A Visual Turn: Comics and Art after the Graphic Novel

By Amy Peltz

*Deb Sokolow, **Whatever happened to the Pentagon (restaurant)?** (2007), photocopied, hand-colored, accordion-folded paper, bound in manila file folder, approx. 11 1/2 × 9 1/2 inches (closed). Edition of 100. Published by the artist.*

Again and again over the course of the 20th century, new popular media—photography, film, video—were adopted by contemporary artists who had trained in traditional techniques such as painting or sculpture. British sculptor Richard Long put it this way: "I am an artist who sometimes chooses to use photographs."[1] For decades it has seemed that the printed comic might be ripe for such assimilation, but while the rubric now encompasses everything from superheroes to an experimental avant-garde, the valorization of comics by art institutions (museums, galleries and publications) has remained elusive.[2]

The relationship between comics and the art world is complicated and (at least for comics artists and audiences) emotionally fraught. While serialized word-picture combinations go back to ancient Egypt at least, the American strain of the sequential, narrative, printed graphic form we call "comics" arose about a century ago as a feature of the new Sunday newspaper supplements.[3] When cheap pamphlet reissues of these strips proved popular, publishers began commissioning "comic books" with original content, and to make the most of the low-quality lithographic printing processes used, a graphic style of strong black outlines and flat areas of dot-screened color evolved.[4] Though newspaper comics were generally the work of single creators, comic books were usually assembly-line products, made by teams of writers, pencillers, inkers and colorists (this remains standard practice with mainstream commercial publishers like DC and Marvel). In the mid-20th century, the sensationalism of comic books and their popularity with young readers prompted assertions of a link between comics and juvenile delinquency, leading to the self-censoring Comics Code Authority, adopted in 1954 (now largely abandoned).

The emergence of underground comics in the 1960s solidified the reputation of comics as a site of countercultural rebellion. Artists such as R. Crumb, Jay Lynch and Gilbert Shelton detailed the sexual and drug-laced adventures of their characters but also delved into politics and subverted older comics styles. By the 1980s, when Françoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman began publishing the pioneering anthology *RAW*, comics had evolved to include artists like Gary Panter and Jerry Moriarty, who explore complex subjects in experimental formats. Panter delineates the visual language of a post-apocalyptic world in paintings and folio-sized, gilt-stamped volumes, while Moriarty records the tempo of everyday life and the character of ordinary spaces in oil paintings and oil-painted comics. Billing itself as "high art for low brows," *RAW* consciously positioned comics as art and aimed at a new audience. This legacy continues today in stylistically and thematically diverse alternative comics (or art comics), often issued in the form of self-published, handcrafted "mini-comics."

Beginning with Roy Lichtenstein's appropriation of Mickey Mouse from a Little Golden Book (*Look Mickey* (1961)),[5] the famous characters, characteristic visual style (black outlines and flat areas of color) and narrative devices (sequential panels, speech bubbles) of comics were gleefully exploited by Pop Art. A half-century later comics are still frequently quoted in contemporary art: Sue Williams improvises on shapes and forms derived from sources such as Don Martin's comics in *MAD*; Gary Simmons makes use of racially loaded Disney characters, drawing then erasing them to leave smudged, semi-legible traces; Rivane Neuenschwander has whited (and

redded and greened) out the contents of panels, narration boxes and speech bubbles from a Brazilian Disney comic book. With some notable exceptions—Ida Applebroog, Öyvind Fahlström, Jess and Mike Kelley, among others—painters have tended to focus on the stereotypical visual properties of comics.

This narrow approach to comics is mirrored in an art discourse that concentrates on the look of comics, rather than the functions of narrative, representation and sequence on which comics are built. Scholars, curators and critics often use the terms "cartoon" and "comics" as if they were specific visual descriptors rather than media that encompass many styles[6] and that today incorporate narrative genres (autobiography, science fiction, journalism), poetry and non-narrative abstraction. The continuing critical view of comics as "raw material" for real art[7] betrays a monolithic and ahistorical conception of the medium, ignoring its aesthetic development and bypassing alternative comics altogether—the comics that could most easily be recognized as fine art.

