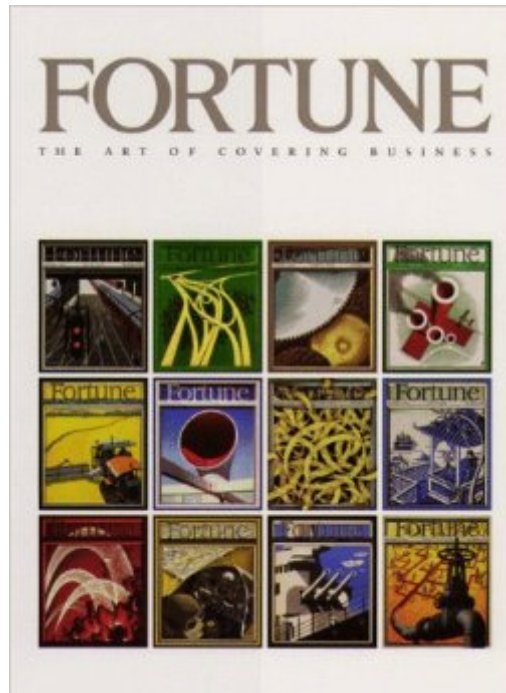


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Fortune: The Art Of Covering Business



Synopsis

Fortune's cover collection, 1930-1950, celebrating business, industry, culture, and the art of a world at work.

Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Gibbs Publishing (October 1999)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Henry Luce, the cofounder of Time Magazine, decided to launch Fortune after the market crash in 1929. He priced it at a dollar a copy (about ten dollars in today's currency value), and set out to make it the best possible magazine. In the publisher's eyes (as taken from an advertising brochure), American business "has importance -- even majesty -- so the magazine . . . will look and feel important -- even majestic." ". . . [E]very page will be a work of art." Luce went on to say, "[T]he new magazine will be as beautiful as exists in the United States. If possible, the undisputed most beautiful." Early staff members often later became famous poets and authors (such as Archibald MacLeish and James Agee) who worked just enough to earn a living, and then went back to their poetry. Luce found it easier to teach poets about business than to teach those who knew about business how to write. The essays contain many rewarding stories. One of the best is how Thomas Maitland Cleland designed the first cover by sketching it upside down on a tablecloth in a speakeasy for the editor, Parker Lloyd-Smith. The original tablecloth, complete with drawing, is still mounted in the Time-Life building. Some of the famous cover artists included Diego Rivera and Fernande Leger. In those days, the cover was independent of the stories in the issue. The cover was simply to attract attention and to encourage thought. If you remember early Saturday Evening

Post covers by Norman Rockwell, you will get the idea. By 1948, the vision changed. Luce wanted Fortune professionalized. The new concept was for "a magazine with a mission . . . to assist in the successful development of American business enterprise at home and abroad.

Fortune magazine, for many years, had the luxury of using eye-catching graphics on its covers unrelated to the contents inside. This rather unusual arrangement was because most copies were on subscription to the folks who ran the nation's business and any newsstand sales were a bonus. The fact that it did not have to use its cover to compete with other magazines for sales allowed the various Art Editors to go for great illustrations from the leading graphic artists of the day. All the covers from the first issue in February 1930 to December 1950 are shown in this lovely designed and printed book, either one to a page or four to a page (I felt the four to a page ones could have been a little bigger) and each year starts on a page with a few news items and some stats about business. The magazine's owner Henry Luce chose Tom Cleland to art edit the first issue and he came up with a rather ugly format for the covers, a double frame device, the logo was in one and the illustration in another, I think this heavy framing design rather spoils the early covers and fortunately by 1942 it was dropped. Daniel Okrent explains in his short introduction that cover artists were chosen for their creativity, some of the best graphic artists commissioned included Fred Ludekens, Erik Nitsche, A M Cassandre, Joseph Binder, George Gusti, John Atherton and Lester Beal. Although artists from the fine arts were also used, such as Ben Shahn, Fernand Leger, Charles Sheeler and Diego Rivera I don't think these covers work as well because their work is not suited to the constraints of commercial graphics. By 1950 Fortune, now a very successful business monthly and making Henry Luce even richer, changed its editorial focus into a magazine that Luce said should "...

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