The Star Wars Archives is a monster behind-the-scenes book

You could fill an entire library with books about the production of *Star Wars*. There are extensive making-of compendiums, behind-the-scenes reference guides, volumes of concept art, official biographies, narrative nonfiction, and more that are full of every imaginable nugget of information about how George Lucas created his universe. The arrival of a new *Star Wars* book is hardly news, but — a new, massive tome from art book publisher Taschen — is nonetheless worth picking up.

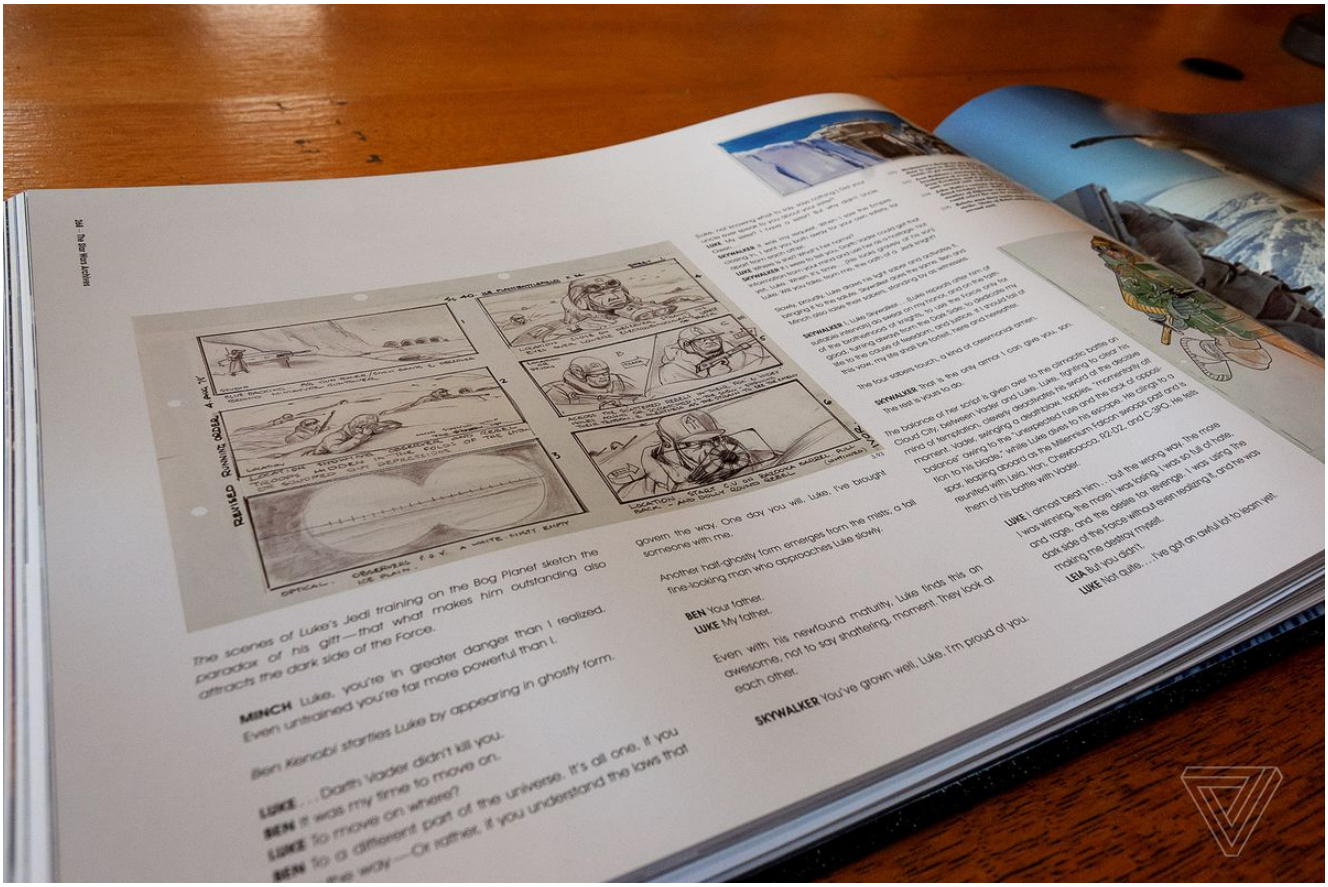
Written by film historian Paul Duncan, the book is an exhaustive collection of behind-the-scenes interviews, pictures, concept art, and script pages that charts the course of production for the first three *Star Wars* films and the sometimes messy development process that generated them.

There's a lot to take in. Duncan structures it as an oral history, including interviews with George Lucas, concept artist Ralph McQuarrie, sound designer Ben Burtt, and actors Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, and Carrie Fisher. Even if you're deeply familiar with *Star Wars* and its history, the book largely flows from Lucas' contemporary interviews, providing a deeply insightful look into how the films came together. Duncan told Starwars.com that he spent three days interviewing Lucas, and came away with an "unexpected thread": his desire to connect with people, not only with Star Wars, but with his two prior films, *THX-1138* and *American Graffiti*.



The picture that emerges of Lucas is of a filmmaker and storyteller who knows the exact type of story that he wants to tell. Concept artist Joe Johnson (who would later go on to direct films like *The Rocketeer*, *October Sky,* and *Captain America: The First Avenger*) recounted how Lucas directed him to draw up scenes from the battle of Hoth before a script was in place. “The process was then was to lay out random shots and pick some that would conceivably work” while Lucas worked on the script, using the drawings as inspiration.

But what’s most striking about the book isn’t just the behind-the-scenes stories; it’s the concept art, behind-the-scenes images, and stills that make the book a joy to simply flip through, even if you’ve watched the films dozens of times. This is an astonishingly beautiful volume that highlights the best part of the *Star Wars* universe: its incredible visuals.





Hopefully, this isn't the last such book from Taschen. As the subtitle – *Episodes IV-VI, 1977-1983* – says, this volume only covers the first three installments of the franchise. Whether

you like them or loathe them, the prequel trilogy, sequel trilogy, and standalone films have generated a wealth of content for fans. A follow-up volume (or two) would be a welcome thing to peruse, hopefully providing some new insight into those newer installments.

All of this comes at a cost — $200 to be precise — which means that it isn't exactly an impulse buy. It's also massive: fully open, the 13-pound book takes up the entirety of a small coffee table. But if you have the money and space for such a book, it's a volume that rewards endless flipping through all of the images, interviews, and minute details that have kept fans coming back to the films time and time again over the years.

Photography by Andrew Liptak / The Verge

https://www.theverge.com/2018/12/15/18130782/star-wars-archives-episodes-1977-1983-behind-the-scenes-book-paul-duncan-taschen