



# TRANSITIONS 9

## New directions in comics studies

Online 8-10 April 2021

Hosted By Birkbeck, University of London

Key note speakers: Prof Dr Sylvia Kesper-Biermann (Universität Hamburg) and Dr Nick Sousanis (San Francisco State University)



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## Transitions 9: New Directions in Comics Studies 8-10 April 2021

Programme (Time zone: BST/UTC+1)

THURSDAY 8 April 2021

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 15:00 -<br>15:15 | <b>Welcome</b> |
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|                  |  |   |
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| 15:15 -<br>16:45 | <b>Panel 1</b>   |   |
|                  | <b>1.1: Periodicals</b>  | <b>1.2: Bodies</b>  |
|                  | <b>Sara Dallavalle</b><br>Comics Magazines: Not only Comics but also Criticism<br><br><b>Jonathan Bass</b><br>The Rube Goldberg Case: The Panel as Paradigm in Newspaper Comics and New York Dada<br><br><b>Kristian Hellesund</b><br>Migration in Three Early American Newspaper Comics | <b>Jose L Garcia</b><br>At My Most Beautiful: Politics of Body Prostheses, Disability, and Replacement in Arryn Diaz's <i>Dresden Codak</i><br><br><b>Sharmistha Chatterjee</b><br>Examining the Diseased Material Body in <i>Stitches</i><br><br><b>Eszter Szép</b><br>Drawing and Transforming the Body in Ken Dahl's <i>Monsters</i> |

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| 16:45 -<br>17:00 | <b>Break</b> |
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|                  |   |
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| 17:00 -<br>18:15 | <b>Keynote</b>  |
|                  | Frames of Thought<br><b>Dr Nick Sousanis</b> (San Francisco State University) |

FRIDAY 9 April 2021

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 10:00 -<br>10:15 | <b>Day's Welcome</b> |
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|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>10:15- 11:45</b> | <b>Panel 2</b>   |  |
|                     | <b>2.1: Adaptation and Pastiche</b>  | <b>2.2: Cultural Memory</b>  |
|                     | <b>Audrey Chan</b><br>Alberto Breccia's Parody of<br>Futurist Paintings in Graphic<br>Narratives: Bande Desinée as a<br>Form of Counter-Censorship to<br>Resist Argentine Right-Winged<br>Politics | <b>Jakob F. Dittmar<br/>and Anders Høg<br/>Hansen</b><br>Pasts renewed in<br>new German<br>graphic<br>storytelling           |
|                     | <b>Miloš Tasić and Dušan<br/>Stamenković</b><br>Visualising an Oral Epic:<br>Lobačev's Comic Book Ženidba<br>Dušanova  | <b>Lena Holec Ravníkar</b><br>Preservation of Slovene<br>Literary History in<br>Comics                                       |
|                     | <b>Oskari Rantala</b><br>V for Pissed-offed-ness vs.<br>Vendetta A case of anti-immigrant<br>subversion of comics intertexts   | <b>Hakan Keleş</b><br>Expanded frame,<br>time and space:<br>80's Urban<br>Atmosphere at<br>Arabacıoğlu's<br>“Panorama” Pages |

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|------------------|--|--|
| 11:45 -<br>13:15 | Panel 3  |  |
|                  | 3.1: Curating, Constructing and Countering Women's Histories   | 3.2: Practice-based Research   |
|                  | <p><b>Neha Yadav</b><br/> <b>Whose Line is it Anyway:</b><br/> Graphic Anthology Drawing the Line as a Counter-narrative to Mainstream Rape Reportage in India</p> <p><b>Andrea Aramburú-Villavisencio</b><br/> Curating the Ordinary: Relationality and Affect in Latin American Women's Autobiographical Comics</p> <p><b>Esther McManus</b><br/> Constructing Inclusive Histories: Reflections on the temporality of comics and activist archives</p> | <p><b>Natasa Thoudam</b><br/> In Search of a Form while Inventing a Language of Subversion through Stereotypes</p> <p><b>Daniel Merlin Goodbrey</b><br/> How to Cheat at Comics: Digital alternatives to traditional techniques for comic illustration</p> <p><b>Irina Richards</b><br/> Narrating cultural heritage through comics: a graphic investigation into witch-hare folklore of Wales</p> |

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| 13:15 -<br>14:00 | Lunch |
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| 14:00 -<br>15:30 | Panel 4   |   |
|                  | 4.1: Individual & Community   | 4.2: Processes and products of drawing  |
|                  | <p><b>Driss Faddouli</b><br/> Moroccan Facebookers and the Visual Rhetoric of Political Negation</p> <p><b>Ibtisam Ahmed</b><br/> Aspiring towards the Utopian Critical Mass of Spider-Man</p> <p><b>Barbara Eggert</b><br/> Family Issues In Early Moomin Comic Strips</p> | <p><b>Clari Searle</b><br/> Creating 'Funnies': how to build an effective creative process for Higher Education pedagogy</p> <p><b>Peter Hebden</b><br/> The Stuff of Dreams: Objects and Disorientation in the work of Julie Doucet and Anders Nilsen</p> <p><b>Dom Davies</b><br/> Fracking Hell! Joe Sacco's Seismic Lines</p> |

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| 15:30 -<br>15:45 | <b>Break</b> |
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|                  |   |
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| 15:45 -<br>17:00 | <b>Keynote</b>  |
|                  | Comics Studies and Education in Germany, 1950-2020<br><b>Prof Dr Sylvia Kesper-Biermann</b> (Universität Hamburg) |

SATURDAY 10 April 2021

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 10:00 -<br>10:15 | <b>Day's Welcome</b> |
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|              |  |  |
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| 10:15- 11:45 | <b>Panel 5</b>   |  |
|              | <b>5.1: Graphic Medicine</b>   | <b>5.2: Experiences of Otherness</b>   |
|              | <b>Iona Lindsay, Amie Huttie, Katie Laing, Hisham Khan, Bryoni Welsh and Frankie Posner</b><br>Using comics and Graphic Medicine to explore and examine medical student experiences of training during the evolving coronavirus outbreak<br><b>Lottie Corr</b><br>A picture of health: Using Graphic Medicine to cultivate empathy and widen student perspectives at medical school<br><b>Muna Al-Jawad</b><br>The evolution of comics as a research method in health humanities | <b>Anna Marta Marini</b><br>Barrier and the representation of the US internal/external boundaries<br><b>Alessia Mangiavillano</b><br>Fieldwork challenges: Navigating the boundaries of comics journalism for migrant and refugee advocacy<br><b>Harriet Earle</b><br>The Gender Politics of Labour and Lace in Kate Evans' <i>Threads: From the Refugee Crisis</i> (2017) |

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| 11:45 -<br>13:15 | <b>Panel 6</b>  |   |
|                  | 6.1: Children   | 6.2: Superheroes  |
|                  | <p><b>Dona Pursall</b><br/>The importance of being unfinished: An exploration of unfixed identity and body politics in humorous anthology comics for children</p> <p><b>Helen Jones</b><br/>Caticorns and Derp Warz: Exploring children's comic making and literacy worlds in an after school comic club</p> <p><b>Olivia Childs</b><br/>Spilling on the Guts: An Analysis of the critical perception of Raina Telgemeier</p> | <p><b>Dina AlAwadhi</b><br/>The Evolution of the Oriental Gaze in the Marvel Cinematic Universe</p> <p><b>Mark Hibbett &amp; Rob Fleay</b><br/>The Swingin' Sounds Of Sixties Marvel</p> <p><b>Riziki Millanzi</b><br/>“Because the city that says it's freed itself of emotion... runs on emotion”: Willpower, Emotional Strength and the ‘Angry Black Woman’ stereotype in DC's <i>Far Sector</i></p> |
| 13:15 -<br>14:00 | <b>Lunch</b>  |   |
| 14:00 -<br>15:30 | <b>Panel 7</b>  |   |
|                  | 7.1: Female voices and narrative in comics  | 7.2: Between and beyond human cultures  |
|                  | <p><b>Diptarup Ghosh Dastidar</b><br/>'The Elephant in the Room': Engaging Women's Voices in Indian Comics</p> <p><b>Lillian Cespedes Gonzalez</b> Embracing the Ordinary and the Quirky in Female Comic Strips</p> <p><b>Jessica McCall</b><br/>Bearable Weight: <i>Faith, Bitch Planet</i>, and the Big Bodies of Big Women</p>   | <p><b>Francesco Bellinzis</b><br/>The social condition of a cosmopolitan collaboration in the comic field: the case of <i>The Blue Lotus</i>.</p> <p><b>Hugo Almeida</b><br/>Movement for movement's sake: the accelerationist manga of Yuichi Yokoyama</p> <p><b>Louise Kane</b><br/>Comics, Space, Race: Materialising World Literature</p>   |

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| 15:30 -<br>15:45 | Break |
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| 15:45 -<br>16:45 | Responses |
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## Keynote 1 - Nick Sousanis

### Frames of Thought

Nick Sousanis will present on his experiences doing scholarship in comics form - including writing and drawing his doctoral dissertation entirely in comics form, subsequently published by Harvard University Press as *Unflattening*. Through his work, he demonstrates an argument for the importance of visual thinking for teaching and learning in both its subject and its form and challenges the forms of learning traditionally found in academic settings. For this talk, he'll offer a visual tour through his work and delve into his process, to showcase how working in the intersection of image and text can ultimately open new ways of making meaning.

**Nick Sousanis** is an Eisner-winning comics author and an associate professor in Humanities & Liberal Studies at San Francisco State University, where he runs an interdisciplinary Comics Studies program. He is the author of *Unflattening*, originally his doctoral dissertation, which he wrote and drew entirely in comics form. Published by Harvard University Press in 2015, *Unflattening* received the 2016 American Publishers Association Humanities award for Scholarly Excellence and the 2016 Lynd Ward prize for Best Graphic Novel. Sousanis's comics have appeared in *Nature*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Columbia Magazine*. More at <http://www.spinweaveandcut.com> or Tw @nsousanis

## Keynote 2 - **Sylvia Kesper-Biermann**

### **Comics Studies and Education in Germany, 1950-2020**

The relationship between comics and education in Germany has a long and rather fraught history from the 1950s onward. Educators in Germany were highly critical of the medium in the 1950s. Today, the attitude has largely shifted to one of benevolent interest. What sounds like a linear success story reveals a much more complex development on closer inspection. Many aspects, such as the role of educators in establishing academic Comics Studies in West Germany, have been forgotten. In my paper, I wish to help create a more differentiated picture together with a look at both the state of Comics Studies research in Germany and the introduction of a new research project. First, I will briefly outline the historical development and current state of Comics Studies in Germany. This will be followed secondly by a closer look at the relationship between comics and education. Thirdly, I will draw attention to an aspect that has gone unresearched to date, the use of comics in language teaching targeting migrant workers in the 1970s and 1980s.

**Sylvia Kesper-Biermann** is Professor of History of Education at Universität Hamburg. Between 2011 and 2016, she taught Modern History at the Universities of Munich (LMU), Cologne and Gießen. She received her PhD in Modern History from the University of Gießen and carried out postdoctoral research at the Universities of Bayreuth and Paderborn. Her research interests include comics studies, the history of schooling, legal history and the history of torture and human rights. Currently, she is working on comic books as educational media in the second half of the 20th century, focussing on the relation of comics and migration.

**Ahmed, Ibtisam**

### **Aspiring towards the Utopian Mass of Spider-Man**

Superheroes are a paradoxical embodiment of justice and equality in that they create such values only because they are superior to average human beings. Yet, their popularity in the comic book medium has never waned and has spun off into other media as well, creating an extensive network of shared imaginations in the zeitgeist. I argue that the reason behind this is not just because of the narrative interest in the characters, but because they act as an aspiration towards societal change achieved through the critical mass envisioned by Tom Moylan (1986).

