

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GUESTS OF 24

BETWEEN THE LINES

JULY 2024

ISSUE 2

FEATURES:
**NATIONAL
CARTOONISTS
SOCIETY**
History and Awards

**KATE
CHARLESWORTH**
and her Sensible Footwear

THE CRAZY UNIVERSE OF JUNKO MIZUNO

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EDITOR'S LETTER

So, the new band has had a phenomenal success with their first album: radio & TV slots, #1 in the charts, huge crowds at each stadium. They are on top of the world. But then ...

They have to now come up with a second album which is as good - if not better. Can they do it?

Fortunately, at Between the Lines, all we had to do for this second issue was surround ourselves with incredibly talented people - some of whom are pictured on the left - and this issue was destined to be every bit as good - you can't get better than the best - as the first.

As well as the fabulous Junko Mizuno and the National Treasure that is Kate Charlesworth, we have a history of the National Cartoonists Society, a note on the Sergio Award, an exclusive Dickie cartoon, and, as if that was not enough, Finn Miles introduces us to his favourite Batman artists and their contributions to one of the world's most famous characters.

Enough? Hardly. There's more comics which are A Million Miles From Marvel, there's the second half of our interview with Gigi Cavenago including his fabulous Corto in Windermere which he did for this year's Festival, a little Nugget you may have been unaware of, and, lest you think that LICAF is "just" a festival, we have a note of some of the programmes we run all year round.

Now, can someone tell me this: did The Darkness ever get around to that second album? The first one was really brilliant!.

John McShane

THE CRAZY UNIVERSE OF JUNKO MIZUNO

KNOWN FOR HER UNIQUE MANGA STYLE, JAPANESE ARTIST JUNKO MIZUNO COMBINES GORE AND EROTICISM WITHIN AN OEUVRE THAT INCLUDES COMICS, PAINTING, DRAWINGS, ANIMATION AND TOYS.

Influenced by vintage shojo manga, folktales, horror and pop art, Mizuno creates fairy tales where deliciously adorable pin-ups prance naively through psychedelic worlds, battling and cohabiting with the dark magic that surrounds them. Junko has grown into a huge global cult figure, and we are thrilled to welcome her back to LICAF this year. To celebrate her return we delve deeper into her life and work in her own words via an interview by Between the Lines.

How do you describe your style and, as a self-taught artist, how did it evolve?

I started drawing and creating when I was still two years old or so and have kept doing it just because I love it. Making art for me is the same thing as eating or sleeping, I do it and think about it everyday and everything I experience naturally influences / inspires my art. That's how my style has evolved and I think it will keep evolving until I die.

I don't care about genres and get inspired by whatever I find interesting so my art style is a mix of so many different things.

That makes it difficult to label my style, so I just call it 'My Style'.

Which aspects of Japanese culture have most influenced you? What other influences have had an impact on your work?

The '70s and '80s Japanese pop culture probably influenced me the most. I was born during the second baby boom in Japan (1973) and grew up enjoying the copious entertainment for kids such as comics, anime shows, toys, and merchandise which built the foundation of my art. After that, I learned and was influenced by art from different cultures but if I had to name the one

that impacted me the most, it would be Aubrey Beardsley's art. I was blown away when I found his art book at a bookstore when I was thirteen. I obsessively copied his art style for a while and that changed my art from the ordinary Japanese manga style to something different. It also helped me learn how to be open, mix a new thing into what I already have and create something new.





Which pieces of work are you most proud of?

It's difficult to name specific pieces as I always do my best for everything I work on.

I'm just proud of the fact that I've been doing what I really wanted to do and created my own universe with stories and characters.

I'm also proud that I'm the kind of person who can enjoy learning, challenging and evolving. That makes your life exciting as you never get bored.

What do you love about comics in particular? Do you have any comics which you have particularly been impressed by and/or enjoyed reading over the years?

From a reader's point of view, I love comics because you can dive into a different world whenever and wherever you want to.

With physical paper books, you don't even need electricity to enjoy them!

From an artist's perspective, it's amazing that you can create your own world just with paper and pen. If you want to make a movie you need so much time, money and have to deal with so many people.



But with comics, you can create your own actors, props and sets on your desk without worrying about the budget!

What are you currently working on and what future plans do you have?

For comic-related projects, I've done some variant covers for the new comic publisher DSTLR since last year. I've also been working on the third and last volume of the US edition of my graphic novel, Little Fluffy Gigolo PELU

with Last Gasp. The other big thing is my own tarot deck project. I did my first tarot-themed art show last year and am going to do three more to finish all 78 tarot card designs. When they are all done, I'm going to make an actual tarot deck. It's been one of my dream projects and I'm really excited! There are also some fun exhibition plans, an art book project and I'm trying to find the good way to start working on my new comic.

I'm really busy and wish I had five more bodies!

Festival Guest 2024

Thank you Junko! We look forward to your event with Paul Gravett on Saturday 28 September 2024.



DID YOU KNOW....

“DC almost never hired women,” writes Joan Schenkar of the 1940s. Meanwhile, on the 14th floor of the Empire State Building, Timely employed: Dorothy Roubicek, Elizabeth Hardwick, D’Anne Fago, Marion Gerrick, Violet Barclay, Patricia Highsmith, and others. Once DC got around to hiring Jeanette Kahn and Karen Berger, they finally improved their attitude - and quality.

純子 水野



BTL MEETS... GIGI CAVENAGO (PART 2)

Gigi's poster for LICAF is superb. Corto Maltese is often pictured by Hugo Pratt with seabirds in the background. Gigi has replaced Pratt's birds with those in Windermere.

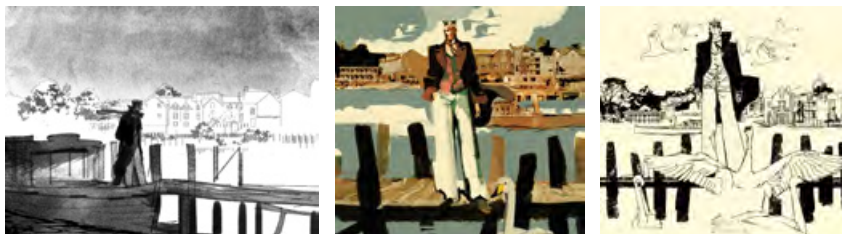
"I know the adventures of Corto Maltese, but I'm not a hard core fan with encyclopaedic knowledge. Corto is a truly iconic character, just a few lines are enough to evoke atmospheres of pure adventure and exoticism. When they proposed to include Corto in the LICAF manifesto I immediately thought it was a perfect match: Bowness-on-Windermere has a unique atmosphere and Corto fits perfectly, not only for the birds, but also for the ancient boats of the jetty museum."

