

Taschen has unleashed another extraordinary coffee table tome. When it arrived at the office and we lifted the box... we thought they'd sent a coffee table by mistake. Although we haven't weighed it, *Jan Saudek* by Daniela Mrazkova is surely the heaviest book of the year, as well as one of the oddest. For those unfamiliar with Czech photographer Jan Saudek, his hand-tinted photographs are a world apart. One thinks of Fellini, a carnival side show, a surrealist dream Breton might have had. Strange and savagely beautiful. Naked narratives staged before painted backdrops or peeling walls that appear to move (think Eadweard Muybridge)..., Bosch-like cameos, bondage scenes, a Victorian-futurist damsel with gun to mouth, a fat lady and a weight lifter mimic poses. Saudek has fused a thousand influences with his own peculiar vision and arrived at a planet all his own. Like a magic carpet, *Saudek* transports the viewer to startling destinations.