



Underground Classics The Transformation of Comics into Comix, 1963–1990

May 2–July 12, 2009

Underground Classics presents a unique genre of artistic work that documented a volatile period of American history and the changes that followed. Early comix artists, rebelling against traditional norms, boldly visualized the political dissent and social exploration of the time. The “x” distinguishes comix—and its celebration of sex, drugs, and rock ’n’ roll—from comics produced by mainstream publishers. Readers were exposed to a completely new kind of graphic storytelling. However, imagery and subject matter alone didn’t differentiate comix from the mainstream; cartoonists in the underground received royalties for their work, retained ownership of their original art, automatically held copyrights, developed an alternative distribution system, and reveled in an uncensored environment. Although comix artists were more concerned with expressing themselves than making a profit, the thriving subculture challenged the economics of publishing as well as social and artistic conventions. Today’s cartoonists assume the creative freedom and economic clout that these artists forged.

The work of artists like R. Crumb and Art Spiegelman is now well known, yet that of many important contemporaries who stirred the artistic cauldron in the 1960s is rarely seen. Underground Classics gathers artwork of these artists to present a fuller survey and deeper understanding of the comix counterculture. Much of the work on view is original art that shows traces of the artists’ process and ideas.

American underground comix profoundly influenced subsequent generations of cartoonists both domestically and abroad; they changed the economics of comics publishing at all levels; and they even influenced the cartoonists who preceded them. Legendary cartoonists like Will Eisner credits undergrounds with his mid-life decision to create *A Contract with God*, which launched the graphic novel revolution in 1978. The booming genres of graphic novels and self-published ’zines benefit from the comix artists’ revolution of the 1960s.

Generous local support for this exhibition has been provided by the Chazen Museum of Art Council, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Overture Foundation, Hilldale Fund, Brittingham Fund, and Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

1963–1973

By 1963, there was a growing sense of change in America: the space race, the civil rights movement, the conflict in Vietnam, and the sexual revolution were all underway. Americans were emerging from a decade of peace, domestic prosperity, and social conformity. A rebellious counterculture was finding its voice and protesting the established norms, with the help of television and newspapers.

Underground comix were nurtured by what came to be called “alternative” or “underground” newspapers. The pioneering *Los Angeles Free Press* appeared in 1964, to be followed by the *San Francisco Oracle*, the *East Village Other*, and hundreds of others nationwide. The editors of these papers combined a free-swinging journalistic style with a strong visual sensibility, attracting a small army of artists whose wild graphics and satire exploded in their pages, and in leaflets, posters, t-shirts, and comic books. The artists, writers, and editors of the undergrounds committed themselves to building the Movement, a new culture that embraced and endorsed the values of young Americans—namely, sex, drugs, and rock ’n’ roll. The Underground Press Syndicate, formed in 1967, allowed its papers to freely reprint content from the member papers.

Artists like Frank Stack (aka Foolbert Sturgeon), Jack Jackson (Jaxon), and Joel Beck were first on the scene, producing important regional underground comix. The first comix to have significant national impact were R. Crumb’s *Zap* and Gilbert Shelton’s *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, both published in 1967. Hippies, free love, dope, acid, rock music, and political protests were defining symbols of the counterculture that pervaded comix. Some of these artists also created music posters for the popular and interesting new bands, and imagery and stories from both art forms also appeared in the underground newspapers. Each channel helped reach a broadening audience as the decade progressed. *Rolling Stone* magazine, also founded in 1967, covered rock music and music culture and would eventually publish the first history of comix in 1974, Mark James Estren’s *A History of Underground Comics*.

1.

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
“Wonder Wart-Hog,” 1963
Pen and ink with Zipatone
Lent by the estate of Harvey Kurtzman

Shelton’s “Hog of Steel” debuted in Harvey Kurtzman’s *Help! Magazine*. Kurtzman’s earlier *MAD Magazine* influenced artists like Shelton, Robert Crumb, Joel Beck, Jay Lynch, and Skip Williamson, paving the way for the earliest underground comix in the mid- to late 1960s. Wonder Wart-Hog, a grotesque parody of superhero comics animals, was Shelton’s first regular character. His other iconic creation is *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*.

2.

Kim Deitch (American, b. 1944)

“Be In,” drawing and cover from *East Village Other*, 1968

Pen and ink; color offset

Eric Sack Collection

The Human Be-In of January 1967 was a historic day for the American counter-culture. Hippies and many others, young and old, came to Golden Gate Park to celebrate human empowerment, communal living, and higher consciousness (often achieved with the help of drugs). Deitch depicted a Central Park version of the Be-In in for *EVO (The East Village Other)*. *EVO* began publishing in New York in 1965; it was one of the original under-ground newspapers, along with *The Los Angeles Free Press* and *Berkeley Barb*.

3.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

“Meatball!” 1967

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

In this episode, as Swedish artist Oyvind Fahlstrom said, “liberation comes from above” in the form of meatballs that drop from the sky, transforming people’s perspectives and threatening the world order. This classic Haight-Ashbury-hippie-era story suggests that the counterculture, sometimes under the influence of drugs, experienced cosmic truths sooner than most of society.

4.

Robert Crumb (American, b.1943)

Zap Comix #1, 1967 cover, 1993 reproduction

Color screen print

Denis Kitchen Collection

In 1967, R. Crumb was living in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district, having relocated from Cleveland. Crumb’s work appeared in the underground newspapers, including *The East Village Other*, but *Zap Comix* gave him national prominence. Crumb and his first wife, Dana, sold *Zap* from a baby carriage they pushed through the neighborhood. The pages were filled with Crumb’s art, which reflected his love of the past and a wickedly sharp critique of American culture (the Whiteman figure presented an especially bitter view of the white middle-class). In the 1990s Crumb reproduced the 1967 cover as a limited edition color print.

5.

Rick Griffin (American, 1944–1991)

Zap #2, inside cover, 1972

Brush, pen, and ink

Eric Sack Collection

Griffin, like so many budding cartoonists of the post–World War II era, started out by drawing icons of consumer culture; in his native California that meant hot rods and surfers. By the mid-1960s Griffin’s posters for rock shows at the Fillmore in San Francisco, as well as album art and more for the Grateful Dead, cemented his reputation for having one of the most important visual styles of the period. This was his first contribution to *Zap*.

6.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Self-portrait, 1969

Pen and ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

From the beginning of his career Crumb included himself in his work, making himself as familiar a character as his fictional ones are to readers. Comix lend themselves to self-expression that allows the artist to be part of the frame both visually and verbally.

7.

S. Clay Wilson (American, b. 1941)

“Head First,” 1968

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

Wilson was an early and important comix artist. Born in Nebraska and trained as an army medic, Wilson went to San Francisco where he met Charles Plymell, the original publisher of R. Crumb’s *Zap Comix*. This contribution appeared in the second issue of *Zap* and featured not just his trademark themes of sex and violence but also pirates.

8.

Skip Williamson (American, b. 1944)

“Racist Pig Comix,” 1969

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

As a teenager in the early 1960s Williamson published his first cartoon in Harvey Kurtzman’s *Help!*. He moved to Chicago to collaborate on *Bijou Funnies*, one of the earliest of the undergrounds, with Jay Lynch. Politics were never far from the artist’s mind or pen, as this piece from *Bijou* shows.

9.

