



50 Drawings to Murder Magic (The French List)

By Antonin Artaud

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50 Drawings to Murder Magic (The French List) By Antonin Artaud

A poet, philosopher, essayist, playwright, actor, and director, Antonin Artaud was a visionary writer and a major influence within and beyond the French avant-garde. A key text for understanding his thought and his appeal, *50 Drawings to Murder Magic* is rooted in the nine years Artaud spent in mental asylums, struggling with schizophrenia and the demonic, persecutory visions it unleashed. Set down in a dozen exercise books written between 1946 and 1948, these pieces trace Artaud's struggle to escape a personal hell that extends far beyond the walls of asylums and the dark magicians he believed ran them.

The first eleven notebooks are filled with fragments of writing and extraordinary sketches: totemic figures, pierced bodies, and enigmatic machines, some revealing the marks of a trembling hand, others carefully built up from firm, forceful pencil strokes. The twelfth notebook, completed two months before Artaud's death in 1948, changes course: it's an extraordinary text on the loss of magic to the demonic—the piece that gives the book its title.

“Artaud matters,” wrote John Simon in the *Saturday Review* years ago. Nearly seventy years after his death, that remains true—perhaps more than ever.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A gloriously reproduced edition There is something in this text that speaks to the creative process—especially to the degree to which so much of what the writer or artist commits to the page (or canvass) extends from a place beyond conscious attention, to be received actively but without specific intention.”

(Rough Ghosts)

About the Author

Antonin Artaud (1895–1948) was the author of many books, most famously of *The Theater and Its Double*. **Donald Nicholson-Smith** is an English-born translator who lives in New York City. **Évelyne Grossman** is a literary critic, editor, and professor of French literature. She has edited several volumes of Antonin Artaud’s works in French.?

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