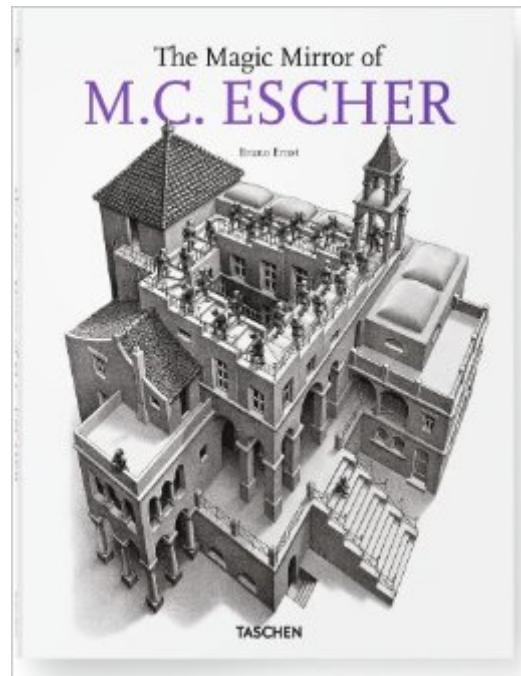


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# The Magic Mirror Of M.C. Escher



## Synopsis

Mathematical problems and visual illusions in the enigmatic work of M.C. Escher

"A woman once rang me up and said, 'Mr. Escher, I am absolutely crazy about your work. In your print Reptiles you have given such a striking illustration of reincarnation.' I replied, 'Madame, if that's the way you see it, so be it.'" An engagingly sly comment by the renowned Dutch graphic artist Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898–1972) the complex ambiguities of whose work leave hasty or single-minded interpretations far behind. Long before the first computer-generated 3-D images were thrilling the public, Escher was a master of the third dimension. His lithograph "Magic Mirror" dates as far back as 1946. In taking that title for this book, mathematician Bruno Ernst is stressing the magic spell Escher's work invariably casts on those who see it. Ernst visited Escher every week for a year, systematically talking through his entire *œuvre* with him. Their discussions resulted in a friendship that gave Ernst intimate access to the life and conceptual world of Escher. Ernst's account was meticulously scrutinized and made accurate by the artist himself. Escher's work refuses to be pigeonholed. Scientific, psychological, or aesthetic criteria alone cannot do it justice. The questions remain. Why did he create the pictures? How did he construct them? What preliminary studies were necessary before he could arrive at the final version? And how are the various images Escher created interrelated? This book, complete with biographical data, 250 illustrations, and explications of mathematical problems, offers answers to these and many other questions, and is an authentic source text of the first order.

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## Customer Reviews

I just picked this book up thinking that there has been a "NEW" book published on M.C. Escher's work. When I got it home, I checked it against other Escher books and was disappointed to find it is the same book published several times before and by different publishers. As you can see the publication date of this edition is shown as April 6, 2007. Therefore, the reviewers here must have been looking at a previous publication, possibly the one also listed here as a paperback in 1987. The copy I had was even earlier, published by Ballantine in 1976. The quality of this Taschen Edition is very good, in fact, superior to the paperback editions I have seen; and will be enjoyed by anyone who likes M.C. Escher's work; but the material included has not changed. I believe this is an excellent book, and agree with the reviews already written on other editions. I guess what we have here is A 25 Year Celebration of its first publication. This is an excellent chance to obtain this book and will be enjoyed, particularly by people new to Escher's work. The fact that this edition has now come out speaks volumes about what a great book this was, and it's great to see it available again.

The work of Escher has captured the imagination of many people and in this book Bruno Ernst (a personal friend of Escher) expands our understanding of the artist. After a brief but concise biography, the author thoroughly analyses the most important facets of Escher's artistic output: the illusion in drawing, the use of perspective, the creation of impossible realities, simultaneous and contrasting realities, crystals, and the infinite. Escher was an artist who was unique in his work, he stands by himself, and this book is a helping tool in understanding and appreciating the unparalleled magic of his work.

In *The Magic Mirror of M.C. Escher*, Bruno Ernst, an acquaintance of Escher's until Escher's death in 1972, presents a thorough summary of the life and work of Escher. Ernst devotes a chapter to the life of Escher, and uses the rest of the book to describe his amazing work. He includes the different themes and styles that Escher used, and devotes a good amount of space to each work discussed. The book is extremely thorough and includes large clear illustrations of the works themselves and also of earlier drafts of the works and mathematical descriptions to assist the reader. This is the most concise book of Escher and his work I have ever seen, and Ernst has done a fabulous job on it.

If you want to READ text about Escher and his art, and view only small thumbnails of his works, then this is the book for you. Wouldn't recommend to anyone who is looking for a book with mostly large (page sized) reproductions of Escher's works.

I have always admired the works of M.C. Escher, and this anniversary book is an excellent purchase. It contains most of the amazing illustrations the artist created during his lifetime, along with an excellent biography about the artist. For the price, I would also consider purchasing for gift giving for the upcoming holidays.

The greatness of this book on the work of M.C. Escher is that it shows how he worked up his ideas for various pieces. It also gives a thorough explanation of his thought and design process. It is truly a shame that this book has gone out of print. I sincerely hope that the publisher brings it back.

Escher's work is so engaging and interesting. Everyone has seen Escher's work, even if they don't know the name. I've used his work to teach math, graphics, and problem solving. My college students love analyzing his work. I bought this book as a gift, and it was an excellent choice. There are many example works in the book, plus interesting explanations.

one of my favorite Eschers is a 1960 woodcut that presents a fascinating image of men 'scending' — ascending and descending simultaneously. two other marvels are his 1961 wood engraving of a Moebius strip, and his 1963 woodcut of a Moebius strip round which red ants are endlessly heading. among my tiptop fayvs is his 1955 lithograph Three Worlds presenting the surface of a pond, and a fish below, and the mirrored image of three trees overseeing. his tessellations also charm; ahhhh the variety and the originality of his art!

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