



Alec: How to Be an Artist

Eddie Campbell

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Eddie Campbell has created a graphic novel about the rise and fall of the graphic novel itself, and along the way draws potent conclusions about the very nature of art. It is a graphic novel about becoming an artist and making your way in the world as an artist. The narrative teems with established luminaries as well as "would be" artists. Many are briefly examined while a few have been made the subjects of penetrating case histories in this cavalcade of dreamers, fools and sudden millionaires.

Alec: How to Be an Artist Details

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Author : Eddie Campbell

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From Reader Review Alec: How to Be an Artist for online ebook

Jason Das says

By far the least essential installment of Eddie/Alec's autobio, and might be best skipped for anyone not already invested in 80s-90s comics-industry nerddom. But if you do remember (or have historical interest) in that world, well worth reading!

Kyle says

How To Be An Artist is a fascinating and entertaining account of Eddie Campbell's career, from a poor unknown artist selling photocopies of his comics at a local shop to the illustrator of the acclaimed From Hell. The book is full of insights into the world of underground British comics in the 80s and features appearances by a number of great comics creators from around the world. People unfamiliar with the comics industry may find it tedious, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Deodand says

I occasionally found Campbell's drawing style roughened and scribbled to the point of incomprehensibility in From Hell - it's nice to see that he can also manage space well. I like how some of the drawings have literally almost no lines. And yet, you get the point.

This would be a terrific book for comic/graphic novel rookies. The recommendations in the back alone are excellent - and Eddie should know what he's talking about, he was there. This is a funny, witty autobiography.

Korynn says

Mr. Campbell retells his life and his work in comics alongside a history of the evolution of modern comics within the last thirty years. A fine piece of work and very inspiring.

Scott says

First third, the beginning of his career, and the last third, where he discusses more reknown artists like Alan Moore, David Sims, and others, were the interesting parts of this book.

Deborah says

I really struggled through this, but trudged on because I wanted to learn more about the comic industry as well as the life of the struggling artist...Wish I could say I liked it more...

Patrick Artazu says

"You'll draw into the wee hours, originality and skill in inverse proportion, as always, as everywhere, reaching towards the moment when they change places."

Wallace says

A poignant review of the rise and fall of the comic book industry during the eighties. Eddie Campbell's bitterness toward super hero comics is obvious

Agustin says

Comics at their best, with a formidable intellect at the helm.

Pixie says

This isn't so much a book about how to be an artist as it is an autobiographical comic (graphic novel) about how Campbell became a working artist/writer. His artwork and writing are both equally skilled. I suppose it helps a little that these writers - Gaiman, Campbell, et. al. - are just slightly older than I am, so I have personal memories of the time periods they are writing about, but I think anyone would enjoy this very charming storyteller.

Mike says

A really great meditation on art and the comics boom of the 80s. Makes me appreciate Campbell's work on From Hell even more.

PJ Ebbrell says

Utterly brilliant book. Made me get out my dreams and start working on comics. Eddie Campbell chronicle the period of comics that I know so well.

Tucker Stone says

Eddie Campbell had previously published Alec material before, using the character to tell an autobiography of Campbell's drunken adventures with his mates during the 1980's. By the time *How To be An Artist* was released, his name was as much of a household one as any comics artist can be: not much of one. Still, Campbell, by any account, was wildly successful in his chosen medium. His work was highly touted by the various critics in the field, his early friendship with Alan Moore had become one of the luckiest and most rewarding relationship with Moore's continually growing success, and he'd even gotten married--which may have been the most surprising development of all for those who'd kept up with him in the various British publications that his work had seen print of. *The Complete Alec*, eleven years prior, did not paint the picture of a young man headed for marital bliss at all, and certainly not the artistic success he found. That's part of what makes *Complete* such bizarre reading--Campbell spends most of his time watching friends pee in shoes after another late night boozing, but the reader only knows this because Campbell found the time, and the talent, to depict it so well. Alec comes across as a very fresh, very real person, but his art seemed hidden within a lazy man devoted to his friends.

The publication of *How To Be An Artist* strikes one as a direct response--at first, until the incredibly compelling narrative takes hold. *Artist* is the story of how Alec the guy becomes Alec the man, and the book ends with it's portrait of Alec as the success, telling it all with such frankness and humility that it doesn't just read like a story of triumph, it reads like a story that inspires triumph in it's reader. Succeeding as an artist in today's world, where art has been so far relegated from having any importance that entire careers are now built at the New Yorker treating the latest Justin Timberlake album as if it were worthy of deep philosophical thought, is incredibly difficult. It's a heroic pursuit for those with talent and a suicide-causing mistake for those without. Attempting to do it in the world of comic books, and attempting to do it without drawing Spiderman, seems almost like a terrible joke. Yet not only has Campbell accomplished it, in *Artist*, he pulls no punches to describe what it took for him to do so. While that in itself would make for interesting reading to anyone with an interest in pursuing a career outside of the mainstream world, Campbell ratchets it up and includes the types of artistic philosophy that kept him so motivated to continue when the times were hard. Make no mistake--this is not a story about a man unlike you or I, one who awakens at four AM to draw and spends his days begging for work. This is the rarest type of artist biography in the field: the story of a man who spent years being alive--and was able to find success through hard work at the same time. There's no drug addiction that was overcome, no shattered marriage or slimy ladder-climbing here. Eddie Campbell simply kept a mildly cynical eye on his dreams and spent every day doing something to get closer to them. During that time, he also developed and maintained friendships for life, brought a child into the world and married the woman he loved. He then was kind enough to write it all down, illustrate it beautifully, and publish it. If it's not a required textbook for art majors in the next 30 years, it will only be because our world has succeeded in closing those programs throughout educational facilities across the globe

Melissa says

Not to be a grouchy old biddy, but I find Eddie Campbell books moderately difficult to read because of the teeny tiny lettering. It was worth it for *From Hell*, but just reading about Eddie's exploits in '80s comic land in .7 font makes me want to shake my walker at him. Also, I hate New York Public Library, because this book had three pages torn out of it at various intervals, and my hate extends to Amazon "Search Inside the Book," which made me jump from computer to computer evading their stringent copyright protections to find those missing pages. Also, Amazon, your text recognition sucks for hand-lettered books, FYI. I'm sorry

that this review is not so much about the book as how annoying the experience of reading it was.
