Graphic Details Symposium:
Jewish Women and Comics

Sunday February 26, 2012, 10am to 5pm
Yeshiva University Museum, New York

This one-day symposium will focus on exploring the intersections between Jewishness and gender in comics and graphic narratives. This interdisciplinary conference will put academics and cartoonists in dialogue with one another to discuss comics by and about Jewish women. This symposium asks: What common themes emerge when viewing Jewish women cartoonists represent themselves and others on the page? What are some helpful theoretical modes for reading these works individually and collectively? What is it about sequential art that allows for unique investigations of identity categories like “Jewish” and “woman”?

The symposium is being presented in conjunction with Yeshiva University Museum’s exhibit, Graphic Details: Confessional Comics by Jewish Women, co-curated by Michael Kaminer and Sarah Lightman which is on display from September 25, 2011 - April 8, 2012. While the influential role of Jews in cartooning has long been acknowledged, the role of Jewish women in shaping the medium is largely unexplored. Graphic Details is a groundbreaking exhibition, and provides the first in-depth look at a unique and prolific niche of graphic storytelling by Jewish women in autobiographical comics. This exhibition of original drawings, full comic books and graphic novels, will present the powerful work of eighteen artists whose intimate, confessional work has influenced the world of comics over the last four decades, creating an entirely new genre. The international roster of artists include Vanessa Davis, Bernice Eisenstein, Sarah Glidden, Miriam Katin, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Miss Lasko-Gross, Miriam Libicki, Corinne Pearlman, Sarah Lightman, Sarah Lazarovic, Diane Noomin, Trina Robbins, Racheli Rottner, Sharon Rudahl, Laurie Sandell, Ariel Shrag, Lauren Weinstein, and Ilana Zeffren. The exhibition is sponsored by The Jewish Daily Forward. Graphic Details has previously toured The Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco (2010) and Koffler Centre of the Arts presents at The Gladstone Hotel, Toronto (2011).

We invite papers on comics by or about Jewish women, including but not limited to the cartoonists featured in the Graphic Details exhibit. We also invite cartoonists to read, present, or talk about their work.

Here are some suggested topics:

- bodies, bodily transformations, and the “Jewish Body”
- confession, memoir, and the autobiographical
- post-feminisms
- queer and lesbian identities
- Israel and Palestine
- endogamy and exogamy
- Judaism and questions of religion
- mothers and daughters
- inking, photography, and digital modes
- diasporism and post-diasporism
- Jewish texts and textuality
- Holocaust and genocide
- JAPS and yentes
- femininity, masculinity, and trans-identity
- Yiddish and other mother tongues
- super-heroines and villains
- humour, horror, and tragedy
- representing trauma

Proposals for papers to be considered for panel presentations should be emailed by October 16, 2011 to GraphicDetailsSymposium@gmail.com. Each submission should include up to a 500-word proposal, as well as a short bio of the presenter. Images are welcome to supplement submissions.

This conference is being organized by Sarah Lightman (University of Glasgow), Tahneer Oksman (CUNY Graduate Center), and Amy Feinstein, Ph.D. (Independent Scholar). Our sponsors include the Yeshiva University Museum, the Jewish Daily Forward, Stirling Maxwell Center at University of Glasgow, and the Center for Jewish Studies and the PhD Program in English at CUNY’s Graduate Center.

For more details on Graphic Details please see: http://www.forward.com/graphic-details/