

Classic Posters - 'Off the Wall' - Wes Wilson's Magazine on the Poster Scene

by Michael Erlewine

If you love posters and poster collecting and don't know about "Off The Wall," the short-lived (but wonderful) tabloid-sized publication, created by Wes Wilson, who is arguably the father of the psychedelic poster, you should. Although it only ran for nine issues, "Off the Wall" was devoted to rock art posters and postering.

I kept hearing 'Off the Wall' referred to with reverence by rock-art fans and wanted to see what this magazine was all about. I managed to track down Wes Wilson, who had a few complete sets of the magazine left. I ordered a set.

What a treat it was to look through them. The list of authors reads like a who's who of posterdom, with authors like Eric King, Jacaeber Kastor, Walter Medeiros, Ben Edmonds, Dick Wentworth, Paul Getchell, Paul Grushkin, etc., and of course Wes Wilson - all writing about the poster scene.

Here you will find different kinds of articles and essays on collecting posters, handling them, caring for them. Articles on Ben Friedman, Rick Griffin, Bill Graham, Chet Helms, Levon Mosgofian and about venues like the Grande Ballroom, the Seattle scene, Los Angeles and more. Also included are fascinating interviews with artists like Alton Kelley and early poster printers like Frank Westlake.

Wes Wilson not only pioneered the psychedelic poster, but also was the first to create a journal devoted to poster artists and poster collecting. In addition, Willson has organized and put on some of the most important poster shows. He is kind of a man for all seasons, when it comes to posters.

If you are finding, like I am, that you love posters, their art, how to care for them, and how they look on the wall, you may find it worthwhile to seek out some of the old issues of 'Off the Wall' or check with Wes Wilson. He may still have a set or two.

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