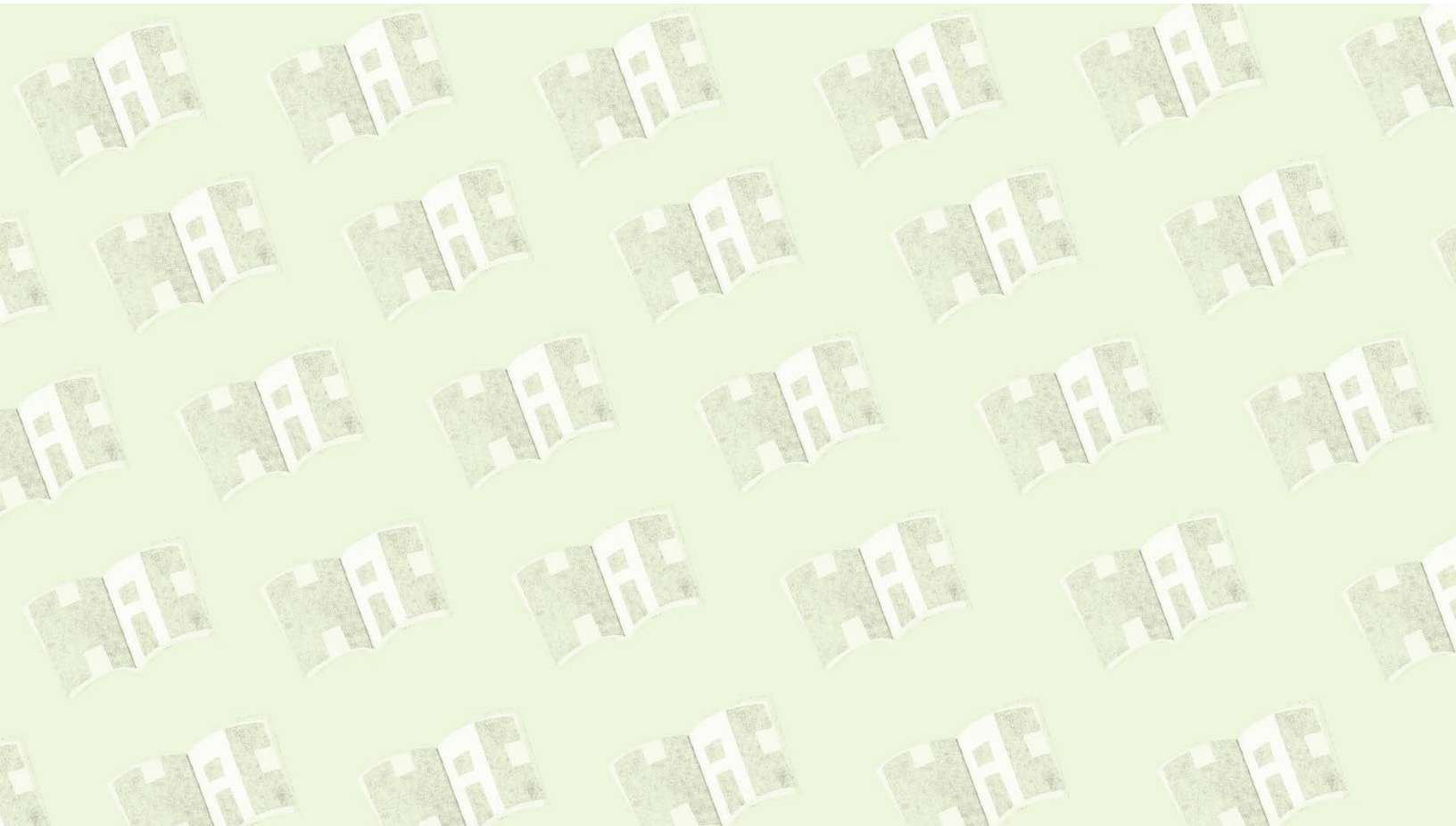# HISTORY IN COMICS

2024 THEME: COMPREHENDING COMICS

EXPLORING METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES TO COMIC STUDIES IN HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

SEPTEMBER 8-9, 2024

PALACKY UNIVERSITY COMICS LAB

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

RACHEL MARIE-CRANE WILLIAMS

TIME Monday 17:30-18:30

TITLE Drawing on Life: Comics as historiography, narrative, and scholarship

BIO Rachel Marie-Crane Williams grew up in Eastern North Carolina, attended East Carolina University and earned a B.F.A. in Painting and Drawing. She also has an M.F.A in Studio Art and a Ph.D. in Art Education from Florida State University. She was a tenured professor at the University of Iowa from 1999-2022 in the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) Department and in the School of Art and Art History. She served two terms as chair of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies. She has also served in the role of University Ombudsperson. In July of 2022 she became the dean of the Division of Liberal Arts at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Her scholarship related to incarcerated women, comics, qualitative research, and visual art has been published in the Journal of Arts Law and Management, Visual Arts Research, Studies in Art Education, Southern Cultures, the International Journal of Comics Art, the Journal of Art Education, and the Journal of Poetry Therapy. She has received funding for her work in the arts from the National Art Education Association, the Roy J. Carver Foundation, the Iowa Arts Council, The Hull House Museum in Chicago, The National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Humanities Iowa.

In 2021 she published two books, R*un Home if You Don't Want to be Killed: the Detroit Uprising of 1943* (UNC Press and the Duke Center for Documentary Studies) and E*legy for Mary Turner: An Illustrated Account of a Lynching* (Verso Books). The Iowa Governor's office, The Iowa Women's Foundation, and The Iowa Correctional Association have honored her with various awards for her work in the Iowa Juvenile Home and the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women. She has also received the Jean Y. Jew Award for Women's Rights, the Michael J Brody award for service, and the President and Provost's Award for Teaching Excellence. In her spare time, she is a predatory baker, motorcycle maven, traveler, dog lover, avid reader, and a Mamma.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

MARCUS WEAVER-HIGHTOWER

TIME Sunday 17:30-18:30

TITLE Comprehending Comics in 2034: What's the Future for Comics-based Research?

BIO Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower is a professor in the Foundations of Education program at Virginia Tech, where he teaches graduate courses in gender and education, the sociology of education, and qualitative research. He serves as the Foundations of Education program leader. He is the author of *Unpacking School Lunch: Understanding the Hidden Politics of School Food* (Palgrave, 2022), *How to Write Qualitative Research* (Routledge, 2019), and *The Politics of Policy in Boys' Education: Getting Boys "Right"* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). He has coedited the collections *The Problem with Boys' Education: Beyond the Backlash* (Routledge, 2009), *School Food Politics: The Complex Ecologies of Hunger and Feeding in Schools Around the World* (Peter Lang, 2011), *Leaders in Gender and Education: Intellectual Self-Portraits* (Sense Publishers, 2013), and *The Wiley Handbook of Gender Equity in Higher Education* (Wiley, 2020). His scholarly articles have appeared in *Educational Researcher, Review of Educational Research, Teachers College Record, Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, Gender and Education, The Journal of Mixed Methods Research,* and J*ournal of Contemporary Ethnography,* among others.

Marcus' work has been awarded the 2013 Anselm Strauss Award for Qualitative Family Research from the National Council on Family Relations as well as a Critics Choice Book Award from the American Educational Studies Association.

ANDERSSON, JENS (WITH GUNNAR KRANTZ)

PANEL Sunday 15:45-17:15 Art History and Historical Accuracies

ABSTRACT Comics as an artform – Öyvind Fahlströms contribution to comics theory in the mid 1950s.

Even though scholarly interest in comics seems to have erupted after McCloud, there are previous examples attempting to include comics into academia (Duncan & Smith 2019), beginning with Töpffer's Essai de physiognomonie (1845). In 1947 Coulton Waugh presented his historical overview; The Comics (1947) and in the early 1960s Gombrich reflected on them, as did academics in Italy, France and Spain. The recent discovery of a text by artist Öyvind Fahlström from 1954, declaring comics to be an artform on its own expands this narrative in time. Fahlström's legacy within contemporary art is widely known. As his involvement with concrete poetry, l'Art informel, and affiliation with the Situationists and pop-art. But Fahlström always had one foot within popular culture and published essays discussing comics. His "Serierna som konstart" ["Comics as an artform"] published in Expressen (1954-08-27) is nothing else than an analysis of comics that precedes theories established decades later. In this paper, Gunnar Krantz, comics artist, and professor within the arts in visual communication, and Jens Andersson, graphic designer, and publisher will present and discuss Fahlström's text and relate it to contemporary comics theory.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Gombrich, E. H. (1960). Art and illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation. New York: Pantheon Books.

Groensteen, Thierry (2007). The system of comics. 1. ed. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Schultz Lundestam, Barbro (2021). Party for Öyvind: group exhibition catalogue, Öyvind Fahlström & his artist friends, São Paulo, Rome, Stockholm, Germans, Paris, New York. Stockholm: Schultz förlag.

Töpffer, Rodolphe (1845) Essai de physiognomonie [elektronisk] https://www.gutenberg.ca/ebooks/toeppferr-physiognomonie/toeppferr-physiognomonie-00-h-dir/toeppferr-physiognomonie-00-h.html.

BIO TBA

BRAIBANT, LOU

Sunday 8-9:30 Comic Visualities: Representation, Remembrance, Color

ABSTRACT A Vibrantly Bleak History: A Colour-Based Perspective on Nora Krug's Graphic Novel *Heimat*

As colour theory is rarely forwarded as a central focus in comics studies in general (Baetens), and because colours are often reduced to bleak schemes in the trauma graphic novel (Romero-Jódar 21), I want to address the need to study colour usage in those texts. In the trauma graphic novel Heimat, Nora Krug tries to reconstruct her (German) identity by reconstructing her family history during WW II. Unlike the more typical bleak-coloured texts in its genre, Krug uses vibrant colour palettes in a scrapbook-like play with different (archival) materials. Since colour is strongly attached to both (embodied) cognitive interactions with colour (Bonaiuto et al.; Naz & Epps; Robinson), and to materials and cultural objects (Macdonald and Mylonas; Jacobson-Cielecka), I propose a complex colour analysis as a fertile way to spark dialogue between history studies and comics studies. The main goal of this research paper shall be to identify the usage of colour and its effects in WW II research as represented in Nora Krug's Heimat. At the same time, the paper will aim to emphasize the relation between the cognitive, historical, and narratological implications of specific colour usages.

First, a comprehensive analysis of colour usage and colour palettes concerning Heimat's structure will be conducted, to identify Heimat's "colour profile" – the colour palettes favoured by Nora Krug throughout her narrative – both aesthetically and narratologically. Second, three cases in which colour usage deviates from the structuralist function of colour in Heimat will serve as points of intersection between the cognitive, narratological, and historical implications of colour usage. The identified colours are extrapolated from Caspar David Friedrich's The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, archival objects, and cultural-historical "objects", that are all items prominently featured throughout the graphic novel. These will be linked back to and brought into dialogue with Heimat's "colour profile".

