

Comics Forum 2023

Archives and Special Collections Showcase Programme

The British Library

The British Library holds comics from around the world in many languages, and from the earliest printed comics to the most recent publications, including UK comics published to the web. Through legal deposit, we hold, preserve and make available all types of comics published in the UK. At the showcase, we will share information about our collection and how they can be accessed, including via the UK Web Archive (<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/en/ukwa/collection/1370>). We will have examples of comics recently published in the UK and also comics in French and Arabic languages, from curators' personal and handling collections. We'd love to hear from you about your research and interests in comics, and we will also talk about our research into web comics and collection development for contemporary comics. If you publish your own comics, we can explain how these can become part of the national collection.

You can find out more about the British Library at <https://www.bl.uk/>, how to join as a reader <https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass>, and all about legal deposit at <https://www.bl.uk/legal-deposit/about-legal-deposit>

The Cartoon Museum

We are the UK's only public gallery dedicated to cartoon and comic art. We house over 300 years of British political cartoons, comics pages and even one of Gilray's printing plates in our permanent gallery, and hold changing exhibitions showcasing contemporary comics and cartoon art and elevating the work of those who may not yet have been recognised by the industry. We have a thriving schools' programme, run outreach sessions and hold public events on a regular basis, and through all of this we encourage everyone, whoever you are, to pick up a pencil and draw.

The Feminist Library

The Feminist Library holds a large archive collection of feminist literature, particularly second-wave materials dating from the late 1960s to the 1990s. The unique, publicly accessible collection comprises over 7000 books; 3000 pamphlets; 1500 periodical titles; archives; leaflets and ephemera.

Set up in 1975, the Library in Peckham, South London remains a space for people to build communities and to celebrate and explore feminism. Our collection supports this aim by focusing on literature from smaller radical publishers, women's presses and DIY publications to document feminism that is grassroots, accessible and intersectional. We regularly hold zine workshops and continue to build our zine collection.

Many of the early periodicals in our collection contain examples of DIY illustrations, covers and experiments with comics. Readers of these primary materials in our Library find direct connection to this use of comics. Zine making and comics have been repopularised in the past decade and creators often reference original feminist materials. Autobiographical zines and graphic novels have a direct connection to the stories of personal and political struggles reflected in the collection at the Feminist Library.

<https://feministlibrary.co.uk/>

<https://feministlibrary.co.uk/about/about-the-collection/>

Guy Lawley

From my personal collection, which is also part of my research material, I will show original printed pages ('tear sheets') from the Sunday newspaper comic sections of the late 1890s and early 1900s. My focus will be on the advent of the word balloon 'as we know it' in this locus - crucial in my view to the appeal, success, transnational spread and development of the comics medium during the 20th century (and beyond). Eike Exner's Eisner Award-winning book *Comics and the origins of Manga* (2022) has provided important new support for this view, and excellent new analysis of the original US word balloon phenomenon - building on Thierry Smolderen and Ian Gordon's research in particular. US strips on display will include the *Yellow Kid*, the *Katzenjammer Kids* and *Happy Hooligan*, plus some of the earliest French comic strips to use word balloons, such as St Ogan's 'Zig et Puce' in its original Sunday supplement form.

Opportunities for future research include the related question of the advent of the thought bubble (!) itself which is much less well researched, and the potential for scholars in many territories around the world to investigate their own national comics histories in light of Exner's work.

Leeds Arts University

The Leeds Arts University Special Collection are home to a wide range of specially selected Artists' Books, Photobooks and Illustrative Books. All are considered pieces of art in their own right and are regularly shown in exhibitions and workshops within the university and other institutions and play an important role in research, teaching and inspiration. The collections are held at Blenheim Walk Library and are accessible to all our registered library users, who are predominantly staff and students.

