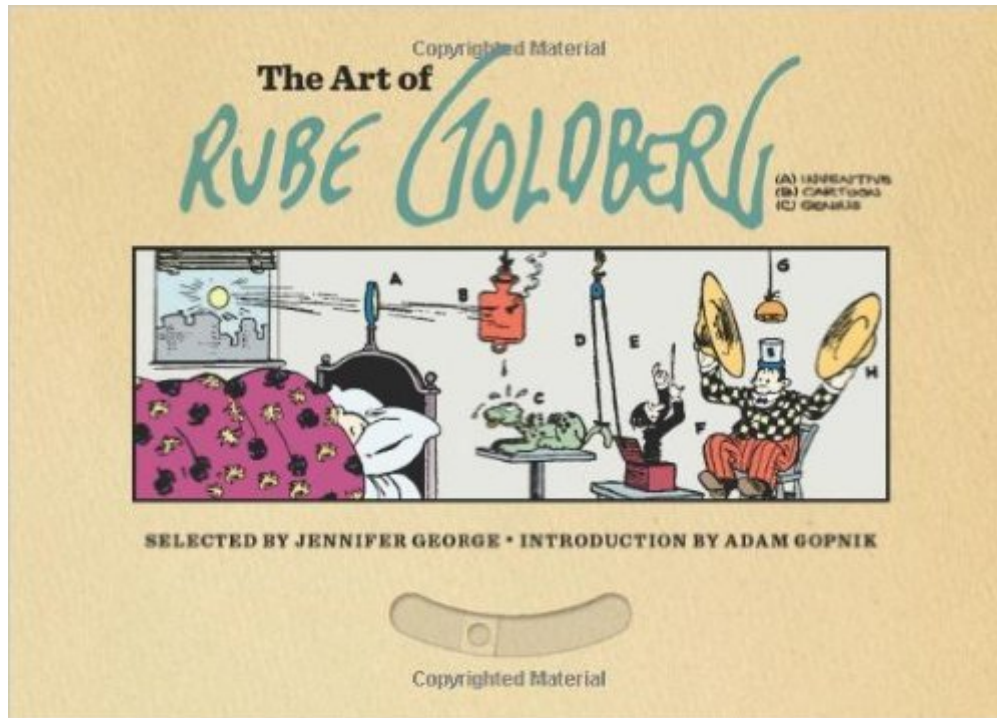


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# The Art Of Rube Goldberg: (A) Inventive (B) Cartoon (C) Genius



## Synopsis

Not many of us make it into the dictionary as an adjective. But then again, Rube Goldberg was no ordinary noun. He was a cartoonist, humorist, sculptor, author, engineer, and inventor, and in a 72-year career he wrote and illustrated nearly 50,000 cartoons. Goldberg (1883–1970) was the most famous cartoonist of his time, best known for his comical inventions, which were syndicated in daily newspapers throughout the world. Author Jennifer George celebrates all aspects of her grandfather's career, from his very first published drawings in his high school newspaper and college yearbook to his iconic inventions, his comic strips and advertising work, and his later sculpture and Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoons. Also included are essays by noted comics historians, rare photographs, letters, memorabilia, and patents, many reproduced here for the first time. Brilliantly designed and packaged to capture the inventiveness of Rube Goldberg's work, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* is a coffee table book the whole family can enjoy. From Merriam-Webster's Dictionary: Rube Goldberg. adjective \rē b-ĕ-gŏl(d)-ĕbĕrg\: accomplishing by complex means what seemingly could be done simply ; also: characterized by such complex means. also: Rube Goldberg's cartoons touch the edge of modern art. •

Adam Gopnik, from his introduction

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Rube Goldberg was born in 1883 during the golden age of invention, just eight years after Bell

patented his telephone and five years after Edison filed his first light bulb patent. A flood of new machines were developed and commercialized during his youth, and while he produced a wide range of comic art throughout his long career, he's most famous for lampooning our modern fascination with mechanical contraptions. Goldberg started drawing as a young child, grew up to study and work as an engineer, and then combined his love of art and technology, keeping at it with such a consistently witty flair that his name became a household word. More than a humorist, his political cartoons won him both a Pulitzer Prize and such enmity during World War II that he asked his sons to change their family name to George for their own protection. He also wrote a feature film for the Three Stooges and later became an accomplished sculptor. A frequent visitor to the White House, he continued working nearly nonstop until his death in 1970 at the age of 87. This big, wide, full-color book (more than twice the size of a thick hardcover) allows Goldberg's granddaughter Jennifer and six other authors, including Al Jaffee of Mad Magazine fame, to present the man's prolific output in all its glorious variety. The cover itself is a cartoon animated by the swipe of a finger, and the Rube Goldberg device that drives this animation is visible through a plastic window on the back of the cover.

This large landscape book is an affectionate and wonderful celebration of Goldberg's art with several dozen examples of his cartoon inventions but there was much more to him than that. As well as being a cartoonist he produced comedy shorts, wrote newspaper columns, did some screen writing for Twentieth Century Fox, starred in his own TV show, drew editorial cartoons and when he retired in 1964 took up sculpture. The first comic strip, in 1908, was called 'They all look good when they're far away', the crazy invention cartoons started in 1912 and by 1915 his work appeared in newspapers all over America. During the Forties he did more political editorial cartoons and I thought his style was rather similar to the Washington Post's Herblock especially in the use of a textured tone to show depth. He's quoted on page 169 saying "Political cartoons were easier for me than the inventions because they were almost pure idea, and the draftsmanship relatively simple". Goldberg's delightful invention cartoons frequently had an inspired extra panel, bottom right, sometimes called Foolish Questions where he allowed his offbeat sense of humour to flow. For example on the invention drawing for May 14, 1929 is Foolish Question, number 47,389,100 showing a couple in bed with the word 'meow' in the window frame, she says "Is that a cat?" - he says "No, it's a mule giving an imitation of a mocking bird". Foolish Questions was, in fact, his first real cartoon hit when it started as a single panel in 1908, five hundred were created between 1908 and 1910 and book reprints soon followed.

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