In this paper, I explore the concept of the superhero as aspirational critical mass using the character of Spider-Man. His role as a grassroots community protector who deals with real-world issues makes him a much more relatable protagonist than comparatively fantastical or privileged characters. I argue that he stands in for the societal concept of Moylan's critical mass - the idea that a critical number of people is needed to enact change against established norms. I especially draw on the idea of Spider-Man as an aspirational superhero, thus making his attempts at change something to strive towards. This is especially pertinent given his history of dealing with issues such as homelessness, poverty and police brutality in his stories alongside more conventional supervillain narratives.

I explore Spider-Man's utopian potential in two ways. First, I consider his main canon narrative and the grounded motivations behind his heroism, including the moral challenges he faces along the way. Secondly, I look at his various multiverse portrayals, with a focus on how he always responds to specific community needs despite the changing contexts, incidentally, always reaching for left-wing solutions. In doing so, I argue that he is part of a wider utopian tradition of innovative change.

**Ibtisam Ahmed** is a Doctoral Research Student at the University of Nottingham, working on decolonisation and utopias. His research is focused on centring marginalised voices and, as a long-term comic book fan, he is passionate about the narratives of hope they explore. Among his work is the published chapter “The Queer Immigrant Body as a Space of Utopia: the Politics of *Young Avengers*’ Wiccan and Hulkling” in the book *The Politics of Culture* (2020, Cambridge Scholars Publishing) which he co-edited.

**AlAwadhi, Dina**

### **The Evolution of the Oriental Gaze in the Marvel Cinematic Universe**

The superhero genre has played a significant role in American popular culture since the rise of comic books in the 1930s, and over the past two decades, the genre has blossomed in American cinema and television with the success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) at its forefront. The superhero genre is generally presented as a Manichean landscape that heavily relies upon binary oppositions of hero and villain, good and evil, self and other, West and East etc. The resultant hegemonic narratives in these texts, be they comics or film, construct degrading stereotypical representations of race, ethnicity, and gender as Other. This is nowhere more evident than in the MCU's film adaptations of Marvel's superheroes Iron Man and Doctor Strange; over a series of films, the MCU establishes the conflict between self and other by implementing a strictly Oriental Gaze that is in constant dialogue with the comics' original stereotypical representations. In this paper, I consider how the MCU engages with the Oriental Gaze. Through close textual analysis, I track the Oriental Gaze via the self/other dichotomy and the adaptation of racialised and ethnic stereotypes in *Iron Man* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *Iron Man 3* (2013), and *Doctor Strange* (2016). The analysis considers how the Oriental Gaze fluctuates over the course of these films between constructing intentionally dehumanised characters to challenging this imagery through ironic deconstruction. Furthermore, the socio-political nature of the genre is exposed both by comparing the on-screen orientalist imagery with that of the original comics as well as by examining the impact of fan reactions to the films. This paper concludes by investigating how the MCU's adaptations either challenge or adhere to the superhero genre's politically conservative nature.

**Dina AlAwadhi** is a third-year PhD candidate studying Comparative Literature at University College London. Her work examines how otherness functions in relation to race, ethnicity, and gender in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. She is interested in popular culture, genre films, as well as postcolonial and gaze theory.

Al-Jawad, Muna

### Sketchnoter for panel 1.2: “Bodies”

#### Speaker: The evolution of comics as a research method in health humanities

I presented a paper at Transitions 4 in 2013 [Graphic Medicine, Graphic Research: Can I do my thesis as a comic?] when I was starting to understand the potential of comics as a research method. My presentation was really a bid for encouragement and permission from the academy to believe that comics-based research could be possible within the field of healthcare.

Things have moved on in the health humanities, Graphic Medicine is accepted as a genre that is here to stay and comics are recognised as a valid qualitative research method<sup>1</sup>. My life has also moved on and after 8 years as a full time NHS consultant, I have now taken a clinical academic job which means I spend half my time in the hospital with patients and the other half in teaching and research.

I (and others) have used comics as part of the research process at various stages including data collection, data analysis, mapping the research process, presentation of research findings and to reconceptualise practice or illness. I will use examples of my own and others’ work to show how comics are used for research in healthcare. The panel below is part of a comic which links medical culture with postcolonial theory, while also trying to understand my positioning as a researcher.



Comics are a democratic and subversive art form that, in their simple form, most people can create and understand. I hope to show that comics can act as a powerful tool to elicit, analyse and present data on issues which can be otherwise difficult to study within health humanities.

**Muna Al-Jawad** is a medical doctor and academic who draws comics as a practitioner research method in the field of health humanities. This year she was co-organiser of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Graphic Medicine Conference in Brighton. She has published articles and book chapters using comics as a research method. Her work can be seen on her wordpress site: [www.oldpersonwhisperer.wordpress.com](http://www.oldpersonwhisperer.wordpress.com)

<sup>1</sup> Al-Jawad M and Czerwic MK. 2019. Comics. In: Research Methods in Health Humanities. Edited by Klugman CM and Gentry Lamb E. New York: Oxford University Press.

## Almeida, Hugo

### Movement for movement's sake: the accelerationist manga of Yuichi Yokoyama

This presentation will discuss the work of manga author Yuichi Yokoyama as a symptom of the ongoing transformations of the Anthropocene—the proposed geological period defined by dramatic transformations to Earth's systems of anthropogenic origin.

Yokoyama's manga limits narrative to the intelligible itineraries of human (or humanoid) characters, or to the transformation of landscapes. Characters pose mechanically, animated by imposing motion lines and dramatic panel layouts. The experience of reading Yokoyama's works recalls, on one hand, watching a river flow: taking joy in the purposeless agency of an (in-)animate actant. On the other, it channels the intensity of contemporary life into a narrative where human automata are subsumed to the speed of data and finance capitalism, which, like a river, is a force that drags everything along with it. Although the former evokes idleness and the latter stress, both impressions reflect the aesthetic resonance that processes, not characters, can concede to narrative.

The artist's representation of both urban and wilderness settings suggest a totally engineered environment, at once evoking Donna Haraway's (2003) concept of naturecultures, the integration of "nature" and "culture" via its entwined and co-dependent realities, while at the same time betraying the spirit of the concept by turning all landscapes into an (apparently) human creation.

We will provide a close reading of Yokoyama's treatment of landscapes, focusing on how the artist undermines the traditional nature/culture divide. We will also argue that, although *Travel* is not concerned with ecological anxieties, it ironically expresses human-driven environmental transformation through a distanced, "nonhuman" look at landscapes. Finally, we will propose that *Travel* falls in line with what Steven Shaviro (2013) calls an accelerationist aesthetics, by intensifying the sensations of speed and artificiality of contemporary experience.

**Hugo Almeida** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Interuniversity Center for the History of Science and Technology – CIUHCT, School of Science and Technology, NOVA University of Lisbon. He received a doctoral degree in molecular biology from the NOVA University of Lisbon (2013), and has been a researcher at the Artistic Studies Research Center – CIEBA (2013-2016), Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon University. His research interests include contemporary and science fiction comics and the intersection of visual studies with science studies with a focus on the issues raised by the Anthropocene: the idea that humankind has become a geological force redefining the conditions for living on a planetary scale. His latest work, *Not-human, Not-fly*, is an artist book that discusses the concept of the posthuman in David Cronenberg's film *The Fly* through the lens of molecular biology.

## WORKS CITED

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Shaviro, Steven (2013). Accelerationist Aesthetics: Necessary Inefficiency in Times of Real Subsumption. *e-flux*, 46. Retrieved from <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/46/60070/accelerationist-aesthetics-necessary-inefficiency-in-times-of-real-subsumption/>

**Aramburú-Villavisencio, Andrea****Curating the Ordinary: Relationality and Affect in Latin American Women's Autobiographical Comics**

This paper looks at various Latin American autobiographical women's narratives published after 2010, to suggest that comics perform *relating narratives* in their material and affective dimensions, and that the reading practice they put into motion embraces the decentralization of the autobiographical experience. I want to argue that these graphic narratives have the potential to map out "curatorial acts" which dislocate the category of the subjective by pointing towards its relational embeddedness in a material world. By "relating narratives" I gesture towards Adriana Cavarero's and Judith Butler's theorizations on relationality, who assert that any account of the self must consider its belonging to a larger web of relations and, is constantly both handling and honouring this exposure to the other. In this sense, I also attempt to continue the work started by comics theorists such as Hillary Chute, Elizabeth El Refaie and, more recently, Frederik Byrn, who foreground how comics are able to stage the different interfaces that arise between self and world.

To do so, I will look at will look at two autobiographical forms: the memoir and the diary. First, I will explore how the representation of the relational does not need to be especially forceful, but it is rather traversed by everyday affects and embodied modes of kinship. I will look at how the graphic memoir, even if it portrays "stages" of life -adolescence in Powerpaola's *Virus Tropical* (Colombia/Ecuador) or being pregnant in Julia Barata's *Gravidez* (Portugal/Argentina)- does not cling to the symbolic positions that correspond to these stages, but rather explores the relational and more open dimensions of these identities. Following this, I will address the contrast between the intimacy inherent to the personal diary and the possibility of representing a relational matrix that exceeds the subjective, by looking at texts such as Ana Paula Machuca's *Un día* (Perú), Julia Barata's *Cotidiano de Lujo*, Delius' *Mi cuaderno de viñetas y dibujos* (Argentina) and Sole Otero's *La pelusa de los días* (Argentina).

**Andrea Aramburú Villavisencio** holds a Master of Arts in *Contemporary Literature, Culture and Theory* from King's College London (London, United Kingdom) and a Bachelor's Degree in *Hispanic Literature* from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (Lima, Peru). She is currently a second-year PhD Candidate at the *Centre of Latin American Studies* (CLAS) at the University of Cambridge, where she is also a Gates Scholar. Her research looks at Latin American women's graphic narratives published after 2010 to think through the intersections of comics, relationality and affect.

**Bass, Jonathan**

### **The Rube Goldberg Case: The Panel as Paradigm in Newspaper Comics and New York Dada**

The young Marcel Duchamp worked briefly as a cartoonist for French humor magazines around 1910. The artist of *Fountain* (1917) and *The Bride Stripped Bare* (1915-23) was not especially accomplished in this area of production. However, as Didier Semin argues, the cartoon became a “paradigm” for the Duchampian artwork, which, in the manner of the single-panel cartoon, combines an often highly ambiguous visual element with a striking caption.

My paper looks at a later Duchamp cartoon, produced in collaboration with Man Ray as part of *New York Dada* (1921), a journal modeled on a typical newspaper of the period. For their periodical’s “sports” page, Man Ray and Duchamp transform a panel from a *Boob McNutt* Sunday page by Rube Goldberg into a single-panel cartoon by one “R. Goldberg” (alluding to Duchamp’s earlier, comics-influenced use of “R. Mutt”).

In relation to this work, I argue three points:

1. Goldberg’s *Boob McNutt* becomes a paradigm for Man Ray, inspiring the subjects and compositions of certain of his photographs of the early 1920s.
2. By contrast, it is the fabricated “R. Goldberg” cartoon rather than the “real thing,” the actual Goldberg comic strip, that represents a new cartoon-based paradigm for Duchamp. One effect of this new paradigm, I suggest, was to retroactively recast Duchamp’s *Fountain* - as preserved photographically in the pages of another Dada publication, *The Blind Man* - as a work modeled “in advance” on the later cartoon.
3. Finally, the transformation of the Goldberg panel by the two “anti-artists” shows us something about the operation of Goldberg’s panel in relation to the full comic strip to which it belongs. More generally, it shows us something about the capacity for certain comics panels to serve as specifically *paradigmatic* representatives of the larger strips, series, or oeuvres to which they belong - a point that, I suggest, at least one of the pair of artists was meaning to make.

