



**Joint Conference of the International Bande Dessinée Society  
and the International Graphic Novel and Comics Conference**



# The Taste of Comics



**2025**

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## Keynote Speakers

**Irène Le Roy Ladurie** (Université de Lausanne)

**Date:** Wednesday, 25/6

**Time:** 16:30-17:30

**Location:** Online

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**Eric Dubois** (Fondation E. P. Jacobs; l'École Boulle)

**Date:** Monday, 30/6

**Time:** 09:00-10:15

**Location:** CBBD - 1

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**Eszter Szép** (Milestone Institute)

**Date:** Friday, 4/7

**Time:** 09:30-10:30

**Location:** CBBD - 1

## Roundtables and Panel Discussions

### Roundtable 1

**Date:** Tuesday, 1/7

**Time:** 09:00-10:30

**Location:** Hoek38 - Gogotte

**With:** Silvia Vari, Valerio Bindi, Merieme Mesfioui and Bambi Kramer

#### **Abstract: Do 'Eat' Yourself: Underground Comics and the Politics of (Dis)Taste**

'Crack! Fumetti Dirompenti' is an underground comics festival held annually at the squatted Forte Prenestino in Rome, which has been a vital force in nourishing—and disrupting—the Italian comics scene since 2003. Over the years, Crack! has become one of Europe's most significant festivals for underground comics, calling together DIY artists and creative minds from across the globe. From its 2023 edition, titled 'Crack! Cannibale: Do Eat Yourself!', the festival has been exploring the relationship between food, body, and (dis)taste in underground comics, informed by the socio-cultural aspects of exploitation and expropriation of colonialist capitalism. Building on the festival's long-standing history, the roundtable brings together academics, festival organisers, and underground comic artists to reflect on the power of comics and autonomous publishing (autoproduzione) in subverting conventional understandings of 'taste', serving as a bold counterpoint to mainstream cultural consumption. The roundtable questions how the disruptive art of underground comics intersects with themes such as the deconstruction of the human/animal dichotomy, the foundation of all systems of division and racist ideologies, and posits autoproduzione as an autophagic act that escapes biopolitical control. Drawing on Crack!'s experience, the discussion aims to foster an inclusive and diverse discussion on how autoproduzione may upend dominant and colonial narratives surrounding food production, the body, and 'taste'.

### Short Bios:

**Silvia Vari (University of Warwick)** is a PhD student in Italian at the University of Warwick. Her current research focuses on the experience of (forced) migration in the Mediterranean area narrated in Italian comics. Aiming attention at different forms of migrant storytelling in comics (such as autobiography, reportage, and fiction) and the relative narrative framing strategies, her research analyses the potential of comics to challenge mainstream discourses about (forced) migration and displacement. She is co-founder of the Warwick Comics Research Network and her academic work has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Mediascapes* (2/2023), *Studi Culturali* (3/2021) and *Ticentre* (15/2021).

**Valerio Bindi (Fortepressa)**, radical architect, professor, author of comics and essays, has been the non-director and anti-curator of the international underground comics festival CRACK! at CSOA Forteprenestino in Rome. He produces underground zines and comics with Fortepressa. He has written and drawn book essays and graphic novels. His latest productions are the catalogues of the Chris Ware and Jacovitti exhibitions at Palazzo del Fumetto in Pordenone (2024), and the essays 'Che cosa sono le nuvole?' (Fortepressa, 2019), 'Che cosa è il fumetto' (Carocci, 2021) with Luca Raffaelli, with whom he edited the volume 'La rabbia' (Einaudi, 2016). Columnist for 'Robinson', cultural supplement of the daily newspaper 'La Repubblica'.

**Merieme Mesfioui (SPIN OFF)** is a Moroccan illustrator, graphic designer and comic author based in France. By combining traditional Moroccan patterns and elements from Islamic art with graphic design and an erotic touch, she is seeking more freedom for women in the MENA (Middle Eastern, North African) world. Her strong erotic art expresses female empowerment and promotes lgbtq+ community's rights as an ally. Merieme spent one year studying illustration and comics at Lycée d'Arts Appliqués Auguste Renoir before getting a Master's Degree in comics at the Angoulême Fine

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Arts School. She is the co-founder of SPIN OFF, an underground comics and zines festival based in Angoulême.

**Bambi Kramer** writes and draws comics. She contributes to 'Linus', 'Internazionale', and 'Domani'. In 2020, she published on 'Cypher Magazine': 'Your wish is my command' (Frontline Defenders, 2020), a short report on the No TAP movement. She is among the authors of 'La rabbia' (Einaudi Stile Libero, 2016). Since 2012, she collaborates with Crack! Fumetti Dirompenti and Fortepressa. Her 'Eden and Edna' was part of the 'Komikaze' #17 anthology, awarded at Angoulême in 2020. In 2024, 'We live here' (Seven Stories Press, NY), an urban sociology comics essay on the Detroit Eviction Defence movement, was published in collaboration with Jeffrey Wilson.

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### **Panel Discussion**

**Date:** Tuesday, 1/7

**Time:** 17:00-17:45

**Location:** Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Title:** Is Comics Studies in Crisis?

**With:** Bart Beaty (p. 24), Julia Round (p. 60-61), Roger Sabin (p. 85), Laurence Grove (p. 63) and Maaheen Ahmed (p. 51)

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### **Roundtable 2**

**Date:** Thursday, 3/7

**Time:** 13:45-15:15

**Location:** Hoek38 - Gogotte

**With:** Gabi Putnoki, Karrie Fransman and Chloë Green

**Abstract:** Improving Britain's taste for comics: how can we achieve the status of BD/Manga in the UK

Unlike Belgium, France and Japan, the UK has had a contentious relationship with comics. Following the US Comics Code (1954), the UK had its own moral panic when 'corrupting' comics were made illegal in 1955. Shockingly, this act has never been repealed! Only one single comics organisation in the UK receives Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding, and there are no infrastructure organisations to support comic creators. There is a prevailing view that comics are immature, simplistic or simply a gateway to reading 'proper literature'.

Despite this and a dearth of funding, a thriving UK grassroots comics scene flourishes, including academic research into these obstacles. An astonishing 115 UK comic conventions run annually, including the biggest, Thought Bubble, attracting 12,000 attendees each year. The Graphic Novel Reading Room (GNRR) brings comics libraries in a van to cafes and communities, introducing readers to the medium. The Comics Cultural Impact Collective (CCIC) is raising the value of comics, improving funding and creating an infrastructure organisation. In this talk, we will discuss the problems and potentials of raising the value of comics in the UK. If the UK can improve its cuisine, surely we can do the same with comics!

### **Short Bios:**

**Gabi Putnoki (Graphic Novel Reading Room)** is the creative producer of the unique event series Graphic Novel Reading Room, a pop-up event where a large number of comics and zines are available to read in a relaxed environment. Gabi has worked with major art and cultural organisations such as Thought Bubble festival, Off the Shelf literary festival and the Wellcome

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Collection. Gabi has also put together a toolkit for academics to use comics as knowledge exchange, and has produced and edited a comics about hydroponics.

**Karrie Fransman (Positive Negatives)** has created comics for The United Nations, The Guardian, The Times, the BBC, The Arts Council and The British Red Cross. She created 'Gender Swapped Fairy Tales' (2020) and 'Greek Myths' (2023, Faber & Faber) with Jonathan Plackett and graphic novels 'The House That Groaned' (2012, Penguin Random House) and the award-winning 'Death of the Artist' (2015, Jonathan Cape). She is the Creative Director at PositiveNegatives.org, who uses comics to amplify research. She is a founding member of The Comics Cultural Impact Collective (CCIC), which aims to raise awareness of the value of comics in the UK. [www.karriefransman.com](http://www.karriefransman.com).

**Chloë Green (Thought Bubble Festival)** is Festival Director of Thought Bubble: The Yorkshire Comic Art Festival, the UK's largest comic art festival. She is also an artist and comic creator; her debut comics work, A Crying Shame and A Walk to a Waterfall, was self-published in July 2023. Chloë graduated with a Master of Arts Degree in Illustration with Graphic Novel from Leeds Arts University; her studies focused on autobiographical comics and their place as a therapeutic tool for creators and readers.

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### **Roundtable 3**

**Date:** Friday, 4/7

**Time:** 10:45-12:15

**Location:** CBBB - 3

**With:** Plenty Collective: Shambhavi Singh, Natalia "Nam-Ke" Kekkonen, Warda Ahmed, Maryam Abuzaid-Ryu and Elvira "Ennekeli" Kim

**Abstract: Plenty (of Food): Book Presentation about exploring food through a BIPOC Lens in the Finnish Comic Scene**

Join us for the presentation of our third comics anthology - Plenty: Food.

In this roundtable, Plenty Collective presents their latest Publication - Plenty (Food), 2025. We will discuss the theme and the Finnish comics scene through a bipoc lens. Discover how comics can bring diverse voices and experiences to life through the topic that is fundamental to our human existence. We each come from diverse backgrounds, and together in this anthology, we channel the nuances of our relationship to food and to Finland.

We will present the anthology and discuss the various stories, their specific treatment of the theme, visual styles and work process and also give the audience a taste of the presence of Bipoc artists in the Finnish comics scene.

The roundtable will focus on two main aspects: The significance of the theme, and how the anthology contextualises the theme through a Bipoc lens in the Finnish comics scene. The craft of comic making in telling juicy stories about food, expressing identity, culture, hope, and challenges. The roundtable will include a 40-60 minute presentation and discussion, 30 minutes for questions from the audience.

**Short Bio:** Plenty Collective gathers international BIPOC comic makers to work together. Having published three issues so far - Body Politics (2022), Layers (2024) and Food (2025). Collective includes the following artists: Nam-Ke is a mixed Finnish comic artist from Kuopio, specialising in silent comics. Maryam "Mellu" Abuzaid-Ryu, a Palestinian-Korean artist in Turku, explores social issues and multiculturalism. Elvira, having lived in Russia, China, and Finland, addresses belonging and immigration. Jade is from Finland. Shambhavi, an Indian artist in Helsinki, focuses on mental

health and research communication. Warda Ahmed, a visual artist and teacher in Helsinki, emphasises migration and the Black diaspora. Instagram @plenty\_collective

## Workshops

### Hauntology, classical myth and Gothic aesthetics: monstrous women in comics

**Organisers:** Barbara Chamberlin and Louisa Buck

**Date:** Monday, 1/7

**Time:** 15:15-16:45

**Location:** CBBD - 2

#### Abstract:

Some ideas refuse to die, re-surfacing in new ways, but where core narratives and associations remain. Traumatic female experience and the attribution of blame have often, since classical myth, been represented as monstrous: gorgons, sirens, harpies, one-eyed prophetic hags, the witch. Hauntology offers a way of exploring the continuation of such core ideas, the stubborn resonance of the past within the present echoed, in these cases, through graphic narrative loops. The co-presence of time in comics is well-established, and this can be true of both sequenced images as well as the single frame, allowing panel, page and text to be considered haunted, especially those adopting a darker, Gothic aesthetic to tell these women's stories.

This workshop will be divided into two primary parts. The first will explore these issues in relation to examples within and beyond both contributors' practices. The practice element encourages participants to explore some of these revenant stories and consider how they can be communicated graphically in ways that weave the past into the present, demonstrating their residual power and resonance.

#### Short Bios:

**Dr Barbara Chamberlin (University of Brighton)** is a senior lecturer in creative writing, literature and English language at the University of Brighton. She also designed and leads the university's newly developed comics studies pathways. She has co-curated the comics symposium Graphic Brighton across many of its iterations and is a member of CoRH!! (Comics Research Hub) at UAL. Her recently awarded doctorate used collaboration and walking to create experimental papercut comics about place-specific witch narratives. She has published work on walking and comics, folk horror comics as haunted spaces and has co-edited *Horror and Comics* (UWP, 2025) with Julia Round and Kom Kunyosying.

**Dr Louisa Buck (University of Brighton)** is an artist and academic who is interested in the adaptation of classical mythology in contemporary times. For her PhD, she looked at the use of Greek mythology in the British political cartoon, with a case study of *The Myth of Sisyphus*. She is currently working on projects including a hand-drawn Ancient Greek Alphabet peopled with mythological figures. She is also translating and illustrating the *Odyssey* by Homer. In other new research, she looks at the use of Greek mythological punishment narratives in the rhetoric of mental health theory and has presented at Graphic Medicine conferences.

## **Creating Comfort Food Comics**

**Organiser:** Zu Dominiak

**Date:** Monday, 1/7

**Time:** 15:15-16:45

**Location:** CBBD – 3

### **Abstract:**

This workshop introduces participants to the art of Iyashikei comics, a genre known for its calming narratives, gentle visuals, and everyday beauty themes, which often feature food at its centre. No prior experience in making comics or drawing is necessary, as the workshop provides an accessible framework for creating “comfort food comics” – stories that evoke warmth, relaxation, and emotional well-being.

While we will briefly look at works such as Laid Back Camp by Afro, the session focuses on hands-on exercises. These will guide attendees through the process of creating their own short Iyashikei comic, focusing on intuitive storytelling and world-building instead of technical skill. By the end of the session, participants will have created their own comfort food comics. This workshop provides a space for creative expression, encouraging attendees to explore storytelling to promote personal and communal well-being.

### **Short Bio:**

**Zu Dominiak (De Montfort University)** is a comics creator, researcher, and Subject Group Leader for Graphics Arts, Animation and Game Art, as well as a senior lecturer in Concept and Comic Arts at De Montfort University, Leicester. They completed their PhD, Comics Art in Museums and Galleries: New Methods for Engagement and Education at the University of Dundee. Their research interests are mainly in formalist approaches to comics, curation and exhibition of comics art. As a creator, they produce public information and healthcare comics, having worked for clients including the Imperial College of London, Bournemouth University and the NHS. In their spare time, they dabble in breaking the comics form.

## Speakers (A-Z)

### Aaron Billings (RMIT)

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics II

Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Malachiet

#### **The Aesthetics of the Cute in Art Spiegelman's *Maus***

##### **Abstract:**

Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986) is an iconic work of graphic novel excellence, totemic of the capacity of the medium to go beyond entertainment and create works of art with gravity and substance. But what if it was also a bit cute? The minor aesthetic of the cute, as argued by Sianne Ngai (2012), has a complicated relationship with value and desire, high art and low art. Cuteness converges on several visual indicators, all of which can be identified in *Maus*. The cute subject is rounded, simplified, and connotes fragility and sometimes disability. Often, they are unintentionally funny and clumsy. This paper argues that *Maus* contains elements of what we could call cute, and in fact, this is the basis for its coherence. I explore how *Maus* responds to the anxiety of the graphic artist, which we can trace to the medium's origins as popular entertainment. *Maus* is often cited as a watershed moment for the form in which the childish shackles were cast off. Yet, rather than diminishing the work, Spiegelman's deployment of the aesthetic of the cute elevates the work's tragic and serious themes whilst celebrating the democratic readability that makes *Maus* such a success.

**Keywords:** *Maus*, cuteness, cute

##### **Short Bio:**

Aaron Billings is primarily a comics and textile artist. He works in Narrm (Melbourne), on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people out of Pink Ember studio, a queer ARI he co-founded in 2018. He draws weekly cartoons for the culture Substack *The Paris End*, as well as contributing comics to campaigns for the NTEU and other causes. He has self-published many comics and zines, his latest long-form comic work 'Beatitudes of the Beat' serialised by Glom Press. He is undertaking PhD research at RMIT, looking into the aesthetic of the cute in graphic novels.

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### Abdullah Parwaiz (Northumbria University)

**Panel:** Recounting the Past through Food

Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

#### **Food, Love, and Resistance: Exploring Gastronomic Narratives in Sekhar Mukherjee's *The Magical Kitchen of Maria Alfonso Caramelo Lobo***

##### **Abstract:**

Sekhar Mukherjee's *The Magical Kitchen of Maria Alfonso Caramelo Lobo* uses magic realism to craft a compelling socio-political critique, positioning gastronomy as a powerful medium of resistance and cultural solidarity. This paper will argue that Mukherjee's narrative leverages food as a battleground to confront sectarian ideologies like gastro-nationalism—where food is politicised to enforce exclusionary identities—and to challenge corporate exploitation of culinary traditions, and propaganda such as “love jihad.”

The narrative centres on Auntie Maria, a “Freedom/Humanist Chef,” whose culinary journey from Goa to Ahmedabad symbolises defiance against moral policing and corporate control over food. Maria's romance with Tanvir, a lower-class Muslim boy, challenges the divisive construct of “love



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jihad,” revealing how it weaponises fear to fracture India’s pluralistic fabric. Her confrontation with regressive food mafias—clad in cutlery armour—becomes an act of culinary resistance, where food transforms into a weapon against oppression and corporate homogenisation.

This paper will focus on two critical arguments: first, how Mukherjee critiques the commodification of culinary traditions as a tool of cultural nationalism and religious discrimination; second, how love and gastronomy serve as counterforces to “love jihad.” Lastly, it will discuss how this work reimagines food as a revolutionary localised medium for secularism, justice, and collective resistance to authoritarian homogenisation.

**Keywords:** Food, Resistance, Discrimination

### **Short Bio:**

Abdullah Parwaiz is a PhD scholar at Northumbria University, UK. His research deals with Indian graphic narratives as resistance genres for Muslims and marginalised identities funded by the prestigious AHRC Studentship. A Gold Medalist in MA English from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), he has presented at national and international conferences and published two academic papers. He has been the former Secretary of AMU's Raleigh Literary Society, one of India’s oldest literary groups, and also a national-level debater. He also writes poetry and prose that deals with identity, society, love and revolution.

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## **Abhilasha Gusain (National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) Surathkal)**

**Panel:** Translating Cultural Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 09:00-09:45, Online

### **From Gotham to India: Localizing the Legend of Batman**

#### **Abstract:**

The adaptation of Batman into local superheroes, like Baaz, Bhootnath, Kala Pret, and others, for Indian audiences exemplifies the intricate process of cultural adaptation and localization within superhero narratives. This paper explores this adaptation, including character transformation, setting modifications, integration of cultural values, and addressing societal issues, illustrating how a Western superhero icon can resonate deeply with Indian culture and values. The evolution of these characters signifies a profound alignment with Indian cultural ethos and societal norms, embodying values deeply rooted in Indian mythology and folklore. Through narratives, drawn from themes such as duty (dharma) and the struggle between good and evil, audiences are presented with a contemporary reimagining of age-old tales of heroism. The localization of narrative within Indian cities or villages grounds the superhero story in familiar landscapes and societal dynamics, enhancing its relatability and authenticity. Furthermore, the adventures extend beyond battles against supervillains to confront pressing social challenges prevalent in India, serving as a medium for commentary and reflection of the collective consciousness of Indian society. The localization of Batman showcases the ability of superhero narratives to bridge cultural divides and resonate with diverse audiences. These characters embody contemporary Indian heroism, inspiring social change and fostering cross-cultural dialogue, while celebrating global storytelling traditions.

**Keywords:** Indianization, Localisation, Mythology, Bollywood, Political Climate, Glocal

#### **Short Bio:**

Dr Abhilasha Gusain is an Assistant Professor of English in the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) Surathkal. She completed her PhD (2024) from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee. Her dissertation examined the graphical representation of the Vietnam War, particularly exploring the themes of

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trauma, ethics of representation, memory, history, and violence, through the reading of graphic narratives. Her research outputs are published in journals like Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics, Visual Studies, and 3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies. She has presented her work at various international conferences, including the University of Cambridge. She is also the recipient of 'The Sabin Award for Comics Scholarship' (2022). She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in English Literature from the University of Delhi. Her research interest lies in Comics Studies.

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### **Abhirami L. (EFLU Hyderabad)**

**Panel:** The Narrative Journey of Food                      Wednesday 25/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

#### **Metaphorography: Visualizing Health Experiences in Selected Graphic Narratives**

##### **Abstract:**

The term graphic medicine, coined by Dr. Ian Williams, is defined as “the intersection between the medium of comics and the discourse of health care”. The paper problematizes the employing of metaphors in the selected graphic medical texts, which traverses the varying aspects of caring, from caring about the other in Brian Fies *Mom’s Cancer*”; through caring for oneself, by listening to others in M.K. Czerwec’s *Menopause: A Comic Treatment*; to caring for oneself in Kimiko Tobimatsu’s *Kimiko Does Cancer*. From the panels to fonts and colour palette, the paper attempts to study the process of signification triggered by these elements.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, medical humanities, cancer comics

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### **Abhirami Prasanth (Indian Institute of Technology Mandi)**

**Panel:** Food Comics, Nostalgia and Community                      Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

#### **Food Motifs in Graphic Literature: A Study of *A Path Home* by Arkototong Longkumer**

##### **Abstract:**

Food and food habits have been among the most important means of claiming identity and asserting agency in the postcolonial context. Literature largely engages in initiating such conversations by employing food motifs and the symbolism of food. Graphic narratives combine visual and verbal elements to tell a story, allowing for a depth of expression that neither medium could achieve alone. The wide range of topics that graphic narratives engage with and their unique blend of visual and verbal storytelling opens up a wider avenue for conveying complex ideas, including food motifs. This has gained significant academic and literary recognition in recent decades. *A Path Home* by Arkotong Longkumer and Meren Imchen is an ethnographic fiction that draws from real-life characters and historical events but employs fictional characters and settings to deal with the movement of Naga repatriation. It is an interesting attempt to share the experiences and memories associated with the past with contemporary readers in the form of a graphic novel. Written in the light of Naga repatriation, the novel becomes an entry point to reconnect with the nostalgia and memory of the past that are buried deep down. This paper is an attempt to examine the use of food motifs to communicate and engage in conversations pertaining to one’s culture. Furthermore, it hopes to study the interaction between the genres of graphic literature and ethnography and to understand the novel’s efficacy in representing and interpreting historical events, cultural traditions, and collective memories in the context of Naga repatriation.

**Keywords:** Food motifs, Ethnographic fiction, Graphic Novel, Naga repatriation

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**Short Bio:**

Abhirami Prasanth is pursuing her Ph.D. in English from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi. Her research interest lies in Graphic literature, especially focusing on the Indian context. Other areas of interest include Popular Fiction, Partition literature, Culture Studies, and South-Asian literature.

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**Adam Twycross (Anglia Ruskin University)**

**Panel:** Gender and Genre

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Jane: On the Air Again**

**Abstract:**

Norman Pett's Jane was a historically significant comic strip that ran in the British tabloid the Daily Mirror between 1932 and 1959. During its lifetime, the series adopted a number of formats and styles, moving from a daily gag strip to a continuity format and variously adopting a range of generic styles that included farce, romance and high adventure. The series' most famous period occurred during the Second World War, when it was successfully diversified across a range of media forms, being adapted into a touring stage revue, numerous spin-off volumes and a plethora of armed forces newspapers and magazines. This presentation will examine Jane's wartime dispersal and the way in which the character's various re-articulations allowed her to appeal to both men and women and to reach audiences both civilian and military. It will also introduce a newly discovered Jane radio series, produced in 1945 by the Overseas Recorded Broadcasting Service exclusively for British military personnel. Starring Georgina Cookson, a popular theatre star of the day, this previously unknown Jane spin-off will be considered in context before the presentation concludes with the airing of a six-minute excerpt, being heard in public for the first time since its original broadcast eighty years ago.

**Keywords:** Newspaper strips, Radio, Second World War

**Short Bio:**

Adam Twycross is a British comics scholar and Senior Lecturer in Games Art at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, UK. His research centres on British newspaper strips, the British popular press and adult comics of the 20th century. His first monograph, *British Newspaper Strips: A Contextual History*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2024, and he is currently working on two further volumes, *Comics Studies as Historical Practice* and *Comics Bohemia*.

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**Aidan Diamond (University of Southern California)**

**Panel:** CHEW Comics

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Utopia in Good Taste? Chew's Utopian Politics**

**Abstract:**

John Layman and Rob Guillory's *Chew* (2013-2017) combines genres and tropes with all the verve and daring of a master chef: the comic is a criminal procedural, a romance, a comedy, a conspiracy, an alternate history; it's both science fiction and fantasy. But the element uniting these disparate parts is the apocalyptic plot at the series' heart.

Elana Gomel (2010) defines the apocalyptic plot, in its most basic form, as destruction followed by renewal: catastrophe followed by recovery, revelation followed by the millennium, apocalypse followed by utopia. In this formulation—commonly upheld by entries in the tradition, including Thomas More's foundational *Utopia* (1516)—utopia is only possible through apocalyptic violence,

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rendering apocalypse (as Clint Jones [2020] points out) “desirable.” Any number of atrocities might be justified if they’re the cost of admission to paradise.

Chew represents a fascinating deviation from this conventional apocalyptic plot. Apocalyptic violence births a seeming utopia, a realm of plenty and relative peace (though one riddled with epicurean monsters for the heroes to continue fighting). Yet at the moment in which utopia is to be fully realized, Tony Chu undoes it all through an act of revenge, demanding of the reader: Is utopia in good taste? This paper reads Chew as an entry in the utopian genre, one that both makes explicit and challenges the cost of the apocalyptic plot.

**Keywords:** Chew; utopia; apocalypse

### **Short Bio:**

Aidan Diamond is a Ph.D. candidate in comparative media, literature, and culture at the University of Southern California. She has presented at conferences in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and co-organized conferences in the United States and Canada. Her publications include articles in *Studies in Comics* and the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, as well as book chapters in *The Ascendancy of Harley Quinn* and *Politics in Gotham*. Her current research examines transmedia apocalypse narratives in the age of climate change.

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### **Alexander James Pollard (University of Brighton)**

**Panel:** Social Critique and Style

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 3

#### **Anti-Taste and Authorial Drift in the Comics of Carlos Gonzalez**

##### **Abstract:**

The American comics artist Carlos Gonzalez is a legendary figure within the underground comics scene. He has produced a prolific body of ‘DIY’ work, essentially low-fi comics published in the main by Floating World Comics (Portland, Oregon, USA). Key works include *Test Tube* (2016), *Gates of Plasma* (2019), and *Wasp Video Roadhouse* (2023).

Carlos Gonzalez is unique in the way he lets his narratives drift outside of his authorial control. Gonzalez essentially uses a methodology that echoes sci-fi legend Philip K Dick’s ‘self-producing vortex’ (as explored in *The Exegesis of Philip K Dick*) – a writing technique which allows a subconscious maker to produce outside of themselves. Essentially, work made using this method ‘makes itself’ through a process of frenzied self-consumption – creating endless feedback loops which fold in on themselves with increasing complexity.

My paper will discuss Gonzalez’s creative and open process, revealing how much of contemporary America gets critiqued as his self-producing vortex does ‘its’ thing. Issues that get dragged into the vortex seem to be focused on class, taste, corruption, corporeality and vulnerability. An interesting mix of material served up in endearingly uncynical comics.

**Keywords:** science-fiction, authorial drift, self-producing vortex, carlos gonzalez, philip k dick, magical realism, surrealism, feedback loops, weird studies, low-fi, bad taste, anti-taste, subconscious, intuition, making comics, open narratives, play, thinking in action,

##### **Short Bio:**

Alexander James Pollard (b. 1977) is an artist. In 2005, Pollard represented Scotland at the Venice Biennale. Other selected exhibitions include: *Jungle* at Celine Gallery, Glasgow in 2017, *WoW PAINTINGS* at Young Team HQ gallery in London in 2016, *Black Marks* at Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007 and *Counter Fature* at Luhring Augustine, New York, also from 2007. Pollard has worked as a Fine Art Painting Lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art, Wimbledon College of Arts,

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London, and now at The University of Brighton, where he is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Painting and MA Fine Art.

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**Alfredo Carlos Guzmán Tinajero (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos)**

**Panel:** Underground Tastes

Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Breaking the body: The grotesque and the filthy as a counterhegemonic device in Julie Doucet**

**Abstract:**

The underground and later the línea chungá and the ligne crade have marked and transformed the precepts of drawing and stylistic traditions. The authors have gone against the dominant models and taste, breaking with the forms, the line and the graphic and narrative practices. Nevertheless, within these ruptures there is still a heteronormative and hegemonic bodily representation that simply adapt their gaze to these supposedly divergent styles. Thus, some women authors have sought through the rupture of these representations not only to oppose the dominant aesthetics but also to transform the imposed reception codes. One of the most outstanding in this sense is Julie Doucet. Throughout her career, her visual style has distanced herself from traditional models, including the underground and the bande dessinée alternative. She has explored terrain that overflows the conventional depictions and confronts the reader with filthiness, blood and explicit violence. These processes are not only noticeable in his broken and marked strokes, but also in the saturation of the page with a grotesque horror vacui, and above all in the representation and use of the body that challenges the expected models. Thus, this presentation will address how Doucet uses the grotesque, the filthy and the eerie to question “conventional taste” and, above all, how she uses it as a counterhegemonic device.

**Keywords:** Julie Doucet, Body, Grotesque, Style

**Short Bio:**

Alfredo Guzmán Tinajero studied a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature at the Universidad Autónoma de México. He completed a master's degree in Comparative Literature at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona with a thesis on the narrative space in comics in Palomar by Gilbert Hernandez. At the same university, he completed his phd in literary theory and comparative literature with the thesis Figurations of the self in contemporary comics. He has participated in various international congresses and published articles on comics, writings of the self, memory and documentary comics. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos.

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**Alina Astalus (University of Bucharest)**

**Panel:** Comics and Cultural Aesthetics

Tuesday 24/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**Wordless Sequential Art**

**Abstract:**

This presentation intends to delve into the unique storytelling potential of comics and sequential art (almost) devoid of words, focusing on how visual language alone can convey complex narratives, emotions, and themes. By analyzing notable examples such as Tsutomu Nihei's Blame! Manga, Matt Rhodes' Tellurion webcomic and others, the presentation will explore how these works employ intricate world-building, dynamic panel composition, and atmospheric imagery to immerse readers

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in their narratives. *Blame!* showcases a haunting dystopian universe where silence amplifies the desolation and mystery, while *Tellurion* uses richly detailed visuals to weave a story of epic fantasy and existential questions.

Looking at notable examples from the genre, the presentation will examine the techniques used to create meaning through imagery, such as panel composition, visual motifs, and the interplay of movement and stillness. This exploration highlights the universality of wordless storytelling, which transcends linguistic barriers and invites diverse audiences into its interpretative process. Ultimately, this presentation celebrates the art form's ability to communicate profoundly through silence, demonstrating the boundless creativity of sequential visual narratives.

**Keywords:** comics, wordless, images

### **Short Bio:**

Alina Astăluș is currently a master's student at the University of Bucharest, American Studies program. She has previously graduated from "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University in 2023, after enrolling in their foreign languages program (English – Spanish). She has a keen interest in all topics related to horror, including comics and visual arts.

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### **Alison Mandaville (California State University, Fresno)**

**Panel:** Diasporic Food Graphic Narratives      Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **Taste of Displacement: Food and Asian American Dislocation**

##### **Abstract:**

From Gaza to Sudan, to Ukraine, to Venezuela, the UN estimates there are about 122 million people currently forcibly displaced worldwide. From home cooking in Thien Pham's "Family Style: Memories of an American from Vietnam," to perversion of home cooking in the incarceration camps in "We Hereby Refuse: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration" by Frank Abe and Tamiko Namura, illustrated by Ross Ishikawa and Matt Sasaki, food plays pivotal roles in human experiences of displacement. As people try to establish and maintain living conditions while mobile or in new and unfamiliar places, food becomes more than biological sustenance. Foods and their tastes/smells are identity sensory objects tied to landscapes, but mobile, where the landscape geographies they originate from, apprehensible especially by sight, hearing, or touch, are not. The peaceful and the forcible movement of food around the globe echoes the movement of people. Although the comics form pictures foods and has developed iconography to evoke the senses of taste and smell, the form is overwhelmingly consumed visually. I explore how Asian American comics illuminate the ways in which food, as a mobile object of our senses, can come to mark place and the complex contours of violent displacement.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Asian American, violence

##### **Short Bio:**

Alison Mandaville teaches multi-ethnic American Literatures, including classes on comics, at California State University, Fresno. She has received UNESCO and Open Society grants for her translations and creative work with women writers in Azerbaijan. Her articles on comics have appeared in journals including *The Comics Journal*, *Image Text*, and *The International Journal of Comics Art* and in several book collections including *Teaching the Graphic Novel*, *Comics and U.S. Cultural History*, and *The Ages of Wonder Woman*. She is currently working on a series of non-fiction essays exploring family, race, and place in the US Pacific Northwest.



