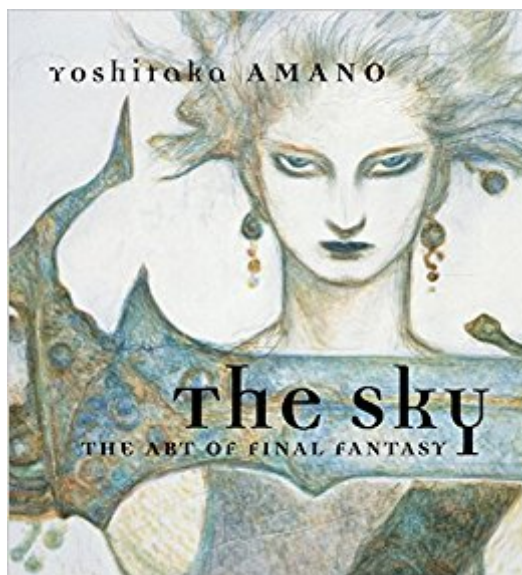


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The Sky: The Art Of Final Fantasy Slipcased Edition



Synopsis

Dark Horse is pleased to offer fans another chance to own the three-book hardcover set *The Sky I, II, and III*, included in the new *The Sky: The Art of Final Fantasy Slipcased Edition*! *The Sky I, II, and III* showcase Amano's ethereal illustrations for the first ten Final Fantasy games! Each hardcover book in *The Sky Slipcased Edition* is 11 5/8" high by 10 5/8" wide, and printed on glossy stock. Volume 1 contains Amano's work for Final Fantasy I-III. Volume 2 contains his contributions for Final Fantasy IV-VI, and volume 3 features his art for Final Fantasy VII-X. The slipcase containing *The Sky I, II, and III* features the same wraparound exterior artwork as *The Sky Boxed Set*, with a double-hinged flap that folds around the open edge and is held flat to the back side with a hidden magnetic closure, making it easy both to remove the books and to display the set closed.

Book Information

Age Range: 3 and up

Hardcover: 640 pages

Publisher: Dark Horse Books; Box edition (July 23, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1616551607

ISBN-13: 978-1616551605

Product Dimensions: 11.8 x 3.2 x 13.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 262 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #54,332 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Video Games #96 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Dark Horse #144 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Puzzles & Games > Video & Computer Games

Customer Reviews

In 2012, Dark Horse released the first edition of *The Sky* limited to 1000 copies. Many who pre-ordered were left sorely disappointed when their books did not ship when the shipping date went by. 1000 limited copies for fans of Final Fantasy, a game series that has over millions of fans. Now that's truly limited. Well, it's all good now. Dark Horse has released, this time, a non-limited edition of *The Sky* that is more easily available. Although there are no additional goodies with this release. This is a slipcase set with three hardcover books. The cardboard slipcase is covered with some silky fabric with a beautiful print across and to the back. It's very sturdy cardboard and even has a cover for the opening. The presentation is very nice. Inside the book there are the three large

format artbooks. Volume 1 collects works for FF I-III, Volume 2 for FF IV-VI and 3 for FF VII-X. This is a collection of artworks from 1987 to 2001. Altogether, there are 576 pages. This box set might not be what you're expecting depending on the type of FF fan you are. I suspect there might be a group of fans or designers looking for art that is closer to the games. You know, like those art-of books typically released alongside games? The Sky is not like those artbooks. There's no full list of characters or enemies, environment art (I'm still looking for these), weapons, vehicles or promotional art. The focus is on character designer Yoshitaka Amano and his character designs. There are over hundreds of drawings of characters and enemies in the unique Amano style of art. It's really interesting to see, for the first few games, how those dot matrix game sprites are translated into or from the concept art. If you've not played the games, these designs will appear foreign. Even if you've played the games, they might still appear foreign because they can be wildly different from their video game form. Therein lies the brilliance of Amano, who can create such a huge cast of characters for the FF world. The amount of content for each game varies. Book 2 is the thickest so you get a bulk of work from FF IV to VI. Book 3 is quite thin with only ten pages for FFXVII. Much is of Cloud and Aeris, with occasional appearance of Sephiroth and Red XIII. Not all characters or enemies drawn are labeled. It's a challenge to identify them sometimes. Depending on where you buy it from, there might be additional weight surcharge. This box set is heavy. It ships with its own custom sized cardboard shipping box designed to prevent damage. That's the way to do it for an exquisite set. You might know that there was an earlier book called *Dawn: The Worlds of Final Fantasy*. Much of that book's content is duplicated here so there's no reason to get that book anymore. Ultimately, this boxset represents great value for money. Grab it fast if you like the art. (See more pictures of the book on my blog. Just visit my profile for the link.)

