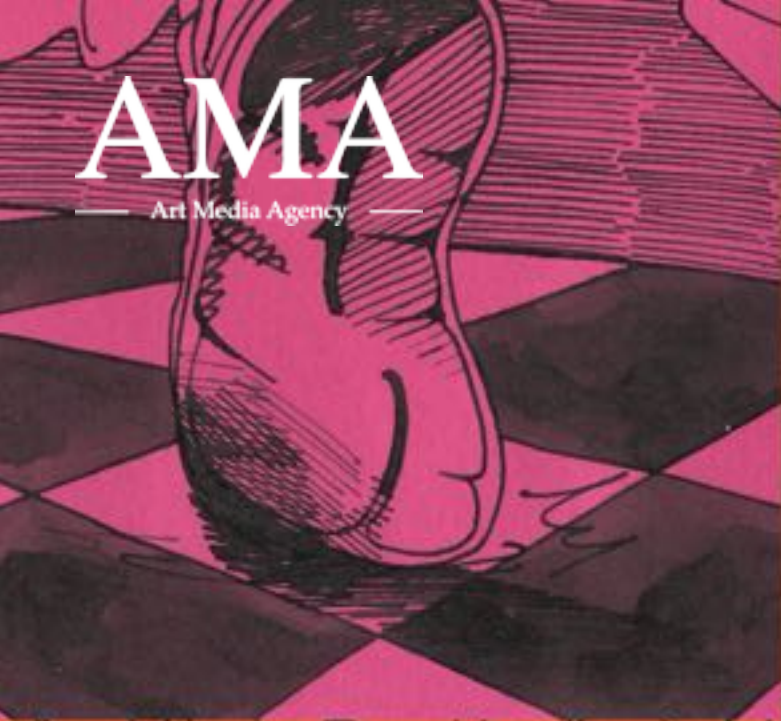


# AMA

Art Media Agency



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357

24 January 2024





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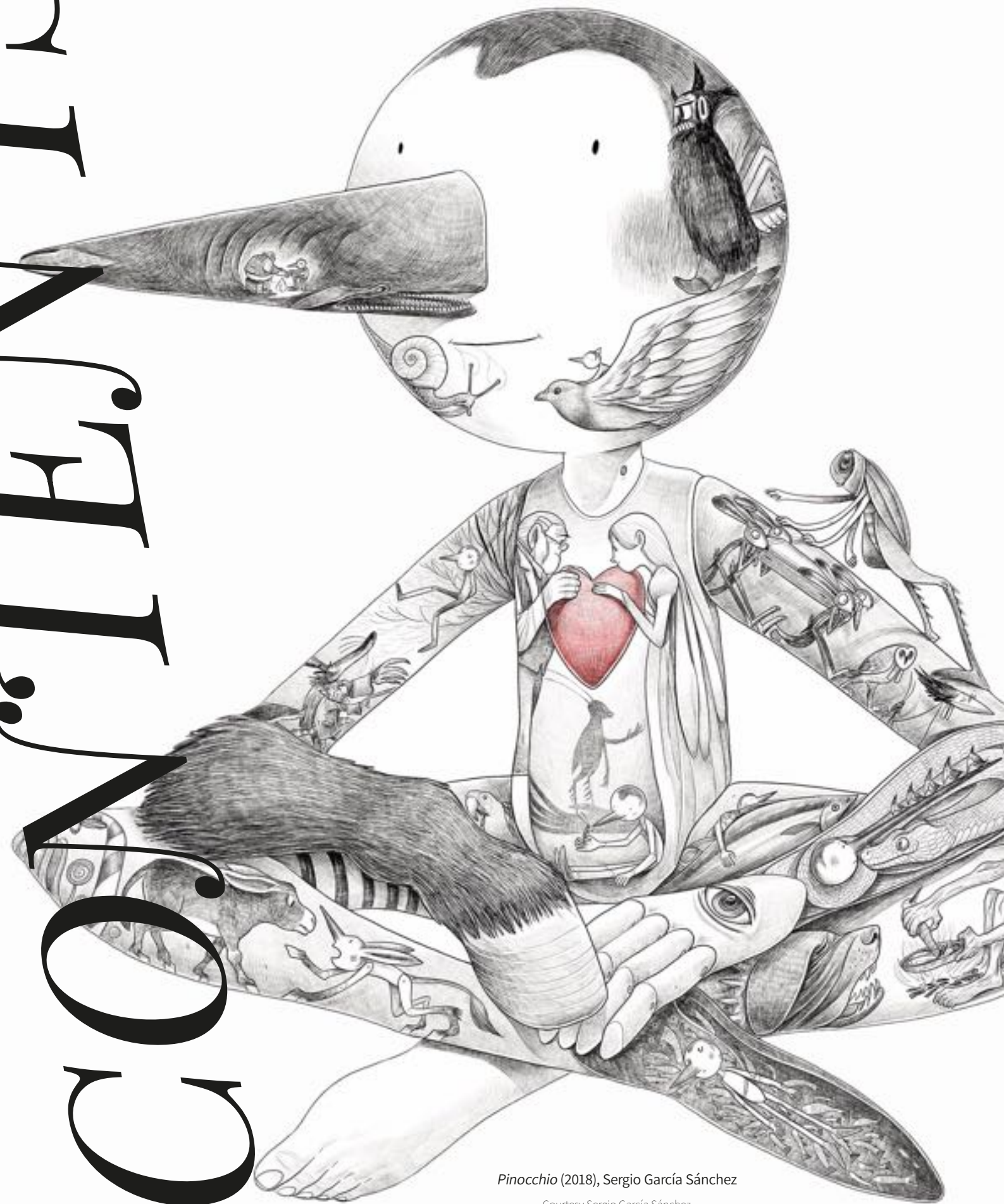
# AMA

— Art Media Agency —

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<b>Authors:</b>	<b>Carine Claude Antonio Mirabile Diotima Schuck</b>
<b>Translation:</b>	<b>Fui Lee Maisha Schimpelsberger</b>
<b>Graphic design:</b>	<b>Pierre Naquin</b>
<b>Layout:</b>	<b>Pierre Naquin</b>
<b>Proofreading:</b>	<b>Stéphanie Perris Laura Archer</b>
<b>Image editing:</b>	<b>Pierre Naquin</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:news@artmediaagency.com">news@artmediaagency.com</a>
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# PINOCCHIO



*Pinocchio* (2018), Sergio García Sánchez

Courtesy Sergio García Sánchez



## EVENT

Angoulême 2024 \_\_\_\_\_ **8**

## PORTRAIT

Riad Sattouf \_\_\_\_\_ **18**

## FOCUS

Mangas \_\_\_\_\_ **26**

## WIDE ANGLE

Independent comics \_\_\_\_\_ **34**

## MARKET

Comics at auction \_\_\_\_\_ **42**

## ZOOM

Starting in comics \_\_\_\_\_ **52**

## NOTEBOOK

2023 releases \_\_\_\_\_ **60**

## DATA

Enki Bilal \_\_\_\_\_ **76**

## ECOLOGY

Bronwyn Ormsby \_\_\_\_\_ **86**







Les Daronnes (2021), Yeong-shin Ma  
© Atrabile. Courtesy Festival de la  
Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême

# HEAVEN





## THE 9<sup>TH</sup> ART IN MOTION

From 25 to 28 January, the Angoulême Festival, in its 51<sup>st</sup> edition, will be a hub for exchanges around comic books. An opportunity to focus on this art form which is gradually finding its place within institutions and the art market.

It's the largest Francophone comic book event in France — and the world. Since 1974, the Angoulême International Comics Festival has grown continuously, now welcoming 200,000 visitors annually. The programme includes meetings with the most inspiring current creators, exhibitions about authors and works, and awards ceremonies honouring international authors. This year, Angoulême is diversifying and deepening its selection after several challenging editions. There was COVID in 2020, its subsequent cancellation in 2021, a rescheduling from January to March in 2022, and controversy surrounding Bastien Vivès' works in 2023... And the event hasn't been spared by these successive crises. The arrival of Marguerite Demoëte as the new artistic director of the event however brings a fresh breeze: a desire to reshape it to favour creation and dig deeper roots to solidify comics' place in the art world.

"It was the festival's intention to have someone who could bridge comics with other arts, and, very concretely, who understands the challenges of mounting exhibitions," explains Marguerite Demoëte, who had transitioned from the publishing world to Jeu de Paume museum in Paris, which she left last May to prepare for the festival. Creating synergies, dialogues, exchanges, and circulation: these dynamics define the DNA of this edition, aiming to be open and representative of all genres. Because through its selection, Angoulême acknowledges, but also shapes the directions of contemporary comics.

### **Comprehensive programming**

French and Belgian *bandes dessinées*, manga, comics, and other literary UFOs... there's

something for everyone's taste. With 45 international authors' works in its official selection, the festival showcases the creative richness of this 9<sup>th</sup> art, in its endlessly diverse forms and subjects: social epics, intimate narratives, political stances, poetic tales, graphic documentaries... The medium demonstrates an unparalleled ability to adapt any discourse to its format, and the authors have infinite resources to captivate their readers. Such is also the jury's leitmotif, which, by selecting from the latest major literary releases [see p.60], aims to present today's creation as comprehensively as possible.

"The official selection and the titles it presents reflect major trends and new experiments in comics," shares Marguerite Demoëte. Last year, the festival honoured Martin Panchaud and his work *The colour of things*. "It could be described as very experimental in how it uses minimal elements, graphically 'potent', leading to a classic narrative." This blend of innovative graphics and traditional storytelling represents one current in contemporary comics. "There are



The primary focus this year is really on creation, pondering how to best support the authors and artists of tomorrow.

— Marguerite Demoëte

also many links with illustration, like Delphine Panique's cover for *Creuser Voguer*. And the entrance of documentary into comics is a real phenomenon, exemplified by Liv Strömquist's feminist works," she adds. Nine Antico's *Madonnas and Whores*, in the official selection, illustrates this trend through the story of three women in twentieth-century Italy.

#### Cultural must-see

The festival's international dimension makes it a prime event in the comics world. It's not just about Franco-Belgian comics; it offers a wide array of works from around the globe. Thomas-Louis Côté, curator of the "From one ocean to another: a focus on Canadian comics" exhibition [see box p.42] and director of the Québec BD festival, notes: "It's a chance for encounters with both French and international creations. Angoulême showcases a breadth of productions, including Scandinavian, Germanic, Asian comics..."

Meanwhile, through his Canadian exhibition, Côté brings seventy authors, aiming to represent the country's diversity in terms of territories and populations, while also "maintaining a certain parity and representing the LGBTQ community and indigenous comics," he specifies.