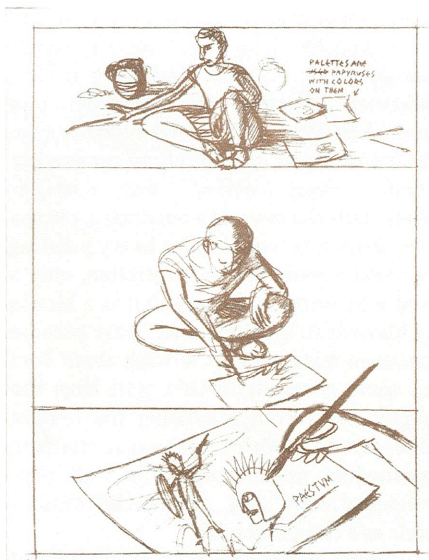
According to comics scholar Bart Beaty, an "internalized bitterness defines how the comics world sees the larger art world."[8] Peter Bagge's "'Real' 'Art'" (*Reason*, August 2004), Daniel Clowes' "Art School Confidential" (*Eightball #7*, November 1991) and Chris Ware's *The Whitney Prevaricator* (2002) all depict contemporary art as a pretentious sham. *Uninked*, a 2007 a strip by Ware, tells the story of a frustrated newspaper cartoonist who decides to try painting; he visits a museum for inspiration, only to find a painting on display that is a blowup of his own strip's title panel. Ware parodies museum texts (and art writing about comics more generally) with a wall label that begins "By recontextualizing the familiar title panel..." (Ware's cartoonist character meanwhile misinterprets the wall text's reference to his "slick, commercial" drawing style as a compliment.)[9]

Comics today have a place in high culture, but ever since Art Spiegelman's *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize Special Citation for Letters in 1992, they have been celebrated primarily as literature rather than as art, especially in the form of longer "graphic novels."[10] Last year the University of Chicago hosted "Comics: Philosophy and Practice," a star-studded three-day conference that reveled in literary theory. Most of the 16 participating artists were makers of graphic novels, and despite the presence of visual-culture theorist W. J. T. Mitchell and the visually astute scholarship of organizer Hillary Chute, what Beaty calls "the literary turn in the study of comics" prevailed.[11]

This may be changing. One of the panelists at the conference was Panter, whose punk visual styling and ratty line carry as much meaning as the subject matter they denote or the stories they tell. Many younger cartoonists employ techniques, working methods and modes of inquiry that owe more to art—Impressionism, the Vienna Secession, outsider art—than to comics. Discussing these younger artists, Spiegelman observed, "the avant-garde in comics is moving very much toward the visual side of comics. [These are] Gary Panter's kids."[12]

At the same time, younger painters and installation artists are investigating structural properties of comics, not just their look but more fundamental features, such as the integration of word and image on the visual plane, and the emphasis on narrative and strategies for visualizing it in the space of the page. The reciprocity of this exchange

Gabrielle Bell, pages 83 and 87 from "The Artist's Assistant" in ***Lucky*** *(2006), offset-printed hardcover book, 9 1/4 × 7 1/4 inches. Published by Drawn & Quarterly, Montreal, Canada.*



Frank Santoro, pages 27 and 28 from **Pompeii** (2012), risograph-printed softcover book, 10 7/8 × 8 3/8 inches. Edition of 300. Published by PictureBox, Brooklyn, NY.

is unprecedented, but have we reached the point where we would find an art star saying, "I am an artist who sometimes chooses to use comics?"

In Gabrielle Bell's comic "The Artist's Assistant" (2004), she uses a "clear line" style indebted to Tintin creator Hergé to tell the story of a young cartoonist who starts working as an assistant to an older artist, Sheila. In accord with the trope that fine artists are interested only in the "look" of comics and not the mastery of craft necessary to their production, Sheila has hired the cartoonist to help with tasks such as drawing a spaceship's control deck, and typifies the art world in announcing, "My knowledge of comics ends at *RAW*."[13] In alternately aggrandizing and self-deprecating daydreams, the protagonist expresses hopes and fears arising from the appropriation of comics by art. When Sheila adopts one of her suggestions, the assistant imagines the Gagosian Gallery and the Whitney Museum clamoring after Sheila's newly improved work, which Sheila ascribes to "a breakthrough" without crediting her assistant. Alternatively, when Sheila shows her how to fix a mistake the assistant made in one of Sheila's drawings, she imagines her own art will seem derivative to those unaware of her contribution to Sheila's. Bell's ending, however, is happier than what one finds in Ware and other earlier artists: prompted by Sheila's praise, the assistant fantasizes about a mentor/mentee relationship in which Sheila teaches her how to do things like "get that moody effect with the grey tones," and the assistant's work is recognized as independent and valuable.[14]

