



Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal

Karen Falk

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Jim Henson's iconic puppet characters, fantastic worlds, and warm humor have delighted millions of people of all ages. His incredibly diverse body of work, from the Muppets to the world of *The Dark Crystal*, reveals his charm and genius to fans old and new. Compiled directly from The Jim Henson Company archives, *Imagination Illustrated* adapts the diary that Jim faithfully kept throughout his career, supplementing it with a trove of little-seen visual material, including rare sketches, personal and production photographs, storyboards, doodles, and much more. Throughout, archivist Karen Falk delves into the behind-the-scenes details of Henson's life and artistic process. Sure to delight anyone who has enjoyed Henson's creations—seeing early drawings of Kermit and Rowlf is like smiling over childhood photos of dear friends—this lovely book celebrates Jim's life and his magic.

Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal Details

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From Reader Review Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal for online ebook

Lauren says

Title is deceptive. This is another meticulously detailed collection of Muppet process work. The book is beautiful and very clearly organized. The "journal" part is a series of date book style entries from Jim Henson's personal diary. He kept them very perfunctory. You will learn nothing about the man himself.

Crystal says

This is a fun glimpse into the education, process, and practice of Jim Henson from the early 1960s through the late 1980s. Unexpectedly, the first part of the book is a good read in anticipation of S6 of Mad Men. Though a child of 1st generation Sesame Street who considers herself a admirer of Jim Henson, I never quite understood that he produced so many ads and that so many "beloved Muppet characters" got their starts as TV pitch creatures. Ahhhh... CONTEXT!

Henson and his crew sure produced a lot of amazing work. It is fun to flip through his notebook and track his creative thinking and the evolution of the business of The Muppets.

The images in the Kindle edition are *almost* high res enough, but not quite. That's the only disappointing thing about the volume.

Ms Threlkeld says

A riveting presentation of journal entries, photographs, mementos and more from Henson's life and career. I learned so much about this brilliant man and can't wait to track down some of his lesser known work. This is a must-read for every Henson fan.

Robert Kelly says

Great look at Jim Henson's notebooks and work process

Robert S says

*"When green is all there is to be
It could make you wonder why, but why wonder? Why Wonder, I am green and it'll do fine, it's beautiful!
And I think it's what I want to be."*
- Kermit the Frog

The work of Jim Henson transcends all ages and backgrounds, much like the work of Mr. Rogers. The Muppets, Fraggle Rock, The Dark Crystal, and his many other projects helped bring out the child in all of us.

Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal uses Henson's own journal alongside a collection of notes and photographs to tell the story of a man who helped touch the lives of millions. While Henson is no longer with us, his creative spirit lives on in so many different ways. As someone who considers himself a huge fan of the man's work, this collection is an absolute delight.

Gemma says

Savoured every page of this book. Great insight into the world of Jim Henson.

Robert says

There is something for everyone of all ages in the work of Jim Henson. Whether you enjoy The Muppets (and really, who didn't?), or maybe *Labyrinth*, or perhaps *The Dark Crystal* or Fraggle Rock. Henson brought out the child in each of us, and there was room for everyone to enjoy his work. His untimely death at 53 is all the more unfortunate when you consider the numerous projects that were left undone, and the projects yet to be created in the mind of the man who was known for his boundless creative energy. Personally, I will never forget "It's Not Easy Being Green" and especially "Just One Person".

Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal is something you could consider as a template to the Jim Henson Museum. The book breaks up into Henson's early days, days with the Muppets, and his more prominent work after the Muppets. Taken directly from The Jim Henson Company archives, this book contains much of the diary that Jim kept for the majority of his professional life. Included with this is numerous other material, including sketches of characters or work he was doing, photographs that are not often seen involving him or his work, and much more.

This works as a great companion piece to read after Jim Henson The Biography by Brian Jay Jones. One cannot help but remember some of their childhood or even adulthood moments spent watching some of Jim's work while reading this. Definitely pick this up for an afternoon read if you're a fan of the man's work and legacy.

Brad DeMaagd says

I am of a Muppet nerd. I own 7 Henson books taking the form of biography, his graphic novel, & art collections. This text is a scrapbook biography with a paragraph description of the time frame the pictures moments are pictured. It is an interesting read in this manner. My only negative for the book is captioning text can be hard to read along with his written examples.

