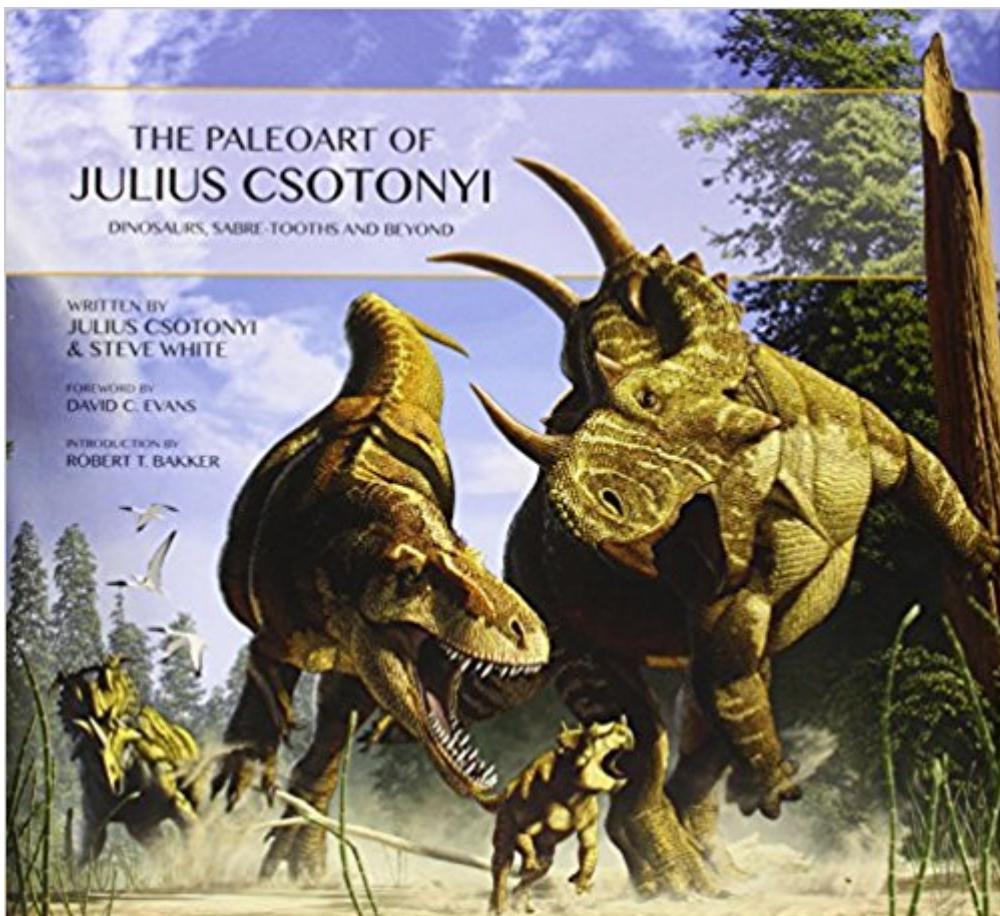


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# The Paleoart Of Julius Csotonyi



## Synopsis

The collected works of Julius Csotonyi, one of the world's most high profile and talented contemporary paleoartists. Csotonyi has considerable academic expertise that contributes to his stunning dynamic art. Csotonyi represents the natural world photorealistically and has been influenced by natural history illustrators such as Peter Zallinger, Doug Henderson and Greg Paul. He uses bold patterns and colors to paint the prehistoric world both with traditional media as well as modern digital techniques.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 156 pages

Publisher: Titan Books (May 20, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1781169128

ISBN-13: 978-1781169124

Product Dimensions: 11.4 x 0.7 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 50 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #553,377 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Dinosaurs #120 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Fossils #448 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Plants & Animals

