



# ARTHUR RACKHAM: A Life with Illustration

*James Hamilton , Arthur Rackham (illustrator)*

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**ARTHUR RACKHAM: A Life with Illustration** James Hamilton , Arthur Rackham (illustrator)

The definitive and sumptuous biography of the one of the world's most collectible illustrators contains a richly detailed account of his life along with beautifully enchanting pictures.

Examining the work of the illustrator Arthur Rackham, this monograph traces his achievements throughout his illustrious career. Rackham's illustrations for such works as *Alice in Wonderland*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, and *Rip Van Winkle* have attained the classic status of the writings themselves—and indeed, in some cases, they have become synonymous with them. His works were also included in numerous exhibitions in his lifetime, including one at the Louvre in Paris in 1914. Rackham himself, however, has previously remained a shadowy figure. As well as featuring exquisite illustrations and sketches, extracts from Rackham's correspondence and insightful commentary shed new light on this much-collected illustrator.

### ARTHUR RACKHAM: A Life with Illustration Details

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## From Reader Review ARTHUR RACKHAM: A Life with Illustration for online ebook

### Hannah says

For as long as I can remember, I've loved Arthur Rackham's illustrations. To me, he defined the world of faerie, in all its sometimes grotesque, otherworldly beauty.

Very interesting book covering Rackham's life, complete with tons of his illustrations and watercolors.

An amazing artist.

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### April says

My thoughts:

<http://www.greenmanreview.com/book/bo...>

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### Katy says

I was a tad iffy about this book at first, mainly due to the fact I have seen so many book on Arthur Rackham before I wondered what could possibly be added to the already substantial collection. Turns out I was wrong for whatever doubt I had, if you are going to research this illustrator or just own one book about his work I would recommend only this book.

The printing of the book i cannot fault each image is beautifully presented and while I could have taken to some of the images being slightly larger I still found I was okay with the smaller images. In the book we are given a large volume of information, for me non fiction takes longer to read so to have images along side the text and the text broken down easy to read and nice clear formatting was refreshing. It felt as if I were reading a newspaper or magazine.

The cover is beautiful, although the texture slightly bugs me it has that canvas feeling i am not totally comfortable with that but that's me and to be honest its one of my favorite covers in a long time. The book contains a list of books he illustrated and timeline of his life.

The only reason this book did not get a five star i would have to say that while the layout and format is easy to read it some times feels as if they had felt they needed to stick an extra image in there and somehow it does not really seem to fit. Personally I would take a whole page of text over a poorly laid image any day of the week.

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### Robert Seitz says

Despite coming from a different reality with fewer distractions, I could count on one hand artists I have met

who worked as hard and continuously as Rackham. It shows. His sympathy for the underdog and his private way of life are just as unsurprising.

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## Orsolya says

Arthur Rackham's name may be one you are unfamiliar with but his work have certainly invaded your eyes on many occasions. From "Alice in Wonderland" to "Peter Pan" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to the Brothers Grimm; Rackham's work is charming, whimsical, but also grotesque and fantastical. James Hamilton goes beyond the images to the man himself in "Arthur Rackham: A Life with Illustration".

Mixing powerful writing with suitable praise, Hamilton truly opens up the life of Arthur Rackham. Beginning with a background look at Rackham's ancestry (which is not boring); Hamilton dives into describing how Rackham's childhood influenced his work based on nuances and allowing the reader to see these effects for him/herself.

Hamilton seamlessly weaves a perfect ratio of work history with that of Rackham's personal life never leaving one topic exhausted or overemphasizing one over the other. Supplemented by an abundant amount of first-person primary resources (including personal writings from Rackham and his family's archives) and also by glorious illustrations of Rackham's various works; "Arthur Rackham: is one biography which can't be ignored. To say the book is vibrant is an understatement.

I did find some errors in terms of incorrectly dated captions and grammar mistakes. However, the edition I was reading is pervious to the newly re-issued version (with a new cover) in which I assume (hopefully) that these errors have been caught.

Although Hamilton describes Rackham's growth, advancement, and stylistic detail to his works; "Arthur Rackham" is not an artistic study or assessment. The book *does* feature discussions of artistic methods used by Rackham, but doesn't overanalyze art meanings. Like the title states, the text provides a literal, life biography. Despite this, Hamilton still provides some art insight which is new and pleasurable even to a Rackham fan.

Instead of merely showing Rackham in a purely flattering way, Hamilton describes Rackham's struggles with humble notes which create a natural bonding with the reader. A Rackham fan will undeniably become a bigger one. Although one may assume the coverage to be dry or merely for art lovers, on the contrary, small details such as models used (and the techniques surrounding them), classes Rackham attended, and notes on his friends and contemporaries; keeps "Arthur Rackham" fresh and inviting even for the average reader.