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Attademo, Greta. 2021. "Color and/is narration. The narrative role of color in Wes Anderson's filmic images." Cultura e Scienza del Colore - Color Culture and Science, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 07–13.

Best, Stephen, and Sharon Marcus. 2009. "Surface Reading: An Introduction." Representations, vol. 108, no. 1, pp. 1–21. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2009.108.1.1.

McCloud, Scott. 1993. Understanding Comics. Harper Collins Publishers.

Romero-Jódar, Andrés. 2017. The Trauma Graphic Novel. Routledge.

BIO Lou Braibant (he/them) holds an MA in English Linguistics and Literature and is currently enrolled in the Advanced Master's in Literary Studies, a Belgian interuniversity program. Lou is also an intern at Prof. Maaheen Ahmed's COMICS project at Ghent University. His main research interests lie in comics studies and ecocriticism.

CHERIAN, AJITH

PANEL Monday 8-9:30 Comic Constructions: Creating Cultural Memory

ABSTRACT The Haptic and the Visual: Inhabiting Memory and Imagining History in Joe Sacco's Comics

This paper aims to study the medium of comics, particularly its hapticity and assemblage of images, beyond traditional sequence, consequence, and subsequence. It examines how comics critique and construct visuality, offering a unique capacity for world-making. Through a blend of the haptic and the visual, comics can fabulate and assemble even forgotten or nebulous memories and otherwise reified or inaccessible perspectives into a sensible and sensory counter-archive. The study emphasizes the medium's capacity to enable the reader to ethically inhabit and (re) organize inaccessible spaces, times, and experiences, mobilizing the reader's imagination, and transforming them active collaborators in world-making, and not just meaning-making. By exploring the methods of "inhabitation" and "informed imagination" that Sacco employs in his comics, this paper examines memory and testimony as the doubles of history and archive.

Focusing on Joe Sacco's non-fiction comics, such as Palestine, Footnotes In Gaza, Safe Area Gorazde, The Great War, this paper argues that he leverages these potentials to challenge the essentialization of vision, history and memory. Through journalistic discourse and an intimate understanding of comic convention, Sacco forges a relationship with the indexical, the real, and the truthful. The study emerges at the interstices of the personal/collective, autobiography/journalism, information/experience, and atmospheric/historical narrative dyads, in the haptic realm of comics. This paper asserts that Sacco's use of archival material, field notes, sketch notes, photographs, and witness testimony, combined with an empathetic firstperson narrative, deterritorializes the taxonomical insistences made on comics and its ability to convey objectivity, history, memory, and truth. This approach creates a new way of seeing that is not a classificatory plateau but one in flux, embodying a graphic and psychodynamic becoming.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Agamben, Giorgio. 2014. "Thought is the Courage of Hopelessness: An Interview With Philosopher Giorgio Agamben." Verso Books, 17 June 2014. www.versobooks.com /blogs /1612 -thought -is -the -courage -of -hopelessness -an -interview -with -philosopher -giorgio -agamben.

Baudelaire, Charles. 1967. The Voyage, VIII. Translated by Eli Siegel, 1967. www .aestheticrealism .net /poems /the -voyage -viii -by -charles -baudelaire/.

Bruno, Giuliana. 2002. Atlas of Emotions: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film. London: Verso. Deleuze, Gilles. 2003. Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation. Translated by. Daniel W. Smith. London: Continuum.

Groensteen, Thierry. 2007. The System of Comics. Translated by Nick Nguyen and Bart Beaty. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." Feminist Studies, vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn: 575-599.

Jay, Martin. 1999. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity." In Vision and Visuality (Discussions in Contemporary Culture), 3–27. Edited by Hal Foster. Seattle: Bay Press.

Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." Public Culture, Vol. 15, No. 1, Translated by Libby Meintjes, Duke University Press, 211-40.

Spiegelman, Art. 2008. Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!. New York: Pantheon Books.

Weizman, Eyal. 2017. Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability. New York: Zone Books.

BIO Ajith Cherian teaches language and writing at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He earned his PhD from the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. His doctoral thesis explored concepts such as the right to look, play, technique, sensation, affective subjectivity, form, method, and truth, particularly focusing on the conflict zones in Joe Sacco's comics. His research interests include critical pedagogy, graphic narratives, visuality, ethnomusicology, post-humanism, and the philosophy of science

DAVIES, DOMINIC

PANEL Monday 14-15:30 Comics as Connection: Past and Present

ABSTRACT Reimagining Infrastructure in Comics

This paper will introduce and offer reflections on recent collaborative, co-created research into the use of comics to reimagine infrastructure in Britain. It focuses in particular on a co-creation workshop held in June 2024, which used storytelling, spatial narratives, illustration, and comics co-creation to empower stakeholders to respond collectively to failing or broken infrastructure in the UK, from collapsing rail systems and leaking sewage pipes to the ongoing housing crisis. The workshop brought together academics, civil servants, policy makers, and community organisers, developing a comics-based research method for "seeing" infrastructure differently by deconstructing, reconstructing, and visualising both abstract planning regimes and lived and learned experiences. By tracing and overlaying concrete environments with personal memories and shared affects, the approach sought to build a deeper and more holistic understanding of the impact infrastructure has on place and society, and to develop plans for more equitable resource distribution. This paper will reflect on the challenges and the outcomes of the workshop, and present samples from the co-created graphic narrative. It will also consider the potential of research-based comics to reimagine infrastructure in an age of economic crisis and climate breakdown, and it will sketch out our plans for future research in this area.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Anand, Nikhil, Akhil Gupta, & Hannah Appel eds. 2018. The Promise of Infrastructure. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Barney, Darin. 2021. "Infrastructure and the Form of Politics." Canadian Journal of Communication 46(2): 225-246.

Bosworth, Kai. 2022. "What is 'affective infrastructure'?" Dialogues in Human Geography 13(1): 54-72.

Levine, Caroline. 2023. The Activist Humanist: Form and Method in the Climate Crisis. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Truscello, Michael. 2020. Infrastructural Brutalism: Art and the Necropolitics of Infrastructure. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

BIO Dr Dom Davies (he/him) is Senior Lecturer in English at City, University of London. His research focuses on infrastructure, how it is lived and imagined, and its representation and remaking in literature and visual culture, particularly graphic narratives. He has written several books, articles, and chapters on this topic. More information about his research is available at www.drdomdavies.com.

DI FRANCO, MANUELA (WITH GIORGIO BUSI RIZZI)

ABSTRACT L'uomo che guarda: towards an operationalisation of the gaze in Italian comics

Methodological approaches drawing from social sciences - empirical, computational, cognitive (Dunst, Laubrock and Wildfeuer 2020) have been at the centre of recent scholarly debate in comics studies. In particular, when combining the study of large corpora of comics with cultural studies, gender studies, and feminist studies, the need for new methodological approaches allowing for some kind of distant reading/viewing - either empirical or computational (Moretti 2013; Underwood 2019; Azar, Cox and Impett 2021; Arnold and Tilton 2023) - becomes stringent. In this paper, we will discuss preliminary strategies to operationalise an analysis of the gaze (Mulvey 1975) in comics, combining gender studies with visual semiotics and (potentially) computational methods.

In discussing the topic, authors like Cocca have proposed a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis (see the 'Broke Back Test', 2014); yet the field is still lacking an established set of conventional markers that allow scholars to assess the gaze without resorting to specific close readings. This paper thus proposes an operationalisation of gender representation in Italian comics, considering both mainstream comics (e.g. Tex, Valentina) and alternative ones (e.g. RanXerox, Zanardi) from the Italian comics landscape. Through the discussion of selected case studies published from the 1970s to the 1990s, we will present a preliminary quantitative visual approach to measure gender representation in Italian comics. The focus on the 1970s/1990s will allow for an exploration of changes in the representation and sexualization of female subjects in a period marked by the initial transgressive and disruptive effects sought by hypersexualised bodies in underground comics, followed by the increasing objectification of the female body in mainstream media (notably, with the advent of private TV in Italy). By establishing a set of preliminary markers and creating a tentative taxonomy, we aim to propose a methodological approach to assess the (male or female) gaze in comics.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Azar, Mitra, Geoff Cox, and Leonardo Impett. 2021. "Introduction: ways of machine seeing." Ai & Society: 1-12.

Cocca, Carolyn. 2014. "The 'Broke Back Test': a quantitative and qualitative analysis of portrayals of women in mainstream superhero comics, 1993–2013." Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics 5.4: 411-428.

Di Giusto, Anna. 2023. "La risignificazione politica del corpo della donna nel fumetto femminista dell'Italia degli anni Settanta." Italica 100.3: 419–434.

Impett, Leonardo. 2020. "Analyzing gesture in digital art history." The Routledge Companion to Digital Humanities and Art History. Routledge: 386-407.

Mulvey, Laura. 2006. "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema." Media and cultural studies: Keywords: 342-352.

BIO Manuela Di Franco (she/her) is a MSCA Fellow at Ghent University, working on a project on Americanisation and gender representation in modern Italian comics. Her research interests include Italian popular culture in Fascist Italy, gender representation in the popular press, and translation practices and censorship of comics in Italy.

DIMITROVA, KREMENA

PANEL Monday 15:45-17:15 Comic Re-Imaginings: Graphic Justice, Infrastructure, and Archives

ABSTRACT Runaway Poetics: Mapping Histories of Migration through Comics

Although difficult to curate (Langrognet, 2022), exhibitions about migration, for example, Thinking Outside the Boxes. Comics and Migration (Palais de la Porte Dorée, 2022) have grown since the 1990s, often commissioned or supported by national authorities aiming to make heritage more inclusive (Baur, 2017). However, there are numerous marginalised people whose complex life stories are left in the historical shadows including colonial subjects, nonassimilated and internal migrants, refugees, people seeking asylum, stateless and displaced people, or recent immigrant communities (Blickstein, 2009; Sutherland, 2014; Bounia, 2016). Caroline Bressey (2013, p. 122) calls for "interventions that highlight and represent the many people who will, despite the reinvestigation of collections and archives, remain unknown" by asking, "How do we represent those who cannot be written about but whom we know were present?"

Traversing histories and geographies across time and space, this 3-part presentation stems from my practice-based PhD exploring situated and narrative illustration as an active and activist text-image process for socially engaged and site-specific heritage-making. I conceptualise and experiment with comics-as-maps-as-poetry as a comics-based research methodology for visualising histories of migration through co-creation and from a child's perspective. Running with the Runaway Everywhere and Nowhere follows in the footsteps of John King, an eleven-year-old enslaved boy who during the 18C ran away from what is now Benjamin Franklin House, London, to seek refuge in Suffolk. Think in Your Heart, Think… Machar Colony, Statelessness, and the Search for Belonging in collaboration with Dr Humera Iqbal, Social and Cultural Psychologist, Partition of Identity, and children of Khel School, Imkaan Welfare Organisation, highlights how members of the Pakistani Bengali minority community traverse the space between being Pakistani and being Bengali. The UKRI-funded comic book focusses on migration and settlement, statelessness and a lack of citizenship rights, identity and (un)belonging. What is Home: Arriving and Departing is a NLHF community-led oral history project and intergenerational creative workshops culminating in public history, comics-as-heritage and poetry mural-installations, mapping, recording, and celebrating the untold stories of Wellingborough's diverse local and (im)migrant communities.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Horvath, Christina, and Juliet Carpenter. 2020. Co-Creation in Theory and Practice: Exploring Creativity in the Global North and South. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Lamb, Gillian, and Siân Pooley. 2023. "Histories of Childhood: Uncovering New Heritage Narratives." Accessed June 15, 2024. https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/sitefiles/original-heritage-toolkit-18-july-2023.pdf

Pelsmaekers, Katja and Tom Van Hout. 2020. "People on the Move: How Museums De-marginalize Migration." Social Semiotics 30, no. 4 (May): 607-624.

