



By Its Cover: Modern American Book Cover Design

Ned Drew, Paul Sternberge

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We all know we're not supposed to judge books by their covers, but the truth is that we do just that nearly every time we walk into a bookstore or pull a book off a tightly packed shelf. It's really not something we should be ashamed about, for it reinforces something we sincerely believe: design matters. At its best, book cover design is an art that transcends the publisher's commercial imperative to reflect both an author's ideas and contemporary cultural values in a vital, intelligent, and beautiful way.

In this groundbreaking and lavishly illustrated history, authors Ned Drew and Paul Sternberger establish American book cover design as a tradition of sophisticated, visual excellence that has put shape to our literary landscape.

By Its Cover traces the story of the American book cover from its inception as a means of utilitarian protection for the book to its current status as an elaborately produced form of communication art. It is, at once, the intertwined story of American graphic design and American literature, and features the work of such legendary figures as Rockwell Kent, E. McKnight Kauffer, Paul Rand, Alvin Lustig, Rudy deHarak, and Roy Kuhlman along with more recent and contemporary innovators including Push Pin Studios, Chermayeff & Geismar, Karen Goldberg, Chip Kidd, and John Gall.

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