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)

“Scenes from the Revolution: Billy Graham Reaches the Dope Mystics,” 1969

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

Radical America was a political magazine published in Madison, Wisconsin, by Students for a Democratic Society. In 1969, Paul Buhle, the editor, contacted Gilbert Shelton to help organize an all-comics issue. Shelton edited the book, drew the cover, and also printed it at Rip Off Press in San Francisco. In this scene, zoned-out hippies respond to Rev. Billy Graham at a revival.

10.

Frank Stack (American, b. 1937)

“Jesus at a Faculty Party,” pp 11–12, 1972

Pen and ink

Lent by the artist

Stack created the majority of his comix while a professor of art at the University of Missouri, which offered many opportunities to observe the absurdities of academe. The premise of his Jesus strips is that the divine one returns to earth—and to an unappreciative modern population.

11.

Frank Stack (American, b. 1937)

“Jesus at a Faculty Party” pp. 13–14, 1972

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

Religious themes, specifically Christian, have been a life-long focus of Stack’s satire. His earliest comix, *The Adventures of Jesus* and *The New Adventures of Jesus*, show why Stack wrote under a pseudonym, Foolbert Sturgeon, in order to gain tenure and avoid persecution while living and teaching in a socially conservative Southern state.

12.

Robert Williams (American, b. 1943)

“Dormasintoria,” 1969

Brush, pen, and ink

Eric Sack Collection

Sometimes described as the master of lowbrow art, Williams was one of the earliest and most significant comix cartoonists. Williams has said his attraction to the art form is rooted in the marriage of graphic images and a complete lack of constraints on subject matter, as evident in “Dormasintoria,” Williams’ first story for *Zap Comix*. In 1994 Williams founded *Juxtapoz Art & Culture Magazine*.

13.
Don Glassford (American, n.d.), Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946), Jay Lynch
(American, b. 1945), Jim Mitchell (American, b. 1949), Wendel Pugh
(American, n.d.), Bruce Walthers (American, n.d.) and Skip Williamson
(American, b. 1944)
Group Self-portrait, 1971
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

This chummy group portrait depicts the core Midwest underground cartoonists. Left to right, back row: Kitchen, Glassford, Mitchell, and Williamson; front row: Lynch, Walthers, and Pugh. The jam was created for an early *Funnyworld* magazine article on under-ground comix. Michael Barrier's periodical was devoted to measuring the work of contemporary cartoonists and animators against traditional artistic standards.

14.
Richard "Grass" Green (American, 1939–2002)
"Wild Man Meets Rubberoy," 1971
Pen and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Green, an African-American, created *Super-Soul Comix*, an idiosyncratic and risqué look at race in America. His characters Wildman and Rubberoy grew out of Green's early involvement in the small but vital fanzine movement—homemade comics by fans of professional publications.

15.
John Thompson (American, n.d.)
Tales of Tales, cover, 1973
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

John Thompson cornered the mystical comix niche in solo titles such as *Tales From the Sphinx* and *The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You*. This unpublished cover of *Tales of Tales* #1 is a prime example of his intricate style, esoteric subject matter, and psychedelic imagery.

16.
Greg Irons (American, 1947–1984)
San Francisco Comix #3, inside front cover, 1970
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

By 1967 Irons was making posters for rock concerts at the Fillmore Auditorium. In 1969 he relocated to London, where he worked on the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* animated feature. Irons was active in comix, contributing to titles such as *Yellow Dog*,

Dr. Wertham's Comix & Stories, *Slow Death*, and *Dope Comix*. This indicia-page illustration for *San Francisco Comix* suggests that some readers may have a trippy experience with the book's contents

17.
Greg Irons (American, 1947–1984)
Slow Death, #1, cover, 1970
Brush, pen, and ink
Eric Sack Collection

In this graphic depiction of ecological disaster, a skyscraper-encrusted Earth consumes itself. The first issue of *Slow Death* featured contributions by Dave Sheridan, Gilbert Shelton, and other artists associated with Last Gasp in San Francisco.

18.
Bill Griffith (American, b. 1944)
Young Lust #3, cover, 1972
Brush, pen, and ink
Eric Sack Collection

In 1969 Griffith conceived the idea for *Young Lust*, which would draw a contrast between the sexually liberated lifestyles emerging in the 1960s and the constrained mores of the 1950s. *Young Lust* parodied traditional romance periodicals while offering a sex-based comic that appealed to female readers—a rarity in comix publishing.

19.
Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Early Jazz Greats, *Heroes of the Blues*, and *Pioneers of Country Music* trading cards, 1985–2005
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

In boxed-card sets celebrating pioneers of blues, jazz, and country in the 1980s, cartoonist Robert Crumb combined his reverence for old music and his obsession with drawing.

20.
Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Ordinary Records 78 rpm record, 1978
Vinyl record with offset print labeling
Denis Kitchen Collection

21.

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, "Mystery Drugs," 1970
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

Strong narrative coupled with clever drawings helped to create a massive global audience for *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, Shelton's best-known creation. Sometimes called "The Marx Brothers on drugs," the comic chronicled the dope-fueled adventures of three hirsute brothers (Phineas, Fat Freddy, and Freewheeling Frank) and Freddy's independent cat.

22.
Vaughn Bodé (American, 1941–1975)
"Love is Thee," 1971
Color markers
Eric Sack Collection

In this page from *Deadbone Erotica*, dark humor wins the battle of wills between a sleazy male suitor and a haughty woman.

23.
Spain Rodriguez (American, b. Mexico, 1940)
Subvert #1 cover, 1970
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

Trashman, depicted as a "hero of the revolution," partly reflects Spain's wild early years as a biker in the Road Vultures. Rodriguez was among the most political of the underground cartoonists. He was involved with establishing the United Cartoon Workers of America, an artists' union that he briefly tried affiliating with the International Workers of the World in San Francisco.

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Subvert #1 cover, 1970
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25.
Jim Mitchell (American, b. 1949)

“Jim Mitchell’s Pro Junior Comix,” 1971

Pen and ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Milwaukee might be considered an unlikely hotbed for underground comix, but its thriving subculture was second only to San Francisco’s. Mitchell’s work appeared in *Teen-age Horizons of Shangri-La*, *Mom’s Homemade Comics*, and his own *Smile* series. Reverse-eyed Pro Junior was a character created originally by Don Dohler, but many cartoon artists reinvented Pro Junior for their own stories, a practice that defied conventional notions of trademark. The character at bottom left who says “Pretend it’s candy” is R. Crumb, and the scene parodies his infamously busted “Joe Blow” story in *Zap* #4.

26.

Dan Clyne (American, n.d.), Skip Williamson (American, b. 1944)

Hungry Chuck Biscuits Comics and Stories #1, cover, 1971

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Hungry Chuck Biscuits became one of Kitchen Sink Press’s more successful titles despite its short run. This unpublished cover was drawn primarily by Clyne, with a Williamson cameo.

27.

Bobby London (American, b. 1950)

“Dirty Duck,” 1973

Pen and ink

Eric Sack Collection

London was a member of the Air Pirates, who provoked a copyright suit from Disney. His art echoes the style of George Herriman’s “Krazy Kat.” Dirty Duck cavorts through a landscape reminiscent of Coconino County, except that drugs and sex are prevalent.

28.

Jay Lynch (American, b. 1945)
Chicago Seed drawing and cover, 1971
Pen and ink; color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

The *Seed* was an underground newspaper published from 1967 to 1971. Edited by Abe Peck, the highly political paper featured some of the most interesting comic art of the period. The politically correct staff of the *Seed* rejected Lynch's 1950s hipster cover in 1971 because of the "emphasis on breasts," but his colleague Denis Kitchen happily accepted it as a cover for Wisconsin's alternative paper, *The Bugle*, where it ran with only a logo change.

