

Hellboy's World: Comics and Monsters on the Margins

By Scott Bukatman

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Hellboy's World: Comics and Monsters on the Margins By Scott Bukatman

Hellboy, Mike Mignola’s famed comic book demon hunter, wanders through a haunting and horrific world steeped in the history of weird fictions and wide-ranging folklores. *Hellboy's World* shows how our engagement with Hellboy's world is a highly aestheticized encounter with comics and their materiality. Scott Bukatman’s dynamic study explores how comics produce a heightened “adventure of reading” in which syntheses of image and word, image sequences, and serial narratives create compelling worlds for the reader’s imagination to inhabit. Drawing upon other media—including children’s books, sculpture, pulp fiction, cinema, graphic design, painting, and illuminated manuscripts—Bukatman reveals the mechanics of creating a world on the page. He also demonstrates the pleasurable and multiple complexities of the reader’s experience, invoking the riotous colors of comics that elude rationality and control and delving into shared fictional universes and occult detection, the horror genre and the evocation of the sublime, and the place of abstraction in Mignola’s art. Monsters populate the world of *Hellboy* comics, but Bukatman argues that comics are themselves little monsters, unruly sites of sensory and cognitive pleasures that exist, happily, on the margins. The book is not only a treat for *Hellboy* fans, but it will entice anyone interested in the medium of comics and the art of reading.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Hellboy's World* is really a manifesto for a different kind of comics studies."
(*Confessions of an Aca-Fan* 2016-03-24)

Quite simply, a masterpiece of loving attention and lively interaction with the works under study. More than that: a constellation of ideas that bear on comics in general, art and culture at large, and the very act (or as Bukatman says, the adventure) of reading itself.

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(Charles Hatfield *The Comics Journal* 2016-05-28)

"*Hellboy's World* is written with such joyfulness and panache that I find it a pleasure to page through, again and again. Beautifully designed, bountifully illustrated — all scholarly tomes on comic art should look this good."
(Charles Hatfield *LA Review of Books* 2016-09-04)

"All will come away from this New York City volume with newfound love for the beguiling, legendary, volatile town…an engaging and enlightening read for anyone who loves New York City, creative scholarship, and top-notch graphic design."
(Melissa Wuske *Foreword Reviews* 2016-08-26)

"Multitasking among such a broad range of texts and media sounds daunting, but Bukatman meets the challenge with energy and grace. . . [he] takes mainstream comics like Hellboy on their own terms for the complex and elusive creatures they are."
(*Film Quarterly* 2017-03-01)

From the Inside Flap

"A revelation . . . as complex, challenging, and 'monstrous' as the comics the book explores. Whether he's talking virtual subjects, *Blade Runner*, or *Hellboy*, Scott Bukatman is savagely brilliant and utterly indispensable."—Junot Díaz, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *This Is How You Lose Her*

"In Bukatman's capable hands, we find ample demonstration of the special wondrousness that books can possess for us as we try to possess them (and not just comic books). They are objects wonderful to behold, wonderful to hold and enter into. And Bukatman's own tome is in this respect a splendid thing: a beautifully produced work that lovingly offers insights that radiate from every page to invoke the enduring and inevitable bookishness inhering within our visual culture. A sublime investigation of comic books as sites/sights of essential world-building."—Dana Polan, author of *Scenes of Instruction: The Beginnings of the U.S. Study of Film*

"*Hellboy's World* is a smart, provocative book that showcases Bukatman's lucid and sparkling writing throughout. It's a pleasure to read such a lively academic book—and it is lively not just because of its subject

matter, a superhero comic of sorts, but also because of Bukatman’s energy and dedication to his subject.”—Hillary L. Chute, author of *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*

About the Author

Scott Bukatman is Professor of Film and Media Studies in the Department of Art and Art History at Stanford University. He is author of *Matters of Gravity: Special Effects and Supermen in the 20th Century; Blade Runner*, BFI Modern Classics; *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction;* and *The Poetics of Slumberland: Animated Spirits and the Animating Spirit.*

Users Review

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Travis Pope:

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