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### Message from the Chair of 'Women in Comics II'

Last year the first 'Women in Comics' Conference was held at The New Hall Collection, Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. It was a great success and as I was told 'everyone loves a sequel', I am delighted to be chairing 'Women in Comics II', here in Leeds Art Gallery on 18th November 2010.

This 'Women in Comics II' conference, like its predecessor, celebrates the growing interest in women in comics, in women reading comics, in women writing about comics, in women making comics. Our aim at these conferences is to be supportive of creative and academic endeavours in all these fields. The atmosphere we engender is one of mutual interest and encouragement, to benefit the continued growth in this community.

There is wonderful array of speakers lined up for today's conference. I am particularly delighted by the range of nationalities present on the panels, and the opportunity to bring together different generations of women creators. Thanks go to those who have travelled extensively to be here, including Maureen Burdock from New Mexico, and The Danish *Penneveninder* (Penfriends), Monica Hee Eun Jensen, Rikke Hollaender, Karen Hansen and Ina Kjoelby Korneliussen. It is also a great honour to welcome Suzy Varty to 'Women in Comics II'. Her publication 'Heroine', was the first all women's comic to be published in the UK in 1977, and is the front cover of our programme.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the 'Women in Comics' Committee, including Catriona MacLeod and Rikke Platz Cortsen, for expertly managing the call for papers, Nicola Streeten for her technical skills, Dr Laurence Grove for his advice and support, Dr Mel Gibson for her support and suggestions, and our volunteers Harriet Kennedy and Emily Rabone.

Thanks also go to Lisa Wood, Director of Thought Bubble, and Leeds Art Gallery for generously hosting Comics Forum, and to our sponsors, University of Glasgow, University of Chichester, Alexander Street Press, Intellect, Liverpool University Press, and Routledge. I am also indebted to the talented Ben Gaskell (Molakoe) for all his design work.

My greatest thanks go to Ian Hague for hosting 'Women in Comics II' this year as part of Comics Forum, and I am grateful for, and impressed by, his ingenuity and organisational skills.

Wishing you a inspiring, enriching and enjoyable day,

Sarah Lightman

## Welcome to Comics Forum 2010

As Roger Sabin marked up in his keynote address at 'Possibilities and Perspectives: A Conference on Comics' in 2009, British journalists, fan-scholars and the occasional academic have been publishing on comics since at least as early as Elizabeth Pennell wrote on 'The Modern Comic Newspaper' in 1886. If we cast a wider net into international writing, we may even find examples of what is arguably comics scholarship earlier than that, in the writings of Swiss pioneer Rodolphe Töpffer in his 1845 work *Essai de physiognomie*, for example.

Nevertheless, even until fairly recently it could be asserted that comics scholarship was a somewhat loose and disorganised field. Certainly, pioneering publications such as *The Comics Journal* and *FA* provided outlets for rigorous thinking on the subject of comics, but it was perhaps not until the first issue of *The International Journal of Comic Art* appeared in 1999 that the academic study of the medium gained a stable focal point. In the years since the foundation of that journal, the field has gone from strength to strength and gained substantially in its visibility within mainstream academia and discourse.

Of course, this is not entirely down to the efforts of one journal, and we must also note the increasing prominence of comics and comics-related works in films, television, video games and fine art as a key contributor to the growing cultural cache afforded to the medium, and consequently to the respect comics are now beginning to be paid in academia. Comics, to put it simply, are cool.

In light of this increasing stability and visibility, it should come as little surprise that the field of comics scholarship has begun to gain momentum in recent years, particularly in Britain. 2008 saw the launch of *European Comic Art*, a peer-reviewed scholarly journal on comics, from Liverpool University Press. 2009 brought the publication of *A Comics Studies Reader* from the University Press of Mississippi, a clear indication not just of the maturation of a vague field of scholarship, but of an academic discipline. 2010 brought us the first issues of *Studies in Comics* (Intellect) and *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (Routledge), along with the launch of Alexander Street Press' collection of Underground and Independent Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels, each of which will contribute further strength and cohesion to this burgeoning field.

Comics Forum is, in its own way, intended to contribute to that sense of cohesion and organisation by bringing together scholars and practitioners from disparate places and disciplines, and providing a location for debate and discussion. We very much hope that these two days will prove stimulating, productive and perhaps even inspiring for speakers and audience alike, and look forward to the lively panels we have lined up. A big thank you to all the speakers who have taken the time and effort to prepare work for Comics Forum; it is only thanks to your enthusiasm and hard work that this has been possible and we really do appreciate it!

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If you have any questions, comments, complaints or compliments either during or after Comics Forum 2010, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us on the email addresses above.

## Programme

**1000-1020: Registration**

**1025-1030: Opening Remarks**

[Sarah Lightman](#)

**1030-1130: Panel 1**

<b>Panel 1A: Superheroines</b>	<b>Panel 1B: International Perspectives</b>
<b>Chair:</b> <u><a href="#">Joan Omrod</a></u>	<b>Chair:</b> <u><a href="#">Janaya Lasker-Ferretti</a></u>
<u><a href="#">Nicola Streeten</a></u> <u>The Graphic Novel and the Ideal Woman</u>	<u><a href="#">Esther Claudio Moreno</a></u> <u>Marjane Satrapi's Postmodern Feminism</u>
<u><a href="#">Mervi Miettinen</a></u> <u>"Women in Refrigerators: The Problem of the Female in Superhero Comics"</u>	<u><a href="#">Ernesto Priego</a></u> <u>Lost in Translation: Autobiography, Bilingualism, Translation, Multiculturalism and Identity Politics in Jessica Abel's La Perdida</u>
<u><a href="#">Efrat Daskal</a></u> <u>"We Choose Not to Be Chosen" – Feminism and Buffy the Vampire Slayer Comics</u>	

**1135-1215: *Penneveninder* (Penfriends)**

[Monica Hee Eun Jensen](#), [Rikke Hollaender](#), [Karen Hansen](#) and [Ina Kjoelby Korneliussen](#),

Chair: [Sarah Lightman](#)

**1215-1230: Break**

**1230-1315: Panel 2**

<b>Panel 2A: Autobiography</b>	<b>Panel 2B: Scandinavian Strips</b>
<b>Chair:</b> <u><a href="#">Olga Michael</a></u>	<b>Chair:</b> <u><a href="#">Rikke Platz-Cortsen</a></u>
<u><a href="#">Helen Iball</a></u> <u>Bobby Baker: boxing herself in, drawing herself out</u>	<u><a href="#">Margereta Wallin Victorin</a></u> <u>To reflect or construct oneself – contemporary autobiographical or autofictional comics by some young women in Sweden</u>
<u><a href="#">Sam McBean</a></u> <u>Family Time: The Queer Family Tree in Alison Bechdel's <i>Fun Home</i></u>	<u><a href="#">Malin Bergström</a></u> <u>Post-Feminist Cultures in Contemporary Scandinavian Comics</u>

**1315-1400: Lunch**

**1400-1445: [Suzy Varty](#) and [Maureen Burdock](#)**

Chair: [Mel Gibson](#)

**1450-1550: Panel 3**

<b>Panel 3A: Women in British comics through time</b>	<b>Panel 3B: Manga</b>
<b>Chair:</b> <a href="#">Catriona MacLeod</a>	<b>Chair:</b> <a href="#">Sally Jane Thompson</a>
<a href="#">Maggie Gray</a> <a href="#">Hanging Out with Halo Jones – the first feminist comics heroine?</a>	<a href="#">Ian Scales</a> <a href="#">Male on Male Sexual Relationships in Yaoi Fiction: the Role of the Woman Inside and Outside of Yaoi Texts (and Slash Fiction)</a>
<a href="#">Matt Green</a> <a href="#">Promethean Violence: Women, Revolution and Community in the Works of Alan Moore and William Blake</a>	<a href="#">Anna Madill</a> <a href="#">Girls love “Boys’ Love”: Exploring sexuality and gender in Japanese manga</a>
<a href="#">Roger Sabin</a> <a href="#">Tootsie Sloper (1870s-1920s): pioneering female character</a>	<a href="#">Amy Christmas</a> <a href="#">Skin Deep: Performative Identities in David Mack’s <i>Kabuki</i></a>

**1555-1645: [Teal Triggs](#)**

[Fan Culture: Not Forgetting Katy Keene \(1945-1961\)](#)

**Chair:** [Matthew Reisz](#)

[Mel Gibson](#)

Summing up and ‘where do we go from here?’