This is also where the festival's identity lies: to provide a meeting place for authors from across the Atlantic. It also addresses the somewhat one-sided relationship between Franco-Belgian comics and their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, whose market is more oriented towards English-language

productions. In the United States, for instance, the Eisner Awards selection highly favours mainstream American comics and seldom considers Francophone creations. At Angoulême, auteur comics are celebrated, unlike in the U.S., where the indie scene forms a niche that is hard to penetrate due to a lack of audience and institutionalisation [see p.34].

Asia, through manga, is not overlooked; five are in the official selection, demonstrating the genre's growing presence on the international scene and its contribution to comics in general [see p.26]. In 2023, Shuzo Oshimi's *Blood on the tracks* won the best series award, and Hisashi Sakaguchi's *Stone flowers* won the Heritage Award. This year, two mangas are nominated: Moto Hagio's *The Poe clan* and Takao Saito's *Confessions of a prostitute*, a single-volume work published in 1972.

#### For creation

This edition, the festival has given particular emphasis to young creators, still under the guidance of Marguerite Demoëte. "The festival has long organised awards, including the Young Talent Prize, which aims to highlight the work of young authors fresh out of school," she notes. She decided to go further by commissioning exhibitions from creators who receive support to advance or extend their editorial works. "And there's also the question of simply paying the authors," adds the artistic director. As a pillar and guide of contemporary comic creation, the festival relies on initiatives

implemented and strengthened each year, as much as on a programme supporting authors and illustrators at the start of their careers.

Since 1975, the major school comics competition has been spotlighting tomorrow's talents [see box p.52]. To celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, the "Another History of the Angoulême Festival" exhibition has had a whole space dedicated to those talents from previous editions, tracing the award's journey and exploring the memories of its participants: "I conducted extensive research on the various winners since 1985, as that's when the competition became national," says Bertrand Brie, in charge of the project. "From 2010 onwards, things accelerated with the recognition of comics as an educational tool and medium for awareness." As a springboard to art school [see p.52], the competition also allows young creators to refine their craft and engage with the broader world of comics. "There's a real dynamic that naturally emerges in Angoulême when various creators discover the exhibited works," observes the curator.

This dynamic is fostered not only through inviting authors from diverse backgrounds to present their work but also through exhibitions showcasing the practices of well-established artists, like Riad Sattouf. "*The Arab of the future*, a World Work" [see p.18] is presented this year, paying tribute to his seminal work. The immersive project offers a journey through installations, sound excerpts, and documentary objects,

Ultimately, what matters isn't so much the genre that a comic falls into, but the perpetual tension between drawings and texts, and the way the unique arrangement of images immerses us in the story.

— Marguerite Demoëte



Drawing by Rutu Modan  
© Rutu Modan. 9<sup>e</sup> Art+. Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême











**Sanglier, Lisa Blumen**

© Lisa Blumen. Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême



Bergères guerrières (2016), Jonathan Garnier et Amélie Fléchais  
© Rutu Modan. 9<sup>e</sup> Art+. Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême



“I believe that for the first fifty years of its history, comics defined themselves by trying to gain legitimacy. Today, they are in a phase of dialogue with other arts.

— *Marguerite Demoëte*

unveiling unique aspects of Sattouf's work in an unprecedented way. “What interested me was to start from the idea of ‘world work’ (*œuvre-monde* in French),” explains Caroline Broué, the exhibition's curator. “His current perspective offers a reading and viewing of the world around him. It's a personal story, accompanied by the upheavals of collective history. It contains everything.”

This comprehensive and insightful look provided by the Angoulême International Comics Festival also reveals its multifaceted approach to celebrating and promoting the art of comics. It underscores the festival's commitment to embracing diversity, innovation, and the evolving landscape of comic art, both in France and on the international stage.

### Opening up comics

Embracing the principle of opening the festival to a broader art field and diverse artistic practices, two creative exhibitions have been organised. “Catching the Race” is dedicated to Lorenzo Mattotti, a polymorphic and transdisciplinary artist active in animation, illustration, contemporary art, and comics. Meanwhile, “Starting lines” brings together four comic artists — Lisa Blumen, Nina Lechartier, Jérémy Perrodeau, and Chloé Wary — in a “collective creation exhibition”. “The exhibition will particularly highlight comic book authors who themselves are in dialogue with other art forms,” comments Marguerite Demoëte. Also featured, “Room with a view” focuses on Nine Antico, exploring the author's relationship with photography and cinema.

This dynamic of openness continues with exhibitions programmed beyond the festival. This includes the Riad Sattouf exhibition, lasting until May at the Cité de la BD, and “The scenario is a patchwork”, dedicated to scriptwriter Thierry Smolderen. And the Mattotti exhibition at the Angoulême museum will remain open until 10 March. “I'm keen on circulating the exhibitions and hope to make them itinerant,” shares Marguerite Demoëte.

Strengthening the presence of comics in institutions is a perspective increasingly popular. This is evidenced by the upcoming exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, “Comics (1964-2024)”. Opening on 29 May, the event will trace the history of the 9<sup>th</sup> art. “I think we are witnessing a broad movement aiming to bring comics beyond specialised circles and present them in various exhibition venues, just like all other arts,” concludes Marguerite Demoëte.

### 3 questions to... Marguerite Demoëte

Marguerite Demoëte is the Artistic Director of the Angoulême festival.

#### Can you tell us about your nomination?

Franck Bondoux, the festival delegate, recruited me with a specific profile in mind: knowledge of the book market and the exhibition milieu. The main task of the festival's artistic director involves vigilance: reading all the comics for the selection committee, and also showcasing these albums through exhibitions. I have worked in both publishing and art centres, and this dual experience is why I was recruited for the position.

#### The Covid, the festival's postponement in 2022, the Vivès controversy, departures in artistic direction... You joined the festival at a crucial time.

The position has experienced many upheavals in recent years. I think the challenge was to acknowledge these events, reflect on these debates, and perhaps admit some shortcomings, mistakes, or dead ends while enacting changes through the artistic programme, bringing in more women, opening up to all nationalities, all publishing houses, and supporting authors so they can make a better living from their art. We'll see how this edition goes, but I think we are really in a dynamic of openness and circulation.

#### Behind your appointment, there seems to be a desire to further embed comics in the field of art...

Absolutely, this idea was central to my appointment. The festival was looking for someone who understands the dynamics of other art and culture domains and who could create a dynamic around comics. We are witnessing a form of institutionalisation of the medium which now joins other forms of creation in museums. The major exhibition being prepared by the Centre Pompidou is proof of this.





Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême 2023

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# POURTRAIT



Riad Sattouf

Photo Richard Dumas. Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême



## THE *ENFANT TERRIBLE* OF GRAPHIC NOVELS

Repeatedly acclaimed in Angoulême, Riad Sattouf has been honoured with the Grand Prix 2023 by the festival, which is dedicating an exhibition to his flagship series: *The Arab of the future*.

Sattouf the illustrator, Sattouf the publisher, Sattouf the director, author, producer... This versatile genius strikes gold with every album or film release. A double Golden Fauve winner at the Angoulême festival in 2010 and 2015, and a César award for Best First Film with *Les beaux gosses* in 2010, he was celebrated with a retrospective at the BPI of the Centre Pompidou, attracting over 50,000 visitors in 2019, and is now the Grand Prix winner at the Angoulême Festival. At 45, Riad Sattouf boasts a spectacular array of accolades, which seems to in no way disturb the modesty that lights up his media presence. "I wanted to create comics readable by people who don't usually read them," he shared on France Inter. "I am fortunate in my life as an author, I have readers. It may seem odd to say, but many even famous authors are not read at all."

Tender yet biting, his unique humour pervades a prolific editorial output. *The poor adventures of Jeremy, Manual of the virgin, No sex in New York, Pipit Farlouse, Return to college, Pascal Brutal, The secret life of youth...* From newspaper strips to graphic novels, from album series to feature films, Riad Sattouf seems to grant himself all freedoms. His works, tinted with benevolence, show the world as it is, without cynicism, but without false naivety either. Above all, he knows how to describe the trials of youth like no other. As a keen observer of reality, the Franco-Syrian author juggles poetry in his memories to extrapolate universal stories. In short, he does in comics what the great classical novel has been doing since Balzac and his *Human comedy*.

### Universal and transgenerational

The work that catapulted his success? *The Arab of the future*, an autobiographical series whose 6<sup>th</sup> and final volume was released at the end of 2022. Starting in early childhood and ending at the beginning of his career in graphic novels, the chronological albums recount a life straddling two cultures and two worlds, that of his Breton mother and Syrian father. The back-and-forth between the two countries, where the child wonders and grows, under the thumb of an authoritarian father. "My book is made of bricks of memories with which I try to build a little welcoming house for readers," he said on France Info about these comics where the hero merges with the author. Translated into 22 languages, over three million copies have been sold worldwide since the first volume's release in 2014. An editorial tsunami, acclaimed by both young and older readers.

"If *The Arab of the future* is a nested work, or a 'world work' as I like to call it, Riad Sattouf himself is a 'world character,'" shares Caroline Broué,



“The civil war in Syria, starting in 2011, was the reason why I began to imagine *The Arab of the future*. What I recount in the end of this last volume was the trigger for the desire to tell an entire story. I don’t particularly feel Syrian, no more than I feel Breton! And I don’t feel any responsibility, legitimacy or illegitimacy to speak about Syria. I am a spectator of this conflict, like everyone else. But I have experienced things within this story.

— *Riad Sattouf*

journalist and curator of the exhibition dedicated to him in Angoulême to celebrate his Grand Prix [see box p.23]. “By that, I mean he is always full of projects, perpetually in all directions. It’s not surprising that we find him in different places, in different fields, from writing to directing. He has an idea a minute, a desire a second.” The journalist met him during a series of interviews for France Culture where he opened up on her microphone. A few months later, he asked her to curate his exhibition following his Grand Prix win. “I was not familiar with the world of comics, I had never set up an exhibition, that’s probably what he liked about having an external perspective,” she explains. She chose *The Arab of the future* to build the exhibition. Riad Sattouf gave her free rein. “His readership had widened considerably,” observes Caroline Broué. “It was no longer just comic book readers who were reading *The Arab of the future*, but absolutely everyone. Even though it’s an autobiographical work, even though it’s centred on the main character, the sharpness of his view shows the world around him. It touches on childhood, adolescence, family, identity, joys, dramas. It’s a personal story, read against the backdrop of collective history. Everything is there.” Thus, the Angoulême exhibition is not a retrospective, but an evocation of his universe, allowing festival visitors to immerse themselves in a work where the *autofiction* of comics and the reality of the artist

— his objects, his drawing table, his friends — merge.