## Customer Reviews

"Titan Books, a British publisher best known for its film and television tie-ins and graphic novels, has recently dedicated two volumes to the work of exceptional modern palaeoartists." - *Palaeontologia Electronica* "Julius Csotonyi is a gifted paleoartist who truly breathes life into long extinct creatures with his artwork. The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi would be a welcome addition to any dinosaur lover's bookshelf." - *GNN* "A rare beast of an art book: It's visually incredible, of course, but it's also content-rich, exhilarating, inspiring, and eye-opening." - *Geek Dad* "100 illustrations that just ignite the imagination." - *Junkyard Arts* "No matter how much of Csotonyi's art you've seen, nothing compares to his new book...Csotonyi's glossy new collection isn't so much a gallery as a tour through life's storied history." - *National Geographic* "Should you buy this book? Absolutely. I will happily say it's on my Top 5 list of Paleoart books people should own." - *Scientific*

American "Stunning Works of Paleoart Bring Dinosaurs To Life." - *Fast Company* "If you know a child who is just crazy about dinosaurs, then this book will bring hours of pleasure. But The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi is so gorgeously presented and packed full of fascinating information, it's just as likely to appeal to adults, too." - *Huffington Post* "Julius Csotonyi is one of those rare breed of scientific illustrators who is able to combine anatomical accuracy and scientific detail with vivid imagination and a flare for the digital medium... This makes an excellent addition to a dinosaur fan or general reader's book collection." - *Everything Dinosaur* "They may be long extinct, but thanks to one paleoartist dinosaurs have now been resurrected in stunning and terrifying detail." - *Metro International* "This book is a wonder because it captures your imagination and drops you right in the middle of a very real world." - *Adventures in Poor Taste* "Stunning 'Paleoart' will beam you back into a ferocious prehistoric world." - *Huffington Post* "Amazingly vivid...illustrates the dinosaurs and many of the beasts of millennia ago in beautiful, spectacular and vicious style." - *Wired.com* "Awesomely life-like!" - *Dino Action Magazine* "I'll do a more detailed review later this week. However if you like palaeo-art and/or specifically the work of the modern master Julius Csotonyi buy this book. It contains the majority of Mr. Csotonyi's pieces. They are of a very high quality, and the book is beautifully put together. For the mere day I've had it on the coffee table has been perused by the twice." - *Art Evolved* "You can be a lover of dinosaurs, great art, or history and you'll find something in this book for you." - *Don't Forget Your Towel*

Julius T. Csotonyi, PhD., Natural History Illustrator and Paleo-artist Julius began illustrating dinosaurs seriously in 1998. Since then he has produced work for 25 publishers and museum exhibits, with a client list that includes National Geographic; Scholastic Inc; the Royal Tyrrell Museum; and the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Julius also has considerable academic expertise, having completed both a BSc in Ecology and an MSc in Environmental Biology.

First off, this is a visually stunning book, Julius Csotonyi is the master of using composite modern photography coupled with his own highly detailed artwork. Basically his style is to use thousands of photos for use as background to create images that give the impression of being IN the mise-en-scene. He adds the drawn animals and subtracts anachronistic modern elements. This is not the artistry of Charles R. Knight but it is artistry nevertheless, that requires hours and hours of hard work. While there are no Cambrian scenes, other Paleozoic eras are limned, especially the Permian and to a lesser extent the Carboniferous (not to mention an amazing scene of a pair of

amorous Dunkleostus). Especially well represented is the early Triassic era with some very interesting scenes. There are dinosaurs, of course but this book is not weighted in favor of either the Jurassic or the Cretaceous but they ARE well represented. For example, there is a magnificent two-page spread of the heads of many of the known ceratopsians (I just can't get enough of viewing just those two pages!). The book concludes with a number of pictures from the Cenozoic (and there is a particularly beautiful scene of an early saber tooth cat lounging on a rock with a thunderstorm off in the distance). I almost gave this book 4 stars because the type is ridiculously small. Unless you have the eyesight of a hawk, you WILL need a magnifying glass to read the type explaining the pictures. This is aggravating in the extreme and the publisher should be ashamed. Nevertheless, this book is recommended for the stunning images it contains.

