

Librarian's Shelf by Karen Connell

Cover Your Coffee Table

Coffee table books, big books, oversized books.... whatever you'd like to call them, the Columbus Public Library has them available for you to check out and take home! These books are typically too large to carry around with you like a standard sized book, but they have beautiful photos or illustrations and contain interesting information on a topic. Whether you are having company or just want something to browse while at home, we have a variety of large books perfect for your coffee table.

National Geographic publishes excellent coffee table books and we have one of their latest for you to check out. "The Photo Ark" by Joel Sartore features over 400 of Sartore's animal portraits. Sartore has photographed more than 6000 species as part of the National Geographic Photo Ark project. This is about half the number of species of animals under human care. In addition to photos of animals, there are short articles highlighting heroes who rescue, breed, or care for a variety of animals.

"The Bizarre and Incredible World of Plants" edited by Alexandra Papadakis is another photo focused oversized book. These images are of various plants or seeds and have been captured using special light and scanning electron microscopy. Cross sections are included to reveal the interior of flowers and other plants. In addition to the photos, information regarding plants is included. The importance of color, pollen, water, etc. is discussed in regards to the plants' evolution and survival. It's written in a very technical style, but this is still great for the lay reader like me. I prefer this book for the amazing images!

Less a coffee table book, and more of an oversized how to guide, DK Publishing's "The Night Sky Month by Month" by Will Gater and Giles Sparrow is full of facts. This book could keep a guest, or yourself, entertained for hours. Monthly sky guides are included, along with instructions for using the sky guides. An astronomy enthusiast could skip straight to the sky guides, but for the layperson, the book begins by explaining the basics of looking into space and looking at specific stars, as well as what equipment is needed for star gazing.

Also by DK Publishing, "Musicals: The Definitive Illustrated Story" is jam packed with facts and photos from the history of musicals. This coffee table book is divided into four parts: The Modern Musical to 1939, A Golden Age 1940-1969, New Inventions 1970-1999, and A Musical Revival 2000- present. Presented in chronological order, photos from the musicals, advertisements, or actors are included alongside tidbits about the show such as an actor's biography, or information about the musical score.

These and other oversized books can be found in the library by subject with the rest of the nonfiction collection. Stop by or call the Columbus Public Library at 402-564-7116 if you have any questions about these books, other oversized books in the collection, or any other resources we offer.