

2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Papers

## **Transnational perspectives on comic art and feminism in the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea region**

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The proposed anthology, *Transnational perspectives on comic art and feminism in the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea region*, aims to explore how the relationship between comic art and feminism has been shaped by global, transnational, and local trends. Included papers will illuminate defining features of aesthetics, materiality, and thematic content as well as recurring strategies of visualizing and narrating female experiences. The goal of the anthology is to curate a series of analyses of multinational comic art that encompasses themes of gender, sexuality, power, vulnerability, assault, abuse, taboo, and trauma, often expressed with humorous undertones of self-reflection or social criticism.

Given that comic art has always been an international form, it is no surprise that comics should also reflect and respond to trends of globalization. If the rise of graphic narrative genres in multiple national contexts may in itself be seen as an effect of cultural globalization, comic art is, at the same time, deeply enmeshed in local histories and contexts. In the Anglo-American context, the emergence of women's comic art and graphic narratives was closely associated with second-wave feminism, "which enabled a body of work that was explicitly political to sprout" (Chute 2010:20). At this time, self-published, underground 'comix' were proliferating, which gave rise to comics with a decidedly feminist orientation (Robbins 1999), albeit as "more a reaction to [underground comix] than their outgrowth" (Sabin 1993:224). Women's underground comix thus paved the way for contemporary feminist comic art, and a growing number of contemporary comics are continuing to explore themes of feminism by creating new discursive spaces for problematizing gender, gender roles, and social norms. Indeed, many women creators in particular have achieved mainstream recognition thanks to the expanding graphic novel market and the popularity of autobiographical comics.

The US-centric history of feminist comics may be seen in parallel developments or even subsequent effects in other countries. However, there might also be translocal particularities, where forms of global media are adapted to meet the needs of local contexts, which themselves are increasingly linked through practices of adaptation, translation, and mediation (Stein, Denson and Meyer 2013, Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, Brickell and Datta 2011, Dirlik 1996).

The anthology aims to identify the national characteristics, salient distinguishing features, and transnational commonalities of feminist comic art. Ideally, papers will endeavor to broaden the research perspective of feminist comics to include national comics cultures peripheral to the cultural centers of US-American, Franco-Belgian, and Japanese comics. To this end, the anthology takes as a point of departure the comic art landscape of Sweden, where feminist comics that explore the political through the personal have established comics artists as influential social commentators. The success and popularity of Swedish feminist comic art warrants an exploration of local reverberations and transnational trends in feminist comic art both in and around Sweden, including marginalized or under-explored

countries. For this reason, the transnational focus of the anthology applies to comic art or comics artists from the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea region.

Theoretical, conceptual, or empirical papers from a wide range of disciplines or interdisciplinary approaches are invited, and may relate to the overall theme of comic art and feminism by addressing questions such as (but not limited to) the following:

- How can the dominant narrative or history of canonical works be challenged or deconstructed by local histories of comics and feminism and their transnational connections?
- How do local histories complement or challenge our understanding of the relationship between feminism and comic art?
- How do comics reflect, comment on, or criticize the societal, cultural, or political developments of contemporary culture?
- In what ways are feminist ideas and politics expressed thematically, visually, or linguistically through the comics medium?
- How are constructions of corporeality, sexuality, or gender called into question or renegotiated in comics?
- What kind of local, transnational, or digital communities do feminist comic artists form?

### Submission instructions

**Abstracts** should be 400-500 words (excluding references) and be accompanied by a 100-word author bio that includes the author name(s), affiliation(s), and email address(es).

Abstracts should be submitted to [comics2020@sh.se](mailto:comics2020@sh.se)

**Extended deadline** for abstract submission is **15 September, 2019**.

**Decisions of acceptance** will be sent by **30 September, 2019**.

**Completed papers** (circa 7000 words) are due by **31 March, 2020\***.

**Editor comments** will be provided by **30 June, 2020**.

**Revised papers** are due by **30 September, 2020**.

\*Prior to submitting their completed papers, contributing authors are encouraged to present their work at the Nordic Summer University – Winter Symposium, “Comics and Feminism”, 19-21 February, 2020, at Södertörn University, Sweden. Contributing authors will be notified when the separate call for papers for the symposium is issued.

#### Works cited:

- Brickell, K. and Datta, A. eds., 2011. *Translocal geographies*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Chute, H. 2010. *Graphic women: Life narrative and contemporary comics*. Columbia University Press.
- Dirlik, A. 1996. The global in the local. In R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake (eds.), *Global/Local: Cultural production and the transnational imaginary*, pp. 21–45. Duke University Press.
- Greiner, C. and Sakdapolrak, P. 2013. Translocality: Concepts, applications and emerging research perspectives. *Geography Compass*, 7(5): 373-384.
- Robbins, T. 1999. *From girls to grrrlz: a history of [women's] comics from teens to zines*. Chronicle Books.
- Sabin, R. 1993. *Adult comics: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Stein, D., Denson, S. and Meyer, C. eds., 2013. *Transnational perspectives on graphic narratives: comics at the crossroads*. A&C Black.