**Álvaro M. Pons + Noelia Ibarra-Rius (Universitat de València)**

**Panel:** Transcultural Tastes

Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBB - 2

**Miguel Calatayud: Representations of Diversity from the Ligne-Claire**

**Abstract:**

The work of Miguel Calatayud (Aspe, Spain, 1942) emerged in the 1970s as a radical break with the stylistic tradition that Spanish comics had established during the dictatorship, centred around naturalistic and humorous lines. Following the model of Pellaeert in France, Calatayud burst onto the scene in the 1970s with comics that drew from pop-art aesthetics, rapidly evolving into a personal style of defined ligne claire, understanding color as a fundamental narrative element and adeptly combining modernity with the tradition of Valencian illustration. His committed vision of diversity and ecological sensitivity, with a pioneering view in sustainability, already present in works that ventured into the noir genre, such as *La pista Atlántica* or *El ojo Cíclope*, finds in *La desaparición de Gonzalo Guerrero* a developmental space that critically analyzes historical discourse, with an integral narrative conception that guides the reader toward new reflections on accepted truths. His art never relinquishes to a personal style that achieves synesthetic effects in the confrontation of a baroque composition based on the simplicity and synthesis of the line. This work traces the evolution of his style and the growth of a discourse that comprehends the educational and performative power of the art of comics.

**Keywords:** Ligne-Claire, Miguel Calatayud, Diversity Representation

**Short Bios:**

**Álvaro M. Pons** is a Ph.D. and assistant professor at the University of Valencia and co-director of the Chair of Comic Studies at the SM Foundation-University of Valencia. His research work on comics has been linked to the history of the medium and its industry and to graphic poetry.

**Noelia Ibarra-Rius** is a Ph.D. and assistant professor at the Universitat de València and co-director of the Chair of Comic Studies at the SM Foundation-University of Valencia, and president of the Comics Academic Studies Society of Spain. Her research interests are children's literature and reading education, with special attention to comics.

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**Amine Harbi (Anime Grandi Academy)**

**Panel:** Translating Cultural Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 09:00-09:45, Online

**Comics and the Hierarchies of Taste**

**Abstract:**

Graphic novels such as *Corto Maltese*, *Vagabond*, and *Berserk* demonstrate the ambition of comics creators to position their medium alongside great works of art and literature, challenging long-standing notions of comics as kitsch. The rise of graphic novels as a distinct subcategory within comics reflects an implicit acknowledgement of the medium's potential for cultural refinement, mirroring the novel's ascent to high cultural taste in modernity. Historically, literature evolved from poetry as the epitome of good taste to prose through milestones such as Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Similarly, graphic novels navigate the historical hierarchy that separates fine art from kitsch, offering a unique experience where words, symbols, images, and imagination converge. Using Nick Sousanis's *Unflattening* as a theoretical framework, this paper examines the complex relationship between taste, cultural traditions, and aesthetic value by analyzing *Ranma ½*'s chapter on "the martial art of fast eating" and Gaston Lagaffe's gastronomic misadventures. These works highlight the playful, yet profound, ways in which comics engage with cultural tastes and traditions, redefining the boundaries of the medium.

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**Keywords:** Cultural taste, Ranma ½, Gaston Lagaffe

**Short Bio:**

Amine Harbi holds a Master's in Mass Communications from Oklahoma State University and a Magister in Communication and Governance from Annaba University. He has taught communication and media studies and served as an Assistant Professor at Souk Ahras University. Currently, he is President of Anime Grandi Academy in Canada, where he focuses on fostering creativity in education and the arts. A Fulbright alumnus, Harbi is a researcher in comics studies, an academic reviewer in the field, and a comics artist. His work explores the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of comics, blending scholarly inquiry with creative practice.

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**Amrita Singh (Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi)**

**Panel:** Femininity, Food and the Forest

Tuesday 24/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**The Warp of Hunger: Visualising Food, Forest and Femininity**

**Abstract:**

Katyayani the Large, the protagonist of Amruta Patil and Devdutt Pattanaik's *Aranyaka* (2019), unabashedly states at the start of the book, "The warp of my story has always been hunger." With a voluptuous body and insatiable appetite, having even stolen food meant for the gods, she appears on the page of the graphic narrative in defiance of the expectations set for women in (Ancient) India with respect to eating and appetite. Food in the Vedic texts has frequently been identified with the flavour of life, vital strength and vigor, attributes that are largely masculine. Consuming food, and certain kinds of food, is an exercise of power, especially as it gets associated with symbolic feeding of the mind. On the other hand, feeding and being fed are regarded as roles to be fulfilled through the feminine characteristics of nourishment, coming from the largely feminine domain of the kitchen. This paper argues that Katyayani's quiet conviction, free-spiritedness and rootedness to the forest space effectively question the hierarchy of feeding, but without derision. Literally translated as "Book of the Forest", *Aranyaka* explores the mythic space of the forest more than the tropes of exile, hardship and enlightened transformation, to a space where the individual becomes a part of the membrane of its vast network. Katyayani shifts the perspective to embrace the chaos, the scary and the nourishing aspects of the aranya/forest, to live-with and die-with in a kind of solidarity with prakriti/nature. Katyayani prompts us to consider whether food is meant to satisfy hunger, acts as a fleeting substitute for a deeper yearning in life, or is given to others with the expectation of receiving nourishment in return. Moreover, Patil's graphic rendition builds on the long-enduring legacy in tribal, folkloric, mythological, and indigenous visual narrative traditions to transform the medium of graphic narratives.

**Keywords:** Indian mythology, food, femininity, visual storytelling, graphic narrative

**Short Bio:**

Amrita Singh (she/her) received her PhD from the Department of English, University of Delhi. Her areas of research include graphic narratives, life writing, rethinking culture and power, and English language teaching. She has presented at international conferences and published articles and book chapters in these areas. She has been teaching literature for a decade and a half, and is currently an Assistant Professor in the English department at Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi. She also writes and edits short stories.

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**Ananya Saha (Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra)**

**Panel:** Monstrous and Fantastic Feasts

Wednesday 25/6, 09:00-09:45, Online



**"Otherworldly Appetites: Female 'Taste' vis-a-vis Gourmet- Fantasy Manga"**

**Abstract:**

"Shōjo as a genre within the mangaverse, traditionally focused on the woman's role within the domestic space. However, with the advent of the 24 nen gumi band of female mangakas in the 1970s, conventional expectations were debunked. In contemporary times, within the genre of gourmet manga featuring gastronomic tales, characters across the gender and sexuality spectrum are portrayed. In this context, I choose to locate female chefs in the crossover of gourmet and fantasy through a critical exploration of select manga titles published after 2000. Gourmet manga reached its peak in the 1980s, during the days of the economic bubble. In the aftermath of the bubble burst in the 1990s, Japan was shaken for decades by the effects of recession. Therein, one might notice a tendency to transport the unfulfilled appetites from mortal to immortal entities, as it was perhaps difficult for the Japanese readership to deal with gastronomic titillation within reach. I shall endeavour to study how the female character negotiates with the demands of an otherworldly clientele in the interface of shōjo, gourmet, and fantasy manga.

**Keywords:** Gastronomy, Appetite, Consumption, Gourmet, Shōjo

**Short Bio:**

Ananya Saha holds a PhD in Literature and Culture Studies with her dissertation on manga, soft power, and globalization. At present, she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, India. She has designed and taught postgraduate courses on comics, manga, and visual cultures. Currently, she is researching the impact of AI on culture industries. More about her publications, research interests, fellowships, and lectures can be found on her website: [www.drotaku.in](http://www.drotaku.in)

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**Angelin Diana (Pratilipi Comics)**

**Panel:** The Cultural Journey of Comics

Tuesday 24/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**Changing Tastes in Comics and Graphic Novels: The Evolution of Franchises and Characters**

**Abstract:**

"Comics and graphic novels have consistently adapted to reflect changing societal values, technological advancements, and evolving audience preferences. This proposal explores the transformation of comic franchises and characters to meet the shifting tastes of global audiences. Using iconic examples from both international and Indian comics, the paper delves into how beloved characters like Batman and Spider-Man have been reinterpreted across generations to address contemporary issues such as mental health, diversity, and environmentalism.

The study also highlights Indian comics, including Pratilipi Comics, to demonstrate how local narratives have embraced modern sensibilities while preserving cultural roots. Special emphasis will be placed on the reinvention of characters and franchises in digital formats, such as webcomics and interactive storytelling, which cater to younger, tech-savvy audiences.

The paper will analyze the balance between retaining the essence of classic characters and introducing innovative elements to keep them relevant. It argues that franchises thrive when

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they evolve with their readers, adapting to modern themes, globalized narratives, and technological platforms. Through this exploration, the paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between changing cultural dynamics and the enduring appeal of comics and graphic novels."

**Keywords:** Comic franchises, character evolution, digital comics, cultural adaptation, Pratilipi Comics, global narratives

**Short Bio:**

Angelin Diana is a writer, storyteller, and Operations Head at Pratilipi Comics, a leading platform for comic content in India. She holds a Master's degree in High Voltage Engineering from Anna University, Chennai, and has authored five books while contributing to over 20 anthologies. Combining her technical expertise with her passion for storytelling, Angelin has been instrumental in developing innovative comic series at Pratilipi Comics. Her work focuses on exploring emerging genres and trends, making significant contributions to the evolving landscape of graphic narratives.

**Anindita Das (independent researcher)**

**Panel:** Feminism and Female Voices

Tuesday 24/6, 11:00-11:45, Online

**Destablization and Stabilization: Interrogating Shoujo Manga**

**Abstract:**

Destablization and Stabilization: Interrogating Shoujo Manga

Shoujo as a generic category of manga or Japanese graphic narratives is gendered in its very nomenclature as the term literally translates to “girl”. Sharalyn Orbaughs claims that the term conveys a complex social construction of little girls and young adult women. The umbrella term of “shoujo” has been bestowed upon mangas which revolve around cis-het females of the age of 6-18, and whose target audience are also of that same age. As Fusagi Ogi states, shoujo manga has been used to both reaffirm and subvert conventions, leading to various academic discourses which analyze the social effects of shoujo manga. This fact echoes Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn’s assertion that literature as a pedagogic tool of culture creates and perpetuates collective ideology, and so does manga as a form of literature.

This paper intends to analyze Nanami Mao’s Half and Half, and Takase Umi’s Kanojo ni Naritai Kimi to Boku; to surmise how different shoujo mangakas(creators) experiment with this form in multifarious ways to represent characters from different intersections, while simultaneously illuminating their shortcomings as well. It will aid in understanding shoujo as a cultural tool.

**Keywords:** essentialization, feminism, subversion

**Short Bio:**

Anindita Das is an independent researcher who has completed her B.A. and M.A. in Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University. Her research focuses on Queer Feminism, Neurodiversity, anime, graphic novels, webnovels, and the politics of translation and transcreation. She previously worked as a junior content researcher at Zee Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

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**Anna Nordenstam (Göteborgs Universitet)**

**Panel:** Feminism and Female Voices

Tuesday 24/6, 11:00-11:45, Online

**Do-It-Ourselves! Feminist Zines and Dotterbolaget**

**Abstract:**

In 2005, the Swedish network Dotterbolaget, a feminist women’s and trans-separatist comics artist network, was founded to support women and trans comics artists when the comics field was male-dominated (Hinchcliffe Voglio 2019). The network Dotterbolaget consisted of comics artists, and many had studied at the Comic Art School in Malmö. At the school, they made zines a part of their education. Today, some comic artists are very famous internationally, such as Liv Strömquist; others are less well-known. This paper analyses the collective zines made by the network Dotterbolaget from 2005 to 2015. It analyses the styles, the material, the topics, and how the zines were made collectively (Piepmaier 2009, Sabin and Triggs 2002). The paper argues that these zines are good examples of a Do-It-Ourselves culture (Streeten 2024). The paper ends with a discussion of how the zines can be regarded as an example of successful feminist comics activism. It shows the importance of zine production for the Swedish comics field. (Nordenstam & Wallin Victorin 2024).

**Keywords:** Zines, Feminism, Do-It-Ourselves

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**Short Bio:**

Anna Nordenstam, Professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Nordenstam has written extensively about Swedish feminist comics and cartoons. The publications include *Comics, Activism, Feminisms*, eds. A. Nordenstam, K. Beers Fägersten, and M. Wallin Victorin, Routledge 2024, *Comic Art and Feminism in the Baltic Sea Region Transnational Perspectives*, eds. K. Beers Fägersten, A. Nordenstam, L. Romu and M. Wallin Victorin, Routledge 2021 and several articles in international and Swedish anthologies and journals such as *European Comic Art*, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comic*, and *ImageTexT: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*.

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**Anna Oleszczuk (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin)**

**Panel:** Intersectional Comics

Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 2

**Food, Taste, and Robots: The Sensory Politics of Transition in Blue Deliquanti's O Human Star**

**Abstract:**

Trans and queer embodiment is often shaped by various external pressures that attempt to dictate what kinds of bodies should be considered legitimate, acceptable, or simply "real." From medical requirements for transition to social expectations related to passing, trans people have to deal with significant external pressure that often impacts their self-acceptance. Food, too, can serve as a mechanism of control: whether, what, and how a person eats and if the act of eating brings comfort or distress intersect with questions of bodily autonomy.

Blue Deliquanti's *O Human Star*, a speculative comic about an inventor resurrected in a robotic body and a teenage AI robot exploring her non-human identity, tells a story about transition and self-love. In my presentation, I examine three ways in which the comic uses food as a key metaphor for trans experience(s). I start by linking Alastair's rejection of "robotic" food to bodily dysphoria and alienation. Then, I focus on Sulla's attempt to eat human food, the fear of exposure, and the price of passing. Finally, I analyze the picnic with robotic and human types of food present, and see it as a non-assimilationist model of queer and trans belonging. By focusing on these moments, I argue that *O Human Star* challenges traditional transition narratives, using food to present trans futurity shaped by self-acceptance rather than social conformity.

**Keywords:** queer, transgender, embodiment

**Short Bio:**

Anna Oleszczuk is a teaching and research assistant at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in Poland. Their research seeks to examine how the potential of speculative comics to conceptualize and introduce the quality of being different from the heteronormative cultural standard has been realized in modern texts and how it can be utilized to explore queerness.

**Antonio Mirizzi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)**

**Panel:** “Bad Tastes” Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Are comics (still) innocent? Dealing with controversial themes and author personas in the 2020s**

**Abstract:**

Entertainment allows us to identify and return to our comfort zones, but fiction can be both a safe and unsafe space. It has long been regarded as safe because, even when it triggers our worst emotions, it does not put us in real danger, but fewer and fewer artists and readers see it as an opportunity to explore those emotions, believing the effects of mere exposure to last in the readers’ minds. Fiction can certainly offend, go against one’s ethical principles, and linger in bad taste, which raises the question of whether we still accept it as a good practice. Yet, only bearing an indirect relation to that, one may wonder how changing sensibilities concerning not the textual, but the paratextual elements; said otherwise, how does the contemporary cult of the author and its mirror opposite - public condemnation - affect the tastes of new generations.

This talk will examine some controversial cases in the history of contemporary comics in order to trace some of the vectors of this mutation and try to imagine the trends that will dominate the publishing market in the coming years, both in terms of new proposals and the preservation of what we have so far consider ‘classics’. Will we still be able to see the value of Cerebus while arguing Dave Sim’s worldview? Will we still be reading Neil Gaiman’s Sandman when justice is done? And if not, will we have missed anything?

**Keywords:** bad taste, controversial authors, new classics

**Short Bio:**

Antonio Mirizzi is a PhD student at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. He is currently working on a tentative framework describing the cognitive experience of comics readers, but his research topics include narrative complexity (especially in comics), comics seriality and the reshaping of the novel form in comics. Along with academic commitments, he works as a comic writer and artist, while teaching history and theory of comics in private courses. He has recently published an essay dedicated to the work of Leo Ortolani, Rat-Man. La Scimmia, il Topo e il Supereroe (2023), originally his Master’s thesis.

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**Anuj Trivedi + Priyanka Das (Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)**

**Panel:** Taste and Boundaries Wednesday 25/6, 11:00-11:45, Online

**Tasting of Visual Textures: Experiencing War Comics Through Children’s Drawings in Virtual Reality**

**Abstract:**

Since the late 20th century, comics has evolved into a journalistic and pedagogical medium that has used nuance to subtly translate trauma experienced by adults, related to war and conflict, for children’s consumption, case in point would be the “Schtroumpf Vert et Vert Schtroumpf” (Smurf vs Smurf) released in 1972 that underscores “real-life division in Belgium between the French-speaking Wallonia to the South, and the Dutch-speaking Flanders in the North,” despite overtly claiming to portray the language barrier between Southern and Northern Smurfs (Meier). However, when the reverse is performed, that is, children’s experience of war and conflict is communicated to adults, albeit reflected through hand drawings, it tends to leave a bitter after-taste lingering in the mouth.

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In our paper, we aim to refer to a chapter from our ongoing Comics Lab virtual reality (VR) project—Children of War, that uses comics as an immersive journalistic and pedagogical medium to document the experiences of children during the Spanish Civil War by borrowing scenes and motifs from archived children's drawings present in UC San Diego's—Spanish Civil War Children's Drawings Digital Collection. By underscoring attributes of the VR space and visceral aesthetics derived from the children's drawings, we argue that our project does not rely on nuancing trauma but can vividly address the abject reality of war and conflict through the experience of visual textures that effectively communicate trauma, particularly when words fail us.

**Keywords:** Visual textures, taste, comics journalism, pedagogy, nuance, translate, Smurf, war comics, virtual reality (VR)

### **Short Bios:**

**Anuj Trivedi** is a second-year Chemical Engineering student at IIT Jodhpur (IITJ) with a strong interest in AI/ML, comics studies and digital visualization. With a thorough experience in AI/ML, particularly in object detection, and Web Development projects, he is well-versed in programming languages such as C, C++, Python, HTML, and CSS. His current project focuses on exploring the intersection of technology and storytelling, specifically in AR/VR visualization and the transformation of 2D comics into 3D. By combining computational techniques with narrative analysis, they aim to push the boundaries of how comics are experienced in digital spaces.

**Priyanka Das** is a first year student pursuing her postgraduate degree in Digital Humanities at IIT Jodhpur (IITJ), she has a background in archives and collections research having worked with various museums and galleries across India prior to joining IITJ, including the Museum of Art and Photography, DAG Museums, and Emami Art Gallery. As a Digital Humanities researcher, she is keen on studying and designing accessible experiences that engage archives and collections in a meaningful way through alternative and experimental mediums like AR/VR sensory comics and games.

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### **Apurba Ganguly + Partha Bhattacharjee (SRM University Andhra Pradesh)**

**Panel:** Changing Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 15:45-16:30, Online

#### **“Putrefaction is my light”: Consumption, Absorption, and Excess in Martin Vaughn-James’ The Projector**

##### **Abstract:**

"In his Preface to *The Cage* (1975), Martin Vaughn-James describes his work as “A book with no story, a book with no characters.” The surrealist distortion of space (as well as time) across the narratives could be deemed as a byproduct of its preceding work, *The Projector* (1971). Unlike *The Cage*, *The Projector* is a text that bustles with characters with human bodies having non-human heads of electronic appliances, animals, or toilets. While the former two categories of entities occasionally make the corresponding motifs evident to describe the said character's nature, it is those with toilets as their head (or “toilet-heads,” for ease of reference) who occupy a greater bandwidth of the overall plot. The theme of excess, depicted via the visual and verbal references of food and excrement, occupies a central position in *The Projector*. It seemingly throws light on a post-industrial world where the sustenance of an individual is compromised by the propagation of instruments and activities that encourage having “fat” in one's brain, thus becoming entities with no agency and individuality. This paper attempts to explore how the narrative spaces in *The Projector* explore the idea of “excess” with regard to food and excrement.

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**Keywords:** comics, space, excess

**Short Bios:**

Apurba Ganguly (she/her) is a Research Scholar in the Department of Literature and Languages at SRM University AP. Her research focus lies at the intersection of Memory Studies and Comic Studies. Apurba's interests extend to examining the themes of "remembrance" and "recollection" within visual narratives, exploring the role of space in memory creation.

Partha Bhattacharjee (he/him) is an Assistant Professor of English and Media Studies at SRM University AP. He has been working on Comics Studies and Graphic Narratives since 2016 (Scopus Id: 57208188001; ORCID: 0000-0003-1581-0076). He serves as an Executive at the Board (Members-at-Large) of the Comics Studies Society, USA. He is also an Editorial Board Member of Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, Springer Nature (Q1) and Journal of International Women's Studies (Q3). His research interests include Comics of the Global South, South Asian Comics, Comics and Gender Studies, Non-fictional Comics, and Comics and Communication.

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**Bálint Szántó (University of Szeged)**

**Panel:** Intersectional Comics      Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 2

**“What’s Up, Danger?”: The Intersection of Comics and Hip-Hop Culture**

**Abstract:**

Comics are often discussed in the context of their contribution to the development of what Henry Jenkins defines as transmedia storytelling. Comic characters have turned into multimedia powerhouses: their stories have been expanded to movies, series, video games, and even novels. To be able to follow the complete narrative of a certain character, one must possess a high degree of multimedia literacy, which helps navigate through the various forms of media. However, there is one form of media that is often neglected in the analysis of transmedia universes: music.

Comics and hip-hop music have had a long history of collaboration. Marvel has released comics with variant covers that feature “Marvelized” versions of iconic hip-hop albums, such as *Paid in Full* by Rakim & Eric B. and *Get Rich or Die Tryin’* by 50 Cent. In 2009, a special issue of *The Punisher* was published, in which the titular character helps Eminem fight against a criminal called Barracuda. Rappers have also made numerous references to comic book characters and superheroes in their songs, including the late MF DOOM, whose rap persona was inspired by the supervillain Doctor Doom. More recently, studios have started hiring high-profile rappers, such as Kendrick Lamar, to create the soundtrack for comic book film adaptations.

We can also find many common elements in hip-hop music and comics. Both are highly self-reflective and involve a high degree of intertextuality. Cross-referencing and remixing are crucial elements in both. In my paper, I will present a critical analysis of these interconnections. I will discuss the soundtracks of two comic book movies: *Black Panther* (2018, dir. Ryan Coogler) and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018, dirs. Peter Ramsey, Rodney Rothman, and Bob Persichetti). I will explore the question of whether comic aesthetics and hip-hop music truly complement each other when brought to the silver screen, or if it is simply just a popularity stunt.

**Keywords:** transmedia, hip-hop, adaptation, intertextuality, remix



**Short Bio:**

Bálint Szántó is a fourth-year PhD student in the English and American literature and culture program at the University of Szeged, Hungary. He is currently writing his doctoral dissertation, which combines comics studies, fandom studies, and new media studies. He is also teaching undergraduate courses about literature and comics at the university.

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**Bambi Kramer (Fortepressa)**

**Roundtable | See p. 3**

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**Barbara Postema (Universiteit van Groningen)**

**Panel:** Cultural Traditions and Canons      Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Dutch comics and the difficulty of translating taste**

**Abstract:**

The Netherlands has a robust comics culture. Many of the titles available in Dutch comics stores, bookstores and libraries will be familiar to international readers, since Dutch comics publishers translate many internationally known titles. Franco-Belgian comics are a staple of the Dutch comics diet, but North American comics and Manga can also be found in Dutch. Less familiar to an international readership will be the Dutch comics that are also present in these comics stores – unsurprisingly, since the bulk of originally Dutch comics is barely available in any language other than Dutch.

Dutch album-based series are not widely translated, but some Dutch cartoonists creating graphic novels appear to have been embraced abroad. Thus, format seems to play a part in how palatable Dutch comics are considered, and in my presentation, I will provide a few examples. Content also affects the international potential of Dutch comics. Humour is a major ingredient in Dutch comics, and since humour tends to be a high-context form, culturally, that makes it more challenging to translate as well. It seems that Dutch comics, not unlike Dutch liquorice, are an acquired taste, and if one doesn't learn to appreciate them early in life, maybe one never will?

**Keywords:** Dutch comics, translation, transcultural legibility

**Short Bio:**

Barbara Postema is Lecturer in English at the University of Groningen. Her book *Narrative Structure in Comics* was published in translation in Brazil in 2018. She has contributed work on narrative theory, wordless comics, and abstract comics to *Image and Narrative*, the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, and the *International Journal of Comic Art*, as well as collections such as *The Routledge Companion to Comics and Graphic Novels*, *The Cambridge History of the Graphic Novel*, and *Abstraction and Comics*. She is co-editor of *Crossing Lines: Transcultural / Transnational Comics Studies*, a book series from Wilfrid Laurier University Press.



**Bart Beaty + Rebecca Sullivan (University of Calgary)**

**Bart Beaty will also participate in the panel discussion. (p. 3)**

**Panel:** Gender and Genre

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 – Auditorium

**Cowboy Love and Cowgirl Romances: Gender and Genre in the Western Romance Comic Book**

**Abstract:**

For a remarkably brief period in the late 1940s, American comic book publishers attempted to hybridize two popular genres: the western and the romance. In the three years after the debut of Young Romance (October 1947), more than one hundred and fifty distinct romance comic book titles were launched by American publishers; of these, ten were romance comic books set in the American West, or western romances. Seven publishers tested the waters of this hybrid genre, none with success. The longest-running title in the genre was Cowboy Love (Fawcett) at a mere dozen issues, while across the ten titles, cumulatively only fifty issues were produced. Seven of the ten titles ended by 1950, and only one lasted until 1952. This widespread failure stands in marked contrast to a title like Ranch Romances, a pulp magazine that published more than 860 issues from 1924 to 1971 and which, when it ended, was the final remaining magazine to have originated in the glory years of the pulp industry.

This paper will draw on feminist theory and the historiography of the American comic book to examine the ways that gender expectations shape genres in the comic book industry to understand the lack of success encountered by the western romance.

**Keywords:** gender, genre, romance

**Short Bios:**

**Bart Beaty** is Professor of English at the University of Calgary. He is the author, editor, or translator of more than twenty books in the field of comics studies, including Comics Versus Art, Twelve Cent Archie, and Unpopular Culture. He is the lead researcher on the What Were Comics? Project. In 2020, he was appointed as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada

**Rebecca Sullivan** is Professor of English at the University of Calgary. She is the author of seven peer-reviewed monographs, including Not A Love Story, Visual Habits, and Natalie Wood (from the BFI star series). She is currently completing a comprehensive history of Studio D, Canada's state-run feminist film unit.

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**Benjamin Woo (Carleton University)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics III

Thursday 3/7, 13:45-15:15, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Putting Away Childish Things? Comics, Taste, and the Life Course**

**Abstract:**

In recent years, comics studies has worked to shed the pretensions of what Christopher Pizzino terms the “Bildungsroman discourse” – the idea that the medium of comics has matured and so only now merits serious scholarly attention or cultural valuation. Yet, for individual readers and fans, tastes do at least change, if not “mature,” over time. In a survey of 426 current and former English-speaking comic-book readers recruited primarily over social media, for instance, respondents were asked to name the first comic they remember reading, their favourite comic, and a memorable or emblematic comic for (roughly) each decade of their reading career. This paper explores patterns in these data alongside interviews with a sample of respondents that contextualize shifting tastes for comics over time.

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**Keywords:** audiences, life course, taste

**Short Bio:**

Benjamin Woo is Associate Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada). He is the author of *Getting a Life: The Social Worlds of Geek Culture*, co-author of *The Greatest Comic Book of All Time: Symbolic Capital and the Field of American Comic Books*, and co-editor of *The Comics World: Comics, Graphic Novels, and Their Publics*, among other works. Recent research has focused on comic conventions and fan events. He is the former president of the Canadian Society for the Study of Comics / Société canadienne pour l'étude de la bande dessinée and is currently on the editorial board of *Popular Communication and Transformative Works and Cultures*.

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**Beth Duggleby (Leeds Arts University)**

**Panel:** Graphic Medicine II

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Soft comics and compassion: turning towards suffering through the 'palatable' tone**

**Abstract:**

Within graphic medicine research, much has been explored around the interactions between comics and wellbeing, with a particular focus on empathic approaches. However, is there an opportunity for further insight into the appropriate use of tone; the taste and style of the artwork itself as the graphic medicine? Given this area often covers narratives of trauma and mental health, understanding what we mean stylistically, when we say a comic is negotiated 'sensitively' or 'carefully' seems pertinent. Are these value descriptors for taste, and if so, what is their habitus?

Recent criticisms of graphic medicine have included an overemphasis on empathy, citing it can be biased and may often result in passive experience over action (Godfrey, 2018). Could a shift towards authorial approaches informed by compassionate practice, where action is embedded within definitions, address this? (Gilbert, 2016)

This paper explores the visual language of 'soft storymaking'. It will use insights from 3rd wave therapies focused on compassion training, soothing images and committed action towards alleviating suffering. Incorporating reflection on my own artistic practice and what may inform a 'habitus of comfort' here; it considers possible softening influences within contemporary comics, including picture books. Its conclusion will review whether a compassionate turn is at play within comics and how best we might harness this to offer a soft space to turn towards the tough conversations of our time.

**References**

**Godfrey, A.** "The Limits of Empathy (Part One: Selective Empathy)." (2018) Synapsis, <https://medicalhealthhumanities.com/2018/02/16/the-limits-of-empathy-part-one-selective-empathy/>

**Gilbert, P.** (2017). *Compassion: Concepts, Research & Applications*. Oxford: Routledge. pp256-257

**Keywords:** illustration, compassion, softening, safeness, graphic medicine, trauma narratives, empathy

**Short Bio:**

Beth Duggleby is a senior lecturer of comics and illustration, researcher, and maker of comics and visual diaries. Her work explores visual storytelling through a compassionate lens. Beth is currently undertaking on scholarship, a practice-based PhD in the design school at Leeds

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University, which explores the visual language of compassion to tell 'soft stories for challenging subjects'. As part of this, Beth aims to develop a compassionate toolkit to support illustrators.

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**Bogdan Groza (University of Siena)**

**Panel:** Food Consumption in Manga

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 2

**Literary and artistic portrayal of wine tasting in Drops of God**

**Abstract:**

Drops of God is a manga written by Yuko and Shin Kibayashi and published by Kodansha between 2004 and 2014. Through a narratological plot device, the series follows the journey of the protagonist in his search for thirteen specific and prestigious bottles of wine mentioned in his father's will. Although not certified enologists, the writers shared a deep passion and understanding for wine; this enthusiasm is accordingly transposed within their work, and the thirteen mentioned bottles are in reality inspired by authentic vintages. The knowledge of the wine industry, the lavish descriptions of the wines themselves, as well as the taste (both of the vintages as well as the hors d'oeuvre that accompany them) all become quintessential components in the creation of the manga.

The paper aims to explore how the above-mentioned nuances of the wine world are explored within Drops of God. As such, the literary-embellished portrayal of the tasting process, as well as the visual representation of these sequences on the page, will be the main topics of this analysis. Furthermore, the paper will attempt a comparison between the description of the wines within the manga and their authentic counterparts.

**Keywords:** comparative analysis, manga, wine

**Short Bio:**

Bogdan Groza finished his Master's Degree programme in European, American and Postcolonial Language and Literature at the University of Padua with a thesis entitled "Knighthood and anti-heroic behaviour in the figures of Falstaff and Don Quixote". He is currently finishing a PhD project at the faculty of Siena on the subject of the Anthropocene in science fiction literature; the main writers he is working on are Philip K. Dick, Frank Herbert and Ayn Rand.

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**Brian Fagence (University of South Wales)**

**Panel:** Food Consumption in Manga

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 2

**Degustation in Gurume Isekai Manga**

**Abstract:**

There is a 'popular' Japanese comics genre about travelling to another world, and a very well-known genre about experiencing delicious cuisine, and while these may initially appear quite disparate, there are many examples which blend these distinctive story types.

These other world stories, known in light novels, manga and anime as Isekai, tells tales of travellers or reincarnators who have traversed from the ostensibly 'real' world and have their existence relocated to a most often medieval-type 'fantasy' setting where their protagonist "often gains special powers through the process of transformation" (Cserkits, 2022, p. 150). The primary characters of these stories may be searching for a way home or accepting their new home-world, and their quests and goals are often fused with what they were unable to accomplish and succeed in in their original life.

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“Comics about food are called gurume (gourmet) or ryōri (cooking, cuisine) manga in Japanese.” (Brau. 2004, p. 34. Original emphasis). They may involve a detailed creation of exquisite foods or its search for and appreciation of, rejoicing in cuisine and flavour. An Isekai-Gurume mix will be explored through the primary case study of Campfire Cooking in Another World with my Absurd Skill (by Ren Eguchi, and Akagishi K, 2017-present), to examine how these genres may complement each other in their careful appreciation and savouring of delicious food in Japanese other world comics.

