



SUBVERTING POWER: CARTOONS, COMICS, AND CULTURE

An Evening with Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly in Conversation with Michael Silverblatt

Thursday, November 8, 2018, at 7 p.m.
Bovard Auditorium
University of Southern California

ABOUT FRANÇOISE MOULY

- Françoise Mouly has been the art editor of *The New Yorker* since 1993. One of her roles is selecting the iconic covers that appear on the magazine each week.
- She is also the publisher and editor of TOON Books, which publishes canonical and important comics for kids.
- She co-founded and co-edited the groundbreaking comics anthology *RAW* with her husband, Art Spiegelman.
- Mouly has been named Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and received the French Legion of Honor. Her many awards include the Richard Gangel Art Director Award from the Society of Illustrators, the Eric Carle Museum Bridge Award for “sustained achievement in the realm of the illustrated book for young people,” and the *Smithsonian* magazine’s Ingenuity Award for being a “transformative figure in comics.”

ABOUT ART SPIEGELMAN

- Art Spiegelman is known for almost single-handedly transforming the role and perception of comics in American culture. Through his own graphic novels, which often deal with serious themes, as well as his work to raise awareness about the history of comics, he has established a space for comics to be understood as a form of literature.
- He won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for *Maus*, a graphic narrative about the Holocaust. He is also the author of *In the Shadow of No Towers*, about 9/11, among many other titles.
- Spiegelman was part of the underground comix subculture of the 1960s and '70s, and co-founded the avant-garde comics anthology *RAW* with Françoise Mouly, his wife.
- Spiegelman has also been a staff writer and artist at *The New Yorker*.
- He has been honored with the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival and is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

ABOUT MICHAEL SILVERBLATT

- Michael Silverblatt is the host of the radio show *Bookworm*, the nation’s premier literary talk show. It airs in the L.A. area on KCRW (89.9 FM).

MAUS

Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel *Maus*, published as a book in 1991 after being serialized in the comics anthology *RAW*, radically changed the way literary audiences looked at comics. The graphic novel is a story of the Holocaust told through conversations between Spiegelman and his father, a Holocaust survivor. Its themes, use of symbolism and postmodern techniques, and genre hybridity—critics couldn’t decide if it was a memoir, a history book, fiction, or some combination of these—placed *Maus* solidly in the realm of literature. It won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize.

NEW YORKER COVERS

The New Yorker is one of the most prominent and enduring American magazines, published (almost) weekly since 1925. It includes journalism, criticism, fiction, poetry, and cartoons—all of which have attained legendary heights in the cultural and media landscape. *New Yorker* cartoons have their own Instagram account (@newyorkercartoons), and the magazine is known as a career maker for writers as well as one of the few remaining publications to invest in rigorous editing and fact-checking.

The New Yorker's covers are an iconic part of a certain liberal-cosmopolitan modern American culture, often capturing a political, cultural, seasonal, or social moment with a striking *je ne sais quos*. In the words of Françoise Mouly, who has spent decades choosing *New Yorker* covers, “I think you can get a very nuanced portrait of the society in images, because they talk about emotions beyond rationalization.”

A FEW FAMOUS NEW YORKER COVERS

“View of the World from 9th Avenue” by Saul Steinberg, March 29, 1976—which shows Manhattan as the center of the world

“The Low Road” by Art Spiegelman, February 16, 1998—referring to the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky scandal

“9/11/2001” by Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly, September 24, 2001—a black-on-black image of the Twin Towers

“Reflection” by Bob Staake, November 17, 2008—on the occasion of Obama’s election as president of the United States

RAW

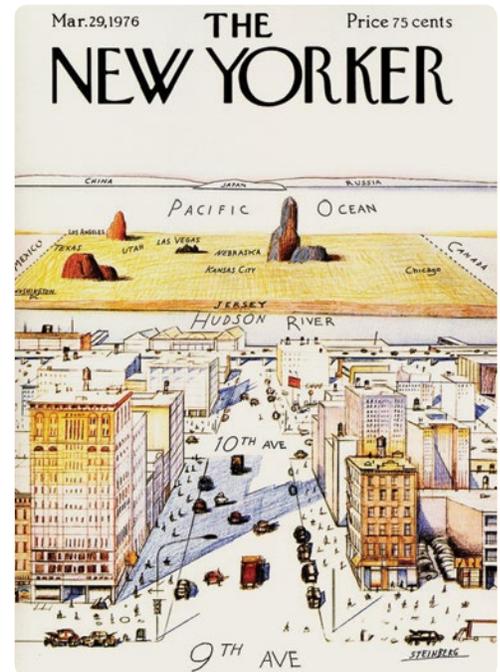
RAW was a comics anthology created by Françoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman from 1980 to 1991. They called it a “graphix magazine,” and published it independently in a bold large format, often hand-assembled. It became a core publication of the alternative comics scene in the 1980s.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- How have Spiegelman and Mouly used art for political subversion?
- Do you agree with the idea that artists and media makers have a responsibility to be subversive? Why or why not?
- What do you imagine it’s like to collaborate on art and media projects with your spouse?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT

- Art Spiegelman on Instagram
www.instagram.com/spiegcomix/
- Françoise Mouly’s TED Talk: “The Stories Behind *The New Yorker’s* Iconic Covers”
www.ted.com/talks/francoise_mouly_the_stories_behind_the_new_yorker_s_iconic_covers
- The New Yorker* Cover Gallery
www.newyorker.com/magazine/cover-gallery
- Michael Silverblatt’s *Bookworm* on KCRW
www.kcrw.com/news-culture/shows/bookworm



“View of the World from 9th Avenue” by Saul Steinberg



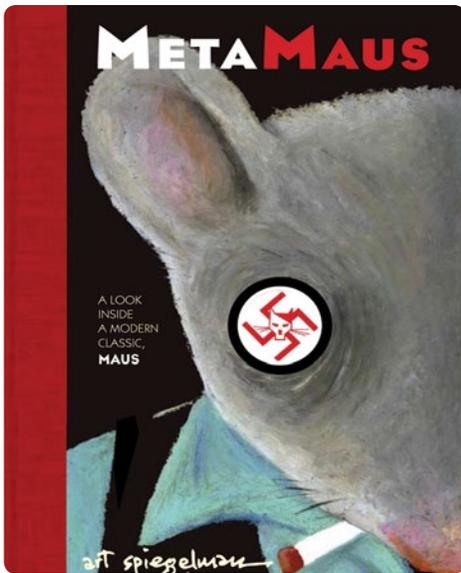
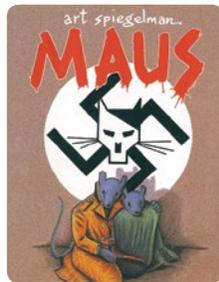
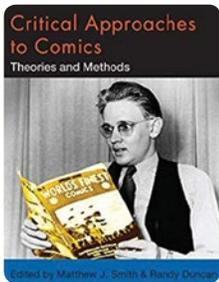
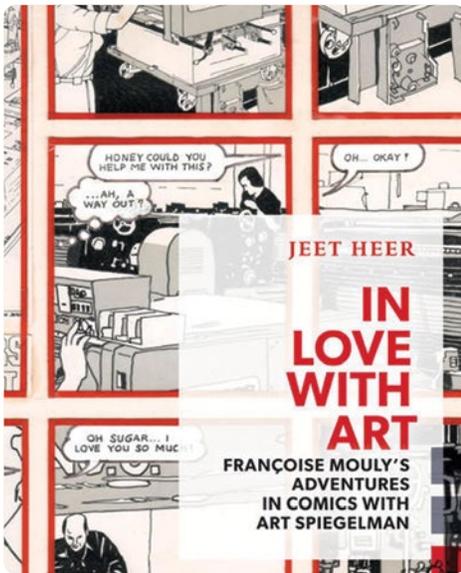
“The Low Road” by Art Spiegelman



“9/11/2001” by Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly



“Reflection” by Bob Staake



DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

REBECCA MICHELSON of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Françoise Mouly, Art Spiegelman, and tonight's event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS

- Heer, Jeet. *In Love with Art: Françoise Mouly's Adventures in Comics with Art Spiegelman*, 1st ed. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Coach House Books, 2013.
 Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **NC1429.M86 H48 2013**
- Smith, Matthew J., and Randy Duncan. *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
 Doheny Memorial Library: **PN6710.C75 2012**
- Spiegelman, Art. *Maus : a Survivor's Tale*, 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997.
 Doheny Memorial Library (Holocaust & Genocide Studies Collection): **DS135.P63 S68 1997**
- Spiegelman, Art. *MetaMaus*, 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2011.
 Doheny Memorial Library (Holocaust & Genocide Studies Collection): **PN6727.S6 Z465 2011**
- Spiegelman, Art., and Françoise Mouly. *The Toon Treasury of Classic Children's Comics*. New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2009.
 Special Collections: **PN6726.T66 2009**

DATABASES

- Alternative Press Index
 The API is a bibliographic database (with links to full-text) of more than 368,000 journal, newspaper, and magazine articles from over 300 international alternative, radical, and left periodicals.
- Arts and Humanities Full Text
 This database features hundreds of titles covering Art, Architecture, Design, History, Philosophy, Music, Literature, Theatre, and Cultural Studies.
- Underground and Independent Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels
 Beginning with the first underground comix from the 1960s to the works of modern sequential artists, this collection will contain more than 75,000 pages of comics and graphic novels, along with 25,000 pages of interviews, criticism, and journal articles that document the continual growth and evolution of this art form.

JOURNALS

- *International Journal of Comic Art*. Drexel Hill, PA: s.n, 1999–present.
- *Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics*. Abingdon, Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2011–present.
- *Journal of Modern Literature*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1970–present.

Available online, on the Architecture and Fine Arts Library high shelves, or in the Doheny Memorial Library journal stacks: PN2.J68