**Jonathan Bass** teaches courses on comics, narrative, and information design in the English department and School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

**Bellinzis, Francesco**

**The social condition of a cosmopolitan collaboration in the comic field: the case of *The Blue Lotus*.**

This paper analyses Herge's comic *The Blue Lotus*, the fifth volume of The Adventures of Tintin, as product of a cosmopolitan collaboration. It suggests that such collaboration with a Chinese artist, Chang Chong-Chen, leaves us with an important but unsolved issue: the social condition of a cultural openness in the comic field. After providing an overview of cosmopolitanism and the aesthetic cosmopolitanism in sociology, I introduce the key concept of comic as a cultural field. The sociological approach advocated here links the concept of comic field to cosmopolitanism rather than to limit this focus on national cultural field borders. Exploring the social condition of this collaboration, by a close reading and a socio-historical analysis of comic field and biographical dates of the author and his contributor (published interviews and biographical books), the paper explains which kind of efforts the Belgian cartoonist made to develop a cultural openness to the others and which role had played Chang Chong-Chen in this process. This paper, therefore, attempts to analyze this collaboration not only as cause of a transformation in the cultural product but also in the author's position related to a condition of creation and legitimization.

**Francesco Bellinzis** is working at the Corporative Solution Department of a Foundation (FPC) attached to the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Before joining the FPC in 2018, he was a member of Gedime (Immigration and Ethnic Minorities Study Group) a research group attached to the Department of Sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He was a visiting researcher at the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Brighton. He was a member of the PhD student forum of Barcelona Centre For International Affairs (CIDOB). His main areas of interest are the sociology of art, cosmopolitanism and Cross Cultural Studies.

**Cespedes Gonzalez, Lillian**

**Embracing the Ordinary and the Quirky in Female Comic Strips**

This paper explores female authored comic strips, and how their voices reflect the ordinary and common occurrence of everyday life from a female viewpoint. The paper brings attention to the fact that all the main characters in these narratives are also female which brings forward personal experiences that are relatable and approachable to audience of any background. The themes of the comic strips selected are presented in a semi-biographic approach empowering the female voices and highlighting the diverse realities of women and people anywhere in the world. In addition, the sources selected represent not just ordinary women, but characters in what could be considered quirky environments. The examples will be sourced mainly from Nemi, Pusheen and Sarah Andersen comics, though others may be incorporated as necessary. These characters present aspects of femininity which are not necessarily perceived as the “ideal” or “ordinary” woman and reflect a sense of “otherness” (i.e Nemi and the heavy metal community, Pusheen as a cat who is a female, Sarah’s cartoons as introverted millennials often invested in alternative cultures). The quirkiness of the narratives surrounding these females is also apparent in the artwork which is the creation of the same authors working as both writers and artists. This investigation reflects on how the sociocultural changes of the last three decades have impacted the development of these comic strips and the authorship of female writers. In addition, the paper will also reflect on the impact that the development of web comics has had on the transformation of the comic strip as a medium, and how the internet is allowing these female voices to proliferate.

**Lillian Cespedes Gonzalez** is a doctorate candidate at the University of Winchester (Viva and Viva corrections submitted - award pending) who specialises in gender and comic book studies, with an interest in cultural identities. Despite her original background as a medievalist, her recent investigations focus on female narratives and identities within alternative cultures, particularly the geek and fan communities, which has been the topic for her thesis as well as several academic publications and blogging articles.

**Chan, Audrey**

### **Alberto Breccia's Parody of Futurist Paintings in Graphic Narratives: Bande Desinée as a Form of Counter-Censorship to Resist Argentine Right-Winged Politics**

I will examine Futurist visuality adopted by Alberto Breccia in his graphic adaptions of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories collected in *Le Coeur Révélateur: Et Autres Histoires Extraordinaires d' Edgar Poe* (1995) as a critical response to the right-wing coup often referred to as the 'Process of National Reorganisation' in Argentina from 1976 to 1983. I will employ an interdisciplinary approach, reading the texts in relation to art history, global political history, the history of underground comics in Argentina, and Breccia's responses to the Argentine coup in his interviews to illustrate the influences of the Fascist-inspired movement of Italian Futurism on the artistic landscape in the previously right-wing Argentina and on Breccia's styles.

In response to the rise of Fascist sentiments in Argentina, the 'Golden Age' of comics in Argentina emerged in the 1940s and flourished in the following decades. For example, comic artists and left-wing activists Héctor Germán Oesterheld published sci-fi comic *El Eternauta* (1957-1959), which alludes to the horror of ideological cleansing led by the right-wing General Jorge Rafael Videla. Breccia's own statements on comics as a form of camouflage or counter-censorship in *Imparato* (2002) will be cited to support my argument of his collection *Le Coeur Révélateur: Et Autres Histoires Extraordinaires d' Edgar Poe* as a form of resistance to the right-wing dictatorship in Argentina. I will mainly discuss Breccia's adaptations of Edgar Allan Poe's stories "William Wilson" (1839), "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842), and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845) that appropriates the convention of the modern BD that allows "artistry and imagination takes over from logical progressions" (Grove 25). Extending from the framework of the modern BD, I will illustrate how Breccia borrows Futurist visuality to recreate the haunting figures of history as they "conceive new forms of storytelling that explore the medium-specific properties of the host medium" (Baetens 7).

**Audrey Chan** is a postgraduate student completing MSc Literature and Modernity: 1900 to the Present at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interest lies in the interdisciplinary studies between contemporary literature and the visual arts. She also received a bachelor's degree of arts from City University of Hong Kong's Department of English and is now a reader for fiction at UoE's James Tait Black Prize. She has recently presented her flash paper "Haruki Murakami's Rhizomatic Underground: Traumatic Memory and New Journalism" at Contemporary Studies Network's conference.

## Chatterjee, Sharmistha

### Examining the Diseased Material Body in Stitches

This paper intends to take up David Small's *Stitches* to examine the representation of the diseased body. *Stitches*, a graphic memoir, documents Small's battle with cancer as a child, which resulted in him losing one of his vocal cords, thus rendering him virtually dumb. This paper will first situate this graphic novel within the genre of horror fiction, and locate in it, the impulse to portray the body as fragmented, mutilated, dissected and dismembered, thus establishing the disturbing materiality of the body. Through this, the paper will raise certain questions. Firstly, the paper will ask how, in *Stitches*, the materiality of the human body is established, and how the fragility that is associated with this body, is mediated through the codex form of the graphic novel. Through this examination, an attempt will be made, to probe whether a material codex is always necessary for such representation, which then, will make a virtual text completely ineffective in rendering a similar experience. To investigate this, references will also be made to such virtual text as Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*. The final segment of the paper will take up Kelly Hurley's understanding of the body, especially one undergoing a metamorphosis of a certain kind, in terms of its "gothicity" which, she avers, "threatens to spill over and infect form itself," and question whether the same can be identified in *Stitches*. In other words, the intention is to conclude with an examination of how the verbal-visual form of the graphic narrative informs the representation of the afflicted body in *Stitches*.

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Hurley, Kelly. 1996. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

**Sharmistha Chatterjee** is a Doctoral Scholar at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. Her research area focuses on Comics and Graphic Novels, with special emphasis on the modes of textual production that inform this specific medium. She has presented papers in various conferences and seminars such as SWPACA, The Comic Studies Society (CSS) conference, and others. Her allied research interests include Media Studies, Book History, Gender and Body Studies.

**Childs, Olivia**

### **Spilling on the Guts: An Analysis of the critical perception of Raina Telgemeier**

If children's graphic novels are the fastest growing area in publishing, it only fits that there's been a drastic increase in the coverage surrounding these books. When Raina Telgemeier released the third part of her autobiographical middle grade series *Guts*, reviews were featured in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *NPR*, in which Telgemeier's dealings with childhood anxiety and fear of illness brought universal praise.

Understanding the reception of *Guts* opens up the discussion of the children's graphic novel market as a distinct and blossoming category, attempting to be understood by a widening market. This is not only evident in reviews, but in news coverage of *Guts* topping *Publishers Weekly's* bestseller list for the US, in which Telgemeier's success is celebrated as an inevitability. This paper will seek to understand critical reaction to *Guts* as the staple or pinnacle of its kind, exploring the framing of Telgemeier as auteur, the celebration of memoir/biography aimed at children, and the praising of the delicacy and difficulty with which anxiety and therapy are addressed—arguing that it is the intersecting of these features which accounts for its popularity amongst *adults*, if not children.

Ascribing the difficulty of analysing the critical reception of comic books to issues surrounding inclusivity and exclusivity, this paper will discuss how and why children's graphic novels are capable of gaining coverage, arguing that the reaching of a wider audience is achieved because reviews must be targeted not at the reader themselves (i.e. children) but an intermediary parent, teacher or librarian. This will lead to discussion of the differences between reviews published by mainstream publications and comics specialist sites, ultimately asking how important it is that *Guts* happens to be a graphic novel, and how, if at all, it is discussed as such.

**Olivia Childs** has recently completed an MA in Film at the University of East Anglia, and is currently pursuing further research on superhero sidekicks.

## Corr, Lottie

### A picture of health: a literature review examining the integration of Graphic Medicine within medical education

Visual aids, such as diagrams, mind maps or flow charts, are established implements in medical education; however, utilisation of visual narrative remains in its early development<sup>1</sup>. Despite recent proliferation of healthcare related graphic texts, the stereotyped history of comics as mediocre childhood literacy dominated by superheroes has discouraged educators from utilising this rich field<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore imperative to reflect on current research to evaluate the value of integrating graphic medicine within medical education.

This presentation will first examine skills that can develop from incorporating graphic medicine. Graphic healthcare narratives can cultivate empathy by relating theoretical knowledge to the human experience and highlighting that healthcare requires more than simply “treating a body”, which is particularly relevant in the current climate of compassion fatigue<sup>3,4</sup>. Engagement with Graphic Medicine can help build clinician capabilities such as observation skills, attention to non-verbal cues and diagnostic reasoning<sup>5,6</sup>. They also encourage creativity and present an opportunity to engage without necessity for distinguished technical skill<sup>7</sup>.

Reflective practice is an integral feature of healthcare. Despite rising encouragement for written introspection in medical school, there is a stark lack of visual methodology<sup>7</sup>. In a profession blemished by stoicism, burnout and mental health struggles, Graphic Medicine can provide a constructive avenue permitting students to express worries; ultimately alleviating stress and isolation in a demanding career<sup>7,8</sup>.

Finally, visual arts can enrich student understanding of patient and practitioner perspectives<sup>9</sup>. Utilising metaphor to describe symptoms is common among patients, and Graphic Medicine allows for literal depictions of these metaphors<sup>1</sup>. These representations can thus question the implicit accuracy of medical terms describing subjective experiences<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, combining relatable images with autobiographical narrative facilitates understanding of wider socio-political contexts inevitably correlated with illness<sup>7</sup>.

In summary, this presentation will investigate the current attitudes, attributes and barriers towards the inclusion of Graphic Medicine within medical education.

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## Dallavalle, Sara

### Comics Magazines: Not only Comics but also Criticism

In Italy, magazines have been instrumental in the development and dissemination of comics, from the pioneering *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* (1908) to the longest-running auteur comics magazine *Linus* (1965-). In particular, auteur comics magazines became the venue in which to publish comics productions imbued with literary and artistic creativity, re-evaluate the work of Italian and international cartoonists of the previous decades, and showcase Italian creators who were developing their work outside the industry of serial comics. While comics were by far the most significant part of these publications, several magazines also featured informative and compelling editorial content, proposing a range of topics and types of contributions (news, reviews, interviews, informative and opinion articles) aimed at comics fans, but also fiction and cinema *aficionados*. Indeed, these magazines were a hybrid between a comics fanzine and a magazine of news and criticism, when the first were still few and the latter non-existent. Despite their importance, the inaccessibility of most issues, as well as the serial nature of the format itself, has often discouraged scholarly studies on the subject. Furthermore, the tendency has always been to only focus on the comics content, often considering the surrounding material as just a frame, and the magazines themselves mere “containers”. In this talk, I propose a methodology to approach comics magazines more holistically. Drawing from my recent dissertation on one such magazine, *Orient Express*, I will illustrate the ways I designed to analyse the magazines’ content from a statistical point of view. With the adoption of digital methods of data collection and data visualization, I am able to give insights into various editorial trends, including author and genre distribution.