The first issue of Frank Santoro's series *Pompeii* (2012) also revolves around an artist's assistant: Marcus, who works for the artist Flavius in the ancient Roman city. The plot revolves around their efforts to keep Flavius' regular model and lover from finding out about his newest lover, a princess. Santoro was trained as a painter and draws from both classic comics and Classical art. Like his earlier *Storeyville* (1995, repr. 2007), which eschewed "deliberative naturalistic clarity" to evoke subjective experience through expressive drawing,[15] *Pompeii* reinforces thematic content through visual style, carefully deployed proportion and dynamic symmetry.[16] The cover features a portrait bust of Marcus on the front and of Flavius on the back, each placed within the intersection of two circles, suggesting ancient geometric constructions like the Golden Rectangle. This iconography of composition, proportion and design fits the story and also emphasizes the axioms that underlie both art and comics. Cartoonists sometimes see themselves as the last champions of representational and compositional skills in the face of an art world that no longer values these abilities.[17] Santoro's book is a story about painting, told through the medium of comics, and it repeatedly presents comics and painting as each other's double. At one point Flavius asks Marcus whether the eyes in his portrait of the princess are correct, and mirrored panels on the following spread show two pictures of the princess, identical but for the blinking eyes on the right. It is unclear which image represents Flavius' painting and which the real woman. Comics and painting both depict the world, and sometimes each other, and they use the same tools to do so.

Aidan Koch does not tell stories about the art/comics relationship, but her work enacts it, melding comics' storytelling formats with abstraction and experimental composition. On one page of *The Blonde Woman* (2012), a hunched figure squeezes between two heavy black triangles that press in from the upper corners. Above her hovers a lit blue candle in a curved, parenthesis-like holder. Commercial offset printing is now adept enough to convey faithfully the fine, restrained pencil line and delicately applied gouache and watercolor that delineate the figure and candle. Seemingly deliberate gaps interrupt both line and color, and the brush strokes are nearly as prominent as the dress and figure they describe. The overall effect is mysterious and a bit melancholy.

To describe this image as a comic would be peculiar if the pages that follow did not contain gridded panels, speech bubbles and narration boxes. Even when employing such conventions, however, Koch disrupts

Frank Santoro, pages 10 and 11 from **Pompeii** (2012), risograph-printed softcover book, 10 7/8 × 8 3/8 inches. Edition of 300. Published by PictureBox, Brooklyn, NY.

Aidan Koch, page 46 from **The Blonde Woman** (2012), offset-printed softcover book, 9 x 6 1/2 inches. Edition of 500. Published by the artist.

them. On another page, two panels of yellow lines—one set tangled and the other straight—read as both compelling marks and as the hair of the Blonde Woman before and after brushing. Elsewhere the artist treats text as image, painting both word and woman maroon, and repeating a sky-blue comma as punctuation in one spot and as a compositional element in another. While most comics are driven by narrative, Koch explains she isn't "really trying to tell stories." Instead she pursues "a tone or idea."[18]

"I never read comics growing up," says Koch, and the influences she cites run from Odilon Redon and Edgar Degas to Luc Tuymans and the sculptor Klara Kristalova.[19] Unlike most cartoonists, she does not develop images carefully from thumbnails to pencil drawings to inked-in drawings to print. Indeed, her painterly method rejects the emphasis on line that characterizes mass-market comics and on which the affordable printing of comics depended, until the recent advent of inexpensive color photocopies and short-run offset and digital printing. Her process is one of "learning through constant corrections and not knowing if anything will work out," an improvisatory approach that "gives more chances for something new and inspirational to just happen."[20] She echoes cartoonists such as Austin English, who described his favorite sort of image as "one where I surprise myself or feel something outside of me within the drawing—something I don't recognize from previous drawings."[21] Koch also adheres to the modern and post-modern art concern with producing works that act as indices of the process that created them: "If I do change something, I often draw right over it or use one of my crappy erasers that smudges the page. That way at least there's a history built into the drawing."[22]

Koch is part of what critic Rob Clough has dubbed the "immersive" movement of comics, which produces work that possesses "a unity between word and image, where text has a visual or decorative impact and is fully integrated as part of the art."[23] These are comics to be both read and viewed, or more accurately, to be read *through* viewing. Immersive artists include, among others, English, Dunja Jankovic, Juliacks, Blaise Larmee, Ron Regé, Jr. (especially in his recent work) and a number of Francophone, German and Scandinavian cartoonists such as Clara Besijelle, Frédéric Coché, Julie Delporte, Anke Feuchtenberger, Dominique Goblet, Joanna Hellgren, Emilie Östergren and Amanda Vähämäki.

