

Chronicling North America in [in] Graphic Literature

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The framing purpose of our workshop is to trace how graphic literature – i.e. graphic novels, illustrated children’s literature, picture books, newspaper and magazine comics, graphic adaptations of novels, plays, or poetry, (serialized) narratives in pictures and words, photo essays and photographic literature, scrapbooks, graphic nonfiction, to name but a few examples here – has helped to create, shape, and maintain (vernacular) visual knowledge over time, and has functioned as visual (and) verbal archives of US-American culture, politics, and history.

To do this, we want to zoom into distinctive developments, i.e. into the socio-economic, technological, political, and medial circumstances in which graphic literatures were enmeshed at specific moments in history. On the one hand, we are particularly interested in reflecting on how, which and why different graphic (narrative) forms and medial formats have emerged, been collected, stored, and preserved. In this context, we also seek to address questions on the role private collectors and institutionalized graphic literature archives play(ed) in making accessible and visible, in curating and exhibiting, and in preserving and protecting (by copyright) graphic literature. On the other hand, we wish to explore depictions of archives within works of graphic literature such as, for example, Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* (2006), Chris Ware’s *Building Stories* (2002) or his series *Acme Novelty Library*, Ben Katchor’s weekly comic strips *Julius Knipel*, *Real Estate Photographer* (1988-1998), Richard F. Outcault’s and Rudolph Block’s “In the Louvre” episode (1897) or Horace Taylor’s “Anthony Comstock [...in] an Art Gallery” (1897), nineteenth-century illustrated children’s literature such as John Lewees’s “Making a Library” (1873), or depictions of exhibitions, libraries, and museums in various volumes of nineteenth-century *Harper’s Bazar* (e.g. vol. 23, 1879), and more.

Thus, we are not only interested in discussing questions of how graphic literature constructs and manages (visual) cultural memory over time, of how comics and other forms of graphic narrative are involved in and influence canon formations, and of how graphic literature invite to reflect on practices of collecting, assembling, preserving, rescuing, protecting, digitizing, excluding, omitting, and more. As (historical) resources and forms of expression and communication, we wish to examine how archives, and archival practices are negotiated in graphic literatures, and with what implications.

Possible topics for papers in this workshop may include but are not limited to:

- Graphic literature as resource, tool, database
- Archives in comics and other forms of graphic narrative
- Digital albums (of newspaper and magazine texts), and comic book libraries
- Comics archives in the U.S.
- Practices of (re-)assembling with / in graphic literature

- Graphic literature (and) canon formations
- (Re-)creating archives in / through works of graphic literature
- Collecting, maintaining and controlling (digitized) graphic archives
- Documenting and memorializing history and culture in graphic literature
- Archival research on graphic literature
- Graphic literature collections in (academic, private and public) libraries
- Fictional libraries in graphic literature
- Graphic literatures as historical archives
- Depictions of archival practices in comics and other forms of graphic narrative

Speakers:

Sabrina Czelustek (Leibniz Universität Hannover)

Lukas Etter (Universität Siegen)

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