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How To Fake A Moon Landing: Exposing The Myths Of Science Denial



Synopsis

2014 YALSA Great Graphic Novels list 10 Unforgettable Graphic Novels list by salon.com 2012 Best Book shortlist at the British Comics Awards (UK edition) • Is hydro-fracking safe? Is climate change real? Did the moon landing actually happen? How about evolution: fact or fiction? Award-winning author-illustrator Darryl Cunningham looks at these and other hot-button science topics and presents a fact-based, visual assessment of current thinking and research on eight different issues everybody's arguing about. His lively storytelling approach incorporates comics, photographs, and diagrams to create substantive but easily accessible reportage. Cunningham's distinctive illustrative style shows how information is manipulated by all sides; his easy-to-follow narratives allow readers to draw their own fact-based conclusions. A graphic milestone of investigative journalism! • Also available by Darryl Cunningham, The Age of Selfishness Find teaching guides for How to Fake a Moon Landing and other titles at abramsbooks.com/resources. Praise for How to Fake a Moon Landing: • "Cartoonist Darryl Cunningham . . . is a welcome voice, shedding some much needed light on the darker areas of science and culture. . . . Cunningham does a remarkable job with difficult material and for high school students, just opening their eyes to the world around them, this is a terrific primer." • "ComicMix

Book Information

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams; Reprint edition (April 2, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419706896

ISBN-13: 978-1419706899

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #694,339 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Manga > Educational & Nonfiction #886 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > Science & Technology #2164 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Environmental Science

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Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

We face daily bombardment of contradictory "facts" coming at us from print, television, and online media. Much of this bombardment is manipulative in nature, urging us to buy a remedy, trust an industry, or elect a candidate. And science is usually cast as a bully, a fraud, or an instrument of persecution. And that is why we need "How to Fake a Moon Landing" and many more books like it. Writer/cartoonist Darryl Cunningham takes on eight topics in this book, including "The Moon Hoax," "Chiropractic," "The MMR Vaccination Scandal," "Fracking," and "Climate Change." In each chapter he employs mixed media of cartooning, diagrams, and photographs to make the case for science over obfuscation. The cartooning may not parallel the graphic beauty of Winsor McCay or Hal Foster, but that isn't what's needed here. Cunningham's graphics are edgy and direct, clearly illustrating each point with just enough humor to avoid pomposity. I wish that Cunningham had placed the chapter on "Science Denial" at the front of the book instead of at the very end. So many points made in that chapter apply to the other chapters. Beginning with "The Moon Hoax" at least establishes the roles of media-inflamed rumor and junk science in distorting our perception of reality. Years ago, Isaac Asimov, in his introduction to James Randi's "Flim-Flam!" wrote, "Humanity has the stars in its future, and that future is too important to be lost under the burden of juvenile folly and ignorant superstition." In a similar vein, Darryl Cunningham writes in the introduction to his book, " Science isn't a matter of faith or just another point of view. Good science is testable, reproducible, and stands the test of time. What doesn't work in science falls away, and what remains is the truth." This could be one of the most important and relevant "comic books" of our time.

Wedding often whimsical images with no-nonsense text, "Moon Landing" is a friendly and convincing introduction to the most pervasive forms of science denialism in force today. There is a real and present danger when vaccination and anthropogenic global climate disruption are given the denialist treatment, and real stupidity in accepting homeopathy or denying the fact and theory of evolution. These important topics and others are given brief treatment, with just enough solid information to render further denial a much less comfortable proposition. My favorite thing about this book is the way photos and cartooning are used together to make really interesting graphics. Even setting aside the crucial nature of what's being communicated, this is paradigmatic communication, a sterling example of creativity harnessed in the service of useful, cogent information. My highest recommendation.

In the same genre as "Logicomix" and "Feynman", this graphic novel takes us on an expository tour

through some of the most heinous claims of conspiracy theorists, charlatans, and cranks. Not something to keep around for reference, but required reading for any homeopath, chiroprancer, or, of course, moon landing hoax believer.

The author has a good aim, but does not discuss how to think critically when considering media scare tactics. In fact, his explanations are wrought with the same poor thinking skills he judges in others - confirmation bias, narrative fallacy, confusion between inductive and deductive reasoning, inconsistent arguments, etc. Here's one specific example of an inconsistent argument from the chapter on Global Warming: Opponent to GW says, "But isn't it true there are a growing number of scientists that now believe the global warming theory to be incorrect." Penguin's answer, "Only 2.5 percent of the worlds top 200 climate scientists are skeptical." The question asked whether the number is "increasing", not whether the number is small. Embarrassing and just one example. There are many great comic science books out there like the "Graphic Guides To ..." series and "The Cartoon Guide To ..." series. I would like to see these same topics in comic format by an author that does not propagate the same scare tactics and poor thinking skills he insults in others.

If you're looking for a book that goes into detail about subjects like the Hoax MMR vaccine scare or the bogus "we didn't go to the moon" theories, then this isn't it. Instead, the author uses an easily absorbed graphic novel format to introduce readers to these subjects and gives suggestions about where to go for more in-depth reading. I found Moon Landing to be entertaining, sensible, and easy to dip in and out of. I commend Cunningham for tackling controversial subjects in a clear-headed, non-partisan manner. I thought this was mostly clearly stated in his coverage of fracking. Knowing little about the subject I wasn't sure if his take would be "the fears are overblown" or "the assurances that it's safe are spurious." In the end I thought he did a good job of concluding that there is a lot more we need to know about this very new technology and that governments owed it to us to ensure there is a level of transparency and thoroughness in their oversight of the industry. To me this showed he was prepared to objectively analyse the evidence without letting a partisan worldview have him reach a conclusion based on something other than the science. Such people are rare. I look forward to reading more from him.

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