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Comics and Cartoons

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I. Scope

The Library of Congress maintains one of the largest research collections of comics and cartoons in the United States, comprised of material documenting the history of comics and cartoons. This statement addresses the collection of original comic art and published works of comics and cartoons. This statement focuses on serially issued cartoons, and does not address other forms since they are covered by other collection policy statements. Animated cartoons, animated features, and children's literature are excluded since they are covered by other collection policy statements (see Collection Policy Statements for Moving Image Materials and Children's Literature) .

It also addresses the scope of secondary sources used for research in the comic and cartoon fields. Comics and cartoon related material is found in the General Collections, the Prints and Photographs Division, the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, and the Serial and Government Publications Division.

Definitions of material in scope for this statement:

Because comic and cartoon art exist in nearly every format of published and unpublished material, this Collections Policy Statement contains definitions that clearly define its scope. For purposes of this Collections Policy Statement, comics and cartoons are defined as entities consisting primarily of one or more distinct illustrations (panels), which tell a story or convey an (often humorous) situation, often with the aid of text captions and/or dialog balloons. As such, comics and cartoons combine the worlds of art and literature.

Single-panel entities, commonly referred-to as cartoons, may exist as one-time-only standalone works (such as caricatures or editorial cartoons), or may be issued serially under a common title (such as the single-panel cartoons found in newspaper comics pages).

Multi-panel entities, commonly known as comics, may be categorized in three formats, roughly corresponding to their length:

- standalone or serialized comic strips, which range from two panels to a full page in length and are issued serially, usually on a daily, weekly, or (as is the case for some magazine comic strips)

monthly or less frequent basis;

- comic books, which present multi-page content in short form (usually 80 pages or less) with stories that are standalone (complete within a single issue) or serialized (spanning two or more issues). A single comic book issue may include multiple stories of various lengths.
- graphic novels, which present long-form multi-page content (usually over 80 pages) and consist of original material or of collected reprints of shorter-form originals such as comic strips or comic books.

Comics have been used to address almost as many issues and themes as text-based works; they convey non-fiction information from history and autobiography to science. Comics content may be non-fiction, or it may fit into one or more fiction genres, such as western, superhero, or funny animal stories.

Most comics consist of drawn images and use a variety of drawing styles, from realistic to abstract. While most styles of art and storytelling are perceived as secondary aspects of comics, there is one exception: manga. Manga are comics drawn in a set of styles common in Japan and neighboring Asian countries. They are recognized as a distinct sub-category of comic books and graphic novels by audiences around the world.

Web comics use the capabilities of the internet to go beyond the limitations of ink and paper, and present more varied and idiosyncratic views to audiences which are not reached via traditional print media. While web comics often blur the distinction given between comic strip and comic book, they share the characteristics of being issued serially under a given title. Web comics are presented on web sites as digital files, and may include audio and video content as part of the viewing experience. Also, a few web comics have proved popular enough to be reprinted as print collections in comic book or graphic novel format.

II. Research Strengths

Due to copyright deposit, the Library of Congress is particularly strong in published collections of U.S. imprint comic strips in English, collection and exhibit catalogues, and surveys and studies of comics and cartoons. Through its newspaper collection (primarily on microfilm), the Library has one of the largest collections of serially issued comic strips. The Library is also strong in U.S. imprint English language comic books, including underground comics. The Library selectively collects foreign (non-English) published material that represents trends in the format and significant influences on U.S. creators and publishers.

Original comic and cartoon art held in the Prints and Photographs Division represents the diversity of viewpoint and format of American creators over time.

III. Collecting Policy

The Library collects published collections of comics and cartoons and other related types of publications. Library resources and market availability permitting, the Library acquires missing titles

and issues in order to create a comprehensive record of the Platinum, Golden, and Silver Ages of U.S. comic book publishing (representing the formative years of comic book development as well as current trends). The Library selectively collects foreign imprint comic books that represent the changes in the format and U.S. imprints reprinted in languages other than English.

The Library collects general works relating to published comics and cartoons (housed mainly in the General Collections) that reflect and complement the Library's holdings of original comics and cartoon art (housed primarily in the Prints and Photographs Division).

The Library collects secondary sources about comics and cartoons on a comprehensive level to support advanced research in comics and cartoons. Subject coverage should be as broad as possible to include history, artistic techniques, popular culture, publishers, biography, bibliography for the study of the format and content of the material.

Collecting of original cartoon drawings and original caricature single sheet etchings, engravings, and drawings falls under the Collection Policy Statement on Fine and Applied Arts (Graphic Arts)—Non-book Materials, which is selective. The statement also guides the collecting of original single-panel cartoon drawings, single-sheet prints, and original animation art.

The Library collects and retains print publications, whether they are periodicals, compilations of the work of several artists, or the works of one artist. All effort should be made to maintain publications in their original published format whenever possible.