Csotonyi's art is fantastic, and the reproductions here are stunning, including several multi-page fold outs of some of his murals. But two issues that have nothing to do with the art itself. First, as noted by other reviewers, the type is ridiculously small. What exactly were the publishers thinking and why didn't this get corrected in proofing? Second, I'm perplexed by how the book is organized - I cannot figure it out. It's not by subject, time period, chronologically by when the art was created, by medium...it seems to be totally random. For these two reasons I was tempted to give 3 stars, but because the main attraction here is the art, and that is reproduced beautifully, I'm giving 4.

Paleoart, known also as paleoillustration or paleontography, can be considered subdivision of natural history illustration or wildlife art, but it is best described as fine mixture between art and science aiming at the realistic reconstruction of extinct flora, fauna, and even whole ecosystems. Bringing paleontological discoveries to the wide public and being the powerful tool for science communication it is, paleoart remains largely overlooked not only by the average person, but also from both artists and scientists. A sad fact indeed, but true nonetheless. It would be far-fetched to say that there are only few titles dedicated to this field, so few that they can be counted on one hand. Thus, the release of Csotonyi's *The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi* is a major event in the world of paleoart (as was its predecessor *Dinosaur Art: The World's Greatest Paleoart*). Event which can be described with just one word: quality. From the featured art, through the science (where it is presented), to the good print and quality paper, it is all a high quality product! Julius Csotonyi is one of the most prolific and successful paleoartists in

recent years, all due to his enormous artistic talent (keep in mind he is self-taught artist!) combined with his understanding of science (he is also published scientist with BSc in Ecology, MSc in Environmental Biology and PhD in Microbiology). Recently, he is the one to illustrate many of the newly described (mostly) dinosaur species or major paleontological discoveries/studies. This volume comprises the biggest collection of his artwork available to date, some of which absolutely new or appearing for first time outside the institutions where it is displayed. Given that most of Csotonyi's recent art involves combination of photomanipulation and digitally painted animals, it is not surprising this is the prevalent type of artwork included in the book. While photomanipulation is tricky technique, Julius Csotonyi clearly knows his stuff and for the most part the results are amazing. It is like the viewer is not looking at extreme detailed print of a mural, but instead transported back in time to those distant worlds, surrounded by animals that most people cannot even imagine. But it is not all about photomanipulation! "The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi" offers the whole palette of artist's employed paleoartistic techniques, which means there are plenty of traditional ink and pencil drawings, acrylics and watercolor paintings, as well as digital drawings and paintings. In my opinion, it is those artworks showing the full scale of Csotonyi's talent. Vibrant, realistic and on many occasions thought-provoking, his drawings and paintings leave no one indifferent opening their eyes for worlds long gone. The book itself is organized in several chapters, with three of them covering the three eras of the Phanerozoic eon – the Paleozoic, the Mesozoic, and the Cenozoic. Each era chapter includes artworks depicting animals and whole ecosystems from this time interval. While it is unfortunate that the art is not ordered chronologically following geological periods, or even stages, it is no wonder that the book designers did not go for this, considering what a tremendous amount of designer's work such a task is. The art included comes in variety of sizes, ranging from small square-ish works to big murals that cover up to 4 pages (there are several fold-outs), which makes it nearly impossible for organizing in better way than the general "divided into eras" approach. Some of the artworks are treated as case studies and for them more detailed information is provided, usually in relation to the depicted species or relevant study/discovery. For a couple of his brand new digital paintings, Csotonyi provides thorough explanation of his working process – from collaboration with paleontologists and storming out ideas, through the "sketch-phase and clearing of concept, to his employed digital techniques and working process. All explanations and the accompanying "work-in-progress" images reveal to the reader how complex and