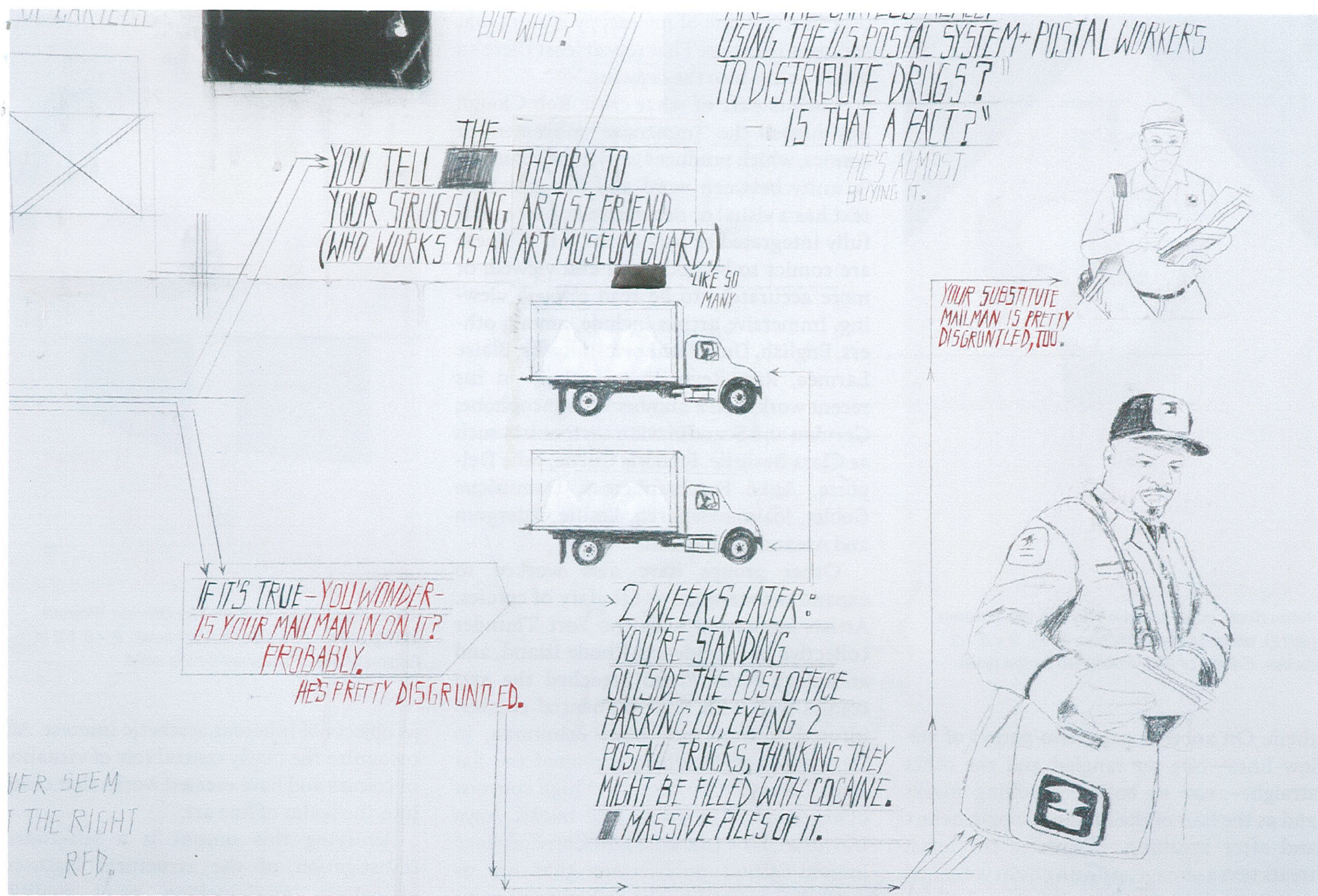
Other groups have also worked to expand the standard vocabulary of comics. Artists associated with the Fort Thunder collective in Providence, Rhode Island, and anthology *Paper Rodeo* breached the art/comics wall with their influential comics-infused screenprints. Matt Brinkman, Jo Dery and Leif Goldberg exploited the flat color shapes, sharp edges and high contrast of screenprint in prints and books. Anya Davidson, Edie Fake and Lilli Carré produce limited-edition publications that are as much like artists' books as like mini-comics; and cartoonist Julie Doucet now makes artists' books and prints almost exclusively. Derik Badman, Andy Burkholder, Warren Craghead III and Leslie Wiebler are among those investigating comics' potential for abstraction, treating historic styles and conventions like panels and speech bubbles

Aidan Koch, page 17 from **The Blonde Woman** (2012), offset-printed softcover book, 9 x 6 1/2 in. Edition of 500. Published by the artist.

as objects of inherent aesthetic interest. All recognize the newly central role of visuality in comics and have created works that cross into the realm of fine art.

