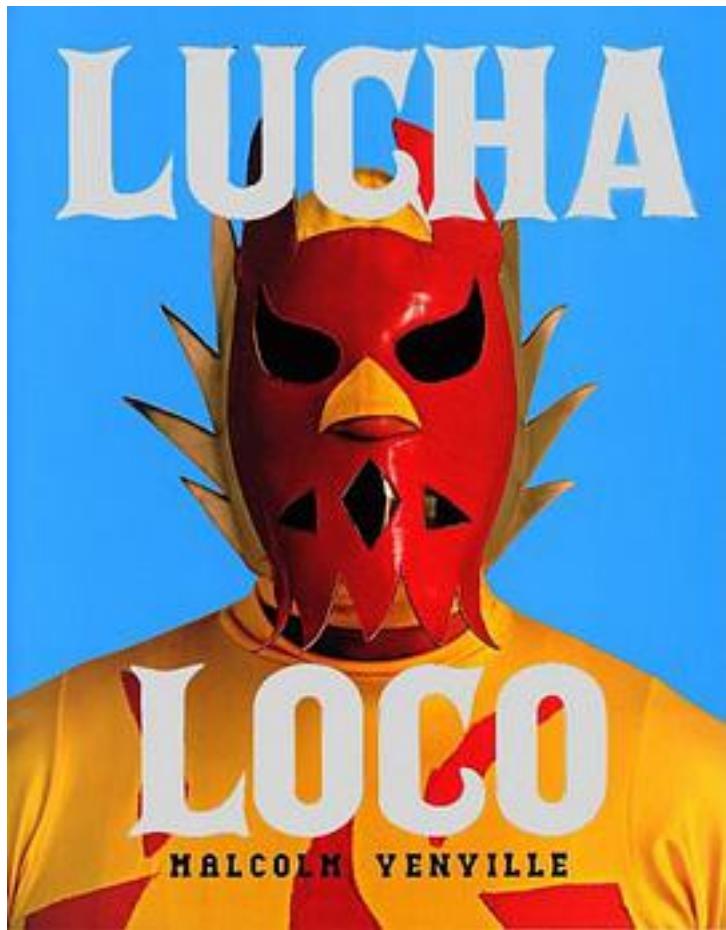


Lucha Loco



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Malcolm Venville's rare deluxe Mexican wrestling volume, now available in an accessible, popular format. Lucha Libre, or "free wrestling," is a cultural phenomenon—renowned not only for the wrestler's high-flying moves, but also for

the mythology of their personas. These masked figures (a ritual dating back to Aztec culture) treat their masks—and the identities they embody—as sacred. El Santo, the first luchador pop star, rarely took off his mask even in retirement, and was eventually buried in it. It is such a significant part of the sport (and the performance) that the removal of an opponent's mask in the ring is grounds for disqualification. Malcolm Venville fell in love with the sport after catching a show in Mexico and spent several weeks photographing and interviewing wrestlers outside the ring in a small portrait studio. Alongside each portrait is the wrestler's fighting name and a signature quote from these interviews. Among the subjects are an accountant and a doctor by day—but Super Pinocchio and Astro Boy by night. They offer such gems as: "American wrestling is more about the lighting," "My character is the fastest in Mexico, but not when I'm making love," and "I combine wrestling with stripping but wrestling's my passion." The result is an even more hilarious and colorful look at this already entertaining spectacle—part sport, part soap opera—as well as a window into the life of a luchador, a world normally shrouded in mystery.

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目录:

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