**From one success to the next**

In Angoulême, Riad Sattouf is right at home. In 2010, he received his first Golden Fauve for his ultra-macho character Pascal Brutal, created at *Fluide Glacial*; the satirical press is a familiar territory for Sattouf, who published a famous strip titled *The secret life of youth* in *Charlie Hebdo* weekly from 2004 to 2014, featuring hilarious anecdotes from his observations of young people. In 2015, again in Angoulême, he received the Best Album award for the first volume of *The Arab of the future*, which was already a bookstore success with some 200,000 copies sold upon release. Always focused on youth with *The Esther notebooks*, a sharp and funny chronicle inspired by the daughter of a couple of friends, the eighth volume of which was released in June 2023 and also became an animation success. His view of adolescence also led him to the pinnacle of cinema with his first feature film, *Les beaux gosses*, selected for the Directors’ Fortnight at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and awarded the Cesar for Best First Film the following year. The sentimental tribulations of his two heroes, awkward, pimply and endearing teens with hilarious lines, became iconic and this first film propelled the career of its main actor, young Vincent Lacoste, to whom he is now dedicating a new comic book series: *The young actor 1: adventures of Vincent Lacoste in Cinema*.

For Riad Sattouf, comics and cinema work with the same narrative efficiency. This is probably a reflection of his years of study in comics and animation. After spending his childhood in Syria, he returned to France at age 12, first to Cap Fréhel with his maternal grandmother, then to Rennes after his parents’ divorce. He passed his baccalaureate and joined the Pivaut school in Nantes in the comics section, where he stayed for two years. “I have excellent memories of it. We learned drawing techniques, which I did not master. I was finally in my element. It corresponded exactly to what I wanted to do,” he said in an interview with *L’Étudiant*. At age 20, he entered the animation section at Gobelins, the prestigious Parisian school of image, where his humour and spirit caught the attention of Olivier Vatine, who put him in touch with Guy Delcourt. A fervent admirer of Hergé, the artist shared a studio from 2002 in Place des Vosges with Joann Sfar, Christophe Blain, Mathieu Sapin, and Marjane Satrapi, whose famous autobiography, *Persepolis*, also speaks of exile and identity. Simultaneously, he signed with publisher Dargaud for whom he created a series titled *The poor adventures of Jeremy*, the tragicomic daily life of a thirty-something loser lead-graphist in a video game development company. The first album, released in 2003 in the new Poissons Pilote collection, then received the René Goscinny Award for Best Script.



Drawing by Riad Sattouf  
© Riad Sattouf. Courtesy Festival  
de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême





Clik 🎵  
Salut vous  
êtes sur 🎵  
Fun Radio  
On écoute  
tout de  
suite de  
Red Hot

Drawing by Riad Sattouf

© Riad Sattouf. Courtesy Allary Editions. Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême

Riad Sattouf rarely takes a wrong turn, but like any sincere author, sometimes he stumbles. Despite an impressive cast including Charlotte Gainsbourg, Didier Bourdon, Noémie Lvovsky, Anémone, Valérie Bonneton, Michel Hazanavicius, and of course, Vincent Lacoste, his second feature film, *Jacky in the kingdom of girls* (2014), met with mixed success. Far from being discouraged, it was this lukewarm reception from the public and critics that pushed him to immerse himself in the adventure of *The Arab of the future*. Cinema remains his other great love story. For his third directorial attempt, he is preparing a film marking the return of the famous trio, *Les Inconnus*. The film is eagerly anticipated, as Didier Bourdon, Bernard Campan, and Pascal Légitimus had not shared a bill together since *The three brothers: the return* in 2014, having been separated since then.

But as Riad Sattouf is a gentle hyperactive, he is currently spending his time developing his own publishing house, *Les Livres du Futur*, launched in 2021 to publish the first part of his new comic book *The young actor*. Speaking to AFP, Riad Sattouf's entourage explained that the author embarked on this project "with the desire to control even more closely the publishing process of his books, from layout to production, in which he was already very involved." It is said that his dream today would be to open a bookstore-gallery, the author having once harboured desires of being a bookseller. Beyond a world work, a true Sattouf galaxy is set to shine.

*"The Arab of the future, a world work"*

Initiated in 2014 and completed in less than a decade, *The Arab of the future*, the magnum opus of Riad Sattouf, has been a huge global success, touching all cultures and generations. Yet, this series of six albums forms a more complex ensemble than it appears. That's why the Angoulême exhibition offers more of a reinterpretation of this flagship title than a retrospective of Riad Sattouf's work. "Why this work has universal appeal is somewhat the central question of the exhibition," shares Caroline Broué, its curator. "The humour, accessibility, but also the multiple approach of Riad Sattouf, which invites history and sociology into his work, makes it speak to everyone."

The focus is not only on the autobiographical dimension of the series, centring on young Riad and his family, but also on what it reveals about Riad Sattouf's sharpness as an author and what he shows, understands, and analyses of the contemporary world. In a scientific rather than hagiographic approach, the exhibition brings to life characters, places (mainly Brittany and Syria), customs, eras, and cultural differences between the West and the Mediterranean East that run through the six volumes of the series. "I invite a reinterpretation of this flagship work," encourages Caroline Broué. "The exhibition is not an illustration of *The Arab of the future* or a chronological presentation of the series, but rather an invitation to interpret it."

Alongside the original boards and drawings of *The Arab of the future*, Riad Sattouf's personal archives, objects, and photographs with sociological and cultural dimensions, friendly and erudite voices shed light on the man, the author, and his work. Thus, the confidences, on the microphone of Caroline Broué — a journalist on France Culture — of novelist Leïla Slimani, young actor Vincent Lacoste, journalist Mathilde Serrell, sociologist Monique Dagnaud, and historians Pascal Ory and Leyla Dakhli punctuate the different parts of the exhibition.

Enriched with videos and sound excerpts, the journey first lingers on the world as *The Arab of the future* depicts it, both in its historical, political, and cultural dimension, and in its sociological dimension. It then leads visitors into Riad Sattouf's imagination and his childhood and adolescent intimacy, through the reconstruction of a fictitious room with walls covered in his favourite works, leading to a corridor covered with flagship comics of the 2000s. The end of the journey is dedicated to the very process of creation and the author's diverse aesthetics, from his sources of inspiration to his fundamental relationship with cinema. "In *The Arab of the future*, Riad Sattouf is a sort of *mise en abyme* of himself," summarises Caroline Broué.

**"The Arab of the future, a world work"**

From 25 January to 5 May 2024  
 Moebius Vessel. 121 rue de Bordeaux  
 Angoulême. [www.citebd.org](http://www.citebd.org)





Drawing by Riad Sattouf

© Riad Sattouf. Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême







# FLOODS

きつと  
たんさん  
あつさん  
たんさん

僕の家  
家族も

僕が  
知らない  
人も

あつさん  
たんさん  
たんさん

## MANGA, CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The international phenomenon that is manga has become, within a few decades, a Japanese cultural emblem around the world.

This year, for the 51<sup>st</sup> edition of the Angoulême Festival, mangas are being celebrated alongside comic strips, graphic novels, and comics, bringing together international authors. And works such as *Chainsaw man*, *Blue giant explorer*, *Evol*, *The fable*, or *Kujo* are part of the festival's official selection. Today, mangas indeed appear in all the major awards: at the Eisner Awards, Japanese works have had a separate category since 2007, expanded to Asia in 2010; since 2020, the Harvey Awards even feature a "Best Manga" category among their six main sections; and despite a selection primarily focused on Germany, the Max und Moritz Award annually honours the best international comic book. In 2006 and 2008, a "Japan" category was specifically recognised, with Keiji Nakazawa winning for *Gen of Hiroshima*, followed two years later by Jirō Taniguchi for *A distant neighbourhood*. Japanese comic books have increasingly asserted themselves the past decades. Along came an international institutional recognition for their authors.

This recognition is even evidenced by the very creation of dedicated institutions. In Japan, the Osamu Tezuka Museum was inaugurated in 1994 to highlight the work of the mangaka. The Yokote Masuda Manga Museum, opened in 1995, now houses Japan's largest collection of original works, with over 230,000 drawings. In July 2020, the Toshima City Tokiwaso Manga Museum was rebuilt on the "Mecca of Manga" in Toshima, a building now demolished, which had hosted manga masters like Osamu Tezuka, Shōtarō Ishinomori, and Fujio Akatsuka. Among these institutions dedicated to the genre, the Kyoto International Manga Museum, established in 2006 by Kyoto Seika University and its manga research centre, stands out for its

international dimension [see box p.28]. Sookyung Yoo, a researcher in visual expression at the centre, analyses the phenomenon as a global movement and a culture of its own.

### Global phenomenon

Today, manga is more popular than ever, with readers found on every continent. Its history dates back to the 1950s when it emerged in the form we know today, with the debut of the first two magazines for weekly manga prepublication, *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* and its direct competitor, *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*, in 1959. They helped establish the principles of contemporary manga, which first appear in the form of chapters published weekly, biweekly, or monthly before being compiled into volumes.

From the 1960s, manga began to be exported to neighbouring countries, Korea and Taiwan — initially in an illegal manner. It was Katsuhiro Ōtomo who paved the way internationally in the late 1980s with *Akira*, a six-volume science fiction manga awarded the manga prize by its publisher Kōdansha



in 1984, later adapted into an animated film in 1988. A new era for manga opened in the 1990s with *Dragon Ball* by Akira Toriyama. Thirty years later, one of the most expensive series in history is an American-Japanese live-action adaptation of the manga *One Piece*, which aired on Netflix in the summer of 2023. This attests to the magnitude of a phenomenon that has become global.

### Capturing attention

But what are the unique features of manga? To answer this, we might need to look back at its origins and the translation of its name. Composed of the *kanjis* “man” (free, aimless, uncontained) and “ga” (drawing, painting, or sketched image), manga originally meant “freehand drawing”. Although its roots can be traced back to the Nara period in the 8<sup>th</sup> century with *emakimono*, the narrative painted scrolls, it was Hokusai in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century who gave it its name, then translated as “grotesque drawings”. Its meaning has since evolved, but the humour often displayed by Japanese authors in their pages still evokes this comical grotesqueness with faces sometimes excessively simplified, expressions marked by astonishment or surprise, and the treatment of eyebrows, eyes, or mouths reduced to simple lines or dots, features that often appear in comedic scenes.