Who were Gigi's biggest influences among comics artists? Or, indeed, fine artists?

"There have been many influences by different authors and in different periods. In addition to the aforementioned Dino Battaglia and Gianni De Luca (if anyone reading this has no idea who they are, please go and do research, you won't regret it) I remember a phase in my life in which I wanted to draw exactly like Mike Mignola! Then there were Goran Parlov, Ferdinando Tacconi, Sergio Toppi, Massimo Carnevale. Now I'm in a phase where I've found a mix of styles that works for me, but even now I have huge influences like that of Ferenc Pinter, an illustrator who worked a lot in Italy but is not well known outside. The poster for LICAF is stylistically a major homage to Pinter's work. When I started the draft I wanted to do something more graphic, but then I came across a book of illustrations by Pinter, I fell in love again, and I couldn't help but pay homage to it."



Artwork Gigi produced for LICAF 2024 festival

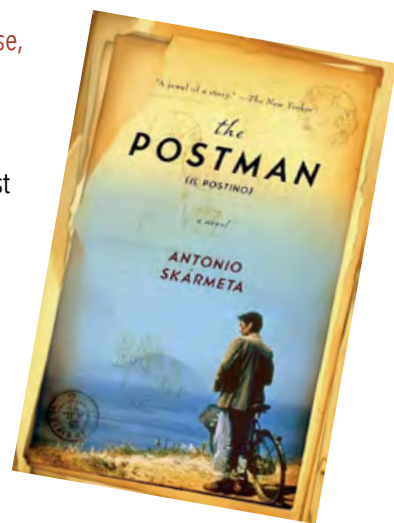


Gigi's initial sketches for the LICAF 2024 artwork

And then there are writers outside of comics and, of course, film directors:

"I never read as much as I would like unfortunately. My favorite writer is Ray Bradbury and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* the book I loved the most. One of the last books I read and loved so much was Neruda's *Postman* by Antonio Skármeta, a brilliant book, with very strong contrasts between the passion for life and the dark times that Chile experienced fifty years ago. I'm currently reading *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* by Susanna Clarke, really entertaining and full of ideas.

"I am more familiar with cinema. I think my favourite director is Terry Gilliam, who in the first phase of his career only made masterpieces that opened my heart and mind. There may be better directors and better films, but for some reason Gilliam is very important to me, his films reveal an unparalleled driving force, a film like *Baron Munchausen* or *Brazil* is a celebration of creativity."





Dylan Dog

And now we come to the Batman/Dylan Dog book:

"One day I received a phone call, 'Can you stop by the editorial office? We would like to talk to you about something.'" It was Sergio Bonelli, the publisher which is based in Milan, but I had recently moved to Rome and so I replied that it wasn't that easy. A week later they tell me to go to a villa in Rome, an ultra-luxury place, full of mirrors. I sit in an armchair, they make me sign an NDA and only then did I find out what was cooking. It was a very interesting day and with a pretty good twist! For the record: they didn't rent the villa just to make me sign papers, I think they had more important business with film producers! Still, very impressive!

"The whole story was divided into American-style issues, so they came to me in 20-page instalments. Since there would have been 200 pages in total, I had accepted on the condition of being able to work on layouts by Werther Dell'Edera, a colleague who had already worked on Dylan Dog, but who had also already done a lot in the American market. He was the ideal partner to start such an undertaking: he prepared layouts for me that I could draw with my own style, but his storytelling and the acting of his characters allowed me to focus a lot on the rest: style and inking. Also, while we were still working on Batman/Dylan Dog, Werther made a splash with his *Something Is Killing The Children* written by James Tynion IV. Go check that out!"



Dylan Dog and Batman cover

As for previous Batman artists:

"As far as I'm concerned the best Batman is the one from *Batman Year One*, so Dave Mazzucchelli wins. And for our *Batman/Dylan Dog* book, I combined Tim Burton's *Batmobile* with that from Bruce Timm's cartoon. If I had to choose between the two *Batmobiles*, I would perhaps say the first, because seeing that film as a child, after the series with Adam West, was a wonderful shock!"

And his choice of software for his work?

"Everything is done digitally now, I do everything with Photoshop."

What's next?

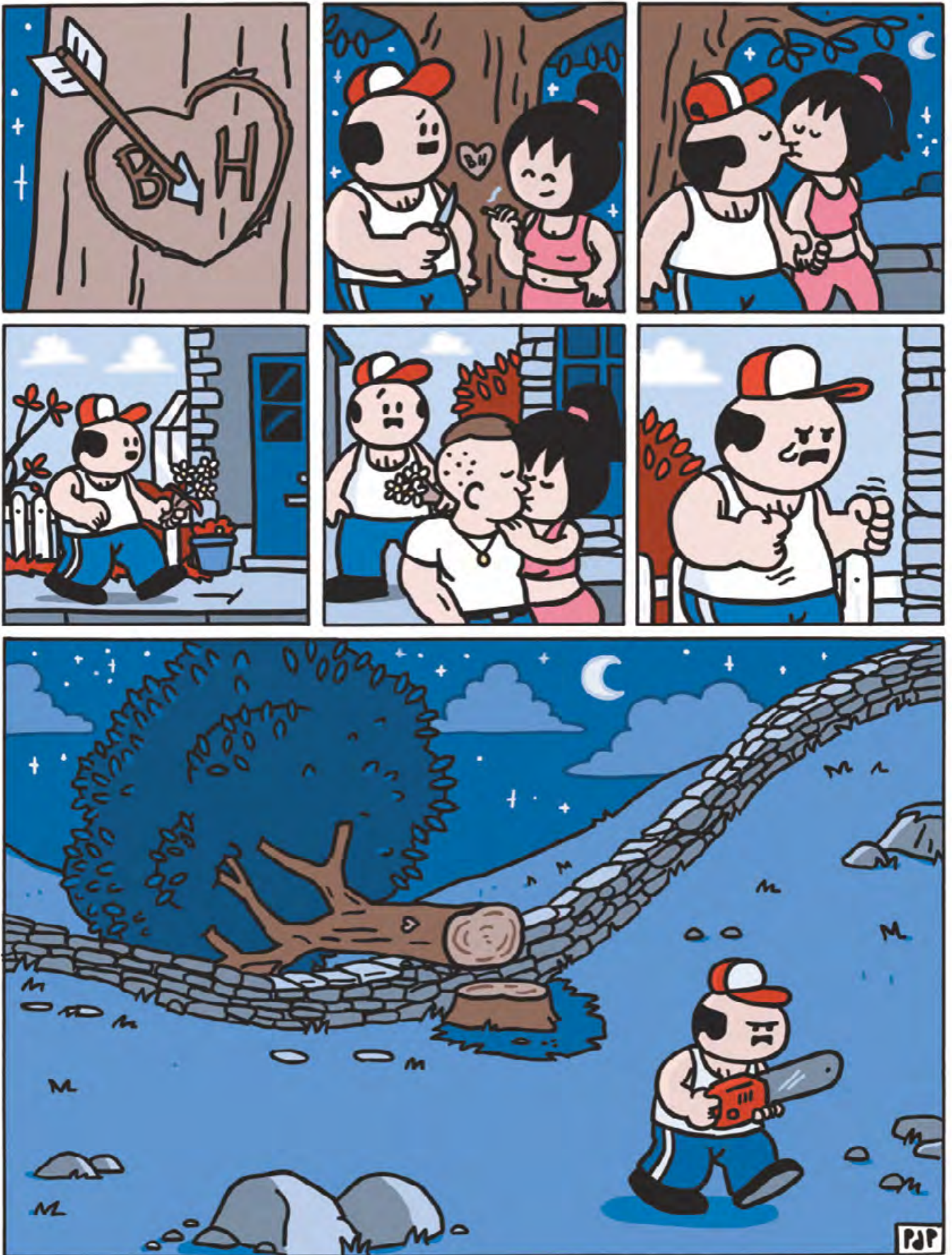
"It's been a year since I was called into the world of animation where I worked a bit as a character designer for a huge upcoming series. I also made some very small parts of the latest *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* and now I'm working as an art director for an animated short.