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"Jim Mitchell's Pro Junior Comix," 1971
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

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30.

Jay Lynch (American, b. 1945)
Teen-Age Horizons of Shangri-La #1, cover, 1970
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This anthology was subtitled *Asinine Adolescent Antics*, though it was aimed at adults. The cover parodies imagery of innocent 1950s teenagers. Lynch is perhaps best known to Midwest comix readers for his strip with Gary Whitney, "Phoebe and the Pigeon People," which ran for two decades in the *Chicago Reader*. He also edited *Bijou Funnies*, one of the earliest undergrounds, and authored the ongoing feature *Nard n' Pat*.

31.

Skip Williamson (American, b. 1944)
"Capitol Hill Comix," 1971
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Williamson's work, frequently political in nature, first appeared in *Chicago Mirror* and the underground weekly *Chicago Seed*. All presidents are fodder for cartoonists but Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew were mercilessly lampooned during the underground comix era.

32.

Spain Rodriguez (American, b.1940)
"Evening at the Country Club," 1973
Brush and ink
Eric Sack Collection

This page, which shows Rodriguez's characteristic street violence and artistry, was published in *Zap* #6. Spain's work, especially *Trashman*, evoked class warfare and his commitment to economic justice.

33.

Jim Mitchell (American, b. 1949)
"Reality Chick" and "Hello There!" 1971
Pen and ink with pencil shading
Denis Kitchen Collection

Mitchell was a key figure in Milwaukee's underground comix scene in the early 1970s. His weekly strip "Smile" originated in *The Bugle* but was syndicated to college and underground papers nationwide. The strips shown here typify Mitchell's appealing mix of cute imagery and sophisticated humor.

34.

James Osborne (American, 1943–2001)
Vultura, 1971
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

Horror comics were a staple of pulp-fiction. In the 1950s, psychiatrist Dr. Fredric Wertham campaigned against the graphic violence in these publications, arguing that it led to delinquency in children. Political pressure led the industry to self-censor. Many underground artists were fans of horror comics, including Osborne, who's *Vultura* contributes over-the-top fetishistic necrophilia to the genre. Osborne occasionally contributed to titles such as *Bijou Funnies*, *Arcade*, and *Sleazy Scandals of the Silver Screen*.

35.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Bijou Funnies #6, cover, 1971
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

Perhaps responding to criticism from feminists, including women comix artists, Crumb depicts a male chauvinist claiming to reform, only to be greeted with skepticism.

36.

Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999)

The Rise and Fall and Rise and Fall and Rise and Fall of the American Revolution, ca. 1970

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

The Free Speech Movement—student protests on the campus of the University of California–Berkeley in 1964–65—and its leader Mario Savio are parodied in this cartoon by Beck, one of the earliest underground cartoonists.

37.

Richard Corben (American, b. 1940)

Page from *Fever Dreams*, 1972

Brush, ink, and Zipatone

Denis Kitchen Collection

This page, from the cover story written by Jan Strand, concerns a beetle-like spaceship and its strange inhabitants, Frierson and Meade. Frierson is a deformed cripple, but the robot, Meade, projects an illusory reality in which Frierson appears as a handsome lover surrounded by beautiful women. Corben, an exemplar of science fiction underground comic artists, has published frequently in *Heavy Metal* and his work is known internationally.

38.

Will Eisner (American, 1917–2005)

Snarf #3, cover, 1972

Brush and ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Comic book legend Will Eisner created *The Spirit*, a weekly newspaper insert in 1940. The groundbreaking feature quickly assumed the status of a classic. Eisner, who influenced countless cartoonists, was himself influenced in mid-career by a movement of younger artists. Inspired in particular by the autobiographical undergrounds, Eisner's *A Contract with God* jump-started the graphic novel phenomenon in 1978. In this tongue-in-cheek *Snarf* cover, Spirit breaks into the Krupp Comic Works (a.k.a. Kitchen Sink Press) office located in a Milwaukee sewer.

39.

Rory Hayes (American, 1949–1983)

“The Midnight Monster,” 1972

Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

This splash page appeared in *Insect Fear* #3, published by The Print Mint in San Francisco. Sometimes called the “Grandma Moses of undergrounds” for his primitive folk style, Hayes’s misogynistic fantasies and tortured teddy bear archetypes certainly limited the comparison.

40.
Jay Lynch (American, b. 1945)
Snarf #2 cover, 1972
Ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This popular underground humor anthology featured an eclectic content mix, and Lynch’s bafflingly surreal cover would not have deterred its hippie customers. Lynch’s best-known creations were the human-and-cat duo in *Nard ’n’ Pat* (Pat the Cat was the smart one).

41.
Trina Robbins (American, b. 1938)
“One Flower Child’s Search for Love,” ca. 1973
Brush, pen and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

This tongue-in-cheek story of archetypal Haight-Ashbury hippies was influenced by the 1950s romance comics Trina Robbins devoured in her youth. Robbins’s *It Ain’t Me Babe* was a very early underground and the first with a feminist theme. Robbins also pushed the boundaries of gender and sexuality with *Wet Satin*, an anthology of “women’s erotic fantasies” she edited.

42. Larry Todd (American, b. 1948)
“Red Robot,” 1972
Brush, ink, and paint
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Todd was friends with Vaughn Bodé at Syracuse and later was active with the San Francisco underground cartoonists. He created the masthead for the short-lived *Sunday Paper*, which looked like a traditional Sunday newspaper section except it was filled with the work of Art Spiegelman, Gilbert Shelton, Willy Murphy, and other underground cartoonists. Todd’s other work includes his best-known *Dr. Atomic* comix series and early contributions to *Cherry Poptart* and *Cobalt 60*.

43.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Home Grown Funnies #2, drawing and cover, 1972
Pen and ink; color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

This self-portrait with Yetti is an unpublished cover framed with the color proof. Many of Crumb's comix include dominant women, an admitted fetish, such as Angelfood McSpade, a gigantic black female with an unbridled sexual appetite; Devil Girl; and Yetti, a Bigfoot introduced in the "Whiteman" episode of *Home Grown Funnies #1*. This intended sequel was never finished.

44.
Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
Bizarre Sex #1, drawing and cover, 1972
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone;
color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

1972 was the high-water mark for comix sales, and one of the Kitchen Sink Press best sellers was *Bizarre Sex*. The vision for "The Giant Penis that Invaded New York" came to the artist during an acid trip. Many buyers of the comic later complained that there was no story to go with the provocative cover.

45.
Vaughn Bodé (American, 1941–1975)
Cheech Wizard #5, "The Bust," 1972
Black and grey markers
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

In the 1970s, *National Lampoon*, started as a spinoff of the *Harvard Lampoon*, brought a new style of parody to American readers, publishing comic strips such as *Cheech Wizard*, Vaughn Bodé's most iconic creation. Cheech first appeared in the *Syracuse Daily Orange* when Bodé was a student.

46.
Bobby London (American, b. 1950)
"Dirty Duck," 1973
Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

London was a member of the Air Pirates, who provoked a copyright suit from Disney. His art echoes the style of George Herriman's "Krazy Kat." Dirty Duck cavorts through a landscape reminiscent of Coconino County, except that drugs and sex are prevalent.

47.

Rand Holmes (Canadian, 1942–2002)
A History of Underground Comics, wraparound cover, 1973
Brush and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Rolling Stone's Straight Arrow Books published the first history of underground comix, written by Mark James Estren. Lavishly illustrated, Estren's book continues to be a basic source for anyone interested in comix. Rand Holmes illustrated the cover, which shows various cartoonists, their creations, and guests at a party. Holmes was best known for his *Harold Hedd* series.

48.
Tim Boxell (American, b. 1950)
Commies From Mars, The Red Planet! #1, cover, 1972
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Tim Boxell, whose art was sometimes signed "Grisly," is perhaps best known for his underground comix adaptation of the novel *The Image of the Beast*. He was the editor as well as a contributor to *Commies From Mars*. In the debut cover, Boxell parodies McCarthyism and space invasion fears. Boxell began working on movies as a director and art director in the 1990s; his movies include *Brenda Starr*, based on the comic strip.

49.
Peter Poplaski (American, b. 1951)
Comix Book #1, cover, 1973
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

The underground comix industry stumbled in 1973 when a Supreme Court decision on obscenity and a market glut combined to weaken distribution and sales. In this climate, Stan Lee of Marvel Comics called Denis Kitchen and convinced him to package *Comix Book* for Marvel and introduce the underground to the mainstream. The hybrid title failed after several issues. It was the first Marvel title to grant artists copyright and trademark ownership and to return original artwork.

50.
Dan O'Neill (American, b. 1942),
Bobby London (American, b. 1950), Gary Hallgren (American, b. 1945), and Shary Flenniken (American, b. 1950)
Unpublished Air Pirates jam, 1975
Color markers
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Four of the five Air Pirates artists depict Mickey Mouse as an ominous galactic threat in this playful jam. Disney has often been targeted by satirists despite, and sometimes because of, the company's litigious reputation. In the early 1970s, O'Neill provoked a copyright and trademark suit by portraying Mickey and Minnie in sexually explicit and recreational-drug-filled cartoons. Over the next decade Disney's lawyers spent more than \$2 million to successfully suppress the cartoonists' work. The characters fleeing from Mickey are (top to freefall): O'Neill's Odd Bodkins, Flenniken's Trots and Bonnie, Hallgren's Tortoise and Hare, and London's Dirty Duck and Weevil. The artist's signatures are accompanied by miniature self-caricatures.

51.
Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
"The Birth of *Comix Book*," 1973
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Comix Book was an experimental Marvel Comics magazine driven by Stan Lee's desire to tap the energy of underground comix for the mainstream. Many comix artists contributed because it helped pay the bills. Kitchen's "origin story" appeared in the debut issue. The "heartland" farm in the second panel was Kitchen's homestead in Princeton, Wisconsin. Stan Lee is unflatteringly depicted as Spider-Man's nemesis J. Jonah Jameson; underground cartoonists are skewered as well.

52.
Ted Richards (American, b. 1946)
"Two Fools Travel on the Astral Plane," 1976
Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

In this page from *Two Fools*, a book done in collaboration with Willy Murphy and others, Richards tweaks the New Age movement and suggests that some souls are undesirable even to Satan.

53.
Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999)
One Dong's Family, 1976
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Turning conventional "Ozzie and Harriet" or "Leave It to Beaver" visions of the All-American family on its head, Beck offers an outrageous parody presenting the nuclear family as genitalia. This two-page story is from *Bizarre Sex*.

54.
Art Spiegelman (American, b. Sweden, 1948)

Maus preliminary drawings and published pages, 1971–72
Color markers; offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Subtitled *A Survivor's Tale*, *Maus* began its cartoon existence as a brief story in the underground comic *Funny Aministrals* [sic] in 1972. As Spiegelman extended and serialized the story to book length in *Raw*, a comics magazine that he also edited, the power of the text and drawings grew dramatically. In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, *Maus* received numerous awards and accolades that acknowledged its value for conveying the horror of the Nazi regime and what it was like to live with parents who survived it. These preliminary drawings are from the “Prisoner on Hell Planet” section of the graphic novel.

1973–1980

The demand for undergrounds swelled steadily in the early 1970s. By 1973, 400,000 copies of *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* #1 had sold. Success—and failure—followed. To fill demand, publishers issued more titles, including more titles of inferior quality.

In 1973, two independent factors dealt the cottage industry a double blow. The first was a direct result of a new distribution system: The nontraditional retailers that bought comix did so on a nonreturnable basis, and eventually the weakest titles built up in a costly and inconvenient inventory glut. That same year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Miller v. California* that obscenity was not protected by the First Amendment and the definition was subject to “community standards.” This decision created a serious chill among the head shop owners, the core distribution base for undergrounds. Already feeling vulnerable, the retailers of bongos, pipes, rolling papers, and other drug paraphernalia did not want the graphic nature of comix to provide local authorities an excuse to shut them down. Large numbers of head shops and regional distributors dropped comix altogether in 1973. With the ending Vietnam War and the decline of hippie subculture, the alternative press also faced major challenges. Many papers shut down; some firebrand editors became teachers and stockbrokers; some comic artists went to work for ad agencies.

But not all. The surviving underground publishers and artists adapted, and many of the genre’s best and most lasting creations were yet to come. The artists had learned something about how to produce and market their wares. Issues of sexual liberation and social equality lingered. Titles proliferated—*Leather Nun*, *Wet Satin* (“*Women’s Erotic Fantasies*”), *Bizarre Sex*, *Dope Comix*, *Slow Death*—and sales and distribution rebounded.

55.

Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999)
Various Cells of the Human Brain, 1974
Ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This novel page layout employs a cutaway view of a head as Beck comments on social changes. “Head” was also a colloquial term hippies used to describes themselves.

56.

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
Self-portrait, 1974
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

In this self-portrait for the Famous Cartoonist Button Series, Gilbert Shelton could easily be mistaken for a fourth Freak Brother. The buttons were manufactured using a manual punch press.

57.
Richard Corben (American, b. 1940)
Self-portrait, 1974
Brush and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This self-portrait appeared as number 12 in the Famous Cartoonist Button Series, issued in 1974 by Kitchen Sink Press.

58.
Harvey Kurtzman (American, 1924–1993)
Snarf #5, cover, 1972
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Harvey Kurtzman's work profoundly influenced underground cartoonists as well as many who read his groundbreaking publications *MAD*, *Humbug*, *Trump*, and *Help!* R. Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson, and Joel Beck all received their first national exposure in *Help!* Kurtzman's unerring satire, institutional irreverence, and graphic sensibility inspired a generation of artists to draw what they felt. In this guest cover for *Snarf*, Flash Gordon, an icon of the 1930s and '40s, discovers that rescuing hapless, barely clad women is more complicated in the era of feminism.

59.
Willy Murphy (American, 1937–1976)
Cartoonists Co-Op Press promotional cartoon, 1974
Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

In the summer of 1973 Bill Griffith, Kim Deitch, Jerry Lane, and Jay Lynch had new comix ready but struggled to find a publisher in the wake of the *Miller v. California* Supreme Court decision that left the definition of obscenity to local governments. They founded the short-lived Cartoonists Co-Op Press, arguing that artists could net a greater share of revenues by publishing cooperatively.

60.
Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940), Dave Sheridan (American, 1944–1982)
"Fat Freddy's Cat . . . and his Friends," 1974
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Dave Sheridan was a friend of Shelton's and a frequent *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* collaborator. After Sheridan's death, Shelton began working with Paul Mavrides. The

premise of this strip, that anyone can create cartoons, is an insiders' joke. Naturally, it's difficult for the perpetually stoned brothers to accomplish *anything*.

61.

