

Recommended Reading

Abel, Jessica: "What is a Graphic Novel?", *Artbomb.net*, 2002. Online at <http://dw-wp.com/resources/what-is-a-graphic-novel/>

Beineke, Colin: "On Comicity." *Inks* vol. 1 no. 12 pg. 226. The Ohio State University Press, 2017.

Chute, Hillary: *Why Comics?* Harper, 2017.

Groentsteen, Thierry: *Comics and Narration*. University Press of Mississippi, 2013. (Originally published by Presses Universitaires de France, 2011.)

Karasik, Paul, and Newgarden, Mark: *How to Read Nancy*. Fantagraphics, 2017.

Madden, Matt: *99 Ways to Tell a Story*. Chamberlain Bros, 2005.

Miller, Ann: *Reading Bande Dessinée*. Intellect Books, 2007.

Miodrag, Hannah: *Comics and Language*. University Press of Mississippi, 2013.

Smolderen, Thierry: *The Origins of Comics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2014. (Originally published by Impressions Nouvelle, 2009.)

Sousanis, Nick: *Unflattening*. Harvard University Press, 2015.

Spiegelman, Art: *Breakdowns*. Pantheon, 2008.

Works Cited

Arno, Peter: "But I Can't!" in *Peter Arno's Sizzling Platter*. Simon and Schuster, 1949. (Originally published in *The New Yorker*, date n/a.)

Ayers, William, and Alexaner-Tanner, Ryan: *To Teach: The Journey in Comics*. Teacher's College Press, 2010.

Barry, Lynda: *Syllabus*. Drawn & Quarterly, 2015.

Groentsteen, Thierry: *The System of Comics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2007. (Originally published by Presses Universitaires de France, 1999.)

Harvey, Robert C.: "Defining Comics Again." *The Comics Journal* (website), 2010. Online at <http://classic.tcj.com/top-stories/defining-comics-again-another-in-the-long-list-of-unnecessarily-complicated-definitions> (Originally published 2002 at rcharvey.com.)

Horrocks, Dylan: "Inventing Comics." *The Comics Journal* no. 234, June 2001. Online at <http://www.hicksville.co.nz/Inventing%20Comics.htm>

McCloud, Scott: *Reinventing Comics*. Harper Perennial, 2000.

McCloud, Scott: *Understanding Comics*. Harper Perennial, 2008. (Originally published by Tundra, 1993.)

Underestimating Comics

Why Scott McCloud is Only the Beginning



Presented by Patrick Holt
Adult Services Librarian
Durham County Library

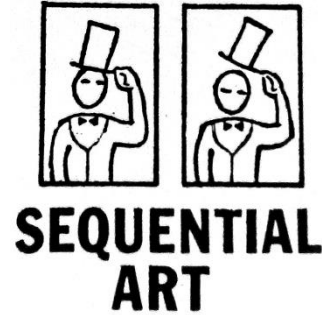
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What is Comics?

McCloud's definition:

"Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer."

From *Understanding Comics*, pg. 9



Cartoonist/historian Robert C. Harvey disagrees:



"But I can't!"

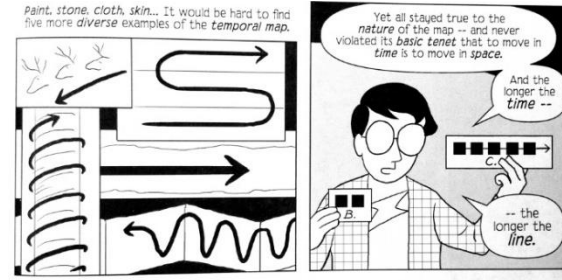
"It seems to me that the essential characteristic of comics — the thing that distinguishes it from other kinds of pictorial narratives — is the incorporation of verbal content. [I]n the best examples of the art form, words and pictures blend to achieve a meaning that neither conveys alone without the other."

From "Defining Comics Again"

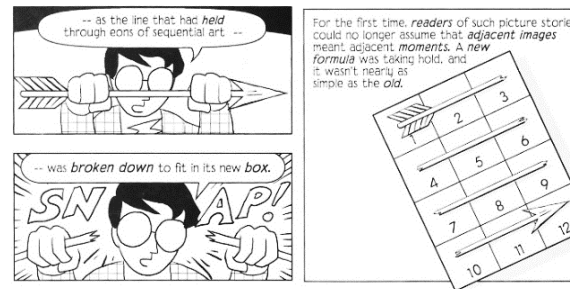
Top image, Scott McCloud: *Understanding Comics* pg. 9; bottom image, Peter Arno: "But I Can't" in *Peter Arno's Sizzling Platter*

Sequence or Network?

McCloud on linear narrative in pre-modern comics:



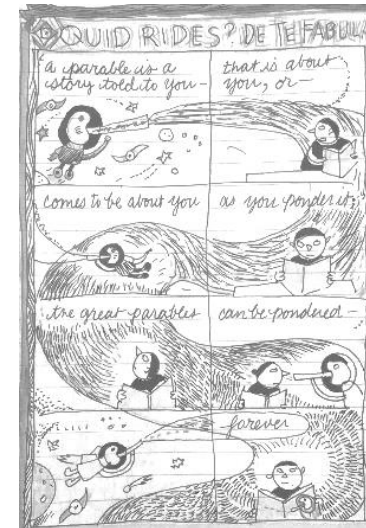
...and its demise with the birth of the printed page:



Semiotician Thierry Groensteen doesn't think that the comics page is "broken":

"[W]ithin the paged multiframe that constitutes a complete comic, every panel exists, potentially if not actually, in relation with each of the others. This [...] responds to a model of organization that is not that of the strip or the chain, but that of the network. [emphasis in original]"

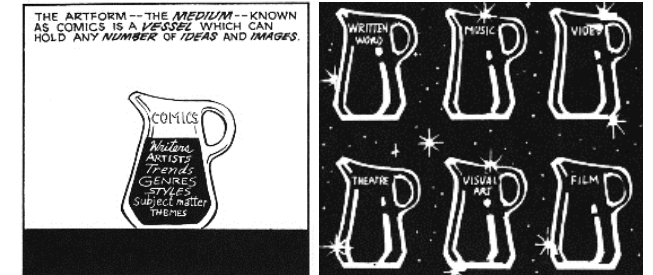
From *The System of Comics*, pg. 146



Top and middle images, Scott McCloud: *Reinventing Comics* pg. 219; bottom image, Lynda Barry: *Syllabus* pg. 186

Genre? Medium? Artform?

McCloud (unintentionally) on categorizing comics:



Cartoonist Dylan Horrocks sees an inconsistency:

"Note here that Scott equates 'the artform' with 'the medium,' which obscures the fact that 'medium' is used in two different ways. It is often used to refer to the physical materials or tools from which an artwork is made: film, video, paint, ink, paper. But it is also sometimes used in the sense Scott uses it here: to refer to an 'artform' such as movies, painting, poetry, etc."

From "Inventing Comics"

The result is a muddled precedent:

ARTFORM	MEDIUM	GENRE
Visual Art	Charcoal	Portrait
Music	Piano	Jazz
...Comics?	...Comics?	...Comics?

...and a lot of hurt feelings!



Top images, Scott McCloud: *Understanding Comics* pg. 6; bottom image, William Ayers and Ryan Alexander-Tanner: *To Teach* pg. xiv