"However, I hope to return to making some comic pages next year!"

He's a busy man. Now your task, dear reader is to look up all the wonderful creators Gigi mentions... And to read *Batman/Dylan Dog*!

EXCLUSIVE TO BTL

BTL is delighted to present an exclusive strip from Pieter De Poortere.



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CARTOONISTS SOCIETY?

The National Cartoonists Society is an organization of professional cartoonists founded in the United States almost 80 years ago as a social group, and has evolved over the last eight decades into an international organization dedicated to the art of cartooning and the cartoonists who put pen to paper, with over 500 members who create work in all walks of the profession including comic strips, comic books, editorial cartoons, illustration books, comics

and graphic novels, animation, online comics, and other forms of comic art.

The origins of what would eventually become the NCS started when a group of cartoonists including Gus Edson, Otto Soglow, Clarence D. Russell and Bob Dunn did chalk talks at hospitals for the USO in 1943. The popularity of their performances caused them and other cartoonists including Rube Goldberg to be asked to do shows for the America Theatre Wing during and following

World War II. The cartoonists decided they rather liked getting together and thought forming a professional organization after the war would be a great idea.

The Society was born at a specially convened dinner in New York in March, 1946, that saw Goldberg elected as president, Russell Patterson as vice president, C.D. Russell as secretary and Milton Caniff as treasurer.



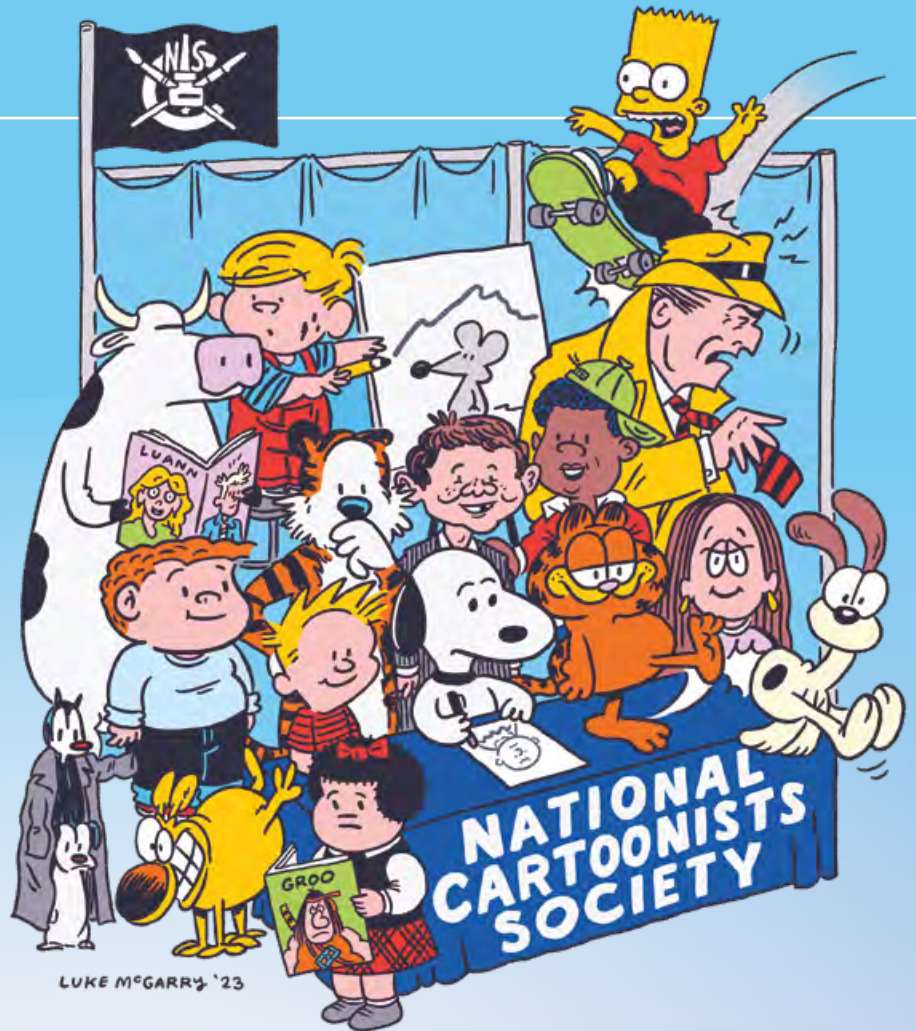
A second vice president, Otto Soglow, was subsequently added. Within two weeks, the Society had 32 inaugural members: Strip cartoonists Wally Bishop ("Muggs and Skeeter"); Martin Branner ("Winnie Winkle"); Ernie Bushmiller ("Nancy"); Milton Caniff ("Terry and the Pirates"); Gus Edson ("The Gumps"); Ham Fisher ("Joe Palooka"); Harry Haenigsen ("Penny"); Fred Harman ("Red Ryder"); Jay Irving ("Willie Doodle"); Al Posen ("Sweeney and Son"); C.D. Russell ("Pete the Tramp"); Otto Soglow ("Little King"); Jack Sparling ("Clare Voyant"); Ray Van Buren ("Abbie an' Slat's"); Dow Waling ("Skeets"); and Frank Willard ("Moon Mullins"). Panel cartoonists Dave Breger ("Mister Breger"); George Clark ("The Neighbors"); Bob Dunn ("Just the Type"); Jimmy Hatlo ("They'll Do It Every Time"); Bill Holman ("Smokey Stover"); and Stan McGovern ("Silly Milly"). Freelance cartoonists and illustrators Abner Dean, Mischa Richter and Russell Patterson. Editorial cartoonists Rube Goldberg (New York Sun); Burriss Jenkins (Journal American); C.D. Batchelor (Daily News); and Richard Q. Yardley (Baltimore Sun). Sports cartoonist Lou Hanlon and comic book cartoonists Joe Shuster and Joe Musial. By March, 1947, there were 112 members.