**Sara Dallavalle** is currently an Assistant Instructional Professor in Italian at the University of Chicago. She earned her PhD in Italian Studies from Indiana University with a dissertation on Italian comics magazines of the 1960s-1980s (2020). Her research integrates elements from periodical studies, media industry studies, fan studies, and more recently digital humanities. Other projects include studying the material and commercial aspects that characterise Italian comics formats and analysing the specificities of the comics medium in relation to other fields, such as literature and visual culture. After designing an advanced Italian course that paired 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italian history with the history of Italian comics, Sara has started to explore further pedagogical applications of comics.

**Dastidar, Diptarup Ghosh**

**‘The Elephant in the Room’: Engaging Women Voices in Indian Comics**

Comics in India have developed in their journey from being children-centric nationalist and educational icons (as in Amar Chitra Katha) to counter-cultural superhero narratives (as in Raj Comics and Indrajal Comics) and have grown into the social realism of twenty-first century graphic novels holding the hands of contemporary independent comics artists and graphic novelists. The representation of women in the Indian comics scene before the advent of the graphic novel in 2004 (with Sarnath Banerjee’s Corridor) is dominated by masculine projections of femininity, where, given the context of Indian societal values, visuality becomes a pretext of stereotypical depictions and unreal or generally misconstrued gender roles. This paper considers both shortform and longform comics by select women author/artists of India and aims to situate them in the corpus of the Indian comics industry, along with providing a critical evaluation of women representation on the reformed comic book page by said authors and artists. The paper will showcase how contemporary Indian comics by women have been able to naturalize the erstwhile stereotypical and limited attitude towards the body, psyche, and the socio-cultural stance of a woman.

**Diptarup Ghosh Dastidar** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Languages, Amity University Chhattisgarh, Raipur, India and is pursuing his Ph.D. on Indian comics from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Ghosh Dastidar’s areas of interest and expertise are comics studies, graphic medicine, spatiality, and gender studies. He is also extremely passionate about music, theatre and playing games.

### **Davies, Dom**

#### **Fracking Hell! Joe Sacco's Seismic Lines**

In his most recent graphic novel, *Paying the Land* (2020), Joe Sacco thickens the cartographic and legalistic histories of draughtsmanship into his own hand-drawn line. The book documents the history of the Dene nation, an indigenous people in Canada's Northwestern Territory who have been subject to settler colonialism since the mid-nineteenth century, from initial land dispossession through to the infamous residential school system and, most recently, the damaging fracking industry. The story Sacco tells of the Dene people's struggle for recognition from Canada's settler state is one of repeated (mis)representations, whether cartographic, legalistic, bureaucratic, or artistic - each of which have their own destructive effects. By implicating his own drawings in the politics of representation and recognition, Sacco provides not only a history of the Dene people, but a history of "drawing" itself.

In this paper, I show how Sacco's thickened lines - his "seismic lines" - construe the act of drawing as a settler colonial weapon with devastating material consequences: from the cartographic lines of early settler maps that divided up and displaced indigenous people from their territories; to the bureaucratic lines of settler law and that further eroded indigenous solidarity and sovereignty; to the seismic lines of the fracking industry, which break up the land into subterranean fragments. Against these settler colonial lines, however, Sacco suggests another delineation: the line as a thread of indigenous knowledge formed through and with the land. As this paper argues, only when the settler notion of drawing-as-representation (cartographic, legal, artistic, etc.) is overturned can drawing be recovered as a way-of-being *in* the world.

Sacco's images are only notes, or sketches, towards these decolonial lines, and by no means a finished picture. But as he concludes, it is in this "unfinishedness" that these lines might yet draw out new futures beyond settler dispossession and environmental destruction.

**Dom Davies** is Senior Lecturer in English at City, University of London. He is most recently the author of *Urban Comics* (Routledge 2019) and the co-editor of *Documenting Trauma in Comics* (Palgrave 2020).

### **Davies, Paul Fisher**

#### **Sketchnoter for panel 4.2, "Processes and Products of Drawing"**

Paul Fisher Davies has published in *Studies in Comics*, the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* and others, including academic articles in comics form, sketchnotes, and covers. His monograph *Comics as Communication: A Functional Approach* was published in 2019.

**Dittmar, Jakob F. & Anders Høg Hansen**

### **Pasts renewed in new German graphic storytelling**

Based on negotiations of the German past, substantial work has been done on history and memory, on belonging, on inclusion and exclusion, and on coming to terms with individual and collective biographies. Relating collective myth as well as individual and collective constructions of memory are constantly negotiated, often with material objects as bearers of memory. This paper explores, through selected case studies, how the contribution of comics to these ongoing negotiations differs from the ways meaning is made in other forms of art, journalism and academic depiction.

While perspectives in comics relate to and partly are quite typical of the German discourse on history and memory, on constructions of German-ness, some comics add their own distinct visual voices to the debate. We aim to provide a wider overview before we focus on these works:

”Belonging” by Nora Krug (2018)

”Im Himmel ist Jahrmarkt” (2013) and “Madgermanes” (2018) by Birgit Weyhe,

”Kinderland” by Mawil (2014),

”Da war mal was” by Flix (2009).

While differences in representation and detail are partly due to their aim for distinct audiences, for this paper we want to look more closely into the expression and negotiation of ambiguity on (partly the outright distrust of) established narratives, historic material and individual witness-accounts. The new accounts are innovative in their specific ways of providing new forms of cultural and medial translation that help to bridge the *floating gaps of memory* (Assmann). In the individual ways of constructing their comics-narratives, they rely on social or journalistic research, and are utilising reportage, (auto)biography and fiction - and in various ways re/draw the symbolic, the material, and the un/homely.

**Jakob F. Dittmar** is an associate professor at Malmö University. Research focus on the construction of comics-narratives and strategies of representation in comics. In relation to this, work on historiography and documentary in comics. Also works on character design. Researching comics for blind and visually impaired readers has taught him a lot about how comics work.

**Anders Høg Hansen** is an associate professor at Malmö University. His research focus on memory and social change across a variety of media. He at present engages with postcolonial journeys or biographies of individuals and their social routes ; memorials and public art; and youth, media and alternative education in East Africa.

### **Dominiak, Zu**

#### **Sketchnoter, Keynote 2: Sylvia Kesper-Biermann, “Comics Studies and Education in Germany, 1950-2020”**

Zu studied illustration at Edinburgh College of Art and graduated in 2011. In 2017 they took Masters of Design course in Comics and Graphic Novels at University of Dundee, which they completed in 2018. They are currently a PhD student at University of Dundee, researching ways of exhibiting comics in museum, galleries and public spaces.

Zu has worked as a freelance illustrator, designer and cartoonist since 2007, mainly doing work for print and web, for various international clients.

[www.zudominiak.com](http://www.zudominiak.com)

**Earle, Harriet EH**

**The Gender Politics of Labour and Lace in Kate Evans' *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* (2017)**

Kate Evans' 2017 comic *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* chronicles her visits to the 'Jungle' refugee camp in Calais, where she volunteered with a group of other Brits to help build shelters and offer general assistance to those in the camp. Evans draws portraits of the children, many of whom are unaccompanied, and also provides food and supplies, alongside her husband and friend who is a midwife. The comic is bookended with double-page spreads that depict traditional lace making processes. Calais is particularly famous for lace production and it is a trade that has long been the domain of women. In addition, lace is used throughout the comic in the gutters of the pages.

This paper will consider representations of labour in Evans' comic, viewed through a gendered lens and framed by the lace 'narrative bookends'. Within the comic, labour is shown as many different things, including the building of shelters and management of resources, caring for children, preparation of food, and domestic duties. In addition, labour in the sense of childbirth exists within the camp, as does the care and treatment of women's medical needs. The demographic groups who undertake each type of labour are clearly split by gender, but the text as a whole is encapsulated in reference to female physical and creative labour.

How does Evans' represent different types of labour - to what extent are her representational strategies different for each? What is she saying (explicitly or implicitly) about the gendered nature of labour? And, of course, so what?

**Dr Harriet Earle** is a lecturer in English at Sheffield Hallam University and the author of *Comics, Trauma and the New Art of War* (2017). Her research interests include violence, protest narratives and biopolitics in comics and popular culture. She is in the early stages of her second monograph, on the topic of prisons and detention camps as biopolitical spaces in comics. She has published across the field of popular culture studies, with recent articles in *The Journal of Popular Culture* and *American Notes and Queries*.

**Eggert, Barbara Margarethe**

**UN/FAMILIAR CONCEPTS - FOCUSING ON FAMILY ISSUES IN EARLY MOOMIN COMIC STRIPS BY TOVE JANSSON**

Apart from presenting diverse perspectives on historical and contemporary family concepts, graphic narratives offer alternative (sometimes futuristic or fantastic) visions of family life, covering all-human constellations as well as interspecies bonding. A multifaceted example for this is Tove Jansson's Moomin cosmos with its multi-species population which is being covered in nine illustrated novels (published between 1945 and 1977) as well as in five children's books (published between 1952 and 1993) and a comic strips series which almost lasted three decades (1947-1959 created by Tove Jansson, 1959-1961 in collaboration with her brother, Lars Jansson who took over from 1961-1975).

Though the core-family in this story world is formed by the anthropomorphic hippo-like Moomins, the expanded family includes diverse other species who (literally) get adopted and/or co-habitate with the Moomins anyway. The individual family roles do reflect stereotypes - but also twist them in unexpected ways.

The aim of the paper is to explore the medium-specific aesthetic, narrative, and pedagogical potentials and functions of Tove Jansson's early Moomin comic strips to help visualize and de/construct un/familiar concepts of family structures and to discuss (possible) effects, including creating awareness of more gender equality on the go. I argue that the Moomins comic strips are an underestimated example for teaching diversity that should find its way into the curriculum for a gender-sensitive art education.

**Barbara Margarethe Eggert** holds an MA both in German Language and Literature / History of Art (University of Hamburg) and in Adult Education / Museum Studies (Humboldt-University Berlin) plus a PhD in Art History. Her main research interests are media that combine text and images (special focus: graphic literature and narrative textiles) and the future of museums (special focus: art education and exhibition cultures).

Important steps for her academic career were Humboldt University Berlin (Department for Adult Education), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Department for Interactive Educational Technologies), Vitra Design Museum (Editorial team for *Atlas of Furniture Design*), and Danube University Krems (Department for Arts and Cultural Sciences). Since 2019, she is part of the team of the Institute of Art and Education, University of Art and Design Linz.

Eggert also works as a freelance curator and writes scenarios for webcomics and graphic narratives using her nom de plume, Eggy.

## **Faddouli, Driss**

### **Moroccan Facebookers and the Visual Rhetoric of Political Negation**

This paper attempts to unravel the underlying dialectics of subversion that gives rise to a counter-hegemonic political consciousness in the Moroccan Facebookers' visual narratives (notably comics) about Moroccan politics. It argues that these comics construct and articulate a rhetorically counter-hegemonic discourse of political negation through generating ideographs that, in turn, animate a variety of antagonisms dismantling the state's discourse (the public transcript). I will base my analysis on the assumption that the emergence of a political counter-hegemony basically translates an actual change in reality wherein stronger changes in political discourse are constantly sustained and fostered. In this sense, the visual rhetoric of political negation offers itself as a pertinent framework that better explains and accounts for the discursive and non-discursive strategies of the counter-hegemonic discourse fostered by the visual narratives in this article. For this purpose, I will particularly resort to this theoretical construct because it retains the power to encompass and synthesize the theoretical insights provided by major theorists such as James Scott (1990)<sup>2</sup>, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985)<sup>3</sup>, Calvin McGee (1980)<sup>4</sup>, and Kevin Michael Deluca (1999)<sup>5</sup>.

## **Felstead, Susannah**

### **Sketchnoter for panel 6.1, “Children”**

Susannah is an illustrator, studying for an MA in children's literature illustration at Goldsmiths. She's interested in stories that serve children, with generous helpings of humour and mischief along the way. Website at [www.susannah-f.co.uk](http://www.susannah-f.co.uk) and on Instagram at @susie.felstead

## **Finmark, Sharon**

### **Sketchnoter for panel 7.1, “Female voices and narrative in comics”**

Sharon Finmark works as an artist across a diverse range of media - from newspaper commissions to artwork for brochures, book covers and even wine labels.