Unifying this output is a self-aware investigation of the structural features of comics (mark-making, print quality, codex form and visual conventions) that connects with the meta-critical sensibility of contemporary art. In particular, the domains of comics and of artists' books are becoming increasingly hard to distinguish. Edie Fake recently received an award from Printed Matter, and cartoonists have begun

Aidan Koch, pages 8 and 9 from **The Blonde Woman** (2012), offset-printed softcover book, 9 x 6 1/2 inches. Edition of 500. Published by the artist.



*Deb Sokolow, detail of **You tell people you're working really hard on things these days** (2010), graphite, charcoal, ink, and acrylic on paper, mounted on panel, 7 × 25 feet. Installed in the main lobby of the museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, as part of the 2010 exhibition "Production Site: The Artist's Studio Inside-Out."*

to exhibit at the New York Art Book Fair. Nearly all have adopted the "original print" practice of producing work in signed and numbered limited editions.

Elements of comics are also creeping into painting, drawing and installation art. Deb Sokolow, for example, relies on comics-like modes of integrating text and picture, building them into sequences and moving viewers through narratives. Her large, site-specific wall drawings and accordion-folded books use images, texts, charts and diagrams to map the paranoid thoughts of an unnamed character in the second person: "YOU WONDER IS YOUR MAILMAN IN ON IT? PROBABLY. HE'S PRETTY DISGRUNTLED," reads a passage in the wall drawing *You tell people you're working really hard on things these days* (2010). On the wall or on the page, her stories develop in installments laid out as a sequence of physical spaces.

Sokolow believes the "generation of [Dan] Graham and Richard Serra kind of poo-poo" such "illustrative tendencies."[24] Like the comics artists Bell and Santoro, she works through her feelings about this underdog status in the stories she tells. Another section of *You tell people* casts Richard Serra as a failed artist turned hit man and body butcher for the Chicago mob. Arrows link a portrait of the sculptor to the question, "DOES RICHARD SERRA HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR?" A pie chart below illustrates unfavorable odds.

Sokolow's images serve the story but, like many avant-garde comics artists, she rejects the term "illustration" and its implication of work done on spec rather than as a personal statement. While she doesn't use panels or speech bubbles, her storytelling mix of all-caps text and figurative drawings follows the workings of comics—more obviously so than, say, Koch's mood-driven work. Words caption and narrate pictures, pictures explain words, and each corroborates, complicates and contradicts the other.

Many other contemporary artists have utilized the mechanics of comics in new ways. Martin Kippenberger's and Raymond Pettibon's work mimics clichés of how comics look, just as Pop Art does, but to tell stories, exploiting the sequencing of word and image (in Pettibon's case, sometimes in book form) and using speech bubbles and visualized sound effects to structure that narrative. The Royal Art Lodge (including Michael Dumontier and Marcel Dzama) constructs meaning through picture and caption, but more critically, highlighting the sequential movement between them—the fact that both can't be perceived at once. Kerry James Marshall actually makes comics, employing in his ongoing *RYTHM MASTR* series layouts and line work typical of contemporary superhero adventures.