Shortly after the NCS formed, the members decided they should create an award to honour excellence in their field. In May of 1947, Milton Caniff became the first artist formally honoured by the group as the "Cartoonist of the Year." The award itself was a silver cigarette box, engraved with Billy De Beck's "Barney Google and Snuffy Smith" characters. The Billy De Beck Memorial Award, affectionately referred to as "The Barney" was awarded annually (chosen by secret ballot by members) to a cartoonist at a gala evening event in

New York City until 1953. In 1954, the "Cartoonist of the Year" was rebranded as "The Reuben Award", named after the Society's first president, Rube Goldberg. The eight previous recipients of "The Barney" were given one of the bronze cast statuettes known as "The Reuben", designed by Goldberg, and has been awarded every year since. Recipients have included Charles Schulz, Ronald Searle, Mort Walker, Pat Oliphant, Ernie Bushmiller, Jeff MacNelly, Arnold Roth, Bill Watterson, Garry Trudeau and 63 other top cartoonists. Starting in the mid 1950's the Society also started recognizing excellence in specific areas of the cartooning field with divisional awards, honouring creators in fields like advertising illustration, comic books, editorial cartoons, gag cartoons, newspaper panel cartoons

and comic strips. Over the years various divisions have been created, combined or modified and the current NCS recognizes high achievement in many walks of the profession including online comics, book illustration, graphic novels, magazine illustration and others.

Through 1982 the event known as the "Reuben Award Dinner" was held in New York City, most often at the Plaza hotel. A formal, black-tie banquet, the dinner was the NCS's annual gala where the annual awards were bestowed. In 1983 this event became a full weekend affair, and travelled to various locations around the U.S. The "Reuben Award Weekend" grew to include guest speakers and panels, public outreach events, elaborate shows and performances at the awards banquet, and multiple social get togethers.



Artwork by Tom Richmond



Artwork by Tom Richmond

The NCS was not just a social club that gave out annual awards. Having been created out of service to WWII soldiers and their families, the NCS continued to lend the talents of their membership to worthy causes. In 1949, the Society volunteered to help the Treasury Department in a drive to sell savings bonds by sending NCS members out on the road. A nationwide, seventeen-city tour was undertaken by teams of ten or twelve cartoonists and a 95-foot-long traveling display. Through the Society, NCS members have continued to serve

the nation in person and through their art. Teams of cartoonists have toured war zones and military installations around the world in cooperation with the USO. Others have entertained at VA hospitals. NCS members have also contributed to many U.S. government programs; their efforts have benefitted NASA, USIA, the Treasury Department Savings Bond division and the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Other beneficiaries have been the Boy Scouts of America, the American Red Cross, St. Jude Children's Hospital and the United Nations.

In 2005 the NCS formed a non-profit charitable arm called the National Cartoonists Society Foundation, which functions in conjunction with the Society to continue the charitable and educational works that have been a hallmark of the NCS since its inception. The National Cartoonists Society Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) charity that works in tandem with the NCS to advance the ideals and standards of the cartooning profession, to stimulate and encourage aspiring cartoonists through scholarships and educational programs, and to provide financial assistance to cartoonists and their families in times of hardship

(formerly the Milt Gross Fund). In addition to the Milt Gross Fund, other programs the NCSF currently oversees include the Jay Kennedy Memorial Cartooning Scholarship, the "Cartooning for Kids" program where members draw for patients and their families in children's hospitals, and sponsorship for festivals and comic arts events all over the world, including the Lakes International Comic Art Festival!

[Click here to view](#)

'How to Draw Caricatures with Tom Richmond'



Check out lots more comic art related interviews and tutorials on the LICAF YouTube Channel

Festival Guest 2024

See Tom Richmond and Pieter de Poortere discuss Parody, Pastiche and P-Taking at LICAF, Saturday 28th September.

THE SERGIO AWARD



The National Cartoonist Society's Sergio Aragonés Award for Excellence in Comic Art was introduced in 2017 in partnership with the Lakes International Comic Art Festival, where it is formally announced and received. As its name implies, the award recognizes excellence in the world of comic art, and the recipient is chosen by a committee that includes the president of the NCS Foundation and its board, organizers of LICAF, and of course the namesake of the award itself, Sergio Aragonés. Intended to honour creators from outside the United States, recipients cannot be from the U.S.,

and the award can recognize a cartoonist for lifetime achievement, recent accomplishments, or a specific body of work.

The award itself is a cast plaque designed by Sergio himself. Since its inauguration, honourees have been Dave McKean, Hunt Emerson, Charlie Adlard, Boulet, Posy Simmons, and Graham Dury & Simon Thorp from Viz.



Boulet with the Sergio Aragonés Award for Excellence in Comic Art

LUKE HEALY'S SELF-ESTEEM AND THE END OF THE WORLD

"At the end of every day, I want you to write about yourself. A few sentences."



Autobiographical comics are a unique and compelling form of storytelling that combine the visual impact of art with the narrative depth of personal memoirs. Robert Crumb lays his life bare in his underground cartoons, Will Eisner tells his story in *To the Heart of the Storm*, *Maus*, among other subjects, is about the artist's relationship with his father, *Persepolis* is an individual's experience of living in Iran during the Islamic Revolution, and *Fun Home* tells the story of a house which really is not fun.