Our Artist Books utilise and explore the qualities of the book, through content, context and form. The collection represents the work of many established artists including Tauba Auerbach, Tacita Dean, Ed Ruscha and Richard Long, as well as showcasing the excellent artistic output of LAU alumni. The Photobook collection comprises over 300 signed, limited edition photography books with representation including: Nick Brandt, Corinne Day, Lee Friedlander, Stephen Gill, Rinko Kawauchi, Daido Moriyama, Anders Petersen and Martin Parr and many more. The Illustrative Books are defined as books whose meaning and form hangs on the illustrated or graphic content: Comics, graphic novels, illustrated texts, picture books, or zines.

Liverpool John Moores University

LJMU Special Collections & Archives hold a wide range of material, from 19th century periodicals through to Jackie magazine, including theatre collections, popular music and counter culture, art, photography, fashion and LJMU history. Of particular interest to Comics Studies is Femorabilia: a collection of girl's and women's comics and magazines, ranging from the early 20th century through to the 1980s, including titles such as *Girls' Own*, *Bunty*, *Misty*, *Jackie*, *Just Seventeen* and *Spare Rib*. We also hold a significant collection of zines, magazines and newspapers from the 1960s to the 1980s, covering punk, situationism and counter culture, with titles such as *Sniffin' Glue*, *King Mob Echo*, *My Own Mag* and *International Times* (IT), and earlier titles including illustration such as *Punch* and *The Strand*.

More information can be found on our webpages at www.ljmu.ac.uk/library/archives and our online catalogue at <https://archives.ljmu.ac.uk/>.

LSE Library

The British Library of Political and Economic Science (LSE Library) was founded in 1896 and houses many world class collections on the themes of women's equality and rights, LGBT+ equality and rights, peace and internationalism, Britain's relationship with the European

Union, development of left-wing thought, and poverty and welfare. In 2013, LSE Library became custodians of The Women's Library (TWL), the oldest and largest library in Britain devoted to the history of women's campaigning and activism which follows the history of feminism from the late 19th century to the present day. On display at the showcase will be comics created for girls including Jinty, British girls' comics, and Tammy as well as TWL zines, antisuffragist postcards, items related to humour in political campaigning, Jacky Fleming postcards and cartoons, and much more!

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collection-highlights/the-womens-library>

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collection-highlights/womens-print-media>

<https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/index.php/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lselibrary/albums>

Rebellion Publishing

Rebellion has been the publisher of *2000 AD* for over two decades and since 2016 has acquired the rights to over 300 comic book, magazine and periodical titles, such as *Roy of the Rovers*, *Misty*, *Lion* and *Buster*, through the acquisition of the Fleetway, Amalgamated Press and IPC archives.

Rebellion established a professional archive in 2020 to manage these historic comic collections. Our archive team work to preserve, catalogue and promote the archive, as well as to support editors to republish titles under the brand *The Treasury of British Comics*.

Our collections include original art, scripts, publishing records and production materials, along with a large catalogue of published material spanning from 1890 to today.

At Rebellion we are keenly aware of our cultural role as custodians of these collections. We have worked with museums and heritage organisations, such as the National Football Museum, The Story Museum and, most recently, The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, to produce exhibitions which highlight the significance of comics. We also engage with comics historians and academics to support their work as well as provide contextual essays for our publications.

Any questions, please get in touch at archive@rebellion.co.uk

<https://treasuryofbritishcomics.com/>

<https://2000ad.com/>

SOAS University of London

SOAS Library, recognised as the UK's National Research Library for Asia, Africa, and the Middle East studies, is a global hub for researchers worldwide. Located in Russell Square, central London, it houses over 1.3 million volumes, together with a major collection of archives and special collections and an expanding Digital Library (<https://digital.soas.ac.uk>). The library is divided into seven major regional collections: Africa; Ancient Near East, Semitics and Judaica; China and Inner Asia; Middle East, Central Asia and Islamica; Japan and Korea; South Asia; and South-East Asia. These collections house a diverse array of comics and graphic novels published in the languages of these regions, spanning titles from Benin to North Korea. In addition to English-language works dedicated to the history and study of comics and cartooning from these regions, the collection also includes noteworthy examples of early contributions to comics scholarship from Asia and Africa. Other sequential visual storytelling materials in the collection include a notable collection of e-hon (early Japanese woodblock-printed illustrated books) and Chinese communist-period lianhuanhua picture books. To locate specific materials in our collections, please use our Library Catalogue available at <https://soas.on.worldcat.org>. For details on how to access our collections, please refer to our guidelines provided at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/research/library/using-library>.

