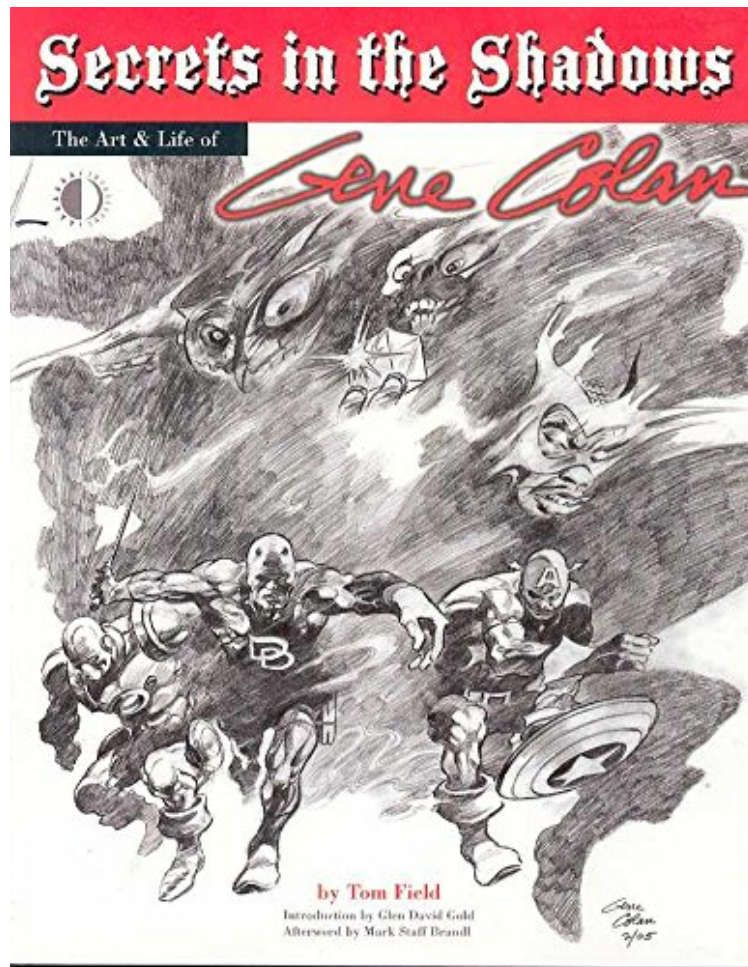


[Free read ebook] Secrets in the Shadows: The Art Life of Gene Colan

## Secrets in the Shadows: The Art Life of Gene Colan

Tom Field

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**Tom Field : Secrets in the Shadows: The Art Life of Gene Colan** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secrets in the Shadows: The Art Life of Gene Colan:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding!By R. GaleI have very little to add to what the other reviewers have already said. If you're a fan of Gene Colan, this book is a must-have. Even if you're not a big Colan fan, you'll learn a lot about the business of comics and how personalities and personal relationships affected the comics we grew up with. It's well written, well documented and contains a tremendous amount of research and (of course) lots of great art. (And if the author happens to read this, that very first New York comic convention was the SCARP Con in 1968 -- I, a geeky 17 year old, attended and met the gracious Mr. Colan who did a sketch of Iron Man for me, and drew dozens of sketches for other fans.) Highly recommended!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant writing and fantastic art!By radams36Tom Field's latest, "Secrets in the Shadows", is an absolute must-buy for any fan of Gene Colan, or of Silver age comics in general. Tom has put together a treasure trove of rare,

sometimes never-before published art, from one of the greatest masters of the comic book art form. Wonderful insight and candid anecdotes on Gene's personal life and how that impacted his art lend a real depth to the artist's history. Tom's writing style is clear and compelling, making the book very hard to put down. An able assist from best-selling author Glen Gold adds considerably to the book, along with a terrific afterword from internationally renowned artist Mark Staff Brandl. Interviews with Gene, Stan Lee, premiere inker Tom Palmer, and acclaimed writers Steve Gerber and Marv Wolfman, provide enthralling perspective on how gratifying it was to work with Gene, both in terms of the amazing artwork he did, and in terms of what a fine and gentlemanly person Gene is. The many illustrations show Gene's advancement as an artist, from early sketches Gene did as a child, to the masterful work he did on such books as Daredevil, Iron Man, Howard the Duck, and Tomb of Dracula. Recent commissions are shown both before and after inking, which lends great insight into how the inker affects the completed page, and how different artists approach Gene's challengingly detailed work. This book is one great read, and is another terrific addition to the history of the Silver age from TwoMorrows publishing. I cannot recommend it highly enough. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

**ONE OF THE ALL-TIME GREATS** By Tim Janson  
Two characters come to mind when I think of Gene Colan... Doctor Strange and Dracula. They were two of my favorites when I began reading comics in the mid-1970's. I was fortunate to have two stores close to me that sold old back issues of comic books. I was able to put together quite a collection of silver age comics. Among my favorite comics was Gene's run on the original Doctor Strange series beginning with #169. These atmospheric, psychedelic stories were unlike anything I had ever seen. I had sold my collection in the 1980's but recently picked up that complete run all over again because I was still enchanted by the great Colan work on those books.