Art Spiegelman (American, b. Sweden 1948)

"Self-Portrait with Characters," 1974

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Spiegelman draws himself with three of his own creations—an abstract Picasso-inspired woman (from *Ace Hole, Midget Detective*), Ace Hole, and a concentration camp mouse from *Maus*—along with the famous comic strip character Nancy. The source for Spiegelman's parody, also shown here, is a 1930s self-portrait by Ernie Bushmiller with his syndicated characters Fritzi Ritz, Nancy, and Sluggo, from the book *Comics and Their Creators*. Perhaps short on stationery, Spiegelman used the reverse side of his original drawing to write a letter to Denis Kitchen in 1974.

62.

S. Clay Wilson (American, b. 1941)

"The Swap," 1974

Brush, pen, and ink

Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

This splash page from *Zap* #8 demonstrates Wilson's stylistic evolution from simple lines to dense page design. Sex and violence are integral to Wilson's work, and he used it in ways that astonished and sometimes frightened his fellow cartoonists, although he was admired for pushing—and at times eviscerating—boundaries of taste and moral convention.

63.

Larry Todd (American, 1948)

Da' Terminal Trick, 1975

Black and gray markers

Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Cheech Wizard, a lizard whose body is overwhelmed by a large hat, became Vaughn Bodé's most iconic creation. In this parody, Larry Todd, a colleague and occasional collaborator, alludes Bodé's actual death in 1975.

64. Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)

Bugle-American #216, drawing and fifth-anniversary cover, 1975

Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone; color offset

Denis Kitchen Collection

Co-founded by Kitchen and four partners in Madison in 1970, the *Bugle-American* became Wisconsin's longest-running underground newspaper. Later shortened to *The Bugle*, the paper ran full pages of homegrown comic strips, which were syndicated to alternative and college papers. Kitchen and other cartoonists often created front covers, but the cash-strapped paper typically could only afford a second color. The paper splurged on a full-color cover for the fifth anniversary edition.

65. Victor Moscoso (Spanish, b. 1936)
“Artist & Model Comics,” 1978
Pen and ink
Eric Sack Collection

R. Crumb's groundbreaking *Zap* #1 was printed by Charles Pymell, a Beat writer who shared a house with Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady. After two solo issues, Crumb invited other artists to contribute to *Zap*. In addition to Moscoso, S. Clay Wilson, Robert Williams, Spain Rodriguez, Gilbert Shelton, and Rick Griffin became associated with *Zap*. Moscoso, like Griffin, was perhaps even better known for the psychedelic art and concert posters he produced for the Fillmore and other clients. *Zap* #9 was the tenth anniversary issue (the first issue was #0).

66.
Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940) and Paul Mavrides (American, b. 1952)
The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers #9, cover, 1980s
Pen and ink
Lent by John Lind

Shelton brought Mavrides in as a collaborator to try to meet demand for his famous comic. Unlike monthly newsstand comic books, undergrounds were published erratically, only as quickly as the artist was able—or chose—to produce the pages. This cover for “The Idiots Abroad” shows both the surreal nature of the humor and the artists' meticulous attention to detail.

67.
Sharon Rudahl (American, b. 1947)
“Sex Welfare Benefits,” 1975
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Rudahl was one of the earliest women underground cartoonists and a contributor to *Wimmen's Comix*, *Snarf*, and other titles. A political artist, one of her strips discussed her oblique connection to the infamous bombing of the math research building at UW–Madison. In this daily strip for *Comix Book*, sex workers are part of America's welfare system.

68.

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
“Major Arcana,” drawing and poster, 1975
Brush and ink; color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Invited to create an album cover for the late Jim Spencer’s Milwaukee-based band, Kitchen made this stream-of-consciousness work as an unpaid favor. He recycled it for the splash panel of *Mondo Snarfo* (a surrealistic spin-off of *Snarf*), and also had it converted into a psychedelic 3-D poster with fifty levels of depth.

69. Leslie Cabarga (American, b. 1954)
Comix Book #4, cover, 1976
Brush and ink with airbrushed color
Eric Sack Collection

In 1973 Stan Lee, legendary co-creator of *Spider-Man* and *Fantastic Four*, and the longtime editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics, invited Denis Kitchen to create a title that would tap into the energy of the undergrounds without alienating Marvel’s family audience. *Comix Book* was the result. In the cover art for the fourth of five issues, Cabarga depicts a scene, familiar to many comic book fans, between a young comic book collector and his disapproving mother.

70.
Justin Green (American, b. 1945)
“Matriculation, with Kiwi Brown and the Statistics,” 1975
Pen, ink, rubber stamps, and screen print
Denis Kitchen Collection

A surreal take on the workplace, “Matriculation” is not only larger than most original comix art, but is also mixed media. Green’s painfully autobiographical comic *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary* (1972) is regarded as a classic. Despite his popularity, Green was not able to sustain a career in comics and has made his living primarily as a sign painter.

71.
Roger Brand (1943–1985), Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999) and Kim Deitch (American, b. 1944)
Banzai! #1, cover, 1978
Pen, brush, and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This cover is a rare example of a cartoon triptych. The picture pane is divided three ways, with each artist doing a solo drawing. This is distinct from interactive jams in which multiple artists draw within the same page or panel.

72.

Rand Holmes (Canadian, 1942–2002)
“Great Job” (a.k.a. “The Interrogation”), 1977
Brush and ink on Craftint doubletone paper
Lent by Rand Holmes

The *Georgia Straight*, named for the channel between Vancouver Island and British Columbia’s coast, began publishing in 1967 and was known for anti-establishment politics and coverage of the emerging counterculture. Rand Holmes was a frequent contributor. Still in publication, today’s paper is similar to alternative newsweeklies. In this comic, Holmes’s tongue-in-cheek scene addresses search and seizure and the right to privacy.

73.

Art Spiegelman (American, b. Sweden, 1948)
Snarf #7, cover, 1976
Painting
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Spiegelman’s work ranges from comic to high art and back again. In the 1960s, Spiegelman suffered a nervous breakdown, which he addressed in some of his underground comix. He is also known for clever wordplay, as in this Vaudeville-inspired cartoon. His early work appeared in a number of titles including *Bijou Funnies*, *Real Pulp*, *Young Lust*, *Bizarre Sex*, and *Sleazy Scandals of the Silver Screen*.

74.

Greg Irons (American, 1947–1984)
Slow Death, #1, cover, 1970
Brush, pen, and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

In this graphic depiction of ecological disaster, a skyscraper-encrusted Earth consumes itself. The first issue of *Slow Death* featured contributions by Dave Sheridan, Gilbert Shelton, and other artists associated with Last Gasp in San Francisco.

75.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Snarf #6, cover, 1975
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

The cartoon scientist’s answer to the mid-1970s energy crisis and spiraling gas prices is as pertinent today as it was at the time.

76.

Roger Brand (1943–1985), Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999) and Kim Deitch
(American, b. 1944)
Banzai! #1, cover, 1978
Pen, brush, and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

This cover is a rare example of a cartoon triptych. The picture pane is divided three ways, with each artist doing a solo drawing. This is distinct from interactive jams in which multiple artists draw within the same page or panel.

77.
Leslie Cabarga (American, b. 1954)
Dope Comix #1, cover, 1978
Line art on acetate over airbrushed background
Denis Kitchen Collection

Kitchen Sink Press produced *Dope Comix* to tap into the drug culture and popularity of magazines like *High Times* and *Head*. Cabarga's cover parodies the 1930s cartoon style of the Max Fleischer studio. It was also issued as a poster.