These markers of visual expression are part of the elements that Sookyung Yoo relies on to distinguish Japanese comics: “Compared to French comics, mangakas focus more on the emotions of the characters, with close-ups on faces, for example.” But this is not the only distinctive trait of manga: “There are a lot of onomatopoeias, which also mark this exaggeration,” explains

### *Kyoto International Manga Museum*

Established in 2006 by the Kyoto Seika University, the Kyoto International Manga Museum is at the intersection of a museum and a library. In total, the institution’s collection includes about 300,000 manga-related items: mostly books or magazines, complemented by original drawings and *ukiyo-e* works from the Edo period, as well as manga-related toys. The institution offers permanent exhibitions showcasing manga from the Taisho era (1912-1926) to the present, as well as temporary exhibitions. As one of the only internationally-oriented manga museums in Japan, it is connected to the university’s manga faculty — the first and only one in Japan! — and its research centre, which produces the material for its exhibitions. For example, Sookyung Yoo conducted a three-year study on comic strips in Francophone Africa, the result of which is featured in “Comics in Francophone Africa” exhibition, open until February 2024. The researcher adds: “Reading mangas is easy, it can be done at home. So we try to bring new dimensions by opening up the Japanese public to international production, but also by organising events with authors who come to draw or propose an activity related to the theme of their stories. To present a manga whose theme is cooking, we can even cook in the museum so that visitors can hear the sounds, taste the food... There are many possible ways to bring mangas to life!”

Kyoto International Manga Museum  
452 Kinbukicho, Nakagyo Ward  
Kyoto, [www.kyotommm.jp](http://www.kyotommm.jp)

the researcher. The use of black and white and the layout of the panels are also unique characteristics of the genre. “While classic French or Belgian *bande-dessinée* consist of 48 pages, with a very concentrated story, in manga, the author does not have to worry about the number of pages, as it is first published in a magazine,” specifies Sookyung Yoo.

Because manga is indeed first pre-published in the form of magazines, mangakas primarily aim to capture the interest of readers. Therefore, they must offer striking images, and hence the focus on facial expressions and close-ups, which are visually more impactful. “It is a sort of competition,” comments the researcher. “In French comics, readers buy a volume directly, and authors do not have to worry that they might stop reading in the middle of the book. But because mangas first appear in magazines containing

different titles, mangakas must absolutely create strong visual formulas so that readers continue to read them from week to week.”

This frenetic pace is also one of the elements that has been defining the genre since the 1950s, but the pressure it places on mangakas is sometimes criticised. To which the Korean researcher responds: “It is possible to take breaks. But it doesn’t happen often, because most mangakas love creating mangas. Also, before embarking on this type of serial publication, they benefit from a training period that can take several years. Then, if their story is accepted by a publisher, they start with short series. They have time to get used to the rhythm.” However, for the most popular mangas, there is no question of stopping. This was the experience of Akira Toriyama for *Dragon Ball*, which he continued under the



Look Back (2021), Tatsuki Fujimoto  
© Shueisha Inc.



pressure of his publishing house, of Masashi Kishimoto for *Naruto* whose ending was somewhat rushed, or even of Kentarō Miura, author of *Berserk*, who suddenly died in May 2021 due to overwork — the Japanese term *Karōshi* refers to this phenomenon, considered as an actual occupational disease in Japan.

### Japanese pop culture

For readers, the publication pace is not too fast, “some would even like it to go faster!” comments Sookyung Yoo. “In Japan, reading mangas has become a hobby.” In the 1960s, children also got into the habit of reading mangas, which were originally intended for them. As adults, most still read them. “I do not think it is even possible to find a single Japanese person who has never read one. It is impossible in Japan to have no connection with manga,” observes the researcher.

In 2022, more than 40% of the Japanese publishing market was dedicated to mangas. Sookyung Yoo recounts: “In Japan, people do not realise the extent of the phenomenon because it blends completely into their daily life and into society in general. Sometimes, advertisements and even the government use manga characters for their posters. Mangas influence a lot of people, and reciprocally, people and society also greatly influence mangas.”

The genre is thus intrinsically linked to Japanese culture. However, one does not need to be Japanese to be a manga author, as exemplified by *Boichi*, a particularly popular South Korean author and illustrator. And while many mangakas are of Asian origin, some are Western, like Åsa Ekström, a Swedish comic book artist currently working as a mangaka in Tokyo... or Tony Valente, author of *Radiant*, the first Frenchman to be published in Japan and to see his work adapted into an anime.

“If the authors have grown up with mangas, if they are ‘natives’ of that culture, I do not think their nationality is so important. Moreover, Japanese readers do not care about it; they appreciate or not a work for different reasons,” explains the researcher. Influences can, however, appear and appeal to one audience more than another. This is the case with Jirō Taniguchi, who, although known in Japan, is much more popular in Europe and especially in France, with a narrative inspired by French comics... and therefore a way of telling his stories more familiar to the French reader than to the Japanese.

“I think the styles of mangas and the differences between mangas, comics, or *bande dessinée* are starting to blend and influence each other.” Here, we can think of *Evol*, a newcomer with a hint of American comics [see p.34]. “Today, I see French comic book authors being influenced by the aesthetics of Japanese manga. Traditional French comics and manga are indeed two distinct genres, but there will increasingly be in-betweens, hybrid works.” On the question of whether Japanese manga risks losing its identity, Sookyung Yoo responds: “It is always complicated to distinguish what pertains to a particular culture or language. And I think that the distinctive traits of manga are not so much linked to a Japanese perspective or its history, but more to the form of the media, the type of publication.”

Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, manga has thus managed to integrate into international pop culture. Initially a reflection of Japanese culture, the genre quickly reached audiences on all five continents. Its palette is wide, appealing to children, teenagers, and adults alike, and it seems to unite elements that adhere not so much to Japanese cultural codes as to its own rules: a certain way of telling a story, marked and identifiable visual expressions, and often, a distinctive humour linked to the particular history of the genre.

### *Shogakukan Manga Award*

Created in 1955, this is the oldest award given to a manga, and one of the most prestigious. The Shogakukan Manga Award thus honours serialised mangas each year in four categories based on age and genre: *jidō* (children), *shōnen* (boys), *shōjo* (girls), and *ippan/seinen* (general). Recent winners include *D' Stone* by Riichirō Inagaki and Boichi (2018) and *Chainsaw man* by Tatsuki Fujimoto (2020), both *shōnen*, with mangas in this category often being the most popular internationally. In the general category, while *Blue giant* by Shinichi Ishizuka was honoured in 2016, its third series *Blue giant explorer* appears this year among the official selection of the Angoulême Festival.

Awarded in the beginning of the year, the prizes come with a sum of about €6,500. The winners of the 69<sup>th</sup> edition for the year 2023 will be announced on 18 January 2024, from a list of twelve nominees. And for the first time, there will be no category, to promote greater diversity of stories and styles within the genre...



Kyoto Seika University

© Shinsaku Munemoto & Associates









# WORLD FAMOUS HEROES

Action Comics #1 (1938)

ARR



# AMERICAN COMICS: DO IT YOURSELF!

The world of comics expanded throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Amidst the mainstream productions of Marvel and DC, what space is there for independent authors to create and tell their stories?

When one thinks of comics, superheroes often come to mind: Superman, Batman, Thor, Hulk... And behind these characters, the entities Marvel and DC. The two publishing houses emerged in the 1930s, dominating the American comic book scene and creating a genre in its own right. Characterised by serialised writing, vividly coloured drawings, and iconic figures conceived by emblematic personalities like Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster in the early days, Jack Kirby, and Stan Lee. But the broader world of comics doesn't stop here. It stems from a history that took off in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and led to a system that, beyond the major publishing houses, is today the soul indie comics: a DIY spirit and creative freedom unique to independent American authors.

## A brief history of comics

This creative liberty is rooted in the history of comics and their development throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They first emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, rapidly evolving in daily newspapers as comic strips — short, standalone or serial stories. As newspapers strove for originality to attract readers, early conventions were established — recurring characters, speech bubbles — along with genres: humour, adventure... The first comic book, a compilation of these newspaper strips, was published in 1934. Then, in 1938, Superman made his debut, heralding the Golden Age of comics.

This era, spanning 1938 to 1954, ended as criticism mounted against the perceived violent or sexualised imagery in comics and their influence on young readers. To preclude state censorship, publishers established the Comics Code Authority, enforcing

a strict moral code on comics [see box p.36]. Even then, while superhero comics were prevalent, all authors suffered under this censorship, impacting their stories. In response, underground comics emerged in the 1960s, followed by alternative and independent scenes partly fuelled by the direct market system in the 1980s. This distribution and sales system allowed — and still allows — authors to bypass the mainstream comic codes dominated by Marvel and DC and evade CCA restrictions. However, working conditions for these independent creators remained challenging.

## The American system

In the US, the comic book publication landscape evolved through the direct market system, leading to the development of specialised comic spaces. This system enables authors to submit their personal works without necessarily going through a publisher. Yet in the vast world of comics, the market is largely controlled by major publishing houses. Marvel Comics and DC Comics together account for 62% of the total revenue from comic book



### Small Press Expo

This is the premier event for independent and alternative comic production in the United States, held in Bethesda, Maryland. Founded in 1994, the SPX is a convention aiming to promote diversity in the comics sector. Since 1997, it has been accompanied by the Ignatz Awards, which focus on rewarding productions owned by their creators, unlike the Eisner Awards that nominate authors tied to publishing houses owning the rights to the works. The latest edition took place in September 2023, featuring programming around themes related to indie culture: horror comics, social issues including feminism, homosexuality, and more intimate narratives. Josh Pettinger, author of *Goiter*, offers a perspective: “It’s a good award, but still very niche. An event like the Angoulême festival will provide more visibility and reach a broader audience, but the SPX offers a recognition that rather happens among those already familiar with the field.”

#### Small Press Expo

On 9 and 10 September 2024

Bethesda North Marriott

5701 Marinelli Road. Rockville. [www.smallpresseexpo.com](http://www.smallpresseexpo.com)

### Outlaw Comics

In 1954, with the establishment of the Comics Code Authority, a wave of puritanism swept through mainstream production. Subsequently, some authors sought alternative distribution methods outside the major publishing houses and self-published. These ‘comix’ (another name for underground comics) were primarily distributed through head shops, stores selling drugs and other American counterculture products that emerged in the sixties with the hippie movement. Featuring sex, drugs, and violence, these comix particularly flourished from 1968, but are now hard to find due to their clandestine nature. YouTube channel Cartoonist Kayfabe, created by comic authors Ed Piskor and Jim Rugg, has played a significant role in rediscovering some of these works and shedding light on this graphic style. Characterised by black and white, extreme violence, sexual content, and highly independent artistic expression, it was Glenn Hammonds, founder of Raw Comics, who coined the term “Outlaw Comics” and defined it. Among the productions rediscovered by Cartoonist Kayfabe are gems like *Bodyguard*, *Chillville*, *Worgard*, or other evocative titles such as *Princess of Sadism*...