Luke Healy is an Irish cartoonist, comedian and TV writer known for his graphic novels.

He was a graduate of the Center for Cartoon Studies in Vermont in 2004, gained a BA in Journalism from Dublin City University in 2012. He has won loads of awards and his work has been

translated into at least five languages. James Sturm, winner of the Eisner Award in 2004 and founder of the National Association of Comics Art Educators, says Healy is "One of the finest cartoonists working today." Praise indeed.

If you read *Self-Esteem* from the beginning, you will be aware that there was a previous work which is related: "There's one about whales - well it's really about me and my mam and brother ...". Fortunately, the nice folks at Faber have added the original work at the end for comparison. This is *Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales*. Liz who is allergic to shellfish and smokes vapes stands in for Luke himself. Caroline is Teddy and Mam equals Mary. In the revisiting of this text, Healy puts aside all notions of disguising his characters. Part of the story of the new book is that there is a film option on the original book and he and his mam go to California to visit the sets and film "Bonus features". There's even a "synthetic Sea World" whale!

In addition to his work as a cartoonist, Luke has also ventured into stand-up comedy. His stand-up routines often draw from his personal experiences and his work in comics, combining

observational humour with a touch of self-deprecation. Healy's unique voice and perspective have allowed him to carve out a niche in both the comic book and comedy scenes.

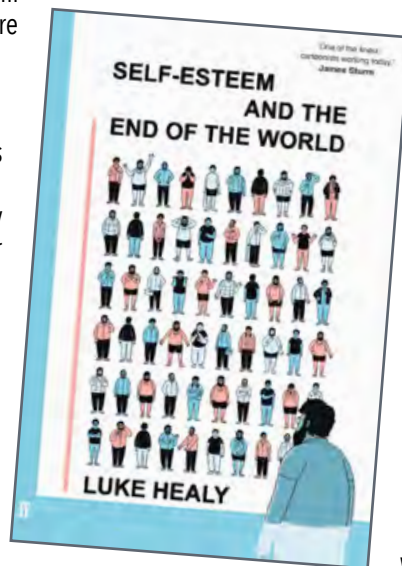
Self-Esteem and *the End of the World* is a thoughtful and nuanced exploration of how individuals' self-perceptions

intersect with existential anxieties. This book delves into the psychological impact of living in a world fraught with global crises, including climate change, political instability, and social upheaval. Healy investigates how these macro-level issues influence personal self-esteem and overall mental health.

Don't worry if that sounds like something you would not enjoy reading. Healy leavens the pill

with some nice bits of humour and insights. Especially enjoyable are the talking mice. They are great characters, especially when they bury a "dead" computer mouse. There are also some talking seagulls.

It is a compelling read for those interested in psychology, mental health, and the broader impacts of living in an age of crisis. It offers a sobering yet insightful examination of how global challenges affect individual self-worth and well-being, encouraging readers to reflect on their own coping strategies and the societal structures that influence them.



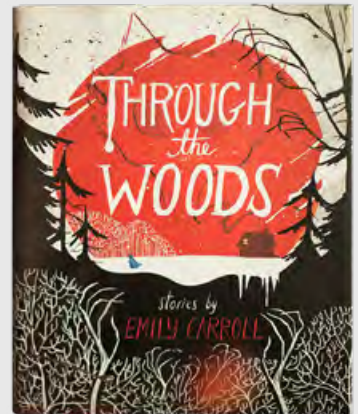
TOP 10 COMICS

A MILLION MILES FROM MARVEL PART 2 BY PETER KESSLER

6. THROUGH THE WOODS

Emily Carroll, 2014

Emily Carroll stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Angela Carter, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Shirley Jackson as a purveyor of the finest feminist Gothic. Her tales pluck tiny tropes of buried fairy stories, and massage them into modern nightmares. And her images, like all the best horror, are both gruesomely dreadful and bewitchingly beautiful. This anthology of five tales is haunting in every sense of the word, created on a palette largely of black, white and red, with occasional splashes of royal blue. Themes of guilt, gender, repression and coercion balance the almost gleeful evil on display. My personal favourite is probably 'His Face All Red', about a girl and her older brother who seems to return from the dead. In Carroll's work, each page is a single work of art, liberated from conventional ideas of panels and grids. And the lettering is as much a part of the image as the figures themselves – a far cry from when writers used to glue speech bubbles all over the artists' work. It's a thing of strange beauty.



7. CHARLEY'S WAR

Pat Mills, Joe Colquhoun, 1979 – 1986

British boys' comics were awash with World War Two stories for decades, but World War One stories were much less common. Charley's War, which ran for seven years in Battle Magazine, followed an underage volunteer through the trenches of France from 1914 to the end of that terrible conflict. It is probably the greatest comic ever created in this country.

Why? First of all, Pat Mills' writing is phenomenally terse, passionately driven (but full of dignity) and has a depth of knowledge that brings humanity to every character. Secondly, Joe Colquhoun's drawings, each of them pure black and white, are stunning, uncompromising, and brilliantly detailed. Thirdly, and most importantly, Mills – who would go on to create the seminal British comic 2000AD – had a message to get across, and it wasn't about the noble English against the evil Germans. The villains of Charley's War are the English bullies, policy-makers and businessmen who ground down their own troops, kept themselves safe, and profited from the War. This is comics as class warfare, and it's incendiary.



8. KING LEAR

William Shakespeare / Ian Pollock, 1984

'Classics Illustrated' and 'Bible Stories' have been responsible for some of the dullest, most two-dimensional comics ever created. Like Rupert the Bear they tend to sit nervously somewhere between inoffensive illustration and unimaginative tableaux. Ian Pollock's King Lear changed all that.