## Abstracts

### **The Graphic Novel and the Ideal Woman**

Nicola Streeten

Not even girls want to be girls so long as our feminine archetype lacks force, strength, and power.... Women's strong qualities have become despised because of their weakness. The obvious remedy is to create a character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman.

Philip Charles Crawford, An enlightening look at the feminist ideals that informed this American icon (School Library Journal, 3/1/2007)  
(<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6417196.html>)

In this paper I will show how female characters in selected American and European graphic novels of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect a pluralism that exists in feminist theory today. I will compare the comic super-heroine Wonder Woman in her role as a feminist ideal with the presentation of female characters in examples of recent graphic novels such as *Cancer made me a Shallower Person* by Miriam Engelberg, *Couch Fiction* by Philippa Perry and *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi.

Such a comparison will evidence a complex presentation of how images of women work both within theoretical terms as presented by feminists such as Laura Mulvey and within the context of the graphic novel. The 1940s Wonder Woman presented a simplistic understanding of the ideal woman within the simplistic comic book position. In contrast the 21<sup>st</sup> Century graphic novel has expanded to accommodate more complicated subject matters and styles and developed to incorporate differing presentations of women. The very nature of the graphic novel form, the interaction of the image and text, assists in facilitating this process.

By contrasting Wonder Woman with modern day graphic novel characters the temptation is to call for a replacement super-heroine, a modern ideal woman within the graphic novel context. However I will show that this is too superficial an approach for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and 21<sup>st</sup> Century feminism. The role of women is one of intricacy that demands more than one ideal. The graphic novel offers a vehicle for the multifarious emerging voices and possibilities within feminism.

### **Women in Refrigerators: The Problem of the Female in Superhero Comics**

Mervi Miettinen

From Wonder Woman to the Dark Phoenix and beyond, the female superhero's power and its threat to male hegemony has been discussed several times. Female characters in the superhero universe do, however, occupy another central position that is often overlooked: the girlfriend, to whom the hero confides his secret identity, and who consequently often becomes the hero's "assistant" (Madrid, 2009). Rarely in possession of superpowers like her partner, the girlfriend immediately becomes a weakness, a potential victim no longer protected by her ignorance – and from the death of Gwen Stacy to the shooting of Barbara Gordon, meets a violent fate that is transformed into the male hero's tragedy. This phenomenon has been identified by Gail Simone (1999) as the "women in refrigerators" syndrome: how the death or injury of a female comic book character is deployed as a plot device in a story that focuses a male superhero. This violent "narrative device" is a highly problematic development within the overtly masculine genre, depicting women as nothing more than access points into the male character. As Simone poignantly notes, it is far from healthy to be a female character in a male-dominated genre, as their fate has often been grim: either "depowered, raped, or cut up and stuck in the refrigerator", the female character is faced with a very slim chance of survival.

It is from this premise that this presentation will seek to discuss and problematise the position of the female within the superhero narrative and to question the narrative trope of raping, mutilating and killing female characters as “just” a plot device. I will approach this problem through DC’s acclaimed Identity Crisis miniseries (2004), which not only deploys this trope, but posits as its villain a very unlikely candidate – another superhero girlfriend.

## **“We Choose Not to Be Chosen” – Feminism and Buffy the Vampire Slayer Comics**

### **Efrat Daskal**

Super-heroine characters have always been the focus of much academic research. Having examined these characters from political and social standpoints, studies have demonstrated how they manifest the social and political zeitgeist of the women's liberation movement over the years (Inness, 1999; Fingerioth, 2004).

The character, Buffy Summers, was first introduced in a movie entitled “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” (1992) and later, in a television series (1997-2003) bearing the same name. The series depicted the adventures of a woman warrior, as an extended metaphor for the struggles of women today. Over the years, the series became a cultural phenomenon and its characters became feminist icons, for television critics and academic scholars (Early, 2001; Wilcox, 2005).

The series was cancelled in 2003; however, in 2007, the story was continued in the official Buffy comics, known as “Buffy the Vampire Slayer - Season 8”. Following the footsteps of the television series, the comics continue to enjoy financial and artistic success.

Through the use of narrative and visual content analysis, I will analyse the comics from two perspectives. The first concerns the new medium that enabled the creators of the story to reach new levels of creativity, in the narration of the story as well as in the graphic art. The second perspective, which evolved from the first, examines the feminist issues presented in the comics, such as femininity and masculinity, sisterhood, and a woman’s right to choose whether to be a feminist.

To conclude, I will discuss the social and political implications of addressing these issues in comics. I will demonstrate that these comics not only reflect existing trends in political feminist discourse, but also have the potential to forecast future developments in this field.

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## **Marjane Satrapi’s Postmodern Feminism**

### **Esther Claudio Moreno**

As Chandra Mohanty comments in her influential article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses" Western feminism has slanted the reality of many women of different races, classes or origins. The postmodern emphasis on difference has thus become an opportunity for many women who

felt excluded from mainstream feminism to raise their voices and rewrite history. These voices have criticized the creation of a stereotype of an oppressed woman which, especially in the so-called Third World, seems to constitute a homogeneous block of women with no means or initiative. Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* is a rich and meaningful work which actively contests such clichés. Due to all her experiences in Iran and abroad, Satrapi's identity is formed at the crossroads of two cultures, Western and Eastern, and throughout the novel, she must come to terms with both worlds. Hence, Marjane Satrapi revels in the middle ground between confronting stances, with images that can show the real complexity both of the situation in her country and of her personal life. In this paper, we will study the creation of an identity for Marjane Satrapi's character at the crossroads between the East and the West. With this aim, we will analyze, on the one hand, the image that the comic projects of both cultures – their relationships, their representations, the interpretation that the author offers of them and their connotations. On the other hand, we will study her depiction of Muslim Iranian women. We will propose that the comic presents and effectively insists on the heterogeneities and contradictions which problematize the homogeneous and simplistic image of Iran and of women like Satrapi herself in order to question the image of Western women as the paradigm of modern feminism. In light of this, we will suggest that *Persepolis* constitutes an essential contribution to the debate and reflection about the role of women in comics - a debate to which, it is hoped, this paper will contribute and enhance.

### **Lost in Translation: Autobiography, Bilingualism, Translation, Multiculturalism and Identity Politics in Jessica Abel's *La Perdida***

#### **Ernesto Priego**

This presentation will draw from my involvement as "cultural consultant" and Spanish translator in the award-winning comic book series (and later graphic novel) by Jessica Abel, *La Perdida* (2001-2006). *La Perdida* is the story of Carla, a Mexican-American young woman who lives in the US and who has never been to Mexico. She goes to Mexico City on a journey of self-discovery, facing along the way the dark side of a culture troubled by cultural and financial resentment.

I collaborated with Jessica Abel from the very first stages of the creative process, and saw *La Perdida* transformed from an abstract idea to rough drafts, then scans and a script, then a comic book series for Fantagraphics, then a hardcover graphic novel for Penguin/Pantheon. I also translated and re-translated the complete edition for the Spanish publisher, Astiberri (2006).

In this paper I will discuss how my involvement as a Mexican in the creation of this graphic story about US-Mexico relations and identity politics informed the different stages of my critical understanding of it. The paper will combine biographical elements (also detailed in the graphic novel itself through the character 'Ernesto') with a critical engagement of the work discussing the implications of American English/Mexican Spanish bilingualism in comics and the later translation of the work from American English/Mexican Spanish into Continental Spanish.

It has been a decade since I first discussed with Jessica Abel the plot of *La Perdida*. Throughout the years I have read and re-read the book in different formats and editions and translated Jessica's English and my own Mexican Spanish into the Spanish of Spain. This paper will revisit my appraisal of it, in order to hopefully unveil the complex identity politics at stake in the graphic novel.





