

Their Satanic Majesties Request

The Title

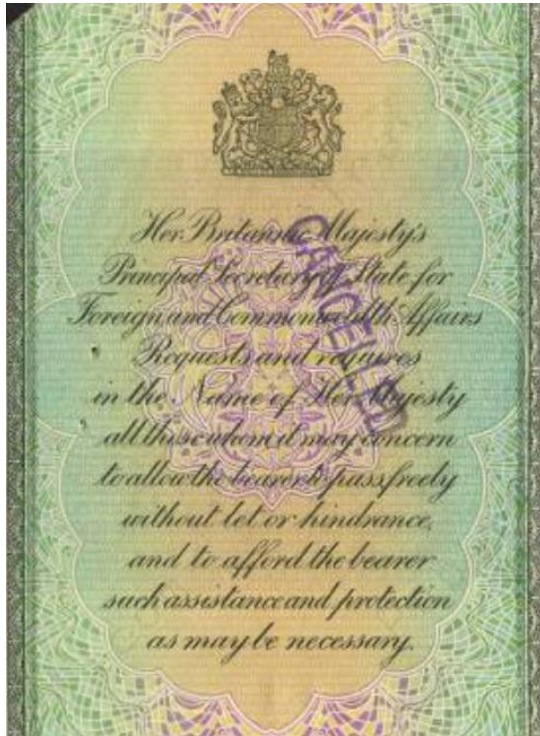
Controversy over a Rolling Stones album cover would not arrive in full bloom until their next LP, *Beggars Banquet*, with its graffiti ridden toilet cover that was suppressed for over a decade. The seeds of cover controversy were sown in the early stages of *Their Satanic Majesties Requests*, however. One story has it that the cover was to have been a shot of Mick Jagger in his jail cell after a drug bust. Supposedly, the photographer was caught and the film was confiscated. Then, the album's working title was Cosmic Christmas or The Rolling Stones Cosmic Christmas. The

In South Africa and the Philippines the album was released as *The Stones Are Rolling* because of the word "Satanic" in the title.

Stones imagined it available at Christmastime with a 12" x 12" photo of Mick Jagger's nude body nailed to a cross on the cover. The band's label company, apparently the only adult left in the room, nixed this concept. "Cosmic Christmas," aka "We Wish You a

Cosmic Joke," is a vestige of this original concept. The unlisted track is an instrumental song credited to B. Wyman. It consists of several seconds of music tacked on to the end of side one's "Sing This All Together (See What Happens)." According to fan lore, this tack-on (it begins at about 7:54 in STAT(SWH)) should be played at 45 instead of 33. The unrecognizable music more clearly becomes an electronic rendition of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" with psychedelic percussion. Bill Wyman is credited by Keno.org with the mellotron although some sources identify the instrument as an oscillator. Unconfirmed fan folklore has suggested it may be possible to hear singing in this recording. This author can confirm that if you listen to it often enough the suggestion of voices can be discerned if not in the song than in the mind's desire to stop listening. Listen to sped up and normal versions here

https://dangerousminds.net/comments/having_a_cosmic_christmas_with_the_rolling_stones



The album title changed when Mick, perhaps contemplating the challenges of international travel, considering the recent drug busts of 3/5 of the band, was looking at his passport. The old black British passports said "Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs requests and requires in the name of Her Majesty that all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford the bearer such assistance and protection as may be necessary." Often shortened to "Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State Requests and Requires..." Inspired, Mick wanted to call the album "Her Satanic Majesty Requests and Requires." Decca, once again playing spoiler, categorically rejected that idea which was subsequently replaced by the less provocative title, *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, which,

interestingly, only appears on the rear of the album.

The title played on the straight world's perception of the band as devils incarnate and the passport link was to the continuing uncertainty about their ability to travel internationally, given the year they'd had. When traveling to the album cover photoshoot, Keith faced enormous problems getting through NY immigration on September 13, 1967. Mick also faced half an hour of questions when he arrived via a later flight.