### **References**

**Brau, L.** (2004) ‘Oishinbo's Adventures in Eating: Food, Communication, and Culture in Japanese Comics’, *Gastronomica*. Berkley: University of California Press Book Division. pp. 34-45 (Accessed 31.01.25).

**Cserkits, M.** (2022) ‘Nation Building and the Role of Leadership: A Case Study of Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken’, *Journal of Anime and Manga Studies* Vol. 3. pp. 147-173. (Accessed 31.01.25).

**Eguchi, R. and Akagishi. K.** (2017-present) *Campfire Cooking in Another World with my Absurd Skill*. Overlap.

**Keywords:** Gurume, Isekai, degustation

### **Short Bio:**

Brian Fagence is Course Leader for MA Animation and lecturer in Critical Studies and Scriptwriting at the University of South Wales. He has been lecturing since 1998 and has published articles in the *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, *Studies in Comics* and the *International Journal of Creative Media Research*. His research interests include storytelling, scriptwriting, transmedia, communication and multimodality.

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### **Candida Rifkind (University of Winnipeg)**

**Panel:** Connections through Food Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **Postcolonial Plenitude in Zeina Abirached's Culinary Comics**

##### **Abstract:**

"French Lebanese cartoonist Zeina Abirached's comic books, including *A Game for Swallows* (2007; English translation 2012), *I Remember Beirut* (2008; English translation 2014), and *Le piano oriental* (French edition 2015), have been critically celebrated for the ways they remember and reconstruct individual and collective experiences of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Abirached's striking black-and-white visual style combines dramatic page layouts, geometric patterns and repetitions, and architectural and cartographic visualizations of domestic interiors, streetscapes, and the politically divided city of Beirut. This paper turns to Abirached's more recent contribution of illustrations and short culinary comics in two French Levantine cookbooks: Kamal Mouzawak's *Manger libanais* (Marabout, 2022) and Pomme Larmoyer's *Manger Istanbul: Les recettes culte* (Marabout, 2021).

Cookbook scholars often argue that regional and national cookbooks are a form rooted in nostalgia as migrant, diasporic, and exilic writers entwine food, memory, family, and identity in the service of instruction and cultural preservation. However, I argue that Abirached's joyful culinary comics and playful graphic design elements are signs of postcolonial plenitude rather than immigrant longing: her distinctive visual style works alongside the prose text and photographs to imbue the recipes with a sense of the contemporary and cosmopolitan everyday of Levantine foodways, from street food to cafes to farms. Moreover, I see her culinary comics

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as part of an increasing trend towards hand-drawn illustrations and short comics appearing in contemporary cookbooks (and on cooking shows) as a shift away from the idealized perfection of food photography to the playful intimacy and perceived authenticity of hand-drawn illustrations."

**Keywords:** Abirached, cookbooks, postcolonial

**Short Bio:**

Candida Rifkind is Professor of English at the University of Winnipeg, Canada, where she specializes in alternative comics, life writing, and Canadian literature. In addition to numerous publications, she co-edited *Documenting Trauma: Traumatic Pasts, Embodied Histories & Graphic Reportage in Comics* (Palgrave, 2020) and *Canadian Graphic: Picturing Life Narratives* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2016). Her next book, *Graphic Refuge: Visuality and Mobility in Refugee Comics* (co-authored with Dominic Davies) will be published by Wilfrid Laurier UP in June, 2025. She is also a co-author of *The Routledge Introduction to Auto/biography in Canada* (2023) and she co-edited a special issue of *Canadian Literature* on "The Pasts, Presents, and Futures of Canadian Comics" (volume 249, 2022).

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**Carolina González Alvarado (Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey)**

**Panel:** Comics Resistance

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Reformulating Aesthetics, Beauty, and Fashion in Mexican and Colombian Fanzines: Piche Chica Chic and Marikiytas Neurocuir as Sites of Queer and Non-Binary Resistance**

**Abstract:**

This paper explores the reformulation of aesthetics, beauty, and fashion in contemporary Mexican and Colombian fanzines, with a focus on Piche Chica Chic and Marikiytas Neurocuir. These self-managed publications challenge dominant narratives by constructing alternative visual and textual discourses that embrace divergent and non-binary sexualities. Through DIY publishing strategies, these fanzines disrupt traditional frameworks of cultural production, redefining not only gender identities but also the very concept of beauty and fashion outside of mainstream heteronormative aesthetics. By examining their visual language, editorial practices, and ideological positions, this study highlights how fanzines function as radical spaces for self-representation and resistance, fostering new possibilities for gender and aesthetic expression.

**Keywords:** fanzines, independent publishing, aesthetics, beauty, fashion, non-binary identities, queer resistance, gender identity, self-representation, Mexico and Colombia

**Short Bio:**

Carolina González Alvarado is a professor and researcher in graphic narratives. She holds a bachelor's degree in Latin American Literature and a Master's degree in Modern Literature from the Universidad Iberoamericana, graduating with Honors. She was awarded the FICSAC Prize (Economic and Development Patronage) for her outstanding work as a high-quality research fellow at the Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, in 2014 and 2015. Additionally, she has pursued studies at UIA, the University of Glasgow in Scotland, and the University of Almería in Spain. She also holds a diploma in "Comic's Pedagogy" from the École Supérieure de l'Image in Angoulême, France. She won the My French Film Festival's 11th edition film criticism contest in 2021.

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**Carolyn Cocca (State University of New York: College at Old Westbury)**

**Panel:** Gender and Power

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 1

**Queering Gendered Food Norms in *She Loves to Cook and She Loves to Eat*, *Wakako Zake*,  
and *Ms. Koizumi Loves Ramen Noodles***

**Abstract:**

Sakaomi Yukazi's *She Loves to Cook and She Loves to Eat* complicates multiple culturally constructed norms and stereotypes surrounding food, gender, and sexuality—about who cooks and how and why, about who eats what food and how much of it, about who exerts power and who expresses pleasure behind the stove and at the table, and about who “should” and “should not” be doing these things.

Most prominent Japanese *ryori* manga and *gurume* manga center male protagonists cooking, critiquing, and enjoying food, and circulate dominant cultural narratives of gender. *She Loves to Cook*, however, pivots these centers and challenges these scripts by focusing on two women and how they negotiate and queer gender expectations of how they should be performing their food practices, as well as their relationship to each other: Nomoto, who loves to cook not for a husband but for her neighbor, and Kasuga, that neighbor who loves to eat large portions of all kinds of food, even in public.

Employing intersectional feminist and queer theories through the transdisciplinary approaches of comics studies and food studies, this paper explores representations of the above themes across the comic and its television adaptation, with reference to other manga as well.

**Keywords:** gender, sexuality, manga

**Short Bio:**

Carolyn Cocca is Professor of Politics, Economics, and Law at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. She is the author of *Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel: Militarism and Feminism in Comics and Film* (2020) and the Eisner-Award-winning *Superwomen: Gender, Power, and Representation* (2016), as well as numerous articles and book chapters on similar topics. She teaches courses about U.S. politics, civil liberties and civil rights, agender and sexuality, and the politics of comics.

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**Cassia Hayward-Fitch (University of East Anglia)**

**Panel:** Tastes of the 1980s

Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**“A Rupture in Meaning Itself”: How “Gay Comix” Navigated ‘Bad Taste’ in its Treatment of  
the AIDS Crisis**

**Abstract:**

The advent of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s brought ideas of taste to the fore within gay male comics. Up to this point, such comics had focused on casual sexual relationships; however, the crisis complicated gay men's relationship with sex, rendering these strips ‘Bad Taste’. Moreover, due to the associations between the comics format and light-heartedness, it was also considered ‘Bad Taste’ to depict the crisis within this medium. This created a dilemma for queer cartoonists — how could they continue representing contemporary gay male culture within comics without falling into ‘Bad Taste’? In 1983, the seminal anthology series “Gay Comix/s” (1980-1998) became the first place to publish an AIDS-centric comic — Howard Cruse's “Safe Sex”. Focusing on this and other comics published in “Gay Comix/s”, this paper examines how Cruse and his peers navigated these two poles of ‘Bad Taste’. It argues that Cruse's strip set a



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precedent for the representation of HIV/AIDS within comics and shows how, across the 1980s and '90s, this comic set into motion a shift that resulted in the telling of new stories about queer lives; stories that focused on communal and romantic relationships.

**Keywords:** AIDS, queer, "Gay Comix"

### **Short Bio:**

Cassia Hayward-Fitch is a PhD student in American Studies at the University of East Anglia. She is the 2023 recipient of the International Comic Arts Forum's Lent Scholarship in Comics Studies. As part of winning this award, the paper was published. It can be found in the International Journal of Comic Art. Her thesis, "Drawn this Gay: Queer Community Activism in the Serial Comics of Alison Bechdel and Howard Cruse", draws on archival material to show how American queer newspaper comic strips from the 1980s and '90s acted as communal spaces, making specific reference to Alison Bechdel's *Dykes to Watch Out For* and Howard Cruse's *Wendel*.

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### **Charles Hatfield (California State University, Northridge)**

**Panel:** Eco-Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **This Play Never Ends: Mita Mahato and the Question of What Comics Are**

##### **Abstract:**

"Is this comics?" may be the most obvious question we could ask about Mita Mahato's *Arctic Play* (2024), a book of pattern poems and woven papers, lists and itineraries, sequences and spreads, all reflecting upon the climate crisis. Inspired by an ambivalent residency in Svalbard (2017), *Arctic Play* treats "nature" not as a fund of extractable resources, nor an idealized romantic remoteness, but instead a ground for thinking about interconnection and longing in light of ecosystemic decay. Evoking theatre, the book unfolds across three "acts" and casts physical media (paper, plastic) as "characters" in its *dramatis personae*. Humans, Mahato included, are unseen, disembodied, and yet human desires remain central. Forms shift: plastic garbage becomes kelp; rocks look like steak. If *Arctic Play* is about being in the world, it's also about the impossibility of folding the repleteness of the world into discrete forms. This radically "playful" assemblage challenges formalisms that would set comics apart. Mahato, known for poetry comics, set out "to make a book that would make discomfort feel like a form of care," and that challenge extends to rethinking comics itself. What kind of "taste" would recognize *Arctic Play* as comics, and what can we learn from it?

**Keywords:** poetry comics, experimental comics, eco-comics

### **Short Bio:**

Charles Hatfield (he/him), Professor at California State University, Northridge, is the author of *Hand of Fire: The Comics Art of Jack Kirby* and *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*, coeditor of *Comics Studies: A Guidebook* and *The Superhero Reader*, and curator of *Comic Book Apocalypse: The Graphic World of Jack Kirby*. He cofounded and served as first president of the Comics Studies Society, and has also served on the boards of the MLA Forum on Comics and Graphic Narratives and the International Comic Arts Forum. He has reviewed comics for more than thirty years, and blogs on children's comics at [www.kindercomics.org](http://www.kindercomics.org).

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### **Chloë Greene (Leeds Arts University)**

**Roundtable | See p. 4**

**Claire Hackett (Massey University College of Creative Arts)**

**Panel:** Monstrous and Fantastic Feasts      Wednesday 25/6, 09:00-09:45, Online

**A Mouthful of Terror: The Gothic and the Consumption of the Body in Japanese Manga.**

**Abstract:**

"The use of food in gothic literature often signifies metamorphosis, both physically through the bodies of the characters and internally through the characters' morals and spiritualities. Alessandra Pino notes that the depiction of food in gothic novels can provide insight into aspects of the plot and storytelling as well as the characters' social and societal position (Pino 9). The Paprikash featured in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* may indicate Jonathan Harker's othering on his journey toward inevitable change at *Dracula's* Castle, while the vegetarianism of Frankenstein's creation seems indicative of his empathy and potential kindness, which contrasts with his description as a monster (Pino 2023). In manga, the consumption of matter - particularly human or same-species flesh - is a common trope which serves as a catalyst for this gothic transformation of plot and narrative as well as the transmutation of the body, providing a tantalizing quandary of transgression: how far might an audience be willing to connect with a character who will willingly bite through taboo to gain power?

In *A mouthful of terror*, I discuss the gothic aspect of transformation and transgression through the consumption of the body in Japanese manga—from a nibble of hair in *My Hero Academia*, to a full body feast in *Attack on Titan*.

**Reference:**

**Buchan, Ella; Pino, Alessandra.** "'A Gothic Cookbook: Hauntingly Delicious Recipes Inspired by 13 Classic Tales'". Unbound, 2024

**Keywords:** gothic, cannibalism, transformation

**Short Bio:**

Claire is an early career researcher at Massey University's College of Creative Arts and lectures in Concept Design. She has worked for Weta Digital on several feature films as an assistant technical director, and has been an Art Director at Mechanic Animation for Marvel Television Animation and co-storyboard director for Pukeko Pictures' *Kiddets*. Claire's freelance illustration portfolio includes pieces created for Lift Education, Learning Media and Saatchi and Saatchi. She has also been involved in illustration and worldbuilding for Arkus Games on the *Shelfie Stacker* and *Dreadful Meadows* properties. Claire loves all things Gothic and Horror-related and is managed by her black cat, Pangur.



**Cristina Alvares + Nicoletta Mandolini (CECS - Universidade do Minho)**

**Panel:** Gender and Power

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 1

**Visualizing Gender-Based Violence: A Lusophone Graphic Novel Corpus**

**Abstract:**

The paper aims at presenting the preliminary findings of the project GENTEEL (Graphic novELs agaiNsT gEndEr violenCe), which qualitatively investigates the reception of graphic novels on gender violence among secondary school students in the north of Portugal. In our presentation, we will analyze the production of contemporary graphic novels on gender violence, which will serve as the basis for selecting texts to be used in the subsequent empirical phase of the project, focused on studying students' reception. The analysis will concentrate on Lusophone graphic novels, meaning texts originally published in Portuguese and originating from different parts of the Portuguese-speaking world (Portugal, Brazil, PALOP – Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa). These graphic novels, considered for placing manifestations of gender violence at the center of their narrative endeavor, will be analyzed through a methodology that combines comics semiotics and feminist theory. The goal is to identify medium-specific features that contribute to representations of gender-based violence capable of challenging patriarchal discourse and potentially fostering readers' engagement. This analysis will help us identify the most suitable graphic novels for the project and assess the potential impact of the selected texts among young adults. The empirical research on students' responses that follows will either confirm or contradict the anticipated impact.

**Keywords:** gender-based violence, graphic novels, lusophone graphic narratives, feminism

**Short Bios:**

**Cristina Álvares** is a full professor of French Literature at the University of Minho. Her research interests include comics and graphic narratives. She has published articles on comics in *Cincinatti Romance Revue* (2017), *Revue Romane* (2020), *Synergies Espagne* (2020), *Neuroptica* (2021) and *European Comic Art* (2021). She was a co-editor of the series *Literature, Cinema, Comics* and national delegate of the COST Action management committee iCON-MICS. With Nicoletta Mandolini and María Márquez López, she has co-edited an issue of *Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais* on gender in Ibero-American graphic narratives in 2023.

**Nicoletta Mandolini** is a researcher at CECS-Uminho, where she is working on the project *Sketch Her Story and Make It Popular. Using Graphic Narratives in Feminist Activism Against Gender Violence*. Among many other publications, she authored the monograph *Representations of Lethal Gender-Based Violence in Italy Between Journalism and Literature* (Routledge 2021). She co-edited the volumes *Representing Gender-Based Violence: Global Perspectives* (Palgrave 2023) and *For real: Il fumetto italiano tra realtà e realismo* (Franco Cesati 2024). She is a founding member of the research group on Italian comics SnIF – Studying'n'Investigating Fumetti.

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**Darnel Degand (University of California, Davis)**

**Panel:** Intersectional Comics

Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD – 2

**Changing tastes in historical and contemporary depictions of Africans and the African Diaspora in comics**

**Abstract:**

This paper presentation reviews how Africans and Africans throughout the diaspora are depicted in comics and cartoon illustrations. I offer a review of literature from scholars who

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examine how these groups have been depicted throughout history. Varying historical reactions to these depictions of African peoples throughout the world are also explored. This includes a discussion of the minstrel show origins of cartoon characters and the stereotypically harmful blackface characterizations of Africans and people of African descent in the comics medium. A review of how various artists have participated in the evolving versions of illustrations that sit somewhere between the continued perpetuation of a minstrel show characterization of African peoples and the evolving depictions of a more dignified representation of African peoples will be explored. The motivations and inspirations that guide these artists will be shared in the form of direct quotes.

I will also present the changing tastes and reactions to contemporary depictions of Africans and the African diaspora. This will be drawn from data I have collected about comic producers' experiences and my analyses of their portfolios. These present-day investigations are part of a larger study that examines the professional experiences of over 100 individuals in the media industry.

**Keywords:** black, pan-African, United States

### **Short Bio:**

Darnel Degand is an Assistant Professor at the University of California-Davis. Prior to UC Davis, he was an interactive media producer. A sample of his resume includes roles as a multimedia designer at the City University of New York, a game designer/developer for Sesame Workshop, and a technical development manager for an online advertising firm acquired by Amazon. His research interests include comics, educational media, media consumption, media production, and social success. He has published in multiple academic journals, such as the Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics, Studies in Comics, The Comics Grid, and the Journal of Futures Studies.

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### **Deepali Yadav (Banaras Hindu University)**

**Panel:** Changing Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 15:45-16:30, Online

#### **The trends in Mahatma Gandhi's Iconography: A study in Comics and Graphic novels**

##### **Abstract:**

The iconic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has always been a variable subject. He is explored for both being a quintessential Hindu figure and also as an ideal spokesperson for Muslim rights and equality in India, a major Hindu nation. At times, he is hailed as the most stubborn Indian leader in South Africa who constantly broke laws against British racial injustices, while in other instances, he is cited for his compromise and failure to save Bhagat Singh by signing the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931).

My paper examines the biographical graphic novels and comics on Gandhi to situate visual politics as the reason behind his shifting iconicity. This shifting iconicity necessarily reflects and is in line with the contemporary tastes in which Gandhi is projected, imagined and thought during the ages. The graphical genre becomes a significant resource to visualize society's approach towards Gandhi, which shifted from considering him as a Father of the Nation, to a saint, resulting in his deification. Alternatively, the genre also hints at the recent transformation of Gandhi being the culprit behind India's partition.

**Keywords:** Gandhi, iconography, shifts

**Short Bio:**

Deepali Yadav's interests are studying the interconnectedness of history and its representation in popular culture, which makes its way through image-making, iconicity, fandom studies, fascination, and visuality. In doing so, she also looks at the techniques of cultural appropriation and the concept of 'intermediality' (between the written word and image) to analyse how meaning and representations shift from one genre to another across the periods. Alternatively, she is also interested in tracing the emergence of new professional patterns through the emergent Indian Digital Cultures.

**Dhrupadi Chattopadhyaya dhyay + Nishta Dev (Sophia College for Women – Empowered Autonomous)**

**Panel:** Comics and Cultural Aesthetics

Tuesday 24/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**Towards an Alternative Aesthetics of the Graphic Form: Notes from Graphic Narratives in India**

**Abstract:**

Theorizations of the idea of the popular emerging from the Global North are largely located within Western epistemological frameworks and Western social imaginaries. Discussions about the status of comics and Graphic Novels within the Global North have been positioned largely within Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural taste, where he argued that the distinction between "high" and "low" culture often reflects power relations, where the "popular" is often disparaged as inferior by cultural elites. Therefore, contemporary works attempt to elevate comics from low entertainment to legitimate forms of cultural and literary production requiring serious engagement.

The Indian Graphic Novel is viewed by scholars like Pramod K Nayar, in a rather uncontested manner, as an expression of this hegemonic Western idea of the "popular". This paper proposes that since matters of taste within culture are highly stratified, this uncontested appropriation of the theoretical framework does not correspond to the complexities of the "popular" in a South Asian, particularly Indian context. The paper attempts to locate the idea of popular within the postcolonial Indian context. To this end, the paper attempts to revisit the history of the form in India to invigorate the idea of the "popular" while being sensitive to the urbane, capitalist context of its production and reception, along with its counter-hegemonic ideological stance.

**Keywords:** Indian Graphic Novel (IGN), South Asian popular literature, graphic aesthetics, power and postcolonialism

**Short Bios:**

**Dhrupadi Chattopadhyaya Dhyay** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai. She has been trained in Literary Studies at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University(M.A.), New Delhi and Ruprecht Karls Universitat, Heidelberg(Ph.D.). Post-colonial Studies, Culture Studies, Digital Humanities and emerging literatures are her areas of interest. She has published articles in her areas of interest in national and international journals.

An alumnus of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, **Nishta Dev** has been teaching in the Department of English, Sophia College for Women, as Assistant Professor since 2013. Her current research interests include Translation (Theory and Practice), Popular Culture, Graphic Narratives, Visual Literacies and Critical Theory. She finished M.Phil in English Literature from the University of Delhi in 2010 and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. from SNDT University, Mumbai,

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on Graphic Fiction in India, an area in which she has also published articles in books and journals, and presented papers in national and international conferences

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**Dominick Grace (independent scholar)**

**Panel:** Tastes of the 1980s

Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**De Gustibus: Taste and Ed the Happy Clown**

**Abstract:**

One of Chester Brown's impetuses in creating his Ed the Happy Clown series was specifically to challenge conventional Western notions of good taste: "could I overcome my cultural conditioning and become less squeamish about looking at drawings of and creating drawings of faeces?" (notes, ch. 3). Ed the Happy Clown glories in transgressing taboos, making the question of "good taste" in artistic consumption almost irrelevant (perhaps most unpleasantly in the depiction of Nancy Reagan's taste for pus—not included in the definitive book, sadly). Interestingly, the storyline is also in key ways driven more literally by questions of taste or consumption. Faeces, a central element in the book, is, after all, the end product of food, and the pursuit of food, or unconventional tastes in food, figure repeatedly in the book, from the initial threat Ed faces (being eaten by rats), to Christian's consumption of pygmies (a practice Ed seems to find unpleasant, but not so unpleasant not to be Christian's friend), and Josie's conversion to vampire, consumer of human blood. Ed's world is in some ways an eat or be eaten one, making the graphic novel a fascinating meditation on taste.

**Keywords:** Chester Brown, food, faeces

**Short Bio:**

Dominick Grace is the co-editor of several volumes of interviews with cartoonists in the University of Mississippi Press's Conversations series. His main comics scholarly interest is the Canadian alternative scene, notably the work of Dave Sim, Chester Brown, and Seth. He also does work on genre literature and media.

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**Don Steinberg + Richard Harrington (Moore College of Art and Design)**

**Panel:** Making and Designing Comics

Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Is Breakfast Cereal Children's First Language?**

**Abstract:**

Food is our first language. The desire for milk is a baby's earliest expression of intent. Infants communicate their likes and dislikes by accepting or rejecting foods before they are able to speak. Food companies have exploited the communicative power of food by targeting children with marketing imagery before kids can even read. With sugar-sweetened cereals, vivid colors, toy prizes, catchy jingles and appealing cartoons, cereal advertising hits children on all five senses and multiple emotional levels, embedding deeply. Research shows the plastic brain of a 4-year-old is twice as active as an adult's.

We created a comic-book series called "Cereal" that explores just how far a breakfast cereal company will go to embed its messages in children's heads and turn them into the earliest consumers. The corporation and cartoon mascots we created for "Cereal" are fictitious. But we surveyed years of real cartoons for cereals like Trix, Cocoa Puffs and Apple Jacks to see what kinds of messages about the world they have fed to children (including us!). Our humorous but

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meaningful 20-minute paper presentation would show and analyze classic cereal cartoons, plus our own comic story, to explore the meanings of cereal messaging.

**Keywords:** breakfast, mascots, sugar

### **Short Bios:**

**Don Steinberg** ("Cereal" author) is a journalist and humor writer, currently with Princeton University, whose writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, and other U.S. and international publications.

**Richard Harrington** ("Cereal" artist) is an award-winning painter, newspaper and magazine cartoonist, and professor of illustration and department chair at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia.

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### **Dragoș Manea (University of Bucharest)**

**Panel:** Monstrous and Fantastic Feasts      Wednesday 25/6, 09:00-09:45, Online

#### **"Devoured from Head to Toe": Nature and Consumption in Junji Ito's Gyo and Uzumaki**

##### **Abstract:**

Junji Ito's graphic narratives *Gyo* and *Uzumaki* foreground the—literal and figurative—consumption of human beings. While neither focuses on traditional monstrous perpetrators of human devouring—such as zombies or vampires—they both draw on the traditions of horror and weird fiction in order to question the conventional divide between the human and the monstrous. Their employment of the grotesque works not merely to create a horrific image but to suggest that horror itself is part and parcel of the natural world.

In this paper, I am particularly interested in the way in which the two manga frame the relationship between human consumption and the natural world. In *Gyo*, this is largely framed as an act of revenge—nature itself, scientists claim, has created monstrous sea creatures with metal legs to end humanity, possibly as a result of Japanese war crimes—while in *Uzumaki* an ancient type of cosmic horror infects both humans and the natural world, rendering the former monstrous and the latter complicit in its designs. In both *Gyo* and *Uzumaki*, humanity largely devolves into a mass of undifferentiated grotesquerie, while nature—though transformed by the logic of the weird—is allowed to endure.

**Keywords:** horror, the weird, human consumption

##### **Short Bio:**

Dragoș Manea is a lecturer in the American Studies Program at the University of Bucharest, where he teaches courses in contemporary American literature, cultural memory studies, perpetrator studies, and media studies. His main research interests include the adaptation of history, cultural memory, and the relationship between ethics and fiction. Relevant publications include *Religious Narratives in Contemporary Culture: Between Cultural Memory and Transmediality* (edited with Maria Sabina Draga-Alexandru, Brill, 2021) and *Reframing the Perpetrator in Contemporary Comics: On the Importance of the Strange* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

**Elżbieta Niewiadoma (AFiB Vistula University; University of Warsaw)**

**Panel:** The Narrative Journey of Food

Wednesday 25/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

**Food as a Romantic Multi-Cultural Mirror: A Look at est em's Quietly Sensual Comics**

**Abstract:**

It is undeniable that there has been a renewed interest in portraying food in comics, notably as a poignant metaphor or plot device (Stein, 2015; Kasabyan, 2024). Tokyo-born Maki Satoh (known professionally as est em) is one of many manga authors who takes advantage of this, using food in her works as an avenue to explore relationships and cultural notions. Publishing within a variety of popular genres (e.g. Boys' Love, Girls' Love) whilst avoiding their stereotypical traits, est em uses food as a driving plot point: one of her most popular titles, ""Oroka-mono wa Aka wo Kirau"" (2008) [Eng: Red Blinds the Foolish], depicts the romantic relationship between a matador and a butcher, while ""Udon no Onna"" (2011) [Eng: The Lady of Udon] follows a university student's infatuation with a cafeteria lady who serves udon. As such, the following paper will focus on how food is depicted in est em's selected works, pointing out its function as a poignant symbol and how it acts as a mirror for characters and their complex relationships, which are further emphasized by the author's restrained artistic style. The paper concludes that est em's comics are a unique example of how food can function as an elaborate cultural and romantic metaphor within the manga tradition.

**Keywords:** manga, romance, food,

**Short Bio:**

Dr Elżbieta Niewiadoma is associated with the Faculty of Modern Languages at the University of Warsaw (pol. Uniwersytet Warszawski) and the English Department at Vistula University (pol. Akademia Finansów i Biznesu Vistula) in Warsaw. She is interested in new media, ludonarratives, as well as digital art and literature, with a particular fascination for video games and comics; her doctoral thesis was on the importance of webcomics and their translation. She is currently conducting literary courses for students at Vistula University, and conducting courses for the Open University of UW. Furthermore, she is actively conducting independent research into contemporary comics, especially those of Polish and Japanese origins.

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**Eric Dubois (Fondation E. P. Jacobs; l'École Boulle)**

**Keynote:** Monday 30/6, 09:00-10:15, CBBD - 1

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**Ernesto Priego (Centre for Human-Computer Interaction Design, City St George's, University of London )**

**Panel:** Fan Tastes

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 2

**Decolonising Taste: A Social Critique of the Hagiography of Hugo Pratt**

**Abstract:**

The elevation of Hugo Pratt as a European comics auteur reflects the social construction of taste in the medium. Thierry Thomas' biography, *Hugo Pratt, trait pour trait* (2020), exemplifies a hagiographic approach, framing Pratt as a visionary who legitimised comics as an eminently European art form, and fails to engage with the potentially controversial elements of his comics. My own obituary article, *Hugo Pratt: Marinero del mar salado* (La Jornada Semanal, 1995), participated in this trend by celebrating Pratt's work through a Western framework, reinforcing



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his mythologisation as an intellectual adventurer. More recently, the Centre Pompidou's (2024) exhibition, *Corto Maltese, Une vie romanesque*, focused on Pratt's protagonist as a fictional icon, avoiding a more contemporary engagement with decolonial or non-Western readings. Drawing on Bourdieu (1984) and De Sousa Santos (2018), I examine how Pratt's reception has prioritised aesthetic recognition over a critique of colonial narratives. Engaging with recent scholarship (Filc, 2020; Comberiati & Spadaro, 2023), this paper argues for a renewed critical appreciation of Pratt's work and biography by critiquing Western idealisation and considering a decolonial reassessment of taste in comics studies, questioning Pratt's positioning within the shifting hierarchies of European comics and their global legacies.

**Keywords:** Hugo Pratt, decolonisation, social construction of taste

### **Short Bio:**

Dr Ernesto Priego studied English Literature at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He holds a Master's in Culture and Communication from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, and a PhD from University College London. He is a senior lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Human-Computer Interaction Design, City, University of London, and the founder and editor-in-chief of *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship*.

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### **Eszter Szép (Milestone Institute)**

**Keynote:** Friday 4/7, 09:30-10:30, CBBB - 1

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### **Fabrice Leroy (University of Louisiana, Lafayette)**

**Panel:** Comics and taste in France and Belgium across three centuries

Wednesday 25/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**“Hé, du gorgonzola!” Food and Transmutation in Pierre La Police's *Les Praticiens de l'Infernal***

### **Abstract:**

In Pierre La Police's iconoclastic works, food and its consumption often contribute to the absurdist sense of humor that is the author's trademark. They are recurrently employed to disturb conventional logic and social norms through intentional deviations of all kinds. Such semantic and conceptual alterations constitute the central humoristic device of *Les Demoiselles de Vienne* (2008), which offers altered photographs of unappetizing dishes accompanied by discordant captions and nonsensical recipes. This paper focuses more specifically on the use of food as a disjunctive mechanism in La Police's narrative works, the 3-volume series entitled *Les Praticiens de l'Infernal* (2012-2021). In these incoherent stories, La Police systematically wields food as a logical and narrative disruptor, by which his characters consume the most improbable and often inedible fares (from night butterflies to pelican ice cream), suffer bizarre consequences and odd metamorphoses as a result, or interrupt their quests due to the unforeseen appearance of random foods (giant raviolis or grapes from space). By deliberately dismantling and undermining the most basic underpinnings of storytelling, La Police's experimentation, despite its apparent inanity, methodically employs food humor as a metanarrative strategy.

**Keywords:** Pierre

### **Short Bio:**

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Fabrice Leroy is Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He has published numerous book chapters and articles on French, Belgian, and American comics and graphic novels. He is the author of the monographs *Sfar So Far. Identity, History, Fantasy and Mimesis* in Joann Sfar's *Graphic Novels* (2014), *Pierre La Police: Une esthétique de la malfaçon* (with Livio Belloï, 2019), and *Back to Black: Jules Feiffer's Noir Trilogy* (2025). With Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey, he co-edited *Intermediality in French-Language Comics and Graphic Novels* (2022) and *The Cambridge Companion to the American Graphic Novel* (2023).

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### **Felipe Muhr (KU Leuven; Ghent University)**

**Panel:** Rethinking Possible Comics Archives

Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 1

#### **Archival Appetites: Visual Consumption and the Reference Picture Collection**

##### **Abstract:**

Comics, traditionally designed for quick consumption, entail multiple stages of image processing. To understand this laborious affair, we must consider the various ways authors engage with the visual ecosystem around them.

This paper examines picture reference collections, or "morgues"—archives of photographs, clippings, and printed ephemera widely used by 20th-century cartoonists but now rendered obsolete by digital image libraries. Assembled by comics artists themselves, morgues provided a catered reference tool for comics production while documenting the authors' lives and personal tastes. Yet, they remain overlooked in comics studies.