## **Bobby Baker: boxing herself in, drawing herself out**

### **Dr Helen Iball**

In this paper, I take as my starting point Sidonie Smith and Julie Watson's observation that 'frequently women's artistic production of the autobiographical occurs at the interface' of 'visuality' and 'textuality'. The recent exhibition *Bobby Baker's Diary Drawings: Mental Illness and Me*, 1997-2008 (19 March-2 August 2009, Wellcome Collection, London) presented such an interface through captioned images. Taking *Diary Drawings* as my vantage point, I look to Baker's performance art and, particularly, *How to Live* (2004) - for which she switched her habitual 'expert housewife' persona for that of 'self-help guru'. I propose that, on a meta- level, interfaces to be discovered between the drawings and Baker's performances facilitate consideration of the personal and socio-political efficacy of autobiographical art forms.

## **Family Time: The Queer Family Tree in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home***

### **Sam McBean**

Alison Bechdel's autobiographical graphic novel, *Fun Home* (2006), intricately weaves together her own coming out story with her family's history, particularly her father's closeted queer sexuality and later possible suicide. An exploration of archives and memory, truth and artifice, Bechdel's story not only pushes the graphic novel genre to new autobiographical heights, it also engages with contemporary queer historiography. In telling the story of growing up in her family home, Bechdel resists a more traditional linear genealogy in favour of a queer narrative where temporality is circular at best, desires intersect across time and texts, and events (such as literature, family photographs, family vacations and political controversies) are continually open to re-readings. Bechdel's 'Family Tragicomic' is not only a reconstruction and troubling of linear narratives of history, 'coming out,' and closeted identity, but indeed, it is also a story about 'family time.' Bechdel's rich narrative troubles family time through investigating how both her and her father's gender, sexuality, and desires intersect, invert, and puncture dominant heteronormative family scripts. This paper will use Marianne Hirsch's work in *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (1997) to investigate how Bechdel's reproduction of family photographs in *Fun Home* queers the family album with questions of temporality, cross-gender identification, and queer desires. Through the medium of the graphic novel, Bechdel works through and explores alternative genealogies, paths of desire, and widens the concept of family lineage. In the current climate where marriage and homonormative family values so dominate Western LGBTQ queer public discourse, it is my hope that this paper will think through how Bechdel's project, and perhaps even graphic novels as a medium more generally, might contribute to forging an alternative understanding of and relation to queer family time.

## **To reflect or construct oneself – contemporary autobiographical or autofictional comics by some young women in Sweden**

### **Margareta Wallin Wictorin**

The autobiographical comic has become an increasingly important genre in many European countries since the beginning of the 1990s. Autobiography can be a way for a real person to give a retrospective narrative of her own existence, where the focus is her individual life and, in particular, the story of her personality. (Beaty 2009) The genre has become popular in Sweden, where often the authors are young women, like Anneli Furmark, Åsa Grennvall, Johanna Rubin Dranger, Coco Moodysson and Malin Biller. But is it biography or fiction the readers are offered to take part of? Is it reflection or construction?

In my presentation I will give some examples of how "realism"/non fiction can be indicated and contradicted in the comics/graphic novels by these women via the use of different verbal or visual means, for example different degrees of visual realism or stylisation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). Leigh



Gilmore's categories of autobiographic storytelling in terms of different kinds of narrators will also be presented and tested (the historical person, the autobiographically constructed person, the author's/artist's voice through the writing/drawing, and the characters within the written/pictorial text). (Gilmore 1994).

## **Post-Feminist Cultures in Contemporary Scandinavian Comics**

### **Malin Bergström**

My research focuses on the thought processes and psychology represented in comics through imagery and the symbolism of details that support the narrative. Scandinavian popular comics and graphic novels often include contemporary artistic perspectives and illustrative solutions, where the narrative is often concise, and the imagery as well as the lay-out is simplified without compromising the idea and value of the story. A significant amount of contemporary comics practice is executed within the autobiographical or biographical tradition. Usually set out in black-and-white and often published outside corporate publishing houses, the open diary format is not only a technique that is accessible for every person to create and develop, but also one that allows the audience to approach it individually because of the freedom in the artistic influences and storytelling solutions.

This paper will consider the comics of independent publisher Kaisa Leka, focusing on the open diary aspect of her work, which is situated alongside and informed by other Scandinavian illustrator/writers, such as Anna-Karin Elde, Joanna Rubin Dranger and Åsa Grennwall. The narrative and illustration of their work exercise a wide range of possibilities in the presentation of ideas, emotion, opinions and stories. These women address issues of confidence, social acceptance, religion and health from a post-feminist perspective, translating them into confessional tales through which they speak to their audience, allowing readers to access their inner monologues and relate to them through the diarised styles.

## **Hanging Out with Halo Jones – the first feminist comics heroine?**

### **Maggie Gray**

The eponymous protagonist of Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's *The Ballad of Halo Jones* was described in The Observer as 'possibly the first feminist heroine in comics'. This paper will consider the extent to which a character created by male practitioners and featuring in a popular science fiction weekly can be said to have truly subverted the conventionally sexist representation of women in mainstream Anglophone comics of the time.

It will briefly summarise standard portrayals of female characters in contemporary British and American mainstream comics and demonstrate how Moore and Gibson transcended that model in terms of narrative and visual style, composition and structure. I will argue that their freedom to do so was contingent on the specific production context of 2000AD in the mid-1980s, in terms of its editorial outlook, political attitude and relation to its readership.

However, this paper will predominantly discuss how *The Ballad of Halo Jones* engaged with the theories, practices and culture of the second-wave feminist movement (including feminist comix): how it refracted key debates about class, work, the family, imperialism, rape and violence, and related to the different positions taken by liberal, radical and socialist feminists. It will also consider how these debates were tempered by the experiences of women under Thatcherism, and relate the strip to the shifting concerns of third-wave feminism, particularly regarding pornography, sex-positivity, and gender essentialism. Finally it will discuss the ways in which the strip aligned philosophical reflections on sex and gender with questions of the nature of representation in the comics medium itself.

While it remains a contradictory work, I will argue that Halo Jones marked a significant self-conscious engagement with both feminist criticism of comics and feminist activism that paved the way for more challenging female characterisation and contributed to substantial debates within comics fandom.

## **Promethean Violence: Women, Revolution and Community in the Works of Alan Moore and William Blake**

### **Matt Green**

Focusing on Blake's illuminated poem *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and Moore's *Promethea*, this paper will explore the significance of gender to current conceptualisations of revolutionary violence. Published in 1793, Blake's *Visions* engages with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and the revolutionary hopes ignited by the French Revolution through the figure of Oothoon, a prophetess who links gender equality with political emancipation and posits a direct link between sexual freedom and the socially-transformative power of the imagination. Similarly, Moore's *Promethea*, which contains verbal and visual references to Blake, presents a heroine whose mission is to overthrow the conceptual systems underpinning a materialistic and militaristic world that bears striking parallels to our own. That both Blake and Moore employ female heroines to articulate detailed critiques of the hegemonic systems of their respective epochs is significant in view of the fact that both also present examples of highly-problematic male revolutionary figures in other works, such as Moore's *V for Vendetta* and Blake's *Europe a Prophecy*.

While distinguishing masculinity and femininity from the sexing of bodies as male or female, this paper will argue that Moore and Blake contrast a sense of community as self-closed and sustained by an aggressive violence with an imagined community organised around an appreciation of openness and vulnerability, which both writers associate with the feminine. Theoretical material will be drawn from Judith Butler's discussions of community, vulnerability and the body, together with Chantal Mouffe's understanding of democracy as "agonistic" rather than "antagonistic". In conclusion, it will be argued that the visual and verbal representations of powerful women provided in *Visions* and *Promethea* provide a basis from which to articulate an understanding of communal strength organised around that experience of vulnerability which remains a constituent feature of being human.

## **Tootsie Sloper (1870s-1920s): pioneering female character.**

### **Roger Sabin**

Created by cartoonist, writer and humorist Charles Ross in the early 1870s, Tootsie Sloper is one of the great forgotten characters of British comics. She was a chorus girl at the 'Friv' Theatre, using her good looks to attract a number of unsuitable suitors, and appeared in various publications, first as a supporting character to her father, Ally Sloper, in his comics (the most famous of which being *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday* (1884)), and then in her own short-lived title *Tootsie Sloper: A journal of lightness, brightness and frivolity* (1899).