Nicole says

Jim Henson is clearly one of the creative/imaginative geniuses of our time. He was taken from our world way too soon. There have been plenty of books which talk of his genius, or his roots, but there have been no books that get to his process, or show exactly what his mind was thinking of and how he translated that to paper--until now. *Imagination Illustrated* is the perfect book for the creative or Henson fan in your life. Detailing specific events he jotted down in his many notebooks throughout the course of his life, *Imagination Illustrated* also shows different ideas and pictures of the things found inside Henson's head as his ideas went from brain to paper. Sometimes they weren't amazing, and other times they turned out far better than anyone could have hoped. This is an inspiring tome for those with a journal, or those who have a creative dream.

Scott says

I read this book as a companion to Brian Jay Jones' autobiography of Jim. This was a great way of having visual context to much of what I was reading about. I highly recommend this to any Henson fan.

Adam says

Makes a great companion to Brian Jay Jones' Jim Henson biography

Kelly says

I am blown away by Jim Henson. He was already one of my heroes, but after reading this book I am just in complete awe of him. He didn't just create the Muppets and present this finished whole to society; his whole life was an explosion of creativity and imagination, evolving and growing. It was a lifetime of work, with successes and failures, to create what we take for granted as effortless.

His journals are pretty straightforward, simple entries, but the book is full of photographs, sketches, ideas, invitations, and concept art. I love the hand drawn story boards and characters sketched out on what appears to be legal pads. This is a book to devour.

The timelines of the book helped put Jim Henson and his impact on me in context with my life. My parents were already fans of *The Muppet Show*, so when I was born in 1980 I went right into a world that would include the Muppet Movie, *The Great Muppet Caper*, acting out the Fozzie/Kermit twins bit with my dad. I watched a lot of Muppet Babies, a lot of *Fraggle Rock*. When he talks about creating *Fraggle Rock* to inspire a generation to kindness and environmental stewardship, he's talking about my generation. (My sister showed up at my house two weeks ago and asked how Marjory was doing...meaning my compost heap...Marjory the compost heap from *Fraggle Rock*.)

Whenever I do something physical, like run or ride a bike, someone close to me will usually say, "You're such a Muppet." I take that as the highest compliment. *Imagination Illustrated* is above all truly inspiring and makes me want to unleash every bit of creativity and imagination that I can.

Hannah Givens says

High-quality book, basically a biography fused with a museum. Enjoyed reading to see the pictures and also learn about Jim Henson's life -- he was really impressive, all the more so because he was so wholesome without being naive.

Tasha Robinson says

Very neat scrapbook-style timeline of Jim Henson's work, with copious photos, sketches, scripts, notes, playbills, ads, posters, PR material, and more from the Henson archives. A little disappointing in that it's billed as information largely from his personal work journal, but that journal mostly consists of his log of dates of big developments in his home life and career — there are excerpts throughout in his handwriting, but they mostly read like "Feb 15 — Goldie Hawn Special AIR," so they don't offer much insight into his mind or his process.

But all the ancillary material is fascinating, particularly the pieces that show his early thoughts about characters who became familiar in other forms. There's an early sketch of Animal from the Muppet show, who was supposed to have four arms and be capable of sweating. The first drawing of Oscar the Grouch had bright magenta fur. There's a concept sketch for a creepy two-legged "baby Snuffleupagus." There are images from Rowlf the Dog's initial Purina ads — which he was designed for — and his later IBM ads. There are concept notes from "World Of Woozles," which became "Fraggle Rock." And on and on — basically just all sorts of bits and pieces from Jim Henson's career, giving a behind-the-scenes look at his many projects in various stages of their lives.

The most fascinating part is his very early career (there's at least one picture of him as a wide-eyed, acne-riddled high-school student) and all the material from dead-end projects, like the nightclub he designed, and the Broadway show that never happened, and the "Wizard Of Id" series that fell through, and all the puppet TV shows he conceptualized but never got aired. As a lifelong Henson fan, I really enjoyed all the detail and tiny revelations packed into this book.

Tony DiTerlizzi says

An optional title for this book would be PERSEVERANCE ILLUSTRATED. Jim Henson's journals reveal that he wasn't just a masterful entertainer, but a tenacious follower of his dreams. Despite the fact that many of his ideas hit dead-ends (a psychedelic 1960's night club, a Muppet-performance show at NYC's Lincoln Center) his resolve ensured that other visions became realities — and we are richer for it.
