



Geisha: A Unique World of Tradition, Elegance and Art

By John Gallagher

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"Rises above many of its competitors, thanks to its ambitious scope...The book's photos and illustrations are frequently stunning....Gallagher's writing style is straightforward and articulate, with so much intelligence and grace, it's difficult not to be charmed."--*Publishers Weekly*

Take a fascinating peek into the geisha's world of tradition and ritual with the help of a most unique book. Four see-through vellum sections, of four layers each, begin with a "naked" geisha; they show, stage by stage, how her distinctive costume and make-up are assembled. You'll view the subtle changes of appearance through the round of seasonal events, and the elaborate array of equipment in the geisha's wardrobe, as well as everything she needs to do her demanding jobs. Equally revealing is the incredibly detailed information about the women's training, lives, and history.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Gallagher's contribution to the geisha book niche rises above many of its competitors, thanks to its ambitious scope. The author, an Englishman who works as a translator in Japan, closely examines a tradition and way of life alien to most outside Japan and seems to leave nothing out, covering such topics as the perception of geishas by both Japanese and foreigners, geishas' artistic and musical talents, and the organizational structure of an okiya (geisha house). Of course, there's also much about the clothes and makeup. Geishas are constructed layer by layer, both figuratively and literally. Various levels of schooling teach them to be complex, articulate and unaffectedly sophisticated while they learn to put on their clothing and makeup in equally painstaking stages. Gallagher illustrates the latter with multiple see-through vellum sections detailing each stratum of ornament, clothing article and makeup, allowing readers to grasp the inordinate amount of attention that geishas must put into their appearance. The rest of the book's photos and illustrations are frequently stunning, combining historical images and artwork with vibrantly hued, more recent photos. Because of its heft and very visual style, Gallagher's work will likely find itself classified as a coffee-table book, but anyone who merely flips through will be missing out. Gallagher's writing style is straightforward and articulate, with so much intelligence and grace, it's difficult not to be charmed.

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About the Author

Born in London, John Gallagher grew up in Ireland, and is currently resident in Japan as a writer and translator. He holds a BA in History and English Literature from the National University of Ireland, and an MA in Translation Studies from Dublin City University.

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