BIO Kremena Dimitrova is a lecturer in visual culture and an illustrator-as-historian. She specialises in visualising history in the heritage sector with a focus on unearthing untold, hidden, forgotten, and marginalised narratives. Kremena is conducting an interdisciplinary practice-based PhD which conceptualises comics-as-maps-as-poetry as a comics-based research method for visualising histories of migration.

EGGERT, BARBARA

Monday 9:45-10:45 Comic Communities: Curation and Storytelling

ABSTRACT Critique of an exhibition – Showing Kant at the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn 2023/24

From November 2023 to March 2024, the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn presented an exhibition about Immanuel Kant and the fundamental questions he formulated in his "Critique of Pure Reason" (1781): "What can I know?", "What ought I do?", and "What can I hope for?"

The exhibition space was lined with a wall comic that combined blow-ups from Antje Herzog's graphic novel Lampe und sein Meister Immanuel Kant (2017) with material that was especially created for the show at Bonn. The site-specific graphic narration served as a biographical backdrop in which the historical exhibits such as Kant's belongings, VR-reconstructions of Kant's Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) as well as contemporary criticism of Kant's ideas could be anchored visually and spatially.

In my research comic, I apply the Kantian questions to the usage of (elements of) comics in an exhibition space.

In this mix of field research and exhibition review, I also reflect on the influence of what we bring to the (academic) table when we write an exhibition critique - not only in terms of professional expertise but also in terms of our family background, upbringing etc.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING TBA

BIO Barbara M. Eggert is the president of Merz Akademie – University of Applied Art, Design and Media, Stuttgart. Dr. Eggert's research, teaching, and curatorial projects focus mainly on comics. In her habilitation project, she investigates the functional spectrum of comics in exhibitions focusing mainly on Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. As of 2020, she is responsible for the comics symposium at NEXTCOMIC, Austria's annual comics festival. She also works as a curator, and creates (web)comics, using her nom de plume, Eggy.

GRAY, MAGGIE (WITH IAN HORTON)

PANEL Sunday 15:45-17:15 Art History and Historical Accuracies

ABSTRACT Alternative Approaches to the Form: 'Seeing' Comics through an Art Historical (and not a Visual Studies) Lens

Some of the foundational texts of Comics Studies of the 1960s and 70s emerged from Art History, registering the dramatic shifts that discipline itself underwent in this period, as traditional approaches were challenged. Although subsequently the study of comics remained marginal to the discipline, recently there has been renewed interest in comics among art historians.

This paper will note the methodologies employed during the 'hidden' history of comics scholarship by art historians from the 1960s to the 1990s and map the contemporary engagement of comics scholars with issues of abstraction and formalism that draws on Modernist theory and the avant-gardes of the early 20th century. It will then consider models for adopting art historical approaches in comics scholarship by discussing selected methodologies employed in the co-authored monograph Art History for Comics: Past, Present and potential Futures (Horton and Gray, Palgrave, 2022) and the edited collection Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form (Gray and Horton, Palgrave, 2022).

Bringing Art History and Comics Studies back into closer dialogue generates avenues for further research at the edges and intersections of comics and other forms of visual art such as postcards, picture stories, stamps, editorial illustration, zines, book arts, posters, muralism, tapestry, stained glass, tattoos and body art, toys and video games. This has the potential to employ a more rigorous set of methodologies developed through art history which maintain the distinctions between different forms and their entwined histories, and attend to material, social and embodied practices of production, reproduction and consumption.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Cunnally, John and Flaten, Arne R. 2024. 'The Scholarship of Comics: In Memoriam, David Kunzle (1936–2024)' Source: Notes in the History of Art (Special Issue), 43:2.

Olsza, Małgorzata. 2019. 'Collage Technique in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic.' ImageText 10:3. Comics and Fine Art Forum. Available at: https://imagetextjournal.com/ collage-technique- in- alison- bechdels- fun- home-a- family- tragicomic/

Sommerland, Ylva and Wallin Wictorin, Margareta (eds). 2017. 'Writing Comics into Art History and Art History into Comics Research', Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History (Special Issue), 86:1.

BIO Maggie Gray is a Senior Lecturer in Critical & Historical Studies at Kingston University with a specialism in comics, cartooning, and visual narrative. She is author of Alan Moore, Out from the Underground: Cartooning, Performance and Dissent (2017), sits on the organising committee of the Comics Forum conference and the editorial board of the journal Studies in Comics, and is a member of the Comics & Performance Network and an associate member of the UAL Comics Research Hub (CoRH).

GUERRA, LUIZ FELIPE ANCHIETA

PANEL Monday 12:15-13:45 Comic Futures: A.I., Sci-Fi, and Consumer Culture

ABSTRACT Do Androids Dream of White Supremacy? Iconography, Iconology and A.I.

Can AI art have intent?

I once wrote: "no nuance of an image, even if accidental, is exempt", and while I still stand by this statement when talking about discourse and more "traditional" images, one must question its validity when dealing with the increasingly proliferating AI-generated images. While having a figure of a politician with six fingers on a meme could easily be dismissed as a simple mistake (albeit a not-so-common one), an argument could also be made for the sixth digit as an intentional reference to something more obscure, such as religious depictions in Buddhism, and thus to some form of coded exaltation of said figure. When dealing with an AI-generated image of said politician though, this argument is a bit more of a stretch, since AIs notoriously have issues with rendering digits: it is, for the time being, a technical limitation of most software available.

How to proceed then? Can we still analyse AI-generated propaganda the same way we analysed it in images created by humans? Does AI have intent or ideology? Can AI-generated content be classified as memes? Are all AI images created equal? How much agency has the individual prompting the AI over the product they make? Are traditional methodologies such as iconology and iconography (Panofsky's enduring contributions) still viable when dealing with art generated by machines? These are questions we hope to address.

Beyond reflecting on the usage of existing older methodologies, we look for insights and newer ideas to construct upon, considering the particularities of machine learning and the current state of AI-art, in order to keep studying the intentionalities of political imagery and memes. For that, we mobilize a body of works starting on the first days of AI content, looking at chat-bots and their agency (Ayede, Guzeldere, 2000; Barros, Neves, Hodges, 2006; Zhu, 2009). Works that more specifically address the Machine Learning art of today, their unintentionalities and relationships with their databases (Spratt, 2018; Terzidis, Fabrocini, Lee, 2022; Tao, 2022). And authors that already go in the direction we want to approach here (Rozado, 2023; Motoki, Neto, Rodrigues, 2023; Urman, Makhortykh, 2023). Finally, this framework, mostly composed from computer science and digital arts authors, will be contrasted with our previous methodology for analysing political medievalism imagery (Dias, 2007; Guerra, 2022) to see how it can adapt.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Dias, Adriana Abreu Magalhães. Os anacronautas do teutonismo virtual: uma etnografia do neonazismo na Internet. Diss. [sn], 2007.

Guerra, Luiz Felipe Anchieta. "The Internet Crusade against Communism: Political Neomedievalism in Twenty-first Century Brazil." The Modern Memory of the Military-religious Orders. Routledge, 2022. 91-110.

Zhu, Jichen. Intentional systems and the artificial intelligence (ai) hermeneutic network: Agency and intentionality in expressive computational systems. Georgia Institute of Technology, 2009.

Neves, André MM, Flávia A. Barros, and C. Hodges. "Iaiml: A mechanism to treat intentionality in aiml chatterbots." 2006 18th IEEE International Conference on Tools with Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI'06). IEEE, 2006.

Aydede, Murat, and Guven Guzeldere. "Consciousness, intentionality and intelligence: some foundational issues for artificial intelligence." Journal of Experimental & Theoretical Artificial Intelligence 12.3 (2000): 263-277.

Spratt, Emily L. "Dream formulations and deep neural networks: humanistic themes in the iconology of the machine-learned image." arXiv preprint arXiv:1802.01274 (2018).

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Rozado, David. "The political biases of chatgpt." Social Sciences 12.3 (2023): 148.

Motoki, Fabio, Valdemar Pinho Neto, and Victor Rodrigues. "More human than human: Measuring ChatGPT political bias." Public Choice 198.1 (2024): 3-23.

Urman, Aleksandra, and Mykola Makhortykh. "The Silence of the LLMs: Cross-Lingual Analysis of Political Bias and False Information Prevalence in ChatGPT, Google Bard, and Bing Chat." (2023).

BIO

Dr. Luiz Guerra is a licentiate in history by the Federal University of Minas Gerais and a Mphil candidate at the Estate University of Montes Claros. He is a researcher of political medievalism since 2017, with published works on uses of medieval imagery by the far right in Brazil, occasionally a researcher of cats in the Middle Ages.

GUNVE, FREDRIC

ABSTRACT Leave no line behind

My neighborhood has experienced violence and other forms of crimes lately. Last summer a man got shot on the street outside my building, and in March two bombs exploded. In response to the violence, I made a comic and self-published it in the lobby in my building. It was a way to create a community-based sequential story in response to how my neighborhood suddenly was portraited in the news as a bad and dangerous area. The need for new stories and narratives based in local communities is urgent in today's turbulent political, economic, and environmental climate. On a local level it is to tell stories about a place that can become its own myths and thereby empower the place and its people.

The making of sequential storytelling and comic-art can be a way to take back the power of the narrative of a neighborhood and the everyday life, and thereby be part of creating new and just futures for communities. This project aims to find ways to deal with and help harbor trauma on a community level through comic-based art. By showing and telling stories from a neighborhood's history and present now, a future can be visualized and created by and for the community. This visualization of a place through sequential storytelling can open for the community to collectively harbor the experiences that make a neighborhood. The comic-art based project Leave no line behind artistically explore the power of sequential storytelling to animate and create new myths by making a graphic novel from the local community and interpersonal meetings in the everyday.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Bayer, Josh. 2023. Unended. Uncivilized Books.

Powell, Nate. 2021. Save it for Later, Promises, Parenthood and the urgecy of protest. Abrams Comic Art.

Queneau, Raymond. 2013. Exercises in Style. Alma Classics.

BIO Fredric Gunve is an artist and senior lecture in visual art at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. His teaching focusses on how to use comic-art, visual-art, visual storytelling, and conceptual-art. He is right now working on a graphic novel about the everyday life in his neighborhood.