1967 was rough for the Stones. There were enough drugs to nearly destroy the band. Jagger, Richards and Jones were all arrested on drug charges. Anita Pallenberg left Jones for Richards. Jones had a nervous breakdown and spent three weeks in the Priory Nursing Home in Richmond, Surrey. Andrew Loog Oldham, the band's manager and producer, quit or was fired depending on the memoir you read. Between court appearances and jail stints, the entire band was rarely in the studio at the same time. When they were it was usually with an entourage and a load of dope.

Title settled; the concept followed. Gered Mankowitz had been the Stones photographer for quite some time. Andrew Loog Oldham had been their manager even longer. Michael Cooper, a friend of Keith's and the band, had recently designed and shot the cover of the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Mankowitz describes a seminal event in the late summer of 1967.

The arrival of Michael Cooper marked the departure Of Gered Mankowitz as Stones photographer. Gered was a friend of Andrew Loog Oldham who was being phased out. He said, "Mick and Michael Cooper appeared and in front of me they went up to Andrew in the control room and said: 'Andrew this is what we're

gonna do for the cover.'" In this one fell swoop, Oldham was told his services were no longer

needed by the band and Mankowitz, his friend, was being told he was no longer the Stones photographer. Jagger and Cooper planned to outdo Sgt. Pepper.

On July 7, 1967 Cooper wrote to the Stones manager, Andrew Oldham, on a piece of stationery designed for himself by Robert Brownjohn, later of *Let It Bleed* album cover fame. The letterhead of the stationery read: "Robert Brownjohn designed this letterheading for Michael Cooper of 4 Chelsea Manor Studios Flood Street London SW3 FLA 9762." His letter follows with his original spacing and punctuation:

Dear Andrew,

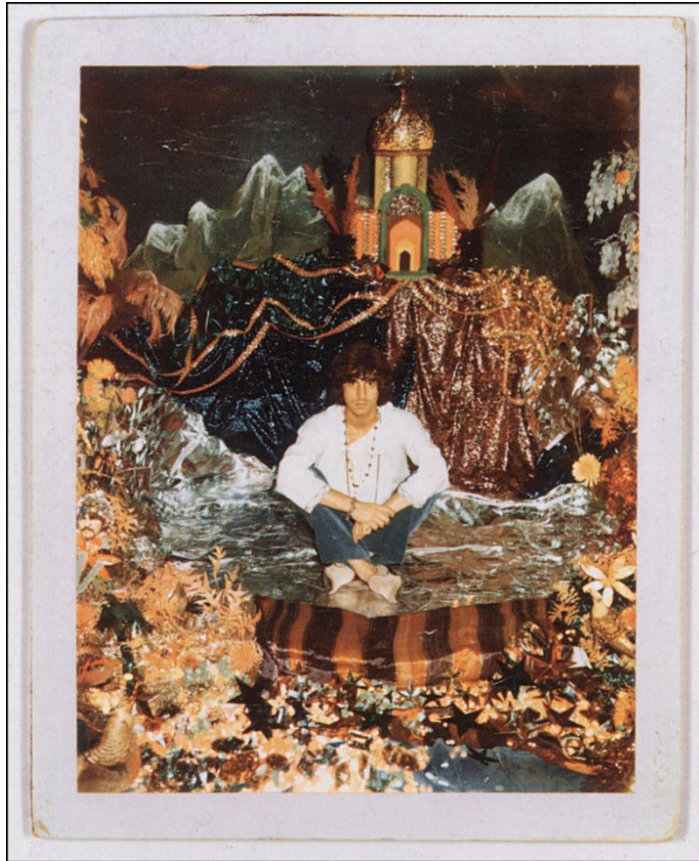
As you probably gathered from our talk last night the cover is going to involve myself, and my studio in a great deal of time and organization, so I feel that the best way for us to do it is the way that I work on my films, (Which I would like you to see some time) whereby I act as the Producer of the cover, taking all the problems off your hands, and my full fee is paid in advance to cover all the costs that I shall incur. A rough outline of these are listed below.