The final chapter, focusing on a comparative study of Rackham's various versions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" smoothly balances the touching description of Rackham's life and legacy. Along with a terrific appendix covering a timeline of Rackham's life, his family tree, a list of all books illustrated by Rackham, a listing of exhibitions of his works, and an excellent look into his ledgers/account books of incomes vs. expenditures; Hamilton concludes the biography on a strong and memorable note.

Whether one is new to the illustrations of Arthur Rackham or is a long-time fan; "Arthur Rackham" does not fail to portray Rackham on an intimate and enlightening level. A must read for art lovers or children at heart.

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## Jane says

Just a beautiful, interesting book. Initially a library book loan, now a purchase because I can't put it down and dipping into Rackham's world.

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## Douglas Summers-Stay says

I saw a couple of Arthur Rackham originals at an exhibit in Pennsylvania I traveled especially to see. I was amazed at the delicacy of the lines and the subtle quality of the painting overall. Previously I had only seen his illustrations printed in the poor quality that was available for color prints at the time, or reproductions based on those prints. The quality of the images in this book is far superior to any of those prints, and was clearly taken directly from the originals. The only fault I can find with it is that there are not enough full-page reproductions (there are 25 or 30).

The text is about what you'd expect, a typical biography. It gets more interesting when it is correspondence about particular paintings. One interesting bit was the reaction to his Alice illustrations-- many reviewers felt that trying to replace Tenniel's original illustrations was a sin. But Rackham's version sold very well, and deservedly so.

I liked the point the author made that Rackham tended to rise to the occasion when he was illustrating a classic: his illustrations of Arabian Nights, or the Ring Saga, or Alice, stand out as some of his very best work. C.S. Lewis mentions him as a major influence.

I enjoy the fantasy material Rackham often illustrated, but also the composition, his use of watercolor washes, and the gesture he captures when drawing humans. I'm not really such a fan of caricatured dwarf and witch faces, though they aren't repulsive like some illustrators I could name.

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## Diane Lynn says

A very good book on Arthur Rackham's life complete with tons of his illustrations. The expressions on the faces of the animals he has drawn are amazing.

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## Varmint says

hamilton gives a richly detailed account of the artists life. ultimately i didn't care. i began to view the text as wasting space that could have been used for the illustrations.

it is a good way to see a range of rackhams work. many obscure drawings.

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## Jaimie says

I cannot imagine a more lush and complete chronicle of Rackham's life and art than this book. Hamilton carefully pairs the events of Rackham's life with his artistic developments, so that the narrative reads more like an artistic exploration than a biography - a positive effect in my opinion. At points, the text loops back on itself to re-discuss previous themes, but Hamilton does so in a way which ties the book neatly together

rather than seeming repetitive. And then there's the illustrations. So many are included - everything from the books to landscapes to little sketches and characters - that no fan of Rackham's work will be disappointed.

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### **Julia Hendon says**

The real delight are all the color illustrations of Rackham's work which will struck a chord with many from their childhood reading. Rackham seems to have lived a quiet life and this biography doesn't give much insight into his emotions. But this may be due to lack of sources.

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### **Alan Culler says**

Once again, Thanks Patience & Steve.

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### **John Shelley says**

This book has to be the most sumptuous and thorough work on Rackham yet. Hamilton painstakingly relates the details of Rackham's life, with enlightening glimpses into the artist's youth, as well as the years following success. Hamilton places a great emphasis on the business side of Rackham's career, running through the agenda of his life interspersed with contemporary reviews of his books and anecdotes of family life. So thorough is the accounting that the author even includes a fascinating appendix on Rackham's expenses and fees.

Where the book falls down is that it lacks as thorough a coverage of Rackham as an artist. Very little is mentioned of his techniques or his methods of working. Although the book is gloriously illustrated, rarely are Rackham's pictures analysed (for this the best discussion of Rackham's art still remains Fred Gettings 1975 biography).

One other rather niggling point, is although the book is full of Rackham's art, whenever possible Hamilton has chosen to make fresh reproductions taken directly from extant artwork. This proves to be a double-edged benefit, as we see the artwork as it is today, warts and all, which may not have been as it was originally intended. Notably some B/W illustrations were subsequently coloured by Rackham for exhibition sale after reproductions in books, nearly always to the detriment of the final image. Also the emphasis on using existing artwork means there are some major gaps in the pictures chosen for inclusion.

Nevertheless, these points aside, this has to be the most detailed work on Rackham and an essential addition to the library of any serious fan.

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### **Sarah Harkness says**

borrowed from Barnsley Library - I probably skim read the second half....

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## Elizabeth S says

5 stars for the art: This book contains a marvelous collection of Rackham's art. For this alone, the book is worth 5 stars.

3 stars for the text: The text is a detailed study of Rackham's life. It was very interesting, but perhaps too detailed for me. For example, frequently there are lists of "well-known" people, and I didn't recognize even one of them. I guess I don't know enough about the art world. :) I still enjoyed the book!

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