



An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, and True Stories

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Comic artist Ivan Brunetti, the creator of *Schizo*, offers a best-of anthology of contemporary art comics, along with some classic comic strips and other historical materials that have retained a “modern” sensibility. As with Chris Ware’s selections for his best-selling *McSweeney’s* anthology, Brunetti’s choices make for a highly personal book (“my criteria were simple: these are comics that I savor and often revisit”) that serves as a broad historical overview of the medium and a round-up of some of today’s best and most interesting North American comic artists. Included here are works from such well-known artists as Robert Crumb, Kim Deitch, Art Spiegelman, Chris Ware, Ben Katchor, Charles Burns, Gary Panter, Seth, Phoebe Gloeckner, Daniel Clowes, Lynda Barry, Joe Sacco, and Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez, as well as many other pioneers whose names may be less familiar.

Brunetti offers selections from the works of more than seventy-five avant-garde comic artists. His selections are arranged by genre and grouped thematically. Luxuriously produced and printed in four-color throughout, the book is a must-have for collectors, aficionados, readers of comics, and those generally interested in cutting-edge art and literature.

An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, and True Stories Details

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From Reader Review An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, and True Stories for online ebook

Rocco Versaci says

Graphic Fiction is an anthology edited by Brunetti that features some of the absolute best work in the medium, including Jaime Hernandez's "Flies on the Ceiling," Richard McGuire's "Here," Harvey Pekar and Robert Crumb's "Hypothetical Quandary," and outstanding selections from Art Spiegelman, Dan Clowes, Debbie Drechsler, Phoebe Gloeckner, Chris Ware, Lynda Barry, and many more. It's such a complete package that I use it as the main textbook in my college-level English class, "Comic Books as Literature."

Sarah says

While there were some really great strong stories in here, there were also were many stories that were confusing, pretentious, and reprints that can easily be found elsewhere (Maus, Lynda Barry, etc). There were some interesting historical essays and reprints of classic cartoons, but overall, I found myself skipping large chunks of the book for being boring.

Alan says

As the introductory essay makes clear, this anthology is basically made up of "some comics I like." But when the person compiling them is Ivan Brunetti, it's time to sit up and take notice. This book is a well-packaged and wide-ranging collection of images and essays that show Brunetti has a comprehensive understanding both of the history and of the current direction(s) of the graphic arts.

There are too many contributors to list individually, but ones I recognized and liked include giants of the past like George Herriman, Charles Schultz, Harvey Kurtzman, as well as present household names such as Lynda Barry, Bill Griffith, Art Spiegelman, Robert Crumb and Aline Kominsky-Crumb, and folks from the future (Kaz, Ben Katchor, Tony Millionaire) whose work is currently gaining wider attention.

This book would perhaps have benefited from being published in an even larger format; a few of the strips were hard to decipher at their reproduced size, but I doubt that was Brunetti's fault. On the whole, it's a worthwhile overview.

Patrick Sherriff says

I'm a quite a newbie when it comes to comics and graphic novels, so I was excited to discover this doorstopper of a hardback at a second-hand bookshop in Tokyo the other day. I need educating, and the is Yale University Press book seemed as good a place to start as any. I've no idea how representative of the genre it was, but I really appreciated the range of artistic styles and topics presented, although the themes of Catholic guilt and weird-stuff-that-happened-to-me-in-my-20s were a little over-represented for my liking.

Still, there were thankfully no superhero comics, instead some really quirky stuff. A few I skipped over as not my cup of tea, or with script too small for me to read after a shochu or two, but I'm left with a handful of North American artists whose work I really want to check out, and plenty of ideas for ways to proceed if I ever decide the world needs a collection of Patrick Sherriff cartoon strips. Perhaps after a few more shochus...

Spencer says

huge compilation. 79 artists. NSFK (not safe for kids). cute stuff by Kochalka. sublime nonsense by Mark Beyer, funny crap by Mat Brinkman, my favorite strip by Jim Woodring, Prewitt's sof'boy, part of C. Burns Curse of the molemen, the sublime Black Cherry, by Michael Dougan. Stuff by J. Bradley Johnson. Seth, David Heatley, Chris Ware, part of Justin Greens Binkey Brown.

Debbie says

I really enjoyed this collection of graphic fiction from numerous artists. The only reason that I would give it 4 stars instead of 5 is because it was proclaimed (in the articles I read) as a young adult collection, but it is most certainly an adult collection. Granted, there are much more explicit materials to be found in a young adult collection, but in the graphic novel medium a little nudity goes a long way. As an adult graphic novel enthusiast I loved it!

Lauren says

I think this anthology works best either as an introduction to interesting artists or as sort of a museum exhibit of the state and history of modern graphic novels.

As with most anthologies, it's hard to rate the book as a whole when some works shine and some I skipped over. I appreciated and enjoyed the book, and especially liked looking at the different art styles. There are also some great stories being told here and I have a brief list of books and artists to look into further.

There is a dark melancholy feel to this collection. I don't know if that's due to the editor's choices, the general tone of modern graphic novels, or that so many were autobiographical, focusing on awkward moments or weird childhood memories. This pervading tone started to feel repetitive by the end of the book. It's like making a mix tape and filling it with the same sad songs.

Also, with so many of the pieces being excerpts from larger works, there were moments when you felt dropped into a scene and then torn away before the end. I'd recommend reading this with a piece of paper handy (or even Goodreads open) so that you can write down anything you want to read more about later.

Aaron says

A great collection, but not a perfect collection. This book is gorgeous and is worth reading just to sit in awe

of its organization and presentation. It did one thing that I haven't ever seen before: its table of contents was only images and page numbers. It seems so obvious that comics can be indexed this way, but this is the only instance of it that I know of.

The choices for this anthology were fantastic and I saw a lot of authors that usually don't get the time of day they deserve. The one that really jumped out at me was Jerry Moriarty, who I hadn't heard of prior to reading this. It's also got its standards in it (Windsor McKay, Crumb, Clowes, Spiegelman etc.) but it spends more time on the fringes of popular independent comics. This may irritate some readers. I did find myself bored here and there by the oddball choices made by the editor.

The real flaw with this book is one that may not be fixable-- no excerpts are long enough to really get into the story. This would be a fantastic textbook for a class on graphic literature and a great resource for anyone interested in comics regardless of previous experience with comics. Worth a read to expose yourself to so many wonderful writers and artists.

Bill says

Like any anthology, the quality of the material is uneven, but the good outweighs the bad, and by a pretty large margin, so this one definitely ends up on the plus side of things. Just about every alternative cartoonist you can think of from the last 30 to 40 years is represented here, with some choice examples of classic comic strips included as a nice palette cleanser... the Frank King Gasoline Alley strips are so beautiful to look at, and any book that slips even a tiny bit of Crockett Johnson's excellent Barnaby back into print is okay by me. If you like this sort of thing, this is definitely the sort of thing you'd like.

Paul says

This is a pretty comprehensive collection of contemporary "comix" or graphic fiction. This is definitely not what I would call "funny books", instead it is much more adult-oriented. A good part of the book is an homage to Charles Schulz, which I enjoyed and which gave me a deeper appreciation of his work.

There are some great stories here, especially Clowes' "Gynecology" and the long piece by R.Crumb. Some of the pieces didn't work well for me because (I believe) they have been reduced in size from the original publication. In particular, the Chris Ware stories were difficult to read because the print was so small. It reminded me that I'm overdue to have my eyes checked.

Bob Redmond says

Brunetti's first volume of "Graphic Fiction, cartoons, and true stories" does a great, if sometimes uneven, job of collecting most contemporary "graphic novelists" and their progenitors in the genre.

Any good anthology will inspire arguments of inclusion; I'll skip that here but will quibble with the space

given certain folks: only 4 pages for Lynda Barry, but Justin Green and Joe Matt get 8 or 9 pages? And Brunetti, although he includes woodcut artist Franz Masreel and some of the early comic strips (Krazy Kat by George Herriman; Gasoline Alley by Frank King), and does a terrific job contextualizing Charles Shultz, mostly he avoids creating a (an) historical survey here. That's probably to his credit, since others have already done the Comix 101 treatment. Brunetti lets the comix make their own links.

The book was worth its hefty weight for the inclusion of the mind-blowing piece by Richard McGuire. Other artists whose work I enjoyed meeting for the first time were: Ron Regé, Ben Katchor, James Sturm, Jerry Moriarty, John Hankiewicz and David Collier, whose biography of 1920's women's track & field star Ethel Catherwood I found totally engrossing. Expected stars (often represented by unexpected work) were: Crumb, the Hernandez brothers, Clowes, Charles Burns, Bill Griffith, and Chris Ware. Brunetti includes numerous women, but as is sadly usual for the industry, they are under-represented.

WHY I READ THIS BOOK: I saw the book previewed when it was published in 2006, asked for (and received) it as a christmas present a couple years ago, and finally made time to finish it off.

Elyse Walters says

I received this huge -gorgeous-dense-400 page collection volume of "Graphic Fiction, cartoons, cartoons, and true stories", at a holiday party last Sat. night. Food, wine, and gift exchanging....this is a lovely gift.

Right away - this book has that 'awe' and 'wow' feeling. It's PACKED FILLED with Authors and Artist's works. At first I flipped through the book seeing if I knew any of these authors. A few: Charles Schulz, Art Spiegelman,but I wasn't familiar with most of the contributors. I'm still memorizing a few other authors names of work I like. There are many to 'adore'....making this a great resource introduction book into the world of mostly contemporary graphic novelists.

There is a wide range of styles - topics - and moods. Some make you laugh - others give you that dark melancholy feeling.

These authors covers the universal themes-- love, loss, family, friendship, desire, pain, choices, limits, hope....

They are each distinct-- telling their own stories....from coming of age to old age.

Great intro. to expand one's appreciation for graphic novels. It's also the perfect book to the reader who has already read everything all year. A lovely gift book!

Aras says

A pretty good anthology of the 'slice-of-life' style of comic book.

One thing that does get tiring is how many of the stories are extremely down-beat, mopey, negative, depressive. What makes comic book writers hate life? Still, as an overview of the modern landscape, this is quite good, and there's some nice extended sections on Peanuts, Art Spiegelman, and Robert Crumb.

Bill says

Haven't read anything in a bit but recently just finished going through this. Overall a good collection of comics, nothing particularly unexpected or out of left field. A pretty good overview of the past 80-some years of Western comics. Unfortunately this is a pretty North American-centric collection, like most collections of this type go. Plenty of the hierarchs of the straight/white/male pantheon (Ware, Clowes, Crumb, Burns, etc. etc. etc.) are represented for the 100th time but there is a pretty good showing from women artists as well.

Yeah, IDK. Good stuff, pretty broad spread but like most collections of this type, not really broad enough. I know there's a point you have to draw the line but I wish more ppl drew the line somewhere a little further out.

David Schaafsma says

I've had this for awhile but never written about it. This is one of the important comics collections. If you are a student of comics you have to know it, and there's a second volume Brunetti did, and The McSweeney's volume edited by Chris Ware.

Faves: Chet Brown, Lynda Barry, Jeffery Brown, Charles Burns, Daniel Clowes, Crumb, Phoebe Gloeckner, Bill Griffith, Los Hernandez Bros, Kevin Huizenga, George Herriman, Ben Katchor, Richard McGuire, Seth, Charles Schulz, Jim Woodring, Chris Ware and about fifteen others.

If you are just getting into comics, read this or one of the above collections or Sammy Markham's collections. Just to see the range of what has been done and IS being done!