- 1.Pre-design work, building rough set, and working out layout of complete cover. (I need to get the boys together very soon for a photo session.)
- 2.Doing photographs of the group for final set and back of cover.
- 3.Designing and photographing back cover. (I must have the complete copy for this as soon as possible)
- 4.Costs of myself and one assistant going to New York for five days and personal expenses involved.
- 5.Buying all materials needed to build the set,which will have to be about ten feet square.
- 6.Costs of hiring the studios and special 3D camera from Vari-View,plus costs of using their technical staff..

The Pepper Bar

Most Beatles album covers had been the work of a single artist and a few assistants. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* required the thoughts and talents of a large group of people. Jann Haworth and Peter Blake were co-designers. Together they designed what we see on the "Pepper" cover. Paul McCartney called Robert Fraser the unofficial art director on the project. His partner, Michael Cooper, was the photographer. Cooper had three studio assistants on the project, they were photographers Nigel Hartnup and Trevor Sutton and junior assistant Andrew Boulton. The cover set was built with two months of creative, hands-on, hard work. EMI rolled out the red carpet for the Beatles, they came in for a three-hour photo shoot once the set had been built.

By contrast, the "Majesties" set was built in three days by Michael Cooper and the Rolling Stones. The Stones pitched Cooper's idea to Allen Klein and ABKCO, the Stones relations were already souring with both these parties. Michael Cooper's son, Adam, reports they said "Yeah,



fine you can do whatever you want, but you're going to have to build the set and you're gonna have to go out and buy the clothing." Richards said, "We made that set ourselves. We built the set on acid, went all round New York getting the flowers and the rest of the props; we were painting it, spraying it. We were just loony, and after the Beatles had done Sgt. Pepper, it was like, let's get even more ridiculous."

Richards went on at length in Cooper's book, "First we go down to the flower district and get all the plants, the foliage. That's where these weird little Japanese people had this process of making a 3-D picture. IT was somewhere like Queens on the outskirts of New York. I remember going to Manhattan on a Sunday, trying to buy all the plants and going to the costume place. Michael was being incredibly fussy about which

Michael Cooper on set of album cover

plants he'd like. We went to the studios with spray cans and made the whole thing ourselves and we made our own set for the album cover—so different from the Beatles with Sgt. Pepper. It was like, "Got the glue?", "Can I have the saw when you're finished with it, Michael?" and bits of Styrofoam—like two or three days of handicrafts. We kept popping out and buying things when we ran out."

Wyman said, "Michael Cooper's imaginative plan for the Satanic Majesties cover took us to a studio at Pictorial Productions, Mount Vernon, New York that night, where we helped prepare a warehouse for the session the next day. We all got totally involved in doing the album cover. Michael had already laid out a basic idea and he said, "Right, I want you to decorate it because it's your picture." So, we all got stuck in. Michael had got all the stuff together and there were piles of it in the studio—just like Christmas decorations. I hung up the Saturn thing to float from the ceiling. We added our own artistic little touches to it and we went out to get clothes, and down to the flower district for plants and foliage. We put all the faces of the Beatles in some of the flowers. We all went to the studio with spray cans. We kept popping out and buying things when we ran out. Michael took the first 3-D pictures of us dressed up, using a 3-D camera from Japan, as well as, some normal photos."

So, Cooper purchased all the ingredients for building the “set” for the cover of Satanic Majesties and put the Stones to work to make it. The set included two planets hanging in the sky, a Taj Mahal-like structure, a camel, a long-tailed bird, the Beatles faces hidden in flowers, and other treasures that would occupy the drug-addled minds of Stones fans for hours at a time for years to come. For three days, the Stones built the outlandishly exotic set in a Manhattan photo Studio. They assembled colorful shrubbery out of scraps of paper, built landscapes with colored foil, constructed a Himalayan backdrop with white material draped over a wooden frame, painted the red Saturn that hung over the Himalayas. They used ribbons, beads, glitter and all manner of decorative paraphernalia. There are photos of Keith building the set with a saw and glue. Brian Jones is holding a can of spray paint. Bill Wyman is intently working away on the landscape. Mick Jagger is crouching on the floor cutting a piece of foil. The Morrison Hotel Gallery provides photos of some of these activities at <https://www.morrisonhotelgallery.com/collections/pf2pvr/iTheir-Satanic-Majesties-Requesti---The-Making-of-an-Album-Cover> accessed November 21, 2019.