She was born and brought up in London, where she still lives. Originally Sharon studied at St Martins School of Art and has subsequently preferred to work on figurative subjects in watercolour, acrylic and pastel. She was appointed Artist in Residence with Today programme.

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**Garcia, Jose**

**At My Most Beautiful: Politics of Body Prostheses, Disability, and Replacement in Arryn Diaz's *Dresden Codak***

Within the literature of prosthetics and disability, there is a tendency to conflate the cyborg body and the prosthetic body, and it was not until relatively recently that scholarship undertook any serious effort to study the ambiguities inherent to such a collision. To that end, my current project builds from Alison Kafer's complications of Donna Haraway's theory of the cyborg to Arryn Diaz's webcomic *Dresden Codak* in order to locate a visual language of prosthesis that can house multiple significations simultaneously in its protagonist, Kimiko Ross. Within that visual language, I also attempt to find ways to reconcile an embodied experience of disability with a political signification of disability as representative of the necropolitical marginalization of non-normative bodies in speculative and future fiction.

Cultural texts often take one of two paths when signalling the cyborg: either as a divorce from one's normative humanity, such as *Star Wars* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, or as a positive "augmentation," such as with the *Bionic Woman* or *The Six-Million Dollar Man*, completely bypassing the worlds of difference between the disabled body and the cyborg body, the effects of trauma, and the embodiment of disability and prosthesis.

My application of Kafer's framing of Haraway's cyborg argues that the cyborg is a useful tool for understanding the endless facets of embodied disabled experience and its clashes with late-stage urban capitalism. Within that analysis, I argue for the use of Tasha Chemel's Narrative/Embodied Experience of disability as a way of reconciling the joining of cyborg and disabled bodies as political significations.

**Jose L Garcia** is a Master's candidate at California State University, Northridge, whose research focuses on images of the cyborg and the body as a tool for analyzing the representation of marginalized populations. His current project studies images of cyborg bodies as explorations of exploitation under late-stage capitalism in Arryn Diaz' *Dresden Codak*. Garcia currently serves as a writing instructor for MeriEducation and has created employment training curriculum for the Hope Builders and Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance organizations, both of which serve to help disrupt the School-to-Prison pipeline in Orange County, CA. Most recently, he has designed a workshop series, which he is currently leading through its pilot phase, geared towards helping students understand how racist ideologies have shaped power dynamics in the United States and connects students towards avenues of anti-racist and anti-capitalist action.

**Goodbrey, Daniel Merlin**

### **How to Cheat at Comics: Digital alternatives to traditional techniques for comic illustration**

The artwork in a comic can typically be described as an arrangement of images that have been deliberately composed, framed and illustrated to represent key moments of narrative meaning. In creating this artwork, artists depict characters and environments that consist of schema of recognised traits that must be rendered consistently across the entirety of the comic. To create these consistent depictions the artist draws on a range of artistic expertise, including masteries of line, shape, anatomy, gesture, expression, perspective and lighting. Developing and refining such illustration skills requires considerable time, training and effort on behalf of the artist. However, the use of digital tools can allow those with less developed drawing ability to “cheat” at this development process, creating effective comic artwork without the same investments of time and training as those of traditional artists.

This paper draws on the work of Cohn, Eisner, Groensteen, Marion, McCloud and Priego to examine the nature of traditional comic artwork and investigate the impact of digital tools and techniques on comic illustration. The inquiry takes a practice-led approach with examples chosen from across the course of my career as a digital comic creator. A range of techniques for creating digital comics illustrations that do not rely on traditional drawing competencies are identified and discussed in detail. These include 3D, fumetti, tracing, found images, simplification, vectors and cut out libraries. The paper analyses and reflects on these illustrative techniques, drawing parallels with the work of other contemporary comic artists and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

**Daniel Merlin Goodbrey** is a principle lecturer in Narrative & Interaction Design at The University of Hertfordshire. A prolific and innovative comic creator, Goodbrey has gained international recognition as a leading expert in the field of experimental digital comics. His hypercomic work received the International Clickburg Webcomic Award in Holland in 2006 while his work in print was awarded with the Isotope Award for Excellence In Comics in San Francisco in 2005. His smartphone app, A Duck Has An Adventure was shortlisted in the 2012 New Media Writing Prize. In 2017 he was awarded a Professional Doctorate for his study of the impact of digital mediation and hybridisation on the form of comics. An archive of his work can be found at <http://e-merl.com/>

**Hebden, Peter**

**Sketchnoter for panel 4.1, “Individual and Community”**

**Speaker: The Stuff of Dreams: Objects and Disorientation in the work of Julie Doucet and Anders Nilsen**

In his 2020 monograph *Comics and Stuff*, media scholar Henry Jenkins explores how the depiction of ‘stuff’ - material objects, and in particular, ephemeral, throwaway objects - can be used in various ways as a tool for meaning-making in comics. ‘Because comics take place in a completely fabricated world,’ argues Jenkins, ‘everything is there intentionally.’ Authorial imprint can be read in every drawn background object, every briefly-seen bit of clutter.

Following this exciting new avenue of enquiry opened up by Jenkins, this paper examines the role that the visual presentation of ‘stuff’ plays in the creation of a dream-like atmosphere in the work of two comics artists, Julie Doucet and Anders Nilsen. Here, I will focus on Doucet’s *My New York Diary* (Drawn and Quarterly, 1998) and Nilsen’s *Dogs and Water* (Drawn and Quarterly, 2007) as two graphic novels that utilise distinct visual styles to trouble the distinction between dream and reality. For both, this is largely achieved by an active disorientation of the reader as they navigate their way through the narrative.

By combining the representation of objects with other visual aspects of their work, both authors tap into a longer history within comics of using visual style to convey the hyperreality and transience of dream-spaces. For Doucet, this is an aesthetic of heavy shadows and busy, oppressive, minutely-realised clutter, while for Nilsen, a spare, panel-less comics style leads the reader adrift. Though their approaches are almost diametrically opposed, I will argue that both artists utilise the presence and explicit absence of objects across sequential images to generate a specifically comics-based visual grammar of the dreamscape. For both Doucet and Nilsen, this is about leading the comics-reader to question which spaces, and what stuff, are within or outside of the dream, and how we can tell.

**Peter Hebden** is a postgraduate researcher in Creative Writing at Newcastle University, interested in the intersections between comics, poetry and digital media. He is currently undertaking an AHRC-funded PhD in partnership with the publisher Bloodaxe Books.

## **Hellesund, Kristian**

### **Migration in Three Early American Newspaper Comics**

The early American comic strips and Sunday pages can in some ways mirror the American society in the first decades of the 1900s. Through gender roles, clothes, attitudes and situations, these comics are often time capsules giving us information about the past.

The newspapers in New York were important for the upstart of American comics. New York had around 1900 a large percentage of immigrants, and the readership of the New York newspapers was multilingual and multiethnic. The immigrant experience was often part of gags and jokes in the comics printed in the newspapers.

«The Katzenjammer Kids» by Rudolph Dirks features a German immigrant family. Their way of life was described mostly through slapstick humour, but there were also various links to Germany and German language and culture in Dirks's comics.

«Yens Yensen, Yanitor» by Ron W. Taylor is an example of the immigrant experience with a Scandinavian main character. The handyman wants to rise from the working class, but he is marked by his problems in integrating into a new society. Taylor also uses typical prejudice towards Scandinavians for humouristic purposes.

Much deeper into the Scandinavian experience, there is «Han Ola og han Per» by Peter J. Rosendahl. Originally published in the Decorah-Posten newspaper from 1918 to 1935, the life of two Norwegian-Americans is shown in a society mostly consisting of other Norwegian-Americans.

In my paper, I will discuss the immigrant experience as presented by Dirks, Taylor and Rosendahl. I will look at likenesses and differences in how the immigrants are presented and how the characters act as subjects in their society.

**Hibbett, Mark & Rob Fleay**

### **The Swingin' Sounds Of Sixties Marvel**

Bob Harris and Paul Francis Webster's 'Spider-Man' theme from the 1967 cartoon series has endured for over fifty years, always associated with the character and probably second only in public affection, as far as superhero theme tunes go, to Neal Hefti's 'Batman Theme' from the previous year.

However, there were several other Marvel theme tunes produced during the 1960s which are not so well remembered. These include Ted Holt's theme for Hanna Barbera's 'Fantastic Four' series (1967), 'The Merry Marvel Marching Society' issued by Marvel in 1964, and Jacques Urbont's range of tunes for the various segments of Gantray Lawrence's 'The Marvel Super-heroes' (1966). This presentation will examine these songs alongside other theme tunes and popular music of the time, in order to see what this little-studied aspect of transmedia storytelling can tell us about the early development of a company which came to dominate the field, commercially at least, in the twenty-first century.

As part of this analysis, the authors will perform each song live on guitar, and ask the important questions: Does Tony Stark really make you feel he's a cool exec with a heart of steel? Is life really a great big bang up for Spider-Man? And is it fair to describe irradiated scientist Bruce Banner as sulky, over-bulky, kind of sulky?

By day **Mark Hibbett** is a mild-mannered Research Data Manager at University of the Arts London, but by night he is a part-time Ph.D. candidate at the same institution, where his thesis title is 'Doctor Doom In The Marvel Age: An Empirical Approach To Transmedia Character Coherence'. He also performs with his band MJ Hibbett & The Validators, most notable for their early internet song 'Hey 16K'. His process blog 'Marvel Age Doom' can be found at [www.mjhibbett.co.uk/doom/](http://www.mjhibbett.co.uk/doom/)

**Rob Fleay** is half IT guru, half multi-instrumentalist session musician whose greatest achievements are 1) playing guitar on (the b-side of) the global number one hit single 'Your Woman' by White Town in 1997 2) milking that on press releases for the past 20 years.

**Horton, Ian**

**Sketchnoter for panel 1.1, “Periodicals”**

Ian Horton is a Reader in Graphic Communication and a founder member of the Comics Research Hub ([CoRH](#)) at the University of the Arts London. He is associate editor of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* and his research is focused on comic books, graphic design and illustration.

**Jackson, Paul**

**Sketchnoter for panel 2.1, “Adaptation and Pastiche”**

Paul Jackson is course leader for MA Graphic Branding & Identity at London College of Communication. He works as a commercial illustrator under the pseudonym Wesley Merritt and is currently undertaking a practice-based PhD at LCC, exploring the interface between illustration, reading and world-building.

web: [www.wesleymerritt.co.uk](http://www.wesleymerritt.co.uk)

Instagram: [@magraphicbranding](#)

**Jones, Helen**

**Caticorns and Derp Warz: Exploring children's comic making and literacy worlds in an after school comic club.**

This paper examines how an after school comic club made a third space for children's literacies practices. Twenty-one eight to ten year olds took part in the ten week project. During this period the children made their own comics strips, and worked in groups to create their own self-initiated publications. These comics were sold at two comic fairs, which were collaboratively planned and organised. In the paper the use of comics in education is explored. The concept of children's literacy worlds is discussed in relation to identity. Third space theory is taken into account in relation to affinity groups and maker spaces. Text World Theory is examined as a framework for analysing children's literacy worlds. Action Research as a methodology is considered, alongside the pedagogical approach of Project Based Learning. The data is analysed in relation to three key areas. First of all, children's self-motivated creation and publication of comics for other children to read is explored. Secondly, the role of 'third spaces', such as after school clubs, in relation to children's development of identity as writers is examined. Finally, Text World Theory is used to interrogate the literacy worlds of two groups of children. The paper concludes with the argument that children want to publish and sell their own comic strips, and that third spaces such as clubs create the room for children to tell their own stories. In addition, the conclusion argues that the space for children to create their own, self-initiated narratives plays an important role in children's meaning making and exploration of identity, through a bi-directional relationship between their discourse and text worlds. Finally, the paper offers suggestions for future practice.

