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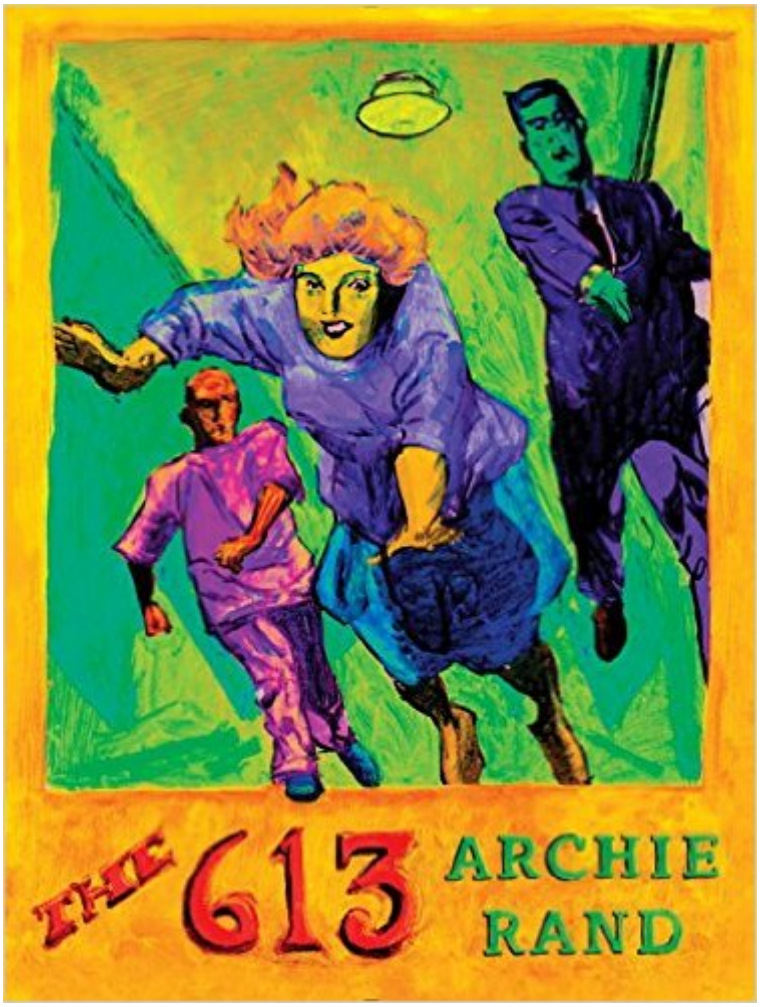
The 613



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Synopsis

Artist Archie Rand creates a glorious reimagining of the 613 Jewish commandments using comic strips and pulp fiction jackets to capture each mitzvah. A gift for the eyes, this unique collage of images, ranging from Lox to superheroes, is not your Bubbeâ ™s graphic novel. Â "If Leviticus seems an unlikely text for a comic strip, look again. Or rather look at Archie Rand's magnificent series of commandments, The 613. The beauty, terror, and fun are all there in one magic, mesmerizing wall of colored shapes and visual oratory. It's a splendid series." â "John Ashbery Â â œ[R]ichly colored, always stirring works of visual artâ ‖[The 613] is something like seeing a cinema-sized version of ancient wisdom transmuted through a comic (and then blown up again).â • â "Flavorwire Â â œA new book by a trailblazing artist...The 613Â pairs mitzvahs with appropriated images from Mad Magazine, pulp and 20th-century illustration. Sometimes the connections are obvious, sometimes intriguingly oblique. It is outrageous and inviting, in-your-face and mysterious, making Randâ ™s case 613 times over.â • â "David Van Biema,Â Religion News ServiceArchie Rand's career as an artist spans five decades and myriad themes and genres. Among his pioneering explorations, The 613 is surely one of his most ambitious feats yet. Without any idea where the work would be exhibited, Rand began transforming each and every one of the 613 mitzvahs, or commandments, into its own breathtaking painting, a series that took five years to complete. Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Each of the gorgeous and perplexing panels features a vibrant, unexpected image that brings forth the heart of its law and commands our eyes to linger. Rand is startling and original in his rich color choices, bold characters, and extraordinarily expressive approach. The New York Times describes the paintings as "rendered in the style of comics and pulp fiction book jackets, a dash of Mad magazine, a spoonful of Tales of the Crypt, some grotesques, some superheroes, always action, emotion, drama." Whether grotesque or dramatic, each painting provokes a sense of wonder and self-reflection, making The 613 a book to be visited time and time again. Perfect for readers of art, religion, or popular visual culture, The 613 may be the most audacious and distinctive gift book of its kind.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Archie Rand's The 613 is truly unique. Not only is it visually stunning--the images are so vivid that they practically pop off the page--it is almost absurdly (or perhaps biblically) ambitious in its scope. The 613 Jewish commandments are each rendered in mid 20th century comic book/pulp fiction glory. The entire series has only briefly been shown in publicâ | Imagine 613 paintings, each approximately the size of the Mona Lisa. The actual art installation requires a wall 100 feet wide and 22 feet high with paintings one on top of the other. I was fortunate to have been able to see it when it was briefly shown by the artist a few years back. The release of this beautiful book ensures that Rand's epic piece can be experienced by anyone and everyone.

This isn't really a book one 'reads.' It is a collection of images, one for each commandment in the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). Contrary to common knowledge, there are many more than ten, and even if you take a close look at the ten, you will see that some of them aren't commandments at all. That is one reason I prefer the title Decalogue, from the Greek for 'ten words.' It is a closer translation to the original Hebrew, the 'ten sayings.'In the Torah, there are 603 more that are actual commandments: do this, don't do that. For each of these commandment, Archer has painted an image. It is almost impossible to put the book down because the images are so evocative and challenging. The commandment and Biblical reference are given in no particular order that I can see; they are almost random, except for the ones that belong in groups.I did hear an interview where he explained one image, Number 7. The commandment is 'Not to profane [God's] name. The image is of a giraffe, which the artist explained he chose because giraffes are mute. They have no vocal cords and are completely unable to violate this commandment.Others are more obscure. Why a vivid image of the widowed Empress Victoria, massive in her black dress, to illustrate 'Make no covenant with Canaanites or their gods.'? Some allusion to the British empire at its height?I don't now. I only know that the book is almost impossible to put down.

Opened up a whole new way for me to understand what a commandment is. Far different than the usual 10 commandments I was use to. As I read the 613 commandments I became amused realizing that Muslims seem to obey these commandments more than Jews or Christians do.Many of the commandments were meant to keep people from intermarrying with people outside of their tribe and who you can have sex with. Just early sexism and racism.I have a strong fear of all religions because of how many people have been killed by religions over the centuries and my feelings that religions were just something we men created to justify our mistreatment of women. "The 613" book supports my fear and disgust with religions.I wasn't able to understand some of the pictures or connect them to the commandments they were shown with.

Archie Rand's visual representations of the 613 blessings range from mystifying to exhilarating. Sometimes disturbing, it challenges you to understand the strength and power of each one. Each painting brings a new thought, a deeper meaning and a contemporary slant to each mitzvah in a way that sometimes enhances and sometimes shatters previous interpretations. Every time I pick up the book, I learn something new from the insight he shares and I become engrossed in the enormity of this particular work of art and in Mr. Rand's unflinching artistic talent to expand and explore.

This book was delivered in excellent condition, exactly as described, and arrived ahead of the projected delivery date. The book itself is amazing. My wife and I prefer to leave it on the coffee table and read no more than a couple of random pages at a time.

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