Through surviving examples of morgues from artists such as Milton Caniff, René Follet and Raúl Roux, I explore the intersections of comics-making and image consumption. Morgues offered practical solutions to meet commercial deadlines while also revealing the challenges of handling an overabundance of pictures. In an effort to assimilate a constant image flow, picture accumulation can quickly spiral into excess, turning an efficient working device into archival bloating and visual gluttony.

Drawing on research on picture archives by scholars such as Diana Kamin, Lisa Gitelman, and Nina Lager Vestberg, this paper also examines how morgues prefigured modern image databases, offering insights on today's visual appetites—and inevitable indigestion.

**Keywords:** comics production, archival practices, visual consumption

##### **Short Bio:**

Felipe Muhr (b. 1986) is a visual artist, illustrator and comics researcher. He holds a Fine Arts degree from Pontificia Universidad Católica (Chile), an MFA in Illustration from FIT, State University of New York (USA), and an Advanced Master's in Artistic Research from Sint Lucas School of Arts (Belgium). In 2022, he completed the post-academic HISK program in Ghent. Felipe co-curated the 2023 exhibition "Issue Zero: Reading the Van Passen Collection" at KIOSK, Ghent. He is currently a FWO-funded PhD researcher at KU Leuven and UGent, with the project "Reanimating Morgue Files: A Media Archeology of Reference Collections".



**Fer Garcia (independent researcher)**

**Panel:** Comics and Cultural Aesthetics

Tuesday 24/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**From Trash to Treasure: The Entrepreneurial Shift in the Perception of Comics as Art**

**Abstract:**

This paper explores how entrepreneurial strategies transformed comics from "low culture" to respected narrative media. Historically dismissed as "trash culture," comics faced a hierarchy of taste that relegated them to the periphery of art and literature. Yet, through strategic innovation, independent creators and publishers challenged these perceptions, leveraging conventions, crowdfunding, and transmedia storytelling to elevate the medium's cultural value.

By examining pivotal moments in this evolution—such as the rise of graphic novels, the incorporation of comics into academic curricula, and the growing acceptance of comics as collectable art—this paper highlights the entrepreneurial forces behind this paradigm shift. Case studies will include the success of self-published works like *Maus* and *Bone*, as well as the role of digital platforms in democratizing access and expanding readership.

Through the lens of semiotics and storytelling, this presentation will also address how creators employed narrative sophistication and aesthetic innovation to appeal to changing cultural tastes. Ultimately, this paper argues that the entrepreneurial spirit not only reshaped the perception of comics but also established a blueprint for other marginalized art forms to gain legitimacy in the cultural hierarchy.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial strategies, cultural hierarchy, comics evolution

**Short Bio:**

Fer Garcia is an expert in entrepreneurship, storytelling, and comics, with 19 years of teaching experience in entrepreneurship and 7 years as a business consultant. Specializing in the intersection of art and business, he focuses on how storytelling and semiotics shape the value and perception of creative industries. A passionate advocate for independent comic creators, he has written extensively on entrepreneurial strategies for the comic book world, combining their expertise in innovation and digital marketing. His work emphasizes the cultural evolution of comics from "low art" to respected narrative media.

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**Fi Stewart-Taylor (Northeastern University)**

**Panel:** Digital Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**A Feast for Algorithms**

**Abstract:**

Across Webtoons, in all kinds of settings and alternate realities, characters feast. Whether plot important or incidental, these meals should command our attention, lingering to enjoy and interpret them as part of the visual and stylistic innovations which characterize Webtoons. A decentralized platform with user-submitted content, Webtoons hosts many distinct styles, but among the "Isekai" or alternate world strips and similar fantasy genres, we can discern patterns. These strips draw on manga conventions, with highly stylized faces and figures and more naturalistic backgrounds, with an additional emphasis on tangible, desirable consumer goods, including food, jewellery, furniture, and clothes, via digital rendering and assets.

In its attention to consumables, this style mirrors John Berger's observations about realist oil painting as a proxy for consumer goods. Given the attention in Isekai to difficulties of the precariat, I propose, following what Dal Yong Jin diagnoses as Webtoons' "snack culture," both

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comic strips and the sumptuous renderings inside them are compensatory tastes, like Lauren Berlant's aleatory pleasures. Produced as a result of artists crushed by deadlines and consumed by readers likewise experiencing a speed up of contemporary work culture, Webtoons' digitally glowing, highly-rendered snacks and feasts offer a glimpse of owning the good life.

**Keywords:** Webtoons, webcomics, digital art

### **Short Bio:**

Fi Stewart-Taylor is a postdoctoral teaching associate in the writing program at Northeastern University. Their research interests include zines, webcomics, and DIY cultures.

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### **Gabi Putnoki (Graphic Novel Reading Room)**

**Roundtable | See p. 3**

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### **Gabriel Clark (School of Design, University of Technology Sydney)**

**Panel:** Comics in Education                      Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

#### **Design comics: design pedagogy and making comics**

#### **Abstract:**

For over two decades, the School of Design at the University of Technology Sydney has been a critical part of Australia's graphic storytelling tradition. Since 2009, the Visual Communication program has been an early innovator in teaching comics within a design setting.

This pedagogical approach to comics in design education has fostered a unique form of graphic storytelling. The integration of design principles and visual analysis in practice-based tertiary education produces a distinctive aesthetic outcome, setting it apart from other pedagogical and creative approaches.

This paper explores the impact of design pedagogy on comic-making practices. It examines the teaching methodology of the Visual Communication degree, visually analyses key precedents, and showcases selected student works.

By defining the formal and aesthetic qualities of these distinctive comics, this paper argues for the emergence of a new aesthetic category within graphic storytelling - an approach termed design comics.

**Keywords:** graphic storytelling, design pedagogy, comics

### **Short Bio:**

Gabriel Clark is a senior lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney's School of Design, where he develops and leads innovative storytelling curricula for the Visual Communications degree. His research interests focus on oral history in comics, earning him significant grants, commissions, and awards. He is a lead on the Australian Research Council project Folio: Stories of Australian Comics and a co-editor and contributor to the scholarly book Folio: Essays on Australian Comics. As a creative producer, he has produced numerous award-winning live graphic storytelling projects, including Read to Me and the Graphic festival at the Sydney Opera House.

**Gareth Brookes (independent researcher)**

**Panel:** Rethinking Possible Comics Archives

Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 1

**Written Over, for the Far Time to Discover – Materiality and Taste in the Archives of Michael Field**

**Abstract:**

Michael Field is the pseudonym of a collaborative writing partnership between two Victorian women, Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who developed a practice which they regarded as both a physical and spiritual marriage. I have been invited to produce a body of practice-based comics research responding to the archives of Michael Field as a Visiting Artist Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford.

Field's practice represents an anachronistic reworking of Elizabethan verse on the one hand, and a radical queer intersubjective life writing practice on the other. Their life combined fraught attempts to recreate Victorian matrimonial domesticity, with a bohemian urge to reimagine society within a burgeoning suburbia.

This paper will consider how these tensions manifest themselves through the materiality of Field's photographs, journals, letters, and scrapbooks in the context of Victorian ideas of taste and convention. I will present my project in progress, reflecting on how I have used comics' visual register to translate archival materiality into a narrative form in a way that effectively communicates aesthetic factors relating to taste and fashion. Reflection on the technologies remediating this materiality will produce insights into the process of memory-making embedded in the societal power structures from which ideas of taste emerge.

**Keywords:** practice-based research, comics and archives, drawing theory

**Short Bio:**

Dr Gareth Brookes is a graphic novelist and comics scholar. He gained a PhD from Central Saint Martins, UAL, in 2024 with a thesis entitled Embodied Responses to Materiality in the Making and Reading of Comics. He has published three graphic novels, including The Dancing Plague and The Black Project, which was nominated Best Graphic Novel published in French Language in the Sélection Officielle 2018 45e Festival International de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême. He has contributed scholarship to the Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics, Studies in Comics and ImageText.

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**Genç Osman İlhan (Yildiz Technical University)**

**Panel:** Reader Activities and Tastes

Tuesday 1/7, 15/15-16:45, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Comics in Education: Why do undergraduate students choose the course?**

**Abstract:**

Comics are a novel genre in literature, offering readers multimedia and joy together. Since 1940, they have been used for educational purposes as reading materials in various courses such as mathematics, language, social studies and others. The United States and Europe have been central to the production of comics and their integration into education. Although becoming very popular with cultural heroes and stories, comics are not widely integrated into education in Türkiye. The first undergraduate course on comics and education was opened in 2019 by the author of this presentation. Since then, the course has been taught at the Faculty of Education to pre-service teachers as an elective course. As a novel course for Turkish universities, this

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study investigates the reasons why undergraduate students choose the course. The participants of the study consist of 348 pre-service teachers at a state university in Istanbul, Türkiye. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire on their aspirations about the course at the beginning and end of semesters between 2019-2024. The results indicate that they choose the course for the instructor, to complete their elective courses or interest in different courses at the beginning. At the end of the course, their knowledge, interest and attitude towards comics are increased, and they plan to use comics in their profession.

**Keywords:** comics and education, undergraduate comics course, preservice teachers

### **Short Bio:**

Dr. Genç Osman İlhan is an associate professor at Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Education, Social Studies Education. He studied at Texas Tech University as a visiting scholar in 2015-2016. He has received his PhD in Social Studies Education, with a speciality in comics in education. He has studied comics and digital comics design and their use in education. He has opened and been coordinating undergraduate and graduate courses on comics in education since 2019. Also, he has completed a teacher education national project on comics, values and environment education. He has expertise in the digital comics programme Pixton and other digital tools. He has conducted various research in national and international issues on comics use as a learning/teaching tool in education. He is the leader of an international Erasmus+ project, Digital Comics of Migration. Also, he is an MC member of the Cost project (CA19119) IconMlcs.

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### **Geraint D’Arcy (University of East Anglia)**

**Panel:** Rethinking Possible Comics Archives

Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 1

**“Pink tones in its yellow colour. . . definitely flute!” Synaesthesia, Kandinsky, and Comics in Restaging The Yellow Sound.**

### **Abstract:**

The Yellow Sound was a 1911 stage composition written by Wassily Kandinsky as part of a treaty on art theory and culture in the 20th Century: Der Blaue Reiter.

Like most of Kandinsky’s work, it was an attempt to synthesize artistic forms that emulated the synaesthetic experiences of its composer. He claimed to hear music and taste colours as he painted. By turning to the plastic art of theatre, Kandinsky felt it was more likely that the connection to the soul that he was seeking would be sharable on the stage, but the result is a cacophonous and confusing set of visual stimuli. Whatever extrasensory stimuli are presented are swamped in the live performance, and it’s difficult to taste blues when the sound is so loudly yellow. If only he had thought to turn his ideas towards comics, where staging pictures are baked into the form. But he was a fabulous snob.

Influential, but never staged in Kandinsky’s lifetime, it was partially realised in the 1970s and only in its entirety at the London Tate Modern in 2011. Using the designs of my 2011 performance, I propose to reinvestigate The Yellow Sound by restaging it as a practice research comic.

**Keywords:** practice research, synaesthesia, history.

**Short Bio:**

Geraint D'Arcy is Associate Professor in Media Practice at The University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK. He is the author of *Mise en Scène, Acting and Space in Comics* (Palgrave, 2020), which looks at the crossover of theory from film, theatre, and comics, and of *Critical Approaches to TV and Film Set Design* (Routledge, 2018). He teaches design praxis and theory across media, specialising in stage, screen and comics.

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**Giorgio Busi Rizzi (Ghent University)**

**Panel:** Digital Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Postdigital ugly? DIY, internet aesthetic, and the impact of generative AI**

**Abstract:**

This contribution posits the birth and surge of a new aesthetic that I propose to call “postdigital ugly”, on the model of the already existing “internet ugly” (Douglas 2014), stemming from the convergence and consolidations of several representational trends and practices.

Comics are quite an interesting object to test this hypothesis, since they have always incorporated different kinds of DIY, punk, abstract, and naïve aesthetics (Belloi and Leroy 2019; Rommens et al. 2019; Dejasse 2022; etc.). Meanwhile, contemporary visual culture through all media has been significantly impacted by the evolution that the aesthetics linked to the Internet have undergone in the last years (Betancourt 2016; Tanni 2020, 2024), the percolation of digital forms and practices into our everyday life – that is, the postdigital condition (Berry and Dieter 2015; Contreras-Koterbay and Mirocha 2016; Jordan and Lutostański 2024) - and the changed configuration of the dominant structure of feeling after postmodernism (Van den Akker, Gibbons, and Vermeulen 2017). This is becoming even more relevant now that generative AI – seemingly here to stay – is consolidating a set of aesthetic qualities so far tightly linked to the ideas of camp and kitsch, and to the feelings of uncanniness that the tool (still?) implies (Busi Rizzi 2023, 2024).

This contribution will examine how comics, both digital and remediating digital forms and protocols, may incorporate such aesthetics.

**Keywords:** aesthetics, postdigital, AI

**Short Bio:**

Giorgio Busi Rizzi is an FWO senior post-doctoral fellow and adjunct professor at Ghent University, teaching the Comics and Graphic Novels and English Literature courses. His current project investigates authorship in post-digital comics; his previous research analyzed nostalgic aesthetics and practices in comics and experimental digital comics. He holds a PhD in Literary and Cultural Studies with joint supervision by the Universities of Bologna and Leuven. His contributions have appeared in *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *Studies in Comics*, *European Comic Art*, *Italian Studies*, *The Cambridge Companion to Comics* and *The Routledge Handbook of Nostalgia*.

**Gorvika Rao (Miranda House, University of Delhi)**

**Panel:** Femininity, Food and the Forest

24/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**Consuming Bodies: Representation of Food, Gender and Desire in Kari and Aranyaka**

**Abstract:**

The concepts of food, desire and hunger are closely associated with the control of women's bodies. Most of the women in Indian society spend their lives in the kitchen but are not allowed to imagine food as an object of desire. Many of the Indian cultures forbid women to eat certain kinds of foods during menstruation, pregnancy and post-partum. In some cultures, widowed women cannot consume non-vegetarian food along with certain food items presumed as aphrodisiacs like onion and garlic. The desirability of women's bodies is visualized as directly proportional to the food consumption. Women starve, eat or diet to fit the lens of this male gaze.

In the light of the above cultural characteristics, I propose to examine, analyse and interrogate the visual representation of food, desire and bodies in Amruta Patil's graphic novels Kari (2008) and Aranyaka (written with Devdutt Pattanaik, 2019). The location, setting and timeline of both novels are far apart and hence, narrate the stories of women from a realistic urban city to a mythological forest. This paper would also like to analyse the feminine visualization of the women's bodies belonging to different sexualities, timeframes and societies.

**Keywords:** food, feminine desire, body

**Short Bio:**

Gorvika Rao is a Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Miranda House, Delhi University, India. Her areas of research include Films, Caste, Graphic and Archive Studies. She has been an important part of the Delhi University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 2017-19, which helped in the introduction of the paper on Comics and Graphic Novels. She acted as the convenor of the board of the committee. She is a recipient of the Asia Art Archive and Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation grant 2023-24. Through this grant, she is working on the Dalit public sphere prevalent in Delhi in the 1970s.

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**Greice Schneider +João Senna Teixeira (Universidade Federal de Sergipe)**

**Panel:** The Narrative Journey of Food

Wednesday 25/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

**The aesthetics of deliciousness in culinary manga**

**Abstract:**

This paper aims to explore comics about eating, not only as a subject but as a way of transforming an everyday, mundane act into a vibrant and sensory reading experience. We will focus on how food is depicted in comics—not just the food itself, but also the reactions, sensations and emotions that arise from the characters' experiences.

We begin from an aesthetic standpoint, investigating how visual elements can evoke sensory experiences of taste and smell. Colors, shapes, graphic style, textures, and page layout all contribute to the aesthetic appreciation of food, engaging readers sensorially. The central question is how comics create a form of synesthesia, offering a visual representation of how food feels or using character interactions with food to convey the experience of eating, its flavors, and the emotions that accompany the act.

We will examine the recurring themes of repetition and variation and how they resonate in graphic storytelling. For instance, we will look at techniques such as the use of ascending lines to represent temperature, the glistening effect of oily food, and other methods for graphically



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expressing tactile sensations. Additionally, we will analyze the recurring forms of character reactions to identify patterns and differences across the comics. Understanding how these techniques are used in different works—both similarly and differently—will provide a more comprehensive insight into the mechanics of such depictions.

We are witnessing a growing wave of manga that celebrates the joys of food. In this exploration, we will examine how different series depict food in distinct ways—from *The Solitary Gourmet* (Kodoku no Gourmet), by Taniguchi and Kusumi, which captures the quiet pleasure of solitary meals, to *Suito-to!* and *Dungeon Meshi*, which approach gastronomy through unique and imaginative lenses.

**Keywords:** culinary comics, aesthetics, synesthesia

### **Short Bios:**

**Greice Schneider** is an Associate Professor in the Communications Department at Universidade Federal de Sergipe (UFS) in Brazil. She authored "What Happens When Nothing Happens: Boredom and Everyday Life in Contemporary Comics" (Leuven University Press, 2016). With a Ph.D. in Literature from KU Leuven and an MA in Communication and Contemporary Culture from Universidade Federal da Bahia, her research focuses on visual studies and the relationship between image and narrative.

**João Senna** is a Ph.D. in communication and contemporary culture with a research stay at the Université de Lausanne and studies seriality, authorship and organization in comics, movies and other media.

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### **Hailey Austin (Abertay University)**

**Panel:** "Bad Tastes" Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **Distasteful Comics: How Erotic Pulp Magazines Influenced Modern Comics Genres**

##### **Abstract:**

Before popular comics characters like Wonder Woman or Superman, there were pulp magazines. Pulp magazines were cheap, fast fiction magazines with alluring covers and interior illustrations that were published from 1896 into the late 1950s. While the pulps expanded into almost every genre, one of the most popular was the 'hot' or 'spicy' pulp that explored erotic themes. Pulp magazines were cheap to buy, and their content was alluring: "The pulp magazines were all about three things: action, adventure, and sex – not necessarily together or in that order" (Haining 2000, p.9).

In this presentation, I will discuss the ways in which pulp magazines are the generic ancestors to the modern comics genres seen today, drawing particular lines between erotic pulp magazines, Tijuana Bibles, and the superhero genre. The iconography of pulp magazines, drawing from fetish and pornographic magazines as well as political cartoons, utilised double-voicing that alerted readers to the content within the magazine while sliding under the radar of censorship. I will analyse the ways in which the iconography and double-voicing of pulp magazines like *Pep!* (1926-1934) led to the creation of Detective Comics and Action Comics, to reveal the ways in which distasteful comics have influenced modern genres.

**Keywords:** pulp magazines, erotic comics, superhero genre

##### **Short Bio:**

Dr Hailey Austin is a Lecturer in Visual Media and Culture and the Programme Lead for the BA(Hons) Game Design and Production course at Abertay University in Dundee, Scotland. She



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got her PhD in Comics from the University of Dundee, where her thesis focused on the anthropomorphic body as a site of fetish in comics. Her research interests include revealing overlooked and marginalised voices in the creative industries, including comics, zines, and games.

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**Hakan Keleş (Eskişehir Osmangazi University)**

**Panel:** Social Critique and Style

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 3

**The Tear that Never Drops: Urban Transformation and Nostalgia in Güneri İçoğlu's Comic Strip Gönül Adamı**

**Abstract:**

This work explores the intersection of urban transformation, nostalgia, and social critique in Güneri İçoğlu's long-running comic strip Gönül Adamı, published in the Turkish humor magazine Leman from the mid-1990s to 2016. Set against the backdrop of Istanbul's rapid urbanization and neoliberal restructuring, Gönül Adamı portrays the melancholic resistance of its titular protagonist to the loss of Istanbul's architectural and cultural heritage. Through satirical and visually rich narratives, İçoğlu critiques the commodification of urban spaces, the erasure of traditional lifestyles, and the homogenizing effects of globalization.

This study employs a content analysis method, examining visual and literary elements across the series' five book compilations. By juxtaposing the contradiction between traditional and modern, new and old, materiality and spirituality, synthetic and organic, local and global, human and nature; İçoğlu's work reflects the tensions inherent in Istanbul's transformation. The comic's nostalgic visual language, from its depictions of historic neighborhoods to daily routines, becomes a powerful medium for resisting cultural and urban degeneration.

Addressing themes such as gentrification, displacement, and consumer culture, this paper situates Gönül Adamı within broader discussions of taste and aesthetic hierarchies in graphic narratives, showcasing comics as a potent tool for urban and social critique.

**Keywords:** urban transformation, nostalgia, istanbul

**Short Bio:**

Hakan Keleş was born in 1986 in Sivas, Turkey. Hakan Keleş grew up in Istanbul and moved to Eskişehir in 2004 to study architecture at Anadolu University. He completed his undergraduate degree in 2009, a master's degree at Istanbul Technical University in 2013, and a PhD at Eskişehir Technical University in 2019. Currently, he works as an Assistant Professor at Eskişehir Osmangazi University. His academic research focuses on the intersection of architecture with illustration, comics, and animation. His "Lilliputlar" illustration series, launched on Instagram in 2017, was published as a book in 2021. He is married and has one daughter.

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**Hannah K. Chapman + Jayde Perkin + Willow Pugh (artists)**

**Panel:** Comics in Education

Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Remembering mealtime: Using food as a writing prompt in the classroom**

**Abstract:**

Graphic novelist and biographer, Hannah K Chapman, and illustrator, Jayde Perkin, teach Writing Graphic Novels and Comics as part of Bath Spa University's Creative Writing Programme. Through our teaching practice and research, we have been exploring how graphic

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narratives, a monosensory medium, convey the rich sensory detail of food and how students can use this to explore themes of identity.

A particular challenge we face is that most of our students do not identify as artists or visual communicators. We use autobiographical writing as a way of grounding our students while they explore different graphic storytelling techniques. For example, in one workshop, we invite students to reflect on memorable meals and the people who made them. Their responses are developed into single-page narratives, reproduced on sheets of tracing paper, that are then overlapped and reinterpreted as a group. The skills developed are then applied to a wider portfolio of work, including original fiction and non-fiction comics.

We propose to share our recent experiences in using food as a prompt in the classroom and where we might take our teaching practice in the future.

**Keywords:** teaching, creative writing, identity

### **Short Bios:**

**Hannah K Chapman** (she/her) is an award-winning comics writer and editor. She is the founder of the twice award-nominated anthology series, *Comic Book Slumber Party*, and her most recent publication is the non-fiction graphic novel, *Why She Wrote* (Chronicle, 2021), which won the 2022 EGL Readers' Choice Award. She was a co-organiser of the Bristol Comic and Zine Fair for five years and has exhibited at comic events throughout Europe and North America.

**Jayde Perkin** (she/her) is a freelance illustrator based in Bristol, UK. She creates hand-painted illustrations for a wide range of clients, as well as writing and making comics. Jayde has garnered praise for her critically acclaimed self-published comics. Her first long-form graphic memoir, *'I'm Not Ready'*, made its debut at the 2019 East London Comic Arts Fair, after winning the ELCAF X WeTransfer prize in 2018.

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**Hatiye Garip** (Institute for Media Culture and Theatre - University of Cologne)

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics II      Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Malachiet

### **Please Do Touch: Tactility in Comics, DIY Techniques and Personal Experiments**

#### **Abstract:**

This paper explores the role of tactility in creating accessible comics, focusing on the tactile methods that comic artists can use through DIY techniques and personal experiments. Tactile graphics are designed to be felt and understood by touch, catering to individuals who are blind or have low vision. However, the high costs associated with tactile printing and graphic techniques—typically produced by specialized organizations—limit comic artists' ability to work in this area and hinder the diversification and growth of tactile comics.

Tactile graphics are mainly found in educational materials, maps, and diagrams where they provide information rather than serve as a form of entertainment, such as comics. This paper aims to enhance accessibility in visual arts, ensuring that entertainment culture and the arts are open to all. It will investigate how comic artists can create tactile comics in their own creative spaces, fostering personal expression and innovation.

To achieve this goal, the paper will explore the use of 3D inks and gels that raise the lines of drawings, as well as other tactile techniques such as collage, cut-outs, and embossing. It will also evaluate these possibilities based on existing examples of tactile visual art. Additionally, practical tools provided by organizations that support artists and designers will be examined, including the Tactile Graphics Kit by the American Printing House for the Blind, the Braille Slate

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and Stylus Set by Makers Making Change, the Acrylic 3D Double Liner by edding, the Cricut Machine for cut-outs, and the Inclusive Design Toolkit by the University of Cambridge, which includes simulation glasses and impairment simulator software.

By presenting various experimental and DIY methods for producing tactile comics, this paper will encourage a wider audience to discover tactile graphics and accessible comics. Furthermore, through artistic research, it will reveal tools that can be used in the production of accessible graphics, contributing to the development and expansion of these resources.

**Keywords:** tactile comics, accessibility, DIY techniques, disability, vision

### **Short Bio:**

Hatiye Garip is a disabled illustrator, comic artist, and designer from Istanbul based in Cologne. She likes to draw birds, flowers, and ordinary moments. She is interested in accessible illustration, comics, graphic medicine and experiments with onomatopoeia and field recordings. More recently, she has been running the Accessible Lines project, which brings together illustrators from the UK and Turkey to make their illustrations accessible. As a DAAD doctoral fellow, she is carrying out her research on accessible comics. [www.hatiyegarip.com](http://www.hatiyegarip.com); [www.instagram.com/hatiyegarip](https://www.instagram.com/hatiyegarip); [www.accessiblelines.com](http://www.accessiblelines.com) (Coming Soon)

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### **Holly O'Neil (University of Technology, Sydney)**

**Panel:** Eco-Comics                      Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Re-seeing the Swamp: how disobedient wildlife and graphic storytelling can re-present and re-surface the "unsightly" wetlands of Sydney**

### **Abstract:**

Beneath the foundations of Sydney is a swampy legacy. A complex, entangled story of flora, fauna, colonial exploitation, indigenous knowledge, and water. This concrete metropolis sits on unceded Aboriginal (wet)land, whose waters have been "silenced" for the sake of development, judgment, misinformation, and disgust. The wetlands of Sydney are a crucial habitat for wildlife, as well as a front-line resource for climate change impact reduction in the city. At best, the wetlands are reviled and, at worst, forgotten. In this article, I will explore how auto "ethnographic" (Dix & Kaur, 2019) comics and drawn, visual storytelling might provide ways of seeing these swamps in a new light – documenting beyond immediate realities, sculpting temporalities beyond the now and present/ing explorative, critical, and multi-layered stories without "freezing" subjects of interest (Abu-Loghud, 1991). I call on comic-making and drawing as a valuable research methodology that brings to the fore the resilient "disobedient" wildlife and water that weaves its way through the city. Through this exploration, I aim to highlight the value that graphic storytelling brings to the academic research practice, in terms of content, layers of understanding, as well as legibility and the opportunity for public accessibility to our research findings.

**Keywords:** climate, research, nature

### **Short Bio:**

Holly O'Neil is an English, Bahrain-born, Australia-based Multimodal Researcher and Anthro-Artist. Professionally trained as both a reportage illustrator and an anthropologist, she now works to combine her two disciplines in experimental and informative ways. Currently, she is exploring the role of graphic visual storytelling as a form of research methodology to document and engage the public with the climate crisis. She is working on her PhD at UTS, in Sydney, where she is working on an Australian Research Council-funded project, with an incredible

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interdisciplinary team, to "surface" the urban wetlands that the city is built on through design and research.

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**Honorine Rouiller (Vanderbilt University)**

**Panel:** Graphic Medicine II

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Appetite as Metaphor: The Body, Illness, and Culinary Experience in *La Vie Gourmande* by Aurélia Aurita**

**Abstract:**

Aurélia Aurita's graphic novel *La Vie gourmande* offers a poignant exploration of the intricate relationship between appetite, body, and identity through the lens of culinary experiences and personal struggles. This autobiographical work begins with the death of Aurita's grandmother and chronicles her journey through haute cuisine kitchens, a battle with cancer, and evolving perceptions of taste and life itself. How does her cancer diagnosis transform her relationship with her body and culinary experiences? In what ways does the graphic novel format uniquely capture the sensory and emotional aspects of this journey?

I argue that Aurita's work demonstrates how the relationship between body and appetite becomes a lens through which to examine mortality, sensory pleasure, and personal growth. By juxtaposing vivid depictions of gourmet experiences with the stark realities of cancer treatment, Aurita creates a nuanced narrative that challenges conventional perceptions of appetite and illuminates the body's capacity for both suffering and celebration. This approach not only offers a fresh perspective on the autobiographical graphic novel genre but also provides a deeply personal yet universally resonant exploration of how our relationship with food reflects our relationship with life itself. Aurita's non-linear narrative and dynamic visual style further enhance the sensory aspects of her culinary journey, inviting readers to engage with the work on multiple levels.

**Keywords:** culinary autobiography, body-appetite relationship, cancer narratives

**Short Bio:**

Honorine Rouiller is a Senior Lecturer at Vanderbilt University. Using graphic narratives as her primary texts, her research interests include biographical studies, memory studies, and contemporary French culture and literature. Her research focuses on the representation of history and memory in comic books. In her current book projects, she looks at the legacies of the Algerian War in contemporary graphic narratives to unpack how the Algerian War is at the heart of the social fracture in contemporary France today, a fracture stemming from questions of national identity, national belonging, and national memory.

**Hugo Frey** (Institute of Arts and Humanities – University of Chichester)  
**Maaheen Ahmed** (Ghent University)

**Panel:** Comics and taste in France and Belgium across three centuries

Wednesday 25/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**Franco-Belgian Visionary Art: Selections from the Alain Van Passen Comics Collection**

**Abstract:**

Our talk zooms in on the curatorial selection process for an exhibition and catalogue based on the Alain Van Passen collection at Ghent University. Focusing on comics magazines published between 1935 and 1965, the exhibition unveils a lost world of French and Belgian comics and their translations and reworkings of American, British, and Italian imports. Van Passen's pristine collection, built over decades of searching and exchanging, offers us unprecedented insight into the diverse trajectories of twentieth-century popular publishing. These images also shed light on changing popular tastes in comics and visual culture, which mutate in their visual styles and influences and in their generic preferences. Scattered across the millions of panels and magazine pages collected by Van Passen, there is a long-forgotten history of vibrant, surrealist, even 'visionary' images. Our talk shows how approaching this multitude of images through thematic selections by a team of colleagues offers an effective means of managing the sheer scope of material and constructing a possible counter history of comics.

**Keywords:** Van Passen, exhibition, catalogue, magazines, visionary

**Short Bios:**

Professor **Hugo Frey** is a cultural and political historian whose research work focuses on twentieth-century France and Francophone Europe with special emphasis on the politics of visual culture. He has published over 40 substantial outputs in this field, including *Louis Malle* (Manchester University Press 2004); *Nationalism and the Cinema in France* (Berghahn Books 2014); *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction* (as co-author with Jan Baetens, Cambridge University Press, 2015). In addition, he has published journal articles with the *Journal of European Studies*, *South Central Review*, *Modern and Contemporary France* and *Yale French Studies*, among others.

**Maaheen Ahmed** is an associate professor of comparative literature at Ghent University, Belgium. She is the author of *Openness of Comics and Monstrous Imaginaries: The Legacy of Romanticism in Comics* (both published by the University Press of Mississippi). In addition to editing several volumes on comics, including *The Cambridge Companion to Comics* (CUP) and *Comics Memory: Archives and Styles*, with Benoît Crucifix (Palgrave), she has published in journals such as *European Comic Art*, *Children's Geographies*, and *Comicalités*. From 2018 to 2024, she was principal investigator of a multi-researcher project on children in European comics: [www.comics.ugent.be](http://www.comics.ugent.be)

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**Ian Hague** (University of the Arts London)

**Panel:** Tastefulness Across the Spectrum

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 3

**Performance and Taste in Comics Cookbooks**

**Abstract:**

"Recipes in comics, and cookbooks that are comics, imply a tripartite relationship between 1) the comics text, 2) a specified set of material objects, and 3) the reader, who, through their interaction with the other two elements, is pushed explicitly into the role of a performer. In this

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role, the reader is expected to ‘carry into effect, fulfil, discharge, carry out what is demanded or required’ by the graphic narrative, and thereby to complete the work through the production of a material outcome and the sensory experiences that accompany it. To do so, the performer must negotiate between a set of words and images implying a “correct” action or state, and a set of materials that may enable that action to be carried out or state to be achieved. This paper will explore this negotiation, looking at the types of relationship that exist between images and actions, as well as how the comics cookbook brings into effect notions of “success” for comics readers/performers, and how the visual components of comics work (or don’t) to enable the production of tastes in ways that differ from written or video equivalents.

