ACCOMPANYING THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART SHOW

MATTHIAS BUCHINGER:
“THE GREATEST GERMAN LIVING”

BY RICKY JAY

WHOSE PEREGRINATIONS IN SEARCH OF THE “LITTLE MAN OF NUREMBERG” ARE HEREIN REVEALED

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Matthias Buchinger (1674-1739) performed on more than a half-dozen musical instruments, some of his own invention. He exhibited trick shots with pistols, swords and bowling. He danced the hornpipe and deceived audiences with his skill in magic. He was a remarkable calligrapher specializing in micrography—precise handsome letters almost impossible to view with the naked eye—and he drew portraits, coats of arms, landscapes and family trees, many commissioned by royalty. Amazingly, Matthias Buchinger was just twenty-nine inches tall, and born without legs or arms. He lived to the ripe old age of sixty-five, survived three wives, wed a fourth, and fathered fourteen children.

Accompanying the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition “Wordplay: Matthias Buchinger’s Inventive Drawings from the Collection of Ricky Jay,” this book is a cabinet containing a single, multi-faceted wonder, refracted through acclaimed sleight-of-hand master Ricky Jay’s scholarship and storytelling. Alongside an unprecedented and sumptuously reproduced selection of Buchinger’s marvelous drawings and etchings, Jay delves into the history and mythology of the “Little Man,” while also chronicling his encounters with the many fascinating characters he meets in his passionate search for Buchinger.


Additionally, Conjuring Arts Research Center is releasing a special edition box set ($79) which includes the Siglio book with two limited edition decks of cards and a letterpress keepsake signed by Ricky Jay. The edition size is 500; each box is closed with a numbered Buchinger seal. Contact: (212) 594-1033 or orders@conjuringarts.org.

Acknowledged as one of the world’s great sleight-of-hand artists, Ricky Jay has received accolades as a performer, actor, and author. He was recently profiled on the series American Masters and is the subject of the film Deceptive Practice: The Mysteries and Mentors of Ricky Jay. His three one-man shows, Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants, Ricky Jay On the Stem, and Ricky Jay: Rogues Gallery, all directed by David Mamet, enjoyed long runs and garnered critical and commercial success. He has appeared in films directed by Mr. Mamet, Paul Thomas Anderson, Gus van Sant, and Christopher Nolan. His numerous television appearances include a memorable role as the gambler Eddie Sawyer in the series Deadwood, and he has written and hosted his own television specials for CBS, HBO, A&E and the BBC. Jay has written frequently on unusual entertainments, and his Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women and Jay’s Journal of Anomalies were both New York Times “Notable Books of the Year.” The former curator of the Mulholland Library of Conjuring and the Allied Arts, he has defined the terms of his profession for the Encyclopedia Britannica and the Cambridge Guide to American Theater. More information and additional material about Matthew Buchinger may be found at rickyjay.com.

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"And it's easy to see why Jay fell so hard for Matthias Buchinger. "That little man was a dynamo, a mystery, a real-world superhero though we're not likely to see him in a Hollywood blockbuster. Comic book superheroes have sex appeal, but very little sex. In comparison, the portly, legless Buchinger was demonstrably a stud." Featured image is a stipple engraving self-portrait of Buchinger (London, 1724), 7 ⅛ x 11 ⅝ inches. Matthias Buchinger: "The Greatest German Living." SIGLIO Hbk, 8 x 10 in. / 160 pgs / illustrated throughout. Start your review of Matthias Buchinger: The Greatest German Living. Write a review. Oct 07, 2016 Jeff Raymond rated it it was amazing. Buchinger himself could have been a refugee from a fairy tale, seeming to have one stump in the supernatural and one in baroque literary conceit, yet even that understates the case. Next to the curious, convoluted works Buchinger produced and the life he lived, Rumpelstiltskin is as mundane as a harried CPA at a cracker factory." –Howard Hampton on Ricky Jay's Matthias Buchinger: "The Greatest German Living" in the April/May 2016 issue of Bookforum. The Greatest German Living book. Read 17 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Born in Germany in 1674, Matthew Buchinger moved to the ...Interesting book about book and print collecting and Matthias Buchinger who living in the early 1700s and was born without arms or legs but could write in minute print and create art that most would need a magnifying glass to see. flag Like · see review. Aug 08, 2017 Jeff Yoak rated it really liked it · review of another edition.