GUSAIN, ABHILASHA

PANEL Sunday 8-9:30 Comic Visualities: Representation, Remembrance, Color

ABSTRACT Drawing from the Margins: Baloup's Vietnamese Memories and the Visual Documentation of the Past

The study explores how Clément Baloup's graphic narratives, Vietnamese Memories: Leaving Saigon (Volume 1) and Vietnamese Memories: Little Saigon (Volume 2), serve as an alternative archive, preserving and legitimizing the often-neglected tales and memories from the past. By transforming these forgotten stories into visual narratives, Baloup's works act as a crucial medium for alternative remembrance, ensuring that the diverse experiences of the Vietnamese diaspora—gathered from his travels across France and the US—are not lost to time. These narratives challenge the mainstream discourse, highlighting marginalized memories that are typically overlooked or deliberately ignored. Baloup's comics argue for the recognition and reintegration of these sidelined stories into the collective cultural memory. Positioned within the framework of postmemory, these volumes bridge the gap between Past and Present, providing a tangible form for otherwise unrecorded and unremembered accounts through visual representation. This emphasis on illustration is key to understanding the role of postmemory in Baloup's work, as it gives voice and visibility to the stories that form an essential, yet often absent, part of the historical narrative.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Baloup C (2018a) Vietnamese Memories: Leaving Saigon. Los Angeles: Humanoids.

Baloup C (2018b) Vietnamese Memories: Little Saigon. Los Angeles: Humanoids.

Chute H (2011a) Comics Form and Narrating Lives. Profession pp.107-117. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41714112.

Chute H (2016) Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, And Documentary Form. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Egger B (2018) Archives and Oral History in Emmanuel Guibert's Le Photographe. In: Ahmed M and Crucifix B (eds) Comics Memory: Archives and Styles. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.59-78.

Hirsch M (2012) The Generation of Postmemory: Writing And Visual Culture After The Holocaust. New York: Columbia University Press.

BIO Ms. Abhilasha Gusain is an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Literature and Languages at SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, India. As a doctoral research fellow in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee, India, her research interest lies in comics studies. Her research focuses on the graphical representation of the Vietnam War, particularly trauma, ethics of representation, memory, history, and violence, mainly through the reading of graphic narratives. Her research outputs are published in journals like Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics and Visual Studies. She has presented her work at various national and international conferences, including University of Cambridge. She is also the recipient of 'The Sabin Award for Comics Scholarship' (2022).

PANEL Sunday 14-15:30 Webcomic and Social Media: Imaginaries and Immediacy in the Digital Era

ABSTRACT "Que no pare la revolución", the twitter webcomic: some thoughts on an appropriation of the social outbreak in Chile (2019)

In Chile's political scenario during 2019, there was a strong presence of graphic arts aiming to represent this particular moment in its history. Among them, webcomics appeared in social media ecosystem. The case of "Que no pare la revolución" (Castro & Salinas, 2019) is relevant, because it depicts several characters and symbols that proliferated during that time. In fact, these characters builded-up a net of imaginaries which provided with a narrative that blended the discomfort, the anger and the collective initiative to change the status quo with an epic scope, which gave as a result a massive phenomenon that strengthened the myths towards the social outbreak through its transmutation into Chilean idiosyncrasy.
This proposal attempts to set some thoughts on the way Salinas and Castro blend different semiotic systems through Even-Zohar's polisystems theory, in order to explain the mechanisms of appropriation of American superhero codes into local imaginaries on the social outbreak. Through an analysis from the perspective of post-production (Bourriaud, 2007) and appropriation, it is intended to review the rhetorical resources of the comic used to permeate in the ecosystem of imaginaries around the superhero, the social outbreak itself and the social claim, understanding that this work, born and disseminated in the context of social networks, is framed in parallel routes of diffusion, or "alternate routes" from canonical culture, which opens the possibility of giving mythical thickness to the social movement. This, because this work flips superhero classical Moral models, constructed from the usual superhero's individuality, emphasizing on the collective empowerment merged with the polisystems previously mentioned.
This work, part from ongoing research, is relevant because it takes recently published comics that are deeply anchored in social and political problems that are expressed from fantasy, but that install and forge interesting imaginaries from massive social media such as X.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Bourriaud, Nicolas. Postproducción. Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2004.

Chatman, Seymour. Story and Discourse: Narrative structure in fiction and film. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Gibson, James J. The ecological approach to visual perception. Hillsdale: Laurence Erlbaum, 1986.

Kress, Gunther. Literacy in the new media age. Londres: Routledge, 2003.

Mitchell, W. Picture theory: essays on visual and verbal representation. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. «Introduction.» Narrative across Media. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. 1-40.

_____. «Narration in various media.» Handbook of narratology. Ed. Peter Hühn y et al.

Berlin:De Grutyer, 2009. 263-281.

Sanders, Julie. Adaptation and appropriation. New York: Routledge, 2006.

BIO Julio I. Gutiérrez G-H is a professor and researcher at the Liberal Arts Faculty in Adolfo Ibáñez University, Chile. His research covers theories of appropriation and adaptation in diverse media, comics narratives, popular culture and media studies. He has published many articles on comic's adaptations, cinema and related issues. He has edite books such as Refracciones (2017), Cuadernos Intermediales II (2022), Difracciones (2020) and Aprender a enseñar, de nuevo (2023). Currently, he is preparing a new book regarding Chilean superheroes and its history.

HORTON, IAN (WITH MAGGIE GRAY)

PANEL Sunday 15:45-17:15 Art History and Historical Accuracies

ABSTRACT Alternative Approaches to the Form: 'Seeing' Comics through an Art Historical (and not a Visual Studies) Lens

Some of the foundational texts of Comics Studies of the 1960s and 70s emerged from Art History, registering the dramatic shifts that discipline itself underwent in this period, as traditional approaches were challenged. Although subsequently the study of comics remained marginal to the discipline, recently there has been renewed interest in comics among art historians.

This paper will note the methodologies employed during the 'hidden' history of comics scholarship by art historians from the 1960s to the 1990s and map the contemporary engagement of comics scholars with issues of abstraction and formalism that draws on Modernist theory and the avant-gardes of the early 20th century. It will then consider models for adopting art historical approaches in comics scholarship by discussing selected methodologies employed in the co-authored monograph Art History for Comics: Past, Present and potential Futures (Horton and Gray, Palgrave, 2022) and the edited collection Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form (Gray and Horton, Palgrave, 2022).

Bringing Art History and Comics Studies back into closer dialogue generates avenues for further research at the edges and intersections of comics and other forms of visual art such as postcards, picture stories, stamps, editorial illustration, zines, book arts, posters, muralism, tapestry, stained glass, tattoos and body art, toys and video games. This has the potential to employ a more rigorous set of methodologies developed through art history which maintain the distinctions between different forms and their entwined histories, and attend to material, social and embodied practices of production, reproduction and consumption.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Cunnally, John and Flaten, Arne R. 2024. 'The Scholarship of Comics: In Memoriam, David Kunzle (1936–2024)' Source: Notes in the History of Art (Special Issue), 43:2.

Olsza, Małgorzata. 2019. 'Collage Technique in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic.' ImageText 10:3. Comics and Fine Art Forum. Available at: https://imagetextjournal.com/collage-technique- in- alison- bechdels- fun- home-a- family- tragicomic/

Sommerland, Ylva and Wallin Wictorin, Margareta (eds). 2017. 'Writing Comics into Art History and Art History into Comics Research', Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History (Special Issue), 86:1.

BIO Ian Horton is Reader in Graphic Communication at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. In 2014, along with Lydia Wysocki (Applied Comics Etc) and John Swogger (archaeological illustrator and comic book artist), he founded the Applied Comics Network. 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.

JERIA, PALOMA DOMÍNGUEZ

Sunday 14-15:30 Webcomic and Social Media: Imaginaries and Immediacy in the Digital Era

ABSTRACT Digital Archives of the Demonstration during 18 O of the Female Authors: Creating Cyberfeminist Memory

During the social outbreak, different Chilean female comic authors used the digital platform to demonstrate against the government. Through their webcomics in real time, they expressed their vision of the events and created content that went viral. Considering the above, on the one hand, the protest must be rethought, since the space that the female authors occupy is the digital one, which has different logics of expression and, at the same time, repositions the female authors as artistic and political agents. On the other hand, many of them are aware of their enunciative position as women or dissidents, for this reason, it is also essential to enroll them in a cyberfeminist praxis. Based on these problems, the aim of this presentation is to reflect about webcomics in social media as a memorial archive to analyze cyberfeminist demonstration in the period of 18 O to identify the benefits and challenges of its use. It is a very a great opportunity to observe immediate response though comics in a way that you can creative a very distinctive narrative and also you can identify their subjectivities as female protests who usually are erased from mass media. Nevertheless, censorship and the deleting of posts has effects of its use as an archive. To do this, I analyzed the Instagram posts of Carola Josefa, Devilkaty, Estefani con E, Gaviota Cercos, Natichuleta, Katherine Supnem and Rowein, between the dates of October 15th to 31st, 2019.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

King, Edward. 2020 ."Autographic Selfies: Digital Comics, Social Media and Networked Photography". Comics Beyond the Page in Latin America. United Kingdom: UCL Press.

Peñaranda, Ida. 2019. "Ciberfeminismo: sobre el uso de la tecnología para la acción política de las mujeres". En Punto Cero, 39.

Wilde, Lukas. 2015. Distinguishing Mediality: The Problem of Identifying Forms and Features of Digital Comics, Networking Knowledge 8 N° 4.

Zafra, Remedios. 2011. "Un cuarto propio conectado. Feminismo y creación desde la esfera público-privada online". En Revista Asparkía 22.

BIO Paloma Domínguez Jeria (she/her) is PhD in Linguistics from PUCV. She teaches at Diego Portales University on comics, linguistics, editing, and literature. She is an active member of RING, Dibujos que hablan and CICLOS. She has published articles on feminisms, comics, media, and multimodality. She has curated exhibitions such as "Other Ways of Fighting: October 18th from a Cyberfeminist Perspective" (2023).

PANEL Monday 15:45-17:15 Comic Re-Imaginings: Graphic Justice, Infrastructure, and Archives

ABSTRACT Graphic Narratives and the Re-Envisioning of Legal History

My presentation will analyze the recent rise of critical legal history graphic narratives, focusing on how the narratives illuminate understudied histories of marginalized groups while challenging the epistemologies of law and history as disciplines. The presentation will build on my recent and forthcoming articles "Graphic Justice, Humor, and the Democratization of Legal Discourse" and "Graphic Narratives and the Construction of Antiracist Legal Pedagogy." I will evaluate how narratives in three thematic clusters—constitutional law and the quest for equal citizenship; national security law from World War II to 9/11; and Black Lives Matter in historical context—dialogue with their sources, especially fraught case materials.

I will consider how the texts exemplify insights in scholarship engaging with the intersection of comics and history, including Kate Polak's Ethics in the Gutter: Empathy and Historical Fiction in Comics (2017) and Martha J. Cutter and Cathy J. Schlund-Vials's edited collection Redrawing the Historical Past: History, Memory, and Multiethnic Graphic Novels (2018). Additionally, I will draw on research in visual jurisprudence, including Thomas Giddens's work on graphic justice and Sandra Ristovska and Monroe Price's edited collection Visual Imagery and Human Rights Practice (2018).