**Helen Jones** is a Lecturer in Primary Education at UCL Institute of Education. Prior to this, she worked in primary schools in London for over 10 years, in which she had a range of roles in both leadership and the classroom. Helen became interested in comic studies and the use of comics in education while studying an MA in Children's Literature at Goldsmiths. Since then she has led a project to set up comic lending library, and currently runs a comic club with a local school.

**Kane, Louise**

### **Comics, Space, Race: Materialising World Literature**

Critical explorations of what constitutes ‘text’ continue to evolve across a variety of disciplines. From Periodical Studies to the Digital Humanities, this evolution of material approaches to a variety of print and digital ephemera has seen comparatively overlooked forms and genres receive greater critical attention. Comic Studies has emerged as a significant facet of this revisionist agenda, with the role and function of the comic coming under new forms of scrutiny. The field of Modernist Studies is one that bears plentiful intersections with the study of comics. Whilst the oft-questioned modernist/mass binary and associated issues of canonicity may bear partial responsibility for the comic’s historical exclusion from the privileged realm of high modernist objects, as Jackson Ayres reminds us, “[n]ot all modernists took such a dim view of comics.”<sup>6</sup>

This presentation explores the comic in relation to its more ‘respectable’ counterpart: the little modernist magazine, and the writers and illustrators who worked ‘across’ these genres. From the ways Dada magazines like *Die Pleite* (Berlin) and *L’Elan* (Paris) utilised aspects of the comic form as part of their illustrated depictions of societal absurdity, to the development of early twentieth-century hybrid comic-magazine forms like the Chinese manhua, I argue that the dialogic relationship between comics and avant-garde periodicals frames their visual art and text in a range of global contexts. Like a magazine, the comic’s portability and ability to transcend linguistic boundaries has facilitated its contribution to forms of world literature. Using select examples drawn from illustrators like Anne Harriet Fish and sub-genres including manhua, manga, and pepines, I discuss how these ‘global’ comics bring together communities of readers in spaces beyond the boundaries of well-known metropoles and invite postcolonial, deconstructive, and transdisciplinary readings.

**Louise Kane** is Assistant Professor of Global Modernisms at the University of Central Florida. Her PhD was awarded through De Montfort University’s AHRC-sponsored ‘Modernist Magazines’ project and her BA in English is from the University of Oxford. She has published widely on comics and serial print culture, including a forthcoming chapter in *Comics and/as Modernism*, ed. Jonathan Najarian. University Press of Mississippi, 2022.

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<sup>6</sup> Jackson Ayres, “Introduction: Comics and Modernism.” *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2016, pp. 111.

**Keleş, Hakan**

**Expanded frame, time and space: 80's Urban Atmosphere at Arabacıoğlu's "Panorama" Pages.**

In Turkey, from the late Ottoman Empire period and in the Turkish Republic period; most of the caricature, cartoon and comic productions have been published by weekly magazines. An important tradition and rich culture have emerged in this cultural segment. Especially in 80's, after the military coup in Turkey, *Gırgır* has become one of the most important popular culture icons ever; the sales figures of the magazine were almost as high as daily newspapers. The content of *Gırgır* was mostly based on politics and daily life. It was representing the urban atmosphere and public figures in a humorous way; and Istanbul especially was the common background of almost all productions as an urban landscape. Bülent Arabacıoğlu, a cartoonist working for *Gırgır* those years, was known mostly as the creator of adventure comic series "En Kahraman Rıdvan" ["Rıdvan the Most Heroic"], and also the multi-layered cartoon pages with multiple jokes, called "Panorama". Each "Panorama" was drawn as a large scale perspective of an urban fragment containing different physical elements of the city with many characters. Around 20 jokes and situations on a specific theme were combined together in an architectural space, and a holistic narrative was being formed out of various sequences. This study focuses on 16 Panorama pages where Arabacıoğlu puts a lot of information about physical qualities of Istanbul, and the daily life of the time. These urban fragments are analyzed by simple architectural illustrations and a comparative reading in terms of perspective use, depth, scale, sophistication and perception of time. The study also examines how the unique theme of each panorama determines its architectural space and the represented social life. Consequently, repeated sociological and cultural codes of 80's Istanbul are deciphered by producing patterns and diagrams.

**Hakan KELEŞ**, born in 1986, lives in Eskisehir/Turkey and works as a research assistant at Eskisehir Osmangazi University, architecture department. He received his Bachelor's Degree in architecture from Anadolu University in 2009 and Master's Degree from Istanbul Technical University in 2013. He completed his doctoral thesis titled "Utilizing Narrative as a Architectural Design Approach" at Eskisehir Technical University in July 2019. His academic and personal works mostly based on architectural design, narrative, comics, illustration and 2d animation. He is currently working on a architectural photo/illustration series named "Lilliputs" on his instagram profile.

**Kilburn, John**

**Sketchnoter for panel 7.2, “Between and Beyond Human Cultures”**

John is an illustrator, artist and academic.

John’s current research promotes sustainability and illustration through collaborative and interdisciplinary partnerships. Projects include A Suitcase Full of Eels ([eels.cargo.site](http://eels.cargo.site)) which has brought attention to the critically endangered European eel and has recently been exhibited at the London Wetlands Center, The Dutch Church, The Natural History Museum, London and the European Parliament in Brussels.

As an illustrator, high profile clients include Thames & Hudson, Cappelen Damm and Gestalten. John is a director of Atlantic Press who publish first time works of authorial illustration.

<https://johndkilburn.com/>

**Lindsay, Iona, Amie Huttie, Katie Laing, Hisham Khan, Bryoni Welsh & Frankie Posner**

**A Pandemic in Panels: Using comics and Graphic Medicine to explore and examine medical student experiences of training during the evolving coronavirus outbreak**

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has undoubtedly created devastating and wide-reaching change, and the subsequent demands on healthcare staff has been unprecedented. Medical students have also been subject to these individual and societal pressures as well as, like many other students, experienced a sharp rise in isolation, loneliness and monotony due to fundamental shifts in education delivery. It is therefore vital to seek creative methodology to investigate this urgent issue, and comics provide a valuable tool for investigation and documentation of these experiences.

Research focused on second- and third-year students from the University of Glasgow medical school, and utilised a series of digital comics workshops to enable students to discuss their perspectives and express these visually through creating original comics. Results will be considered alongside accompanying student artwork.

There were several prominent themes that arose from this investigation. It was evident that the influence of the media representation of “frontline NHS heroes” had been pervasive in creating pressures for students and affected how they saw both themselves and how they were perceived. A clear difficulty for students was the isolation and monotony of distance learning, where they lacked the social support structures integral to study. Other challenges of delivering crucial parts of training via a digital platform were explored such as simulated patients. Students also discussed how the expectations of friends and loved ones differed greatly from the reality of their training during this time. Finally, students also examined their fears about how the quality of their training may be perceived by their future colleagues or the wider public upon graduation and beginning work as a doctor.

In summary, this presentation will evaluate the use of comics as an investigative tool to explore experiences of future doctors during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This presentation is by a **collective of students** from the University of Glasgow Medical School. Iona, Bryoni and Frankie are in second year of their studies, and Amie, Katie and Hisham are in their third year. Their supervisor is Dr Lottie Corr who runs the Graphic Medicine module at University of Glasgow.

**Lostalé, Beatriz**

**Sketchnoter for panel 3.2, “Practice-based Research”**

Beatriz Lostalé is a Spanish illustrator and researcher living in the UK. She obtained a MA in Children’s Book Illustration in 2017, winning the V&A Student Illustrator of the Year Award with her final project. She is currently undertaking a practice-based PhD on non-fiction children’s books at Anglia Ruskin University.

Website: <http://www.blostale.com/>

### **Mangiavillano, Alessia**

#### **Fieldwork challenges: Navigating the production of comics for migrant and refugee advocacy**

In the last few years, the production of comics conveying fist-hand testimonies of migrants and refugees increased considerably. These comics are usually produced in Western countries by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - or in collaboration with NGOs - and speak mainly to a Western non-migrant audience, with the attempt to disseminate knowledge about the crossing of borders and migration issues. The pivotal role of NGOs in the process of production of comics narrating migrant and refugee stories is largely overlooked and involves actors and connections that so far remain unacknowledged. Both script and drawings are mediated by multiple roles, which can be identified throughout a fieldwork aimed at investigating how practices are formed and representation choices are made. I will offer reflections regarding the positionality of the researcher in the field and illustrate the methodology crafted to investigate the process of production. I will also discuss the relevance of grounded theory for data analysis and provide examples from my research journal. Shedding light on the process of production allows to understand the mediated authorship of NGOs and multiple roles involved, explore how narratives on migrants and refugees are shaped, and contributes to advance empirical comics research that engages with knowledge production on migration.

**Alessia Mangiavillano** is a doctoral researcher in the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, UK. Her research investigates the use of comics as a creative, versatile form of communication that conveys the stories and voices of refugees and migrants. Before starting her PhD, she used the comics medium extensively when designing and delivering activities and workshops for communication, education, and intercultural mediation in several international contexts in the UK, Italy, and Mexico.

**Marini, Anna Marta**

### **Barrier and the representation of the US internal/external boundaries**

In 2015, the comic series *Barrier*—by writer Brian K. Vaughan, artist Marcos Martin, and colorist Montse Vicente—was published by the DRM-free digital comics platform Panel Syndicate. Tackling issues related to the US-Mexico border security and immigration, *Barrier* takes a leap into the sci-fi genre to convey a powerful message on incommunicability and sociocultural clash. The authors bring the reader to experiment alienation, constructing a multilingual story without any translation provided; nonetheless, for both the reader and the protagonists, mutual understanding will reveal partially and progressively possible.

The plot is quite simple in itself, starting off with hardened Texan landowner Libby and illegal Honduran immigrant Oscar incidentally meeting at the border; at once, they get abducted by a couple of aliens, who will release them after a mutual exchange of memories. Such exchange facilitates a connection that comes across as necessary to overcome prejudice and mistrust; overborne by the public discourse on the border, the actual struggles and diverse realities of the transnational region often seem to fall through the cracks. By means of clever metaphors, peculiar graphics, and stunning color work, *Barrier* stimulates a timely reflection on existing linguistic, cultural, and physical boundaries. Borderlands are not just a geographical region along the border; they also represent a conceptual locus of inevitable encounter where the lack of mutual understanding, humanity, and awareness, hinder the possibility to bridge differences. The analysis will delve into the construction of otherness in the series and will be integrated with pertinent examples taken from other comics in which borderlands issues and the border itself have been exploited, in order to discuss the representation of conflictual boundaries extrinsic and intrinsic to the US society.

PhD candidate in American Studies at the Instituto Franklin-UAH, my thesis work (realized in collaboration with the CISAN-UNAM, Mexico City) explores the film representation of reciprocate Otherness bridging the US-Mexico boundary. I obtained my MA and BA in Linguistic and Cultural Mediation (areas of expertise: Anglo American and Hispanic American cultures), as well as a 2<sup>nd</sup> level postgraduate MA in Public History. My main research interests are: discursive and cultural representation of the US borderlands and Mexican American communities; CDA related to direct/structural violence, political discourse, and the US-Mexico border discourse; identity re/construction and narration through cinema and comics, especially related to US Hispanic minorities as well as otherness in the US-Mexico borderlands.

### McCall, Jessica

#### **Bearable Weight: *Faith*, *Bitch Planet*, and the Big Bodies of Big Women**

Despite significant and necessary conversations about representation of bodies in comic books, fatness remains a taboo both on the page and in real life. While the connections of beauty, thinness, and morality have long been critiqued, the existence of a fat body is still primarily read as a failure: failure to control one's appetites, failure to work hard, failure to achieve heroic status through physical activities. However, two representations of "big women," Jody Houser's *Faith* published by Valiant Comics in 2016 and Kelly DeConnick's Penny Rolle from *Bitch Planet* published by Image Comics in 2014, challenge the place the fat body holds within twenty-first century notions of strength and heroism. In this presentation I will consider how big bodies are drawn, what narratives their characters are allowed to experience, and where the line exists between subversive representations of fatness versus those designed to contain unruly bodies. The history of women and their unruly bodies is fraught, and the characters of Faith and Penny force readers to confront their own discomfort with the unruliness of fatness. As women take up more and more space within comics, as writers of comics, and as readers and fans, it has become increasingly important to not only fight for the right to take up space, but to also consider how women, both real and fictional, are allowed to take up that space.