Tootsie's function in the early comics was to add light and shade to the humour. Ally Sloper was a drunk and reprobate, and many of the stories involved him flirting with Tootsie's pals at the Friv. Also, she provided a counterpoint to her mother, Mrs Sloper, a battleaxe who took the role of Ally Sloper's nemesis.

But as times changed towards the end of the 19th century, so Tootsie became a symbol of something else: the New Woman. In particular, she became a fashion icon, with new and ever-more elaborate outfits each week, and started to be central to gags about women's independence. It was no coincidence that the female readership for the Sloper comics shot up in this period.

Meanwhile, in the music halls, actresses queued to imitate Tootsie, and a new dimension was added to her persona via the stage - usually involving song and dance. Again, this was a time when the number of women frequenting the halls was rising.

This paper will explore the way in which Tootsie negotiated the comedic terrain between sexual titillation and glamour, and ultimately steered Victorian notions of 'Good Girl Art' in a more feminist direction.

### **Male on Male Sexual Relationships in Yaoi Fiction: the Role of the Woman Inside and Outside of Yaoi Texts (and Slash Fiction)**

#### **Ian Scales**

This paper seeks to explore issues related to the relatively recent emergence of the genre of Yaoi comic strips from Japan, authored by women and yet focused on male/male relationships. The homosexual tropes that these narratives construct intervene in the normative (heterosexual) negotiation/regulation of more canonical texts. It is this intervention of 'Yaoi' fiction in the dominant ideology that elicits my paper's questions: How is gender/sexuality portrayed? Does Yaoi fiction act as a voice for gay or feminist issues, or does it impose its own silences or repression? What role does the woman play in the stories?

Originally developed from fan interpretations of popular Manga heroes, Japanese publishers have embraced these often plot-light stories for official publication. Yaoi stories have also become prolific through fan forums on the internet where fans read and write their own fiction as well as discussing more official Yaoi stories. Interest in male/male pairings has also developed simultaneously within fan responses known as slash fiction in the West where, currently, television production teams are actively acknowledging the existence of male/male relationships, by hinting at same sex interpretations within their texts for predominantly female fan subgenres.

My paper will seek to assess how the genre of Yaoi comic fiction in particular appears to have developed along the same lines as slash fiction in the West. I will discuss how gender/sexual stereotypes are presented in the comic texts, specifically focusing upon the roles women as writers play in the process and the effects this produces on our understanding of male/female roles. This will involve the often asked question of why the writers are removing the woman from the text. Is there a sense of irony being played out in the comic strips and how are perceived 'silences' in society being articulated?

### **Girls love "Boys' Love": Exploring sexuality and gender in Japanese manga**

#### **Anna Madill**

Manga, a style of comic, is central to contemporary Japanese visual culture and has become a global phenomenon with translated editions consumed in their millions worldwide. Different kinds of manga, in terms of story-line, drawing style, and character type, are targeted to markets segmented by age and gender. However, there is manga for virtually every niche interest. Manga provides a rich source for visual and textual analysis and subject matter of potential interest to social and cultural psychologists. Boys' Love is a genre of manga portraying romantic and sexual relationships between young men and is targeted at, and largely consumed by, young, (mainly) heterosexual women. Boys' Love ranges in narrative complexity from multi-volume, emotionally intense love stories to short, 'mood' pieces characteristic of the sub-genre 'Yaoi' (an acronym of 'no-point-no-peak-no-meaning'). Dedicated female fans of Boys' Love are termed 'fujoshi', which translates literally as 'rotten girls'. From a feminist perspective, this, seemingly derogatory, label appears an attempt to stigmatise fujoshi resistance to hetero-normative masculinity. That is not to say, though, that Boys' Love texts are overtly political or, even, progressive. Indeed, in the main, Boys' Love appears to offer traditional, romantic narratives with conservative social values. However, the genre does invite readings that explore 'queer' female, heterosexual identities and women's anxieties around men's ability to be nurturing partners and fathers. Translated Boys' Love manga is available and increasingly

popular outside Japan and an English-language academic literature on Boys' Love exists in Japanese and East Asian Studies, Communication and Media Studies, and Gender Studies, but little or nothing in Psychology. This talk provides an introduction to Boys' Love manga, considers its implications for topics potentially of interest to (qualitative) psychologists, and presents some observations from my own research on the genre.

### **Skin Deep: Performative Identities in David Mack's *Kabuki***

#### **Amy Christmas**

This paper will consider the construction of the feminine self in the *Kabuki* comics series by David Mack (1994-2009). The comics follow eight masked female assassins, and while their assignments drive the plot, what substantiates the story is the paralleling personal journeys of two of the agents in particular: Kabuki and Scarab.

Joan Riviere's 1929 essay "Womanliness as a Masquerade" proposes that femininity is a consciously constructed "mask" that can be worn or discarded at will, to suit individual purpose and circumstance.<sup>1</sup> In more recent years, Judith Butler's theory of performativity draws heavily on this concept of masquerade, and her work on performed identities has been largely accepted as part of the working paradigm for gender studies.

Mack's characters embody a literal representation of the masquerading self. Drawing on a wealth of masked or concealed personas from the comics tradition, and informed by both Eastern and Western philosophies concerning the postmodern identity crisis, his comics depict the poignant journeys of women coming to terms with their sexualities, their societies, and themselves.

Using both Riviere and Butler as critical frameworks, this paper will give a comparative reading of the characters' respective self-actualising processes through their relationships with their Other, masked selves. Mack's work continues to speak volumes about women's perception of their own femininity, and the socio-historical roles that they play through a gendered identity, masked or otherwise.

1- See Athol Hughes, ed., *The Inner World and Joan Riviere: collected papers 1920 – 1958* (Karnac Books: London 1991), p. 94.

### **Fan Culture: Not Forgetting Katy Keene (1945-1961)**

#### **Teal Triggs**

While fan networks are not necessarily new (e.g. the first US movie fan magazine was founded in 1911), how many comic book characters can claim to be the focus of a loyal fan club and pen pals, with merchandising to match, and whose clothes, houses, and cars are created by the fans themselves? Created by American illustrator Bill Woggon (1911-2003), *Katy Keene* who made her debut in 1945, is part of a history of comic strips written about independent career women. Katy Keene was drawn to reflect the fashionable female image of America's fifties post-war period - less exotic 'pin-up', rather girl-next-door - but one with ambition and drive to make it as a successful career woman. What makes *Katy Keene* significant is the process by which the designs for her clothes, possessions and other elements of the graphic page like the lettering of the story titles, were submitted by fans. While not the first to use fans' drawings in a comic book, the way in which Woggon actively sent out a call to readers was unique. He would then redraw the designs to fit the comic book characters attributing each contribution with the fan's postal address. This paper will explore Katy Keene's comic book world and the way in which her creator broke down the barrier between artist and fan.

## Profiles

**Malin Bergström:** Malin Bergström is a comics illustrator and writer from Finland, based in York where she completed her BA degree in Literature and Fine Art, where she developed on the work she initially began researching during her foundation degree in Graphic Design and Illustration. She is currently working on her postgraduate thesis proposal in preparation for an MA in Literature (with a primary focus on comics and comic book practice), whilst publishing and exhibiting her work.

**Maureen Burdock:** Born in Germany in 1970, Burdock emigrated with her mother to the United States at the age of seven. During her childhood she frequently visited the art museums of Chicago, absorbing the work of artists who had the intention and power to change perspectives and social conditioning. Since then, Maureen Burdock's work has consistently addressed social issues. She has shown her paintings, drawings, artist's books, and installations at the Anti War Museum in Berlin, Germany; TAPP Gallery in Sydney, Australia; MECENAS Gallery in Juarez; Mexico; and Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, amongst others. Past projects include *The Womb is a Bunker: Exploration of Cellular Memory*, *The Politics of Purification* and *Collateral Damage*. These works dealt with the ways in which war affects civilians, especially women and children.