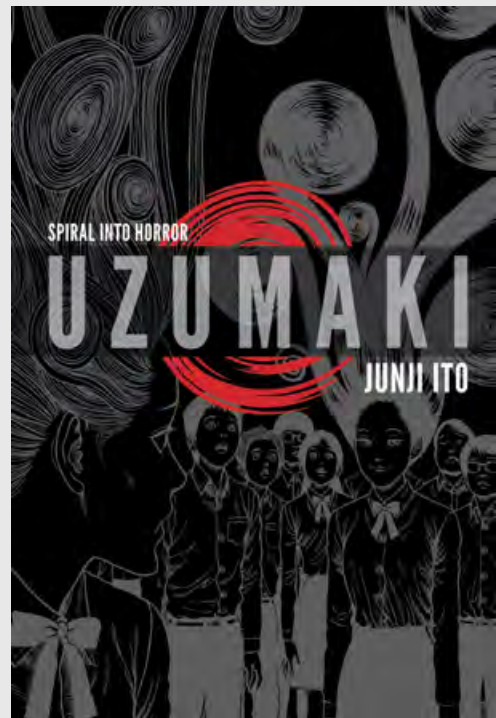
Pollock used to design amazing posters for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and after being involved with their phenomenal 1983 production of King Lear, he was commissioned to create a graphic novelisation of the entire, unexpurgated text. What he produced is, effectively, a performance of the play on paper – but a performance that could never take place in the real world. He brings the text to life with surreal imagery, grotesque characters, landscapes that appear and disappear from one panel to the next, and perspectives that jump from the massive to the distant. The Fool, whose speeches are so dense with imagery that audiences can hardly follow them, at one point literally juggles with the ideas that are coming out of his mouth. It's vicious, it's tragic, it's original, and it's the best King Lear I've ever seen.



9. UZUMAKI
Junji Ito, 1998

Junji Ito is the master of Japanese horror, and if you're not already familiar with his oeuvre, make sure you're feeling calm and relaxed before you give it a try. His work is a perfect blend of two sub-genres: body horror and cosmic horror. The cosmic horror resides in the fact that the terrifying, supernatural events to which his characters are subjected seem beyond their control or understanding. The body horror is to be found in the impact that external force has on the characters' lives – whether they are being pressed into solid rock in *The Enigma of Amara Fault* or whether, as in *The Dissolving Classroom*, the act of formal apology causes one's schoolmates' brains to liquefy and leak out of their nostrils.

Uzumaki is a phenomenal creation. Meaning 'Spirals', it (literally) revolves around a community in which the townsfolk become obsessed with spirals. The sinister shape attacks, kills and dominates them in the form of typhoons, whirlpools and, in one particularly rebarbative scene, a specially-made spiral box into which a man forces his own body. This clearly isn't schlock horror: there's method in the madness, with social commentary never far from the surface. But what makes the whole thing unforgettable is Ito's phenomenal draughtsmanship. Once seen, it will haunt your dreams.



10. MIRACLEMAN

Alan Moore, Garry Leach, Alan Davis, John Totleben, Mark Buckingham, Rick Veitch, 1982 - ?

I know I started this article by saying I'd moved away from super-heroes. But we need to talk about *Miracleman*...

Watchmen may have been a global phenomenon, but it was not the first time Alan Moore had deconstructed the idea of the super-hero. It all really started with *Miracleman*. In 1982, Moore took one of the flimsiest and most forgettable heroes ever invented, a cheap, 1950s, British knock-off of Superman called 'Marvelman', and asked one simple question: what if all this was actually real? What if, simply by saying the word 'atomic' backwards, a man could turn into an all-powerful being? The result was a devastating epic that broke taboos, questioned the role of heroism, and confronted head-on the principle that all power corrupts. Page 11 of issue 1 is a coup de bande dessinée that freezes on the smiling face of a two-dimensional super-hero and then takes you into his Nietzschean soul. Issue 9 was the first time a comic had depicted a human birth in detail. And issue 15 features the brutal killing, in detail that would have made Hieronymus Bosch green with envy, of everyone in London. By the end of the story, *Miracleman*'s inevitable triumph means that 'Good' prevails, because humanity is scared into obedience: a distinctly uncomfortable and hollow victory. If you want to witness the moment that comics grew up, read *Miracleman*.



KATE CHARLESWORTH

NATIONAL TREASURE

**SENSIBLE
FOOTWEAR**
A GIRL'S GUIDE



I gather Sensible Footwear took rather a long time to complete. How long was it?

I had the idea around the millennium, and after a few years began making notes and collecting reference material. I submitted some early pencil pages to Myriad's first First Graphic Novel Competition in 2011. (Write it in a year? Luckily I was disqualified because I didn't submit enough pages). Around the same time Footwear was put on hold while I drew the artwork for Sally Heathcote – Suffragette, written by Mary Talbot and designed by Bryan Talbot, their second joint graphic novel.



Finally a script was ready in 2015 and in 2016 I worked on layouts and then until 2019, on the artwork (306 pages) until they were wrenched away from me a few weeks before publication.

As well as telling us about your life, there are a lot of fascinating glimpses into the period you're talking about. Did you enjoy doing all this research?

I did. Over time I've accumulated a lot of LGBTQ+ material; books, periodicals – some of which, such as Gay News and The Pink Paper I'd worked on – and loads of ephemera including leaflets, postcards and badges. It's the backbone of the book's historical aspects. I also visited physical sources, such as Glasgow Women's Library, and, inevitably spent a huge amount of time online. I sometimes found obscure images which filled the gaps in my material, and the gaps in my memory. I wanted things to be as accurate as I could make them, and (to me) those images were like gold dust.

At what point did you approach a publisher? Was it easy to find one?

I was lucky to know Corinne Pearlman, then at Myriad Editions, and she was very supportive of both the idea and me. I sent her a partly written script, and she replied with some laser-sharp suggestions, which I incorporated into the story. The result was a much improved script and, subsequently, a contact with Myriad.

I might add I'm thrilled that Corinne (with Candida Lacey) are now my new agents and far better placed than I ever could be to approach a new publisher.

Now that the magnum opus is out there, what are you working on?

Not as some have suggested - a sequel to Sensible Footwear. That's for someone else to do - so if it's you and you're reading this - start thinking about it now!

I'm working on a story which originated in a lockdown project with my friend



Jackie Cockle. The working title was The Old Dyke's Home, featuring my comics character and avatar Auntie Studs. It's a fantasy, and it's funny, but it also talks about some of the very different situations and problems (sometimes dangerous and frightening) LGBTQ+ people may have to face in their older age; problems which simply don't affect older heterosexual folk. It's also about women getting older, how we might live, how we do live.

And - there will be ghosts.

Finally, people are always interested in an artist's influences. Are there 3 creators who particularly influenced your art and/or subject matter?

In no particular order, all influenced my art and subject matter:

Leo Baxendale in the Beano (The Bash Street Kids, Minnie the Minx); Ronald Searle's St Trinian's cartoons (terrifyingly anarchic schoolgirls); Osbert Lancaster's pocket cartoon in the Daily Express, 1950s and 60s. Class (upper), social scene, politics.

And sorry John, but I've got to have Carl Giles, too. Same newspaper, superb draughtsman (he could draw weather)! Social class (all of them), social scene, politics. Glorious.