From Barry Miles 1997, p. 345:

“The money men at EMI were horrified when the saw the bill for the [Sgt. Pepper] sleeve. Their usual budget for a sleeve photograph was £25, perhaps rising to £75 for an act as big as the Beatles. Copyright and retouching fees for the cut-out heroes came to £1,367.13.3d. Robert Fraser and Michael Cooper’s fees amounted to £1,500.12.0d, out of which Peter Blake [and Haworth] was given £200. Sir Joe Lockwood told Robert Fraser that he could have hired the whole of the London Symphony Orchestra for what it cost.” Total = £2,867, 1967 price levels

£2,867 in 1967 is like £43,420 today and that is worth \$55,583 (November 2019). \$25,000 in 1967 is worth \$192,500 today, so TSMR cover cost 3.4 times what Pepper cost.

Mick was adamant that the Stones cover should cost more than the Beatles. The 3D and cover art ran in excess of \$25,000. Jagger said, “We were on acid doing the cover picture. I always remember doing that. It was like being at school, you know, sticking on the bits of colored paper and things. It was really silly. But we enjoyed it.” The album cover was shot September 17, 2019. Then the Stones returned to London.

The Photography

The cover is believed to be notable for having the first three-dimensional lenticular layout in music history. This work of art was designed by Michael Cooper and his crew of Stones, who asked him to surpass Peter Blake's Sgt. Pepper cover photograph. The big innovation was the use of lenticular technology, which allows the image to have the ability to change or move as it is viewed from different angles in addition to its three-dimensional look.

The original cover design called for the lenticular image to take up the entire front cover. This concept proved to be prohibitively expensive so the image was scaled down by a third and surrounded by a blue-and-white graphic design. Even with this modified design Decca says manufacturing the picture was more costly than the actual retail price. So, Decca and London actually lost money for every copy sold.

Robert Fraser, an art dealer, arrested with the Stones at the Redlands bust said, "The Satanic Majesties thing was entirely Michael's idea. He has this crazy idea to use a special 3-D camera in New Jersey (sic), which was the only place in the world where this could be done. There was a colossal camera...The result was never as great as hoped."

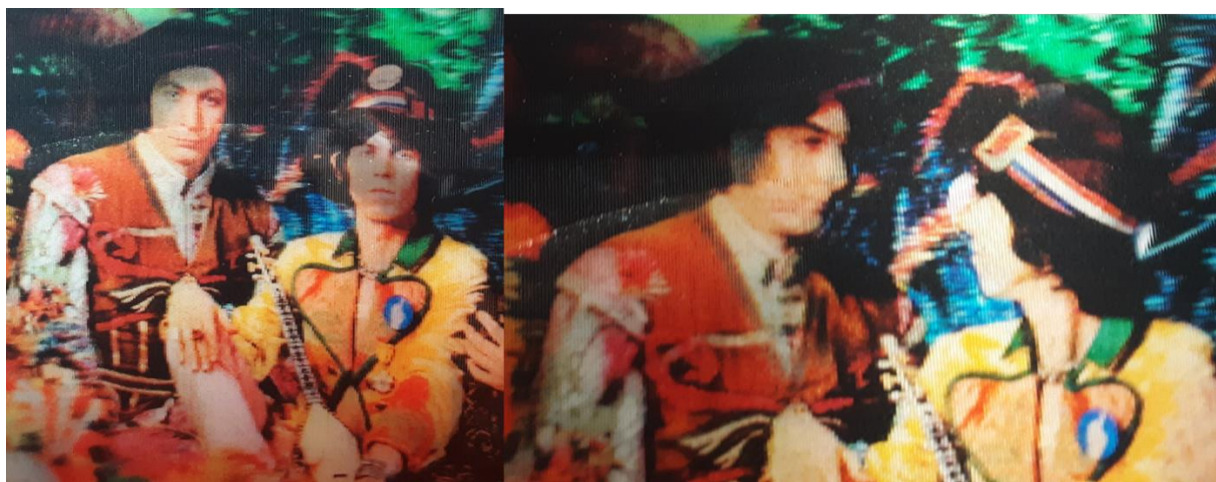
Eventually the lenticular cover was replaced by a simple photograph. The album was re-released as a limited edition in the 1980s with the lenticular cover. The original master materials were then destroyed, intentionally, so that it could never be produced again. An exception to never was granted for the 50th anniversary edition of the album, which came with a reproduction of the original lenticular cover.