Burdock's current work, a series of graphic novellas, is titled *The F Word Project: Five Feminist Fables for the Twenty-first Century*. This project incorporates engaging stories, social messages, strong female superheroines, humor, and contemporary artworks. Burdock began this project in 2006, in response to the femicides in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The artist chose the graphic novel format because she wanted to tell these stories in words as well as in images, and because she intended to disseminate these stories to people outside of galleries and museums. Work from this project has received several awards, including recognition and a solo exhibition by Judy Chicago, renowned feminist artist and educator.

Burdock's work is represented in the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art Online Database and in the Center for Book Arts, New York: Artist Slide Registry.

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

**Amy Christmas:** I am a research student in the first year of my Ph.D (Cultural Studies and Critical Theory). My thesis investigates the impact of technoscience, using representations in the art world (literature, including comics, film and visual media) to gauge the cultural response to developments in biotechnologies and cybernetics. I have recently given papers on the construction of self in the work of French performance artist Orlan (Dublin City University), and the relational position of the individual in surveillance society (University of Tartu).

**Efrat Daskal:** I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Communication Studies Department at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My Ph.D. dissertation addresses the issue of media accountability from the public's point of view. My M.A. thesis explored the feminist influence of television drama series. I am a teaching assistant in various courses at Hebrew University as well as a lecturer at science fiction conventions in Israel.

**Mel Gibson:** Dr Mel Gibson works at Northumbria University, UK. She has written about women, girls and comics and about developing and promoting graphic novels and comic collections in libraries, schools, colleges and universities. Her National Teaching Fellowship has enabled her to establish a comics website <http://www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk/> and has helped support the development of both comics collections in libraries and comics scholarship in the UK and beyond.

**Maggie Gray:** Maggie Gray has just completed a PhD in the History of Art at University College London (UCL), entitled 'Love Your Rage, Not Your Cage' Comics as Cultural Resistance: Alan Moore 1971-1989. Her thesis addresses Moore's early work as a case study to consider the potential for the creation of

adversarial mass culture in the context of the rise of Thatcherism and New Right hegemony. This is situated in relation to critical theory and cultural studies, as the dominant poles that have framed theoretical debate around mass/popular culture. Maggie has taught comics, aesthetics, and the history of art and design at Middlesex University, St Martins College of Art and Design and UCL.

**Matt Green:** Dr. Matt Green has published widely on the works of William Blake and Lord Byron. His current work investigates the legacy of romanticism in popular culture with a view to further understanding of the relationship between literature and social change. His forthcoming publications include an article and chapter on Alan Moore, as well as two edited collections: *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terror* (co-edited with Piya Pal-Lapinski; Palgrave 2011) and *Alan Moore and the Gothic Tradition* (MUP, 2011). He is currently working on a monograph examining Blake's impact on Moore (and vice versa).

**Karen Hansen (Penneveninder - Pen Friends):** Karen Hansen (1975) studied at Swedish comic school Serieskolan. Her work is influenced by her everyday life, social life and sexuality. She is interested in playing with words - their connotations and symbolism and how they can take on negative connotations. Hansen's comic work is the rereading of fairy tales through a feminist lens, telling stories of lesbian life, love, struggle, sex and spirituality. Her work is published in the yearbooks of Serieskolan 2006-2007 and at Coretoon and Gimlestudio where she works on her own project each week. She contributed to the Danish Government Department of Social Affairs' *We Are All Equal* campaign for Danish primary schools in 2007 funded by the EU.

She is inspired by working with other comics artists and after years of looking for other women who do comics and searching for a group to join, she finally started the group Penfriends. Here she developed a unique environment to create, share and develop. It is her goal that comics will help and comfort everyone, regardless of race, sex, sexuality, age, disability or class. "Comics are something for everybody to read, a space and room of one's own" says Hansen.

**Rikke Hollænder (Penneveninder - Pen Friends):** When asked about her style, Hollænder's usual answer is something along the lines of: "Err.... European, I guess". While Hollænder's drawings are pretty simple, her stories are usually fairly odd, even when she is not collaborating with her older brother. She likes the genre she calls social-unrealism, and is currently working on a story about a man in outer space, but she is also looking forward her next project, a story about policemen.

Hollænder is a member of three different Danish comics networks; *Blæk* (Ink), *Ondskabens Flydende Vatikan* (Liquid Vatican of Evil), and *Penneveninder* (Penfriends). Hollænder has had comics in anthologies from all of these groups. Growing up, she read all the European classics such as *Lucky Luke* and *Asterix*, and while she still reads them from time to time, her taste has broadened quite a bit and she now reads just about any comic she can get her hands on, though she admits – not surprisingly – that she has a special interest in underground comics.

Hollænder spent the first six months of 2010 at The Drawing Academy in Viborg, doing classical drawing all day, and her day job is now drawing comics at a small studio. Self-employed and unpaid she is happy and always looking for new projects to work with her friends including a humor strip and a Christmas picture-book.

**Helen Iball:** Helen teaches in the Workshop Theatre in the School of English, University of Leeds. Her current project *Theatre Personal: audiences with intimacy, 1990-2010* received British Academy funding for interdisciplinary workshops and for conversations with theatre makers and audiences. Helen's publications include *Sarah Kane's Blasted* (2008) for Continuum Modern Theatre Guides and essays in *Bobby Baker: Redeeming Features of Daily Life* (Routledge 2007). Her recent and forthcoming publications address scenography, site-specificity and the ethics of One-to-One performance. [h.iball@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:h.iball@leeds.ac.uk)

**Monica Hee Eun Jensen (Penneveninder - Pen Friends):** Monica Hee Eun Jensen (1982), is also known as Tat, and to this day defines herself as a self-taught artist. In her artwork she addresses themes of stagnation and decadence, exhibitionism, abuse and egocentricity. Tat questions the effects of popular society's aesthetics, in both iconography and history.

Tat believes art is manifested as everything and everywhere, and that any creator and creative individual should be aware of this. In the last six years, Tat has focused on painting but also enjoys creating drawings, book illustrations, comics and other kinds of graphic work. For the last three years Tat has been an active visual art contributor for *The Poetic Bureau*. She has held two separate exhibitions, including portraits of women, and has illustrated publications including the Danish translation of Sacher-Masoch's classical novel *Venus in Furs* and modern Danish poet René Sandberg's *Ceremonien* (The Ceremony). Tat's enthusiasm for comics is evident in all of her artwork, although only recently has this taken the form of the more classical comic strip. Her latest comic *Hunden og parfumeflasken* is based on a prose poem by Charles Baudelaire's *Le chien et la flacon*. [www.tat-art-process.blogspot.com](http://www.tat-art-process.blogspot.com)

**Ina Korneliussen (Penneveninder - Pen Friends):** Ina Korneliussen's comics deal with ordinary women struggling with everyday life – mixed with voodoo, dinosaurs and magic realism. Her drawing style is packed with myriads of tiny details and she loves playing with the possibilities of silent comics.

Korneliussen has been making comics most of her life. Her first printed comic was *Typisk Piger* (Typical Girls), which ran in a monthly magazine for teenage girls when Korneliussen was herself just a teenager. Since then, she has participated in a number of anthologies, including the ambitious *Blæk* and *chezch Bubble Gun*. Together with writer Simon Petersen she has made two album-length comics, *Donut og Planke* (2005) and *Marianne* (2007). Korneliussen has an MA in Danish Literature and History of Art, with a thesis in 'Comics Narrative'. She occasionally teaches classes on how to make comics and is also the mother of a one-year old son, who has provided her with material for her latest comic *Fortællingen om dengang jeg fik en bamse* (The Story of Me Getting a Teddy Bear), to be published in November 2010. [www.inakorneliussen.com](http://www.inakorneliussen.com)

**Harriet Kennedy:** Harriet Kennedy is currently studying for an MPhil at the University of Glasgow with a project about Nationalism in Quebecois Comics.

**Janaya Lasker-Ferretti:** Janaya Lasker-Ferretti is a Ph.D. Candidate in Italian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is finishing her dissertation on the verbo-visual media by women of futurism, the first Italian avant-garde movement. Her other project, on the works of Italian women comic artists from 1960 to today, argues that graphic narrative gives women a more complex and nuanced way to narrate that is more in tune with their postmodern, female identity. These two lines of research are part of her larger book project that investigates and analyzes the relationship that Italian women have with word and image in the twentieth century.