I am still in shock, but let's see if I can manage a quick review. This is probably the best investment in printed media I have ever made. When the package arrived, it felt like it was loaded with bricks. When I opened the package, I got my second surprise: The gorgeous box containing the books themselves. I was under the impression it was a real 'slipcase' from the item description - a circular piece of paper or printed plastic that slid off from around the books. No, it's this big, sturdy case covered entirely with the fabric cover illustration. The case has a tab that opens the side panel which snaps shut well with all three books inside. The books themselves are delightful. Not only containing Amano's most iconic works from 1987 to 2001, the books also have countless character, monster, and location illustrations. The reproduction is gorgeous, to the point where I'm still not completely sure I paid as little as I did for this collection. If I had to lay out a drawback, I would

mention that this collection does not encompass Amano's work on Final Fantasy XI, which I consider to be one of his peaks of illustrative perfection. The only other con would be lacking the goodies of the very limited run first edition 'box set', but most of those box sets were snapped up by scalpers and now run for literally 10 times the current price of this item on .Summary: If you're a fan of Amano's work and would consider one of the many collections available, this set should be the top of the list without question. It is more comprehensive, at a lower price, than pretty much any other on the market.

The Final Fantasy series has been a fairly big part of my life for the past decade, so I made my obligatory visits to fan-sites every now and again. Now, a handful of these websites had photo galleries dedicated to concept artwork, most of which was done by a Yoshitaka Amano. At first, I didn't get the fuss over this Yoshitaka Amano guy. He liked to make brunettes blond, and he thought that chocobos were pterodactyls. Everybody either wore nothing but a cape, or they had on garish motley costumes. I certainly saw the Final Fantasy quintessence embodied in my favorites, but some of them just seemed odd. Over the years, I started to pick up on the subtleties of Amano's works. Many of them were still, brooding, and somber; yet just as many were whimsical, vibrant, and active. But somehow, I could feel a small narrative in essentially every piece, that unmistakable Final Fantasy quality. When I saw this box set on for pre-order, and for a reasonable price, I figured it would be nice to own some of those drawings and paintings in real life, not in compressed .jpg format. I justified the preorder by telling myself that I could probably sell this for a lot of money in due time. Well, I don't want to sell this thing now that I have it. Opening up the first volume yesterday afternoon, I recognized a couple of familiar drawings. I flipped through the pages fairly quickly, until I noticed that there was a clear narrative moving along with each turn of the page. Not only had Amano documented the creative process of Final Fantasy, he was telling the game's story through his own eyes as well! I began looking at each page much more slowly, taking in the big picture as well as each individual sketch. The same as Nobuo Uematsu has defined Final Fantasy through his music, Amano truly is synonymous with the visual world of Final Fantasy. Looking through these drawings, I could see how painstakingly Square's in-game artists worked to bring Amano's visionary ideas to life with integrity and consistency. Throughout the first two volumes, it was amazing to watch as Amano's works became more detailed, more ornate, and more prolific for each successive installment in the series. Final Fantasy VI's section alone spanned over 100 pages! The final volume then showed a different, more experimental side of Amano, as he had been removed from his role at the creative helm, ceding to the likes of Tetsuya Nomura and Yusuke Naora (VII, VIII, and

X), and Hideo Minaba (IX). Instead of creating many bright environments and characters, Amano shifted his focus to much more detailed, tender scenes, oftentimes through less traditional media like printmaking. Amano's emphasis on specific moments in Volume 3 casts a different tone than was captured in the first two books, but all paint an equally vivid narrative of the Final Fantasy series and its evolution. It's a spectacular journey! As for the technical details, I was surprised at how heavy the set was! I guess that's the best testament I can give to the set's durability. As others have mentioned, the outer "slipcase" is in fact an incredibly sturdy box, with an amazing cloth graphic covering the whole thing. The books themselves have nice, thick glossy paper. They are bound loosely enough that the book can be laid flat to any page but sturdily enough that pages don't feel like they'll fall out anytime soon. Perhaps the only technical complaint I have about the book is that a small number of drawings and paintings either appear to be cropped to fit on a page or are magnified to take up more space. In both cases the images look slightly out of place. Overall, though, this is an incredibly detailed, faithful, and durable set. My highest recommendation both for product quality and for content. Also of note: packs this thing as if it were as fragile as an egg! I'm very impressed and thankful for the care that went into a safe delivery.

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