**Secrets in the Shadows** is a combination biography and tribute to one of the all-time great comic artists, Gene Colan. Author Tom Field takes on a guided tour through Gene's life, beginning with his upbringing in New York and his first comic book work for Fiction House. Gene tells a story similar to many of his contemporaries such as John Buscema and John Romita, and their mass dismissal from Timely Comics. Gene would go on to DC and then back to what was now Atlas Comics. Atlas would then implode leaving Gene again out of work in the late 1950's and with a lifelong feeling of insecurity about the comic book business. As Gene explains this was a difficult time in his life as he was not only out of a job, but also had just gone through a divorce with his first wife. Stan Lee would come beckoning again in the early 1960's as the Marvel Age was off and running. Gene quickly became one of Marvel's top artists and perhaps the only one whose style was so unique that he was not asked to pencil over Jack Kirby's layouts the way many other artists were. Field presents several conversations in the book between Gene and some of the people he worked with at Marvel. The first is a lengthy conversation from 2004 between Gene and Stan Lee. They talk about their first meeting at Timely in the 1940's. Gene mentions that Stan was wearing a beanie cap with a propeller... now that's something I'd love to see! They also discuss their creative process and how books were plotted and finished. Other conversations include Gene talking with his long-time inker Tom Palmer with whom he worked on so many great books over the years, and with Steve Gerber, the writer on Howard the Duck. Gene worked on numerous titles at Marvel over the years, Daredevil, The Avengers, Captain America... But perhaps the title most associated with him was Dracula which had a remarkable 70 issue run in the 1970's. Colan's Dracula was dark and grim and his incredible use of light and shading gave the book a true horrific feel. Gene would eventually leave Marvel in the early 1980's after several run-ins with then Editor-in-Chief, Jim Shooter. Shooter's tenure was marred by one controversy after another including his shameful treatment of Jack Kirby. Shooter was highly critical of Gene's work and harassed him with constant demands of changes. Gene would migrate to DC along with many other former Marvel staffers who had grown tired of Shooter including Roy Thomas, Len Wein, and Marv Wolfman. To be fair, Tom Field presents both sides in the Colan/Shooter situation. He allows Shooter to give his side of the story in which he feels he was doing what was right for the company and felt Gene was cutting corners with his work. Unfortunately Shooter's credibility is almost nil due to his run-ins with so many other artists and writers. At DC Gene would work on Batman, Wonder Woman, Detective, and new projects such as Night Force and Nathaniel Dusk. Gene would find himself under attack again for his art, this time by John Byrne who was highly critical of Gene in a Comics Journal interview in 1982. Byrne would basically call Gene a cheat and say that 90% of the time you could not tell what was happening on the page. I credit Field for including this in the book. I would guess he knew that rather than be any kind of indictment against Gene, that it would make Byrne look like a jerk for making an unwarranted attack on a true legend. Cheat? Byrne is still giving every character that same weird looking, rectangular mouth for twenty-five years! Gene would leave DC some years later after similar criticisms by then Editor Dick Giordano. Gene would strictly freelance from now on and even go back to work at Marvel (shooter has since been broomed himself). Today, Gene has found many new outlets for his work thanks to the internet. He's busy doing commissions for fans who truly appreciate his work. Tom Field presents a portrait of a man who fits the nickname of "Gentleman Gene". Colan's volume of work over the last sixty years is awe-inspiring. It's great to see Gene finally getting the tribute he so justly deserves. Reviewed by Tim Janson

From Daredevil to Dracula, from Batman to Brother Voodoo, from Howard the Duck to Stewart the Rat, *Secrets in the Shadows: The Art Life of Gene Colan* is the ultimate retrospective on one of comics' all-time unique artists. Featuring

rare childhood drawings, photos, recently-discovered wartime illustrations, and original art and sketches from throughout his nearly 60-year career, this book offers new insight on the inspirations, challenges, and successes that shaped Gene 'the Dean' Colan. Among the highlights are: A comprehensive overview of Gene's glory days at Marvel Comics! Marv Wolfman, Don McGregor and other favorite writers share plot/script samples and anecdotes of their Colan collaborations! Tom Palmer, Steve Leialoha, and other noted artists show how they approached the daunting task of inking Colan's famously nuanced penciled pages! Plus: a new portfolio of never-before-seen collaborations between Gene and such masters as John Byrne, Michael Kaluta, and George Perez, and all-new artwork created specifically for this book by Gene Colan, who is still inspired by the Secrets in the Shadows.

From Booklist Colan was one of Marvel Comics' key artists in the late 1960s and the 1970s, best known for a lengthy run on the superhero title Daredevil and his stint on the groundbreaking satire Howard the Duck. He is most closely associated with The Tomb of Dracula, which ran for seven years in the seventies. He fit uneasily in Marvel's lineup of superhero artists, for his realism ran counter to his peers' stylized approaches, and his mastery of light and darkness seemed less suited to the genre than, say, the bold simplicity of a Jack Kirby. Colan's star waned as fans' tastes changed, but he continued to work steadily in the field, even when that meant wasting his talents drawing Archie. Nearing 80, he remains at the drawing board today. Field, a longtime fan, thoroughly traces Colan's career (the segment on the 1950s comics industry is particularly fascinating) through biography, interviews, and page after page of everything from original comic-book pages to previously unseen fan commissions. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved