

# Comics for Everyone! Exploring Graphic Novels

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# Why does your library need Graphic Novels?

- The GN market has exploded
- GN is a format, NOT a genre
- Every age group reads and enjoys graphic novels
- GNs attract reluctant readers
- GNs appeal to above average readers
- GNs are a legitimate form of literary and artistic expression

# A short history of comics from Obadiah Oldbuck to Jimmy Corrigan

# The first comic book?

- *The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck* is widely considered the earliest known comic book. It was originally published in several languages in Europe in 1837. It was reprinted in New York on September 14, 1842 making it the first comic book printed in America.
- The comic was created by Switzerland's **Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846)**, who is considered by most historians as the creator of the picture story. He could be considered the originator of the comic book and graphic novel.

# The comic book "ages"

- Platinum Age (1897-1937)
- Golden Age (1938-1955)
- Silver Age (1956-1969)
- Bronze Age (1970-79)
- Modern Age (1980-present)

# Underground Comix

- Flourished 1966-1980
- Small press or self-published
- Counterculture themes
- Best-known include Robert Crumb, Vaughn Bode, Jay Lynch, Bill Griffith, Jack Jaxon, Gilbert Shelton and Art Spiegelman

# Underground becomes “Alternative”

- After 1980
- Single creator
- Experimental
- *AKA independent, small press, new wave, art comics, mini-comics*
- Best-known include Harvey Pekar, Daniel Clowes, Peter Bagge, Chris Ware, Roman Dirge, Jeffrey Brown, Phoebe Gloeckner

Comics For Everyone!  
Building a Diverse  
Graphic Novel  
Collection @ Your  
Library

# GN market hits \$375 million *PW*, April 18, 2008

- “With the New York Comic-Con about to start, the third annual ICv2 Graphic Novel Conference kicked off the show with its annual white paper on the category delivered by Milton Griep, CEO of ICv2, a pop culture trade news website. The message was continued strong sales growth for the graphic novel category. In 2007 graphic novel sales in the U.S. and Canada were \$375 million, a 12% rise from 2006 and quintuple the sales number from 2001.”

# Many comic readers are adults

- Comic “cons” (conventions) are massively popular and are huge money-makers
- San Diego’s Comic-Con International had attendance of 130,000+ in 2008
- Wizard World Chicago had 58,000 attendees in June 2008
- Hundreds of local and regional cons are held every month

# Mainstream authors are crossing over...

- Stephen King
- Brad Meltzer
- Orson Scott Card
- John Ridley
- Charlie Huston
- Eric Jerome Dickey
- Michael Chabon
- Laurell K. Hamilton
- Tamora Pierce

# Mainstream TV and movie creators are crossing over...

- Joss Whedon (Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Firefly)
- J. Michael Straczynski (Babylon 5)
- Reginald Hudlin (House Party, Serving Sara)
- Kevin Smith (Clerks, Chasing Amy)
- Richard Donner (Lethal Weapon, Superman)

# Comics creators are breaking out!

- Neil Gaiman
- Matt Groening
- Mike Mignola
- Alan Moore
- Max Allan Collins

# Benefits of a diverse, targeted GN collection

- Fewer challenges, arguments, grief
- No stigma for adult readers
- Higher circulation
- Better collection development

# Creating a vital, diverse Graphic Novel collection

- Communicate – in your collection development policy, website, staff
- Talk to comics readers (customers)
- Consult comics reviews, comics stores
- Placement and publicity
- DON'T shelve in 741.5!

# The Loss Question

- GN loss rate has fallen sharply
- Greater availability has reduced desirability to collectors
- Cost has fallen sharply
- Discounts are common

# Minimizing damage

- Rebind or reinforce paperbacks
- Purchase library bindings
- Repair minor damage immediately
- Avoid spinner racks and slotted displays

# Using GNs to enhance your programming

- Book Clubs
- Author signings
- Include graphic novels in topical bibliographies and reading lists

# 6 “naturals” for book club discussions!

- *Capote in Kansas* by Ande Parks
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi
- *In the Shadow of No Towers* by Art Spiegelman
- *Our Cancer Year* by Harvey Pekar & Joyce Brabner & Frank Stack
- *Blankets* by Craig Thompson
- *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel

# Connecting with the comics community

- Library web sites
- Comic book news sites
- GN and comics review sites
- Movies and TV tie-ins
- Local comic book conventions
- Comic book shops

# Local/regional comics creators

- Ande Parks
- Rich Corben
- B. Clayton Moore
- Jason Aaron
- Jai Nitz
- Matt Fraction
- Freddie E. Williams II

# Graphic Novel Categories

- Superhero
- Horror and Supernatural
- Underground and indie (independent)
- Literature, politics and the arts
- Nostalgia
- Fan favorites
- Manga

# Japanese Lesson

- Shōjo – intended for girls
- Shōnen – intended for boys
- Shōnen-ai – “Boy’s Love” comics
- Yaoi – Slash or gay love, usually explicit
- Dōjinshi – fan-produced manga

# 3 good adult-interest magazines about comics



- *The Comics Journal (Fantagraphics)*

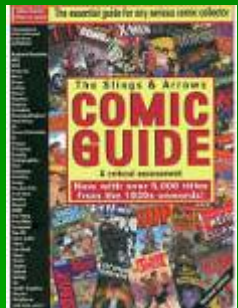


- *Comic Book Artist (Top Shelf)*

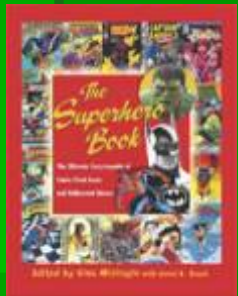


- *Back Issue! (TwoMorrows)*

# 3 good books about comics



- *The Slings & Arrows Comic Guide: A Critical Assessment (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 2003)*



- *The Superhero Book: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Comic-Books Icons and Hollywood Heroes, ed. Gina Misiroglu (2005)*



- *Comics: Between the Panels* by Steve Duin & Mike Richardson (1998)

PRESIDENTIAL MATERIAL:

# Barack Obama



PRESIDENTIAL MATERIAL:

# John McCain



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