**Jessica McCall**, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of English at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA. Her publications include "Feminist Studies" in *The Arden Research Handbook to Contemporary Shakespeare Criticism*; "Exit Pursued by a Fan" in *Shakespeare & Creative Criticism*; and "Some Women Just Want to Watch the World Burn: Gendered Villainy in Shakespeare and Geek Culture" in *Shakespeare and Geek Culture*.

**McManus, Esther**

**Sketchnoter for panel 2.2, “Cultural Memory”**

**Speaker: Constructing Inclusive Histories: Reflections on the temporality of comics and activist archives**

My paper will outline the ways that comics can effectively present inclusive historical accounts, in a way that has parallels with archival encounters. Not only do both have the ability to offer simultaneous distinct (and even contradictory) perspectives, but they both offer a similar experience of *temporality* when read by audiences.

Recent scholarship on activist archives (Sellie et al, 2015; Greenan, 2017; Eichhorn, 2013) suggests that their *temporality* enables the struggles of the past to enliven those of the present. Encounters with physical archival materials present ‘new and potentially productive proximities between social agents rarely imagined occupying the same space and time’ (Eichhorn, 2013, p.61), which in turn can provide ‘a means of helping others (re)discover marginalized social histories and continue to build new social movement culture’ (Sellie et al, 2015, p.461).

The multiple and unsimplified nature of archives also facilitates a historical understanding that is not rooted in a single perspective - ‘refusing to tell history from one particular stance’ (Sellie et al, 2015, p.467). Ultimately this offers an alternative to the singular, coherent historical narrative, which often disregards and erases the perspectives of minoritised people.

I suggest that these features of the archive can also be found in comics, drawing on Groensteen’s articulation of comics’ ‘temporal imprecision’, where ‘a narration that tends overall to be read as if in the past (aligns) images that, taken one by one, are read as present’ (2013, p.87). In the same way that physical archives meaningfully bring artefacts into our present, each panel of a comic can be seen to offer its ‘presence’.

To show these ideas in action I will describe the exploitation of ‘temporal imprecision’ in my recent comic *Between Friends*, which offers a multi-perspectival history of feminist printing and publishing collectives in the UK from 1970s to today. Finally, I will introduce my current work at MayDay Rooms, which was commissioned to explicitly make connections between their activist archives and the work of contemporary activism, to inspire contemporary audiences.

**Esther McManus** is an educator and self-publisher of comics and zines. With a background in silkscreen and risograph printing, her teaching and self-publishing are both informed by historical uses of print and its role in the production and distribution of knowledge. Her work engages with historical activism (particularly of feminist movements) to invigorate ways of living in the present, and her comics and writing draw on archives and oral histories to offer multiple perspectives of the past. Through her work she also explores ways of learning collectively as part of a national/ international publishing community, developing (and participating in) learning groups which foreground collective production and skill-sharing. Esther produces comics and pamphlets as part of residencies and commissions and is currently shortlisted for the 2020 Arts Foundation Futures Award in Comics.

## **McKeever, Lou**

### **Sketchnoter for panel 3.1, “Curating, Constructing and Countering Women’s Histories”**

Lou McKeever (Bluelou) recalls that she “learnt to draw from her brother’s discarded 2000AD comics”, before studying fine art at the Cardiff Institute of Higher Education, from which she graduated in 1997. She works in painting, digital imaging, photography and performance art, but admits that her first love has always been cartooning and comics - although acknowledging that the British comic scene has “all the unreconstructed atmosphere of a working men’s club, intimidating for a lone woman to enter.”

In 2004 McKeever was involved in the British Council’s “Trans-Atlantink” exchange program, with five young South African cartoonists, in which she was mentored by Steve Bell of *The Guardian* and the South African cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (Zapiro). In July 2010 McKeever was one of six young cartoonists invited to cover for Steve Bell and Martin Rowson at *The Guardian*. She also works for the *Morning Star*. McKeever is based in Bristol.

[www.bluelou.net](http://www.bluelou.net)

### Millanzi, Riziki

**“Because the city that says it’s freed itself of emotion... runs on emotion.”: Willpower, Emotional Strength and the ‘Angry Black Woman’ stereotype in DC’s *Far Sector***

In 2019, DC’s ‘Young Animal’ imprint began publishing the comic book series *Far Sector*, which introduced readers to the newest member of the Green Lantern corps, Sojourner ‘Jo’ Mullein. In *Far Sector*, Jo is assigned to the ‘City Enduring’ after the first murder is committed there in over 500 years. The City Enduring is an intergalactic society that is being torn apart by protests, inter-species conflict and a drug which allows the user to temporarily bypass the compulsory genetic modification that prohibits their emotions.

Jo Mullein is an intersectional character, whose experiences and portrayal provide readers with a speculative lens through which they can examine real life issues and narratives. *Far Sector* engages with ongoing societal discourses, such as Black Lives Matter, and examines the effects of and responses to such events.

The ‘Angry Black Woman’ is a racialised trope portrays Black women as unreasonable, threatening and ultimately out of control. Similarly, the City Enduring’s trilogy of alien species view Jo’s perceived emotional sensitivity as a weakness. However, Jo’s emotions are also an important part of carrying out her work as the City Enduring’s Lantern, providing her with the empathy and emotional connection to the murder case that the City’s own police force are lacking. They are particularly important to Jo’s characterisation within the series, and her recognition within the wider *Green Lantern* canon.

This paper will use the ongoing discourses surrounding the ‘Angry Black Woman’ stereotype in comics to discuss how N.K. Jemisin and Jamal Campbell invoke, subvert and react to the trope within *Far Sector*. Furthermore, this presentation will explore how Black women are represented within comics such as *Far Sector* and how their narrative and visual depiction within superhero comics provides the opportunity for ‘Black Girl Magic’: A celebration of Black women, Black culture and Black creativity.

**Riziki Millanzi** (she/her) is a PhD Researcher at the University of Sussex, exploring the representation of Black Women in Black Speculative literature, film and popular culture. A lifelong fan of comics, Riziki uses Intersectionality to examine the ‘#BlackGirlMagic’ movement and its permeation into comic books, their fandoms and audiences.

### Molga, Amanda

Sketchnoter for panel 5.1, “Graphic Medicine”

I’m a Polish-Born-Londoner. I am inspired by Anything strange and obscure from aggressive arachnids to un-tameable serpents, monsters and magical nature. Currently in My Final Year at Plymouth university, studying illustration

<https://www.tarantulawestwood.com/>

**Pursall, Dona**

**The importance of being unfinished: An exploration of unfixed identity and body politics in humorous anthology comics for children**

In 2014 Marvel introduced a teenage American Muslim superhero, 'Kamala Khan', whose narratives necessarily engaged with uneasy social, religious, cultural and moral negotiations appropriate to a young person in a complex contemporary world. Her character literally embodied the flexibility this required through her power as a polymorph, able to stretch and change physically. While the Marvel world depicts such bodily manipulation as empowering for heroic characters, British children's comics have a long established tradition of portraying the same unusual physical abilities in characters, but intentionally unheroically. 'Ping the Elastic Man' for example, a boy whose body could stretch just like 'Kamala Khan's' appeared in the first ever *Beano* comic in July 1938. His elasticity however was ambiguous, equally likely to be an asset or a curse, thus creating unpredictable outcomes from week to week. 'Ping' was amongst a plethora of such characters in the D. C. Thomson comics of the time, including 'Big Fat Joe', 'Bandy Legs', 'Toots McTurk' with ginormous feet, and 'Pansy Potter the Strong Man's Daughter'. These characters were not heroes, but rather children in difficult, changing, unpredictable and inappropriate bodies trying to make the best of their situations. The humour of the strips is not simply about a punchline, but rather this is the shared laughter of exploratory play; characters testing out their power, their abilities and their limits.

This paper grows from the extensive body of existing work on normality, representation, power and identity relating to both hyper-normative superhero comic characters and more recent depictions of bodily difference in graphic medicine. It intends to wrangle with the difficult discourse regarding laughter and disability, specifically related to how comics for children embrace bodily inconsistency and change as inevitable, uncontrollable and still ridiculous. It proposes to explore the importance of the weekly reading relationship between characters and readers, and the extent to which uncertain outcomes within the strips play a role in aligning developing child readers with incomplete, fallible characters, so readers laugh with and not at the characters. It will further position this ambiguous relationship with children's bodies and ideals of physicality and power in the wider context of the late 1930s and specifically the looming Second World War.

**Dona Pursall** is a PhD student of Cultural Studies, currently embraced within a wider European project seeking to piece together an intercultural history of children in comics: <https://www.comics.ugent.be/>

She is specifically investigating the relationship between the British 'funnies' from the 1930's to 1960's and the experiences and development of child readers within the context of wider social unrest and political change. Dona is a teacher with over fifteen years of classroom experience. Her Master's degree explored young adult readers and notions of identity and consumerism within vampire fiction.

### Ramjohn, Candace

#### Sketchnoter for panel 6.2, “Superheroes”

Candace Ramjohn [BA (Art & Design), BA (Business Analysis)] is a Project Coordinator with the Alberta SPOR Support Unit Knowledge Translation Platform. She contributes to the platform's visual dissemination, stakeholder engagement, and community of practice with her talents in art and graphic design, graphic recording, content management, web development, event planning, and administration. In addition to being the team's in-house artist and digital media pro, Candace is a busy football mom, an avid Star Wars and Marvel fan, painter, music-lover, talented baker, and cake artist.

### Rantala, Oskari

#### V for Pissed-off-ness vs. Vendetta. A case of anti-immigrant subversion of comics intertexts

In the parliamentary elections held in 2019, the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset) defied expectations and became the second-largest party in the Finnish parliament. Despite a party split and other challenges during the prior term, the radical nationalist and populist party succeeded in increasing their number of seats.

A significant component of the successful campaign was a video ad titled *V niin kuin ketutus* (literally "V for pissed-off-ness"). It caused controversy and was a topic of heated discussion due to depiction of violence and the representation of immigrants as sexual predators. Nonetheless, it was viewed nearly half a million times before the election and one of the main actors was elected to the parliament.

From the perspective of comics studies, the narrative short film is interesting especially because of its intermedial relations with comics. The film depicts a dystopian Finland governed by corrupt politicians and overcome by high levels of immigration - however, this dystopia is situated inside the storyworld of a comic book in the film.

Furthermore, the film extensively appropriates *V for Vendetta*, a comics work by Alan Moore and David Lloyd (1982-85, 1988-89) and its film adaptation by James McTeigue and the Wachowskis (2005). Whereas the original dystopian comic takes a strong political stand against nationalism and the prominent English fascist movements of the time, the film adaptation is more concerned with the erosion of civil liberties in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent "War on Terror".

In my paper, I discuss the ways in which the narrative strategies and aesthetics of these works are appropriated and the politics subverted to advance an anti-egalitarian and anti-immigrant agenda and manufacture exploitable political controversy in the contemporary media landscape.

**Oskari Rantala** is working on his doctoral thesis in the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, researching medium-specific narrative strategies and medial self-awareness in the comics of Alan Moore. Research interests: experimental narrative strategies, medium-specificity, (inter)mediality and their political uses.

**Ravnikar, Lena Holec**

### **Preservation of Slovene Literary History in Comics**

This paper focuses on comics adaptations of Slovene literary classics. It includes the history of the Slovene comics tradition, comics adaptations of Slovene literature (whereby only the works of known authors are considered and adaptations of material of folk origin are excluded) and comics biographies of Slovene authors.