“The Eisner Awards focus on superheroes. It’s somewhat very unattainable for creators of independent works,” confirms Josh Pettinger, author of *Goiter*, a self-published series compiled into a book selected at Angoulême this year. He is among those creators who have chosen to bypass publishing houses, publishing completely independently and utilising the direct market opportunities. For such authors, this also means the chance for creative freedom outside of censorship and public expectations.

#### DIY spirit

“Comic books often adhere to strict codes, but I believe in the United States, because the independent scene is such a niche, there’s actually a broader margin for creative possibilities. Here, one can propose far stranger comics because there isn’t really a dedicated industry,” explains Josh Pettinger. This allowed him to create *Goiter*, which he began writing in 2014 and completed in January 2022. Over eight years, he wrote eight self-published issues: facing a lack of interest from publishers, he decided to keep on drawing, sent his work to a local printer, and began selling his issues through various comic shops, as well as promoting on Instagram and the internet, where his visibility grew. “Sometimes I sell to small independent comic shops, but most of my sales are direct,” he comments. Starting with thirty copies, he was printing 800 of them by the time of the latest issue.

He’s not alone in the US in adopting this approach. “There’s this spirit of camaraderie; all comic book artists in America are friends or at least know each other. It’s a great community,” he explains.

#### Niche audience

While authors can take unconventional paths, their audience remains significantly limited. Being a niche production in a niche market and distributed

and graphic novel sales in comic shops, while alternative publisher Image Comics represents just 11%. Similarly, the Eisner Award, recognising the industry’s best each year, predominantly focuses on these major houses, sidelining *auteur* comics.

To survive and make a name for themselves, some writers choose to work between these major houses — primarily Marvel, DC, and Image —

and more free, independent productions. An example is James Tynion IV, an award-winning author in recent years, notably for his collaboration with independent publisher Boom! Studios on personal projects. He, however, initially got known on the comics scene for his work with DC. Besides, it is with DC Black Label that he recently published his last original project, *The nice house on the lake* [see p.60], and won the 2022 Eisner Award for Best New Series.

# RED ROOM



*Red Room: The Antisocial Network* (2021), Ed Piskor

© Fantagraphics



## WIDE ANGLE

in specialised spaces, American comics outside the mainstream scene struggle to find their audience and even less so institutional recognition. Interestingly, Josh Pettinger first published *Goiter* in France. “Since then, some American publishers have started to notice me, and an English edition is planned for April,” he shares. But there is no equivalent to the Angoulême festival in the US, sometimes perceived as too intellectual.

Similarly, comic book culture is more democratised in Europe, where works are distributed in general bookstores alongside other books. Pettinger recounts, “I think comics in the US belong to a more specialised niche than in France. I attended a festival in Coulommiers last year and was surprised to see that everyone, regardless of age or demographic, seemed interested in comics. I sold books to people I never thought I would. I think it’s part of French culture; people are more accustomed to bizarre, surreal, or absurd stories, whereas in America, the audience that likes this kind of niche comics is very specific.”

Between creative freedom and lack of industry, the world of independent American comics offers infinite possibilities, outside the usual confines, codes, and expectations of traditional comics and superheroes, precisely because any author can easily write and self-publish. But the audience is lacking, and for the author of *Goiter*, the major houses are partly to blame: “I think superhero comics can be a hindrance for those creating stranger and more human narratives like myself because people might be put off: a regular reader could be discouraged by comics, thinking they’re just for children, or simply for older men into geek culture in the US.” And to the question, “How to democratise these kinds of works?” he jokingly responds: “Let Marvel and DC go bankrupt and create better-quality comics!”

AMA







Goiter Comics (2021), Josh Pettinger  
© Kilgore Books







# ALL ABOUT TINTIN



Tintin au pays de l'or noir (1951), Hergé  
Sold for €62,500 on 20 November 2019 by Christie's Paris  
© Christie's Images





## WHEN COMIC BOOKS THRIVE AT AUCTIONS

Boosted by important names of the 9<sup>th</sup> art like Hergé, Uderzo, Franquin, and Morris, comic book auctions are soaring, while also benefiting lesser-known artists.

The comic book market bears a resemblance to the photography market. Initially obscure and considered more as pop culture than a distinct art form, it gradually made its way into auction houses while the sector's ecosystem was structuring around powerful publishers. Unlike photography, comics are fundamentally a robust economic field, a key sector in publishing with €921 million in revenue in 2022 and 84 million copies sold worldwide. "Forty years ago, there simply wasn't an auction market," summarises expert Alain Huberty. "Artists had their comics strips, and the few enthusiasts willing to acquire them were rare. Authors themselves struggled to grasp that extracting a moment from a narrative could transform it into a work of art. Our Franco-Belgian classics focused on their stories and visual rendering, paying little heed to the value of a panel. Initially, remember that comics are part of the book world, and often, but not always, the value of a panel is linked to the print run of the album."

### **Onrush of major houses**

From a marginal auction presence in the 1970s and 1980s, comics have become a niche, profitable and promising market, uncovering strips from big names and new talents. Studies and operators specialised, as the field began attracting major houses' attention. Now, they all have a dedicated department, just like for painting or decorative arts. "When auctions appeared, they were events because, back then, there was quite a lot of material," recalls Alain Huberty. "Tintin was a big star. Concurrently, galleries began to emerge. Initially, they weren't really galleries, just sometimes a second-hand shop with panels hung behind the counter.

These players eventually professionalised. Today, we can say we're a contemporary art gallery specialising in comics, but it took thirty years to reach this point, a gradual evolution."

In 2014, Christie's held its inaugural Comic & Illustration sale in Paris, achieving a €4 million result, with twelve world records, including a *Tintin in Tibet* drawing sold for €289,500 (including fees), against an estimate of €150,000-160,000. The following year, in March 2015, comic sales at Sotheby's and Christie's caused, a week apart, quite the stir, garnering nearly €10 million and breaking records, including a world first for Enki Bilal at Christie's, with *The fair of the immortals* panel 7, estimated between €30,000 and €40,000, and sold for €115,500 (including fees).

Nearly a decade later, auction prices have skyrocketed, reaching stratospheric heights for Franco-Belgian greats, with Hergé at the forefront. "An *Astérix* cover now fetches over €500,000", comments Alain Huberty. "In these high-price





*Hergé* (detail, 1947), Nat Neujean  
Sold for €130,000 on 15 December 2019 by Millon Brussels

Courtesy Millon Belgique

“We always wanted to institutionalise comics. However, thirty or forty years ago, we were facing museum curators who wouldn’t accept comics as a major art form, just perhaps a popular art. The new generation of curators is immersed in this culture.”

— *Alain Huberty*

### *Legendary Hergé*

Hergé remains the undisputed star of comic book auctions. Forty years after his death, no other illustrator matches his results in salesrooms, and his originals keep setting multimillion records. The globally renowned *Adventures of Tintin* series, created in 1929 by Belgian cartoonist and writer Georges Remi (1907-1983) known as Hergé, comprises 24 albums, from the first *Tintin in the land of the Soviets* in 1930 to the last, unfinished *Tintin and Alph-Art*. While there are many editions and derivative products on the market, some rare original covers fetch golden prices.

Artcurial alone accounts for many of Hergé’s highest auction results — 8 out of 10. It also holds his world record with *The blue lotus* sold for €3.2 million. Offered during the *The World of the Creator of Tintin* auction in January 2021, this exceptional piece, unprecedented in the art market, is a drawing made by Hergé for the cover of the 1936 album *The blue lotus*. In 2023, the house also set the world record for an original black and white drawing by Hergé with the cover project of *Tintin in America* sold for €2.1 million.

While not reaching the multimillion stratosphere, other houses enjoy their own successes. At Millon Belgique, Chinese ink, white gouache and blue watercolour for *The sceptre of Ottokar* page 88, sold for €197,000, while a 1958 Hergé sketch for *Tintin and the red sea sharks* fetched the top result in Daniel Maghen’s comic sale in November 2023 at €120,200. Appraised by Huberty & Breyne, an original drawing of Hergé’s *Quick and Flupke*, coloured by Guy Dessicy, was sold for €24,130 at Sotheby’s last March. To celebrate its fourth anniversary, Belgian auction house Dagoty, operating at Drouot, recently dispersed an entire lot of eighty Tintin/Hergé pieces from the collection of a Belgian Tintin enthusiast.

Everything related to Hergé is somewhat mythical. In 2021, the Piasa auction house created a buzz with the sale of an original three-strip panel drawn by Hergé for the Tintin adventure *The shooting star*. This backup copy, made in ink by Hergé in 1942, is unique due to being stained with the artist’s blood from pricking his finger on a compass on his drawing table. The result? €400,000. Thus, it’s no surprise that Tintinimaginatio, the Belgian company responsible for the commercial exploitation of Hergé’s work, warns against the risks of counterfeits in the face of the proliferation of Hergé-branded items and boards at auctions. “One might think that, because they are presented in the official context of auction houses, all Hergé artefacts on the market are authentic. This is not the case.” Copied.

### **The careful cultivation of specialised auctions**

Recently, a rare set of ten works by Morris from the artist’s family sold for a total of €330,184 (including fees) on 19 December at Huberty & Breyne in Brussels, marking an exceptional sale for the centenary of Lucky Luke’s creator. “Morris is one of the last great classics who never sold, aside from a few pieces occasionally,” shares Alain Huberty. “What’s exceptional is that the family allowed us to organise an exhibition for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of comics in Belgium. In the context of this partnership, the family agreed to auction ten pieces.”

While Huberty & Breyne pioneered, other houses have specialised in comics. Millon Belgique has been organising four catalogued sales a year and about ten online sales since 2005. Among its notable results are a Chinese ink, white gouache and blue watercolour for Hergé’s *The sceptre of Ottokar* page 88, sold for €197,000 (excluding fees), and a Chinese ink of Asterix in Spain by Uderzo (page 31), fetching €137,000 (excluding fees), not to mention *A gaffer knowing how to gaff* by Franquin (*Gaston Lagaffe*), at €90,000 (excluding fees). A few years ago, Daniel Maghen, former expert at Tajan and Christie’s, launched his own auction house dedicated to comics. In its latest sale in November 2023, a 1958 Hergé sketch for *Tintin and the red sea sharks* achieved the top result: €120,200 (including fees). Some authors set their world records, like Giardino with his *Max Fridman* Volume 2 cover at €18,760 (including fees), Vrancken with *The children of the sky* album cover at €11,960 (including fees),

categories, you find museums, foundations, investors... But there’s also the niche for new authors. You can still find boards for €500.

