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The Many Faces of Disgust

In 1993, illustrators Charles Burns and Gary Panter's collaborative book *Facetasm* put a horrifying face on children's mix-and-match books. Its three sets of horizontal panels allowed readers to craft new visages by combining one character's bulging eyes with another's foaming mouth. Now, a reformatted version is hitting bookstores, with more than 7,000 spine-shaking incarnations.

Both men have made careers drawing unsettling stories, and these images reflect their individual sensibilities. Panter unleashes a menagerie of monstrous faces, drawing in his trademark raw strokes. Best known for the series *Big Baby* and *Black Hole*, Burns provides the more normal faces (of course, that's a relative term).

Working from such raw material, it's hard to make anything less than grotesque. The faces created don't seem jury-rigged. Often, they seem drawn from fever dreams - capturing the intermediary stage as a human turns ghoulish.

- Marc Spiegler

Facetasm: A Creepy Mix & Match Book of Gross Face Mutations, by Charles Burns and Gary Panter: \$12.95. Gates of Heck: +1 (212) 343 8878.

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