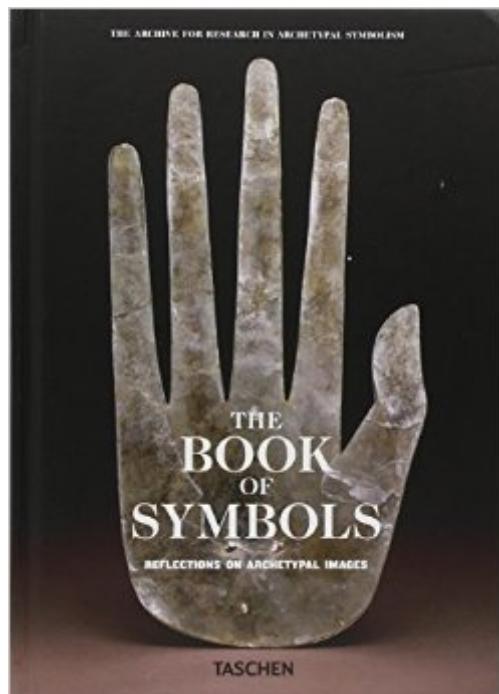


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The Book Of Symbols: Reflections On Archetypal Images



Synopsis

Handbook of visual experience: An exploration of symbols and their meanings throughout history

The Book of Symbols combines original and incisive essays about particular symbols with representative images from all parts of the world and all eras of history. The highly readable texts and over 800 beautiful full-color images come together in a unique way to convey hidden dimensions of meaning. Each of the c. 350 essays examines a given symbol's psychic background, and how it evokes psychic processes and dynamics. Etymological roots, the play of opposites, paradox and shadow, the ways in which diverse cultures have engaged a symbolic image—all these factors are taken into consideration. Authored by writers from the fields of psychology, religion, art, literature, and comparative myth, the essays flow into each other in ways that mirror the psyche's unexpected convergences. There are no pat definitions of the kind that tend to collapse a symbol; a still vital symbol remains partially unknown, compels our attention and unfolds in new meanings and manifestations over time. Rather than merely categorize, The Book of Symbols illuminates how to move from the visual experience of a symbolic image in art, religion, life, or dreams, to directly experiencing its personal and psychological resonance. The Book of Symbols sets new standards for thoughtful exploration of symbols and their meanings, and will appeal to a wide range of readers: artists, designers, dreamers and dream interpreters, psychotherapists, self-helpers, gamers, comic book readers, religious and spiritual searchers, writers, students, and anyone curious about the power of archetypal images.

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Customer Reviews

I agree with everyone that this is an exemplary physical book to display, hold and browse through. Unfortunately, the content is not up to what's advertised. The articles are short and have a scattershot, unscholarly feel. All entries receive two or four pages. As a result, the most basic, important symbols, e.g., sun, moon, rose, fountain, receive embarrassingly scant coverage. Egg gets two pages. Obviously you can't even scratch the surface of these major symbols in two or three paragraphs. Other articles such as knee, coyote, bicycle, and kangaroo, get two pages each and are mixed in among the more important ones; so flipping through the book gives no sense of relative weight and hierarchy. A number of key symbols and terms, such as Trinity, caduceus, tarot, sephiroth, crucible, receive no articles or references. There is no article or index entry for either hero or journey. Each article gets 1-3 illustrations, but few if any have references in the article text and many lack captions altogether. A closer look at the book shows a complete lack of scholarly credentials. The "About the Authors" page lists only the archives from which the images were taken; no individuals are listed there as editors or authors. The "Contributors" page that follows gives only the contributors' names; there is no mention of anyone having so much as a college degree much less a publication or academic position. The Bibliography contains fewer than fifteen items, nearly all of which are encyclopedias and archive catalogs. Carl Jung's collected works are mentioned as one citation, but Jung himself is hard to find -- there's no article on him and his name does not even appear in the index.

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