And from all these I learned that funny women always got the best lines, and a long caption under a small drawing (cheers, Osbert) could work. Result!

BATS IN THE BELFRY: THE GREATEST BATMAN ARTISTS

THE CAPED CRUSADER. THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE. THE DARK KNIGHT.

By Finn Miles

THE BATMAN

For nearly a century Bruce Wayne and his watchful alter ego have illuminated comic panels and TV screens alike with a signature gothic zeal. A dark ardour that has led DC's hero of the night to become one of the world's most popular superheroes, dethroning the company's boyscout and mascot Superman, as arguably their single biggest intellectual property.



Perhaps such a state of affairs should not be surprising. Part Zorro, part Sherlock Holmes, part high octane action hero along the lines of a Jack Reacher or Jason Bourne, few characters, nevermind superheroes, can encapsulate so much and yet boil down to so little as the Batman, a concept both strikingly simple yet unendingly complex- a collision of the mundane and profane, of bare materiality and profound metaphysicality, of the mortal and immortal. A mere man made divine not by spectacular super ability nor even exceptional skill or talent alone,

but through the power of raw jungian symbolism, the image of the Bat painting a striking silhouette that manifests even in the darkest vestiges of the night, striking fear straight into the hearts of criminals with a vengeful veracity.

That is to say that, on one level, Batman is a hero steeped deeply in aesthetics. From the aforementioned shadow he paints in the hours of darkness, to the Bat signal that towers above the streets of Gotham, a simultaneous beacon of hope and prophetic token of doom to those who dare not heed its warning.

Between this and one of the finest and most visually identifiable rogue galleries and cast of characters in comics, it is easy to see how Batman has not only maintained his place as a cultural icon to those who draw, render and fill the contours of his world.

And so as we continue through the masked vigilante's 85th anniversary it is as good a time as any to reflect on the character's history, this time casting our gaze upon the greatest to have ever penciled the cowl and all that it brings.



JERRY ROBINSON

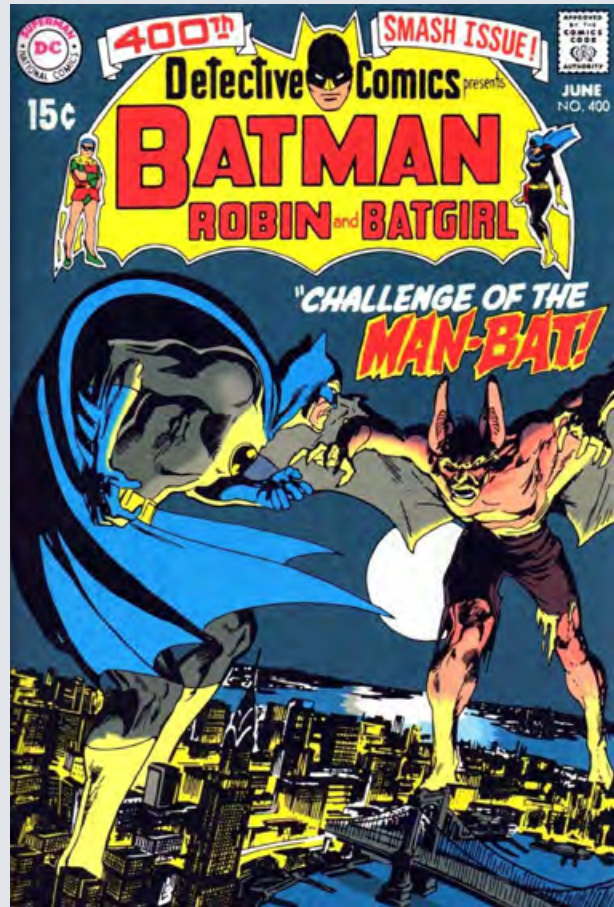
Not only one of Batman's greatest artists but one of his most important creators alongside fellow co-creator Bill Finger, Robinson played perhaps the most pivotal role of any artist in outlining much of the Batman mythos, co-creating not only arch nemesis the Joker but the boy wonder himself, Robin, first debuting in 1940 alongside the clown Prince of crime.

Following the departure of Bob Kane in 1943, Robinson took on the role of singular penciler, bringing a creative and dynamic artstyle that would not only help to define the Dark Knight but the golden age of comics in general.

Robinson's legacy towers over not only Batman but the Golden Age of comics

What else needs to be said? Without Robinson and his dynamic and bold style, without the Joker or Robin, Batman as we know it would simply not exist. And thus Robinson will forever stand as one of the greatest artists to ever define the Cape and cowl.

Robinson's legacy lives on from humble beginnings.



NEAL ADAMS

A leader of the 1970's bronze age artistic revolution and thus neither definitively retro nor modern, few lists of the greatest artists to sketch the Batman would be complete without the venerable Neal Adams.

Honed in advertising and the photorealistic school serial dramas, Adams brought a poignant and dramatic flair to the character, reinventing both Batman and Green Arrow for a new generation of readers, starting the transition of the Bat mythos back towards a darker realistic tone following the Adam West inspired feel, that could only be truly described as "campy" in tone, that defined the previous decade of the character.

Adams brought back a darker tone to the caped crusader.

However, in his fabled Bat-run Adams would also introduce numerous new characters on top of this general shift in tone, with now essential villains such as Ras Al Ghul and Man Bat, both products of his artistic know how and creativity.

It is thus easy to see how Adams is so commonly listed as not only one of the greatest Batman Artists, but a seminal figure in comics in general.

Prolific, Adams drew Batman in some capacity from the 1970s to the 2010s.



GREG CAPULLO

A relative newcomer to the franchise, Capullo brings a boldness to the Dark Knight like few others, with an eye for intricate detail. Praised for his creative panel layouts, dramatic flair and a style which fuses both realism and a distinct “grungy” cartoon aesthetic, Capullo first rose to fame on the back of his seminal run on the character alongside the equally gifted Scott Snyder as part of DC’s New 52 reboot.