Cooper decided to pursue both 3D and motion effects on the cover. The lenticular method combines multiple frames in the image. The varying depths of the frames provide the 3D effects. In lenticular animation, images that animate when tilted up/down work better than animations that animate left/right. Cooper opted for left/right animation for the cover. Mick, as the central figure of the image, does not animate at all. This stability highlights the movement and gives your eye a frame of reference.

Some of us spent way too much time trying to discern the lenticular magic. There was movement but the revised images were not terribly clear and it was difficult to get all the Stones faces clear at once from a single direction/angle. Finding the hidden Beatles on the original cover? Forget about it.



Above left is the default view of Brian and Bill. When the right side of the album is lowered and the left side is raised you see the view on the right. A similar effect is observed to Mick's left where Charlie and Keith sit.



Sgt. Pepper's Jealous Hearts Club Fan

"I would just like to list what we did and what the Stones did two months after on every fuckin' album. Every fuckin' thing we did, Mick does exactly the same—he imitates us. And I would like one of you fuckin' underground people to point it out: you know Satanic Majesties is Pepper; "We Love you" it's the most fuckin' bullshit, that's "All You Need Is Love." Thus, sprach John Lennon.



Beatles fans joined in awkward chorus; the Stones were "ripping off The Beatles." All of Pepper's spontaneous innovations calculatedly trotted out again. Wah, wah, wah. The fans cared more than either of the bands did. Richards admitted, "Maybe we were doing it a little bit after them. Anyway, we were following them through so many scenes. We're only just mirrors ourselves of that whole thing. It took us much longer to get a record out for us, our stuff was always coming out later anyway." Years later, Keith added, "The Beatles sounded great when they were the Beatles. But there's not a lot of roots in that music. I think they got carried away. Why not? If

you're the Beatles in the Sixties, you just get carried away – you forget what it is you wanted to do. You're starting to do Sgt. Pepper. Some people think it's a genius album, but I think it's a mishmash of rubbish, kind of like Satanic Majesties – 'Oh, if you can make a load of shit, so can we.'" Jagger also said, "Sgt. Pepper's was coming out, so we thought basically we were doing a put-on."

The Album Cover

There was no secret, Mick wanted to outdo the Beatles with this album cover. It is a thinly-disguised bit of one-upmanship on the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* masterpiece, which also featured an elaborate sleeve shot by Cooper that Majesties pastiches. But tribute was paid, if you look carefully enough you will see the faces of the Beatles hidden among the flowers.

The faces of the four Beatles are not easy to see on the original cover, they are even more difficult to see on the 50th anniversary edition of the cover. George Harrison's face may be the easiest to spot. It's below Charlie Watt's right elbow where his forearm would be. John Lennon's face is just above the camel's hump. Paul McCartney and Ringo are much harder to see. Paul's face is to the viewer's left of Charlie Watt's right elbow. The face is tilted to the viewer's left and it is well hidden among the flowers. Ringo's face is well hidden to the viewer's right of Bill Wyman's left upper arm. There is a large red flower with a yellow center that looks like a large eye on Bill Wyman's left arm. Ringo's face is just to the right of this flower.



