustrations in all), many of them full-page plates, which look nothing short of smashing in the book's oversize, 10 x 14 format. A series of foreign posters reveal how artists outside the studio system were able to convey a great deal of the films' psychological complexity in a single, giant image. The variety, style and color here, representing films familiar (The Postman Always Rings Twice) and forgotten (The Big Tip Off, starring Cathy Downs), will be enticing to any fan of noir or mid-century American history.

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From Booklist

It is hard to quibble with this gorgeous movie-poster album. Fans of the gritty '40s and '50s flicks that made the reps of Humphrey Bogart, John Garfield, Alan Ladd, Lizabeth Scott, Gloria Grahame, and Ida Lupino, and burnished the already risen stars of Joan Crawford and Barbara Stanwyck, will roll in the 10-by-14-inch volume like cats in 'nip. Collector Muller is suitably systematic about his passion, displaying the book's riches in chapters on various movie studios' poster styles, poster styles outside the U.S. (the Swedish examples are unnervingly up-to-date looking), noir poster iconography, the biggest noir stars, the biggest noir writers (Hammett, Chandler, Cain, and a bevy of obscure screenwriters), and the best noir directors, among whom a director of photography, chiaroscuro virtuoso John Alton, is given pride of place. All this is great, so why kvetch? Well, the text could have been more thoroughly fact checked, edited, and proofed. There are many tiny errors and grammatical gaffes, and one caption ends not only midsentence but midline. (Ah, quit readin' an' lookit th' pitchas.) Ray Olson

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