### **References**

**Perform (v.).** n.d.. Available from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/perform> (accessed Feb 1, 2025)."

**Keywords:** performance, cookbook, materiality

### **Short Bio:**

Dr Ian Hague is Associate Dean of Research and Reader in Graphic Narrative at London College of Communication, UAL. His research looks at sensory and material cultures, with a particular focus on comics and related forms. Ian is the author of *Comics and the Senses: A Multisensory Approach to Comics and Graphic Novels*, and the co-editor of *Representing Multiculturalism in Comics and Graphic Novels* and two volumes on *Violence in Comics*. In 2009, Ian founded Comics Forum, an annual conference and website. In 2018 he co-founded the Comics Research Hub (CoRH) at UAL.

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### **Ian Horton (University of the Arts London)**

**Panel:** Social Critique and Style

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 3

#### **Shaken and Stirred: The Iconography of Food and Drink in the James Bond Newspaper Strips**

##### **Abstract:**

In 1958, the Daily Express published the first newspaper comic strip adaptation of Ian Fleming’s James Bond novel *Casino Royale* (1953). This was illustrated by John McLusky and scripted by Andrew Hearn, who had previously adapted two James Bond novels for serialisation in the newspaper. At the conclusion of this initial adaptation, Hearn was replaced by Henry Gammidge, who worked with McLusky to adapt ten more of Fleming’s Bond novels. In 1966, this team was replaced by the artist Yaroslav Horak and writer Jim Lawrence, who together adapted two of Fleming’s Bond novels and three of his short stories.

Although these adaptations mainly followed the publication order of the books and short stories, and faithfully followed the main plots, there were certain aspects of the original stories that were downplayed and others that were emphasised. Although the iconography of international travel, exotic locations, food, and drink was already present in the novels, it was even more notable when visualised in the strips. The visual imagery closely followed the descriptions in the novels, but as the series progressed, a new, distinct kind of iconography emerged with food and drink at its core. This iconography spoke of exotic cultural tastes and traditions, intertwining food and romance with graphic depictions of gastronomy and an excessive devotion to drinking. This paper focuses on these elements and what they contributed to the narrative of these comic strip adaptations.

**Keywords:** newspaper strips, iconography, James Bond



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**Short Bio:**

Ian Horton is a Reader in Graphic Communication at the University of the Arts London. His present research is focused on three related areas: comic books, graphic design and illustration, and he has previously published work on: colonialist stereotypes in European and British comic books; the relationship between art history and comics studies; and public relations and comic books. He is a founder member of the Comics Research Hub (CoRH!!) at the University of the Arts London, co-editor of *Contexts of Violence in Comics* (Routledge 2019) and *Representing Acts of Violence in Comics* (Routledge 2019), and is associate editor of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*. Most recently, he has collaborated on *Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form* (co-edited with Maggie Gray (Kingston University)), Palgrave March 2022, and *Comics Studies and Art History: Past, Present and Potential Futures* (co-authored with Maggie Gray (Kingston University) Palgrave, August 2022.

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**İbrahim Mertcan Alçinkaya (University of Warsaw)**

**Presents paper on 25/6 and 3/7**

**Panel 1:** Food, Consumption and Power      Wednesday 25/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**Panel 2:** CHEW Comics      Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Bittersweet Taste of Comics: Representation of Police Power and Food Politics in John Layman and Rob Guillory's *Chew***

**Abstract:**

In the nascent field of Cultural Criminology—or Criminological Humanities—comic books remain understudies as sources of social commentary. As cultural products of reflection and critique of contemporary realities, comic books offer literary lenses to view social phenomena such as policing. Locating the comics medium at the epicenter of cultural representation of police power, I will argue that American comic books may function as vehicles of discussing police power and police-related issues such as corruption, violence, and militarism. Through visualizations, narrativizations, and contextualizations, American comic books such as John Layman and Rob Guillory's *Chew* (2022) arguably critique and glorify police power. Departing from the political theorist Mark Neocleous's argument that the concept of policing transcends the confines of law enforcement and crime prevention to maintaining and fabricating social order, I will discuss food as a vector of policing and exerting state violence.

**Keywords:** police, comics, power

**Short Bio:**

İbrahim Mertcan Alçinkaya is a postgraduate student at the Doctoral School of Humanities, University of Warsaw. His dissertation project involves the reconceptualization of American comic books as a representation of invisible police power. Alçinkaya's research interests include cultural criminology, cultural justicology, police stories/cop knowledge, police militarization, superhero narratives, speculative fiction, and video games. He currently teaches at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, including the courses "History of Police Militarization in the US" and "American Superhero Comics."

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**Irène Le Roy Ladurie (Université de Lausanne)**

**Keynote:** Wednesday 25/6, 16:30-17:30, Online



**Ivan Lima Gomes (Federal University of Goiás)**

**Panel:** Appetite and the 'F' Word

Tuesday 24/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

**Gluttony, compulsion and the exchanges between the U.S. and Brazilian comics art world:  
a preliminary investigation of Mauricio de Sousa's Magali**

**Abstract:**

In the Latin American comics world, Turma da Mônica [Mônica's Gang] certainly occupies a special place. It is one of the most successful comics series of all times: its more than six decades of publication have covered formats ranging from comic strips to manga, luxury editions in the graphic novel format and, of course, the children of the gang can be found in various items related with Brazilian consumer culture, from diapers to sketchbooks. An important member of Monica's Gang is Magali, whose main characteristic revolves around gluttony. She's always hungry and willing to eat; hunger works as a device that channels all the actions in the narratives that have Magali as the main character. In this communication proposal I will discuss the meanings of hunger in Magali's comics, exploring its relationship with the personal history of Mauricio de Sousa, its creator; the presence of a character with such characteristics in a context in which hunger represented a historical problem for Brazil; and the relationship with cultural transits involving the worlds of comics in Brazil and the United States. In the latter case, I intend to discuss the hypothesis that Magali is an appropriation – maybe close to the main lines of the Anthropophagy defended by the Brazilian modernists, even if in a massive way? – of similar strategies found in comic books originally published by Harvey Comics and very successful in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Little Dot, Richie Rich, and Hot Stuff, the Little Devil.

**Keywords:** food (compulsion), U.S. and Brazilian comics world, Monica's Gang, Harvey Comics

**Short Bio:**

Ivan Lima Gomes is an Adjunct Professor of Latin American History at the Federal University of Goiás. He holds a PhD in Social History (PostGraduate Program of History, Federal Fluminense University, supported by the CNPQ funding research). His research interests concern the historiographic study of cultural practices, with a particular focus on the aesthetic, history, and theory of comics, publishing history, visual culture, and Latin American and Contemporary history.

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**Jason D. DeHart (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)**

**Panel:** The Cultural Journey of Comics

Tuesday 24/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**Spinner Rack Kid: Tracing Development of U.S. Comics through Autoethnography**

**Abstract:**

This paper presentation stems from edited chapter work that the author/presenter has completed for a project focused on the changing role of comics in the United States. From propaganda-based forms in early examples to a more recent three-prong publishing approach, the paper explores the ways that the researcher has navigated affiliation with a medium that has been misunderstood and undervalued by mainstream North American culture. A podcast interview project serves as a reflection point for the analysis, including over 500 interviews with comics fans and creators.

The reputation of comics has been an amorphous and contextual matter. Groensteen (2009) has traced the history of the medium, noting that it has been in search of some sense of legitimacy and reputation as a complex form. In their early inception in North American culture,

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comics acted as propagandistic texts for efforts in World War II. Later on, the movement toward mature and horror-oriented storylines in comics led to a cultural pushback and cancellation movement around the medium, as evidenced in the Comics Code Authority (Nyberg, 1998). This presentation focuses on these historical movements and trends while framing the discussion through the textual journey of the author and podcast participants.

**Keywords:** comics, historical criticism, autoethnography

### **Short Bio:**

Jason D. DeHart earned his PhD in literacy in 2019 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He currently teaches in the P-12 setting as an independent researcher. He is the author of the NCTE book, *Building Critical Literacy and Empathy with Graphic Novels*.

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### **Jayde Perkin (artist)**

**See p. 47-48**

### **Jeanette Roan (California College of the Arts)**

**Panel:** CHEW Comics                      Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **A Taste for “Chew”: On Critical Attachments and Comics**

##### **Abstract:**

In “Hooked: Art and Attachment”, Rita Felski suggests that attachments are ubiquitous but rarely acknowledged in academic life. Although she does not mention comics in her work, what she argues about the existence of affective ties in academia seems true of Comics Studies scholars as well. After all, we study the works we do because these works matter to us. My first peer-reviewed journal article on comics was about John Layman’s and Rob Guillory’s “Chew” as seen through the lens of disgust. It was so much fun to research and write! But what does it say about me, as a scholar, that I chose to devote hours to reading and writing about “Chew”, and to searching out, familiarizing myself with, and to be honest, reveling in, academic theories of disgust? What does it say about “Chew”? There’s no accounting for taste, they say. But that can’t be all there is to it. This paper will use Felski’s “Hooked” as a point of departure to examine the ties that bind critics and scholars to the comics they study and how they study them. It will also consider, from the perspective of aesthetics, what it is that comics do to us, how they solicit our regard and attention. This is therefore a paper with dual objects of analysis, scholars and the comics they study, with the aim of trying to understand how each acts upon the other in a co-constitutive fashion.

**Keywords:** attachment, affect, aesthetics

### **Short Bio:**

Jeanette Roan is an Associate Professor in the History of Art and Visual Culture Program at California College of the Arts and an Associate Editor of *INKS: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*.

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### **Jean-Matthieu Méon (Université de Lorraine)**

**Panel:** Fan Tastes                      Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 2

**“Grand Design: a taste for the minutiae”: Continuity and fan aesthetic in auteurist retellings of Marvel classics**

**Abstract:**

Remakes are a common practice in mainstream superhero comics, where origin stories are continually retold. The three Grand Design series (X-Men, Fantastic Four, Hulk) published by Marvel between 2017 and 2023 fall into this familiar category, but in this case, the publisher turned to alternative creators who seem to be outside its usual perimeter. These three artists (Ed Piskor, Tom Scioli, and Jim Rugg) have idiosyncratic graphic styles, far removed from the contemporary Marvel house style. Yet their three works display a common taste for continuity, their narratives based on a faithful and meticulous adherence to the publisher's global narrative in all its nooks and crannies.

The attachment to this coherent intertextual construction (Friedenthal, Proctor) and its minutiae is a central aspect of mainstream fandom (Pustz) and has roots in some of the earliest practices of “bedephilie” (Gabilliet & Labarre, Schelly). Earlier works by Piskor, Scioli, or Rugg already showed a similar attention to continuity, adopting a mainstream-ready alternative aesthetic. This unexpected choice of alternative creators for Marvel was not so surprising after all. In this part of the comic book field (Beatty & Woo), fan taste for continuity is both an aesthetic and a criterion for professionalisation.

**Keywords:** continuity, Marvel, fan aesthetic

**Short Bio:**

Jean-Matthieu Méon has a PhD in political science and is a senior lecturer in media and communication studies at the University of Lorraine (France). He is a member of the Centre de Recherche sur les Médiations (Crem). He has published extensively on censorship, musical amateur practices, and popular culture (comics, pornography). His work on comics (published in International Journal of Comics Art, Studies in Comics, European Comic Art, Image & Narrative, ImageText, Comicalités, Studies in Book Culture) deals with comics exhibition, the reprinting and patrimonialisation of comics, and the international circulation of the “graphic novel” label.

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**Jenny Gibson + Joe Sutliff Sanders (University of Cambridge)**

**Panel:** Graphic Medicine I

Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Collective Autonomous Activism: Autism and Self-Determination Theory in Sensory: Life on the Spectrum**

**Abstract:**

In June 2021, Bex Ollerton and 41 other autistic creatives produced Sensory: Life on the Spectrum, a high-quality, full-color, crowd-funded “autistic comic anthology.” Over nearly 200 pages, Sensory explores masking, stimming, creativity, productivity, comics, diagnoses, activism, and a host of other aspects of diverse autistic experiences.

Our paper brings together this exceptional comics project with Self-Determination Theory to illuminate both text and theory. SDT emerged in the 1970s as a framework for understanding motivation and fundamental psychological needs. The theory provides a context in which to understand the human needs expressed by the anthology's contributors and how what SDT calls “psychological need satisfaction” plays a role in human flourishing.

However, Sensory also solves a problem with which SDT has long struggled, namely, a tension between autonomy and relatedness, each important to the well-being that SDT describes.

This reading of the text and theory will improve our understanding of both.

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**Keywords:** autism, sensory, self-determination theory

**Short Bios:**

**Prof. Jenny Gibson** is Professor of Neurodiversity and Developmental Psychology at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Jenny leads the Play and Communication Lab research group. She is also a co-director of PEDAL, the centre for research on Play in Education, Development and Learning, and a co-director of CHIA, the Centre for Human-Inspired Artificial Intelligence.

**Joe Sutliff Sanders** is a specialist in children's media in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge. He has published seven books, including studies of Batman, Hergé, and children's comics. His next books are a history of comics in US public libraries and a co-edited collection of new methodologies for comics and the Global South.

**Jiahao Ji (Kingston University, London)**

**Panel:** Graphic Medicine I

Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Exploring the Potential Application of “Good Taste” and “Bad Taste” Visual Metaphors in Narrative Therapy**

**Abstract:**

Considering mental illness through the lens of good and bad taste has wider therapeutic value. Mainstream depictions often use inspirational metaphors to portray a resilience and triumph over adversity narrative. In contrast, "bad taste" metaphors—like the surreal phallic imagery in Justin Green's *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary*—convey the raw, chaotic nature of mental distress and chronic struggles, ambivalence, and unconventional narratives of suffering. By contrasting these approaches, I first highlight the role of metaphor taste in shaping therapeutic narratives.

This paper then employs Reflexive Thematic Analysis based on Primary Metaphor (Grady, 1997) research to analyze visual metaphors co-created in Comics Therapy workshops with the UK mental health charity Mind. The findings categorize these metaphors and examine their role in narrative therapy: in the Externalization phase, "bad taste" metaphors provide an outlet for emotional release, while in the Reconstruction phase, "good taste" metaphors help patients reframe their narratives constructively, fostering empowerment. This study also addresses challenges such as over-idealization and cultural bias in "good taste" metaphors and the visceral intensity of "bad taste" metaphors, underscoring the need for inclusive, adaptable designs. This offers practical insights for designing therapeutic comics and advancing graphic medicine.

**Keywords:** metaphor taste, graphic medicine, narrative therapy

**Short Bio:**

Jiahao Ji is a PhD research student at Kingston University. Her research focuses on enhancing the therapeutic potential of visual metaphors and comics to improve mental health. Currently, she is developing a toolkit and accompanying guidance booklet for creating and recreating metaphorical comics, designed to support daily emotional self-care for individuals with anxiety. This work is grounded in the principles of Art Therapy, Narrative Therapy, and Metaphor Therapy. Her practice-based research emphasizes co-creation. She works closely with art therapists, mental health professionals, and individuals facing mental health challenges. Jiahao collaborates with mental health charities and art institutions to conduct workshops.

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**Joan Ormrod (independent scholar)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics III

Thursday 3/7, 13:45-15:15, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**National and Industrial Tastes and the Transnational Dissemination of 1950s Fotoromanza**

**Abstract:**

This paper maps the global and local roots of romance comics, arguing that the success of a comic can relate to cultural taste, publication practices, and how they manipulate the comics form. The starting point is the UK comic, *Mirabelle* (10/09/1956-1977), which used imagery and stories unlike any other comics in the mid-1950s. The format was typically anthology-based, like comics such as *Marilyn*, *Valentine*, *Roxy*, and *Romeo*, featured articles, advice columns, fashion, and a growing amount of material based on pop music. However, the comic was published in magazine format with sophisticated full colour covers, photo and picture stories, the latter painted in subtle washes and featuring images of Hollywood stars. On examination of

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the advertisements and content, it was clearly a publication for older women. The origin of the materials was identified as an Italian women's magazine, *Grand Hotel* (1946-), which was adapted in French, Spanish, and USA comics. The paper draws on the research of Jan Baetens (2019), Isabelle Antonutti (2013), Ken Quattro (2022), amongst others who have written extensively on *Grand Hotel*, *Nous Deux* (14/05/1947-), and *Enchantment Visalettes* (1949-1950). The paper reflects on why some publications were more successful than others.

**Keywords:** transmedia, assemblages, adaptation

### **Short Bio:**

Joan Ormrod is an independent scholar and editor of Routledge's *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*. Her research revolves around popular culture, fantasy/ science fiction, gender, and comics. These include a monograph, *Wonder Woman, the Female Body and Popular Culture*, an analysis of how changes in the female body were reflected in the ways *Wonder Woman* was portrayed over 80 years. She has also published book chapters on aliens, time travel, fantasy, and the landscape. Her latest research is in the origins of UK romance comics and pop music in the 1950s and '60s.

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**João Senna Teixeira (Universidade Federal de Sergipe)**

See p. 46

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**Joe Sutliff Sanders (University of Cambridge)**

See p.

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**John Miers (Kingston School of Art)**

**Panel:** Tastefulness Across the Spectrum

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 3

**Dickens about: Tastefulness and faithfulness in literary adaptations for children**

### **Abstract:**

Responding to criticism from Frederic Wertham, *Classics Illustrated* managing editor Meyer Kaplan argued that “the taste for good literature [...] must be cultivated in a child slowly,” and that “pictorial renderings [...] which can be easily understood” will whet their appetite “to know more fully those bookish treasures merely suggested” thereby.

In contrast to Kaplan's model of tasteful adaptations validated by directing attention to canonical sources, this paper examines three comics responses to Dickens that employ varying degrees of playfulness regarding authorship and presentation. In *Classical Comics's* *Great Expectations*, Pip retains his role as textual narrator but plays no part in the visual presentation. In *Comic Classics's* version, a collage format presents Pip as author of the imagetext, and frequent eye contact invites a parasocial relationship with the reader. Least tastefully, *Dav Pilkey's* *Dog Man: A Tale of Two Kitties* presents a story fictionally authored by child cartoonists George and Harold, who have realised that classic literature is “actually pretty good,” because it's “deep and stuff”.

I argue that the extent to which these comics cultivate the taste for literature depends not on fealty but on whether, in Kendall Walton's terms, they engage audiences as onlookers or participants in games of make-believe.

**Keywords:** adaptation, Dickens, make-believe

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**Short Bio:**

John Miers is the author of *Visual Metaphor and Drawn Narratives: Embodied Cognition and Expression in Comics* (Palgrave, in press). His comics depicting experiences of living with multiple sclerosis have been recognised in artistic (Broken Frontier, Myriad First Graphic Novel) awards and appeared in scholarly volumes (Graphic Medicine, University of Hawai'i Press) nominated for Eisner and Council of Editors of Learned Journals awards.

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**Jonathan Bass (Rutgers University)**

**Panel:** Fan Tastes

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 2

**Desiring Disappointment: Métal Hurlant, Taste, and the Cultivation of Reading Expertise**

**Abstract:**

My paper will consider the role of disappointment in the experience of reading comics and the deliberate cultivation by some experimental comics work of an aesthetic taste for such experiences. With disappointment, a desired and reasonably expected source of pleasure and satisfaction, often explicitly or implicitly promised (e.g., by the cover or by familiarity with the artist's previous work), is not encountered in the actual experience. This feeling is ordinarily associated with the detection of a failing in the work – a failure by the artist to make or do what was reasonably expected. Accordingly, reports of disappointment in a work are a widely employed vernacular resource for expressing negative critical assessments.

Reports of disappointment can also be used to signal a reader's (good) taste. What other, less discriminating readers might find satisfactory, the "reader of taste" finds disappointing. These readers find satisfaction in their capacity for discrimination, developing what I will call a taste for non-deliberate disappointment. My paper, however, will focus on the cultivation of a taste for deliberate, artistically produced disappointment. Here, disappointment is experienced but does not lead to a negative assessment. Instead, the experience provokes the reader to appreciate that the artist has acted in a disappointing way in order to achieve an aesthetic or intellectual goal.

Working with examples from early issues of *Métal Hurlant*, I will argue that developing a taste for moments of deliberate disappointment depends on learning to see the purpose of their appearance in the work. I want to read – or rather, will briefly sketch a reading of – Moebius's *Arzach* and his longer *Airtight Garage* as a training course, with the final episodes of each serving as tests of the readers' growing expertise, of the skills needed for demonstrating and appreciating in themselves a taste for artful disappointment.

**Keywords:** Moebius, disappointment, readership

**Short Bio:**

Jonathan Bass teaches comics, multimodal composition, and information design in the English Department, Writing Program, and School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

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**Julia Round (Bournemouth University)**

**Julia Round participates in the panel discussion. (p. 3)**

**Short Bio:**

Julia Round is an Associate Professor at Bournemouth University, co-organiser of IGNCC, and edits *Studies in Comics* journal (Intellect) and the *Encapsulations* book series (UP Nebraska).



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She has over 50 publications on horror and comics, including the award-winning book *Gothic for Girls* (2019). She shares her work and can be contacted at [www.juliaround.com](http://www.juliaround.com).

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**Jyotsna Mayadas (EuroSchool Thane - ICSE School)**

**Panel:** Fairytales, Cannibalism and Food

Wednesday 25/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**Kari by Amruta Patil: Disruptive Feminine Appetite in Maximum Mumbai**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines the cannibalistic resurrection of Sanarembi from a sociohistorical perspective, connecting it with contemporary Meitei society, culture, and politics. It also challenges hegemonic and dominant interpretations of women in comics while highlighting pressing problems associated with sexuality, agency, embodiment, and identity.

**Keywords:** multimodal, trauma, sexual appetite

**Short Bio:**

Dr. Jyotsna Mayadas, Principal of EuroSchool Thane, has a rich teaching and administrative experience of over 30 years. She holds double Master's degrees in English and History from Calcutta University, with a Doctorate from Mumbai University, her research area being Personal and Collective Legacy of Trauma in Graphic Novels. She has taught and been in the administrative seat of leading schools. She was the Founder Principal of The Shriram School, Dehradun. Prior to that, she was the Vice Principal of The Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai, and St. Thomas Church School, Kolkata. She received the Derozio Award 2024.

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**K. Vatsal + S. Shardul Vikram + S. Yash Kumar + Samyukthah Ananadhasayanam + V. Sonic (Indian Institute for Technology Jodhpur)**

**Panel:** The Cultural Journey of Comics

Tuesday 24/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**Famine and Famish: Memory of Food and Starvation in Postwar Japanese Manga**

**Abstract:**

In war-torn Japan, food held a profound symbolic meaning, whereby civilians were encouraged to relinquish food, so that the soldiers fighting in the war could have an ample food supply. Memories of starvation in war created a psychological burden, giving way to existential conflicts and moral dilemmas. From young Suzu adapting to food rationing amidst war in *In This Corner of the World* to little Shinju dreaming of eating rice in *Barefoot Gen*, children in war embodied the real pangs of hunger and food deprivation. This paper will explore the nature and representation of food scarcity and starvation in war-ravaged Japan as portrayed in the graphic narratives like the semi-autobiographical manga *Barefoot Gen* (1975) by Keiji Nakazawa and the manga series *In This Corner of the World* (2007-09) by Fumiyo Kōno. The works paint a visual picture of the pain and endurance of children and their resilience to cope with a lack of food amidst war. *Gen* features intense cases of cannibalism and food hallucination, where *Gen's* "food ghosts" depict his pain and psychological turmoil caused by hunger and starvation. *This Corner* paints a picture of the reality of war and its effects on food rationing through the life of Suzu Urano, who takes the readers on a little culinary journey amidst the severity of war in Japan. The paper attempts to study the memory and representation of food and war-induced starvation in graphic narratives with theories drawn from Freudian psychoanalysis and with philosophical interventions from Emmanuel Levinas. **Keywords:** food memory, war-induced starvation, food hallucination, war memory, manga

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**Keywords:** Famine, Japan, Manga

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**Karrie Fransman (Positive Negatives)**

**Roundtable | See p. 4**

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**Kin Wai Chu (Ghent University)**

**Panel:** Adaptations and Intermediality

Thursday 3/7, 13:45-15:15, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**From Disney's Theme Song Let it Go to Let's Eat Cakes: A Study of Graphic Gastronomy and Intermediality**

**Abstract:**

This presentation focuses on a close reading of “Let's eat cakes” (‘cake’ is pronounced as ‘go’ in Cantonese), a comic parody adapted from Disney's Frozen theme song “Let it go”. Created by artist Siuhak in 2014, the story introduces different cakes and dim sums in Hong Kong. The panel backgrounds are film shots of the original Frozen singing scene, but the main character, Elsa, is substituted by a panda character, On On, who mocks Elsa by singing with the rewritten Cantonese lyrics about food. Not only do the panels establish a visual parallel to the movie scenes, but each panel also presents only one line of text at the bottom to intermedially reference the karaoke medium.

This parodic adaptation poses challenges to the media specificities of film, music video, and comics; it also foregrounds the phonological obstacles of parodying English lyrics in Cantonese. The most obvious media challenge is that audio elements can only be represented visually. I propose that “Let's eat ‘cakes’” has enriched the synesthetic experience of the readers through graphic gastronomy and intermedially referencing the karaoke medium to entice readers' mental reconstruction of the original song melody when reading the adapted lyrical text.

**Keywords:** graphic gastronomy, intermediality, comic adaptation

**Short Bio:**

Kin-Wai Chu is an FWO post-doctoral fellow on Comics Studies at Ghent University. Her current project focuses on the historical and transcultural study of cartoons and humour from the mid-nineteenth to the twentieth century. Her completed doctoral research was on nostalgia and transmediality of the twenty-first-century Hong Kong comics at KU Leuven. Her publications can be seen in anthologies and journals on comics, cultural, feminist, and (post)colonial studies.

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**Laurence Grove (University of Glasgow)**

**Laurence Grove will also participate in the panel discussion. (p. 3)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics III

Thursday 3/7, 13:45-15:15, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**'Occasional Essays on Taste': The Fortunes of the Glasgow Looking Glass on its Bicentenary**

**Abstract:**

Early issues of the Glasgow Looking Glass propose two numbers, ‘On Taste’ for a ‘Series of Occasional Essays’. The ‘essays’ are visual and seem to contain jokes lost to two hundred years

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ago, but in so doing attest to the fickle nature of taste. As such, they serve as a microcosm of the reception of the Glasgow Looking Glass itself over the last two centuries, and perhaps also of comics, of which it is arguably the first. This paper will give an overview of the Glasgow Looking Glass's fortunes, from popular underground humour originally circulated in the drinking establishments, to a 1906 reprint naming it as 'The Scotch Punch', to anonymity and then 'rediscovery' with John McShane's 2007 *The Drouth* article and then the 2016 Hunterian Comic Invention exhibition. In conclusion, we will ask whether the vagaries of taste have affected, and continue to affect, comics more than other cultural forms.

**Keywords:** Glasgow Looking Glass, history of comics, 1825

### **Short Bio:**

Laurence Grove is Professor of French and Text/Image Studies and Director of the Stirling Maxwell Centre for the Study of Text/Image Cultures at the University of Glasgow. His research focuses on historical aspects of text/image forms, specifically bande dessinée. Laurence Grove (also known as Billy) is co-editor of *European Comic Art* and has authored (in full or jointly) fourteen books and approximately sixty chapters or articles, these in a variety of publications including *French Studies*, *PMLA*, and *Yale French Studies*.

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### **Layla Rosser + Niru Raghavan (University of Alberta)**

**Panel:** Food, Consumption and Power

Wednesday 25/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**“O Eternal Children, Stand up for Yourselves!”: Self-Advocacy and Human Rights in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Shirai Kaiu's *The Promised Neverland***

### **Abstract:**

Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* and Shirai Kaiu's manga *The Promised Neverland* share the bleak premise of children being systematically farmed for consumption, either as livestock (Kaiu) or organ donors (Ishiguro). In each, the children occupy an effectively subhuman status which fails to trigger the application of universal human rights, per Slavoj Žižek (127). The panoptically designed total institutions of Grace Field and Hailsham appear to provide the children with the accepted rights of the human child, undermining resistance by preventing the understanding that there is anything in their lives to be resisted.

The response to discovering the truth is very different between the texts, however. Critics have noted that “none of [Ishiguro's] [clones] even contemplates escape or revolt” (Pereira and Karunakar 4); meanwhile, the Kaiu's protagonists resist being consumed even unto suicide. We argue that while Kaiu and Ishiguro both explore the effectiveness of quelling resistance in the face of dehumanisation by offering the appearance of the rights of a child and the right to childhood, Kaiu further hypothesises that a successful human rights claim must involve an active rejection of the status of childhood - for instance, by adopting the role of soldier, terrorist, mother or suicide.

**Keywords:** trauma, human rights, comparative literature

### **Short Bio:**

**Layla Rosser** (they/them, she/her) is an MA student in the University of Alberta's English and Film Studies department. Their current research interests are focused on the intersection of graphic narratives and trauma studies, and their MA thesis is on post-nuclear traumas and anxieties in the anime *K*. Layla is also interested in postcolonial studies with a focus on the British Empire, a lingering aftereffect of her history minor. Her current hobbies include yearning wistfully for spare time in which to engage in any hobbies whatsoever.

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**Niru Raghavan** (they/them) is an MA English student at the University of Alberta. Their primary research interests are in manga, postcolonial and ecocritical studies, an outcome of their enduring fascination with colonial histories and power dynamics, and the intersections of the ecological world and the eco-illogical biome we've made. Their MA thesis focuses on these interests in an analysis of pipeline narratives and energetic anxieties in *Fullmetal Alchemist*. The rest of their time is spent herding cats either literally (they have four) or metaphorically (they have ADHD).

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**Leonie Sharrock (University of South Wales)**

**Panel:** Appetite and the 'F' Word                      Tuesday 24/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

**GLUTTONY: A practice-research comic-in-progress**

**Abstract:**

Gluttony (along with lust and greed, three of the seven deadly sins which carry the same motivation) is a desire for more. More flavour, more tastes, more on the tongue, in the belly, in the gut. More beyond sufficiency, beyond satiety, beyond sense. My current comic-in-progress is a tongue-in-cheek exercise in collaging food images as landscape (cliché alert!) to serve as a commentary on gluttony and obesity, but also about unchecked greed on a personal, public, and planetary level. It is a short cautionary tale for our time of an Adam and Eve couple starting out in a garden of Eden of natural foods who, seduced by sweetness then spices and processed foods, embark on a romp through food landscapes of ever-increasing culinary debauchery (among other things) towards a saucy, possibly sticky, end. In this practitioner paper/comic playing with concepts of scale, I am using photo-collages with analogue cut-outs from printed materials composited and manipulated digitally, with hand-drawn characters in a *Ligne Claire* style. Using external and internal landscapes of food as interchangeable visual elements, I want to explore that fine line between the humorous and the offensive, the sweet and the sour, the tasty and the unpalatable.

**Keywords:** practice, collage, analogue media

**Short Bio:**

Leonie Sharrock is a part time Senior Lecturer in Animation at the University of South Wales, UK, and her practice-research is around the use of analogue materials and processes in symbiosis with the digital, through embodied creative practices, thickness and transparency and layers of meaning and making, and the relationship of tactility (and other senses) with story-making in comics, hybrid comics and other media.

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**Lisa Macklem (University of Western Ontario)**

**Panel:** Connections through Food Comics                      Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Food, Family, and Community: Feeding the Body and the Soul**

**Abstract:**

Food plays a central role in everyone's life. It is necessary for life itself, but more importantly, it is often a central touchstone of community and family. In her novel *Something New*, Knisley tells the reader that *Relish* was "a book about food, and all the delightful experiences that come from enjoying and preparing good food to share with those you love. I tried to share my own food-love through the book and encourage the reader to find joy through eating and cooking"

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(SN 97) In traversing what Nancy Pedri calls “the creative interplay between an individual, private self and its representation in the public realm of graphic memoir” (148), Knisley makes the private public through her touchstone of food. Indeed, she begins *Relish* by helping the reader make a sensory memory to accompany the book by providing the recipe for spiced tea that the reader can drink as he/she reads the book. Like Knisley, Mimi Pond bridges her world with the reader’s through food. Pond also bridges the fictional and the factual. Mimi Pond’s graphic novels, *Over Easy* and *The Customer Is Always Wrong*, are fictional memoirs set in a San Francisco diner. The diner is the hub of her memories and the friends who worked and ate there. In *Off Menu*, by Oliver Gerlach and illustrated by Kelsi Jo Silva, a restaurant is also central to the purely fictional tale of a young girl finding agency and her place in the world, surrounded by those she considers family. These three seemingly disparate graphic novels have much in common in exploring how food and its preparation are a cornerstone to family, community, and memory.

