



Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy

Brandon Alinger , Aggie Rodgers (Introduction) , John Molland (Introduction)

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Who can forget the first time Darth Vader marched onto Princess Leia's ship, in his black cape and mask? Or the white hard-body suit of the stormtroopers? Or Leia's outfit as Jabba's slave? These costumes—like so many that adorned the characters of that galaxy far, far away—have become iconic. For the first time, the Lucasfilm Archives is granting full access to the original costumes of episodes IV, V, and VI, allowing them to be revealed in never-before-seen detail. In over 200 new costume photographs, sketches, and behind-the-scenes photos and notes, based on new interviews, fans will get a fresh perspective on the creation of the clothes and costume props that brought these much-loved characters to life. *Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy* affords both new and longtime Star Wars fans an intimate look at the unforgettable costumes from this classic series.

Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy Details

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From Reader Review Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy for online ebook

Quinn Rollins says

I love Star Wars. Always have, always will. The characters, the stories, the symbolism, the comedy, the tragedy. All of it. Something that has fostered that love and moved it along towards full-on obsession is the material world of that universe. The settings, the spaceships, the weapons, and even the clothing. The clothing--the costumes of Lucas' creation are on exquisite display in 2014's "Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy" by Brandon Alinger.

This beautifully written and designed book is an in-depth look at every costume seen in the Original Trilogy. I read a similar book by Trisha Biggar about ten years ago, "Designing a Galaxy: The Costumes of Star Wars," but that had a focus on the prequels. Which, by the way, despite their weaknesses, have incredible designs. Those costumes, some of the only things built practically instead of in a computer--that's where it's at. But I digress. The domain of this book is the Original Trilogy only, and the text and the images make this a coffee table book worth poring over.

There are three different forewords, written by John Mollo, Aggie Rodgers, and Nilo Rodis-Jamero. They each worked on the original trilogy, and each had insight on how Lucas and the other directors helped shape what we saw on screen. The constraints on budget (not just on "A New Hope," but on the others as well), the attempts to make a universe without any zippers or buttons, the stretch of the imagination to create an entire culture and civilization, represented in a costume that will get about three seconds of screen time. Besides the forewords, Alinger uses interviews with these designers, and pieces of interviews with directors Lucas, Kershner, and Marquand to make the book seem like an intimate conversation that has you going through a museum exhibit with them all as your docents.

There have been touring exhibitions of the costumes of Star Wars, sponsored by the Smithsonian and other organizations...I've never been to any of them. Reading this book is the closest you'd get to that experience. The photography focuses on details that you never thought to look for before; the differences in the colored buttons and lights on Darth Vader's chest box; the differences between a Mark I and Mark II Stormtrooper, the sewn-on patches on the back of Boba Fett's gloves. There are also things I've always wanted a closer look at, but never been able to see: the little pan flute-like instrument hanging around Yoda's neck, the markings on different Rebel pilot helmets, the uh, intricate scrollwork on Leia's bikini in Jabba's Palace. It's all presented at its best here, with most of the costumes photographed at multiple angles and far away/closeup looks. There are also inset photos of what the costume looked like in the movies, often in shots where you'll never see the back of the costume, or the feet of the character...but that part of the costume was carefully designed as well. Not just the principal characters, but "Rebel Technicians" and "Imperial Dignitaries" -- the background people and aliens who add depth to the Star Wars galaxy.

Most of the costumes have sketches of preproduction concept art. These include the initial concept art by Ralph McQuarrie, and then the stages of design that go from his concepts to what we actually see on the screen. I love seeing what could have been, and where the designers or their directors made choices that fundamentally changed the shape of the trilogy. You also see how their use as costumes during the trilogy, and their handling and storage since the 1980s has damaged some of them, some pieces have gone missing, others have paint flaking off or leather breaking down.

For the costumes of the Star Wars movies, and other science fiction movies to an extent, there's a fine line

between the costumes and the masks and paws and flippers of the alien species. If it's something an actor needs to wear, it's a costume. John Mollo was the one who did the initial sketches of what the cantina aliens and monsters would look like. Even though many of those designs changed before filming, it's fascinating to see the process. All of them have to be designed so they can be actually worn by humans, and that can be challenging too. We get in-depth looks at what the Ewoks were wearing, and how they wore them, the trials of the poor actors who were roasting inside them. The almost-Ewok costumes are also some of the most horrifying things you've ever seen. They were able to cute-ify them up before they got into the movie, but wow. That was a close one.

