The Illustrated Press of Saint Louis, Missouri published two distinctive catalogs in January of 2009, focusing on artists whose works defined popular illustration of the 1930s through the 1970s. These titles offer readers the opportunity to study reproductions of pulp art and popular illustrations as one would study images of more traditional art.

The first book features Reynold Brown, a California illustrator whose oeuvre ranged from aircraft diagrams, comics, detective novels, adventure stories, movie posters, as well as portraits and landscape paintings. This lavishly illustrated publication pays homage to Brown, a prolific illustrator and teacher, best known for his movie posters of the 1950s, through 1970s. The authors assert that Brown and his art were underappreciated during his prolific career that spanned these three decades. This book seeks to establish Brown as a major figure in the field of popular illustration by virtue of the quantity, quality, and popularity of his work.

The targeted readership is a general audience, as well as students, enthusiasts, and collectors of American popular illustration and film posters of the 1950s and 1960s. The book is suitable for a public library or studio art library based on the strength of its body of illustrations. Scholars of mid-twentieth-century popular culture would find the compilation and cataloging of images useful as well. The rich display of Brown’s drawings and paintings are framed within the context of his biography which serves as the book’s organizational structure. The table of contents outlines the artist’s professional milestones, culminating in his film career and eventual departure from the film industry.

His film posters ranged in quality from low-budget cult classics such as *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* to important films such as *Ben-Hur* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Brown’s eventual dissatisfaction with the film industry and his departure from the business was a result of what he considered to be tasteless films, low pay, and exploitation of illustrators by studio executives.

This publication establishes a detailed record of Brown’s work, and while the book is not indexed, an appendix lists covers of magazines, books, record and album covers, advertising campaigns, and of course, movie posters produced by the artist. There is also a small bibliography and a list of museum exhibitions.

The images are of good quality and represent the vitality of the artist’s style, in terms of composition, use of color, value and attention to detail. The works speak for themselves as reflections of the popular aesthetic of the era. The narrative, on the other hand, is
comparatively thin, being anecdotal in content and colloquial in expression. More serious analysis of the art or its development would be welcome.

The second title considers the work of Norman Saunders, a major figure in the field of pulp art production and popular illustration. Like the previous volume, this work is also a comprehensive catalog, full of vibrant reproductions, chronologically spanning the scope of Saunders’ life and career.

This publication is suitable for public or art school libraries and would be especially helpful to collectors and scholars in the field of popular illustration. While the book lacks an index or bibliography, it possesses an appendix classifying Saunders’s early works: covers of pulp magazines, comic book and paperback covers, men’s adventure magazines, and trading cards. Saunders pulp compositions depict characters that emerge from dark backgrounds, are dramatically lit, bathed with intense color, and dominate the picture plane.

A noticeable theme in his work is the highly sexualized depiction of women. During the 1930s, his semi-pornographic covers for the magazine *Saucy* featured semi-nude beauties provocatively posed. In the 1940s and 1950s pulp novels featured depictions of voluptuous women at the mercy of sadistic Nazi or Japanese soldiers and in other scenarios of near torture. The reader can find oneself overwhelmed with the repeated images of gratuitous violence against women as part of the emerging culture of male entertainment. The sparse text of the book makes no mention of controversial gender representation or the violence directed toward women. This catalog of Saunders’ work provides a body of visual material that gender scholars might further develop.

This book contributes to the literature of the field that was enhanced by the Brooklyn Museum’s 2003 exhibition entitled *Pulp Art: Vamps, Villains and Victors*, which explored paintings created for the covers of pulp magazines and novels. Norman Saunders was one of the artists featured in the exhibit. The 2009 publication of Saunders catalog fulfills the artist’s dream of a compilation of his life’s work, making permanent that which was by nature disposable and ephemeral. This catalog makes available material for more extensive scholarship in the future.

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