Depending on their success, their auction value can rise relatively quickly. There are, in fact, different comic book markets.”





*Quick et Flupke* (1950), Hergé  
Sold for €22,860 on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 by Sotheby's Paris

© Sotheby's Art Digital Studio



*Quick et Flupke* (1950), Hergé  
Sold for €24,130 on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 by Sotheby's Paris

© Sotheby's Art Digital Studio



and Barbucci with *Sky-Doll* Volume 1, page 41, at €8,040 (including fees). “I’m very pleased with this sale’s result, where classics like Franquin, Gibrat, Hergé, Hermann, Loisel, Moebius, Uderzo achieved very high scores. The success of the catalogue dedicated to Jean-Marc Rochette raises this artist’s value to the level of contemporary comic classics,” declared Daniel Maghen following the sale.

#### “Global leader”

In a typically dual-headed art market, the “world leader in comic book sales” is not an Anglo-Saxon auctioneer, but French house Artcurial. They had nearly a decade’s head start over the Christie’s/Sotheby’s duopoly in this specialty. Established in 2005, its Comic Books department organises widely publicised auctions, particularly around Hergé, for whom it holds the auction record [see box p.45]. It also hosts monographic sales dedicated to other artists, such as Sempé or Jidéhem, but one of its jewels is Enki Bilal, to whom it dedicates sales, notably in Monaco. In 2022, *Coup de sang*, a preparatory cardboard for a 2020 cover, fetched €95,573.

In 2023, the Angoulême festival also stepped into public sales by launching its 9<sup>th</sup> Art Square, a 900 m<sup>2</sup> space occupied by about thirty exhibitors and gallery owners offering original boards, rare books, and collectables.

### 3 questions to... Thomas-Louis Côté

Thomas-Louis Côté is the director of the Québec BD festival.

#### **You are the curator of the exhibition “From one ocean to another, a focus on Canadian comics”. What did you want to show?**

In recent years, Québec BD has been primarily working on promoting Quebecois comics, especially with the Canadian embassy, which has allowed us, among other things, to ensure our presence in Angoulême in recent editions. The idea is to showcase the richness of what is being produced across Canada. This year is special because we are presenting more than seventy authors from across the country. I set myself the constraint of representing each province and territory, from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, up to the Yukon, in the Great North of Quebec, because quality comics are produced everywhere. The pool of authors is very wide. They cover a variety of styles and subjects, including indigenous comics. I wanted to show this diversity that really characterises the country.

#### **What is the comic book market like in Canada?**

It’s always complex to address the Canadian comic book market as a whole, due to the language issue. Francophone and Anglophone markets reflect two completely different situations. With a few exceptions, Anglophones are very unaware of Francophone production, while Quebec publishers work a lot with Europe — although Montreal remains one of the biggest players in Anglophone comics. Logically, Anglophone production circulates more between English Canada and the United States. The influence of comics is felt, but not only. The independent Anglophone comics, especially, stand out; they are very dynamic. We often talk about two solitudes in Canada, and the situation of comics illustrates this expression quite well.

#### **And the Quebec market?**

In Quebec, the offer is diverse and of high quality, both for commercial comics, manga, and more intimate and personal stories. Our publishers offer great albums in both adult and youth comics. For example, Pow Pow, a Quebec publisher distributed in France, has enabled several young authors to become known. But in recent years, the level of youth comics has been particularly impressive, like with *Agent Jean*. This series by Quebecois Alex A. has been hugely successful at home and is at the top of the sales charts, almost at the level of *Astérix*...

Back then, all comics strips were valued equally. Gradually, the market rationalised and structured, as with all new markets. A strip with a large panel, action, or more visually appealing would be valued higher than one serving purely narrative purposes.

— *Alain Huberty*

Some of these items were dispersed in a physical and online auction, with starting estimates between €150 and €500, aimed at attracting first-

time collectors. Eventually, 64 strips and drawings were sold for a total of €41,230; the proceeds went to struggling authors. The festival decided

to renew the initiative under the direction of the auction house Coutau-Bégarie & Associés. The next event is scheduled on 27 January 2024.

CHER MITACC,  
J'APPRENDS AVEC RETARD  
QUE TU VIENS DE REJOINDRE  
NOTRE PATROUILLE DES CINQUANTE.  
JE TE FELICITE, CAR JE SAIS QUE  
TU AS TOUJOURS...



Liliani  
et André Franquin

Drawing by André Franquin  
Sold for €12,500 on 5 April 2015 by Christie's Paris

© Christie's Images





*Tintin* (1978), Hergé  
Sold for €49,500 on 21 May 2016 by Christie's Paris

© Christie's Images





# 2022



École nationale des arts appliqués et de l'image

Courtesy ENAAI

# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET STARTED IN COMICS

The profession is a dream for many. Discovery internships, university courses, and prestigious art schools... To support the constant emergence of new talents, numerous training programmes are established each year at all levels, from beginner to advanced. Here's a selection.

For some, the passion for comics starts in the cradle, or more commonly, at school. Once absent from textbooks and relegated to mere entertainment, comics are now a mainstay in educational curriculums. The benefits of comics in education are manifold: rediscovering the joy of reading, fostering creativity, and offering diverse teaching tools. In this context, festivals like Angoulême and resource centres such as La Maison de la BD in Blois “play a crucial role in promoting the genre and cultural diversity. They offer programmes tailored to school groups, facilitate encounters with works and their creators through exhibitions, lend educational kits, and organise training sessions,” notes a study by the National Publishing Syndicate.

All this stimulates student creativity and perhaps even inspires future careers, despite the often precarious nature of the profession. A novice comic artist typically earns less than €100 per page for their first contract, according to *Le Parisien*. “In recent years, there’s been an increase in young participants and winners of the prize who have pursued higher education in dedicated fields, whether in animation or in print and comic arts, at institutions like Saint-Luc or Arts Déco,” explains Bertrand Brie, curator of the exhibition celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the School Comic Competition [see box p.54]. “When the contest started, a few training programmes were emerging, but they were still rare. Today, even the Fine Arts schools have their own comic workshops.” In late 2022, Joan Sfar notably spoke at the Beaux-Arts de Paris in a dialogue with Alain Berland. Comics have carved out a significant place, even in major art schools. For example, for those pursuing a Higher Diploma in Applied Arts (DSAA),

eight institutions offer specific comic art pathways: the National Art School of Nancy; the Lorraine Art School; the European School of Art of Brittany (Rennes campus); the Art School of Cambrai; the Higher Institute of Arts of Toulouse – Fine Arts; the HEAR – Rhine School of Arts in Strasbourg; the Higher Institute of Fine Arts of Besançon-Franche-Comté; and the Higher School of Arts and Media of Caen-Cherbourg (Caen campus).

Diploma-granting, certifying, professionalising, preparatory, public, private... Beware of the labyrinth! With over 300 comic book training programmes listed on the Indeed job search engine, the first step is to verify that the school awards diplomas recognised by the state or is listed in the National Register of Professional Certifications (RNCP), as some only offer course completion certificates.

## **The European Higher School of Image (Angoulême-Poitiers)**

A prime path for aspiring comic artists, EESI (European Higher School of Image) Angoulême-Poitiers offers a National Diploma of Art (DNA) in Comics, a Master’s degree in Text and



### *The School Comic Competition's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

The contest is virtually as old as the festival itself. Launched in 1975, just one year after the first edition of the Angoulême Festival, the School Comic Competition was conceived by Dominique Bréchoteau, an applied arts teacher who would later become president and vice-president of the festival. The story began in 1974 when he attended the first International Comics Festival of Angoulême, founded by Francis Groux, Jean Mardikian, and Claude Moliterni. At that time, he visited the new event wearing two hats: as a casual visitor and as a teacher responsible for the educational activities of plastic and applied arts teachers. Following his meeting with Francis Groux, he decided to set up the very first school comic contest for the following edition. Fifty years later, the contest remains a staple of the Angoulême festival. To mark the occasion, a retrospective looks back on the history of this award, which has seen thousands of students participate and sparked many vocations. “Initially, it was necessary to delve into the history of the contest. The main difficulty was that the archives were relatively uneven from one decade to the next,” confides Bertrand Brie, the exhibition’s curator. “Much like the festival, the contest was developed ‘on the job’. After immersing myself in this history, I decided to focus on the testimonies of authors, both male and female, and their memories of the contest. I realised that all these young people were exchanging ideas, sometimes staying in contact for years after. This stimulation among the participants and winners undoubtedly helped to ignite vocations.” The exhibition’s journey revisits the history of the School Comic Competition, its inception, its evolutions, the different names of the awards, as told by its creators and winners, whether they pursued a career in comics or not. “At the end of the exhibition, there is a small projection area with videos of advice given by former winners of the contest who are now at the Arts Décoratifs and Estienne School in animation. There is also testimony from Benoît Ers, the author of the successful series *Les enfants de la résistance*,” adds the curator. Aimed at stimulating student creativity, the contest is now part of the pedagogical arsenal used by teachers. “A prize like this gives confidence to young participants, they take the plunge, compare their work with others. For those who wish to pursue a career in comics, the award also opens doors.”

expressions, inking, typography, colouring, etc. The Liège campus also offers access to specialised post-training courses such as computer graphics or animation, among others.

[www.stluc-bruxelles-esa.be](http://www.stluc-bruxelles-esa.be)

### **Émile Cohl School (Lyon)**

In Lyon, École Émile-Cohl prepares students for a range of drawing professions: animation, video games, illustration, comics, 2D and 3D computer graphics. Founded in September 1984 by Philippe Rivière, a writer and documentary filmmaker, with the help of artist Roland Andrieu, this state-recognised private art school focuses heavily on professionalising its students, counterbalancing the sometimes overly theoretical approach of fine arts schools. The school offers a one-year, 740-hour Preparatory Drawing Angoulême course for those wishing to prepare for major art or animation schools. Aimed at upgrading drawing and artistic culture skills, it also prepares students for admission to Émile Cohl’s higher cycles, such as Storyboard and Layout, Practitioner Illustrator, or 3D Illustrator training. For professionals, it also organises short (seventy-hour), non-certifying courses like traditional and digital colouring in comics for active or transitioning artists.

