

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The Secret World of Renaldo Kuhler.

Ingram, Brett (Author)

Nov 2017. 264 p. Blast, hardcover, \$45. (9780922233489). 709.04.

This volume brings readers into a remarkable society rife with storied monarchies, secret police, worker's revolutions, and more. Rocaterrania was the invention of Renaldo Kuhler (1931–2013), a self-taught scientific illustrator who spent most of his life developing this world in countless graphite, ink, acrylic, oil, gouache, watercolor, colored-pencil, and marker images. More than 400 are published here, accompanied by Guggenheim fellow Ingram's history of Rocaterrania, as told to him by Kuhler before he passed away. Unlike the medieval-inspired fantasies of George R. R. Martin and J. R. R. Tolkien, Kuhler's invented world exists as part of the real one, following the same calendar and incorporating historical figures like Hitler and attractions like the Moulin Rouge, in Paris, and the Bardovan Opera House, in Poughkeepsie, New York (near where Kuhler was raised). Kuhler's illustrations of Rocaterrania's language, leaders, architecture, technologies, and milestones are fiercely alive. Distinctive drawings supposedly pulled from a soldier's field journal or a design-student's sketchbook make Rocaterrania seem real. Ingram's documentation of Kuhler's richly imagined creations will fascinate all who are drawn to art and/or fantasy.

— *Maggie Taft*