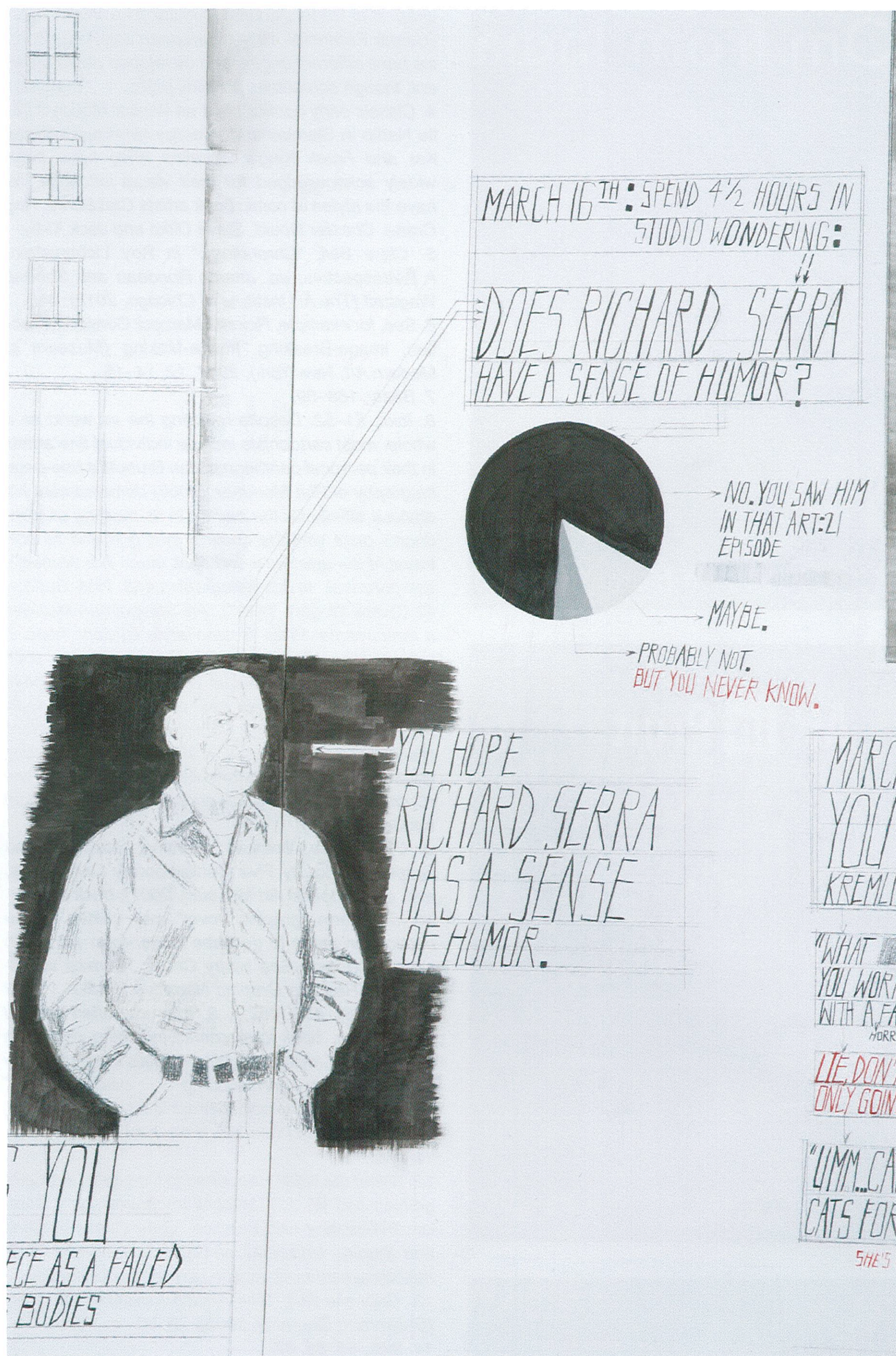
Comics and contemporary art are thus beginning to share some core characteristics: comic artists can be seen to be moving closer to the conceptual concerns of art as they engage in critical analyses of the traditions and materials they employ, while contemporary artists are adapting the structural elements and narrative functions of comics to (primarily unique) media like drawing and painting. But they do not yet occupy the same territory: Koch may think of herself as an "artist who uses comics," but for Sokolow, comics and zines are a way "to broaden the narrowness of the High Art story"[25]—they remain a material form of the "other." Similarly, while Kerry James Marshall may appear to be an art star "who sometimes chooses to use comics," for him it remains a tool to investigate other issues, much as it was in Pop Art; despite actually being made in the comics form, the work does not engage the mechanics of comics in a meta-critical way. In sum, contemporary painters, sculptors and installation artists

have not taken up comics in the way that, for example, the conceptual artists of the 1960s and 1970s took up photography.

The audiences for comics and for art also remain, for the most part, two separate entities. Though comics can now be seen in numerous galleries, most are venues that specifically deal with the form. The interviews with Koch and Sokolow consulted for this article were both published online, but Koch's appeared on such sites as *The Comics Journal* while Sokolow's can be found through a link on PBS's *Art:21* blog.