University of the Arts London

The University Archives and Special Collections Centre (ASCC) holds two large comic book collections.

The Les Coleman Collection is a significant collection of comics from North American underground [1968-1980] and alternative [1980-present] comic book movements. The collection includes work by Robert Crumb, as well as artists such as Aleksander Zograf, Julie Doucet, Charles Burns, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Archer Prewitt and Jooste Schwartz. Coleman also collected complete runs of several counter-cultural comics as well as art, illustration and humour books from the United States, Australia, the UK and Europe including work by Roland Topor, Saul Steinberg, HM Bateman, Ivor Cutler, Sempé and Siné. It also includes Coleman's personal papers. More information can be found in the collection catalogue:

<https://archives.arts.ac.uk/Calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=LCO>

The Comic Book Collection contains mainly British and American comics, graphic annuals and graphic novels and includes many mainstream titles such as, *Doctor Who*, *Batman* and *Star Trek*. It also contains UK, American and European comics, graphic annuals and books. The graphic annuals cover the work of over seventy individual artists including Raymond Briggs, Guido Crepax, Will Eisner, P. Craig Russell and Moebius. In addition there are 35 files containing cuttings about comics and comic strips. More information can be found in the collection catalogue:

<https://archives.arts.ac.uk/Calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=CB>

The final part of the collection is made up of British children's comic books and a small number of mainstream American children's titles.

The ASCC is located at London College of Communication and is open to researchers and the general public by appointment Monday-Friday 1-4pm. To arrange to see either collection, you can email archive-enquiries@arts.ac.uk

University of Liverpool

The Science Fiction Collections, held in the Special Collections and Archives department at the University of Liverpool, is the largest catalogued collection of science fiction in Europe. We hold over 35,000 books, 2,500 periodical titles, and a wide-range of critical works and fan-created media. In addition, the Science Fiction Collections are home to the archives of a number of important figures within the science fiction genre including Ellen Datlow, John Wyndham, and Olaf Stapledon. Here is a link to an overview of the collections:

<https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/library/sca/sfhub>

The Science Fiction Collections are of particular interest for scholars of science fiction comics creation in the UK in the second half of the twentieth century. We have material that ranges from commercial publications such as *Eagle* and *2000 AD* to counter-cultural publications such as *Lord Horror* and *Brainstorm*. We are excited to be in the process of setting up a John Higgins Archive, which will bridge the gap between the commercial and underground publications that we hold (Higgins worked on both *2000 AD* and *Brainstorm*), as well as providing an insight into one of the most innovative comics artists of the last few decades.

Victoria and Albert Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum holds over 35,000 comics and graphic novels, with a modest current collecting programme that adds around 150 items a year. Today we seek selectively to represent contemporary comics publishing; although we also have examples of the earliest proto-comics, such as the *Glasgow Looking Glass* and the works of Rodolphe Töpffer.

The bulk of the collection however consists of material acquired from private collectors:

The earliest received, c.4,200 primarily British and American post-war comics, amassed by the artist Eduardo Paolozzi as part of his 'Krazy Kat Arkive' of popular culture.

The largest group comprises c.16,000 items, predominantly 4-colour US comic books from the 1930s to 80s collected by Ian Rakoff.

By contrast, The Andy Roberts Memorial Collection consists of c.7,000 comic books and fanzines from the late 1960s into the early twenty-first century.

There are two thematic collections:

The Rakoff Romance Collection is a discrete group of 1,500 particularly post-war, pre-Comics Code, American romance comics.

The Clarvis Collection of Disney comics, especially the published work of Carl Barks.

All is available for study. Visit us at, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/national-art-library>