78.
Justin Green (American, b. 1945)
"Zen Time," 1978
Ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Green describes his obsessive-compulsive disorder as essential to his artistic development. The appeal of surrealism is also clear in his work, which often focused on religion. In "Zen Time," both personal enlightenment and obsession are the theme.

79.
Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
"Working in Geektown," drawing and back cover, 1977
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone; color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

This back cover of *Mondo Snarfo*, a collection of comix inspired loosely by Salvador Dali and other Dada and Surrealist artists, suggests the dehumanizing nature of the corporate work place. The initials on the door stand for Marvel Comics Group, where Kitchen worked briefly earlier in the 1970s.

80.
Peter Poplaski (American, b. 1951)
Corporate Crime Comics #2, cover, 1979
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Corporate Crime replaced the bank robbers and murderers of traditional crime comics with white-collar criminals. The artist employs Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy* style and puts Alfred Krupp (putative father of Krupp Comic Works) in the police line-up. Poplaski is also an oil painter and authority on R. Crumb and Zorro.

81.

Dan O'Neill (American, b. 1942), Bobby London (American, b. 1950), Gary Hallgren (American, b. 1945), and Shary Flenniken (American, b. 1950)

Unpublished Air Pirates jam, 1975

Color markers

Eric Sack Collection

Disney has often been targeted by satirists despite, and sometimes because of, the company's litigious reputation. In the early '70s, O'Neill provoked a copyright and trademark suit by portraying Mickey and Minnie in sexually explicit and recreational drug-filled cartoons. Over the next decade Disney's lawyers spent more than \$2 million to successfully suppress the cartoonists' work. The characters fleeing from Mickey are (top to freefall): O'Neill's Odd Bodkins, Flenniken's Trots and Bonnie, Hallgren's Tortoise and Hare, and London's Dirty Duck and Weevil. The artist's signatures are accompanied by miniature self-caricatures.

82.

John Pound (American, b. 1952)

Dope Comix #2, cover, 1978

Line art on acetate over airbrushed background

Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

The camel smoking a hookah evokes a certain cigarette brand. This cover also enjoyed popularity as a poster, with its richly detailed, almost hypnotic, oriental carpet, hookah, and tapestry. Pound later became famous for his work on the Garbage Pail Kids trading card series.

83.

Jay Lynch (American, b. 1945)

Dope Comix #3, cover, 1979

Pen and ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Dope Comix is an iconic title of the '70s.

The fine detail in this cover was drawn with the artist's obsessive attention and a 3x0 Rapidograph pen. Jay Lynch, by this time a drug teetotaler, reflects his jaded view of the '70s drug scene. After the peak of underground comix, Lynch developed a new following with the art and ideas behind bubble gum trading cards, usually sans gum, including Garbage Pail Kids and Wacky Packages.

84. Steve Stiles (American, b. 1943)
“Wobblies!” 1979
Brush and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Stiles graduated from New York’s famed High School of Music and Art, which Harvey Kurtzman and other artists associated with *MAD Magazine* had also attended. In this splash page on the International Workers of the World (IWW), Stiles reminisces about his involvement with the “Wobblies.” Stiles often used history as subject matter and this is a surprisingly rare example of overtly leftist politics in underground comix.

85. Aline Kominsky-Crumb (American, b. 1948)
“Anatomy of the Bunch Body,” 1981
Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

In this page from *Power Pak #2*, Kominsky-Crumb combines her trademarks: acerbic self-deprecating humor, Jewish shtick, and frank autobiography. Her periodic jams with husband Robert Crumb have appeared in *Dirty Laundry* and *The New Yorker*.

1980–1990

In what became the Reagan Years, comix art retained its artistry and sharp insight while the content reflected changing economic troubles and a revival of patriotism. The demand for earlier work prompted comix publishers like Kitchen Sink Press to reprint out-of-print, classic, mainstream comics like Will Eisner's *The Spirit* and Milt Caniff's *Steve Canyon*.

Will Eisner was a legendary comics artist whose work deeply influenced the underground cartoonists. However, he initially disliked comix. Over time his distaste grew into appreciation for what the new graphic freedom could mean for the art form, and in 1978 Eisner published *A Contract with God*, subtitled “a graphic novel.” The long narrative graphic work once again transformed comics publishing for artists, publishers, and readers. In the 1980s sales of graphic novels boomed, with books printed by both mainstream and comic publishers. They were sold in independent and chain bookstores alike, and were even used in school and college curriculum. Comix artists went on book tours and issued limited edition, signed prints that sold as fine art.

The “cheerfully demented” underground comix had made it into the fringes, and sometimes even the predominant fabric, of mainstream culture. They were no longer relegated to head shops and smoke- and geek-filled comic stores. Many of the underground artists and their work developed and changed in a society that had become more willing to embrace the medium. Artists like Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, and Art Spiegelman had made names for themselves, and demand continued for the weird, unfettered, sex- and dope-crazed comix take on American life, even as appreciation developed for epic personal stories such as Spiegelman's *Maus*.

Today graphic storytelling has developed into a medium of rich, skillful expression and artistry, due in part to the groundbreaking work of the underground cartoonists. Some of these same artists, and the artists they have influenced, are publishing sophisticated, full-length graphic narratives, including biography and autobiography, history, and literature. The comic art form may appear as newspaper strips, self-published 'zines, conventional multivolume books, and artist websites, with stories ranging from escapist to political, mundane to epic.

86.

Art Spiegelman (American, b. Sweden, 1948)

“Pluto's Retreat,” 1980

Hand-colored and retouched Photostat

Denis Kitchen Collection

Pluto's Retreat was a notorious New York City sex club that catered to heterosexuals in the late 1970s and early '80s. Located in a hotel basement, the club had previously been the gay-oriented Continental Baths. The club closed in 1985, as part of the city's response to concerns about HIV/AIDS. In “Pluto's Retreat,” the back cover of *Bizarre Sex* #8, Spiegelman portrays an orgy of famous comic characters.

87.

Bill Griffith (American, b.1944)

Zippy Stories, cover, 1981

Brush, pen, and ink

Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

“Zip, the What-Is-It,” a microcephalic, was a sideshow attraction with P.T. Barnum from 1864–1926. Griffith first created Zippy the Pinhead for *Tales of the Toad* #2, then produced several solo titles. Making an unprecedented leap from underground comix to daily newspapers, *Zippy* is now nationally syndicated by King Features.

88.

Robert Williams (American, b. 1943)

Cocaine Comix #3, cover, 1981

Brush and ink

Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Williams is a painter, but his roots are in comix. He began by drawing hot rods cartoons for Ed “Big Daddy” Roth, and he was a key member of *Zap*. Satan is the featured character in Last Gasp’s overtly drug-oriented *Cocaine Comix*. His often-disturbing drawings have been collected in numerous books, including *Hysteria in Remission*.

89.

Jay Kinney (American, b. 1950)

“Say! What Ever Happened to the Counterculture?” 1981

Brush, pen, and ink; hand-colored blue-line print with acetate overlay

Courtesy of Jay Kinney

In this bittersweet reflection from *Dope Comix* #4, the artist concludes that the hopes and dreams of the 1960s counterculture are over. An early fanzine artist and contributor to *Bijou Funnies* in 1968, Kinney was part of the defining first wave of comix artists. He was published extensively and edited a number of periodicals, including *Anarchy Comics*, *Young Lust*, *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, and *Gnosis*.

90.