Related Collections Policy Statements include:

- Children's Literature
- Fantasy and Science Fiction
- Fine and Applied Arts (Graphic Arts)—Non-Book Materials (for guidance regarding original comic art)
- Moving Image Materials (for guidance regarding animated cartoons)
- Newspapers - United States
- Web Archiving Supplementary Guidelines

Specific Collecting Guidelines:

The Library collects compilations of comic strips on a selective basis to support interpretations of original comic art and to document the form in the history of the development of and influence on the comic book. Newspaper issues may be selectively acquired to represent the daily or weekly appearance of comic strips in newsprint. The Library also collects syndicate proof sheets selectively to represent the format.

Comic books are acquired from all major U.S. publishers (e.g., DC Comics, Marvel Comics), independent publishers (e.g., Bongo Entertainment, CrossGen Comics, Fantagraphics), and leading self-publishers (e.g., Aardvark-Vanaheim, El Capitan, New England Comics). The Library acquires as possible small press comic books and selectively acquires self-published comic books (including mini-comics) to document the development of the comic book format. Manga will be acquired selectively to represent a variety of publishers and formats, with emphasis on U.S. imprints. A sampling of foreign imprint manga is acquired as part of the Library's selection of foreign comic books. The Library considers all

formats for acquisition, including printed black and white, printed 4-color, microform (as available), and web comics. The Library considers all frequencies of publication: ongoing series, annuals, one-shots, limited series and special event issues (e.g, 9/11 "Moment of Silence," "Heroes").

The Library extensively collects graphic novels and collected works (stories previously published in comic book form, including consecutive issues of a series, limited series, or common themed stories from a single publisher). These issues are selectively retained by the Serial and Government Publications Division, with an emphasis on award winners or creators of note, but are otherwise retained in the General Collections.

Resources permitting, the Library collects individual cartoons which have won or been nominated for the following major awards:

1. Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning (Pulitzer Prize Committee)
2. Herblock Prize [for editorial cartooning] (Herb Block Foundation)
3. Clifford K. & James T. Berryman Award for Editorial Cartoons (National Press Club)
4. John Fischetti Award (Columbia College, Chicago)
5. National Headliner Awards (Press Club of Atlantic City)
6. Reuben Award (and other awards given by the National Cartoonists Society)

Resources permitting, the Library collects comic books which have won the following awards:

1. The Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards
2. Awards of the Angouleme International Comics Festival (Les prix du Festival international de la bande dessinee d'Angouleme)
3. Harvey Kurtzman Awards
4. Ignatz Awards
5. The Joe Shuster Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards

The Library will attempt to archive award winning web comics which have won the Web Cartoonists' Choice Awards.

The Library collects current and retrospectively published collections of works by U.S. and other English language creators of comic strips, editorial cartoons, single and multi-panel cartoons. English translations of manga collections are collected selectively to document this sub-genre.

To support advanced research in the field, the Library collects as comprehensively as possible secondary sources, including monographs on comics and cartoons and their creators, catalogs and exhibitions of original comics and cartoon art, and periodical publications mainly or heavily featuring comics and cartoons, either in content or subject.

IV. Acquisition Sources: Current and Future

Mandatory copyright law, purchase, and donations are the primary means by which the Library builds its collection of comic and cartoons. For the collecting of comics and cartoons published in the United States, the Library follows guidelines in Copyright Circular 7b, *'Best Edition' of Published Copyrighted Works for the Collections of the Library of Congress* for printed textual matter, with particular attention to rarity and criteria for illustrations. An exception to Circular 7b is the acquisition of comic

books in microformat: when available, the Library acquires comic books on color microfiche.

Presently, the Library does not acquire comics or cartoons in digital format. Once the Library has determined an acceptable method to archive and access digital material, it will capture original web comics, with accompanying background material, on a selective basis to represent the emerging format.

V. Collecting Levels

| | Collecting Guidelines | Collecting Levels | Acquisition Sources |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Original Comic Art | Selectively | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Comic Strips | Selectively | 3 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation; future: also digital deposit |
| Syndicate Proof Sheets | Selectively | 3 | Copyright, Donation |
| Comic Books—US | Extensively | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Comic Books—Foreign | Selectively | 2 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Graphic Novels and Collected Works | Extensively (General Collections) Selectively (Serials) | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Manga | Selectively | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Published Collections, Comics | Extensively | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation; future: also digital deposit |
| Published Collections, Cartoons | Extensively | 4 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation; future: also digital deposit |
| Secondary sources, Comics | Comprehensively | 5 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Secondary sources, Cartoons | Comprehensively | 5 | Copyright, Purchase, Donation |
| Web Comics | Selectively | 3 | Not presently acquired; future: digital deposit, purchase |

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