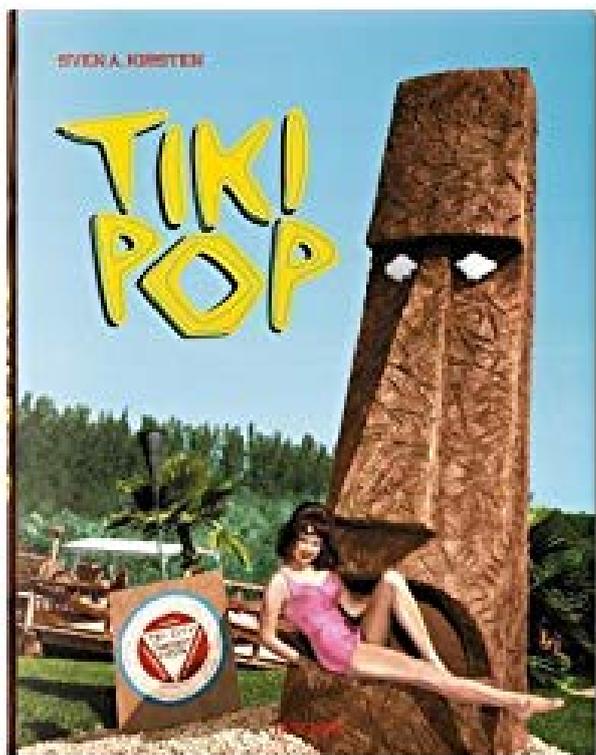


Tiki Pop



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Author:	Sven A. Kirsten
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Cult of kitsch: The art and history of the Tiki phenomenon Tiki culture at its height was a manifestation of exotic visions of island culture inspired by the tales of American soldiers stationed in the South Pacific during World War II: trees loaded with exotic fruits, sleepy lagoons, white-sand beaches, and gorgeous people wearing grass skirts as they danced half-naked during all-night orgies of food and music. Americans embraced these visions and incorporated fantasy into reality: mid-century fashion, popular music, eating and drinking, and even architecture were influenced by the Tiki trend. With unfettered enthusiasm—ignoring scholarly authenticity and political correctness—American artisans molded the Tiki into their own image, creating a mid-century pop culture genre that was forgotten until the 2000s, when urban archeologist Sven Kirsten wrested the figure of the Tiki from obscurity with his pioneering TASCHEN books *The Book of Tiki* and *Tiki Modern*. This book traces the development of Tiki as romantic vision and kitschy cultural appropriation, from its earliest beginnings when James Cook “discovered” the Pacific Islands in the second half of the 18th century to Herman Melville’s South Sea adventure stories like *Moby Dick* and Gauguin’s exuberant, exotic paintings to the jungle fantasies of the Hollywood dream factory. Published in connection with an exhibition at the prestigious Musée du quai Branly in Paris, *Tiki Pop* the culmination of Sven Kirsten’s research efforts. With his widely lauded visual style, the author places venerable ancient godheads next to their Polynesian pop counterparts.

With hundreds of previously unpublished images, the story of Tiki the 20th-century pop icon unfolds from its earliest beginnings to its spectacular downfall in the dawning awareness of the Western world’s colonial misdeeds.