**Sarah Lightman:** Sarah Lightman is an artist and curator currently researching a Ph.D. in 'Autobiographical Comics and Graphic Novels' at The University of Glasgow. She has written on autobiographical comics and visual diaries for *Studies in Comics* and *The International Journal of Comic Art*. Sarah co- founded Laydeez do Comics, a monthly autobiographical comics forum with Nicola Streeten. Sarah is curating *Graphic Details: Confessional Comics by Jewish Women*, with Michael Kaminer, which features 18 international artists. *Graphic Details* opened at The Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco in October 2010 and is touring to Toronto, New York and Michigan. [www.sarahlightman.com](http://www.sarahlightman.com)

**Catriona MacLeod:** Catriona MacLeod is currently in the third year of her PhD entitled 'Invisible Presence: The Representation of Women in the Francophone Bande Dessinée' at the University of Glasgow. Her recent publications include reviews for journal *European Comic Art* and her article 'Adopting and Adapting:



Ethnic Minority Women's Quest for Identity in the Bande Dessinée' will be published shortly in the forthcoming Peter Lang title *Adaptations*.

**Anna Madill:** Anna Madill is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Psychological Sciences at the University of Leeds. She specialises in the use of qualitative research methods. Anna is a Chartered Psychologist, a Chartered Scientist, and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She is Co-Founder and current Chair of the British Psychological Society Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section, is Associate Editor of the British Journal of Clinical Psychology, and is on the editorial boards of the British Journal of Social Psychology and the journal Qualitative Research in Psychology.

**Sam McBean:** I am entering my second year as a PhD student in the Department of English & Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London, exploring the connection between feminist history and emotions. I previously completed my Masters at the Gender Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science. My areas of interest include: feminist and queer historiography, feminism and temporality, popular representations of feminism, and affective attachments to feminism.

**Olga Michael:** Olga Michael completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cyprus in English Language and Literature in 2008. She continued with a Master's degree in American Cultural Studies at the University of Manchester which she completed in 2009. Her dissertation title was: *Boys Don't Cry and Milk: Mainstreaming the Representation of Queerness*. She is researching a PhD in the department of English and American Studies at the University of Manchester in *The Construction of Female Subjectivity in Autobiographical Comics by American Women Cartoonists*.

**Mervi Miettinen:** Mervi Miettinen is a PhD candidate at the University of Tampere in Finland. Her dissertation, tentatively titled "Superhero Comics and the Geopolitics of American Identity", focuses on superhero comics and their political and ideological dimensions in connection to American identity. After a year as a Fulbright scholar at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, she is currently finishing her Licentiate's thesis in Tampere.

**Esther Claudio Moreno:** Esther Claudio Moreno is a PhD student of English and North American literature at the University Complutense of Madrid. Her dissertation was on "Hyperreality and escapism in Robert Coover's The Universal Baseball Association Henry J. Waugh Prop." and her current thesis research deals with the notion of hyperreality and simulacra in contemporary North American literature, especially (but not limited to) Postmodernism. She has a scholarship from the Ministry of Education to work as a translator for the European Network on Education (Eurydice network) at the Spanish Institute for Educational Research and Innovation (IFIIE). Most of her papers have dealt with her current research, but she is also interested in anthropology and feminism. She has presented papers at international congresses such as "Women's Worlds / Mundos de Mujeres" 08/09 (Madrid) on "A brief history of Women's comics", at Vaxjö University on "Jimmy Corrigan: Breaking the reader's horizon of expectations" May '09 (Sweden) and at the University of Brown, Rhode Island (USA) on "Metafiction as Hyperreality: Simulation in Coover's works".

**Joan Ormrod:** Joan Ormrod's main areas of research are in audiences, subcultures and subcultural production. She teaches a range of courses including Youth: Cultures and Subcultures and Fantasy, Myth and Fairytales, in the Department of Media at Manchester Metropolitan University and co-edits Routledge's *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*.

**Rikke Platz Cortsen:** Rikke Platz Cortsen is a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Arts and Cultural Studies working on a thesis concerning time and space in comics. She recently hosted the international academic conference *Contemporary Comics* in Copenhagen with keynote speaker Jacques Samson and artist talk by Chris Ware. Writing articles on various aspects of comics, she also presented a paper on Swedish female comics artists at the first Women in Comics conference. She is on the editorial

board of the forthcoming Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art, Danish comics magazine STRIP! and the new Danish site on comics [www.nummer9.dk](http://www.nummer9.dk).

**Ernesto Priego:** Ernesto Priego wrote his PhD thesis about the materiality of comic books and digital media (UCL, 2010). His master's thesis was about traumatic structure in graphic narrative in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (UEA Norwich, 2003); his BA thesis explored how narratological tools could be used in the analysis of *Watchmen* (UNAM, 2001). He has been involved in comics scholarship for at least 15 years. He writes about graphic narratives for the Nieman Storyboard of Harvard University and other publications.

**Emily Rabone:** Emily Rabone is a final year undergraduate at the University of Leeds, studying English Language. She plans to take the *Autobiographics* module this year, which looks at graphic novels as a medium of expressing autobiographical experiences. Having been brought up in Tokyo, Emily has always read and been a fan of *Manga*. After moving to England at the age of 12, however, she was somewhat disappointed by the stereotypical image here of comic readers as 'geeky' and male-dominated; this was definitely not the case in Japan. Emily feels very strongly about the importance of the 'graphic novel' genre, and would list Osamu Tezuka's *Adolf* as one of the most inspirational books that she has read.

**Matthew Reisz:** Matthew J. Reisz was born and educated in London and studied Classics and French at Balliol College, Oxford. He has since worked as a journalist, editor, copy-writer, ghost-writer and translator. He was also for several years the editor of the Jewish Quarterly. Since June 2007, Reisz has been a full-time Features and News Writer for Times Higher Education, covering many different aspects of the university scene in Britain and beyond – from the decline of foreign language learning to the seven deadly sins of the academy. He won the 2009 award for Education Writer of the Year.

**Roger Sabin:** Roger Sabin is Reader in Popular Culture at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London. He is the author of *Adult Comics: An Introduction* (Routledge) and *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels* (Phaidon).

**Ian Scales:** I am currently researching a PhD in slash fiction at York St. John University. I am examining the role of the Masquerade in the female manipulation of male/male relationships in various texts based upon television series such as Star Trek, Merlin, and Sherlock. From slash fiction's humble beginnings in the seventies, I have enthusiastically followed the growing development of slash fiction via the mass emergence of internet forums. My focus is on the presentation of gender roles in popular fiction by a predominantly female demographic involved in producing slash fiction.

**Nicola Streeten:** Nicola Streeten has worked as a freelance illustrator since 1996 and is presently working on a graphic novel about making sense of life following the death of a child. This is being serialised in *Liquorice Magazine*, a quarterly publication Streeten produces in collaboration with her family. It will be published in book form in Autumn 2011. With artist Sarah Lightman, Streeten co-founded *Laydeez do Comics* in 2009, the first UK women-led graphic novel reading group that meets monthly in London. Streeten is working towards an MRes in Art Architecture and Design at the University of Lincoln.

**Sally Jane Thompson:** Sally Jane Thompson is a freelance illustrator and comic creator, currently completing an MA in art and design at the University of Derby, in which she is examining form and structure in comics, and the use of comics in museum and gallery interpretation. Academic work includes a recent paper ('Drawing the Self') in *Manga and Philosophy* from Open Court Publishing, and papers presented at Academic Perspectives in Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels (Växjö University, Sweden) and Reading After Empire (University of Stirling). Clients and collaborators include Derby Museum and Art Gallery, RE Today Services, IndieManga, Greenbelt Festival and Derbyshire and Yorkshire Libraries.