Harvey Pekar (American, b.1939), Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

“Miracle Rabbis,” 1982

Pen and ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

The writer and artist collaborated on “A Doctor Gesundheit Story” for Pekar’s *American Splendor*. Crumb and Pekar originally met as collectors of 78 rpm

records. *American Splendor* embraced autobiography and the tedium of real life, and the series inspired the 2003 motion picture by the same name.

91.

Reed Waller (American, b. 1949) and Kate Worley (American, 1958–2004)
“The Adventures of ‘Omaha’ the Cat Dancer,” splash page, 1983
Pen and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

Written as an ongoing erotic melodrama, the epic eventually filled eight collected volumes. *Omaha* was deeply informed by sex-positive feminism. The anthropomorphic and sometimes sexually explicit strip was a popular underground, and the first to attract a sizable female audience. *Omaha* was also a magnet for obscenity charges in a number of countries. Its seizure from a suburban Chicago comics store led to the formation of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. In New Zealand, on the other hand, the Indecent Publications Tribunal in Wellington ruled that *Omaha* was not obscene in a decision that in fact praised it for portraying honest, positive, affirming sexuality.

92.

Charles Burns (American, b. 1955)
Dope Comix #5, cover, 1982
Color screen print
Denis Kitchen Collection

Burn’s cover takes the viewer inside the head of someone who has likely consumed mind-altering substances. This was the last issue of the *Dope Comix* series to be published. The head shops that sold drug paraphernalia were rapidly closing down as restrictive ordinances were passed and carrying comix, particularly drug-related titles, was politically unwise.

93.

Dan Steffan (American, b. 1953)
“Marijuana aka Leaf, Boo, Muggles et al,” 1983
Brush and ink
Denis Kitchen Collection

The inside cover from *Dope Comix* #5 parodies both marijuana smokers’ pursuit of enlightenment and the mainstream attitudes about drug use. The image underscores that most underground cartoonists did not take themselves terribly seriously on the topic. Steffan’s work appeared in several comix and science fiction zines, and he later created the science fiction fanzine *Blat!*

94.

Steve Stiles (American, b. 1943)

“My First Marijuana Experience!”, 1984
Brush, pen and ink with Zipatone
Denis Kitchen Collection

Stiles had formal artistic training and began freelancing as a teenager. His first sale was to Paul Krassner’s iconic *The Realist*, but his work appeared in children’s books and other “above ground” publications. This 2-page excerpt is from a longer autobiographical story in *Dope Comix*, which encouraged cartoonists to recount their personal drug experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant.

95.
Drew Friedman (American, n.d.)
“Jimmy Durante Boffs Young Starlets,” 1984
Pen and ink
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Drew Friedman is an American cartoonist who was long known for his stippling style of caricature, although in recent years he has switched to painted caricatures. His work, often incongruous parodies of Hollywood legends and political figures, appears widely from comics publications to news magazines. He was a student of Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner at the School of Visual Arts.

96.
Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940), Dave Sheridan (American, 1944–1982)
Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers #4, cover, 1975
Painting
Lent by Eric Sack, Jenkintown, Pa.

Most underground comic book covers were created as black-and-white line art, and color was applied mechanically using hand-cut Zipatone overlays. Full-color paintings are rare for cover art; the cost of converting a painting for printing was quite expensive in the predigital era. Because the *Freak Brothers* comix were the best-selling undergrounds, Shelton and Sheridan were not always held to tight budget restrictions.

97.
Jack “Jaxon” Jackson (American, 1941–2006)
“Portrait of Quanah Parker,” 1985
Pen, ink, and Zipatone
Courtesy of the estate of Jack Jackson, 2009

Jackson’s portrait of Quanah Parker, from his book *Long Shadows*, depicts the half-Indian son of Cynthia Ann Parker, a young girl captured and assimilated by Comanches in Texas in 1836 (a story told in *Comanche Moon*). Quanah eventually become the chief of his tribe.

98.

Jack “Jaxon” Jackson (American, 1941–2006)

“Commanche Moon,” 1979

Pen, ink, and Zipatone

Courtesy of the estate of Jack Jackson, 2009

Commanche Moon is based on the true story of Cynthia Ann Parker, a young girl captured by a band of Texas Commanche in 1836. Born in Texas, Jack Jackson was on the staff of the University of Texas–Austin’s humor magazine *Texas Ranger*, and soon published *God Nose* in 1964, which some consider to be the first underground comix. Jackson moved to San Francisco and in 1969 co-founded Rip-Off Press, one of the first independent publishers of comix, with four fellow Texas transplants, including Gilbert Shelton. Jackson is best known for his historical work, which focused on Native Americans and Texas.

99.

Will Elder (American, 1921–2008)

Snarf #10, cover, 1987

Pencil on typing paper; tempera

Denis Kitchen Collection

Will Elder was an integral part of EC Comics and *MAD Magazine* in the 1950s and a longtime collaborator of Harvey Kurtzman. Both were major influences on underground cartoonists. Though not part of the movement, Elder agreed to do this cover for the anthology *Snarf*, which parodies his favorite masterpiece, Théodore Géricault’s *Raft of the Medusa*, and portrays a dying counterculture adrift in the late 1980s.

100. Howard Cruse (American, b. 1944)

Wendel, “March in Washington,” 1988

Pen and ink with Zipatone

Lent by Howard Cruse

This pair of two-page stories by the foremost gay underground cartoonist features his most famous creation, Wendel. Headrack, Wendel’s artist friend, came out in *Barefootz* #2, in 1976, when gays were rarely visible in popular culture. Cruse edited and contributed to *Gay Comix* in 1980, the first anthology by gay cartoonists.

101.

Howard Cruse (American, b. 1944)

Wendel, “The Fagbasher,” 1989

Pen and ink with Zipatone

Lent by Howard Cruse

This pair of two-page stories by the foremost gay underground cartoonist features his most famous creation, Wendel. Headrack, Wendel's artist friend, came out in *Barefootz* #2, in 1976, when gays were rarely visible in popular culture. Cruse edited and contributed to *Gay Comix* in 1980, the first anthology by gay cartoonists.

102.

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946) and Dave Schreiner (American, 1946–2003)
"Rural Publishing," 1988
Brush, pen, and ink with Zipatone on illustration board
Denis Kitchen Collection

San Francisco and New York were hotbeds of underground comix publishing, but the rural midwest seemed an unlikely home base. Kitchen Sink editor Dave Schreiner facetiously pokes fun at his friend and collaborator Denis Kitchen, who published comix from his home in Princeton, Wisconsin, for twenty years.

103.

Art Spiegelman (American, b. Sweden, 1948)
"Three Mice," 1993
Lithograph
Denis Kitchen Collection

Maus is a graphic novel memoir, originally serialized beginning in 1980. It tells the story of Spiegelman's father Vladek, a Jew living in Poland before and during World War II, and of the artist's personal struggles to understand the legacy of the Holocaust. His anthropomorphic animal characters include Jewish mice, German cats, American dogs, and Polish pigs. In this later work, the artist depicts a Spiegelman Maus, Mickey Mouse, and a real mouse.

104.

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
A Short History of America, 1979, 1993 reproduction
Color screen print
Denis Kitchen Collection

This is Crumb's most universally appealing image. It first appeared in black and white in *Co-Evolution Quarterly* (1979) and in *Snooid Comics*, and went on to acquire cult status. It then became a very popular 12-panel color poster, ending with the "What Next??" panel. Crumb subsequently added the bottom tier showing three speculative future scenarios for our endangered planet: ecological disaster, technological supremacy, or Ecotopia (his vote). This seventeen-color hand-pulled screen print, signed and numbered by the artist in 1993, was his entrée into the fine art world.