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Pond, Mimi. *Over Easy*. Drawn & Quarterly, 2014.

---. *The Customer is Always Wrong*. Drawn & Quarterly, 2017.

**Keywords:** memoir, fiction, community

**Short Bio:**

A PhD Candidate in Law at the University of Western Ontario, Lisa’s dissertation focuses on digital content delivery and how the entertainment industry both helps and hinders cultural production and access. Lisa is an active researcher in popular culture, graphic novels, and fandom studies and is especially interested in where these areas intersect. Lisa was the 2018 winner of the Sabin Award for a paper on Lucy Knisley. She has co-edited two books on Supernatural with Dominick Grace.

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**Maaheen Ahmed (Ghent University)**

**Maaheen Ahmed will also participate in the panel discussion. (p. 3)**

**See also p.**

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**Maggie Gray (Kingston School of Art, Kingston University)**

**Panel:** Underground Tastes                      Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**‘Their bad taste is deliberate’: Beryl & the Perils and the aesthetics and politics of feminist cartoon theatre.**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines why feminist theatre companies of the 1970s-80s turned to comics as a trashy, popular form, and adopted cartooning as a mode through which to explore sexuality and

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the body, and subvert heteronormative constructions of gender. It focuses on UK group Beryl & the Perils, who drew direct influence from the character Beryl the Peril from DC Thomson's The Topper (and later The Dandy), and for whom underground cartoonist Nicola Lane produced posters and programmes. The Perils not only used comics references and iconography in their plays and publicity, but developed a distinctive theatrical style defined by exaggerated costume, physical athleticism, and a mixing of genres which playwright and critic Michelene Wandor (1984; 1986) saw as representative of a new wave of more brash, satirical, queer and punk-inspired feminist performance that used dressing up, acrobatics and crass comedy to disrupt notions of glamour and articulate a feminist humour. Analysing their 'Perilous' approach to acting, scenography, and dramaturgy, and its relationship to cabaret, commedia dell'arte, and the carnivalesque, this paper identifies what this appropriation tells us about both the cultural politics of comics at that time and the aesthetics of cartooning more generally.

**Keywords:** cartooning; performance; feminism

### **Short Bio:**

Maggie Gray is a Senior Lecturer in Critical & Historical Studies (Illustration Animation) at Kingston University. Her research focuses on UK underground and alternative comics, and overlaps between comics, performance and political activism. Recent publications include *Art History for Comics: Past, Present and Potential Futures* (2022) co-authored with Ian Horton, and the accompanying co-edited volume, *Seeing Comics Through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form*. Maggie is a member of the Comics & Performance Network and an associate member of the UAL Comics Research Hub (CoRH!!). With John Miers and Nick White, she co-runs Kingston School of Art Comic Club.

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### **Malgorzata Olsza (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)**

**Panel:** Monstrous and Fantastic Feasts      Wednesday 25/6, 09:00-09:45, Online

#### **Reproductive body (horror) in Beth Hetland's "Tender" (2024)**

##### **Abstract:**

This talk focuses on Beth Hetland's "Tender" (2024) and its representation of the reproductive body and its horror(s). "Tender"'s protagonist Carolanne is happily married and dedicated to her role as a housekeeper. The visual sequences which show her preparing meals for herself and her husband are elaborate and detailed – cooking and feasting represent love and care, but also desire, hunger for something else. Carolanne needs one more thing to make her life complete: to start a family. Unfortunately, her pregnancy ended in miscarriage. Unable to come to terms with the loss of her baby and ideal(ized) life, Carolanne begins to consume herself. First, her nails, hair, peeling skin, and then her actual flesh. Consumption of the self represents self-destruction paired with a dream of reproduction (excess weight mimics pregnancy belly), giving rise to a bodily presence that is both monstrous (Coody and Langsdale 2020) and vulnerable. A close reading of the comics through the lenses of body gothic (Reyes 2014), body horror (Moore 2017, Luhning and Folio 2019, Huckvale 2020), and gynaeohorror (Harrington 2017) is meant to demonstrate how the sequential hand-drawn visual medium presents consumption and reproduction within a tender framework, where pain, care, and flesh intertwine.

**Keywords:** reproductive body, body horror, feminism

### **Short Bio:**

Dr Małgorzata Olsza (she/her) is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Her current research project, "The pregnant body and reproductive rights in American comics and graphic novels (1970-2022)", SONATA Grant



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2022/47/D/HS2/00054 funded by the National Science Center (Narodowe Centrum Nauki), focuses on the study of reproductive rights and freedoms in American graphic narratives. She has published on different aspects of American and Polish comics, among others, in ImageText – Interdisciplinary Comics Studies, Image [&] Narrative, and Studies in Comics. [ORCID 0000-0002-9171-0352]

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**Manuela Di Franco (Ghent University)**

**Panel:** Gender and Genre

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 – Auditorium

**From Sheena to Pantera Bionda: The Male Gaze and the Americanization of Italian Comics**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines the Americanization of gender representation in post-war Italian comics by analyzing the influence of Sheena, Queen of the Jungle (1938) on Pantera Bionda (1948), Italy's first jungle girl comic. As American popular culture spread across Europe, Pantera Bionda adapted Sheena's model of the fearless, independent jungle heroine while navigating Italian moral and cultural constraints.

Focusing on visual representation, narrative structure, and audience reception, this study explores how both comics construct female protagonists within a framework shaped by the male gaze. Sheena, despite her physical strength and autonomy, was designed to appeal to male fantasies of exoticized, untamed femininity. Pantera Bionda adopted similar visual and narrative conventions but faced heavy censorship in Italy, revealing anxieties about female sexuality and the influence of American cultural imports.

By situating Pantera Bionda within the broader discourse of Americanization, censorship, and gender representation, this article sheds light on the ways transnational media flows reinforce, adapt, or challenge dominant gender ideologies.

**Keywords:** male gaze, Italian comics, gender representation

**Short Bio:**

Manuela Di Franco is an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellow at Ghent University, researching Americanisation and gender representation in Italian comics (1934–65). She completed her PhD in Italian Studies at the University of Cambridge with a dissertation on Italian popular press during Fascism. She has taught Italian language and culture at the University of Michigan and held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on the Americanisation of Italian culture, popular media in Fascist Italy, censorship, and gender representation in comics. She also examines 21st-century comics, exploring themes of gender and gender-based violence.

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**Marc Singer (Howard University, Washington DC)**

**Panel:** Food in Superhero Comics

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 1

**"You Don't Want to Give Him an Appetite": Matter-Eater Lad and the Construction of Taste**

**Abstract:**

First published in 1958, the Legion of Super-Heroes has cycled between fan-favorite bestsellers and commercial extinction, but it has never provoked much interest in comics studies. Produced by multiple creators working in collaboration, unable to sustain a consistent creative



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vision or even a stable continuity, the Legion is the antithesis of the type of comic that tends to be discussed in scholarly literature.

Today, the Legion is remembered mostly as a repository of outdated visions of tomorrow and absurd character concepts. The latter is perhaps best exemplified by Matter-Eater Lad, a superhero with the power to eat anything who is generally played for a joke even within the outlandish world of the Legion. If the character serves as a metaphor for superhero comics' voracious incorporation of other genres and styles, it is only by accident.

Yet the Legion's most absurd concepts, Matter-Eater Lad included, have also inspired a bold work of contemporary poetry, a form of artistic production that commands much greater cultural capital and significantly less economic capital than superhero comics. Raymond McDaniel's *Special Powers and Abilities* (2013) is a book of poetry inspired by the Legion of Super-Heroes. McDaniel mines the characters, worlds, and concepts of the Legion to produce a collection of poems about youth, maturity, and nostalgia, repurposing the artifacts of an abandoned comics franchise into a deeper meditation on growth and loss. *Special Powers and Abilities* proves there is no concept so absurd it cannot be made poignant, and no comic so vulgar it cannot be made into art.

**Keywords:** Legion of Super-Heroes, Raymond McDaniel, cultural capital

### **Short Bio:**

Marc Singer is Professor of English at Howard University in Washington, DC. He is the author of *Breaking the Frames: Populism and Prestige in Comics Studies* and *Grant Morrison: Combining the Worlds of Contemporary Comics* and the co-editor, with Nels Pearson, of *Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and Transnational World*.

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### **María Porras Sánchez (Complutense University of Madrid)**

**Panel:** Diasporic Food Graphic Narratives

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

#### **“It tastes like home”: Food, Hope and Belonging in Migrant Graphic Memoirs**

##### **Abstract:**

Food often plays a focal role in autobiographical comics investigating the author's early years, as a repository of happy memories, complementing how “the graphic novel child is often a symbol of interiority and a conduit for nostalgia” (Ahmed 2021, 358). But food can also be a source of connection and experimentation. This becomes evident in the case of migrants, who navigate different cultures and their corresponding gastronomic contexts, constructing “a new semiotics of food” (Greco 2016, 59) by which they negotiate their dual sense of identity. Comics authored by migrants and diasporic cartoonists often create a precarious sense of belonging through food. In graphic memoirs such as Thien Pham's *Family Style* (2023), Malaka Gharib's *I Was Their American Dream* (2019), Laura Gao's *Messy Roots* (2022), Pedro Martin's *Mexikid* (2023), Robin Ha's *Almost American Girl* (2020), and Panchulei and Joan Bolumar's *Menú Degustación* (2023), food shows its prominence through pivotal narrative turning points, detailed descriptions, lush illustrations and even recipes inviting readers to prepare certain dishes. This communication investigates the different approaches to food in connection to individual and cultural memory, as a form of nostalgization of children and childhood (Nodelman 2008, 191-193), as an element of affiliation and/or identification, as a projection of hope and futurity and as an example of sensuality, showing how it becomes both metaphor and metonymy of “home” in the absence of a stable place of belonging.

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**Keywords:** food, migrant narratives, graphic memoir

**Short Bio:**

María Porras Sánchez is a tenured professor at the Department of English Studies, Complutense University of Madrid. Her main research areas are graphic narratives, literary translation, and postcolonial literatures in English, with an interest in themes such as precarity, migration, and otherness. She has coedited with Gerardo Vilches *Precarious Youth in Contemporary Graphic Narratives: Young Lives in Crisis* (Routledge, 2022) and with Esther Sánchez-Pardo *Myth and Environmentalism: Arts of Resilience for a Damaged Planet* (Routledge, 2023). She has translated more than thirty works, including graphic novels, novels, essays, young adult fiction, and illustrated books.

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**Mark Hibbett (University of the Arts London)**

**Panel:** Food and Children's Comics                      Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 1

**Slap-up feeds and class war: lessons learnt from British humor comics**

**Abstract:**

This paper will examine two of the key trends which occurred in British children's humour comics during the 1970s and 1980s - hunger as a motivating narrative drive for child heroes, and the constant presence of class conflict. It will use examples uncovered as part of the research process for 'The Funny Comics Fan Club', a fortnightly podcast which looks at a specific single issue of a British kids' comic in each episode. It will attempt to answer why, despite taking place long after the end of rationing, the search for food and the prospect of a 'slap-up feed' as the ideal reward for success remained so dominant, and explore the many ways that class conflict is displayed, from the subtle use of higher-status characters such as Walter The Softy and Posh Claude as antagonists to the explicit titling of stories such as 'The Snobbs And The Slobbs' or indeed 'Class War'. Finally, it will examine how these themes changed over time and in different comics companies, and

**Keywords:** British, kids, hunger

**Short Bio:**

Mark Hibbett is head of research information systems at University of the Arts London, UK. He has spent thirty years working with research data in arts and science contexts and his current research focuses on transmedia character cohesion, particularly related to superheroes and children's humour comics.

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**Mark McKinney (Miami University, Ohio)**

**Panel:** Comics and taste in France and Belgium across three centuries

Wednesday 25/6, 13:45-14:30, Online

**Art and taste in a 19th-century French comic**

**Abstract:**

In several early French-language comics, or "novels in prints," an opposition between good and bad taste figures in various, usually ironic ways. They include: a sophisticated textual narrator commenting on tasteless and pretentious actions of drawn characters; creating a contrast between the low-brow taste of petit bourgeois characters and the higher tastes of an ambitious authorial double, a painter, in the text; or conversely, mocking the artist's caricatural creations as bad art. One or more related binary oppositions in a classic series also often structure such narratives: Parisian/provincial, French/foreign, urban/rural, sophisticated/simple, etcetera. The stories typically produce a comedy of people out of place, such as a bourgeois in aristocratic spheres, a Parisian in the provinces, a provincial in Paris, or a foreigner in France. The motivations and professions of interlopers are diverse: aspiring artist, foreign emissary, retiree, social climber, student, or tourist. They often produce a carnivalesque, temporary inversion of status, a conversion or role change, after which social values and proper places are usually reestablished, though sometimes with significant lasting changes. This presentation will examine such structures and devices in one early French comic album.

**Keywords:** early French-language comics, 19<sup>th</sup> century, taste

**Short Bio:**

Mark McKinney is Professor of French at Miami University (Ohio). He studies cartooning and comics from the 19th through the 21st centuries, and is currently writing about the relationships between comics and other arts in France. He is the author of *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* (2011), *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* (2013), and *Postcolonialism and Migration in French Comics* (2021). With Alec G. Hargreaves he edited *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* (1997). He also edited *History and Politics in French-Language Comics and Graphic Novels* (2008). With Laurence Grove and Ann Miller, he founded the journal *European Comic Art*.

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**Martha Kuhlman (Bryant University)**

**Panel:** Comics Resistance                      Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**"Consumption, Power, and Horror in *The Sisters Dietl* by Vojtěch Mašek"**

**Abstract:**

Czech author Vojtěch Mašek's tour de force *The Sisters Dietl* (Centrala 2023), a mash-up of different genres and collage, is an ideal text for analyzing cycles of consumption and power. Detective Hoffman investigates who has committed the ghastly crime of slicing off Vera Dietl's face like "a slice of cake," and in the process encounters a variety of related subplots involving

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double agents, a mad scientist, social engineering, and an obscure cult. Throughout the story, motifs of food and consumption bring together these disparate fragments in an intricate dance of “tressage” (Groensteen). The book itself, which resembles an artist’s book more than a conventional graphic novel, invites the reader to consume multiple layers of collaged text, including recipes, articles from the Cold War, and sewing instructions. Juxtaposing the banal with the horrific, I will analyze how Mašek’s work generates a profound sense of unease and asks us to participate in a frenzy of interpretation where there is no definitive answer.

**Keywords:** Vojtěch Mašek, collage

### **Short Bio:**

Martha Kuhlman received her PhD in Comparative Literature from NYU. She edited *The Comics of Chris Ware: Drawing is a Way of Thinking* (2010), published by the University Press of Mississippi, and has contributed chapters to a number of books on graphic novels, including *Drawing From the Classics: Essays on Graphic Adaptations of Literary Works*, *The Cambridge Guide to the Graphic Novel*, and *Approaches to Teaching the Graphic Novel*. She has published articles on Central European authors in *World Literature Today*, *The Comparatist*, and *Modernism/Modernity*, among other journals. She served on the MLA Forum on Comics and Graphic Narratives from 2012-2017, and served on the executive committee of the Comics Studies Society from 2018-2019. Most recently, she published *Comics of the New Europe*, co-edited with José Alaniz, with Leuven University Press in the summer of 2020.

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## **Martin Foret (Centre for Comics Studies of the Institute for Czech Literature, Palacký University in Olomouc)**

**Panel:** Food in Superhero Comics

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 1

### **Porridge as a superweapon. On a case of fusion of a local fairy tale and a superhero scheme**

#### **Abstract:**

The paper would like to offer a close reading of Kateřina Čupová's comics book "Hrnečku vař!" ([Cook, Pot!], 2022, already published in French translation by Glénat as "Gaspard et la Marmite magique", 2024), which playfully, inventively and functionally combines the scheme of (traditional) superhero comics with the theme of a traditional Czech fairy tale – and at the heart of this fusion are food and appetite. This theme is primarily updated for the contemporary (however rural) children's world and effectively combined with elements of the popular comic book genre. Into the everyday life of today's children, the author first introduces a magical object from fairy tales, which soon becomes a "gadget" used for the new superhero Kašoman [Porridge-man], who is searching for a mission. At first, he has to be a „neighborhood superhero“ who solves some rather trivial problems, but soon a villain appears on the horizon who fulfills both fairy tale and super-villain parameters – and therefore a spectacular final and suitably fatal battle. The superhero topoi are thus compactly fused with folkloric elements, and one of the topics covered in this „mash-up“ is the issue of gluttony.

**Keywords:** fairy tale, superhero comics, Czech comics

### **Short Bio:**

Martin Foret, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Media and Cultural Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. As a member of the Centre for Comics Studies of ICL CAS and FA PU in Olomouc, he participated in the preparation of the two-volume *History of Czechoslovak Comics of the 20th Century* (2014) and

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co-wrote the introductory treatise In Panels and Speech Balloons. Chapters from the Theory of Comics (2015). His main research interest is the question of the mediality of comics.

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### **Mel Gibson (Northumbria University)**

**Panel:** Cookery in Comics                      Tuesday 24/6, 16:45-17:30, Online

#### **From ‘Girl Tells You How’ to ‘What’s Cooking?’: Features and comic strips on cooking and food in Girl (Hulton Press, 1951-1964)**

##### **Abstract:**

This paper explores a sample of editions to show the changing emphasis in cookery-related features in relation to girlhood in the weekly periodical Girl (Hulton Press, 1951-1964). ‘Girl tells you how’ ran in 1952 and used photographs to illustrate recipes like how to make scones for a 1/2d! (29 Oct 1952). This was replaced by ‘Mother tells you how’, an authoritatively voiced, wide-ranging half-page comic strip that included cookery alongside instructions on many household management topics. For example, how ‘to make all-purpose pastry’ (21 Jan 1953, p.15) had a final panel containing a list of the ‘rules’ of pastry making. These practical cookery strips were accompanied by ones on entertaining guests, such as how ‘to arrange your birthday party’ which contained no recipes but offered a menu (11 Feb 1953, p. 15). Later, Gas Council sponsorship of ‘What’s Cooking? With Carol and Chris’, making the strip both advertising and cookery instruction, shifted the focus onto young women cooking for themselves and their friends, including making a fruit salad (12 Sept 1959, p.15). Thus, the features move from adult authority to peers and independence. In effect, girlhood and cookery are intertwined here, but the emphasis changes as the 1950s progress.

**Keywords:** recipes, menus, girlhood

##### **Short Bio:**

Dr Mel Gibson, an Associate Professor at Northumbria University, UK, has been researching children, media, and literature for over twenty years and has a particular focus on comics for girls. In addition, she is interested in issues around both girlhood agency and LGBTQIA+ characters in historical and contemporary graphic novels and comics. Mel is additionally engaged with how readers have historically integrated reading comics into their lives and has also recently been exploring professional identity, graphic novels, and comics in libraries and education in Britain.

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### **Meral Şentürk (Yıldız Technical University)**

**Panel:** Comics and Cultural Aesthetics                      Tuesday 24/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

#### **Lines of Legitimacy: Fatherhood, Trauma, and the Cultural Elevation of Comics in Maus**

##### **Abstract:**

This paper examines the dual conflicts at the heart of Art Spiegelman’s Maus, focusing on the complex father-son relationship between Artie and Vladek and the broader tension surrounding comics as a historically marginalized medium. The father-son conflict, rooted in intergenerational trauma, emotional distance, and contrasting worldviews, serves as a metaphor for the dichotomy between "high art" and "low art". Using trauma theory and the cultural legitimization of comics as critical frameworks, this study explores how these personal and artistic struggles are deeply intertwined. Artie’s efforts to elevate comics as a sophisticated and legitimate narrative form parallel his attempts to reconcile with his father, whose values

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reflect traditional storytelling often dismissed by the literary and artistic establishment. Maus not only offers a profound exploration of Holocaust trauma but also challenges entrenched hierarchies between art forms.

**Keywords:** artistic hierarchies, intergenerational trauma, high art vs. low art

### **Short Bio:**

Meral Şentürk holds her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and a master's degree in interactive media design. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in Art and Design and serves as a visiting instructor in the Communication Design Department at Yıldız Technical University. Her work focuses on developing interdisciplinary projects that combine storytelling with innovative approaches to education and design, with a particular emphasis on educational comics, discourse, and narrative studies.

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### **Meriel Dhanowa (University of Glasgow)**

**Panel:** Tastefulness Across the Spectrum

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 3

#### **Jojo's Creative Juices: The Multifaceted Flavours of Jojo's Bizarre Adventure**

##### **Abstract:**

This paper will explore Hirohiko Araki's renowned manga Jojo's Bizarre Adventure as both a landmark in the manga medium and a work of art. Beginning in 1987, the manga is currently ongoing, but is divided into self-contained narratives, each exploring a different genre, while maintaining a fantastical horror element. As a result, Jojo has effectively developed an identity of its own and has been described as 'a living breathing organism' that is constantly adapting and evolving.

The shift between genres as well as form can also reflect the changing tastes in visual trends. This can be perceived through the artwork of the early parts, reflecting character designs present in many manga of the 1980s, which were inspired by action films. For later instalments, Araki's style would further evolve to emulate high fashion, which is apparent through both the characters' costumes and iconic poses. Araki employs many cultural influences, with references to fashion, music, and art. Jojo has even had a profound impact in these media, such as collaborations with Gucci and the Louvre. Therefore, this paper will argue that Jojo's Bizarre Adventure's ability to fuse diverse forms of the arts has enabled it to embrace a multitude of tastes.

**Keywords:** manga, art, culture

##### **Short Bio:**

Meriel Dhanowa is a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow. She has presented papers at the IGNCC and the IGNCC and IBDS joint conferences. She completed an MPhil in Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge. She recently completed a chapter for a Horror Comics collection, which is due for publication by University of Wales Press in May 2025. Her research interests include manga, Bande Dessinée, comics, graphic novels, animation, Children's Literature, and Film Studies.

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### **Merieme Mesfioui (SPIN OFF)**

**Roundtable | See p. 2-3**



**Michael Connerty** (Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin)

**Panel:** Food and Children's Comics

Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD - 1

**Sweet Tooth: Confectionery and Comic Strips in the 1970s**

**Abstract:**

This paper considers the symbiotic relationship between comics and confectionery in the UK during the 1970s, by focusing on a number of strips - primarily Trevor Metcalfe's 'Sweet Tooth' series - which appeared in Whizzer and Chips comic between 1973 and 1978. Metcalfe's series unproblematically celebrates the compulsive and repetitive consumption of confectionery, its highly formulaic structure, reliably encountered by readers on the same day each week, forging an interpenetration of two key areas of children's culture. The comics served to initiate young readers into a world of commodities and consumerism that anticipates the interpenetrating roles that visual media, advertising, and popular entertainment would play throughout their lives.

Common approaches to graphic design, including the integration of cartoon characters as components of corporate branding, suggest specific ways of appealing to young consumers via visual style, typography, and humour. Well-known manufacturers, including Cadbury's, Rowntrees, and particularly Trebor, promoted their products in advertisements styled as comic strips, which were often indistinguishable from the regular strip series with which they shared the pages. Emphasising the relation to other cheap commodities, including joke shop novelties, frisbees, and yoyos, which also appeared in stories, advertisements, and as prizes in competitions, comics' function as a mainstay of popular children's culture was consolidated through cross-promotion and iconographic intertextuality. These renderings of the allure of lollipops and ice cream exist side by side with strips that mock excessive consumption, valorising normative standards of body shape in series like 'The Slimms' and 'Fat Boy'. This paper further unpacks these associations in terms of the characterization of comics as both juvenile and unhealthy, and the reduction of the medium to the ephemeral status of "rubbish".

**Keywords:** comics, confectionary, intertextuality

**Short Bio:**

Michael Connerty teaches film history and visual culture at the National Film School/IADT in Dublin. He has published work on animation history and Victorian/Edwardian comics. His monograph *The Comic Strip Art of Jack B. Yeats* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2021.

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**Michael Dooley** (ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena)

**Panel:** Changing Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 15:45-16:30, Online

**Superhero Comics and Bad Taste: The Secret Identities of Schlock, Camp, Kitsch, and Funk**

**Abstract:**

Bad taste can be found in many places, including art, literature, music, and comics, and is generally disdained by the cultural elite. And bad taste it comes in many forms, including schlock, camp, kitsch, and funk. The general public often dismisses the entire comics medium as mere schlock, particularly pre-Maus. So, okay: what about superhero comics? Are they schlock? When are they camp? Can they be kitsch? And what about funk? Actually, the genre is so diverse that examples can be found in all these categories, and are perhaps not as bad as



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society's taste-arbiters would have us believe. Join comics historian Michael Dooley as he travels from 1938 to 1970 to explore these four varieties of bad taste and investigate the relationships between Mort Weisinger and movie director Roger Corman; between Bob Kane/Bill Finger and poet/filmmaker Jean Cocteau; between Jim Steranko and art critic Clement Greenberg; and between Gilbert Shelton and jazz drummer Art Blakey.

**Keywords:** comics, superhero, bad taste

### **Short Bio:**

Michael Dooley is a designer, author, and historian who's been writing comics features, essays, and reviews for nearly 40 years. He became a contributing editor at the design magazine *Print* in 1990 and a professor at Pasadena's Art Center College in 2008, where he created the course "Design History of Comics and Animation". In 2005-2006, he participated in programming events for the Hammer Museum's controversial "Masters of American Comics" exhibition. In 2020, he was a Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards judge. He is editor of the book "The Education of a Comics Artist" and lectures on comics at conferences and universities.

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### **Mihaela Precup (University of Bucharest)**

**Panel:** Food Comics, Nostalgia and Community      Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

#### **Food, Nostalgia, and Conviviality in Mimi Pond's *Over Easy***

### **Abstract:**

Mimi Pond's fictionalized memoir *Over Easy* (2014) documents life as a worker in a café in Oakland, California, in the 1970s. The café is represented as a safe but exciting space where food produces human connections, and where the simplicity and excellence of the food mirror, in the author's memory, the nature of the relationships created in the sheltered space of the restaurant. Nostalgia appears to be partly responsible for the lack of a substantial social critique or significant references to life outside the restaurant, as much of the narrative drive seems to be partly motivated by the need to feel "a part of a collective cultural past" (Lizardi 2015, 3). I am interested in exploring the apparent narrative bias from *Over Easy* that seems to stem from Pond's nostalgia for the café as a lost space of conviviality, the pleasure of becoming one of the initiated few with access to the backstage area of a restaurant, and the delight in observing the human spectacle of a bohemian crowd.

**Keywords:** food, nostalgia, memory

### **Short Bio:**

Mihaela Precup is Associate Professor in the American Studies Program at the University of Bucharest, where she teaches American visual and popular culture, contemporary American literature, and comics studies. Her work explores the graphic representation of violence, post-traumatic memory, autobiography, and subversive femininity. She has co-edited three special issues of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (on War and Conflict and Sexual Violence; with Rebecca Scherr). She is the author of *The Graphic Lives of Fathers: Memory, Representation, and Fatherhood in Autobiographical Comics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Her latest publication is "Of Monsters and Women: Gender, sexual violence and the Logic of Familiarity in Drawing Power." *Studies in Comics*, Vol. 15, Issue 1-2: Comics, Conscience and Gender, Jan. 2025, pp. 55-72 [https://doi.org/10.1386/stic\\_00118\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/stic_00118_1).

### **Mike Classon Frangos (Linnaeus University)**

**Panel:** Eco-Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Petro-comics, Graphic Narrative and the Distaste for Oil**

**Abstract:**

As oil's devastating impact on the planet has become a widespread target for climate activism and education, contemporary comics and graphic novels have tended to treat fossil fuels with increasing suspicion. A significant number of activist comics and graphic novels about oil have not only raised awareness about this issue, but also attempted to use the comics medium to respond to the seeming intractability of fossil fuels and extractivist ideologies. This paper examines two recent graphic memoirs that represent what Amitav Ghosh once referred to as the "oil encounter," in which the meeting between extractive industries and Indigenous groups sets the stage for resource extraction on a global scale. With examples from Canada and Nigeria, I examine petro-comics as a form for exploring the oil encounter at the level of genre and narrative through the examples of graphic memoir and Bildungsroman. First, I give a reading of Kate Beaton's *Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands* (2022), a memoir of the author's experiences working in the Alberta tar sands, her increasing disgust with the oil industry and her awareness of Indigenous and climate activism, especially the work of Fort McKay First Nation activist and elder Celina Harpe. Then, I turn to a graphic novel by the Nigerian-German writer Sylvia Ofili, *German Calendar No December* (2018). Ofili's work takes the oil-producing Niger Delta region as a point of departure for a coming-of-age narrative of global migration. What emerges in each graphic narrative, I argue, is a distaste for oil as a "dirty" resource threatening to limit the personal development of the characters through the seemingly unstoppable extraction and displacement of resources and populations.

**Keywords:** oil, memoir, distaste

**Short Bio:**

Mike Classon Frangos (he/him) is an Associate Professor in English literature at Linnaeus University, Sweden, and an affiliated researcher at the Linnaeus University Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies. He has published articles and book chapters on English and Swedish-language comics and graphic novels, comics and ecology, queer and feminist comics, postcolonial and migration literatures, and digital humanities.

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**Natasa Thoudam (IIT Jodhpur)**

**Panel:** Fairytales, Cannibalism and Food

Wednesday 25/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**Reborn to Be Eaten: The Cannibalistic Resurrection of Sanarembi**

**Abstract:**

Marc Kipniss argues that "when Superman dies, in 1992, he dies a decisive and long overdue death to the superheroic, monumental formation of modernity. As will be seen, this event itself negotiates a traumatic transition from modernism to postmodernism, and paves the way for Superman's rebirth in 1993 to the subheroic deformations and radical indeterminacy of fin-de-millennium America. Ultimately, the story of Superman's death (and life) is not so much about Superman's life (or death); it is about popular transformations in the age of postmodern cultural production." Samantha Langsdale writes about Jean Grey's reincarnation thus: FEW COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS HAVE UNDERGONE REINCARNATION (literally) as many times as Jean Grey/Phoenix from Marvel's X-Men series. Beginning as the demure Marvel Girl, Jean Grey transforms throughout the comics into various manifestations of the Phoenix, each one more powerful and volatile than the last. This makes her argue that "the character of Jean Grey/Phoenix may be interpreted in ways that critique hegemonic definitions of female sexuality

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as monstrous and that constructively challenge certain assumptions about agency, identity, and embodiment.”

Subadani Kshetrimayum’s “Sanarembi amushung Cheishra” in her graphic narrative, *Illustrated Folk Tales Of Manipur*, adapts the Meitei folktale of Sanarembi and Cheishra. This stepmother folktale intricately inserts cannibalistic practices into a reincarnation story. If Sanarembi is reborn twice as a bird and a citron, then she is also almost consumed as food by her king husband and the palace gardener.

This Meitei folktale has resonances of Baba Yaga’s Assistant based on the Russian fairy tale/folktale of Baba Yaga, who is not only reborn but also cannibalistic.

This paper examines the cannibalistic resurrection of Sanarembi from a sociohistorical perspective, connecting it with contemporary Meitei society, culture, and politics. It also challenges hegemonic and dominant interpretations of women in comics while highlighting pressing problems associated with sexuality, agency, embodiment, and identity. "

**Keywords:** Subadani Kshetrimayum’s “Sanarembi amushung Cheishra” in *Illustrated Folk Tales Of Manipur*, rebirth, cannibalism

**Short Bio:**

Natasa Thoudam is an Assistant Professor in English at the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur. She is also affiliated with the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, SOAS University of London (honorary appointment: 2024–26) as a post-doctoral research associate. She is the current Chair of the Awards Committee (2024–25) of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO), a formal alliance of independent Digital Humanities (DH) organizations around the world. She is currently working on two book projects: one theorizes on the concept of writing and its relation to various religious movements in India’s Northeast, while the other is on the many origins, variations, and versions of comics cultures in the world.