Informed by this scholarship, the presentation will comparatively evaluate illustrative graphic legal histories, highlighting how the authors present stories of resistance often effaced from both official records and casebooks in legal academia today. The narratives create counter-archives in part by reading official accounts against the grain. In addition, they take advantage of the graphic medium, which can allow readers to co-create meaning as opposed to legal materials that assume a more hierarchical relationship between authors and readers. I will close by considering broader pedagogical and professional implications of the narratives, including how they call into question what it means to "think like a lawyer" and model how to "re-form" the law for social justice

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Kate Polak. 2017. Ethics in the Gutter: Empathy and Historical Fiction in Comics. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

Martha J. Cutter and Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, eds. 2018. Redrawing the Historical Past: History, Memory, and Multiethnic Graphic Novels. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Thomas Giddens, ed. 2015. Graphic Justice: Intersections of Comics and Law. New York: Routledge.

Rebecca Hall and Hugo Martínez. 2021. Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts New York: Simon & Schuster.

Sarah Mirk et al. 2020. Guantanamo Voices: True Accounts from the World's Most Infamous Prison, edited by Charlotte Greenbaum. New York: Abrams ComicArts.

BIO Almas Khan (she/they) is an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law. Almas's work interrogates how creative forms of legal dissent – ranging from judicial opinions to graphic narratives – have sparked constitutional reimagination in the context of African American, working-class, and women's experiences.

KRANTZ, GUNNAR (WITH JENS ANDERSSON)

PANEL Sunday 15:45-17:15 Art History and Historical Accuracies

ABSTRACT Comics as an artform – Öyvind Fahlströms contribution to comics theory in the mid 1950s.

Even though scholarly interest in comics seems to have erupted after McCloud, there are previous examples attempting to include comics into academia (Duncan & Smith 2019), beginning with Töpffer's Essai de physiognomonie (1845). In 1947 Coulton Waugh presented his historical overview; The Comics (1947) and in the early 1960s Gombrich reflected on them, as did academics in Italy, France and Spain. The recent discovery of a text by artist Öyvind Fahlström from 1954, declaring comics to be an artform on its own expands this narrative in time. Fahlström's legacy within contemporary art is widely known. As his involvement with concrete poetry, l'Art informel, and affiliation with the Situationists and pop-art. But Fahlström always had one foot within popular culture and published essays discussing comics. His "Serierna som konstart" ["Comics as an artform"] published in Expressen (1954-08-27) is nothing else than an analysis of comics that precedes theories established decades later. In this paper, Gunnar Krantz, comics artist, and professor within the arts in visual communication, and Jens Andersson, graphic designer, and publisher will present and discuss Fahlström's text and relate it to contemporary comics theory.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Gombrich, E. H. (1960). Art and illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation. New York: Pantheon Books

Groensteen, Thierry (2007). The system of comics. 1. ed. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi

Schultz Lundestam, Barbro (2021). Party for Öyvind: group exhibition catalogue, Öyvind Fahlström & his artist friends, São Paulo, Rome, Stockholm, Germans, Paris, New York. Stockholm: Schultz förlag

Töpffer, Rodolphe (1845) Essai de physiognomonie [elektronisk] https://www.gutenberg. ca/ebooks/toeppferr-physiognomonie/toeppferr-physiognomonie-00-h-dir/toeppferr-physiognomonie-00-h.html

BIO TBA

PANEL Monday 15:45-17:15 Comic Re-Imaginings: Graphic Justice, Infrastructure, and Archives

ABSTRACT Representing temporalities and processes of archival research

Comics are a great medium for constructing and representing histories. They have much in common with the way archives can bring us in touch–literally–with the lived experiences of the past. My paper will explore these commonalities, drawing on my current work-in-progress that uses comics to represent both the processes and outcomes of archival research. I will suggest that comics offer the potential for a situated and contextualised kind of history-making, making them adept at representing history-under-construction. To illustrate this, I will offer a case study of my current practice-based research into multi-temporal engagement with a specific manuscript: The Book of Margery Kempe (BMK).

Written in the 1430s, Margery Kempe dictated her Book to a series of amanuenses. A single remaining copy was created in the c15th and subsequently annotated by several monks, before disappearing into obscurity. It was rediscovered in 1934 and identified by Hope Emily Allen (a meticulous scholar of English mysticism), who collaborated on its printed scholarly edition. For the contemporary reader, there are now several 'Books'; from the digitised c15th manuscript to the numerous printed 'translations' into modern English. Each offers a different understanding of the text and its multiple scribes and annotators (whose presence is often erased through the editing process).

In my current work I am using the features of comics to represent Hope Allen's archival encounters with BMK and her subsequent work on the modern edition of the text. I am able to show (not merely describe, or overlook) the ambiguous, rich surface of the manuscript, its filtration through Allen's notes and its transformation into a printed edition. I highlight Allen's challenge of navigating multiplicity (and even contradiction) in the manuscript, using comics' ability to present a rich plurality of historical voices–and, in turn, highlighting the processes of interpretation and decision-making that shape the historical accounts we receive today.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Carolyn Dinshaw (2012) How Soon is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers and the Queerness of Time, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Hemmings, C. (2018) Considering Emma Goldman: feminist political ambivalence and the imaginative archive, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Cvetkovich, A. (2008) Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home, WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly, 36 (1 & 2), pp.111-128.

Groensteen, T. and Miller, A. (2013) Comics and Narration, Jackson: University of Mississippi.

Anzaldúa, G. (2009) 'To(o) Queer the Writer–Loca, escritora y chicana'. In: Keating, A. (ed.) The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader, Durham and London: Duke University Press. pp.163-176.

BIO TBA

PANEL Monday 12:15-13:45 Comic Futures: A.I., Sci-Fi, and Consumer Culture

ABSTRACT What do you know of this 'demon'?": History, Science Fiction, and Monstrosity in David Hutchison's *Beowulf* (2006) and Santiago García and David Rubin's *Beowulf* (2017)

David Hutchison's manga-inflected, science fiction adaptation of Beowulf—also published in black-and-white as BIOwulf in 2007—reimagines its titular character as a technologically-enhanced super-soldier mercenary in a distant, seemingly neo-feudal society. While the miniseries largely borrows only a few names and plot points from the Old English poem—Beowulf fights Grendel, a fellow technologically-modified super-soldier, rendered monstrous by scientific experimentation, and his mother/creator—it still places particular emphasis on the scene of dismemberment. Unlike the poem, the comic also sees Grendel rip out Beowulf's arm after Beowulf has dismembered him. Beowulf's technologically-modified body, though, allows him to prosthetically graft Grendel's arm onto himself in a scene in which "the parallel between human and monster is blurred to the point of elimination" (Nokes 2023, 120). The miniseries offers readers a visual metaphor that literalizes the intermingling of the monstrous and the human often found in contemporary adaptations of Beowulf and in perpetrator narratives more broadly.

In this paper, I would like to read Hutchison's version of Beowulf alongside Santiago García and David Rubin's 2017 adaptation, a comic book that is significantly more traditional in its approach but still employs elements of science fiction. García and Rubin's Grendel is not a victim turned perpetrator—as in Hutchison's Beowulf—but a monstrous killer whose depiction, as Tito W. James notes, has "more in common with Predator or Alien than any traditional mythological beast" (2018, n. pag.). Although set in the Early Middle Ages, García and Rubin's Beowulf, much like Hutchison's, employs the visual language of science fiction to explore the blurring of lines between the human and the monstrous—particularly through its depiction of human anatomy—and to question simple, and often specious, classifications.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
in't Veld, Laurike. The Representation of Genocide in Graphic Novels. Considering the Role of Kitsch. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Landy, Joshua and Michael Saler, eds. 2009. The Re-enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Secular Age. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Nelson, Victoria. 2001. The Secret Life of Puppets. Cambridge, MS and London: Harvard University Press.

Nokes, Richard Scott. 2023. Beowulf in Comic Books and Graphic Novels. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc.

BIO Dragoș Manea (he/him) 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.

PANEL Sunday 9:45-10:45 Comics as Case Studies: Manga and Motherhood

ABSTRACT At the intersection of comics studies, feminism, and …:
Reading pregnancy graphic memoirs

This paper grows out of and reflects on my most recent research project devoted to the study of American comics and graphic novels, both non-fiction and fictional, which talk about different aspects of reproductive rights, such as the experiences of pregnancy, labor, miscarriage, and access to sexual and reproductive health care. While the project is firmly rooted in and defined by such a thematic scope, it also raises some challenging methodological issues which transgress the more formal approaches to comics and comics studies, identified with the poetics and mechanics of the artform, that is its use of panels, gutters, sequences as well as the phenomenon of closure, effectively rising questions about other methodologies available. I wish to reflect on how such a more comprehensive methodological model might look like in the case of autobiographical non-fiction comics devoted to pregnancy and motherhood, specifically A.K. Summers's Pregnant Butch: Nine Long Months Spent in Drag (2014) and Keiler Roberts's Chlorine Gardens (2018). The methodological model created for the purposes of reading both comics – as case studies – was originally located at the intersection of comics studies, in its formal understanding, and feminism, especially feminist perspectives on motherhood and reproduction, but it soon proved limiting and ineffective, insofar as it did not represent the complexity of issues discussed by Summers and Roberts. Disability studies, gender studies, the medical humanities as well as human geography all proved essential; still, they had to be balanced against one another so as to not "silence" the comics aspect of the entire discussion. I wish to present the results of my methodological and critical explorations during my talk, sharing my findings and failures, as guided by Rita Felski who in Uses of Literature argues that we should not "assig[n] all value to the act of reading and none to the objects read".

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Ahmed, Maaheen. 2016. Openness of Comics: Generating Meaning Within Flexible Structures. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Chute, Hillary. 2010. Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics. New York: Columbia University Press.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 1994. Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Longhurst, Robyn. 2001. Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries. New York: Routledge.

Longhurst, Robyn. 2008. Maternities: Gender, Bodies and Space. New York: Routledge.

BIO Dr. Małgorzata Olsza (she/ her) is Assistant Professor at the Department of American Studies: Literature and Media at The Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She specializes in the study of American and Polish comics and graphic novels.

O'SULLIVAN, STEPHEN

ABSTRACT Consumer Culture Research Comics: Multi-Representations and Regenerative Translations of Marketplace Extremes

This research explores the application of comics for representing consumer research. It is argued that consumer research should embrace the translation turn when representing consumer narratives and in its approach to understanding audience engagement and the production of meaning. The unique structure of research comics allows for consumer realties to be represented in an ongoing mutative manner – audiences are provided a fascinating structure with an emergent constantly shaping narrative. Because audiences are provide a structure and fluid resources for meaning-making it allows for personalized translations and more intimate engagement with the emergent personalized narrative. Research comics require audiences to impose a multitude of translation, meaning the representation becomes much like an immersive experience of learning – an intimate knowledge refinery – which adapts and regenerates according to the audience.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Hill, Tim, Robin Canniford, and Joeri Mol. "Non-representational marketing theory." Marketing Theory 14, no. 4 (2014): 377-394.

