

COMICS FORUM

Leeds

16 -18 November 2011

Sculpture and Comic Art, 16/11/2011

As historical and theoretical interest in comic art continues to grow, we plan to explore the relationship between sculpture and comic art, looking at how formal and thematic concerns migrate, and have migrated across the last hundred years or so, between these practices. Comic figuration, like caricature, is a regular influence on much modern and contemporary sculpture - allowing the body to be reinvented and restaged in new and fantastical ways beyond anatomical norms. By the same token we can also find the direct appropriation of comic and cartoon characters (often animals or superheroes) in recent installational practices, including those of Paul McCarthy, Maurizio Cattelan, Mark Dion and Thomas Schütte. The role of narrative (sculptural and sequential) is significant here, between the 'gutter' and the gallery, and such co-options are, in turn, echoed in sculpture's intriguing place in many comics and graphic novels, where it is often given special powers and dynamic plot-determining roles within the visual sequential narratives constructed. It has also been caricatured since the earliest cartoon strips and tensions between high and low emphasised. Finally, as sculptors have turned to comic art, so comic artists (such as Robert Crumb, Chris Ware and David Shrigley) have turned to three-dimensions. This move also reminds us of the power and popularity of the small-scale figurine, and in turn the collectible, to stand as a three-dimensional demonstration of characters articulated in two dimensions, whether on the page or in animated film.

We invite proposals for 25 minute conference papers, from academics and artists from all fields, that focus on any aspect of the above. Please submit a 250 word abstract and short CV to Kirstie Gregory, kirstie@henry-moore.org. Deadline for submissions is Monday 18th July 2011.

Graphic Medicine: Visualizing the Stigma of Illness, 17/11/2011

This one-day interdisciplinary conference aims to explore medical narrative in graphic novels and comics with an emphasis on the stigma of illness, disease or disability, both physical and mental. A subgenre of graphic narrative known as *graphic medicine* is emerging as a field of interest to both scholars and creators of comics, and members of the healthcare professions are beginning to turn to comics as a source of illness narratives and documents of the patient and carer experience.

We invite proposals for scholarly papers (20 minutes) or panel discussions (60 minutes), focused on medicine and comics in any form (e.g. graphic novels, comic strips, graphic pathographies, manga, and/or web comics) on the following—and related—topics:

- notions of stigma in graphic pathographies of illness and disability
- the use of comics to explain, highlight and eradicate stigma
- the use of comics in patient care
- the interface of graphic medicine and other visual arts in popular culture
- ethical implications of patient representation in comics by healthcare providers
- trends in international use of comics in healthcare settings
- the role of comics in provider/patient communication
- comics as a virtual support group for patients and caregivers
- the use of comics in bioethics discussions and education

Contributions are sought from humanities scholars, comics scholars, healthcare professionals, comics enthusiasts, writers and cartoonists.

300 word proposals for a 20 minute paper should be submitted by 18/07/2011 to submissions@graphicmedicine.org and notice of acceptance or rejection may be expected by 01/08/2011.

Abstracts may be in Word, WordPerfect, or RTF formats, following this order: author(s), affiliation, email address, title of abstract, body of abstract.

All proposals submitted will receive and acknowledgement. Abstracts will be blind peer reviewed.

Drs. Columba Quigley, Maria Vaccarella and Ian Williams 15/4/2011.

Materiality and Virtuality: A Conference on Comics, 18/11/2011

The material forms that comics take have always had significant impacts upon the stories they are able to tell. As Pascal Lefèvre has observed: 'Whether an artist gets only one row of panels in a newspaper, must confine his story into a comic book of 32 pages, or gets more than one hundred pages in a graphic novel, format will always be decisive.'¹ Today there are more publication formats open to comics creators than ever before, both in print and in "virtual" forms such as webcomics. These differing forms affect not only the creative act, but also reading experiences and publishing concerns. 'Materiality and Virtuality: A Conference on Comics' will seek to investigate the growing diversity of comics formats, taking in past, present and future incarnations of the comics form.

Subjects for discussion might include (but are not limited to):

- Creators/publishers who emphasise the significance of the physical forms of comics
- The rise of the graphic novel
- The importance of understanding materiality
- Comics as an allographic or autographic art form
- The nature and significance of the virtual
- The ways in which comics stimulate the senses
- Changing publication formats
- Production/publication techniques
- Historical changes to the forms and formats of comics

Proposals of 250 words are invited for talks of 15-20 minutes in length, and should be emailed along with a short biography (around 100 words) to Ian Hague (Department of History, University of Chichester) at: I.Hague@chi.ac.uk. The deadline for submission is 18/07/2011 and notification of acceptance or rejection will be emailed by or before 01/08/2011.

¹ 'The Importance of Being 'Published': A Comparative Study of Different Comics Formats', pp.91-92.