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**Nazneen Hoque (University of Exeter)**

**Panel:** Food, Consumption and Power

Wednesday 25/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

**The Bengal Holocaust: A Graphic Reimagining of "Chhiattor-er Monnontor" or The Great Bengal Famine of 1770**

**Abstract:**

This paper explores the historical representation of the Great Bengal Famine of 1770, a catastrophe that led to the death of millions in Bengal, as depicted in the graphic tale “Drawing Disaster: A Lost Sketchbook” by artists Debkumar Mitra and Argha Manna. Featured in the anthology *Famine Tales from India and Britain* by Professors Ayesha Mukherjee and Amlan Dasgupta, the narrative intertwines the historical account of William Wilson Hunter’s *Annals of Rural Bengal* (1868) with a metafictional dialogue between Hunter and Debdulal Mitra, a fictionalized character based on the painter Debkumar Mitra. While the famine is traditionally attributed to environmental factors like poor monsoon, the paper argues that it was a result of a complex interplay of socio-political and colonial forces. The East India Company’s policies including systemic exploitation, forced taxation, and the destruction of Bengal’s agrarian and industrial systems, exacerbated the crisis. Additionally, colonial racism, socio-economic disparities, and the role of local elites, such as Zamindars and Nawabs, were critical factors in shaping the famine. This analysis sheds light on the famine as not just a natural disaster, but a man-made catastrophe, with long-lasting effects on Bengal’s landscape and society.

**Keywords:** famine, disaster by design, colonialism

**Short Bio:**

Nazneen Hoque is currently a Commonwealth PhD Split-Site Scholar at the University of Exeter (2024-2025). She is originally registered as a PhD scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University, India (reg. 2019-2020). Her doctoral research focuses on the representation of transnational refugee movements in graphic novels, with particular attention to the Syrian refugee crisis and the migration of Latin American refugees over the last two decades of the twenty-first century. Nazneen previously completed her MPhil (2017-2019) in the Department of English at Jadavpur University, where her dissertation explored Shaun Tan's graphic narratives through the lens of Diaspora Studies, especially examining themes of home and displacement.

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**Neha Negi**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics II                      Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Transforming Graphic Narratives: The Artistic Evolution in Bhimayana**

**Abstract:**

Graphic narratives around the world follow the foundation shaped by the Eurocentric modes of knowledge production and representation, adopting a template that is shaped by the Western-influenced spatial organization, sequential transitions, and panel structures. *Bhimayana: The Experiences of Untouchability* is a graphic novel that subverts the dominance of mainstream art forms and uses the indigenous art form of India, the Pardhan Gond art, to narrate Dr B.R. Ambedkar's experiences of caste-based discrimination and resistance. Gond art is characterised by mythical and folkloric motifs and the intricate floral and faunal designs. *Bhimayana* extensively employs these as symbolic elements that enhance the visual iconography of the novel and the ecology of Pardhan Gond art to create a new graphic idiom that facilitates a powerful narrative of Dalit history in India. This paper aims to explore how *Bhimayana* uses Gond art to break the traditional panelling norms, how this Indigenous visual grammar redefines the relationship between text and image, and expands the iconography of graphic narratives. Further, this paper will compare *Bhimayana*'s organic, motif-driven storytelling with the sequential storytelling, demonstrating how it challenges Western-dominated graphic tradition and exemplifies the use of subaltern art form as artistic resistance and evolution.

**Keywords:** graphic novel, *Bhimayana*, Gond art, art form, artistic evolution

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**Nick Stember (independent researcher)**

**Panel:** Transcultural Tastes                      Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 2

**Art Book Comics, Comic Book Art, and the Idea of the Superflat in Contemporary Chinese Comics**

**Abstract:**

Over the last two decades, the granting of the Golden Dragon Awards (Jin Long Jiang) has developed into the premier awards ceremony for graphic novels, comic strips, and animation in the People's Republic of China. Somewhat uniquely, beginning as early as the second year of the contest, a separate award was established for 'Best Illustration'. Since then, this category has only grown in importance, with a number of so-called 'art books' being shortlisted for the prize every year. In this paper, I explore this flourishing field of cultural production and its impact on Chinese comic book art through the theoretical lens of the superflat, a conceptual approach

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that is perhaps most closely associated with the postmodern aesthetics of Japanese manga and anime. Attempting to look beyond the longstanding geopolitical tensions between Japan and China, I contend that it is only by contrasting the ‘high’ artistic mastery of art book comics with the ‘low’ mimetic genius of comic book art that we can begin to come to terms with the enduring appeal (and lasting stigma) of comics and cartoons as a form of cultural consumption in East Asia today.

**Keywords:** cross cultural flows, mimesis, superflat aesthetics

**Short Bio:**

Nick Stember is a media historian and translator of Chinese literature and popular culture who defended his PhD dissertation on “pulp science” in early Reform-era (1976-1986) comic books at the University of Cambridge. More recently, he worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Museum of Denmark, where he studied visual depictions of Daoist self-cultivation in comics, animations, and video games. He is currently researching the remediation of the past through historical fiction.

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**Nicoletta Mandolini** (CECS - Universidade do Minho)

See p. 32

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**Niru Raghavan** (University of Alberta)

See p. 64

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**Nishta Dev** (Sophia College for Women – Empowered Autonomous)

See p. 34-35

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**Noelia Ibarra-Ruis** (Universitat de València)

See p. 14

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**Partha Bhattacharjee** (SRM University Andhra Pradesh)

See p. 22

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**Paul Aleixo** (Sheffield Hallam University, U.K.)

**Panel:** Changing Tastes                      Tuesday 24/6, 15:45-16:30, Online

**How Readers Navigate Comic Book Pages: Evidence from Eye Movements and the role of aesthetic content**

**Abstract:**

While a z-path is intrinsically part of how typically formatted text is read, it is less clear that this same approach is used when reading comics. Previous evidence for the z-path is limited to self-reported preferences from readers. The main aim of this paper was to confirm that readers do use a z-path when navigating a comic book page by using eye-tracking technology. We

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examined the eye-movement behaviour of 90 participants when reading a textless page from the comic Watchmen. Participants were a mix of novice and expert comic book readers. Results indicated that the z-path was an accurate prototypical descriptor of how participants navigated the comic book pages, but that there was a great deal of variation from that prototype. In particular, it was shown that readers commonly demonstrated regressive saccades, where fixations moved back to the previous panel rather than to the next panel in the z-path order. These findings provide a strong first foundation for future work in this area that looks at reading behaviour in comic book pages. This paper will also discuss the implications for page design and the aesthetic nature of comic book page content in guiding eye movements and panel navigation.

**Keywords:** eye-movement, eye-tracking technology, Watchmen

### **Short Bio:**

Since gaining his Doctoral Degree (Personality and Moral Reasoning in Young Offenders) in 1993, Paul Aleixo has worked for several Universities, including 14 years spent at De Montfort University in Leicester, where he taught a variety of modules, including Psychology & Education and Biopsychology. He joined Sheffield Hallam University in 2013. His main interests are focused on applying Psychology to Educational settings. He is currently particularly interested in the use of comic books as an instructional tool in educational settings. To this end, he has written a Biopsychology textbook in Comic book format aimed at Undergraduate students.

### **Paul M. Malone (University of Waterloo)**

**Panel:** The Narrative Journey of Food                      Wednesday 25/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

#### **Apitz and Kunkel's Karl: A German Historical Comic between Adventure, Satire – and Viniculture**

##### **Abstract:**

Michael Apitz, Eberhard Kunkel and Patrick Kunkel's Karl der Spätlesereiter took Goscinny and Uderzo's Astérix as its model. Karl, however, is set in Germany's Rhine valley vineyards during the late 1700s. The hero Karl, a poor vintner's son, woos Maria, whose landowner father favours Karl's well-born rival Ferdinand. Chosen to ride to the prince-bishop for permission to begin harvesting, Karl is waylaid and imprisoned by Ferdinand's henchmen to discredit him. When he escapes weeks later, the crop has largely rotted on the vine. The remaining grapes yield a single cask of wine, but of such high quality that Karl has inadvertently discovered the Spätlese, or late harvest dessert wine. Ferdinand's machinations are exposed, and Karl is henceforth known as "the late harvest rider."

Over twelve albums, Karl thwarted Ferdinand's schemes, despite Ferdinand's frequent alliances with the villainous French, whether under Robespierre or Napoleon. Karl was aided by his mentor Pater Anselm, his obtuse friend Oskar, and his dog Grandpatte, a Grand Gascon Blue hound who represents the positive side of French culture—that is, good wine and cordon bleu cuisine, which Grandpatte obsessively seeks out.

While the plots offered wordplay, caricatures of historical and modern celebrities, oenological trivia, and mild political satire, at their core they were focused on the lore and secrets of winemaking and the competition to excel gastronomically. Despite its unusually conservative political perspective and narrow regional appeal—which suited the albums' purpose as tourist souvenirs—Karl's longevity on the tiny German market makes it one of Germany's most successful comic series, with a legacy of Karl-themed local "culinary evenings" that continues over twenty years after the final album appeared."



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**Keywords:** Germany, viniculture, gastronomy

**Short Bio:**

Graphic novels and comics, film, theatre, cinematic adaptations of literature, and translation are among Professor Malone's interests, as well as the works of Franz Kafka and Ödön von Horváth. He has also supervised graduate work on Goethe, Brecht, rap music, modern German literature and film. He has recently published on superheroes in German-language comics and comic strips in Viennese newspapers between the World Wars.

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**Paul Williams (University of Exeter)**

**Panel:** Underground Tastes                      Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**DRAWING AND EDITING IN THE LAND OF BAD TASTE: SHARY FLENNIKEN AT THE NATIONAL LAMPOON**

**Abstract: TITLE**

This paper examines the contributions of underground comix creator Shary Flenniken to the National Lampoon (1970-1998), the US humour magazine that was at turns shocking, satirical, and puerile, specialising in sick humour and taboo subject matter. Indeed, the title of Ellin Stein's 2013 group biography of the Lampoon comes from one of the magazine's spinoff records: That's Not Funny, That's Sick.

Flenniken, part of the Air Pirates underground comix collective in the early 1970s, was first published in the November 1972 issue of the Lampoon. She was a regular contributor for many years, usually drawing comics featuring her well-known characters Trots and Bonnie, and she was an editor at the magazine from August 1979 to January 1981. Based on interviews I have conducted with Flenniken, I will examine the work she performed as an editor, which included recommending cartoonists for the "Funny Pages" comics section and designing features such as a parody of a women's humor magazine. I will also discuss the comics that Flenniken drew for the Lampoon, which were formally innovative and reflected on the relations of production at the magazine.

**Keywords:** Shary Flenniken, National Lampoon, editing

**Short Bio:**

Dr Paul Williams is Associate Professor of Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture at the University of Exeter in the UK. He has written four books: *The US Graphic Novel* (2022), *Dreaming the Graphic Novel* (2020), *Paul Gilroy* (2012), and *Race, Ethnicity and Nuclear War* (2011). He also co-edited the collection *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts* (2010). He has a new book on minicomics and photocopying coming out later in 2025.

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**Pavel Korinek (Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences)**

**Panel:** Adaptations and Intermediality                      Thursday 3/7, 13:45-15:15, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**A Spectacle of Fasting: Three Comics Adaptations of A Hunger Artist**

**Abstract:**

A short story called "A Hunger Artist" (Ein Hungerkünstler) by Franz Kafka represents one of his more frequently adapted prose pieces. The main motive of this story is publicly exhibited starvation (starvation as a circus-like spectacle), and has been read in various, sometimes even directly contradictory ways. A comparative analysis of three comics versions of this story - by



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David Zane Meirowitz and Robert Crumb, by Peter Kuper and by Nishioka Kyodai - offers an opportunity to identify the comic creators' different strategies of adaptation (adaptation as selection, adaptation as interpretive actualization and recontextualization), but it also offers a fitting case study for more general considerations of practice of comic book adaptation of complex literary, in Eco's words "open" pretexts.

**Keywords:** Franz Kafka, fasting as spectacle, strategies of adaptation

### **Short Bio:**

Pavel Kořínek is a Prague-based comics theorist, historian, and journalist, working at the Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences, and a founding member of the Centre for the Study of Comics ICL / UP and the Czech Academy of Comics. As a researcher, he has written and co-written a number of monographs on Czech comics history and theory (f.e. History of Czechoslovak Comics of the 20th Century, 2014; In Panels and Speech Balloons: Chapters from the Theory of Comics, 2015; Punťa: The Forgotten Hero of Czech Comics /1934–1942/, 2018).

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### **Petros Tsakaliadis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)**

**Panel:** Cultural Traditions and Canons      Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 - Gogotte

#### **Grasping for a future Canon of comic books and manga**

### **Abstract:**

The literary critic Harold Bloom sparked debate and controversy 30 years ago with the publication of *The Western Canon*, a personally curated list of timeless, essential works of Western literature. Similar attempts at establishing a list of classic films have been influential in the world of cinema, with the Criterion Collection and established magazines like *Les Cahiers du Cinema* considering the distinction of certain works as a serious endeavor for the future health of the industry. In 2011, the French comic book theorist Harry Morgan dared to pose the same question for the medium of comic books. Can there even be such a thing as a canon of comic books and manga? Nowadays, best-of lists are very popular among comic book fans, but they are rarely given official sanction by art critics or academic institutions. 'My taste is better than yours' is what is usually implied in the passionate taste wars that have been going on since the medium of comic books first attained a certain prestige and mass popularity in conditions of digital globality. Is that crudely elitist sentiment a perfectly human attempt to distinguish worthy titles or just the insecure proclamations of fans? This presentation is going to explore these and other questions by delving deep into contemporary comic book culture, with the future of the industry in mind.

**Keywords:** Western Canon, comic books, manga

### **Short Bio:**

Petros Tsakaliadis holds a PhD in the Department of French Language and Literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, where he has worked as a lecturer. His current research focuses on the representations of sexuality and violence as seen in the francophone bandes dessinées, contextualizing them in comparison to Japanese manga and Superhero comics. His other research interests include: history, literature, cinema, philosophy, video games, and intercultural comparisons. He completed and presented his PhD thesis with the title «The representations of violence and sexuality in francophone comics: A comparative approach (1970-2020)» in 2022.

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## **Plenty Collective**

**Shambhavi Singh, Natalia “Nam-Ke” Kekkonen, Warda Ahmed, Maryam Abuzaid-Ryu and  
Elvira “Ennekeli” Kim**

**Roundtable | See p. 4**

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**Priyanka Das** (Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)

**See p. 21**

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**Rebecca Sullivan** (University of Calgary)

**See p. 24**

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**Richard Harrington** (Moore College of Art and Design)

**See p. 36**

**Robert Sapp (College of Charleston)**

**Panel:** Recounting the Past through Food      Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**How do you stomach it? Hospitality and Survivor Testimony of the Algerian War in Algériennes 1954-1962 (2018)**

**Abstract:**

In *Algériennes 1954-1962*, written by Swann Meralli and illustrated by Zac Deloupy, the protagonist sets out to uncover the untold stories of the women who took part in the Algerian War. Food sets the narrative in motion when, during an awkward dinner exchange with her father, she discovers his reluctance to talk about his participation in the war. Be it homemade delicacies, family dinner, or a table in an otherwise empty café, food serves as the locus of testimony in *Algériennes*. Through a close reading of graphic gastronomy and how food facilitates bearing witness to the past, this paper considers the intersection of hospitality and testimony, two important concepts for Jacques Derrida, in the context of remembering the Algerian War. Taking Derrida's idea further, we consider the gendered practice of preparing and offering food since the stories being told are those of women who defy gender norms to take direct part in warfare. *Algériennes* voices the concerns of multiple, at times antagonist, perspectives from the Algerian War, thus allowing the graphic novel to serve as a dialectic that foregrounds the plurality of experience while anchoring it in the common need for food.

**Keywords:** food, testimony, hospitality, the Algerian War

**Short Bio:**

Robert Sapp is an Associate Professor in the Department of French, Francophone, and Italian Studies at the College of Charleston, specializing in literature from the Francophone Caribbean. His current research focuses on the expression of the past in contemporary Haitian novels and ghosts in French-language graphic novels. His work appears in *French Review*, *The Journal of Haitian Studies*, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, and other journals. He currently has an article forthcoming in a special edition of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* entitled "Between Life and Death: Ghosts at the Border in *Les Ombres* by Zabou Di Mambé and Hippolyte."

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**Roger Sabin (University of the Arts London: Central Saint Martins College)**

**Roger Sabin participates in the panel discussion. (p. 3)**

**The Sabin Award will be awarded on Thursday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July at 15:30 (Hoek38 – Auditorium)**

**Short bio:**

Prof. Roger Sabin is Professor of Popular Culture, and as well being a researcher, supervises PhD students. He also teaches across the BA and MA Culture, Criticism and Curation, and is based in the Culture and Enterprise Programme.

His writing includes books, essays and journalism (please see Research Profile), with other work involving broadcasting, consulting and curating for The Guardian, BBC and Tate Gallery. He serves on the boards of academic journals, and runs book lists for Palgrave Macmillan. His interests and specialisms include comics studies, cultural studies, subcultural studies, cultural history and comedy studies, and he is currently researching the 19th century entertainment business.

**Ronald Stewart (Daito Bunka University)**

**Panel:** Food Consumption in Manga

Monday 30/6, 10:45-12:15, CBBD – 2

**“Buu” & “Puu”: Towards a History of Flatulence in Manga—Expression and Comic Effect**

**Abstract:**

For readers of manga, it is quite clear that the Japanese revel in humour that can seem “earthier” than that of Anglophone countries. This can be seen in the abundance of scatological humour, for example, in manga and popular picture books aimed at children, and even in more serious manga aimed at more mature readers, such as the running gag of miso paste mistaken for faeces in the hit manga *Golden Kamuy*. Likewise, flatulence-related humour is a common broad spectrum of manga. Famously, in the early episodes of the 1980s superhero *Kinnikuman*, he was able to fly by repeatedly breaking wind. How flatulence is deployed as a humorous device and how it is depicted has changed over time. It has been used for political satire, as juvenile breaking of social conventions, and even as explorations of health problems. Its depiction ranges from onomatopoeia, like “buu” & “puu,” small puffs of clouds or billowing smoke shapes, yellow when colour is used, fingers and thumbs on noses, and sour facial expressions, or sweat and grimaces when held in. This paper will attempt to briefly sketch out the history of these depictions of flatulence in manga and how they have been deployed at different times.

**Keywords:** manga, flatulence, taste

**Short Bio:**

Ronald is a Professor at Daito Bunka University, Japan. A member of the Japan Society for the Study of Cartoons and Comics since 2003, he has published widely on political cartoons and manga history in both English and Japanese. Amongst Ronald’s most recent publications are *Manga: a critical guide* (Bloomsbury, 2023) coauthored with CJ Suzuki, and “Newspaper Comic Strips: Laughs in Four Panels,” in J. Berndt (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Manga and Anime* (2024).

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**S. Shardul Vikram (Indian Institute for Technology Jodhpur)**

See p. 61

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**S. Yash Kumar (Indian Institute for Technology Jodhpur)**

See p. 61

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**Samyukthah Ananadhasayanam (Indian Institute for Technology Jodhpur)**

See p. 61

**Shiamin Kwa (Bryn Mawr College)**

**Panel:** Diasporic Food Graphic Narratives

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 -  
Auditoriumra

**Hand to Mouth: Tastes Past and Present in Asian-American Immigrant Graphic Narratives**

**Abstract:**

Julia Kristeva described food loathing as the most “elementary and archaic form of abjection.” The physical revulsion and gagging that she describes when eyes see or lips touch the skin on the surface of warmed milk brings together questions of surface, sight, and taste in relation to the sensorial. Our relation to food, whether input or output, foregrounds the role that the material plays in interiors and exteriors, concrete and abstract, thus recalibrating the emphasis from the phenomenological towards the ontological. Food narratives are therefore particularly effective at detailing the nuances of the immigrant experience, which is often marked by the individual’s separation from a physical environment as well as from less tangible references. This paper addresses food substitutions in graphic narratives drawn from the Asian diaspora, attending to the ways that disgust, subsistence, and survival are deployed in the graphic narrative form. Applying Kristeva’s theory of the abject to the surface of the comics page, I consider how the graphic narrative form, in comics like *Family Style* (Pham) and *Vietnamerica* (Tran), deploys taste as both existential and material intervention.

**Keywords:** diaspora, abjection, surface

**Short Bio:**

Shiamin Kwa is a writer and translator in Philadelphia and is Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Bryn Mawr College, where she holds the Eugenia Chase Guild Chair in Humanities. She is completing a memoir about food and immigrant identity, which will be published by FSG Books, and teaches a course on “Taste: Food in Translation.” Recent books are *Regarding Frames: Thinking with Comics in the Twenty-first Century* (RIT Press, 2020) and *Perfect Copies: Reproduction and Contemporary Comics* (Rutgers University Press, 2023). This paper is part of a new project on the relationship between food, comics, and materiality.

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**Shuchita Mishra (Kennesaw State University)**

**Panel:** Cultural Traditions and Canons

Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 – Gogotte

**Exploring Culture through Food in Graphic Novels**

**Abstract:**

Anthony Bourdain says, “Context and memory play powerful roles in all the truly great meals in one’s life”.

Food serves as a cultural anchor, symbolizing celebration, loss, and emotional connection. It also acts as a bridge across generations, preserving traditions and fostering continuity. My paper examines the role of food in graphic narratives, exploring how its depiction offers a nuanced understanding of diverse cultures and their traditions. Through this lens, I analyze how culinary elements function as cultural symbols, bridging gaps in identity, heritage, and community.

I draw on examples from authors like Thien Pham, who uses food in his graphic novel *Family Style* to recount his refugee and immigration experiences. The juxtaposition of familiar dishes within unfamiliar settings vividly illustrates the duality of belonging and displacement—a central theme in migration narratives. This idea is further explored through Thi Bui’s *The Best We*

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Could Do, which highlights the complex relationship between food, memory, and cultural identity. Lastly, I celebrate the role of food in connecting culture and family by examining Lucy Knisley's *Relish: My Life in the Kitchen*, where culinary experiences are portrayed as a bridge between personal history and communal traditions.

**Keywords:** culture, food, tradition, graphic novels

### **Short Bio:**

Shuchita Mishra graduated with an MFA in Comics from California College of the Arts. Apart from running comic and basic animation workshops across the US schools, she is an Assistant Professor at the School of Art and Design at Kennesaw State University. She also freelances for The New Yorker's Daily Shout Out Segment.

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### **Silvia Vari (University of Warwick)**

**Roundtable | See p. 2**

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### **Simon Grennan (University of Chester)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics I                      Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Illegal feelings: legislative communities, formal constraints and kitsch in Madden's 'Six Treasures of the Spiral' (2025)**

#### **Abstract:**

The impact of changes in style upon story continues to be demonstrated in practice by comics artists (Manouach, Madden, Sikoryak, Brookes and Grennan) and theorised by them and scholars Baetens (2010, Roubaud (2005), and Mathews and Brotchie (2005).

Current theorisations of aesthetic judgements (Bourdieu [1997], Hovden and Rosenlund [2021]) largely rely upon the identification of specific sets of aesthetic judgements with concomitant communities and their ideas (Woodward and Emmison [2001], O'Brien and Ianni [2022]).

Kenneth Walden (2023) proposes that aesthetic judgement is agreement by members of a group (or 'legislative community') with a proposal to make a rule. Iterative experiences on the part of group members might be unruly, but agreement upon the rule is normative.

This paper utilises Walden's idea of proposals made by legislative communities to reconsider social conventions as formal constraints (Andrews 2003), further interrogating how these proposals can have a generative function exceeding the agreements by which they are produced (Groensteen 1997).

It applies Walden's idea to Madden's constrained comic 'Six Treasures of the Spiral' (2025), revealing Madden's use of constraint as typification, kitsch, and the realisation of a 'generalised other' (Mead 1967, 1982).

**Keywords:** aesthetics, constraint, kitsch

#### **Short Bio:**

Dr Simon Grennan is an awarded scholar of visual narrative and graphic novelist. He is Professor of Art and Design and Associate Dean for Research and Innovation at the University of Chester and author of *Thinking about Drawing* (2022), *A Theory of Narrative Drawing* (2017), *Marie Duval* (2018), and *Dispossession* (2015). He is a co-author of *The Marie Duval Archive*. He is half of the international artists team Grennan & Sperandio and Principal Investigator for Marie

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Duval presents Ally Sloper and Co-investigator of Remediating Stevenson: Decolonising Robert Louis Stevenson's Pacific Fiction through Graphic Adaptation, Arts Education and Community Engagement.

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**Sk Tousif Hasan (Aliah University)**

**Panel:** The Narrative Journey of Food

Wednesday 25/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

**Taste of Traditions: Mapping Indian Cuisines in Comixense: The Fellowship of Food**

**Abstract:** India, being the most populous nation and a major agricultural producer, faces significant challenges in meeting its annual food demand. India's diverse landscapes profoundly influence the regional variations and transfusions in its culinary traditions. Indian cuisines, deeply intertwined with myths, traditions, and nostalgia, have evolved into significant markers of socio-politico-religious identity, often giving rise to the gastro-politics (Appadurai 1981) that can lead to both social diversity and adversity. The Indian comic magazine Comixense's special edition, "The Fellowship of Food", is a collection of five different short graphic narratives, exploring a broad spectrum of Indian culinary traditions and their social, religious, and mythical implications.

This paper employs visual research methodology to critically assess and understand various graphical representations of cuisines as cultural identities across different regions of India. It explores the interplay between geographical locations and foodscapes (Fraser 2017; Lowitt 2014; Roep and Wiskerke 2013), actively shaping and transforming Indian culinary practices in this graphic narrative. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate food as a tool for class stratification and intergenerational reunification. Finally, the paper aims to extend its scope beyond national boundaries, initiating a broader dialogue on food as a transnational and global phenomenon, highlighting its universal and transcultural significance.

**Keywords:** culinary, nostalgia, identity, gastro-politics, foodscape

**Short Bio:**

Sk Tousif Hassan is a doctoral researcher at the Department of English, Aliah University, Kolkata, India. He has presented papers on comics, novels, and films in different national and international conferences both online and in-person. His areas of interest include waste studies, graphic narratives and environmental humanities.

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**Sohini Naiya (Indian Institute of Technology Patna)**

**Panel:** Femininity, Food and the Forest

Tuesday 24/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**Hunger, Hierarchies, and Resistance: Appetite, Asceticism, and Mind-Body Dualism in Aranyaka**

**Abstract:**

Amruta Patil's Aranyaka subverts traditional mind-body dualism by presenting hunger—both bodily and intellectual—as a site of power, perception, and agency. Katyayani, exiled for her gluttony, later becomes a provider, seeing others through the act of feeding. Unlike Yajnavalkya, who associates restraint with wisdom, Katyayani's appetite—for food, knowledge, and sensuality—challenges the ascetic ideal. Drawing on Foucault's biopolitics, ecofeminism (Val Plumwood, Vandana Shiva), and feminist food studies (Carol J. Adams), this paper argues that appetite in Aranyaka is not a weakness but a form of radical care. Katyayani's rejection of bodily denial resists patriarchal and intellectual hierarchies that separate reason from instinct.



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Postcolonial theory further frames her embrace of nourishment as defying imposed asceticism, reclaiming bodily autonomy. By exploring hunger as a metaphor for control and liberation, this paper highlights Aranyaka's critique of traditions that suppress bodily wisdom in pursuit of intellectual purity.

**Keywords:** appetite and asceticism, mind-body dualism, power and resistance

**Short Bio:**

Sohini Naiya is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Patna. She has done her bachelor's and master's in English Language and Literature. Her area of interest includes Indian comics and graphic novels.

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**Sonali Agarwal (Indraprastha College for Women, Delhi University)**

**Panel:** Food Comics, Nostalgia and Community      Tuesday 1/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**The Fellowship of Food: Culinary Capers in India**

**Abstract:**

'The Fellowship of Food' is a comic by Comixense, a quarterly comic magazine which focuses on a theme in each issue. This issue contains five stories about diverse culinary experiences, especially the relationship between food and culture in India. The geographical diversity of India is reflected in the variety of its regional cuisines and food practices. The first story, set in Assam, is about religious restrictions and the dietary dilemmas they cause. The second story, 'Hunger' portrays the harsh reality of poverty and lack of access to food, and how the custom of 'langars' provides solace to the hungry. The story 'Inimitable Wazwaan' is about the Kashmiri tradition of the Wazwaan – a multi-course feast prepared by Kashmiri chefs for special occasions. 'The Tell-Tale Tails' is about Sikkimese cuisine, and its emphasis on steaming and fermenting. The last story, 'Upai', is the only one to go beyond Indian borders. It is set in Japan and is about a young boy's encounter with traditional cormorant fishing practices. This story shows that food is a universal language that goes beyond geographical borders. The stories portray a gamut of emotions that food (or its lack) can evoke - it can foster a sense of fellowship, guilt, wretchedness, or a sense of belonging. The comic depicts the emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of food and showcases the diversity of India's culinary heritage.

**Keywords:** food practices, cultural heritage, regional cuisines

**Short Bio:**

Sonali Agarwal is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Indraprastha College for Women, Delhi University. My areas of interest are graphic novels, comics, and children's fiction.

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**Soonbae Kim (Chungbuk National University)**

**Panel:** Connections through Food Comics      Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Auditorium

**Cooking, Culture, and Connection: Exploring the Culinary Narratives in Korean Comics**

**Abstract:**

The paper would critically examine Heo Young-man's comic Sikgaek, a seminal work in Korean food-themed comics, highlighting its portrayal of cooking as a medium for human relationships, cultural memory, and national identity. Serialized over six years, Sikgaek combines meticulous field research with storytelling to explore Korea's culinary traditions, regional ingredients, and

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the social dynamics embedded in food culture. Through its episodic structure, the comic presents cooking as an intimate and communal act, reflecting ideas of craftsmanship, respect for tradition, and the emotional connections formed through shared meals. Unlike typical food narratives that focus solely on taste and presentation, Sikgaek positions food as a narrative device that reveals characters' values, personal histories, and ethical dilemmas. The protagonist, Seong-chan, embodies the philosophy of harmony and respect in cooking, contrasting with figures who view cuisine as a means of status or power. The comic also critically engages with themes of food nationalism, interrogating how culinary heritage is preserved, commercialized, and contested in contemporary society. By situating Sikgaek within the broader context of Korean comics and food media, this study explores how Heo's work extends beyond entertainment to function as a cultural archive and discourse on national identity. The comic's detailed depiction of cooking techniques, ingredients, and ethical considerations elevates it beyond a conventional food narrative, offering insight into the deep relationality between humans and their culinary traditions.

**Keywords:** Sikgaek, Korean comics, relationality

### **Short Bio:**

Soonbae Kim (He/Him), an associate professor at Chungbuk National University in the Republic of Korea, specializes in areas that encompass graphic novels, digital literature, and the media and forms of literary narratives. His academic focus extends to modernism and literary ontology, reflecting a keen interest in the evolving intersection of literature and digital media. Email: [pearlpoet@chungbuk.ac.kr](mailto:pearlpoet@chungbuk.ac.kr)

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### **Sofie Vandepitte (KU Leuven; UGent)**

**Panel:** Food and Children's Comics                      Monday 30/6, 13:30-15:00, CBBD – 1

#### **Micky-Gazet (1933-34), or Mickey Mouse as a Coffee Brand Ambassador**

##### **Abstract:**

"From his first appearance in Steamboat Willie (1928), Mickey Mouse rapidly became a cultural icon across many media worlds (Madej 2012), one of which was the press. In France, Paul Winkler, the founder of the Opera Mundi Presse Service, obtained the rights to the Mickey comics, which led him to publish an illustrated children's magazine dedicated to the mouse, *Le Journal de Mickey* (°1934), to tremendous success (Ory 41-44). Despite the pivotal role played by Winkler in bringing Mickey to Europe, *Le Journal de Mickey* was, however, not the first children's magazine to feature the mouse. Already in April 1933, a small, Dutch-language children's periodical, titled *Micky-Gazet voor de Vroolijke Jeugd*, circulated in Antwerp, Belgium. This monthly publication, which ran for only thirteen issues, each counting a mere four pages, was the initiative of a local Flemish coffee factory, N.V. Cafesa-fabrieken.

Sold as a children's magazine, whose supposed goal was to provide the youth with 'healthy' and 'useful' literature (1 April 1933, vol. 1, p. 2), *Micky-Gazet* functioned essentially as a marketing tool for the factory, and especially its new coffee brand, appropriately named "Micky-koffie." In my presentation, I will examine how *Micky-Gazet* utilised the figure of Mickey Mouse to transform the child reader into a loyal consumer of the coffee brand, as well as the reader participation and loyalisation strategies involved in doing so. For this purpose, I will conduct a close reading of the editorials, all of which are signed by "Micky," and discuss the magazine's "Micky-Club" and accompanying readers' contests."

