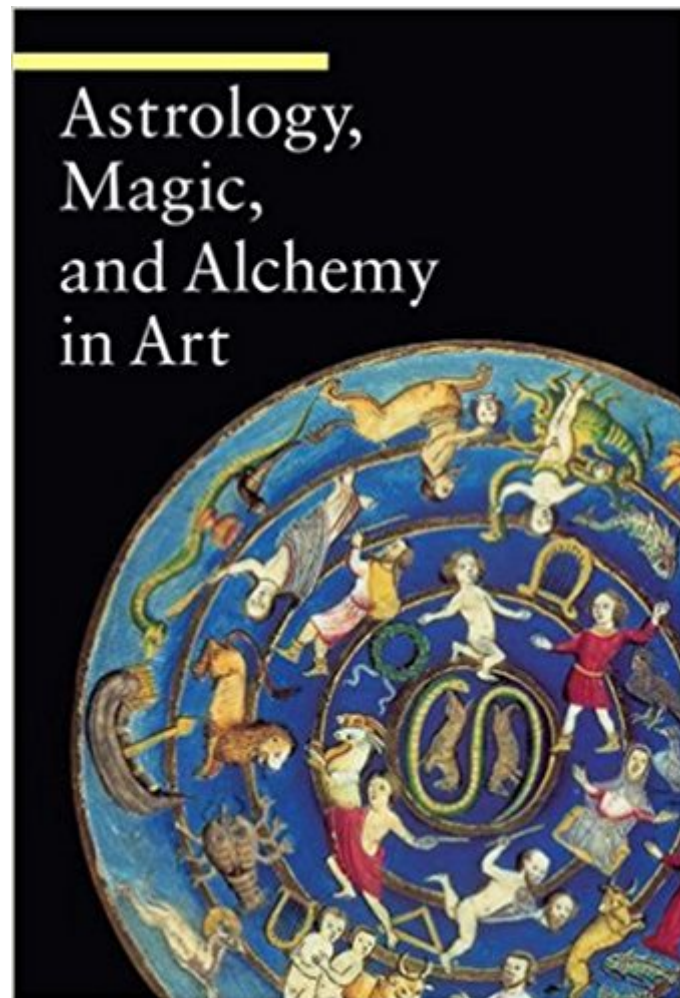




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Astrology, Magic, And Alchemy In Art (A Guide To Imagery)



Synopsis

From antiquity to the Enlightenment, astrology, magic, and alchemy were considered important tools to unravel the mysteries of nature and human destiny. As a result of the West's exposure during the Middle Ages to the astrological beliefs of Arab philosophers and the mystical writings of late antiquity, these occult traditions became rich sources of inspiration for Western artists. In this volume from the popular Guide to Imagery series, the author presents a careful analysis of occult iconography in many of the great masterpieces of Western art, calling out key features in the illustrations for discussion and interpretation. Astrological symbols decorated medieval churches and illuminated manuscripts as well as fifteenth-century Italian town halls and palaces. The transformational symbology of magic and alchemy that enlivened the work of a wide range of Renaissance artists, including Bosch, Brueghel, Dürer, and Caravaggio, found renewed expression in the visionary works of nineteenth-century artists, such as Fuseli and Blake, as well as in the creative output of the twentieth century's Surrealists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The work, based on efforts of the J. Paul Getty Museum, addresses some of the symbolism concerning areas of Astrology, Magic and Alchemy without touching on Religion. This may have been reasonable for purposes of averting criticism from the current religious orthodoxy. Within the context of its circumscribed purpose, the work is very helpful. What it does not clearly touch on is the extent to which Alchemy was a Science of the time, perhaps the precursor to modern Chemistry,

but definitely what would be considered Science today. The fact that we do not perceive it in this manner now is irrelevant to the past usage. The really interesting thing about this topic was that Alchemy was also a part of the Religion of the time. The ability to turn a base metal into gold was akin to the ability to take a tarnished soul and have it salvaged. Pursuit of perfection was achievable, at least before more strict forms of Protestantism were imposed. The religious overtones that may have been present for such notables as Rudolph II (Hapsburg) and Isaac Newton are not addressed here, though that is a minor point. As such, Alchemy could take on the rather interesting connotation of a crossroads where Science and Religion mixed. This is again somewhat confusing for a 21st Century reader. Yet, considering that Oxford, Cambridge and most other Universities of the Middle Ages and Renaissance Europe were institutions staffed virtually exclusively by those within the established religious orders of the country, it was the established norm of the time. While we now find Science and Religion in conflict, it was the exception, if not the perversion of practice, that Science and Religion had any lack of concordance. This context is worth elucidation. I would have preferred if this context were addressed to some degree.

Nice pictures, interesting explanations, many examples. Fun to read and a good start to understand the symbols of the unknown through the ages, and how they were hidden and perpetuated thru art. Too European. After this book we need the "origins" in Africa, India, the silks of China, the Japanese prints. The book lacks the Americas now and then. Xul Solar the Master of astrology and esoterism in art in the XXth century (better than Klee and Kandinsky) is not even named. Still a good book and important to have for consultation.

I believe these series of books are one of the greatest iconographic dictionaries! Having said that, I believe anyone who uses them should consider that they are only a tool, and not a sole bibliographic source.

There are some pretty interesting pieces of art in this book. It's a great conversation starter, mostly because sometimes you see the correlation to the occult, and sometimes you really have to look for it.

yes indeed full of images and guides. to find this type of book is rare. the art is not repetitive taken from other books and the book is divided into sections for each subject.

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