There are many explanations for this state of affairs. Perhaps the emphasis on comics as literature has impeded our ability to see comics as visual art. Certainly, some academics and cartoonists have become preoccupied with policing the boundaries of the form, marginalizing experimental comics even within the comics world. Other distinctions are the natural result of structural differences between the art market and the comics market, which, in both its mainstream and alternative incarnations, is geared to distributing unpretentious, physically accessible items through websites, comics conventions and specialized stores, at prices that make them easy to acquire. The art world, on the other hand, deals largely in unique, prohibitively expensive objects that must be sought out at a finite number of galleries concentrated in certain cities. The recent trend toward beautifully printed, limited-edition comics may actually do more harm than good, moving comics into the somewhat marginalized art world cul-de-sac of prints and multiples. Finally, as objects meant to be read as well as looked at, comics are an awkward fit for museums and galleries, where page-turning by the general public isn't an option (artists' books suffer from the same problem).[26]

But perhaps this is what cartoonists have been after all along—artists have long chosen the codex form for its potential to disrupt standard museum modes of consumption. Maybe comics' current visual turn is less an attempt to seduce the museum than a backlash against the literary gentrification of the graphic novel and the attendant academicization of the form. Spiegelman emphasized the importance, in light of comics' "Faustian deal . . . with the culture," of making "more dangerous comics, not more domesticated ones that can be explicated in ... classes."[27] The works of Koch and her peers are not conventionally "readable" and have little chance of being taken up as literature. Their adventurous visuality may be a kind of poison pill against assimilation, a fulfillment of Spiegelman's vision of artists working with comics "in ways that won't be happily contained anywhere, in books or walls."[28]



Deb Sokolow, detail of ***You tell people you're working really hard on things these days*** *(2010), graphite, charcoal, ink, and acrylic on paper, mounted on panel, 7 × 25 feet. Installed in the main lobby of the museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, as part of the 2010 exhibition "Production Site: The Artist's Studio Inside-Out."*

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Notes:

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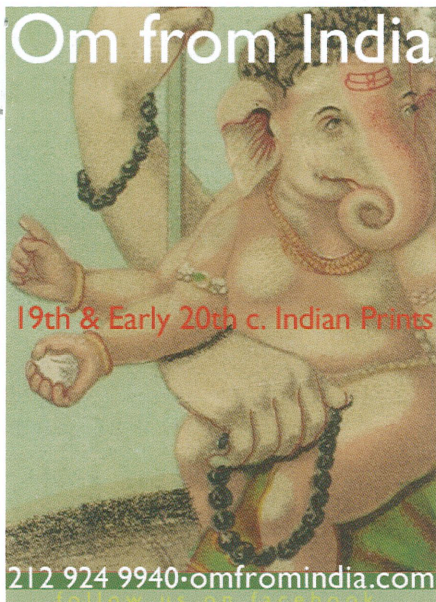
1. *Quoted in* Richard Long: São Paulo Bienal 1994 *(British Council, 1994), cited in Robin Kelsey, "Hazarded into the Blue: John Baldessari and Photography in the Early 1970s," in* Light Years, *ed. Matthew S. Witkovsky (The Art Institute of Chicago/Yale University Press, 2011), 139.*

2. *See Bart Beaty, "Introduction: Out of the Historical Dustbin—Comics and the Hierarchy of Genres," "What If Comics Were Art? Defining a Comics Art World" and "Roy Lichtenstein's Tears: Ressentiment and Exclusion in the World of Pop Art," chaps. 1–3 in* Comics versus Art *(University of Toronto Press, 2012).*

3. *Cartoons were popular in 19th-century publications such as* Punch, Fliegende Blätter *and* Puck. *Elements of the form can be found in British satirical prints of the 18th century, and some comics historians (notably Scott McCloud) trace it back through the* Bayeux Tapestry *to Egyptian hieroglyphics, and possibly cave painting. See McCloud, "Show and Tell,"*



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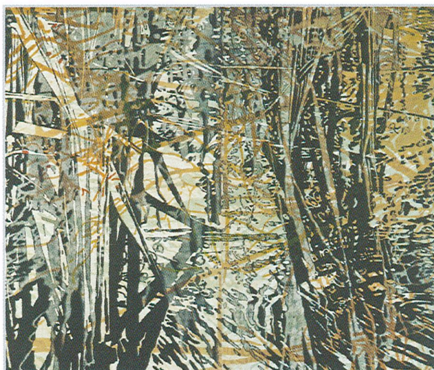

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chap. 6 in Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art (Harper Perennial, 1994). European and Asian comics have different origins and developed along different, though sometimes parallel, paths.

4. Classic early comics such as Winsor McCay's Little Nemo in Slumberland, George Herriman's Krazy Kat and Frank King's Gasoline Alley have been widely acknowledged for their visual influence, as have the styles of comic book artists Carl Barks, Roy Crane, Chester Gould, Steve Ditko and Jack Kirby.