difficult the work of paleoartists can get, requiring knowledge on various scientific fields like paleontology, geology, zoology, botany, ecology, and even physics. A detailed interview with the artist (situated as separate chapter in the beginning of the book) reveals even more about Csotonyi's history, preferred artistic tools and techniques, scientific background and training, his other interests and future plans, and probably most important of all his philosophy about the world we live in. Almost all of the artworks are accompanied by comments or anecdotes by many paleontologists who had collaborated with Csotonyi, or enjoy and appreciate his work. It is those small comments providing much of the science information in the book. While science information and facts are there by default (it is a book about paleoart after all) the volume is light on scientific content (not much jargon used there), so it should be fairly easy read for any layman. Also, there is nice little glossary at the end of the book. Many people criticize the book for the small font size used, and while I can understand them, I don't agree with their criticism. Usually font/text size is a matter of personal preference, and there are many people who think that small text looks and works better within layout, improving the overall design. In this particular case, I think that the usage of small text size is forced by the nature of the book's content, which is art often with size that makes it hard to fit in your usual book layout. Csotonyi's art needs space and small font size is one of the means to afford it. While there are some places where larger size could have been used, design should be uniform throughout the book and graphic designers were probably with tied hands. As a person who wears glasses, I have no problems reading the text even from distance at which most people read books. I think that book's design and layout is tight, clear and generally eye pleasing. Even with all the compliments it deserves, "The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi" is not without its little flaws, even if pointing out those may be considered nit-picking. The things which are bugging me most are: 1) the geochronological chart is outdated by about a decade and as it is clearly from recurring typo it is just copy-pasted from "Dinosaur Art"; 2) some of Csotonyi's reconstructions appear to be conservative just for the sake of being conservative, and/or slightly inaccurate, which is most obvious in his feathered dinosaurs and especially in how the wings are structured. This is in contrast with the premise that the featured art is as accurate as possible. Of course this is not meant to say his paleoart is not top-notch (which it is!), just that it is puzzling considered everything else is as accurate as it can get. Maybe the reason is that many of these artworks are commissioned by paleontologists, which means the artist is obligated to depict their ideas and not his own, no matter who the one providing better interpretation of

the available data; 3) for some of the murals, especially those depicting less known species of fish, amphibians, and lizards, it is a bit difficult for the reader to understand which animal is which. Some kind of number code (it is present once or twice in the book) would have been pretty useful for laymen, and is something worth considering by the publisher if there are going to be more books of this kind. On the other side, one may get interested in learning more about those names and the animals behind them and thus going to Wikipedia or Google Scholar, which is a great way for self-education and/or sparking further interest in the topic. After all it may not be bad decision to leave animals identity a bit hard to understand. Even when its small flaws are considered, this book deserves the highest rating possible, and anything less does not seem right. I can say for sure that "The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi" will be enjoyed by everyone with interest in paleontology or art, paleontologists and paleoartists alike, no matter of their professional status. This book will surely be especially inspirational for young paleoartists, at least it was for me. It is without a doubt major event for the world of paleoart. In my opinion, this volume is highly recommended for anyone with even passing interest in the subject, no matter of their age. Kids will surely love it, so if you are parent who wants to spark their kid's interest in natural world and natural history, or have kid already interested in dinosaurs, "The Paleoart of Julius Csotonyi" is one of the best presents you can think of (along with its predecessor "Dinosaur Art"). With a price of 20-something dollars, it is a great deal as you are going to get much more than you are paying for!

I recently purchased the book 'Dinosaur Art: The World's Greatest Paleoart' (Dinosaur Art: The World's Greatest Paleoart) and so discovered the work of Julius Csotonyi. I was so wowed by his work, I just had to get his book. Utilizing digital technology this paleo-artist has created magnificent murals, so life-like and realistic one could think he used a time machine to take actual photographs. The text accompanying the pictures does provide some scientific details, but mostly focuses on the reasons and processes in the creation of the individual picture, which personally I found quite fascinating, and it shows just how much work goes into making each and every picture. The pictures themselves - all very inspiring - cover not just the mesozoic dinosaur era and dinosaurs in particular, but includes underwater scenes, flying reptiles and life in the post-dino era (cenozoic - i.e. mammoths etc), and even a modern-day artist impression of a far away world recently discovered by astronomers.

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