Pountney, Richard, and Graham McPhail. "Researching the interdisciplinary curriculum: The need for 'translation devices'." British Educational Research Journal 43, no. 6 (2017): 1068-1082.

Buckingham, David, and Issy Harvey. "Imagining the audience: Language, creativity and communication in youth media production." Journal of Educational Media 26, no. 3 (2001): 173-184.

BIO Stephen R. O'Sullivan is lecturer in marketing and consumer culture at University College Cork, Cork University Business School. His research explores the consumer culture theory dimensions of marketplace cultures and consumer identity projects. Current research involves an investigation of contemporary play, street art, and interspecies relationships. Stephen is author of the book The Comic Book as Research Tool: Creative Visual Research for the Social Sciences. He is an advocate for the greater application of creative media in social science; his published works can be found in the Marketing Theory, Psychology & Marketing, Journal of Marketing Management, Consumption Markets & Culture, Advances in Consumer Research, and Journal of Customer Behaviour. Stephen is passionate about the public dissemination of science and showcases research films at the IndieCork Film Festival.

PETER, ALEXIA F.

ABSTRACT Transforming trans lives: queer representation and imagined futuristic medieval in Nimona (2015)

Usually, writing allows the author to create a world with things that people never thought of in the real world, however, it's even more common to assimilate elements that appeal to the history of humanity, and in comic books, that happens all the time. Nimona, written and illustrated by Noelle Stevenson, uses the stereotypes of repression from an imagined medieval world, combined with a sort of futuristic individualism to propose reflection within funny and full of action moments, bringing representation of disabled people and queer thoughts in the character Nimona. This paper aims to understand the representation that is brought to the table by Noelle's comic book, and how it's elaborated to be used specifically in an imagined medieval world.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Butler, Judith. 1993. Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1999. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Bychowski, Gabrielle M. W. 2018. "Trans textuality: Dysphoria in the depths of medieval skin". postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies 9, no. 3 (September): 318-333. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41280-018-0090-6.

Stevenson, ND. 2015. Nimona. New York: HarperCollins.

BIO Alexia studies History at the Universidade Federal dePelotas (UFPel). She is also a member of the Polo Interdisciplinar de Estudos do Medievo e Antiguidade (POIEMA) at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas, owning a scholarship in the project POIEMA nas Redes!, and conducting a research on the political role of womens in the Mongol Empire. She also researches Trans Visibility in the Middle Ages and a comparative study of political rhetoric of the Byzantine Empire and Qing China. Her interests relly on oriental political models, gender in those same spaces, and queer in the Middle Ages.

PANEL Monday 8-9:30 Comic Constructions: Creating Cultural Memory

ABSTRACT Growing up in a Dictatorship: Childhood, State Propaganda, and Everyday Life in My Golden Age I by Daniel Horia

This paper explores the autobiographical comic Epoca mea de aur I/My Golden Age I by cartoonist Daniel Horea, published in 2021 by Art Publishing, currently the leading Romanian comics publisher. The first volume of this projected 2 or 3-volume life-writing project tells the story of five-year old Daniel, who grows up in the early 1980s in Bucharest, the Romanian capital, during the Ceaușescu dictatorship. Throughout the story, the "narrative I" is confined mainly to text boxes, while the viewpoint of the "narrated I" (Smith and Watson 2010) is prioritized and mirrored through drawings that emphasize little Daniel's powerful emotions as he gradually experiences the world around him. Horia uses an anime-inspired style (occasionally interrupted by insertions of doodles and drawings produced by little Daniel) to document everyday life during his early childhood. Daniel is a generally happy child, the center of the universe for six adults: four grandparents and two parents; the comic bathes these domestic moments in a golden light which often seems to emanate from Daniel's blonde hair. Such scenes of domestic bliss are in sharp contrast with those instances when the harsh reality of the dictatorship strikes Daniel as scary or baffling, and when the color palette turns darker, shades of grey dominating such panels.

The child's perspective from My Golden Age I is also employed to reflect on the adults' own fragility and child-like vulnerability as citizens in a dictatorship that tightly controls even banal everyday activities and keeps them confined, allegedly for their own protection from nefarious capitalist influences, within Romania's borders. Much as Daniel's family manage to shield him from the darkness of the regime by leaving questions unanswered and creating a warm protective atmosphere at home, they are ultimately powerless when little Daniel gets sick and almost dies because of a botched operation (a frequent occurrence in a corrupt and under-funded medical system). Such narrative elements bring the comic within the realm of "ironic nostalgia," a longing without the desire for return (Boym 1994), something that becomes increasingly apparent as the first volume approaches its ending. As the explosion from the nuclear power plant Chernobyl takes place in 1986, filling the air with poison that would ultimately cause generations of Romanians to struggle with deadly illnesses, little Daniel recovers from his life-threatening infection and happily bathes in the light of his "golden age" (a term the Ceausescu dictatorship used to unironically describe and praise itself), in his mother's arms, even as they are unknowingly breathing in the toxic fumes of Chernobyl.

Daniel Horia's book—which is not recommended for a specific age group, but can probably be read by children 5 and up as well as by adults—is a rare document in present-day Romanian culture. In a country where there is still no museum dedicated to the forty-year communist dictatorship, comics and film create an important—perhaps the only—public visual memory space of everyday life during totalitarianism. Daniel Horia's comic provides audiences with a visual inventory of everyday objects (particularly children's books, games, and toys), most of which have disappeared or are unrecognizable to a younger audience. Horia also memorializes postures and gestures that reflect the little absurdities of everyday life during communism: for instance, having to perch children on the folded chair at the cinema, in the last row, because most cinema floors were not adequately sloped, making it impossible for children to sit anywhere except in the back row. Horia also carefully records spaces that have vanished,

from communist apartments, populated by roughly the same objects because of the limited range of household items one could buy, to the architecture of Bucharest (now modified by post-1989 additions), clothes, and language. This inventory is placed in a political context that is not detailed (as little Daniel does not comprehend the specifics of the dictatorship) but it is able to, nonetheless, create a space of reflection upon the past.

My paper reflects on the contribution that a child's perspective (sometimes translated into/ as a childish style) can have on the documentation of everyday life during the Ceaușescu dictatorship. I argue that Daniel Horia's visual choices and strategies from My Golden Age I can be particularly illuminating in the context of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's fixation on childhood and children's ideological indoctrination through comics and other children's publications (Ciobotariu and Niță 2010), as well as his interest in cultivating a public image for himself as a benevolent patriarch surrounded by smiling children. I am particularly interested in placing My Golden Age I in the broader context not only of comics that perform similar tasks (such as Andreea Chirică's The Year of the Pioneer or Marzena Sowa and Sylvain Savoya's Marzi), but also in the context of 1980s children's magazines and state-issued propaganda featuring children (such as TV series and photographs in which the communist system consistently promoted an idealized image of childhood during the dictatorship).

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
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Ciubotariu, Alexandru and Dodo Niță (2010). Istoria benzii desenate românești, 1891-2010. Bucharest: Vellant Publishers.

Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson (2010). Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives. 2nd ed. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.

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).

RANGANATHAN, KALAIARASI

ABSTRAC Drawing Religion in Comics: Racializing Dalits and Indigenous People in Amar Chitra Katha Comics

Comics as a hybrid medium is complex with its image and text interface. The images of the comics are the representation of ideas; they are the mental images. The images and words of the comics are the product of cultural mediations imbibed with ideological meanings. It is essential to situate the relationship between the material and mental image to postulate its ideological meaning. Hence, the images of the comics have to be read in the broader framework of social, historical and ideological contexts to comprehend their cultural and social significance.

A sociocultural reading of Indian comics would inform its indebtedness to the Hindu Religion and mythology. The complex interlace of the Hindu religion in comics is reflected in its representation system, mimicking the hierarchical or feudal notions prevailing in Indian society. The hegemonic caste system, which the society modelled upon, categorizes Hindus based on the varnas. Brahmins occupy the top layer of the pyramid, followed by the Kshatriyas and Vaishya, and Shudras. Dalits and tribals are left out of the four-fold system called Avarnas. Dalits and Indigenous people are considered untouchables and unapproachable. They were neglected from participation in mainstream society and were treated as sub- ordinates born to serve Brahmins. The trajectories of the hegemonic notions of Hinduism are observable in Amar Chitra Katha comics, not just in the storyline and characterization but also in the iconography and stylistic aspects. This is reflected in the language of the comics (i.e.) the medium-specific elements of the comics, like colours and drawing style. In this context, the paper takes up selected comics from the Amar Chitra Katha, which studies the representation of Dalits and indigenous people by probing deep into the representational strategies used in 'racializing' and othering' them. It analyzes the images, texts, themes, and visual symbols these comics employ that reflect the Hindu religion. The paper also draws its theoretical underpinnings from WJT Mitchell's iconographic analysis to unravel the complex layers of meaning in visual representation. Further, the paper will use Stuart Hall's theory of representation and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste to offer insights into the cultural and social contexts in which they were created.

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BIO Kalaiarasi. R is a research scholar at the Central University of Tamil Nadu, Department of English Studies. Her doctoral research focuses on Dalit representation in comics and graphic narratives. She seeks interest in Dalit Studies, Film Studies, Digital Humanities, Visual Arts and Australian Aboriginal Literature.

PANEL Sunday 15:45-17:15 Art History and Historical Accuracies

ABSTRACT Academics Creating Comics?: A Look at Scholars and Scholarship in Pre-1940s History Comics

Between 1900 and 1940 there were no less than 30 distinct "history comic" titles published in the United States, Canada, France, or Great Britain (and syndicated much further afield). In addition there were at least dozens of one-off history auca in Spain. The creators of these comics intended to offer their readership "historical accuracy," while at the same time countering what at least one creator referred to as his own dissatisfaction "with the histories we were given to study – dry, uninteresting affairs with little to intrigue the youthful imagination."

Until the 1940s, however, the academic credentials of the writers of these titles were haphazard at best. A notable shift in the creation of history comics took place in 1941, when True Comics, published by Parents Magazine Press began its run. Unlike the vast majority of history comics which came before it True Comics, "was overseen by an editorial advisory board of experts: professors, especially historians, educators, and even the public-opinion pollster George Gallup."

This professionalization of the genre was in large part driven by growing calls for the end of the comics industry (even before Seduction of the Innocent). This is not to say, however, that pre-1940 era history comics were devoid of historiographic depth. This paper is concerned with the historical epistemology of "history comics." By examining the creators' academic background and or pre-production research we will gain a fuller sense of the historical narratives history comics created. In turn, by examining the history comics themselves, with the context of the creators, we may begin to understand how the product (history comic) changed audiences' relationships with historical narratives.

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Cole, Jean Lee. 2020. How the Other Half Laughs: The Comic Sensibility in American Culture, 1895 – 1920. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press.

BIO Maryanne A. Rhett, Professor of History at Monmouth University (NJ, USA), works at the intersections of fin-de-siècle politics, history, and popular culture in various world settings. She has several articles and one book which examine comics in various places throughout the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries.