105.

S. Clay Wilson (American, b. 1941) and Skip Williamson (American, b. 1944)

“The Checkered Demon Meets Snappy Sammy Smoot,” 1988
Color screen print
Denis Kitchen Collection

The artists' respective iconic characters meet for the first time in this screen-printed jam. The Demon, with his fat torso exposed, wears checkered pants and is almost always violent toward the denizens of Wilson's world, which includes bikers, pirates, and rapists. In contrast, Williamson's unctuous character Smoot, wearing a green suit and dotted tie, is the epitome of decorum and deference. Like R. Crumb, these and other underground cartoonists have developed their typically black-and-white drawings into color, limited edition, fine art prints.

Display Case Labels

[Case 1]

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Kent Melton

Sculptures of well-known Crumb characters, 1991–1993

Hand-painted cast resin

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 2]

Sylvie Rancourt (Canadian, n.d.)

Self-portrait, 1993

Hand-painted wood

Denis Kitchen Collection

Jacques Boivin (Canadian, n.d.)

Melody necktie, 1989

Screen print on fabric

Denis Kitchen Collection

Jacques Boivin (Canadian, n.d.)

Melody #8, 1993

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 3]

Richard Corbin (American, b. 1950)

Reclining Nude, 1970s

Cast resin

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 4]

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Kent Melton

Snoid and Host Woman, 1992

Hand-painted cast resin

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 5]

Reed Waller (American b. ?)

Omaha the Cat Dancer necktie, 1989

Screen print on fabric

Denis Kitchen Collection

Reed Waller (American b. 1949) and Steve Kiwus (American n.d.)

Omaha the Cat Dancer statue, 1989

Painted porcelain

Denis Kitchen Collection

Reed Waller (American b. 1949) and Kate Worley (American, b. 1958)

Omaha the Cat Dancer trading cards, 1990s
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Reed Waller (American b. 1949) and Kate Worley (American, b. 1958)
Omaha the Cat Dancer picture disc, 1988
Vinyl record
Denis Kitchen Collection

Reed Waller (American b. 1949) and Kate Worley (American, b. 1958)
Omaha the Cat Dancer, #20, 1994
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Various artists
Kitchen Sink Press 20th-anniversary card set, 1989
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Charles Burns (American, b. 1955)
Good Squad trading cards, 1992
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 6]
Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Devil Girl Chocolate Bars, 1994
Color offset printed box and wrappers, chocolate
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Devil Girl lunch box, 2000
Color offset printed box and tins, chocolate
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Devil Girl Hot Kisses, 1997
Color offset printed tin and wrappers, chocolate
Denis Kitchen Collection

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers knapsack, 1990s
Machine embroidered fabric
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Motor City Comics, 1969
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Homegrown Comix, #1, 1971

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)

The Collected Adventures of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, 1971

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)

Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers pin-back button, ca. 1980

Color offset

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 7]

Various artists

Kitchen Sink Press's Famous Cartoonist Button Series pin-back buttons, 1975

Offset on celluloid

Denis Kitchen Collection

Aline Kominsky-Crumb (American, b. 1948)

Self-portrait for Famous Cartoonist series, 1974

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Kim Deitch (American, b. 1944)

Self-portrait for Famous Cartoonist series, 1974

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999)

Self-portrait for Famous Cartoonist series, 1974

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

Trina Robbins (American, b. 1938)

Self-portrait for Famous Cartoonist series, 1974

Ink

Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 8]

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Mr. Natural glass, 1970s

Screen print on glass

Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)

Mr. Natural glass, 1970s

Screen print on glass

Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Mr. Natural squeaky doll, 1993
Painted vinyl
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Mr. Natural lamp, 1998
Painted resin
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Mr. Natural pin-back button, ca. 1980
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Zap #1, 1967
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Various postcards, 1969–2002
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[CASE 9]
Robert Williams (American, b. 1943)
Header card for Head's Hi-Lite Marijuana, 1967
Offset, plastic bag, and oregano
Denis Kitchen Collection

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
Packaging for Milwaukee Brand Rolling Papers, ca. 1975
Offset
Lent by the artist

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
Packaging for Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers rolling papers, ca. 1979
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Jay Lynch (American, b. 1945)
Dope, #3, 1979
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)
Dope, 1971

Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

[CASE 10]
Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Ordinary Records 78 rpm record, 1978
Vinyl record with offset print labeling
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Ordinary Records pinback button, ca. 1978
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Early Jazz Greats, Heroes of the Blues, and Pioneers of Country Music trading cards,
1985–2005
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

In boxed-card sets celebrating pioneers of blues, jazz, and country in the 1980s,
cartoonist Robert Crumb combined his reverence for old music and his obsession
with drawing.

[CASE 11]
Various artists
Holiday cards, 1976
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 12]
Various artists
Postcards, late 1960s–1980s
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[CASE 13]
Various artists
Seasoned Greetings, 1970s–1994
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[CASE 14]
Gilbert Shelton
Fabuous Furry Freak Brothers cards, 1973–1980, printed 1994
Color offset
Denis Kitchen Collection

[Case 15]
Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)

Krupp Dealers' Catalog, #22, 1977

Offset cover

Lent by the artist

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)

Krupp 10th-Anniversary Mail Order Catalog, 1977

Color offset cover

Lent by the artist

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)

Rip Off Press, Inc., Wholesale Catalog, 1979

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Gilbert Shelton (American, b. 1940)

Rip Off Press, Inc., Wholesale Catalog, 1978–1979

Offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)

Krupp Mail Order Catalog, #8, 1975

Color offset cover

Lent by the artist

[Case 16]

Rand H Holmes (Canadian, 1942–2002)

Harold Hedd, #14, 1973

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Dean Armstrong (n.d.)

Death Rattle #14, 1988

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Charles Burns (American, b. 1955)

Curse of the Molemen, 1986

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Melinda Gebbie (American, n.d.)

Wimmens Comix, #7, 1976

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Trina Robbins (American, b. 1938)

Trina's Women, 1976

Color offset cover

Denis Kitchen Collection

Aline Kominsky-Crumb (American, b. 1948)
The Bunch's Power Pak Comics, 1979
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Bill Griffith (American, b. 1944)
The Enigmatic Donut (scrolling comic in "Zippy Scope"), 1979
Color offset box
Denis Kitchen Collection

Richard Corbin (American, b. 1950)
Fever Dreams, #1, 1972
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Richard Corbin (American, b. 1950)
Slow Death, #4, 1972
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

[CASE 17]
Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
Mondo Snarfo, #1, 1978
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Roger Brand (American, 1943–1985), Joel Beck (American, 1943–1999), Kim Deitch
(American, b. 1944)
Banzai! 1978
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Denis Kitchen (American, b. 1946)
Mom's Homemade Comics, vol. 1, #1, 1969
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
Mr. Natural, 1970
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Lee Mars (American, n.d.), Roberta Gregory (American, b. 1953), Burton Clarke
(American, n.d.), Howard Cruse (American, born 1944)
Gay Comix, #2, 1981
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Robert Crumb (American, b. 1943)
The People's Comics, 1972

Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Unknown artist
Corporate Crime Comics, #2, 1979
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Cliff Harper (American, n.d.)
Class War Comics, #1, 1979
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

William Scout (American, n.d.)
Weird Tales, #2, 1978
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection

Kim Deitch (American, b. 1944)
Lean Years, 1974
Color offset cover
Denis Kitchen Collection