5. Clare Bell, "Chronology," in Roy Lichtenstein: A Retrospective, ed. James Rondeau and Sheena Wagstaff (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2012), 346.

6. See, for example, Roxana Marcoci, Comic Abstraction: Image-Breaking, Image-Making (Museum of Modern Art, New York), 2007, 12, 14–15.

7. Beaty, 188–89.

8. Ibid., 51–52. Despite rejecting the art world as a whole, most cartoonists include individual fine artists in their personal pantheons. Ivan Brunetti's one-page biography of Piet Mondrian (2006) demonstrates his obvious affinity for the painter in its melding of Mondrian's grids with the comic's own grid and its portrayal of the artist as a sad sack much like Brunetti's self-portrayal. In his lithograph Lead Pipe Sunday #2 (Durby Dugan) (1997), Art Spiegelman includes a monumental Philip Guston–style Cyclops head in a landscape littered with comics characters, such as Mount Rushmore–scale Dick Tracy and Popeye busts and a Nancy hair ball. Chris Ware reportedly reveres Joseph Cornell; Daniel Raeburn, Chris Ware (Yale University Press, 2004), 50. It is interesting that none of the artists they value are living and one (Cornell) made work quite at odds with the dominant trends of his day.

9. Chris Ware, Uninked: Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Works by Five Contemporary Cartoonists, exh. cat. (Phoenix Art Museum, 2007), back cover.

10. The term "graphic novel" was coined in the comics fan press to describe longer-form work with serious content. See Hilary Chute, "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative," PMLA 123, 2 (Mar. 2008), 453, 462 n. 3. It is now often applied to any long, book-form comic, including nonfiction memoirs and reportage. Brunetti calls it an "unwieldy and perhaps tawdry-sounding . . . catch-all term." See Brunetti, Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, and True Stories (Yale University Press, 2006), 10.

11. Ibid., 18.

12. "What the %$#! Happened to Comics?," Art Spiegelman and W. J. T. Mitchell in conversation, Comics: Philosophy and Practice, Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, University of Chicago, May 18, 2012, http://graycentercomicscon.uchicago.edu/videos.

13. Gabrielle Bell, "The Artist's Assistant," in Lucky (Drawn and Quarterly, 2006), 79, 80.

14. Ibid., 83, 85, 87.

15. Chris Ware, "Introduction," in Frank Santoro, Storeyville (PictureBox, 2007), iii.

16. For an analysis of this mirroring and the theme of doubling more generally, see Nicole Rudick, review of Pompeii by Frank Santoro, The Comics Journal, Oct. 30, 2012, http://www.tcj.com/reviews/pompeii/.

17. See Beaty, "Roy Lichtenstein's Tears: Ressentiment and Exclusion in the World of Pop Art," chap. 3, for an analysis of this phenomenon in the generation of cartoonists who were contemporaries of Lichtenstein.

18. Interview by Sean T. Collins, The Comics Journal, Dec. 17, 2012, http://www.tcj.com/aidan-koch/.

19. Interview by Austin English, 20 Questions with Cartoonists, Dec. 27, 2008, http://20cartoonquestions.blogspot.com/2008/12/aidan-koch.html; Koch, interview by Collins.

20. Interview by Caitlin Shearer, Privelidge House, Mar. 18, 2009, http://privelidgehouse.blogspot.com/2009/03/name-aidan-koch-age-20-country-usa.html.

21. English, interview by Lee Henderson, The Man Game, Feb. 26, 2012, http://leehenderson.com/archives/653.

22. Interview by Shearer.

23. "CR Holiday Interview #11—Rob Clough," interview by Tom Spurgeon, The Comics Reporter, Dec. 29, 2012, http://www.comicsreporter.com/index.php/cr_holiday_interview_6. Clough considers Koch to belong primarily to another school, which he defines as "comics as poetry."

24. Interview by Abraham Ritchie, ARTslant New York: Rackroom, Sept. 2010, http://www.artslant.com/ny/artists/rackroom/65477.

25. Beaty, 42; Sokolow, interview by Ritchie.

26. In fact, Sokolow began using the second person partly in response to viewers' reluctance to stand and read her art. As she explains, it was a means of telling "a story in a way that would immerse a viewer/reader in the narrative." Interview, Other People's Pixels, Mar. 29, 2012, http://blog.otherpeoplespixels.com/otherpeoplespixels-interviews-deb-sokolow.

27. "What the %$#! Happened to Comics?"

28. Ibid.