

WOMEN AND THE GRAPHIC NOVELS THEY WRITE:

ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

March 1 to April 20, 2015

Drew University Library

Curated by Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

**WOMEN AND THE
GRAPHIC NOVELS THEY WRITE**
ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

**MOVING
PICTURES**
EXHIBIT BY SLOANE DRAYSON-KNIGGE

Image: Top Shelf Productions / IDW

An exhibit showcasing women writers and artists and the graphic novels they create, including a distinctive collection of memoirs, 'self' conscious representations, the confessional, and the fanciful.

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Women and the Graphic Novels They Write: Alternative Narratives

Betty and Veronica of *Archie Comics*, *Tessie the Typist*, and a parade of vixens, perky teens, and romance-stricken damsels in distress are a part of the historical compendium of comics and their evolution into the graphic narrative. While that important history is acknowledged, there is so much more—the works exhibited here are only a modest representation of the graphic novel universe and its diverse alternative narratives. Despite the fact that the graphic novel has been formalized into scholarly discourse, university libraries and other educational settings, the study of women writers and artists and the graphic novels they create, still lags behind.

This exhibit forestages a distinctive collection of memoirs, ‘self’ conscious representations, the confessional and the fanciful. Among the graphic narratives under consideration include Nell Brinkley's *The Brinkley Girls* [1907-1930s] and her depictions of the challenges for ‘the new woman of the 20th century’; the satirical critiques of Jackie Ormes, the first African American woman comic strip writer [1930s-1950s]; Joyce Farmer's *Special Exits: A Graphic Memoir*, a poignant, gallows humor chronicle about caring for elderly parents; and Mary M. Talbot's *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, an intertwined coming of age narrative about James Joyce's daughter and author Mary Talbot, daughter of the Joycean scholar, James S. Atherton.

The graphic novel is an intense convergent medium of word and image which combines into an immediate and powerful confrontation with the subject at hand. Graphic novels can compel a visceral means of engaging and understanding socio-historical events that for many are distanced by time, space, or place. This sequential art form is no longer the "pow" and "zap" realm of the caped crusaders of yesterday's comic books, but is a vast array of varying styles, perspectives and content.

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March 4, 2015

AMERICAN WIDOW

Alissa Torres, art by Sungyoon Choi

New York: Villard Books, 2008.

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Torres' memoir chronicles her isolation and alienation within a public tragedy after the death of her husband Eddie, one of Cantor Fitzgerald's 685 employees who are murdered on 9/11. A journey toward reconstructing a life for herself and her expected child that is tender, dark and often trammled by bureaucracy and well-intentioned thoughts.

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?: A COMIC DRAMA

Alison Bechtel

New York: Mariner Books, 2012.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

A sequel to the best-selling author's, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Bechtel is an uncompromising sleuth as she dissects her relationship with her mother. Part memoir and essay, with nods, citations and allusions to the likes of Alice Miller, Sigmund Freud and Virginia Woolf, among others.

THE BRINKLEY GIRLS: THE BEST OF NELL BRINKLEY'S CARTOONS FROM 1913-1940

Trina Robbins, ed.

Seattle, WA: Fantagraphics Books, 2009.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

Though arguably problematic, the lavish, sumptuous work of Nell Brinkley has long been neglected--underneath, it is more than the beautiful women who inhabit it, given her attention to some of the challenges for women of the new 20th century, including working conditions, voting rights and prevailing cultural attitudes.

CANCER VIXEN: A TRUE STORY

Marisa Acocella Marchetto

New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

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"What happens when a shoe-crazy, lipstick-obsessed, wine-swilling, pasta-slurping, fashion-fanatic, about- to-get-married Big-City girl cartoonist with a fabulous life finds...a lump in her breast?" (www.amazon.com). Vibrant...the grace of humor...empowering.

A CENTURY OF WOMEN CARTOONISTS

Trina Robbins

Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993.

Harry A. Chesler Collection of Cartoon Art and Graphic Satire

Drew University Library Special Collections

A fun, lavish and informative guide by a feminist pioneer in the underground comix movement of the 60's. The text is secondary, go for the artwork—it's a wonderful tour from the 1890s to contemporary women at work. Also see, *Pretty In Pink, North American Women Cartoonists, 1896-2013*.

DOTTER OF HER FATHER'S EYES

Mary M. Talbott & Bryan Talbott, illustrations

Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books, 2012.

Personal collection of Bruce Lancaster

Intertwined coming of age narratives about James Joyce's daughter, Lucia, and author Mary Talbot, daughter of the Joycean scholar, James S. Atherton and the coerced conformity and constraints of their lives. A poignant, atmospheric collaboration.

IRELAND: A GRAPHIC HISTORY

Morgan Llywelyn & Michael Scott

Rockport, MA: Element Books, 1995.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

Vivid and lively illustrations that give an accessible overview of Irish history with a foreword by the late Senator Edward Kennedy. Key historic moments bookended by a 1995 contemporary setting.

JACKIE ORMES, THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN CARTOONIST

Nancy Goldstein

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

The satirical critiques of Jackie Ormes, the first African American woman comic strip writer [1930s-1950s] delighted readers of such African American newspapers as the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender* with her cartooning on civil rights, racial injustice, views on the environment and independent heroines. Ormes was long neglected, if not forgotten.

See theormesociety.com.

KARI

Amruta Patel

New Delhi: Harper Collins India, 2008.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

The first graphic novel by India's first woman graphic novelist. Powerful, meditative, ironic humor, which begins with the attempted suicide of Kari and her girlfriend, Ruth.

For an interview with Patel, please see among others: www.booboomagazine.com.

MARBLES: MANIA, DEPRESSION, MICHAELANGELO AND ME

Ellen Vornay

New York: Gotham Books, 2012.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

This intimate, visceral memoir about being bipolar opens with a 5 1/2 session in a tattoo parlor.

Fornay explores the question of 'being crazy' and creativity, incorporating other artists with mood disorders such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Vincent Van Gogh.

MOVING PICTURES

Kathryn Immonen & Stuart Immonen

Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2010.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

The use of dark and shadow captures the dangerous, moral darkness of Nazi-occupied France and the moving of pictures by art curator, Ila Gardner and the pas de deux between Gardner and Nazi officer, Rolf Hauptman.

UNTERZAKHN

Leela Corman

New York: Schocken Books, 2012.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

Energetic, bold brush work brings to life the teeming tenements of New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the 20th century and its life of "underthings" *unterzakhn* (Yiddish) for twin sisters, Esther and Fanya, whose lives take radically different turns.

WE ARE ON OUR OWN

Miriam Katin

Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2006.

Personal collection of Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

Created by the well-known cartoonist at age 63, this is a memoir about faith and questioning which draws on her experience as a small child when her mother fakes their deaths and flees with her to the countryside to escape the Hungarian Holocaust.

Also, see *Letting It Go*, a corollary novel written seven years later about confronting the past in the present. The scene shifts to her Washington Heights apartment, a soaring view of the New York skyline with counterpoints of artist-block. Katin's pencil work is extraordinary as are her storytelling skills.

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW: A GRAPHIC MEMOIR

Book 1: A GOOD AND DECENT MAN

Book 2: COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Book 3: A SOLDIER'S HEART

C. Tyler

Seattle, WA: Fantagraphics Books, 2009, 2010 & 2012.

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Tyler's stunning landscape format serves even as it makes room for the full kaleidoscopic narrative of the "terrible silence" of her father's World War II experience and the way it shapes his life and that of his family. This is a unique 'family album'.