[www.cohl.fr](http://www.cohl.fr)

### **Pivaut School (Nantes)**

The comic book section of this private school has revealed several gems: one of its alumni is none other than... Riad Sattouf [see p.18]. State-recognised, the Comic Book training at the famous Nantes school is RNCP level 6 certified as “Illustrator Designer”. This three-year, post-high school program is offered in Nantes and soon in Toulouse, with a course opening scheduled for 2025. Taught by qualified teachers and active professionals, the training includes comic artists, colourists, illustrators, scriptwriters, and storyboard artists. In the final

Image with a focus on Comics, a Research Master in Comics, and even a PhD in Comics! Unique in its kind, this public art school under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture hosts nearly 350 students across its two campuses. The teachings at EESI Angoulême and Poitiers are conducted by a team of about forty mostly active professionals, including nationally and internationally renowned artists, authors, researchers, and professionals. The entrance exam for the first year consists of several assessments: a practical test, a portfolio, a general culture test including a language proficiency evaluation, and an interview with a jury.

[www.eesi.eu](http://www.eesi.eu)

### **The Higher School of Arts Saint-Luc (Liège and Brussels)**

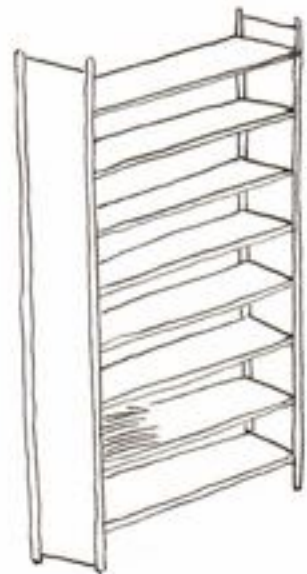
Internationally renowned, the bachelor’s degree in comics at Saint-Luc (the first cycle in Belgium) offers a 180-credit (ECTS) programme spread over three years of study. In the master’s cycle, a specialisation in creation and dissemination extends the training provided in the bachelor’s cycle, specifically focusing on the editorial process. The first cycle’s learning aims to master the rules of narration and storytelling, representation techniques, and publishing. Focused on the concept of the author, Saint-Luc’s training revolves around fundamental pillars: composition, proportions, perspectives, settings, characters,



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Drawing by Alice Dybowski

© Alice Dybowski. Courtesy School Comic Competition

year, students develop a project based on a personal scenario and universe, with support from the teaching team. This project is presented at the school's Open Doors event and then to the final jury. Since 2016, students have engaged in a unifying challenge: creating the fanzine *La Bulle à Pivaut*. In twelve days, they must each produce five comic book pages on a given theme and constraints, with a different guest comic book artist each year. The outcome is a finished and printed product.

[www.ecole-pivaut.fr](http://www.ecole-pivaut.fr)

preparing students for careers in illustration, comics, animation, graphic design, and space design. Co-founded in 1999 by illustrator David Soudan, in the regional dynamic of the Chambéry comic book festival, ENAAI trains students in bachelor's degree programs (three years) across four main streams: Illustration and Comics, Animation, Graphic Design, and Space Design. After a common first year, ENAAI's bachelor's degree offers two years of specialisation where students explore comics as well as illustration and press drawing. Post-baccalaureate admission is based on an individual interview

### **International School of Manga and Animation (Toulouse)**

After Japan, France is the world's second-largest market for manga [see p.26]. It's no surprise that a specialised school trains future mangaka in France. Since 2016, EIMA has offered a three-year mangaka program, accessible from the age of 16. Focused on professional integration, EIMA boasts a 75% employment rate in the sector within a year of graduating. Teaching is conducted by Japanese mangaka, "who have achieved professional success in Japan", the school

The School Comics Competition was a pioneering initiative and has become a central institution regarding comics in schools, as its initiator, Dominique Bréchoteau, was himself a teacher trainer. He began creating dossiers on comics in schools in the 1970s, a time when comics were rarely discussed in the educational context. — *Bertrand Brie*

### **Condé School (France)**

Present across eight campuses in France (Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Nancy, Nice, Paris, Rennes, Toulouse), the Condé School offers a Master's in Illustration — Comics Concept Art. This two-year programme supports students in developing their work as author-illustrators. This private school also offers a three-year Bachelor's degree in Illustration. Admissions are based on interviews (which can be requested online), from October until a week before the start of the academic year, subject to availability, for both first-year entry and parallel admissions.

[www.ecoles-conde.com](http://www.ecoles-conde.com)

### **School of Applied Arts and Image (Le Bourget-du-Lac)**

ENAAI, a private school of applied arts located on the Savoie Technolac campus, between the towns of Aix-les-Bains and Chambéry, offers several post-baccalaureate programs

and the presentation of academic records and an artistic portfolio. The school also organises evening classes, as well as leisure workshops and continuous training for professionals.

[www.enaai.fr](http://www.enaai.fr)

### **Delcourt Comic Art Academy (Paris)**

Founded in 2014 and located in the 11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of the capital, the Academy is a private higher technical education institution dedicated to comic art professions. To date, it is the only major publisher to have integrated its own school — potentially to internally train its future talents. Each year, it supervises a small cohort of 25 students who follow a three-year curriculum. The publisher leverages its influence and extensive network to involve professionals and big names in the sector in its teaching. Enki Bilal, for instance, was the sponsor of the 2021-2022 cohort [see p.76].

[www.academie-bd.fr](http://www.academie-bd.fr)

proudly states. EIMA's final year jury is comprised of publishing professionals.

[www.eima.school](http://www.eima.school)

### **Institute of Creation and Digital Animation (Paris)**

This private higher education institution specialises in training digital designers. As a specialist in user experience (whether for gamers, viewers, readers, or internet users), ICAN offers students courses organised around five areas: Game Design, 3D Design and Animation, Web and Digital, UX Design, and Digital Comics. This focus is significant: comics have evolved considerably in recent years with new digital practices and diversified platforms. All diplomas prepared by students are registered with the RNCP at level 6 for three-year programmes (Bachelor's cycle) and at level 7 for five-year programmes (Master's cycle).

[www.ican-design.fr](http://www.ican-design.fr)





European Higher School of Image

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NOUVEAU  
FEMME  
LIBERTÉ

FEMME  
VIE  
LIBERTÉ



Femme vie liberté (2023), Marjane Satrapi

© Les Éditions de l'Homme



## 2023 COMICS RELEASES

The year 2023 has seen the release of graphic novels, manga, comics and more. Between graphic feats and innovative narrative styles, they range from social epics to intimate tales, reflecting our contemporary society in their own ways. Here's a selection of the best releases of the year.

### ***El cielo en la cabeza*. Beyond the Mediterranean**

Having explored the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Spain in *The art of flying*, published in 2009 and winner of Spain's national comic book award, Antonio Altarriba embarks on a new odyssey in *El cielo en la cabeza* (*The sky in mind*), released in October. It tells the story of Nivek, a twelve-year-old from Congo. From the Kivu mines where he nearly dies to becoming a child soldier forced to execute his entire family, the young teenager decides to leave his homeland for Europe. The reader is taken on an initiatory journey across the African continent. Enhanced by Sergio García Sánchez's multi-linear narrative illustrations and Lola Moral's colours, this politically charged and extensively researched story offers a fresh perspective on the migrant experience from the other side of the Mediterranean, from the perspective of those who live it.

#### ***El cielo en la cabeza***

Antonio Altarriba, Sergio García Sánchez, Lola Moral  
Published on 27 Octobre 2023  
[www.normaeditorial.com](http://www.normaeditorial.com)

### ***Les guerres immobiles*. Diary**

Since the 1990s, Fabrice Neaud has been chronicling his life. Between 1996 and 2002, he published four volumes under the title *Journal*, starting the story in February 1992 and ending it in 1996. In 2023, the author picks up where he left

off — or rather, two years later, in 1998 — opening a new cycle in continuation of the first. In this largely autobiographical grand project, Fabrice Neaud opens up about his homosexuality, his encounters in parks, his disappointments. Without any tenderness for the narrator who “whines, complains, snivels, cries, and falls in love again” as he describes him himself, the author delves into exploring his memory through hyper-realistic and detailed drawings, giving the story an almost documentary value. He also tackles new themes that were not covered in *Journal*: the spectre of HIV, but also family, seen also as a “deafening nightmare”. Fabrice Neaud won the Alph'Art Prize at the Angoulême Festival in 1997 for the first volume of *Journal*. And this year, *Les guerres immobiles* (*Still wars*) is part of the official selection.

#### ***Le dernier sergent Tome 1***

#### ***Les guerres immobiles***

Fabrice Neaud  
Published on 27 September 2023  
[www.editions-delcourt.fr](http://www.editions-delcourt.fr)





Evol (2023), Atsushi Kaneko  
© Kadokawa Corporation





### 3 questions to... Sergio García Sánchez

Sergio García Sánchez is the illustrator of *El cielo en la cabeza*.

#### How did the project for this book develop?

We had previously collaborated with Antonio Altarriba on a very experimental comic book, *Cuerpos del delito*, which was only published in Spanish. After that, we wanted to propose something more classical. We explored various themes and eventually chose the Congo because Antonio met a nurse who worked there with an NGO. Antonio was told all about what was happening in South Kivu, the region where Nivek, the book's character, comes from. These stories deeply moved him and led to the creation of the idea and script for *El cielo en la cabeza*.

#### What degree of freedom did you have?

The script was very precise, very cinematic. But I can't work like that; I need a huge amount of freedom to create, with the layout, etc. We reached an agreement where he gave me free rein over the page composition and narrative, based on his script. So, I would read each of the chapters, then visually imagine how to approach them, and from there, I made sketches. The creation process was developed in a digital format using the iPad Procreate app. I experimented a lot throughout the book, and each page is adapted to the story being told, in its layout, the format of the panels... Then with Lola Moral, who is my wife and long-time collaborator, we decided on the colours, starting very orange in the mines, very green in the forest, leading to Europe where the pages become much greyer.

#### You have developed a distinctive style, in your work in general, and in this comic in particular...

I started in comics very traditionally, using chalk, watercolour, etc. But in recent years, especially since my first covers for the *New Yorker*, I've developed a more conceptual, more geometric form of drawing. This work greatly influenced my way of illustrating *El cielo en la cabeza*, which has a truly cinematic narrative. As for the graphic style, I think everything started three years ago with the "Picasso and Comics" exhibition at the Picasso Museum in Paris, for which I produced a work that was a tribute to Guernica. So, I studied Picasso's drawings, but also those of New Objectivity, Futurism, Marcel Duchamp... And at university, I had the opportunity to research Egyptian drawings in tombs, Greek drawings on amphorae, which are always in profile, with a very frontal perspective. From this, I developed a way of drawing that I now apply in comics, in the press, and in my work with the Cayón gallery in Madrid.