**Keywords:** Mickey Mouse, children's magazine, marketing magazine, advertising

**Short Bio:**

Sofie Vandepitte is doing a joint doctoral degree at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven/Universiteit Gent, as part of a project on Belgian children's magazines published between 1919-1949. From November 2021 to October 2024, she served as pedagogical assistant in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her research interests include the periodical press, comic illustration, and gender-oriented literary analysis. She has presented her work at, among others, the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP) 2022 conference "Margin/Limit/Periphery/Edge" and the European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) 2023 conference "Periodicals and Belonging."

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**Srishti Nagrani**

**Panel:** Changing Tastes

Tuesday 24/6, 15:45-16:30, Online

**Drawing Queer Identity: Amruta Patil's Kari and the Power of Graphic Narratives**

**Abstract:**

This paper explores the representation of queer identity and experiences in graphic novels such as Kari by Amruta Patil, with the investigation of visual and narrative strategies used in projecting the protagonist's emotional journey. The paper focuses on the background of contemporary India and how Kari offers a nuanced view of queer identity and challenging the traditional concepts of belonging, family and community. It aims to analyze the storytelling techniques- both visual and narrative of the author and the navigation of queer self-discovery in socio-cultural context noticeable through the lens of marginalization and repression. The study portrays the changing dynamics of identity, communal ties, and kinship among peers. Through a comparison with a global queer graphic novel Stone Fruit, we see a broader discourse of queer literature in India and the graphic novel scholarship. The paper provides an insight into the social practices through graphic novels and the treatment of graphics in a multi-cultural society and it also aims to contribute to the study of queer literature giving an insight in how graphic novels serve as a medium to explore complex social themes and emotional landscapes in a country like India which seems to be in early stages of development of the medium of graphic novels.

**Keywords:** queer identity, graphic novel, contemporary India

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**Stella Oh (Loyola Marymount University)**

**Panel:** Reader Activities and Tastes

Tuesday 1/7, 15:15-16:45, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Disordered Eating: Disgust and Desire in Victoria Ying's Hungry Ghost**

**Abstract:**

Graphic novels provide a compelling medium for exploring the complex interplay of disgust and desire in the context of eating disorders. These visual narratives enable nuanced representations of internal struggles, social pressures, and embodied experiences of individuals with eating disorders. This paper examines Victoria Ying's Hungry Ghost (2023) and the ways in which disgust directed at the body and at food emphasizes feelings of self-loathing and isolation.

As Sianne Ngai argues in Ugly Feelings, disgust is both repulsive and captivating, marked by its ambivalence and capacity to provoke reflection. Disgust emerges as a reaction to what is perceived as contaminating, excessive, or out of place. By examining Hungry Ghost in relation to

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other graphic novels on eating disorders like Katie Green's *Lighter Than My Shadow*, this paper explores how disgust and desire reflect feelings of shame and aversion. Disgust is intricately linked with desire for control, perfection, and acceptance, creating a paradox that sustains disordered eating.

**Keywords:** eating disorder, disgust, desire

### **Short Bio:**

Stella Oh is a Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Director of the Peace and Justice program at Loyola Marymount University. Her research is informed by and grows out of her training as both a literary critic and a scholar of ethnic and gender studies. In addition to her more than 30 published works, she has given keynotes at Fugen University in Taiwan and has given talks in Beijing, South Korea, London, Austria, as well as the U.S. She teaches courses on narrative optics, graphic novels, and gender justice.

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## **Suniti Madaan (Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies – Technical Campus)**

**Panel:** Appetite and the 'F' Word

Tuesday 24/6, 12:00-12:45, Online

### **Subversive Appetites and Non-Work Tastes: Reading the Subversive Non-action of the Fat Stock Characters in Tinkle Comics**

#### **Abstract:**

"Bourdieu (1979) considers "taste" as a marker of class and representation of the dominant ideology of the ruling class. On the other hand, appetite is a feature of Bakhtinian carnivalesque that subverts social order and even propriety. The stock characters of the one-shot comics in the popular children's comics collection, *Tinkle* (1980-2025), belong to this latter category. The action of each comic is dictated by their motivation or temptation to eat and rest. The Bakhtinian characters of *Tinkle* evoke both laughter and sympathy by a challenge to the aesthetic of the neoliberal elite culture focused on fitness and self-control. Appetite for food and rest relieves these stock characters from the burden of action, thus allowing for non-action as their dominant trait. In their non-action lies their "impotentiality" (Agamben: 1999) to enact Bartleby's "prefer not to" (Kang: 2020), a subversive act in a capitalistic superstructure of individual responsibility for economic sustenance. Agamben (1999) and Žižek (2006) both identify the potential within this inactive subject to recuse from oiling the machinery of capital's cycle of self-correction through the participation of active resistance.

In this paper, I will be looking at two such characters, Shikari Shambu, a hunter in British uniform in the eponymous one-shot comics, and Raja Hooja, the king in the one-shot comics titled "Tantri the Mantri". Their appetite and fat bodies are not just poised against the aesthetic taste of neoliberal injunction of fitness as self-reliance (Gill: 2021), but also advocate celebration of non-work ideology by aligning moral innocence to these fat characters. The paper will examine the subversive non-action ideology in a comics collection that claims to impart "Learning with Fun" as part of their byline.

**Keywords:** appetite, fat bodies, non-action

### **Short Bio:**

Dr. Suniti Madaan is an Assistant Professor at Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies in the Vivekananda School of English Studies. She has a PhD in English Literature and Culture from JNU on *Tinkle* comics. Her thesis is an interdisciplinary work that follows the changing cultural and political landscape of popular children's comics, *Tinkle*, and its characters over a span of

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30 years. She is also a translator from Hindi to English and has published her translations in the Sahitya Akademi and Two Lines Press. Her work can also be read in *Childhoods in Peace and Conflict* (Springer), *Screening Children in the Apocalypse* (Lexington), *Muse India*, *Teaching English Literature in India* (EFLU Press), and *The Book Review*.

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**Surangama Datta (University of Bristol)**

**Panel:** Gender and Power

Friday 4/7, 13:30-15:00, CBBB - 1

**Floating Heads, Dis-tasteful Bodies: Feminist Aesthetics in Aline Kominsky Crumb's *Need More Love* (1991) and Barbara Brandon Croft's *Where I'm Coming From* (1993)**

**Abstract:**

Barbara Brandon Croft's *Where I'm Coming From* (1993) and Aline Kominsky Crumb's *Need More Love* (1991) offer profound feminist aesthetic interventions into the visual language of comics. In Croft's strategic omission of the female body — represented only as floating heads — she offers a radical feminist counterpoint to the visual conventions of Black 'femininity' that persist in both popular and high culture. By aestheticising absence, she makes a strong political statement that disrupts the conventions of Black women in comics and evokes a change in taste and aesthetics. By contrast, Aline Kominsky's *Need More Love* aesthetically confronts the body not by its absence but by its grotesque and exaggerated presence, a sort of hyper-presence that evokes dis-taste. The female body, rendered in all its neurotic, fluctuating excess, offers a critical exploration of the complex inner world of its female subject. By evoking dis-taste, excess, and 'ugliness', Kominsky's aesthetic positions the body as a site of feminist resistance and re-appropriation to confront the masculinist gaze. This paper interrogates how these intersectional feminist texts, though diverging in their approaches, offer complementary insights into feminist aesthetic theory, challenging the very parameters of taste, beauty, and corporeality in the comics form through their unique evocation of dis-taste and disruptive absence as aesthetic tools.

**Keywords:** dis-taste, feminist aesthetics, body

**Short Bio:**

Surangama Datta is a PhD Researcher and Graduate Teacher at the University of Bristol, working on postcolonial comics, women's comics, and feminism.

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**Svitlana Pidoprygora (Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Mykolaiv) Ukraine; University of Innsbruck)**

**Panel:** Comics Resistance

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Malachiet

**Myths, Legends, and Superheroes: Ukrainian Comics as War Narratives**

**Abstract:**

This study examines the role of contemporary Ukrainian comics as a cultural response to war, exploring how they reinterpret national myths, legends, and historical narratives in the context of the ongoing Russian invasion. The focus of this research is *Peremoha*. Victory for Ukraine (2022) by The Will Production, which mythologizes key moments of the war into heroic narratives, such as *The Ghost of Kyiv* and *The Witch of Konotop*. These comics merge ancient legends from the Kyivan Rus' and Cossack periods with contemporary events, creating a compelling synthesis of past and present. Each hero, whether military or civilian, gains supernatural abilities, embodying the idea of becoming a superhero in times of profound

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societal upheaval. This study employs narrative, content, and comparative analysis to investigate how Ukrainian comics shape cultural identity, reinforce historical memory, and provide a unique perspective on national resilience. Ultimately, these comics function as both artistic expressions and tools of resistance, reflecting Ukraine's ongoing struggle for sovereignty and self-determination.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian comics, war narratives, national identity, mythology, cultural resistance

### **Short Bio:**

Svitlana Pidoprygora was a professor at Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Ukraine) until May 2022. She completed her Ph.D. on Ukrainian historical prose in 2008 and earned a Doctor of Philological Sciences (equivalent to a habilitated doctor) in Ukrainian Literature and Theory of Literature in 2018, specializing in Ukrainian experimental fiction. She has authored over 80 academic publications, including two monographs and two co-authored books. Since 2018, her research has focused on Ukrainian comics and graphic novels, as well as global comics about Ukraine. She was a URIS Fellow at the University of Basel (2023–2024) and a Prisma Ukraïna Fellow in Berlin (2022).

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### **Svitlana Stupak (University of Siegen)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics I

Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Malachiet

#### **I Know It When I See It: Multimodal Irony and Visual Aesthetics in Comics**

### **Abstract:**

Twenty years ago, Charles Hatfield (2005) described ironic authentication in alternative comics as the author's invitation to play a 'game': "our input is solicited, and our skepticism flattered, by their refusal to be simply 'honest' – that is, fictitious." Generally, the indirect nature of irony is mobilized as a sign of the medium's innate self-reflexivity, thus stalling conservative criticism of comics' formulaic nature, while also, at least nominally, deferring affective response to images, which the reader is invited to decode in the process of arriving at a 'hidden' meaning. It also exemplifies a productive semiotic connection between word and image as two competing levels of signification. However, irony is both a trope and discourse: the well-established practice of ascribing it to visually loaded and/or controversial works quickly turns into an aesthetic strategy, employed to impose specific ways of reading/seeing. In his defense of the disturbing visuals in R. Crumb's work, Jeet Heer equates the act of registering visual immediacy with exercising bad taste in reading/viewing: "A literal-minded inability to understand satire and irony is fatal to the task of criticism." In this respect, my talk explores how irony as a "double-layered phenomenon" (Muecke, 1969) shapes our aesthetic judgments about graphic narratives, specifically influencing the way we perceive their conflicted visual plane, onto which ironic discourse seems to have cast its shadow, successfully hiding what is in plain sight.

**Keywords:** multimodal irony, indirect discourse, aesthetics, reader-response theory, canon

### **Short Bio:**

Svitlana Stupak is a PhD student (2022) in American Studies at the University of Siegen, Germany, working on her dissertation project "The Construction of Irony in American Graphic Narratives at the Turn of the 21st Century." Her research interests include multimodal metaphor and irony as employed in narrating identities and visualizing violence in graphic narratives. Apart from her work on history and horror comics featuring the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war (Image&Text, 2024; Routledge, Global Perspectives in Comics Studies Series, forthcoming), Svitlana has written on graphic autofiction in the works of Seth (Stupak 2023), as well as



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biographic fiction in *The Hunting Accident* (2017) for the Comics Grid Special Collection (forthcoming).

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**Swarnima Banerjee (Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)**

**Panel:** Taste and Boundaries Wednesday 25/6, 11:00-11:45, Online

**Spaces as Distasteful in Bengali Detective/Superhero Comics: Reading Selected Texts of Narayan Debnath**

**Abstract:**

Scholarships around comics in India have seldom focused attention on vernacular comics produced from Bengal. An instance of colonial cultural borrowing, the form entered the indigenous literary world of colonial Bengal in the form of mass-produced literature. The notion of "good taste", which is frequently equated with education, morality, social class, and cultural capital, has functioned as a potent tool of exclusion, perpetuating power dynamics by marking distinctions between "high" and "low" culture (Arnold, Bourdieu). The mushrooming of vernacular presses at Battala (Northern parts of the city of Kolkata) catering to popular taste and its circulation of low-brow literary outputs (calendar arts, sensational chapbooks, dime novels and comics) among the masses was sharply contrasted with the Bhadraklok novelistic publications. Comics published by these disreputable publishers were scorned and frowned upon as dis-tasteful by the bhadraklok. The socio-ideological fissure between literature from below and elite publications at the heart of the urban space of colonial Calcutta helped certain groups assert their superiority while gatekeeping access to cultural spaces.

This paper concentrates on the figure of the detective and superman as depicted in two Bengali comics by Narayan Debnath- *Batul the Great*, a superhero comic and *Goyenda Kaushik*, detective comic, both based in the postcolonial urban space of Kolkata. Upholding the intriguing overlaps between the figures of the superman and the goyenda (detective) and the nineteenth century Parisian flâneur, this paper underscores the "distracted gaze" (Benjamin) deployed by the protagonists to excavate the dis-tasteful aspects of the urban space. We aim to demonstrate that the detective and the superman, while fighting crime in a realistic and urban context, observe the dis-tasteful and desultory sides of life. The superman and the detective, like the flâneur, are inevitably drawn to spaces like arcades, alleyways, and backstreets—liminal zones where the "low life" is most visible. These spaces are not just sites of observation but also spaces of resistance, where alternative forms of life flourished beyond bourgeois respectability. These figures are seen traversing "territorially stigmatised" landscapes teeming with sordid personalities and their gaze is riveted by contrasts between luxury and decay, beauty and squalor. In the postcolonial nation-space, we argue, their observations harnessed in a previously trash genre serve as trenchant critiques on social inequalities and contradictions of modern cities where opulence and poverty coexist in close quarters, giving rise to the propensity to commit crime.

**Keywords:** dis-taste, flâneur, Bengali comics

**Short Bio:**

Ms. Swarnima Banerjee is a senior research Scholar at the School of Liberal Arts at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur. Her research interests lie at the intersection of feminist geography, crime fiction, and pre-Indian independence Bengali literary narratives. She has presented papers in ICFA (organised by Bath Spa University, CRASSH (organised by University of Cambridge), and BCLA (organised by University of Oxford) and several other Indian universities. She is presently a member of the Association of Literary Urban Studies (ALUS), Comics Studies Society, International Crime Fiction Association (ICFA), NeMLA, and ACLA.

## **Tasos Anastasiades (European University Cyprus)**

**Panel:** Making and Designing Comics

Thursday 3/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

### **Artistic Authenticity vs. Commercial Viability: Navigating the Tensions in Comic Book Creation**

#### **Abstract:**

This paper reflects on my personal journey as a comic book artist and explores the balance between artistic expression and the commercial demands of the industry. From launching Plastic Comics, Cyprus's first comic book series, to collaborating on *The Traveller* with Neil Gibson, I've navigated the tension between showcasing my skills, adapting to publisher expectations, and staying true to my creative identity.

In the ever-evolving world of comics, I've often grappled with the question: Does pursuing what sells compromise authenticity, or can it coexist with personal expression? Over the years, I've adapted my artistic style to meet market needs, but this process has often sparked an internal dialogue about what truly represents who I am as an artist.

This paper examines whether it's possible to come full circle and return to creating purely for oneself, free from external pressures. By sharing insights from my own creative evolution, I aim to shed light on the broader dilemma faced by artists in balancing passion and practicality. Ultimately, this is a journey of finding harmony between the art that resonates deeply within us and the realities of working in a competitive industry.

**Keywords:** artistic expression, commercial viability, creative authenticity

#### **Short Bio:**

Tasos Anastasiades, an Associate Professor at European University Cyprus, launched Plastic Comics in 2004, Cyprus's first comic book series. Active in cultural events, he represented Cyprus at the 5th European Comics Festival in Romania in 2017, selected by the Cyprus Embassy and the Ministry of Education and Culture. His recent work includes *The Traveller*, a graphic novel created with Neil Gibson, publisher of Twisted Comics in London. Volume 2 is slated for release in 2025.

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## **Terry Bradford (University of Leeds)**

**Panel:** "Bad Tastes" Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Auditorium

### **Tintin's Good Taste and Morality (through the eyes of Jan Bucquoy)**

#### **Abstract:**

To borrow Jackie Horne's terminology (2016: 21), Hergé's Tintin is an 'idealized moral exemplar'. Jan Bucquoy dared to give this character a sex life, thus overstepping the conventional bounds of 'good taste'. Indeed, his incendiary *La Vie sexuelle de Tintin* (1992/2018) continues to perform its original aim: it remains a 'provocation', crafted to attack - from within (that is, from within the cultural landscape of Belgium) - the iconic (and moral) 'exemplarity' of Belgium's number-one national treasure. This paper will examine Bucquoy's full-frontal assault on the embodiment of 'good taste' from a number of angles. Firstly, peritextually, we shall examine Bucquoy's aims in parodying and 'desacralising' Tintin. Secondly, we shall examine the BD itself to investigate how Bucquoy uses détournement to weaponise 'taste' politically.

**Keywords:** Jan Bucquoy, Tintin

**Short Bio:**

Specialist in Cinema, Tintin and translation.

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**Thomas Gebhart (University of the Arts London; British Library)**

**Panel:** Digital Comics

Tuesday 1/7, 13:30-15:00, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**The library wants everything: collecting digital comics and constructing taste**

**Abstract:**

Using the UK Web Archive's Webcomics Collection as a starting point, this paper will examine the role digital comics collections play in forming perceptions about digital comics. It will do this by exploring how cultural taste and traditions influence what is included or excluded, and in turn, how this may inform taste and construct a canon.

Since 2013, Non-Print Legal Deposit legislation in the UK has meant that any digital comic published by a creator from or based in the UK can and should be collected as part of the national legal deposit collection. There is a remit to collect everything, but before everything can be collected, it is necessary to outline the scope of the collection and therefore attempt to define what is and is not a digital comic. Even at this stage, definitions are constructed, potentially creating a canon and consensus, raising questions about status and taste.

Behind the apparent neutrality of collecting everything lies the sheer scale of the endeavour, and the potential to reinforce marginality through exclusion. As well as comparing collection practices from other national institutions, such as the Royal Library of Belgium and the Library of Congress, the paper will discuss fan, community, and other 'rogue' collection practices.

**Keywords:** digital comics, collections, archives

**Short Bio:**

Thomas Gebhart (he/him) is an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership PhD student at the British Library and University of the Arts London. His research explores how UK digital comics, and their creators, offer new ways of telling stories and whose story is told. From here, his research examines how digital comics contribute to the aims and objectives of critical librarianship, taking advantage of the digital environment to foreground marginal, alternative voices and create a more inclusive and diverse collection. In doing so, the research addresses the opportunities and challenges digital comics present for UK Non-Print Legal Deposit collection and preservation policy.

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**Uddipana Kalita (Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)**

**Panel:** Fairytales, Cannibalism and Food

Wednesday 25/6, 10:00-10:45, Online

**THE INTERSECTION OF POWER AND TEST OF FASHION: SUPERHERO SUITES IN WINGSTAR:  
THE RELUCTANT SUPERHERO 1**

**Abstract:**

Subadani Kshetrimayum's "Sanarembi amushung Cheishra" in her graphic narrative, Illustrated Folk Tales of Manipur, adapts the Meitei folktale of Sanarembi and Cheishra. This stepmother folktale intricately inserts cannibalistic practices into a reincarnation story. If Sanarembi is

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reborn twice: as a bird and as a citron, then she is also almost consumed as food by her king husband and the palace gardener.

**Keywords:** power and identity, taste of fashion, superhero suites, fashion in comics, self-expression, North East India awareness, empowerment in comic studies.

### **Short Bio:**

Uddipana Kalita is a Ph.D. scholar in Digital Humanities at IIT Jodhpur, where she is exploring the intersection of technology and humanities. With a passion for Indian languages, she completed a prestigious 3-month online course on the 'Applications of Digital Tools in Teaching & Learning Indian Languages,' earning an A++ grade. Uddipana has also showcased her leadership skills as a student representative for an international faculty development program. Her research interests include literature and technology, demonstrated by her published paper on Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi. A dedicated scholar, she is committed to advancing interdisciplinary research in the digital humanities.

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### **V. Sonic (Indian Institute for Technology Jodhpur)**

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### **Valerio Bindi (Fortepressa)**

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### **Vladimir Popov (Faculty of Media and Communications, Belgrade)**

**Panel:** Comics Aesthetics I                      Tuesday 1/7, 11:00-12:30, Hoek38 – Malachiet

#### **From Trash to Treasure: Comics, Cultural Hierarchies, and the Aesthetics of Taste**

#### **Abstract:**

Although comics have been dismissed as "trash culture" in the 20th century, they have risen to occupy a significant place in the global cultural landscape throughout the years, and actively challenge old, entrenched hierarchies and ideologies of "good" and "bad" taste. My goal in this paper is to explore the evolution of aesthetic and cultural values of awe-inspiring grandeur works of Jack Kirby through the lenses of Immanuel Kant's theory of the sublime, the sensory and emotional excess in the worlds crafted by Moebius and Katsuhiro Otomo through Jacques Lacan's concept of jouissance, and to showcase how restraint and minimalism exemplify an alternative aesthetic, bridging popular and literary traditions through the lenses of Hugo Pratt's Corto Maltese. In the analysis I will consider how these works challenged the boundaries of taste using theories of Pierre Bourdieu, while embracing the semiotic complexity described by Roland Barthes. By examining institutional validation through awards, academic inclusion, and exhibitions, I will explore in this paper the legitimization of comics as a medium capable of conveying sublime themes, profound narratives, and unparalleled artistic innovation within and outside cultural hierarchies.

**Keywords:** comics, sublime, jouissance

#### **Short Bio:**

Vladimir Popov (b.1982) was born in Zrenjanin, Serbia. He graduated from the Technical Faculty Mihajlo Pupin in Zrenjanin with an MSc in Information Technologies. He continued his education at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade, where he is currently a PhD student at

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the Transdisciplinary Studies of Contemporary Art and Media program. During his professional artist career, he worked in the field of commercial illustration and comic book sequential storytelling for various US and European publishers such as Dark Horse, Vault Comics, Top Cow, Image Comics, IDW Publishing, Boom Studios, Dynamite Entertainment, Stela, DoubleTake, Z2 Comics, Scout Comics, Wired Magazine, Soleil, Glenat, La Feltrinelli, and others on high-profile licensed titles such as Clive Barker's Hellraiser & Next Testament, Robocop, Steed and Mrs. Peel, Noir, Pathfinder, Cartoon Network's Adventure Time & Amazing World of Gumball, Maze Runner and other creator-owned titles, multimedia projects, crypto art, etc. He published "Contemporary Aesthetics of NFTs: How and Why Are They Art?" in AM Journal of Art and Media Studies No. 29 in 2022. His second paper, "The Joker: Transmedial Literacy of the Comic Book Character" for the Transmedia Applications in Literacy Fields anthology was published in 2024 by IGI Global publishing house.

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### **Wallis Eates (Kingston University)**

**Panel:** Graphic Medicine II

Thursday 3/7, 16:15-17:45, Hoek38 - Gogotte

#### **The Poisonous Taste of Medicine: The Derridean Pharmakon in Autobiographical Comics-Making**

##### **Abstract:**

This paper will examine the tensions between autobiographical comics-making as a therapeutic tool and the imagined audience, and how experiencing the notions of 'bad taste' in 'airing one's dirty laundry' plays a key part in the creative process. The Greek term 'pharmakon' refers to poison as remedy, which Derrida developed to emphasise the importance of ambiguity in its application to find meaning, a concept that Robert Pihl and Maria Austin use to promote intersubjectivity within the field of psychoanalysis. Drawing upon these ideas, I will introduce the ethos of 'Safe Space for Hard Stories', a reflective practice support group for autobiographical comics-makers that I facilitate, and I will outline the five 'autobio anxieties' that form the framework of discussion within the group. Further exploring psychoanalysis through Carl Jung's analogy of the psychoanalytic process to alchemy, I argue that the pharmakon aligns with an alchemical container where autobiographical comics-making merges anxiety with creativity, potentiating psychological transformation in the creator. My conclusion will apply a synthesis of these philosophical and psychoanalytic propositions to a textual analysis of the graphic memoir, 'The Third Person' by Emma Grove, to demonstrate that autobiographical comics-making can be the spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine go down.

**Keywords:** autobiography, pharmakon, psychoanalysis

##### **Short Bio:**

Wallis Eates is a comics practitioner, mentor, and workshop facilitator. Shortlisted for the Myriad Editions First Graphic Novel Award in 2014, she has since collaborated with prisoners, adults with dementia, and brain injury survivors to produce comics about lived experience. Her long-form graphic narrative about brain injury, 'Like an Orange' is due to be published through Cast Iron Books. Wallis currently runs an online reflective practice support group for autobiographical comics-makers called 'Safe Space for Hard Stories' and is studying for a PhD at Kingston University. She is also on the Board of Directors for the graphic novel forum, LDComics.

**Wilhelm Haydt Richter (Idaho State University)**

**Panel:** Cookery in Comics

Tuesday 24/6, 16:45-17:30, Online

**The Meaning(s) of "Salsa"**

**Abstract:**

In the 2010s, Salvadoran-American poet Jorge Argueta published five poems under the label "A Cooking Poem." The poems showcase Latin American dishes and were individually published as children's books illustrated by Latin American artists. "Salsa" was illustrated by Mexican-American artist Duncan Tonatiuh, whose distinct style evokes the pre-Columbian codices of Mexico. Tonatiuh fuses the flatness of codices with textures that both pay homage to and update the Mesoamerican style. From touching on the history of molcajetes, the pre-Columbian mortar and pestle, to the savoring of salsa, Argueta and Tonatiuh illustrate in word and image the process of salsa production. "Salsa" is printed in Spanish but accompanied by an English translation of the poem by Elisa Amado.

In this paper, I explore meanings: those lost in translation, those illustrated and expanded by Tonatiuh's art, and others. I employ an interdisciplinary and pluralistic approach to help provide the framework to explore meaning complicated by the interaction of different modes and languages of this work, as well as the cultural social, and economic dynamics that inform and shape the text: illustration theory, translation theory, Linguistics, Cultural Studies, New Historicism, Structuralism, and close reading.

**Keywords:** Mexico, salsa, Tonatiuh

**Short Bio:**

Wilhelm Haydt Richter currently attends Idaho State University's PhD program in English and the Teaching of English. With a BA in Media Arts (Film) from Brigham Young University and a master's in English education, from UIEXPRO in Mexico, he explores issues of translation, adaptation, interculturality, multimodality, teaching visual rhetoric in an English classroom. Mexican-born and raised, but with German roots on both sides of his family, he likes to dive into themes of liminality, ambivalence, hybridity, cultural context and subtext.

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**Willow Pugh (artist)**

**See p. 47-48**

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**Yiqi Zhang (University of the Arts London)**

**Panel:** Transcultural Tastes

Friday 4/7, 10:45-12:15, CBBD - 2

**Tasting the Differences: A Practice-Led Exploration of Research Comics Forms through a (Trans)Cultural Lens**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines the role of 'cultural taste' in shaping the forms of research comics, i.e., scholarly works formatted through the comics medium for academic audiences. It contends that comics conventions, rooted in specific cultural contexts, shape how research is presented through comics. This cultural dimension, however, remains largely underexplored in the discourse on research comics.

Adopting a practice-led methodology, this paper uses comics-making as an analytical tool to investigate research comics forms, actualising the nuanced 'flavours' of cultural differences. It



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involves two processes: creation and comparison. It features the author's creation of two versions of a research comic, both based on the same textual source, one employing Anglophone comics conventions, the other manga conventions. Through narratological and visual analysis, the paper compares the two versions across three dimensions: the narrativisation of theory, the characterisation of authorial voices, and the text and image interplay.

The findings reveal significant divergences between the two versions, offering insights into the cultural specificities of visualising research. Ultimately, the paper underscores the importance of engaging with 'cultural tastes' in research comics practice. It demonstrates the value of fostering (trans)cultural sensibilities and critically exploring the formal possibilities of research comics in relation to culturally specific conventions.

**Keywords:** cultural taste, research comics, practice-led research

### **Short Bio:**

Yiqi Zhang is a PhD candidate at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London (UAL) and a member of the UAL Comics Research Hub (CoRH!!). Her research examines the creation of comics through a transcultural perspective, focusing on the contrast, translation, and hybridisation of comics cultures within broader cultural contexts. As a practising comics artist, Yiqi also explores the interplay of theory and practice within a practice-led research paradigm, using comics as both a medium and method. For more information, please see <https://www.yiqi-zhang.com>.

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### **Zahra Taheri (University of Kashan, Iran)**

**Panel:** Food, Consumption and Power

Wednesday 25/6, 14:45-15:30, Online

#### **Culinary Habits and Biopolitical Surveillance and Stratification in Sattouf's The Arab of the Future**

### **Abstract:**

Riad Sattouf's graphic novel, *The Arab of the Future*, has been described by different critics as a compelling example of narratives engaging with themes of race and humanist ideology. As a memoir chronicling Sattouf's life from birth to young boyhood in sequels, his work offers a parallel portrayal of the West and the non-West and reinforces the hierarchical structure of "us" versus "them" through a stereotypical representation of grotesque Arab children and monstrous and bigoted Arab men. Despite Sattouf's claims of apoliticality, the juxtaposition of Libya, Syria, and France in his oeuvre—represented through different colors—invokes the "civilized/uncivilized" dichotomy and perpetuates racial discourse. Oddly, few critics have focused on Sattouf's instrumentalization of food, culinary habits, and ways of serving to represent this ideology. Nor has much attention been paid to the marks such deployment leaves in Westerners' memory. This paper, thus, tries to discuss how food, as the most politically charged motif in *The Arab of the Future 1 and 2*, transcends its conventional role as a mere source of sustenance and pleasure and functions as a medium for biopolitical surveillance, social stratification, and gender construction. It is argued that since Riad, the focal character, is too young to be directly engaged with political themes, Sattouf's narrative employs the concept of food to establish a comparative framework for the reader to see the similarities and differences between the 'West/non-West', 'us/them.' This treatment of culinary practices reveals not only the politicization of food (and the blurring of the private and public spheres) but also the role it plays in the formation of identity schemata and the production of docile bodies.

**Keywords:** biopolitics, culinary habits, food, Riad Sattouf, surveillance

**Short Bio:**

Zahra Taheri is an Iranian professor teaching at the University of Kashan, Iran. She has a Ph.D. in English literature and has written more than a dozen articles on women, particularly racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. She is an expert in postcolonial literature, minority literature. She has also investigated the intersection of gender and politics. She has also developed an interest in children's literature and comics.

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**Zoe Robertson (University of Edinburgh)**

**Panel:** Recounting the Past through Food      Thursday 3/7, 09:00-10:30, Hoek38 - Gogotte

**Reaching for a Taste of the Past: Persimmons and Reclaiming Post-War Identities in 'Grass' and 'Golden Kamuy'**

**Abstract:**

‘Asirpa: So?

Sugimoto [eating the persimmon]: It’s delicious. Hinna hinna.

Asirpa: I meant, have you changed? Back to who you were before the war?’

(Golden Kamuy, Volume 31)

Significant to the childhoods of both Saichi Sugimoto and Granny Lee Ok-Sun, protagonists of the manga series Golden Kamuy (2014-2022) and graphic novel Grass (2019), this paper argues that the recurring imagery of a persimmon in each text represents the complexities of how victims access memory in the wake of Imperial Japanese violence. In the act of reaching for a persimmon to eat, both characters hope that a bite will resolve their traumas and even transform them into who they were before it. But is it really possible to get a taste of the past, and what happens if the memory is no longer palatable?

The paper develops an excised concept from an ongoing doctoral project on Postcolonial approaches to temporality, using the work of Amanda Lagji and Mark Rifkin. In analysing Golden Kamuy alongside the much-studied work of Gendry-Kim, the paper raises the profile of a relevant comic on the brutality of Japanese imperialism in the early 1900s, which additionally creates a haunting bridge towards the events of Grass.

**Keywords:** temporality, identity, fruit

**Short Bio:**

Zoe Robertson is a PhD Researcher at the University of Edinburgh, examining graphic novels in Postcolonial contexts. Approaching the field of comics scholarship and multimodality through the lens of her ASD diagnosis, Zoe additionally runs her school’s Sequential Narratives reading group and works with local community groups to promote comics academia and raise public interest in the medium. In her free time, she contributes a cartoon strip to The University of Edinburgh’s LLC newsletter: ‘CATADEMIC!!’ - a comedy following a feline PhD candidate.



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