If you're a hardcore fan of Star Wars or filmmaking, or if you're considering creating a costume of your own for cosplay or Halloween or just wandering the streets of Mos Eisley, this book is a must-read. My son and I are looking at some Star Wars costumes for later this year, and it's changed what we were going to wear and how we were wearing it. They may still be duct tape, but they're going to look good.

ThatPersonWhoReadsStuff says

Excellent and very comprehensive. Got it from the library, but I might have to buy my own for costume reference.

Grant says

A lavishly illustrated study of the costumes that, despite George Lucas' dictum that they should not be particularly noticeable, set the look of the Star Wars universe. The commentary reveals many interesting details about the design, fabrication, and wear of the various costumes. What really amazed me was the contrast in quality - costumes for closeups and main characters vs. background costumes.

Seana says

Spectacular and drool-worthy!

Autumn says

This is a magnificent coffee table sized book. Get it for the photos. Seriously. :)

Em says

This book is beautiful! The photos of the costumes are amazing and clear. It's incredible how much work and thought went into each costume, even those in the background that are barely seen.

It took me a while to get through the book because it's heavy and large (allowing for good photos, but making it much less transportable than other books!) and the text is very small (I had difficulties with my vision during this period). The book is very interesting - it wasn't a book that I avoided/put off reading due to its content.

Karly Drake says

Terrific photos and wonderful text; a real delight! Christmas gift from hubby and son, this one will stay on my shelf!

Mary says

A gift for my sweetheart. Beautiful coffee table book with luscious photographs.

Tina says

It was treat to see so many of the costumes up close, the details are amazing. Who knew Lando's Bespin cape had an inner lining of fabric with dragons? Very cool nerd geeking out while reading this. The process on how so many of these iconic costumes came to be was very interesting.

Kathleen says

Dudes, this book is awesome.

Star Wars Costumes covers the costuming of the first three movies (New Hope, Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi) in great detail. This might sound boring, but actually it's super amazing. The costumers writing for the book not only go into how they made the costumes, they also talk about the thinking that went into costuming the characters, like how Luke Skywalker's costume in Return of the Jedi gets more and more stripped-down and basic black until the very end, when he has made his choice: then, he leaves the flap of his tunic open and we see the white lining. It's so cool, guys. They even talk about the robots and how they made the costumes for that! So cool. Highly recommended if costuming is your thing-- if it's not this obviously won't be interesting, but if it is, you'll love this.

Lisa says

My formal review has been published on Coffee With Kenobi - <http://www.coffeewithkenobi.com/book-...>

CB says

Utterly fascinating. Even if I wasn't a costumer myself, I learned so much about the making of the original trilogy. There were pictures I had never seen before and stories I had never read before. I so wish there was a similar book for the prequels, and I hope they make one for the new movies too.

Laura says

A wonderful look at the iconic costumes of the original Star Wars trilogy, with beautiful photography, insightful information on their design and construction, and lots of fun behind the scenes tidbits (Harrison Ford comes across as a diva!) A must-read for Star Wars or costume design fans. Here's hoping they release a companion book for the prequel costumes next!

Todd Hoffman says

This book is great for any Star Wars fan. Interesting tidbits that for even the hardcore Star Wars enthusiasts.

Krista says

I'm between a 2 and a 3 on this one.

The pros: Superb photography of the costumes of "Star Wars." (The original trilogy, that is.) The text is extensive, with in-depth commentary and notes about how ordinary objects became essential props/costumes. (Luke's wearing jeans!)

The negatives: Some of the text is repetitive, the text itself is too small for the book size, and there's no commentary on hair/makeup. In addition, it would have been interesting to see some commentary about how styles of the 1970s/1980s influenced the look of "Star Wars," as well as the fantasy and historical elements frequently mentioned.

Another negative: The book reveals that Leia's infamous slave dancer attire came about because the costuming team and the production people thought Carrie Fisher was attractive. As a result, the team came together and bugged George Lucas to put CF in this position. He said he would so long as CF agreed. This is offensive on two levels: 1.) the story was shifted for 100% reasons of sexism; 2.) the book doesn't call it out for what it was. I never thought that sequence was anything other than gratuitous to begin with, but it is sad to see how pathetic it really was.