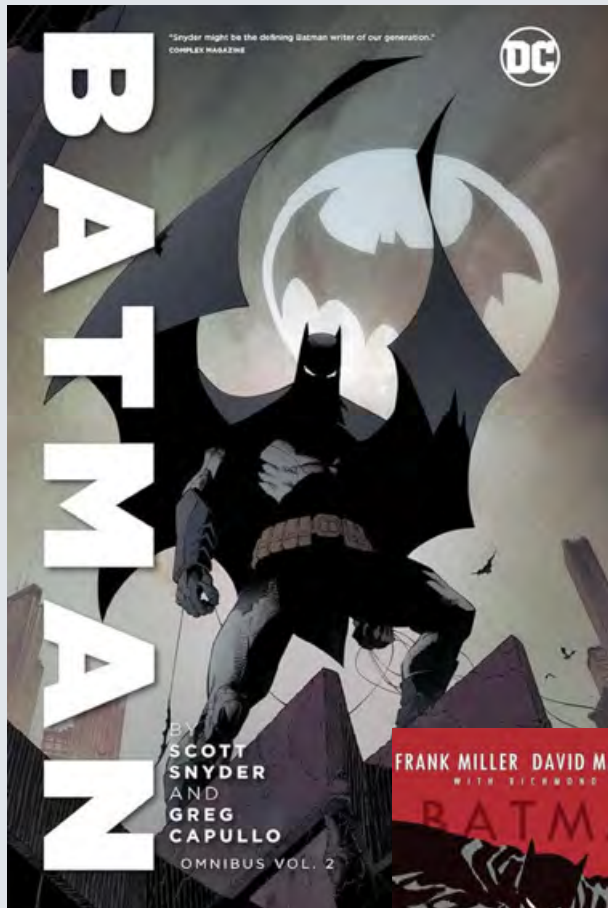
Snyder and Capullo together helped define the future of Batman.

Having come off a stint at rival Marvel Comics and a period working at Image, Capullo’s run on the Dark Knight at DC, starting in 2011 would thus help define the next decade of the character, co-creating the likes of the Court of Owls, one of the greatest newer additions to the Batman mythos and rogue gallery, alongside illustrating the Joker’s monstrous return in the 2012 “Death in the Family”.

Grungy and stylised, Capullo shows a fine eye and artistic flair.

A Batman artist for the modern age, few can be said to have had a bigger impact on the current state of Batman comics as Greg Capullo.

One of Capullo’s most enduring legacies is his co creation of the Court of Owls.



DAVID MAZZUCHELLI

A leader of the 1970’s bronze age artistic revolution and thus of all the names to make this list, Mazzucchelli is the only artist whose placement is indebted to a single story, today predominantly found in one encapsulating tome, created alongside the legendary Frank Miller.

Batman Year One.

But what a story! Indeed, without Batman Year One, the world of not only Batman but superhero comics would be a very different place - and all the poorer for it.

Batman Year One is perhaps the greatest Batman story ever told.

Part tribute, part re-imagining, upon the debut of the title with the first issue in May of 1987 fans and critics alike were treated to not only the most seminal look into Wayne’s first year behind the mask, but what would unravel into perhaps the greatest Batman story, and thus one of the greatest superhero stories, ever put to page, with a riveting and gripping narrative as engaging as it was viciously striking.

And yet it is not only Miller and his writer’s pen that can be credited for such a work, with Mazzucchelli putting forth one of the most accomplished visual feasts in comics, with a minimalist style composed of sharp contrasts and shadows that practically sings off the page with every panel and story beat.

Mazzucchelli’s art is both gritty and beautiful.

Far from a one hit wonder of course Mazzucchelli had already found acclaim with his and Miller’s first collaboration, Daredevil Year One, published only a year earlier. Later he would find himself moving on to more experimental pastures with more personal stories. And yet the

rest of his career, as great as it is, is forever to some degree steeped in the shadow of the Bat, with Year One casting itself over his entire creative legacy.

And yet, like the patches of shade that line his work, what a fine shadow it is.

Mazzucchelli’s legacy is forever in the shadow of the Bat.



TIM SALE

A legend not only in regards to Batman, but the genre in general, Tim Sale would find himself time and time again in the crusading spotlight of superherodom, having worked on many classic titles for Marvel and DC, from Spider-Man Blue, Daredevil Yellow and Hulk Grey to DC classics such as Superman For All Seasons.

Perhaps his greatest work, however, came with his plethora of engaging and visceral Batman stories, particularly the Long Halloween, which stands amongst the very best of the Caped Crusader's esteemed narrative library.

The Long Halloween is one of the only contenders to challenge Batman Year One and Sale's finest work.

However to focus on merely the basic layer of narrative would be a disservice to Sale. Sure, without his clarity and pacing the fundamental flow of the narrative of certified Batman classics like the Long Halloween and Dark Victory may have not flowed with even a fraction of the same vigour, but it was ultimately the details that Sale delivered, that truly made his work special.

Bat blues: colour and emotion underlies Sale's work.

Details that were often small but delivered in what may be termed as broad packaging, his taut chiaroscuro art style is bold and sweeping, much like the caped crusader himself, and yet also managing to convey the finest of emotions.

And it is simply that which makes Sale one of the greatest Batman Artists of all time. Pure unbridled, unadulterated emotion as part of an immersive and intimately stylised rendition.

Sale's taut chiaroscuro style forms a sombre symphony in the Long Halloween.

A feat that still persists in its strength after his death and will persist even with the continual passage of time.

Goodbye, Tim.



Don't miss the LICAF finale on Sunday 29 September 2.45pm in the Old Laundry Theatre - The Batman: The Big Draw

In this live draw finale we will challenge four artists to draw Batman in refreshing and, possibly, bizarre new scenarios. Featuring Sean Phillips, Michael Lark, Bruno Redondo and, to spice it up, Junko Mizuno.

COMICS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

More than “just” a festival

LICAF was launched in 2013 and has grown from strength-to-strength on the world stage. However you may not be aware that we are much more than “just” a festival and have a vibrant and ever-evolving year-round programme of work. Highlights include :-

- Opportunities for British comics creators including taking delegations to major festivals overseas to promote 'British Comics Now', exchanges and residencies eg in Arbroath, Prague, Quebec, Tokyo, Barcelona and workshop skill development overseas
- Major academic research into the impact of comics on literacy and enjoyment of reading in primary schools and special schools
- Creating a suite of resources to bring comics into the classroom for teachers and educators and hosting the UK's Comics Laureate
- Creation of tourable exhibitions to libraries aiming to attract the interests of young people eg 'Make Mine Manga' an exhibition accompanied by a library of manga, manga workshops and all kinds of manga-related activities
- Representing British comics on the international stage including co-founding a new international network, co-commissioning new work presenting comics in new ways and connecting British creators with international festivals and events
- Bringing international comics to our audiences with innovative projects including Ten Years to Save the world and From Ink to Action - comics anthologies featuring new work on climate change with the Phillipines and the Middle East and North Africa presented at COP26 & COP 28

And there's much more....

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