The main focus is on adaptations of the works of Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), one of Slovenia's literary giants and the first professional writer in the history of Slovenian literature. Further proof of the intersection of literature and comics is Cankar's biography in the form of a graphic novel commissioned by the Ljubljana Museum and Galleries to commemorate the centenary of his death in 2018. It is a product of the collaboration between dr. Blaž Vurnik, curator at the Museum of Ljubljana, and Zoran Smiljanić, a prolific comics author responsible for the visualization of the five-part graphic novel series *Meksikajnarji*, which also touches on an important theme of Slovene history (it depicts a fictional story of a Slovene man who joins the army of Maximilian of Habsburg to conquer Mexico).

Adding to the celebration of the centenary and Cankar's influence on the Slovene literary and cultural heritage, three comics adaptations of his work were commissioned and published by Zavod Škrateljc in 2017, bringing together three of Slovenia's best-known youth authors Andrej Rozman - Roza, Boštjan Gorenc - Pižama, Žiga X Gombač) and three accomplished illustrators (Damijan Stepančič, Tanja Komadina, Igor Šinkovec).

Comics biographies of Alma Karlin, an early 20th century world traveler and Ivan Rob, a poet killed in the World War II are also presented and analyzed.

It can thus be observed that the Slovenian comic tradition has tapped into Slovene literary classics as a rich and continuous source of inspiration and has in turn contributed to its preservation.

**Lena Holec Ravnikar**, PhD student at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory. My research focuses on the identification, collection and analysis of comic adaptations of Slovene literary classics. It was started as my graduation thesis and proved to be a much more generous subject than initially expected, so it progressed into my PhD research. I have also worked as a translator, editor and copywriter, which I still do occasionally while working on my doctoral thesis. In my spare time I have also co-authored a children's book.

Richards, Irina

Sketchnoter for panel 5.2, “Experiences of Otherness”

**Speaker: Narrating cultural heritage through comics: a graphic investigation into witch-hare folklore of Wales**

As a comics artist whose practice is inspired by history, mythology and folklore, I have been interested in investigating how cultural artefacts (both tangible and intangible) can be interpreted in comic format. The project I have been conducting as part of my Masters dissertation focuses on creating a trilogy of short comics based on witch-hare folklore in Wales. The project focus comes from my personal interest in witch-hare folklore, as well as from discovering historical items related to this theme. The comics have been informed by visual research conducted at locations geographically and culturally linked to the witch-hare theme as well as online, using museums' virtual collections. This study is autoethnographic; it involves investigating my own practice and using the comics I created as data. My two main aims for these projects have been to communicate and interpret research into witch-hare folklore through comics, and to express my personal voice as an artist and a researcher through my comics. The project outcomes will be presented as a visual essay, which will form part of my final dissertation.

**Irina Richards** is a comics creator, artist educator, and MA Artist Teacher Practice student at Oxford Brookes University. She is currently teaching at the University of the Arts London's Future Creatives programme. Irina's research interests include history and heritage in comics, poetry comics, comics as data, and using comics in socially engaged art projects.

**Searle, Clari**

## **Creating ‘Funnies’: how to build an effective creative process for Higher Education pedagogy**



This paper explores the way comics ‘how to’ books (Barry 2015, 2019; Brunetti 2011, Mankoff 2002, McCloud 2006) have informed my comics practice and could help or hinder the development of an effective creative process and practice for higher education pedagogy.

The focus is my ongoing PhD research, the aim of which is to contribute practically to the current gap of the funnies genre in UK Comics Studies degrees with a final

creative submission of a graphic guidebook for students on ‘how to create funnies’ or humorous comics. The ‘audience’ for this work is primarily university students and their teachers and I am currently working on creating activities that build towards this graphic guidebook and also a workbook of photocopiable activities for teachers.

My talk will consider selected literature from comics ‘how to’ manuals on the construction of funnies, my resulting arts-based action research, and the subsequent cherry-picking of ideas to build into exercises for future data-gathering workshops. These workshops intend to investigate activities within a playful creative process to ascertain the most useful for inclusion in the final submission of the graphic guidebook. Overall, this paper explores the building of an effective creative process for personal creative practice, workshop design, and pedagogic practice.

**Clari Searle** has been a university teacher and teacher trainer since 2005 and holds a lectureship post in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University. She is currently on research leave to work on her doctoral project at University of the Arts London. Her PhD research blends her interests in pedagogy with her passions for comedy, the visual arts and cartooning. [www.badlydrawnbirds.co.uk](http://www.badlydrawnbirds.co.uk)

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## **Sohini, Kay**

### **Sketchnoter, Keynote 1: Nick Sousanis, “Frames of Thought”**

Kay Sohini is a comics-maker and a PhD candidate in English at Stony Brook University, where she is currently drawing her doctoral dissertation as a comic. Her work on comics has been published in Graphic Mundi's *Covid Chronicles*, *Women Write About Comics*, *Solrad*, and *Inside Higher Ed*, among others. She serves as the Secretary on the Executive Committee of the *International Comic Arts Forum (ICAF)*, and on the editorial team of *The Comics Grid*.

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**Szép, Eszter**

### **Drawing and Transforming the Body in Ken Dahl's *Monsters***

Ken Dahl, in his graphic narrative on living with the sexually transmitted disease of herpes, represents his avatar and personifies the illness of the avatar with cunning visual inventiveness. Dahl's dynamic visualizations freely transform the bodies of the characters, which, I argue, emphasize drawing as a performance and as a way to think about the many controversial topics of this comic (eg. relationships, responsibility, sex, guilt, prejudice). Bodies are constantly created and recreated in acts of drawing, which offer creative ways for Dahl (pen name for Gabby Schulz) not only to find visual expressions of complex feelings and experiences regarding illness but also to testify to the endlessness of pictorial embodiment (El Refaie) itself.

The metamorphoses keep the avatar in what Margrit Shildrick called the “condition of constant becoming” (1): in a particularly vulnerable state where the repeated acts of transforming the avatar's body are used to ask visual questions about the body. Shildrick does not talk about comics, her book, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, studies monstrosity and vulnerability in various cultural products: my paper applies Shildrick's questions to Dahl's take on normative and the monstrous bodies. I show with examples and by close reading that the morphing of the avatar's body is expressive of vulnerability on two levels: on the level of the narrative where the illness is transforming the body, and on the level of representation, where it is the lines that govern the transformations of the body.

Content warning: Dahl uses a cartoony style to show a sexually transmitted disease, but occasionally he switches to a very realistic, photoreferential way of drawing, which can be disturbing. Actually these changes are extremely interesting.

**Tasić, Miloš & Dušan Stamenković**

### **Visualising an Oral Epic: Lobačev's Comic Book *Ženidba Dušanova***

Using the findings coming from the realms of intermediality, intersemiotic translation, transmedia storytelling and adaptation, this study analyses visual and verbal material found in Đorđe Lobačev's comic book *Ženidba Dušanova* (1938/1976) (translated into English as *Dušan's Wedding*), based on the Serbian oral epic of the same name, which focuses on the hero wedding theme. It belongs to the Pre-Kosovo cycle (Serb. *Pretkosovski ciklus*), which includes epics about events that predated the Battle of Kosovo (1389). The study will try to present verbal and graphic devices used to transfer the epic narrative to the medium of comics and compare them to the devices used in the original story. The analysis will also take into account the historical context of the comic book in question (pre-WWII) and compare the findings with the results of the research dealing with modern comics. The subject matter of Lobačev's work represents a visual rendition of a popular Serbian oral epic, which is in its own way a highly specific form of creative expression, as it follows a pattern. The pattern in hero wedding epics includes: (1) the proposal, (2) the conditions set by the in-laws and the disguised fraud attempt, (3) the detection of the fraud, (4) the wedding campaign with obstacles, and (5) the happy ending. We will track the transmedial procedures in portraying each of these. Besides this, the preliminary results reveal that Lobačev's comic, when compared to modern comics, contains some graphic devices related to describing motion, speed and spatiality, but lacks the ones used to enhance emotional content, which is in line with basic traits of oral epic poetry.

**Miloš Tasić**, PhD in linguistics, is an assistant professor of English at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Niš, Serbia, and Head of its Department of Social Sciences. He teaches several general English and ESP courses at two undergraduate study programmes in mechanical engineering and engineering management. His fields of interest include cognitive linguistics, comics studies, multimodal communication, critical discourse analysis, and English for specific purposes.

**Dušan Stamenković**, PhD in Linguistics, is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, where he teaches linguistics, semantics, psycholinguistics, multimodality and contemporary English. He is the Chief of the Language Cognition Laboratory, a researcher in the Center for Cognitive Sciences, and one of the editors of *Visual Communication*. His articles appeared in journals including *Journal of Memory and Language*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Metaphor & Symbol*, *Developmental Review*, and *Discourse, Context & Media*.

### **Thoudam, Natasa**

#### **In Search of a Form while Inventing a Language of Subversion through Stereotypes**

Inspired by Nick Sousanis' *Unflattening* (2015), I imagined a pictorial story of the emergence of the form of the graphic narrative within the Meitei community of Manipur in India's Northeast. This imagination also used the form of graphic narrative to tell this particular story. The story connects this emergence with Meitei painting (specifically illustrative arts), Meitei folktales, and the pictorial bodily symbolism of the Meitei Mayek (the written script of the Meiteis). This quest revealed a gendered (his)story of Meitei painting that had left women out and unearthed a gendered and stereotypical representation of women in Meitei folktales. In order to counter this gendering of (his)story and representation, my pictorial story adopted a language of subversion, whereby the authorial 'I' was assigned to these stereotyped marginal characters.

This paper then is an exercise to explore pictorial stereotypes and stereotyping in the light of these questions: What happens to status quo/stereotypes during these instances of subversion? Do we find a reproduction of stereotypes in these instances? How do we distinguish a category of description from that of deployment in these subversions?

**Dr Natasa Thoudam** is an Assistant Professor at IIT Jodhpur. She was also a recipient of the competitive Zubaan-SPF Grant for Young Researchers from the Northeast (2018-19) for a collaborative project titled *Fragrance of Peace* funded by Zubaan Publishers, India, and Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Japan. Her doctoral research was on women's writing on political violence in Manipur in India's Northeast. She has also extensively published research papers and presented conference papers on India's Northeast. She was awarded the CD Narasimhaiah Prize for the Best Paper read at India's Northeast-focussed IACLALS Annual Conference 2017.

**Yadav, Neha**

**Whose Line is it Anyway: Graphic Anthology Drawing the Line as a Counter-narrative to Mainstream Rape Reportage in India**

Published by Delhi's feminist press Zubaan Book and Toronto's Ad Astra Comix, *Drawing the Line: Indian Women Fight Back* is an anthology of graphic narratives by fourteen young women. The book came into being as a result of a workshop held in the wake of the brutal gang rape and murder of a young female medical student in Delhi in December 2012; the incident received extensive national and international media coverage and triggered massive civic protests across the country. The ensuing national conversation around rape was shaped in a significant manner by media reportage which ranged from fact-based reports of the night's events to impassioned opinion pieces. However, as scholars like Deepa Fadnis and Reetinder Kaur have pointed out, the newsgathering and reporting process is heavily influenced by patriarchal socialisation; as a result, the conversation rarely moves beyond the language of surveillance and control of female bodies under the rhetoric of women's safety. An anthology like *Drawing the Line*, I argue, offers a valuable counter-narrative to the problematic public discussion around rape. The anthology explores, in the black-and-white of newsprint and documentary photojournalism, a gamut of issues that undergird rape culture; these include punitive beauty standards, enforced heteronormativity, restrictions on mobility, lack of economic independence, street harassment etc. Equally importantly, the stories articulate a desire for what Shilpa Phadke calls the right to risk and pleasure. My paper, therefore, will explore this graphic anthology as an image-text archive that resists the hegemony of the mainstream discourse by significantly broadening its concerns and offering perspectives that interrogate the status quo's espousal of the rhetoric of safety.