**Teal Triggs:** Teal Triggs is Professor of Graphic Design, Course Director for MA Design Writing Criticism, and co-Director of Information Environments (IE), at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. As a graphic design historian, critic and educator she has lectured internationally and her

writings have appeared in numerous design publications. She is author of *The Typographic Experiment: Radical Innovations in Contemporary Type Design*; co-editor with Roger Sabin of '*Below Critical Radar*': *Fanzines and Alternative Comics From 1976 to Now*. Her most recent book is *Fanzines* which provides a general overview of the history of this unique form of self-publishing.

**Suzy Varty:** I started my artistic life in Birmingham where my husband was at university, having ended the 60's pregnant on the cusp of the pill's availability.

We published an alternative magazine from the house and I became part of a vibrant art scene based around the Arts Lab. My visual diaries of the time led to comics, which had been a huge childhood influence. The Arts Lab Press guys started a comic's collective and I was the token woman, producing the first British Women's Comic in 1977.

I earnt a modest living in the arts from then on, and was published and exhibited at home and abroad, somehow managing to bring up my daughter mostly as a single parent, form a band, 'Twist' and do lots of modern dance classes.

I came back to my home city Newcastle in the mid 80's to work with "Them Wifies", a community arts collective and continued to use comics as my main medium. As a freelancer for the past 20 years I have organised an International Comic Art Festival for Visual Arts Year 1996, done many artists residencies and commissions, produced issue based comics, most recently for BBC publications, run cartooning courses for Newcastle University, worked in schools, libraries and youth clubs, designed greetings cards and generally tried to encourage people to be interested in comics.

I now spend time with my wonderful grandson and continue to work in my favourite medium of comics.

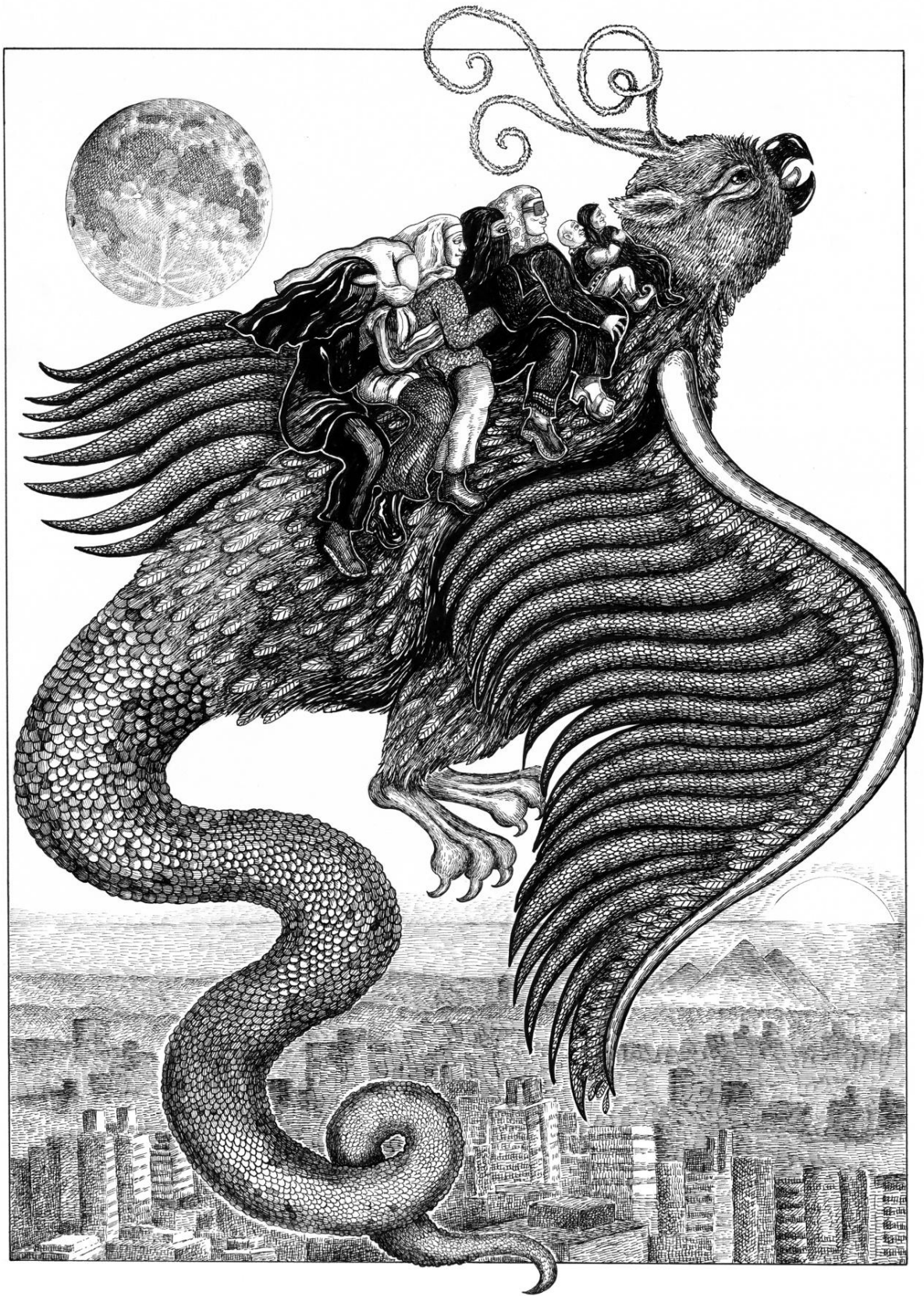
**Margareta Wallin Wictorin:** Dr. phil. Margareta Wallin Wictorin works as senior lecturer in Art History and Visual Studies at Linnaeus university in Växjö. She has written books and articles, and given presentations at international conferences, on graphic art, popular prints and imagery, press images, book illustrations, and manga, often with a gender perspective. In 2010 she will participate at the Nordic Africa Days in Åbo, Finland, with a presentation of Comics in Senegal.

Wallin Wictorin was leading organiser of the international conference "Academic Perspectives on Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels, as Intercultural and Intermedial Phenomena", in Växjö in April 2009, and is member of the editorial committee of the forthcoming web magazine Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art.

## Contributor Comics



Malin Bergström



**Maureen Burdock**

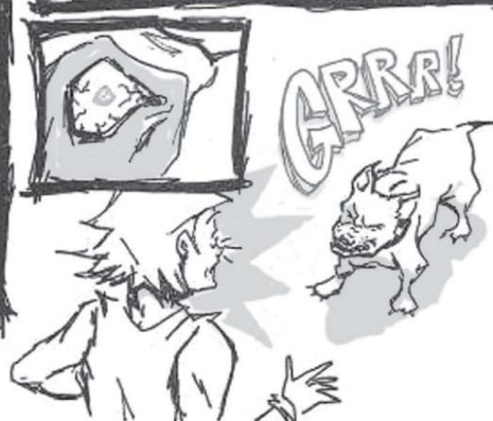


by Karen Hansen  
coretoon.dk and gimlestudio.dk

Karen Hansen

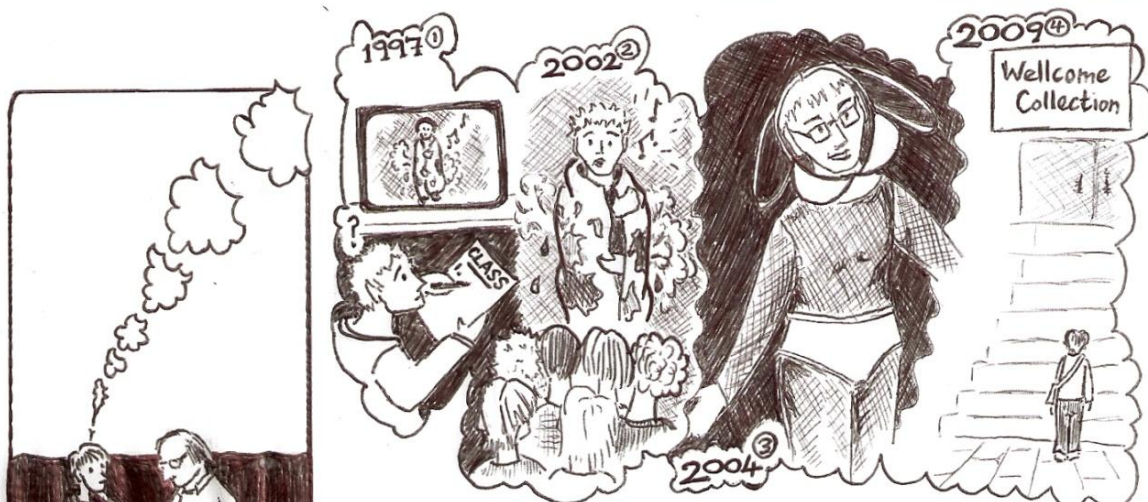
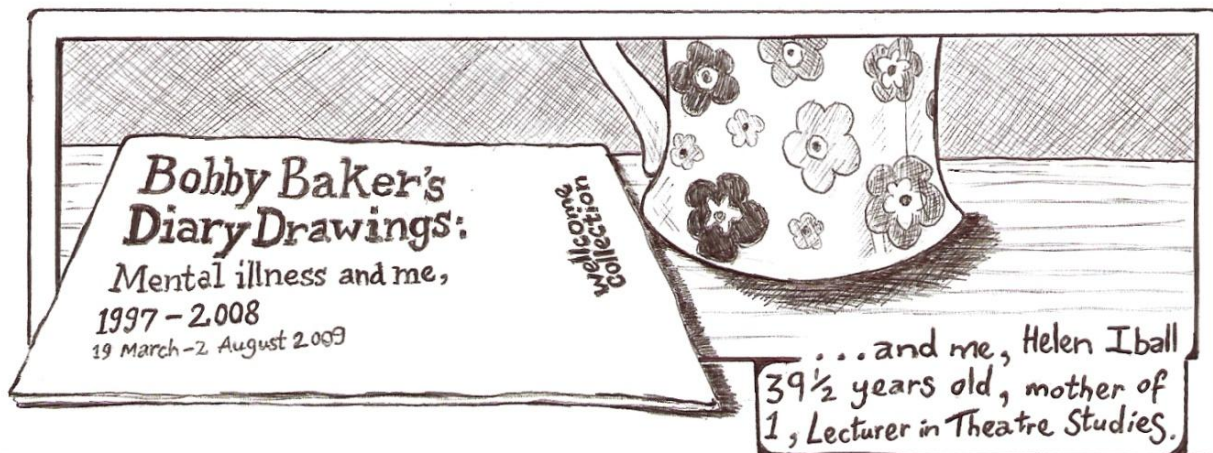


Baseret paa Baudelaires



Monica Hee Eun Jensen

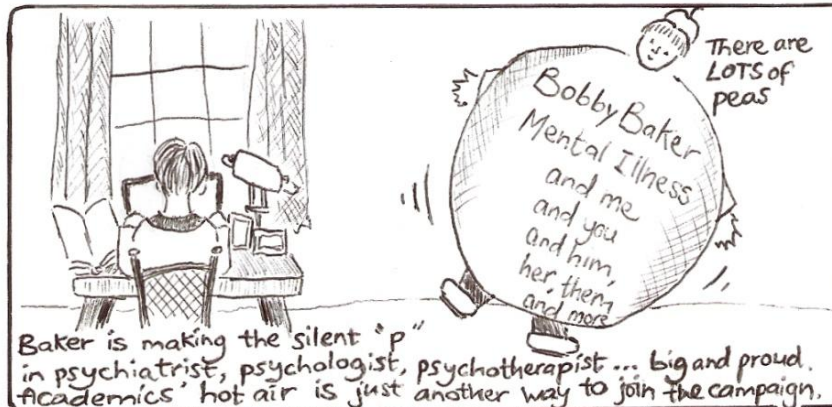




The Wellcome Trust security check of visitor baggage was too superficial to reveal the extent of my history with Bobby Baker. (Footnotes Keep it academic.)



I noticed everyone wanted to view drawings in SEQUENCE and talk about them.



### Footnotes

- ① Wondering how to share the mess and smell and pleasure of Baker's performance, Helen (Bobby Baker) Iball Draws Upon
- ② A mother myself since 1999, I perform Drawing on a Mother's Experience. N.B. (BRA on head ...)
- ③ Workshop led by Baker. I devise "Does my Brain Look Big in This?"
- ④ 2 August 2009. Wondering if I am big enough to witness "Diary Drawings."

Helen Iball

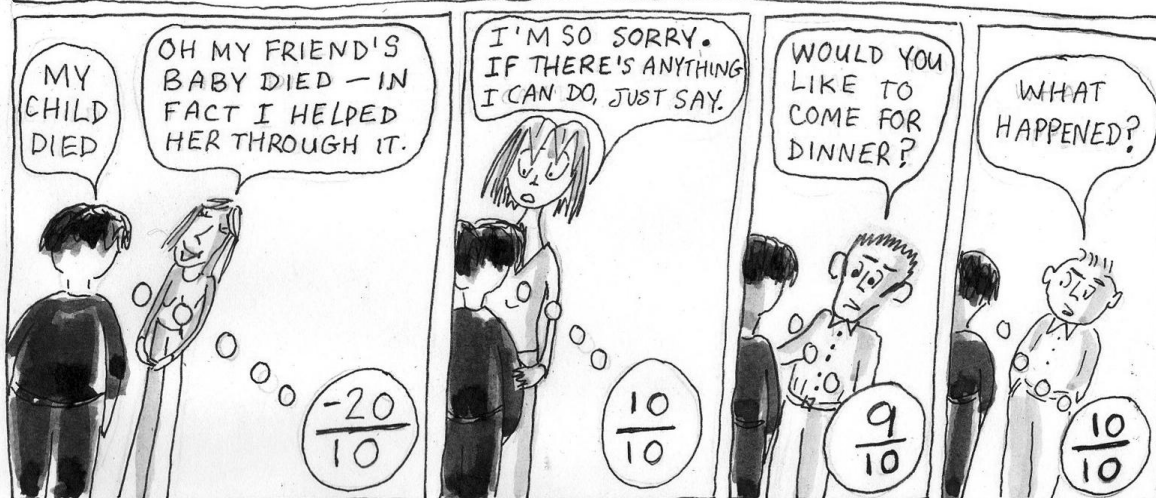




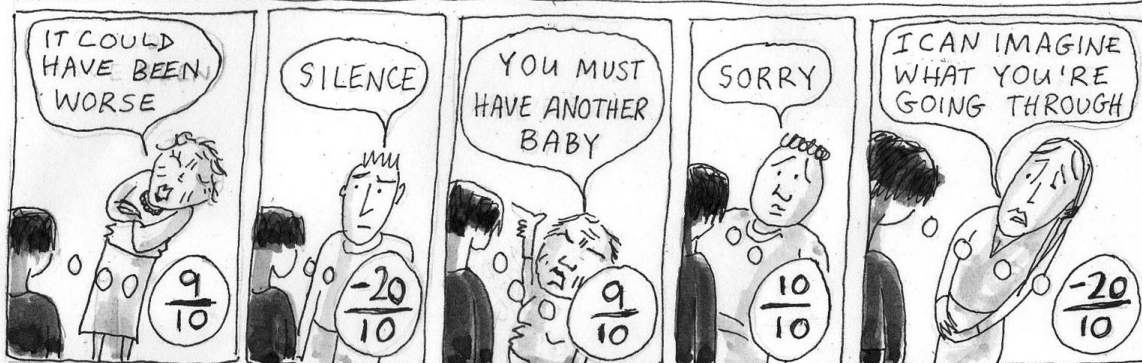


**Sarah Lightman**

THE MORE I TOLD PEOPLE, THE MORE INTRIGUED I BECAME IN THEIR RESPONSES  
 .... I FOUND MYSELF JUDGING PEOPLE BY THEIR REACTIONS.



THE MOST COMMON RESPONSE WAS FOR PEOPLE, EVEN STRANGERS, TO GET WATERY-EYED, WHICH FASCINATED ME THE MOST.... DID THEY GET THAT EVERY TIME THEY WATCHED STORIES OF DEAD CHILDREN ON THE NEWS?



THE WINNING REPLIES WERE FROM TWO OF MY STUDENTS, HAKIMA AND KARIM, IN SPITE OF THEIR LIMITED ENGLISH.