RIZZI, GIORGIO BUSI (WITH MANUELA DI FRANCO)

ABSTRACT L'uomo che guarda: towards an operationalisation of the gaze in Italian comics

Methodological approaches drawing from social sciences - empirical, computational, cognitive (Dunst, Laubrock and Wildfeuer 2020) have been at the centre of recent scholarly debate in comics studies. In particular, when combining the study of large corpora of comics with cultural studies, gender studies, and feminist studies, the need for new methodological approaches allowing for some kind of distant reading/viewing - either empirical or computational (Moretti 2013; Underwood 2019; Azar, Cox and Impett 2021; Arnold and Tilton 2023) - becomes stringent. In this paper, we will discuss preliminary strategies to operationalise an analysis of the gaze (Mulvey 1975) in comics, combining gender studies with visual semiotics and (potentially) computational methods.

In discussing the topic, authors like Cocca have proposed a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis (see the 'Broke Back Test', 2014); yet the field is still lacking an established set of conventional markers that allow scholars to assess the gaze without resorting to specific close readings. This paper thus proposes an operationalisation of gender representation in Italian comics, considering both mainstream comics (e.g. Tex, Valentina) and alternative ones (e.g. RanXerox, Zanardi) from the Italian comics landscape. Through the discussion of selected case studies published from the 1970s to the 1990s, we will present a preliminary quantitative visual approach to measure gender representation in Italian comics. The focus on the 1970s/1990s will allow for an exploration of changes in the representation and sexualization of female subjects in a period marked by the initial transgressive and disruptive effects sought by hypersexualised bodies in underground comics, followed by the increasing objectification of the female body in mainstream media (notably, with the advent of private TV in Italy). By establishing a set of preliminary markers and creating a tentative taxonomy, we aim to propose a methodological approach to assess the (male or female) gaze in comics.

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Impett, Leonardo. 2020. "Analyzing gesture in digital art history." The Routledge Companion to Digital Humanities and Art History. Routledge: 386-407.

Mulvey, Laura. 2006. "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema." Media and cultural studies: Keyworks: 342-352.

BIO Giorgio Busi Rizzi (he/his) is FWO post-doctoral fellow and adjunct professor at Ghent University, teaching Comics and Graphic Novels and English Literature. His current project investigates authorship in post-digital comics; his previous one analysed experimental digital comics. His PhD (University of Bologna/KU Leuven) focused on nostalgia in comics.

ROJAS, FRANCISCA CÁRCAMO

PANEL Sunday 14-15:30 Webcomic and Social Media: Imaginaries and Immediacy in the Digital Era

ABSTRACT The treatment of information for a small informative comic

How do I work the script of a historical comic that relates to the present? In the search for stories to make in the project El Otro Archivo, I have encountered the difficulty that the past is in constant representation of the present, especially when we talk about social issues, environmental struggles and the defense of human rights. The way to approach them is diverse and in each of them I find different challenges; documenting through research, interviews, reports and documentaries, can give us a greater breadth of the subject to be addressed. In this presentation I will review some particular cases in which the collection of information and archives is used to turn them into the script of a small comic that aims to disseminate a specific topic.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

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Topo: https://www.toporevue.fr/

Revista Badaró: https://www.revistabadaro.com.br/

The Nib magazine: https://thenib.com/

The Qomix: https://www.theqomix.com/

BIO Francisca Cárcamo Rojas (she/her) is a cartoonist and illustrator. She has completed several postgraduate studies in Chile and Spain. She is currently working on the comics Un destello azul (DIPC and Jot Down Kids), and Las balas de Washington (Tricontinental), and on her personal project El Otro Archivo.

SALO, MERVI

ABSTRACT Visual Sovereignty: Indigenous Historiographics in Comics

This article examines the transformation in the representation of Indigenous peoples in comics and scholarly work, transitioning from outsider, stereotypical portrayals to authentic narratives told by Indigenous creators and scholars. The emergence of Indigenous historiographics as a field signifies a pivotal shift towards Indigenous people telling their own stories and histories through comics, exemplified by works such as Haida Manga and Indigenous-authored graphic histories. The evolution of historical narratives in comics, underscored by Joseph Witek's "Comic Books as History" and Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer-winning "Maus," showcases the medium's ability to tackle complex historical narratives and events. Indigenous-authored graphic histories, such as "Paying the Land" and "This Place: 150 Years Retold," introduce a genre exploring settler colonialism's impacts and untold stories of the land we now call Canada. Traditional historiography's focus on the text has been challenged by figures like Trevor Getz, who advocates for greater academic recognition of graphic histories, and Hillary L. Chute, whose work "Disaster Drawn" emphasizes comics' unique capacity to encompass the complexity of experiences. This shift also contributes to decolonizing education by introducing previously unshared Indigenous viewpoints to the broader population and significantly contributes to young Indigenous individuals' identity affirmation and pride. This is especially important for the families increasingly in the diaspora living away from traditional homelands and often in urban settings. The paper posits the critical role of Indigenous-authored comics in deepening historical understanding and education, especially relevant in the context of truth and reconciliation efforts in nations such as Canada, Norway, and Finland. Moreover, it aims to outline and explore the developing, interdisciplinary domain of Indigenous historiographics and identity, focusing on the authenticity of the creator's voice and empowering readers to view visual narratives as integral to the historical record beyond mere illustration.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING

Baloup C (2018a) Vietnamese Memories: Leaving Saigon. Los Angeles: Humanoids.

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Chute H (2011a) Comics Form and Narrating Lives. Profession pp.107-117. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41714112.

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Hirsch M (2012) The Generation of Postmemory: Writing And Visual Culture After The Holocaust. New York: Columbia University Press.

BIO TBA

SCHMIDT, PYETRA

PANEL Poster presentation on Padlet

ABSTRACT "Ragnarok revisited?: Alternate History and comics in The Life Eaters (2003)

In pop culture, the possibility of a historical event occurring in a different way is discussed in countless publications. In fiction, the theme of the possibility of a Nazi victory has been the subject of academic study from the perspective of reflections on Alternate History. The graphic novel The Life Eaters (2003) by David Brin, presents an alternative narrative in which the Nazis win the Second World War with the help of superhuman elements, thus, through the use of magic and the worship of the Norse gods. The main objective of this work is to analyze this graphic, which challenges the perception of reality by exploring how changes in the past can significantly influence the present and project a new future, observing how the visual narrative constructs interpretations about a fictional past and its impact on the understanding of the present, through the interaction between verbal and non-verbal languages in comics."

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING TBA

BIO Pyetra is a student of History at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel). She is also a member of the Polo Interdisciplinar de Estudos do Medievo e Antiguidade (POIEMA) at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas and holds a scholarship from the same university. Her research focuses on political neo-medievalism and far right politics. Her interests include Political History, History and Culture, Reception of the Middle Ages, Neomedievalism, Political Nationalism and the 20th Century, with an emphasis on German History.

STUPAK, SVITLANA

PANEL Monday 14-15:30 Comics as Connection: Past and Present

ABSTRACT Establishing Historical Continuity Through The Chronotope Of War: How Ukrainian Comics Narrate Its Colonial Past

Ukrainian comics have a long tradition of popularizing national history, starting from the educational magazines for children published by the Ukrainian diaspora abroad in the middle of the twentieth century and following the surge of local periodicals featuring comics after the Declaration of Independence (1991), and graphic novels after the Revolution of Dignity (2014). These state-building events prompted the growth of the local comics community, with history/historical fiction comics constituting the majority of the published titles. The earlier non-commercial works like Ukraina v Borotbi [The Fighting Ukraine] (1953) by Leonid Perfetsky depicting the Ukrainian independence movement in the 1940s-1950s or Kozatski Dzvony [Cossacks' Bells] by Yur Lohvyn (1994) that narrates the fall of the Cossackdom in the 18th century are thematically connected to the later comics like Protystoiannia. Chervonyi Teror (2019) or Oborona Zamostya (2021) funded by the government. They all narrate history through the prism of war in its different historical incarnations, which is believed to serve as an "impetus for the transformation of national identity" establishing different types of historical continuity (i.e. as "constancy of direction" and as "periodicity of events") that links the country's colonial past and its current postcolonial present. In this paper, I address the chronotope of war in the local comics tradition of popular history by asking the following questions:
How do history comics visually and thematically engage with the colonial narratives that frame Ukraine as a "rift between worlds," "the nobody's land (Mälksoo, 2022, p. 2), and "a point of rupture between East and West" (Musliu & Burlyuk, 2019, n. pag) in the context of the war?
Do these comics succeed in visualizing "a completely new image that refers in its message to the new [post-colonial] reality" in retrospective reclaiming of national agency?

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Svyrydenko, Denys, and Wiktor Możgin. 2019. "The Condition of Contemporary Ukrainian Culture: The Postcolonial Retrospective and Perspective." Ukrainian Policymaker 4 (June). https://doi.org/10.29202/up/4/7.

Von Hagen, Mark. 1995. "Does Ukraine Have a History?" Slavic Review 54 (3): 658–73. https://doi.org/10.2307/2501741.

BIO Svitlana Stupak (she/her) is a PhD student (2022 – ongoing) in American Studies at the University of Siegen, Germany. Current interests: US-American and Ukrainian graphic narratives, war comics, historiographics, autobiography/autofiction, postcolonial comics. Recent publication: Stupak, S. (2024). Shaping Post-Colonial Identity: Cossacks and Ukrainian Comics. Image&Text, 14(3). https://imagetextjournal.com/stupak-shaping/

SUKUMAR, LAKSHMI

PANEL Sunday 12:15-13:45 Comics in Cultural Studies: Cold War and Contested Identities

ABSTRACT Comics as Social Narratives: Representations, Memory and Dissent

Visual storytelling has been in vogue since the prehistoric times. Before the invention of languages, human beings resorted to images to communicate with one another. These earliest forms of images discovered by historians on cave walls are instances of human communication through visuality. Studies on the history of print technology have traced the beginnings of texts with type and image printed together to the second half of the fifteenth century. Since then, the integration of words and images was observed in different texts across ages. Most people would have made their first encounter with this form of narration in children's books. The colourful visualities of these books were seen to be encouraging children to be interested in them.

The invention and mass production of television extended visuality to broadcast media. The digital age has further intensified the use of visuality in designing narratives for consumption. This has further reconfigured the information consumption practices of youngsters and they exhibit an increasing inclination towards visual texts. Thus there is a proliferation of visual techniques in contemporary storytelling. We see innovative ways of using visualities in narratives in the form of comics, cartoons, graphic novels and webcomics. Disrupting the conventional impressions of comics as texts of humour signifying triviality, we are now in the midst of a number of comic and graphic narratives that engage in deep negotiations with diverse forms of human experiences and identities. While bringing to life different forms of identities and experiences, the comic format is also extensively used as a counter-discursive space that facilitates alternative worldmaking.

This paper attempts to critically examine the evolution of comic narratives in India as sites of contested identities, as a 'polygraphic space' of personal and collective memories and counter-discursive space of alternative imaginaries and dissenting subjectivities.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
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Moretti, Veronica. 2023. Understanding Comics-Based research: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists. Leeds: Emerald Group Publishing.

