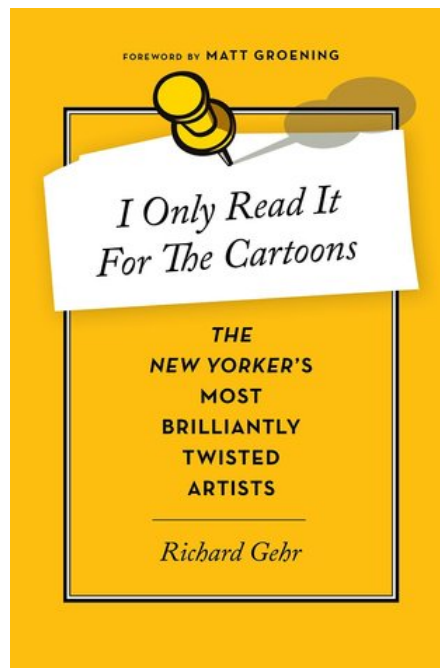




I Only Read It for the Cartoons: The New Yorker's Most Brilliantly Twisted Artists

Richard Gehr

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Available for the first time to The New Yorker's one million-plus readers: a volume dedicated to the individual careers of the magazine's cartoon superstars.

Widely considered to be the pantheon of single-panel cartooning, The New Yorker cartoonists' styles are richly varied, and their personal stories are surprising. For example, did you know that Arnie Levin is a seventy-three-year-old former Beatnik painter with a handlebar mustache and a back decorated by Japan's foremost tattoo artists?

Gehr's book features fascinating biographical profiles of such artists as Gahan Wilson, Sam Gross, Roz Chast, Lee Lorenz, and Edward Koren. Along with a dozen such profiles, Gehr provides a brief history of The New Yorker cartoon itself, touching on the lives and work of earlier illustrating wits, including Charles Addams, James Thurber, and William Steig.

I Only Read It for the Cartoons: The New Yorker's Most Brilliantly Twisted Artists Details

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Lori says

I would give this a 3.5. I was a goodreads first reads winner of this book. Richard Gehr devoted this book to the talented artists that write cartoons for the New Yorker. There are twelve biographies of the talented artists. Each have 15 to 20 pages. the artists are Lee Lorenz, Sam Gross, Roz Chast, George Booth, Edward Koren, Charles Barsotti, Arnie Levin, Victoria Roberts, Gahan Wilson, Jack Zeigler, Zachary Kanin, and Robert Mankoff. I learned from reading the min bios that each artist has their own style. own sense of humor. this was pretty interesting. It may be more interesting to those who are devoted readers of the New Yorker. and may be more familiar with the artists than I am. I was a bit disappointed because I was hoping there would be more samples of the artists work in this book. If someone is a fan of the magazine they may enjoy this book.

Brent says

What a thrift store find: this 2014 volume of profiles captures the cream of the current crop of panel cartoonists. I had to begin by jumping in to the profile of (my personal favorite) Gahan Wilson, the greatest of macabre cartoonists. The book begins and ends with profiles of (former New Yorker cartoon editor) Lee Lorenz and (current New Yorker cartoon editor) Robert Mankoff. The small spot illustrations made me want to revel in larger doses of each cartoonist's work. But these fine chapter-length profiles have much to amuse and entertain.
Highly recommended.

Lily says

Perfectly up my alley, but not nearly enough actual prints of the cartoons themselves! The interviews with the cartoonists varied on how interesting they were. Some of them were real characters, but others just didn't lead that interesting of a life. My breakdown for each chapter would have been: 10% bio (unless there's something really indicative of their artistic style), 40% analytic explanation, 50% cartoons themselves. Instead there were about three cartoons per chapter with a ton of not that interesting information about pen brands and parents' birthplaces. Oh well! It was fun nonetheless!

Kem Mirsky says

I spent a fair amount of time in my childhood reading my father's collections of New Yorker cartoons from the '40's on and have had my own subscription to The New Yorker since the '70's, so I was lucky enough to be able to "see" almost all of the cartoons described in the book. The profiles are interesting and often funny, especially when the author doesn't get in the way. It's not as laugh-out-loud funny as "The Rejection Collection" (especially Volume 1), but it's worth picking up.

Ariadna73 says

Interesting an very funny cartoons. It is true: I only read this book for the cartoons. Here are some I extracted. WARNING: the last one is really and absolutely gross. It made me laugh, but can be extremely offensive, so if you feel offended by sexually explicit images, please refrain from opening the spoiler.

WARNING: the following cartoon was never published and I can tell why! It made me laugh, but it could be really offensive and traumatizing, so please do not open the spoiler if you are easily offended by sexually explicit images
(view spoiler)

LeeAnn says

I enjoyed each of the biographical essays in this book. Each artist was given their due time in the spotlight, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Lots of 'laugh out loud' moments for me. Thanks, GoodReads, for the chance to read this biography. It's high time cartoonists got their day in the art world limelight. I think I especially enjoyed the section on Charles Barsotti. Such a multifaceted character (as are most of the artists portrayed in this book).

Susan (aka Just My Op) says

I'm a fan of biographies and memoirs, even those about people who have slipped under my radar. And I'm a fan of New Yorker cartoons, so this book, subtitled The New Yorker's Most Brilliantly Twisted Artists, should have been right up my alley.

I'm afraid it just wasn't interesting to me, and I found myself skimming through it just to finish it.

Sure, some of the cartoonists are interesting people. But the book was not in-depth enough about any of them to give me a real sense of their lives. There were some interesting anecdotes. While some of the cartoons may be twisted, the artists themselves are generally not too out of the ordinary.

On the other hand, there was way more than I wanted about what pencils or pens or brushes the artists used, how much they were paid for cartoons, who accepted their first cartoons.

There are some cartoons in the book, always enjoyable, and descriptions of even more.

Perhaps this is a good book for budding cartoonists who want to know about getting into the field. This seems like a niche book, with a fairly limited niche. As much as I wanted to like this book, I'm afraid I don't

fit into the niche.

I was given an advance readers copy of this book for review.

Biblio Files (takingadayoff) says

I enjoyed this book but I would hesitate to recommend it to anyone who isn't a cartoonist or someone who is especially interested in how New Yorker Magazine cartoonists work. There are some cartoons in I Only Read It For the Cartoons, but it's mostly interviews with New Yorker cartoonists.

Most of the cartoonists profiled here are family types, living in the suburbs, leading rather boring, if pleasant, lives. They don't seem to be especially amusing to be around and if you didn't know they were cartoonists, you'd never guess. So the interesting bits of the interviews have to do with how they got their starts in cartooning, how they come up with ideas, what drawing materials they use. The cartoonists profiled in this volume are long time professionals -- aside from one cartoonist in his thirties, all the others are in their fifties and older. Peter Arno, George Booth, Roz Chast, Victoria Roberts, and others spill the beans about their creative processes.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter is on Robert Mankoff, a New Yorker cartoonist who is now the cartoon editor for the magazine. He describes how he and the editor (David Remnick) choose around sixteen from among the thousand or so cartoons that are submitted to the magazine every week. It's a fairly brutal process and while amateurs may submit their cartoons, it's a long shot.

Ollie says

I'd be lying to you if I said that I read the New Yorker for anything other than the cartoons. Sure, they're awfully corny and gag-y at times, but at the same time, it's so great when a single panel lands so well that you're still laughing at the joke days later.

I Only Read it for the Cartoons is a simple, straightforward, and awfully delightful book. Its format is nothing revolutionary: each chapter looks into the history and legacy of a certain New Yorker cartoonist, their beginning, what inspires them, how they approach cartooning, their favorite contributions throughout the years, and even their chosen medium. As one can expect, these cartoonist are unique and characters in their own right, and Gehr's biography successfully focuses on the important or noteworthy parts that make up who they are as cartoonists. And as an amateur cartoonist myself, I was very impressed with what some of these cartoonists brought to the pages of the New Yorker over the years (like George Booth, who I have to learn more about ASAP).

It sounds like a debasement but it really isn't: I Only Read it for the Cartoons isn't going to win any National Book Awards, but as an easy and informative read on the New Yorker and its cartoonists, you'll get a kick out of it.

Dan Lalande says

A dozen sweet-tempered profiles of The New Yorker's most iconic cartoonists - Wilson, Chast, Koren, etc. - formulaically addressing their backgrounds, methodology, and philosophy. Given their unique, hard-scrabble professional milieu, you expect eccentricity and cynicism - but each subject comes across as even-tempered and self-satisfied. Added bonus: samples of their work that went bafflingly unpublished.

Binit says

Unlike the title suggests, this book is rather light on New Yorker cartoons and more about the cartoonists themselves.

James G. Auchter says

Interesting But Not What I Expected.

I thought it would be a collection of cartoons from the New Yorker. While it had cartoons, the book was really a series of biographies of better known cartoonists from the New Yorker, like Booth. Still uninteresting read.

Geoff says

This was a perfectly fine set of biographies that competently laid out the lives and journeys of several prominent living cartoonists whose work is (or was) frequently in the New Yorker. But I don't know enough of each cartoonists' work to find the bios engaging and there weren't enough cartoons printed to forge that emotional connection for me.

Barry Smolin says

As a longtime and avid reader of the New Yorker, one of those subscribers who, like author Richard Gehr and millions of others, digs into each issue by flipping through to see the cartoons first, I laud the insight this volume provides into the creative minds that conceive and execute the single-panel format with such precision and humanity and subtle weirdness. I was unaware of just how intensely competitive an endeavor it is to get a cartoon placed in the magazine, with even the most famous and oft-published artists racking up hundreds of rejections from New Yorker editors. Reading about the agony each artist endured, especially Roz Chast's painful description of sitting across from Lee Lorenz while he thumbed, poker-faced, through her work each week, brought home just how grand and triumphant an achievement it is to have one's work see print in the esteemed publication. Gehr has chosen to make each biography a snapshot not just of the artist's origins and influences and often roundabout paths to cartooning in general and publication in the New Yorker in particular, but also of the artist's home life, dealings with New Yorker editors and editorial policies, experiences getting published in other magazines, and, perhaps coolest of all, the chosen work materials, from nibs to erasers to inks to paper stock. All 12 profiles are expertly rendered by Gehr, though I was most drawn to the cerebral wit and offbeat wisdom of Sam Gross, Roz Chast, Gahan Wilson, and Arnie Levin. I also love how, fittingly, as disparate as all of these artists' lives are, what they all share in common is the city itself, New York, whose inhabitants are the magazine's namesake (even if they don't currently live

there) because the mystique and mundanity of the place definitely informs the vision of all twelve of these gifted creative minds, attributes Gehr captures admirably and with just the right amount of edge. I was so enthralled I read it in two sittings. Bravo!

David Rickert says

I don't know why you would write a book like this and not include a bunch of cartoons. Interesting, but not the great book it could have been.