The hidden faces of the Beatles were a wink and a nod to their friends who similarly acknowledged the Stones with a message on the sweater of a Shirley Temple doll displayed on the Pepper cover.



The top third of the photo is dominated by the Himalaya Mountains, constructed of a wooden frame draped in white cloth. A gaudy Taj Mahal-like structure occupies the center of the photo. Above it to the left is an angry red Saturn, the handiwork of Bill Wyman. A huge moonlike planet dominates the upper right of the photo. Below the moonlike planet is a decorated white bush, home to two birds, one green the other blue and yellow with a long light blue tail. Peacock feathers decorate the bottom of the bush, the eyes quite prominent. Opposing the white bush on the left margin is a yellow and red version of the same plant. A bright yellow bird stands near the top of the bush, it is possible that a black bird perches beneath it.

The middle third of the photo is occupied by a craggy plateau of colorful foil landscape-blue, green, reds. Atop this foil plateau sits a colorful minaret that appears to be a take-off of the Taj Mahal. In front of all this we find the Stones seated cross-legged in the middle of a tacky psychedelic hippie scene. It was the sixties; we are all sorry if you missed it.



Their dress style on the front cover has been variously described in reviews as psychedelic medieval pranksters, mystical robes, blatantly Pepperish outfits, troubadours of fairy-tale characters, funny costumes, psychedelic minstrel gear, pantomime outfits, peak psychedelic regalia, kaftans, and psychedelic finery of the time. The costumes were rented from a costumer in Manhattan. Each Stone has chosen a personal statement hat and a colorful costume to accompany it.

Charlie is in matching flowered shirt and pants covered with a colorful red vest and a jauntily placed hat. Keith appears without a shirt in a yellow jacket with a maroon hat festooned with a small American flag, not visible on the album cover. True to form, he is not without a stringed instrument, speculated to be a saz or something similar. Mick is wrapped in a black robe with embroidered edges and a crescent mooned pointy wizard's hat, reminiscent of Mickey Mouse in Fantasia. Brian has chosen a costume decorated with moons and accented with a bandolier-like pair of belts across the chest and a tall pink hat. Bill looks a bit wizardly himself in a star festooned costume with a suave feathered Pilgrim hat.

In the lower third or foreground of the picture we find a potpourri of images, resting amidst flowers and foil. On the left, there is a large white sphere decorated with ribbons to make it appear to be a creatively colorful pumpkin. Across the middle of this pumpkin/ball is the long-feathered tail of an unidentified bird. At the base of the pumpkin/ball is a bright red cornucopia that has spilled a long trail of colorful red, yellow and black fruit. At the far right end of the fruit spill is a saddled camel draped in a purple cloth.

All of this is more or less visible in the lenticular cover, depending on its vintage and condition. Notice how the tilt of Mick's hat differs between the album cover and the normal photo. This is simply the cant of the hat not a lenticular illusion.

The blue and white border has been described as a marble pattern but it has decided nuances of sky and clouds.

The Rear Cover

The rear cover illustration is a painting done by the man with a name of 1,000 spellings, Tony Meeviwiffen (aka, Meeuwissen and many other spellings between). It is a salute of sorts to the four basic elements of earth, water, fire and air. An idyllic earth scene appears at the bottom of

Brian Jones purportedly played no guitar on the album. His contributions by listing number were mellotron (1-3, 5-10), flute (2, 5, 10), percussion (1, 5), saxophone (1, 2, 10), sound effects (3), acoustic guitar (4, 7), vibraphone (5), theremin (5, 9), jew's harp (5), brass (5), organ (7), electric dulcimer (2, 8, 9), recorder (8), sarod (8), and harp (10)

the cover. A stream on the left side of the cover runs through a varied landscape with nine exotic-winged birds and trippy trees and vegetation. A sunrise is visible in the lower right corner. Water in layered colors swirls and peaks into waves on the left side of the cover. This water bleeds down to the earth, forming the headwaters of the earth stream. Leaping tongues of fire form the upper edge of the painting. Seven birds navigate the space between the flames. The flames

appear to give rise to billowing smoke on the right side of the cover. Small spaces of blue outline the smoke and clouds that waft through the air. Nine more birds fly the right edge of the cover.

The album title, the set list and credits are printed on what appears to be a piece of cross stitch fabric placed on top of a picture of various flowers. The spaces in the fabric allow the general shape of the flowers to bleed through the fabric. The fabric itself is irregularly shaped. It is

almost a square except for the Arrow-like protuberance at the upper right end of the square. This protuberance is edged in red material consistent with a green flowered fabric that abuts it.



The album title appears in an unidentified font that has succeeded somehow in capturing a satanic feel. The playlist appears in lower case font. Instead of side 1 and side 2 we find the devilishly clever frontside and backside. Bill Wyman gets a credit writing and singing “in another land” but the Rolling Stones get a credit for producing it. The fifth line of credits says “cover built by the rolling stones, michael cooper, and artchie at pictorial productions, mount vernon, n.y.”

The Gatefold

What do Their Satanic Majesties and Our Lady of Reims Cathedral have in common? They both use the same maze. Wyman said, “Brian got the idea of doing the maze for the inside of the cover. It was a bit complicated and I’ve never quite worked out what it was all about...I thought, knowing Brian, that it would have been one of those mazes where there was no way out—that he’d done it on purpose for people who were stoned out of their brains, to keep them out of the way for a couple of days, or that it was something he’d give to his friends when they came round for dinner.” Read on.



The inner sleeve shows scenes from many pieces of art. Cooper has taken images from pieces of art and maps, sometimes multiple images from the same piece, and arranged them into a Hieronymus Bosch-like collage. Some of them have been identified below. The vast majority have not been.

1. The Abduction of the Sabine Women by Nicolas Poussin
2. Saint Michael Vanquishing Satan by Raphael
3. Bani Thani by Nihâl Chand
4. Lady with an Ermine by Leonardo Da Vinci
5. The Virgin Annunciate by Antonello da Messina
6. The Judgment of Paris by Lucas Cranach the Elder

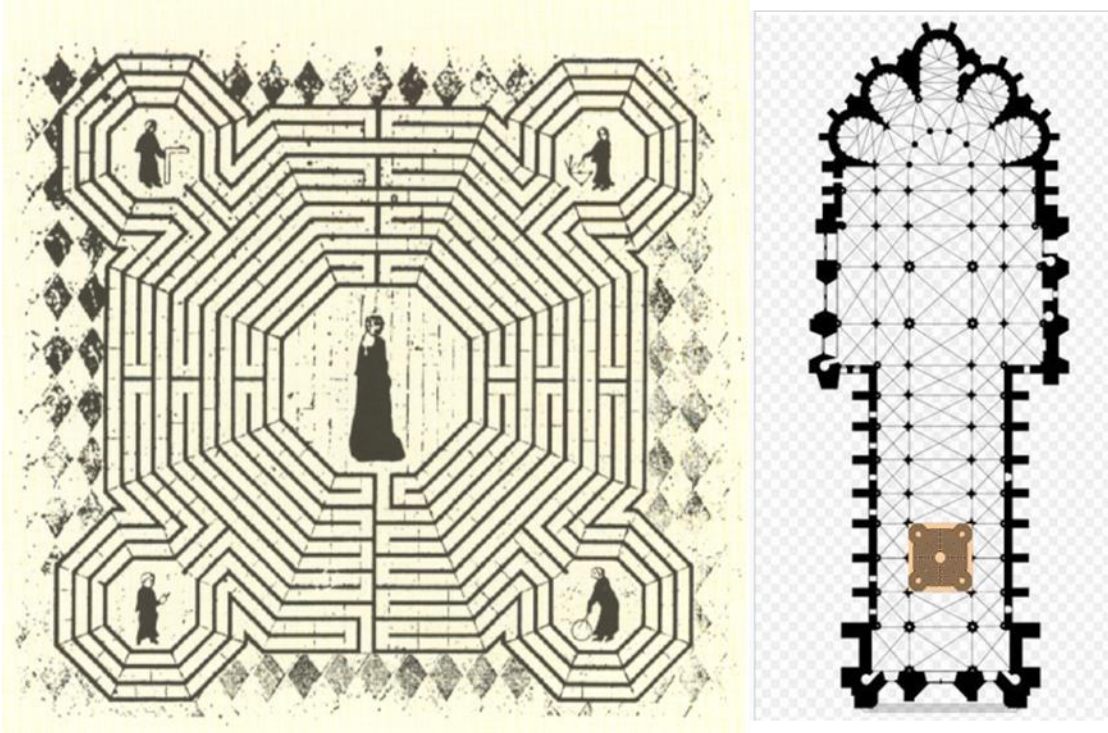
7. Birth of Cupid by Master of Flora
8. Augustus and the Sibyl by Antoine Caron
9. Breton Brother and Sister by William Bouguereau
10. Odalisque with Slave by Ingres
11. From the cover of (Francois) Bernier's Travels in the Moghul Empire

On the left side of the gatefold is a maze. It rests on bits of a world map. The maze rests upon bits of world map. Section A, somewhat cropped in this image, shows Maryland and a portion of the East Coast of the United States. Section B shows the coast of South America at Uruguay and Argentina. Section C shows the Gulf of Guinea from Ghana to Cameroon. Section D shows a segment of China and Mongolia. Section E returns to the South America, this time the North and Western parts of Ecuador and Columbia.

There is a green entry arrow at the bottom of the maze but it is impossible to solve the maze. Any good cheater knows if you begin at the finish line it is easier to solve a maze. If you start at the 'It's Here' finish you always end up at the white x. If you enter at the green arrow you end up at the white o.

The maze itself is a representation of the Labyrinth of Reims Cathedral. Notre-Dame de Reims or "Our Lady of Reims" is a Roman Catholic cathedral in Reims, France. The cathedral was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and is famous for being the traditional location for the coronation of the kings of France. The labyrinth was installed on the floor of the nave of the Cathedral. A distinctive aspect of this labyrinth was the inclusion within it of depictions of the master masons of the cathedral. At the center of the original labyrinth, where "It's Here" is found, was an image of the master builder of the Cathedral, Aubry de Humbert. Images of four major architects are found in the corners of the original labyrinth. The church labyrinths were paths of colored stone Christian people follow on their knees as a symbolic pilgrimage or to win indulgences. This labyrinth was inaugurated on 6 January 1286 at the coronation of Philippe le Bel. It covered the central part of the nave at the third and fourth spans as shown on the right below. The labyrinth was removed in 1779 by priests charged with running the cathedral

because they were disturbed by children playing on the labyrinth during ceremonies.



Labyrinth at Reims Cathedral

The Inner Sleeve

The slipcase varied from the red mono to the blue stereo as seen below. The pattern is familiar from the front cover of the album. As a complete sheet it looks less cloudlike than white paint on a blue/red background. These are also presumed to be the work of Michael Cooper.



The Record

The record label had a tiny touch of distinction. Instead of the traditional side 1 and side 2 designations this record label identified the front side and the back side. The rear of the album spelled these as compound words; frontside and backside.



Last of Its Kind

At some point in time The Rolling Stones became rock and roll royalty. Rock historians are best positioned to identify that point in time. One might nominate *Their Satanic Majesties Request* as a potential breakpoint. This was the final album sleeve to have more than a hint of a previous Beatles cover or to present a standard approach to album cover art. From this point on they set their own course and began to commission immensely talented and influential artists for their album sleeve designs. Their status as rock and roll royalty provided them access to a galaxy of talent mere mortals could not reach. Michael Cooper was, himself, the successful photographer of Pepper. Soon the Stones would hire Michael Joseph, Ethan Russell, Robert Brownjohn, Andy Warhol, Robert Frank, David Bailey and more celebrated designers. From this point forward, the Stones projected an increasingly confident sense of the band's distinctive persona through their album art.

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