BIO Dr. Lakshmi Sukumar is Assistant Professor at the Institute of English, University of Kerala. Her doctoral research was on Kerala Studies. She has been teaching in various Higher Education institutions under the Directorate of Collegiate Education, Government of Kerala since 2007. She was the Director of the Centre for Women's Studies, University of Kerala from 2018-2020. Her areas of interest are Critical Theories, Media Studies and Kerala Studies

VALORI, MARIO

PANEL Sunday 9:45-10:45 Comics as Case Studies: Manga and Motherhood

ABSTRACT Introducing Secret Gardens: Manga as a Valuable Medium for Public History

Spiegelman's Maus (1980-91) was one of the earliest comics to receive universal recognition and praise for its cultural and historical significance. Its success in promoting ethical and social values while providing accurate information on its transposition of the Holocaust is undeniable. Manga and anime today are being more and more appreciated by the public, particularly younger people. They are a prime example of the current trend of favouring concise and simple texts, complemented by iconographic aids. However, the cultural bias that undermines the importance of comics and manga continues to be a significant barrier to their inclusion in public history projects. Still, it is the iconographic apparatus that serves as the key advantage of these works. Even the most disaffected readers are not discouraged by the short text; meanwhile, their visual element can provide the public with valuable information. This is particularly relevant for works that are situated in a historical period unfamiliar to the reader.

Sometimes, the inclusion of detailed descriptions can disrupt the flow of a book's narrative. There are instances where authors leave out details they find unimportant. Arthur Conan Doyle assumes his readers are well-acquainted with Sherlock Holmes' London, so he rarely provides descriptions. Still, can today's students really grasp what London was like in the early 20th-century? The visual structure of comics and manga aids by delivering information in a straightforward and practical manner, surpassing the limitations of text. The drawings also enable readers to allocate their attention based on their preferences,scopes and background. Of course, obtaining these results requires commitment and precision, which is the result of in-depth research by both the author and the artist. A mediocre work may entertain, but it lacks historical accuracy. The goal of this study is to showcase the outcomes of utilizing a three-volume manga (Sayonara Rose Garden — さよならローズガーデン) as a tool for public history. To do so, I will present the results of a 2022 reading experiment involving 200 participants at Lucca Comics, 200 high school students, and 20 university students in historical-humanistic disciplines. The goal of the study was to establish the historical information that non-professional readers could identify in the text, and assess its ease of understanding and memorization. Two taxonomies were constructed, both important in their own way. The first one addressed the source and aimed to distinguish between textual and para-textual information. The introduction of a second profiling enables the categorization of readers' results based on gender, age, and previous knowledge, in order to account for potential variations among users. Although not universally valid, these study results create a starting point for exploring the potential of manga and comics in public history or as a tool for classroom instruction at the middle and high school levels. It's possible to assess the reception of information, its source (text and/or image), and the level of detail it can provide. We can assess the level of comprehension provided by a concise text and the enhancements that visual aids provide.

As mentioned before, this use is only possible with works that come from detailed and thorough historical research. In this regard, Rose Garden's performance of is nearly flawless. Nevertheless, the results obtained are overwhelmingly positive, especially when contrasted with traditional teaching approaches.

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BIO I graduated from the University of Pisa with a master's degree in contemporary history (2021, summa cum laude); I later specialised in Artificial Intelligence for digital humanities at the University of Naples (2024, summa cum laude), with a thesis revolved around developing a digital Latin corpus for translating classical authors. Cultural and literary history are at the forefront of my research interests, with a particular emphasis on gender perspectives. My most significant contributions to date have revolved around how female characters are depicted in British clue-puzzle detective stories. Over the past few months, I've expanded my focus to examine also the representation of women in Japanese anime and manga, giving special attention to the impact of moe and kawaii characterizations.

VASSILOGLOU, GEORGE

PANEL Sunday 12:15-13:45 Comics in Cultural Studies: Cold War and Contested Identities

ABSTRACT Exploring Cold War through comics; the Greek case (1970-1990)

The Cold War was a turning point in the history of the last century. The synthesis of a bipolar world, due to the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, formed our modern international political and economic relations (Karvounarakis 2012, p. 11). Nowadays, the Cold War is a field of the collective imagination that has not received the same attention from the research community as the two major conflicts of WWI and WWII. In this void, human experience, in its complexity, can yield fruitful factual material, which relates to cultural memory and mediates the research framework of myths, narratives and identities of particular communities (Farbøl 2017, pp. 149, 150). Comic books are a field that highlights the fact that the Cold War was more than just a confrontation between economic and political centres of power. Cultural Studies helps us to approach this historical phenomenon beyond the dogmatic framework of a bipolar representation. Thus, this paper, through greek comics of the Cold War period, attempts to explore the cultural history of greek youth communities during the second half of the twentieth century and, via the continuities (but also the breakthroughs) of radical social groups (especially in youngsters and student movements of the period), discusses culture and the resulting aspects of its politicization. The border among culture, pop culture, subculture and counterculture. The experience of reading comic books as a cultural practice.

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L. Abu-Lughod. 1991. 'Writing Against Culture', Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present, [R. G. Fox (ed.)], Santa Fe:School of American Research Press.

Mark Mazower. 1999. Dark Continent, Penguin.

BIO George Vassiloglou studied History at the Department of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace and continued his postgraduate studies in History, Anthropology and Culture in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe at the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies at the University of Macedonia and is currently a PhD Candidate in the same department. The topic of his doctoral thesis is 'Comics and the Cold War in Greece (1970-1990; readings of a visual culture of everyday life'.

PANEL Monday 8-9:30 Comic Constructions: Creating Cultural Memory

ABSTRACT Chronicles in Stone: Thierry Robin's Depiction of Hailongtun Tusi Fortress Through Comics

This paper presents an in-depth analysis of Thierry Robin's comic "Hailongtun," focusing on the historical significance of the Hailongtun Tusi Fortress in Zunyi, Guizhou, in southwest China. Renowned for his profound engagement with Chinese culture and his seminal work "Rouge de Chine," Robin explores new creative territory by crafting a comic that delves into Chinese history and culture. The comic centers on the well-known Battle of Hailongtun in 1600, a pivotal event that significantly contributed to the Ming Dynasty's decline. Robin's preparatory work for creating this comic includes extensive archival research and on-site visits to capture crucial historical details.

This study adopts a framework akin to historical visual ethnography, utilizing comics as primary source material to elucidate historical and cultural narratives. The analysis is structured around three principal dimensions:
1. Historical Narrative: This facet involves a detailed examination of the portrayal of the battle within the comic, analyzing how the confrontation between the Ming army and the forces of the local Tusi is depicted. The analysis entails a comparative assessment with historical records and legends to gauge historical accuracy.
2. Visual Content Analysis: This dimension involves a meticulous examination of the various characters depicted in the comic, including the Tusi chieftain, his wives, soldiers, and civilians. Their portrayal is evaluated for accuracy against historical texts from the Ming Dynasty, with particular emphasis on attire, appearance, weaponry, and other visual details.
3. Critique of Orientalism: This study critically evaluates how Chinese history is represented by a French artist for a global audience, recognizing the dual distance, both cultural and temporal, confronted by the artist. The resulting comic is examined for potential Orientalist tendencies, offering insights into cross-cultural interpretation and representation.
This research not only contributes to the field of comic studies but also provides a nuanced understanding of historical representation and cultural exchange through the medium of visual art.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING
Herman, John E. 2006. "The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China's Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier." In Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China, edited by Pamela Kyle Crossley, Donald S. Sutton, and Helen F. Siu, 135-168. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Swope, Kenneth M. 2011. "To Catch a Tiger: The Suppression of the Yang Yinglong Miao Uprising (1587–1600) as a Case Study in Ming Military and Borderlands History." In New Perspectives on the History and Historiography of Southeast Asia, edited by Kenneth R. Hall and Michael Aung Thwin, 112-140. London: Routledge.

Noordam, Barend. 2023. "Heart-minds and Harquebuses: The Bozhou Rebellion in China (1587-1600)." Small Wars & Insurgencies 34(3): 627-669.

BIO Peng-hui Wang earned her PhD in Anthropology from the Department of Anthropology at National Taiwan University. Her research pursuits are anchored in ethnic studies within

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Amy Matthewson is a historian interested in race relations, identity, epistemologies, and visual and material cultures with particular focus on China in the British imagination in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, currently Associate Professor in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham. She holds a PhD in History from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and is a founding member of Asia Collections Network (ACN), a global platform for those with specialist knowledge of and involvement in collections of the arts and artefacts of Asia. Her book *Cartooning China: 'Punch,' Power, & Politics in the Victorian Era* (2022) explores the series of cartoons of China and the Chinese in the popular British satirical magazine Punch that were created over a sixty-year period from 1841-1901. You can see more on her website here.

Elizabeth Allyn Woock is an assistant professor in the Department of English and American Studies at Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Her work focuses on medieval history and medievalisms, as well as comics studies and comics-based research. She is interested in exploring how the comics format can be harnessed for academic writing and takes every opportunity to explore this methodology. Her upcoming book *Medieval Spaces in Comics Affect and Ideology* (2024) proposes a conceptual framework for analyzing and discussing narrative space in comics, and explores the communicative possibilities of the comics format through illustrating key sections of the text. You can see more on her website here.

ABOUT THE COMICS LAB

The Comics Lab is a pilot program run by Dr. Woock under the auspices of the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Palacky University in Olomouc. The Lab is designed to be a hub for collaboration, research, and event organization. In 2024, the Lab invited Comics Studies experts like Simon Grennan, Clari Searle, and Andrea Hoff to lead workshops and lectures with local students. The Lab is also planning activities such as a Graphic Novel Reading Rooms throughout Olomouc, booths at Czech Researchers' Night, and other events. The Lab also works in international collaborations with a range of networks and teams which align with the current research interests of the Lab. Updates on the Lab can be found on Dr. Woock's personal website.

ABOUT PALACKY UNIVERSITY

Palacký University Olomouc (UP) is an internationally respected and scientifically and academically highly productive university in Central Europe. Founded 22 December 1573, it is the second-oldest university in the Czech Republic and the oldest one in Moravia. For 450 years it has contributed to the intellectual wealth of society and to its scientific, cultural, and social development. Read more here.

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THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS, AMY MATTHEWSON AND ELIZABETH ALLYN WOOCK, WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE PARTICIPANTS, AUDIENCE MEMBERS, AND OUR ESTEEMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT HAPPEN. WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE CONVERSATIONS STARTED HERE WILL SPARK MORE EXCELLENT SCHOLARLY WORK TO COME!

HISTORY IN COMICS
2024 THEME: COMPREHENDING COMICS

The advancement of comics-based research offers new potential for the study of history and the social sciences; it is a crucial time to reflect and take stock of current practice and possible future directions!

Did you enjoy the conference "Comprehending Comics: Exploring Methodologies and Approaches to Comic Studies in History and the Social Sciences"? We're working on further projects, and we'd love to bring you along!

You can find contact information, future Calls for Papers, information about past projects, and updates on current projects on this website: