

Translating Hollywood

Sam Sarowitz

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Sam Sarowitz : Translating Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Translating Hollywood:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A delight for film buffs and pop art collectors By Dennis Littrell Many of the posters presented in this very attractive book are "translations" (actually representations) of Hollywood movies, but some are the other way around, Hollywood poster translations of foreign films. The selections

are from the world-renowned collection of Sam Sarowitz from the Posteritati Gallery Collection in New York. The emphasis is on famous movies: Citizen Kane, The Third Man, Sunset Boulevard, The 400 Blows, La Dolce Vita, The Birds, Dr. Strangelove, My Fair Lady, Chinatown, Annie Hall, etc. In the case of each film, posters are presented in brilliant color, or black and white as the case may be, from various countries showing the varying ways that artists sought to promote the film. Thus presented are three posters of John Schlesinger's 1975 film *The Day of the Locust*. The one from Germany, which also graces the cover of the book, shows a green female silhouette burning in front of the Paramount Studio logo. The French poster of *Le Jour du Fleau* is an abstraction of a woman's head with puckered lips for her eyes floating ethereally above a celluloid clip of a grasping hand and below that a Hollywood sign in lights. The US poster shows an eerie Karen Black in lights above a mob seemingly reaching for perhaps the Hollywood dream. There is some sprightly commentary about each of the posters sets. Here's the take on the three posters advertising Roger Corman's *The Trip* (1968): "This title can be construed many ways, though all three posters exude the trappings of a drug-induced trip, a popular theme in 1967. Kaleidoscopic coloring, 1960s rock poster lettering, and the superimposed blurry forms scream LSD, as does the use of those three letters on all of these posters. Most interesting about this is the fact that on the American poster the acronym is converted to 'Lovely Story of Death' while the Japanese decided on 'A Love Story of Dream.' (Of course, everyone knows that LSD stands for 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds.')" The poster reproductions are beautifully realized on heavy glossy paper on pages that are about 7 by 11 inches with no more than two posters on any given page so that these old eyes do not have to strain to see the fine print. There's a brief introduction to the book followed by a mini word portrait of Sam Sarowitz, both written by Dave Kehr. In the latter I learned that the highest price ever paid for a movie poster was \$700,000 for the German poster of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). That poster does not appear in this book since the earliest images are from movies from the 1940s. The final set on pages 172-173 features three posters from Spain, England and the US of Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* from 1992.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A MUST for movie and graphic art lovers! By Steve Ramm A MUST for movie and graphic art lovers! I just recently received this book, though its been out for a year. The "author" is Sam Sarowitz, whose main occupation is running the New York City poster gallery Postertati, which he started in his Greenwich Village apartment. Most of the posters are from his private collection. In this book Sarowitz provides two or three posters of the same (usually classic) film from different countries. Nearly all include at least one from the US. When you get to see these side by side you begin to realize how boring the US ad posters are. Usually the stars' names are featured prominently and lots of photos from the film are included. Its very easy to figure out what the film is about. But the Japanese and Eastern Europe ones are much more fascinating in their graphic design, making them more of an "art poster". The posters that stand out the most (at least for me) are those from Poland, especially those for "Sunset Boulevard", "Vertigo", "The Pink Panther" and especially "Rosemary's Baby". Most of the films are well known but not "First Spaceship on Venus" (1960) and "Army of Darkness" (1992). All are pre 1993 releases and seem to be from post-1950. There is one adult film depicted: the infamous "Deep Throat". Sarowitz provides a few sentences about each film, either giving its plot or commenting on the difference in the poster styles. A few errors popped out as I read through the book. "Some Like It Hot" was released in 1959, yet the Yugoslavia poster is listed as being from 1954. "Beyond the Valley of the Dolls" refers to Director Russ Meyers (should be Meyer). But those shouldn't deter you from this book. Its not really a reference book. The print and graphic quality are high. The book is published - as are other books from this respected publisher - without a dust jacket. I had a lot of fund reading through this book - and learned a bit about other pop cultures as well. Highly recommended! Steve Ramm

"Anything Phonographic" 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. 'Oh, to see ourselves as others see us' By Grady Harp Poet Robert Burns wrote 'Oh wad some Power the giftie gie us To see oursel's as ithers see us!' and that much referenced phrase certainly applies to this fine new art/design book TRANSLATING HOLLYWOOD: The World of Movie Posters. Sam Sarowitz has successfully gathered variations of movie posters from around the world and in fine full color images accompanied by capsules of written information by Christopher D. Salyers and Buzz Poole compares and contrasts the PR of movies according to the idiosyncrasies of the countries where the films are marketed. Most examples of what Sarowitz focuses on are Hollywood films over a long period of time, while others are foreign films successfully promoted in the USA. The resulting colorful documentary, courtesy of designers Eliane Lazzaris and Christopher D. Salyers, is both entertaining and illuminating. Sarowitz gathered examples of movie posters both from his own impressive private collection as well as the Posteritati Gallery Collection. The countries contrasted with the USA include Argentina, Cuba, Italy, Russia, France, the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Japan, England, Turkey and others. On each well-designed page Sarowitz selects one film, for example 'Citizen Kane', and with a few comments shows the four versions of the posters designed in Poland, in Japan, in Argentina, and in Italy - each country's view of the subject matter is expressed in the graphics and the accompanying description of the film. The image variations inform us as to the relative taboos and sensual appeal of each country, as well as a subtle comment on how that country views the USA. On another set of pages the famous US poster for the 1981 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' is compared to the very grotesque imagery in the Polish version of pure graphics and with the Japanese version that, instead of featuring star Harrison Ford, shows a photo of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg! There is a wealth of information here not only about Hollywood, but also about movies in general and the

impact that films have on the audiences here and around the world. While the book is designed to entertain the reader, it also serves as a valuable teaching aid to 'translate Hollywood' for graphic designers, film students, and history buffs. Highly recommended. Grady Harp, May 06

A fresh perspective on movie posters, comparing posters from different countries that promote the same film.