Tynion IV and artist Álvaro Martínez Bueno. Following their collaboration from 2018 to 2020 on Justice League Dark, this work allows them to combine their creativity — winning them the 2022 Eisner Award for Best New Series — with greater narrative freedom.

#### *The nice house on the lake*

James Tynion IV, Martínez Bueno Álvaro  
Tome 1 published in February 2023  
Tome 2 published on 31 March 2023  
[www.urban-comics.com](http://www.urban-comics.com)

#### *Femme vie liberté. Iranian revolution*

Joann Sfar, Coco, Mana Neyestani, Catel, Pascal Rabaté... *Femme vie liberté (Woman life freedom)*, a Kurdish slogan adopted in Iran following the 2022 protests, brings together seventeen artists under the direction of Marjane Satrapi. Twenty years after *Persepolis*, the author and director turns again to her childhood homeland to pay tribute to Mahsa Amini, a young woman killed by the Iranian morality police on 16 September 2022. Through texts written by Iranian political scientist Farid Vahid, war correspondent Jean-Pierre Perrin, and Iranian-American historian Abbas Milani, the artists create comics and illustrations in support of the movement and Iranian women. From examining the origins of the uprising — the first feminist revolution supported by men — to deciphering Iranian history, the work addresses the country's political situation, highlights the courage of its people, and sheds light on the complex events shaking Iran today.

#### *Femme vie liberté*

Marjane Satrapi  
Published on 14 September 2023  
[www.editions-icnoclaste.fr](http://www.editions-icnoclaste.fr)

#### *The nice house on the lake. Sci-fi thriller*

The title alone evokes a horror story or an Agatha Christie-esque thriller. The setup is classic: ten characters are invited to a villa by a lake, summoned by a mutual friend. Isolated, they soon realise they are trapped. But it's the outside world that collapses while the walls of the luxurious, high-tech house shelter

them. The plot of this two-volume locked-room mystery morphs into a science-fiction narrative filled with mystery and the supernatural, set against a backdrop of human introspection on contemporary society. Published by DC Black Label, a DC Comics label for readers over seventeen, *The nice house on the lake* brings together writer James

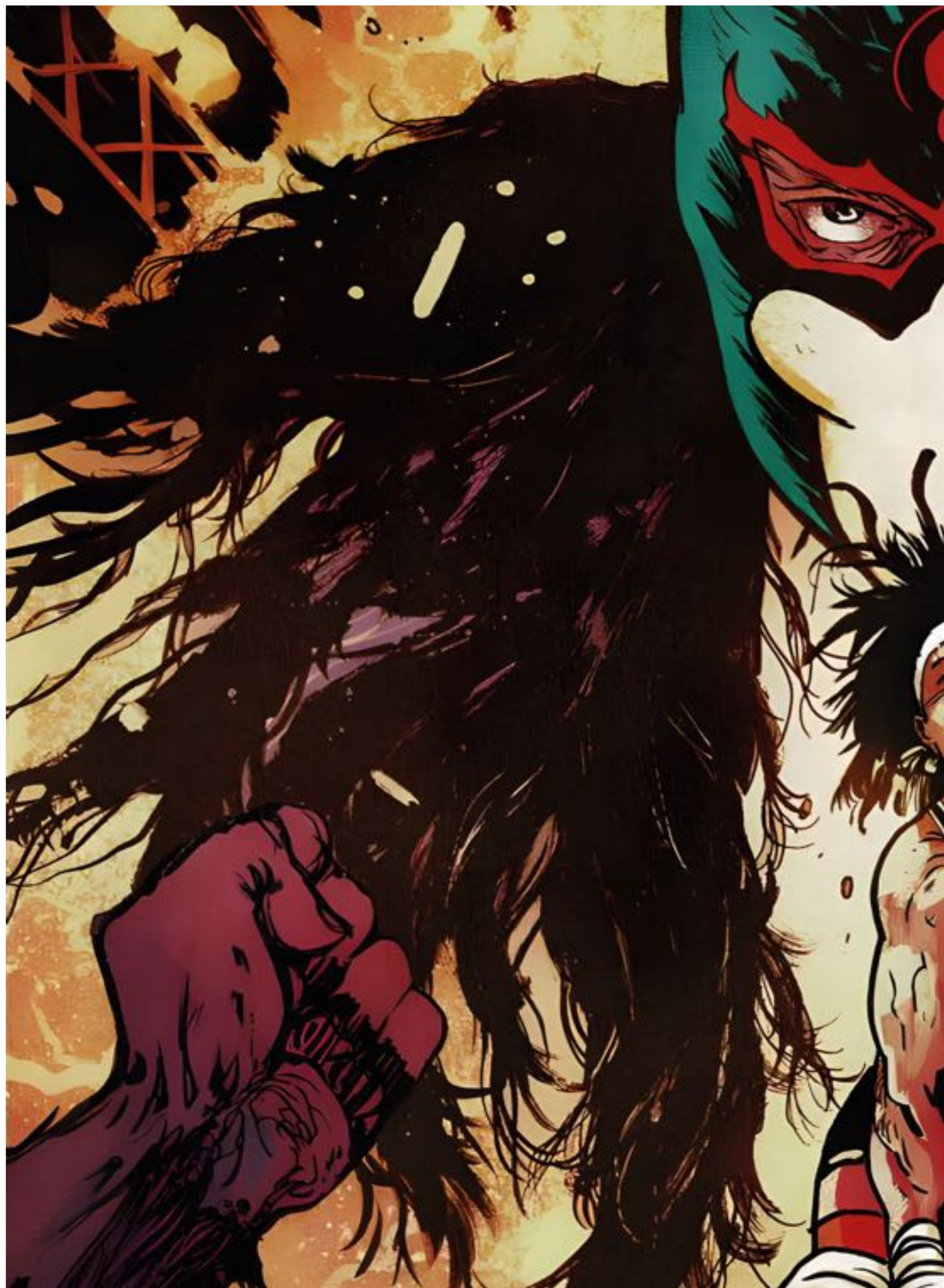




*Monica* (2023), Daniel Clowes

© Daniel Clowes. Delcourt Editions  
Courtesy Festival de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême









Do a powerbomb (2023), Daniel Warren Johnson and Mike Spicer  
Photo Elsa Guillaume



PRICE \$8.99

OCT. 31, 2022

# THE NEW YORKER



5 G S

Cover of the Halloween 2022 issue  
of the *New Yorker*, Sergio García Sánchez

Courtesy Sergio García Sánchez

**Berserk. Classic**

This is one of the most famous mangas in Japan and around the world, renowned for its over fifty million copies sold. *Berserk* began in 1988 when Kentarō Miura wrote a 48-page prototype. The first volume was released in November 1990, and the story took shape. Dark and disturbing, it follows Guts, a warrior in a world inspired by medieval Europe. A gripping plot, a richly crafted universe, and graphic quality: everything comes together in this manga, which now spans 41 volumes. Volume 42 is set to be released in France in April 2024, over a year after the previous instalment, released in July 2022. Sadly, the series' author passed away from exhaustion in May 2021 after 32 years of working on his masterpiece, adding a tragic aura to *Berserk*. His childhood friend Kōji Mori, assisted by Miura's assistants, has decided to continue publishing to finish the series, of which he knows the ending.

**Berserk**

Kentarō Miura

Publication planned on 2 April 2024

[www.lidenfilms.jp](http://www.lidenfilms.jp)**Monica. American dream**

Daniel Clowes, a figure in American independent comics, returns after a seven-year hiatus. Author of the now-cult classic *Ghost World*, he is selected for the 51<sup>st</sup> edition of the Angoulême Festival for *Monica*, published on 3 October 2023. In this new graphic novel, Clowes narrates the eponymous character's life through nine interconnected stories, each treated in different graphic and narrative styles, with the connections left to be made by the reader. Monica's life, from birth to death, unfolds. An absent father, a hippie mother; as an adult, Monica searches for her missing parents, traversing various eras of the United States.

Daniel Clowes mixes genres, from war comics to romance and horror, addressing significant themes of late twentieth-century America, including the Vietnam War, drugs, and cult excesses.

**Monica**

Daniel Clowes

Published on 3 October 2023

[www.fantagraphics.com](http://www.fantagraphics.com)**Do a powerbomb. Cosmic wrestling**

We're thrust into the world of wrestling with *Do a powerbomb* through its main character, Lona Steelrose. Following in her mother's footsteps, a wrestling champion who died in a ring accident, Lona embarks on her own journey to make her own mark. She soon meets a necromancer who offers her a deal: compete in a tournament in a parallel world against opponents from across the universe, with the chance to resurrect her mother if she wins. But unlike the choreographed fights, here the hits are real. Awarded the 2023 Eisner Award for Best Youth Publication, Daniel Warren Johnson, a regular with Image Comics, Marvel Comics, and DC Comics, brings his technique and experience to create striking, energetic, and colourful artwork that captures the atmosphere of wrestling matches while delivering a human story with engaging characters.

**Do a powerbomb**

Daniel Warren Johnson

Published on 23 June 2023

[www.urban-comics.com](http://www.urban-comics.com)**Frontier. Space colonisation**

Blending adventure and science fiction, Guillaume Singelin presents

a one-shot story that contrasts with its naïve graphic style. When we look beyond the almost childlike characters, the landscapes gain depth, and the comic panels buzz with detail. The story, involving three protagonists, follows their daily lives in a world where Earth is suffocating due to the exploitation of its last resources. Humanity, having turned to the stars, depends on corporations that control resources and structure society, colonising space and damaging planets with their mining operations. Questioning their own choices, Ji-Soo, Camina, and Alex seek meaning in their lives in a story that addresses highly relevant reflections on ecology, working conditions, and the economic grip of multinational corporations.

**Frontier**

Guillaume Singelin

Published on 12 April 2023

[www.editions-ruedesevres.fr](http://www.editions-ruedesevres.fr)**The many deaths of Laila Starr.****A philosophical tale**

Through the sumptuously psychedelic colours of Portuguese illustrator Filipe Andrade, Ram V. unfolds a philosophically tinged story, offering a reflection on the value of life. A contemplative and introspective journey, the reader follows the goddess of death reincarnated in the body of a mortal, Laila Starr, who seeks a young boy destined to invent immortality as an adult. Sworn to kill him before it's too late, her quest opens the narrative to the different stages of life, set in an atmosphere blending Indian mythology and cyberpunk. Originally published in spring 2022, the Urban Limited collection offers a luxurious format with limited editions of 1,700 numbered copies.

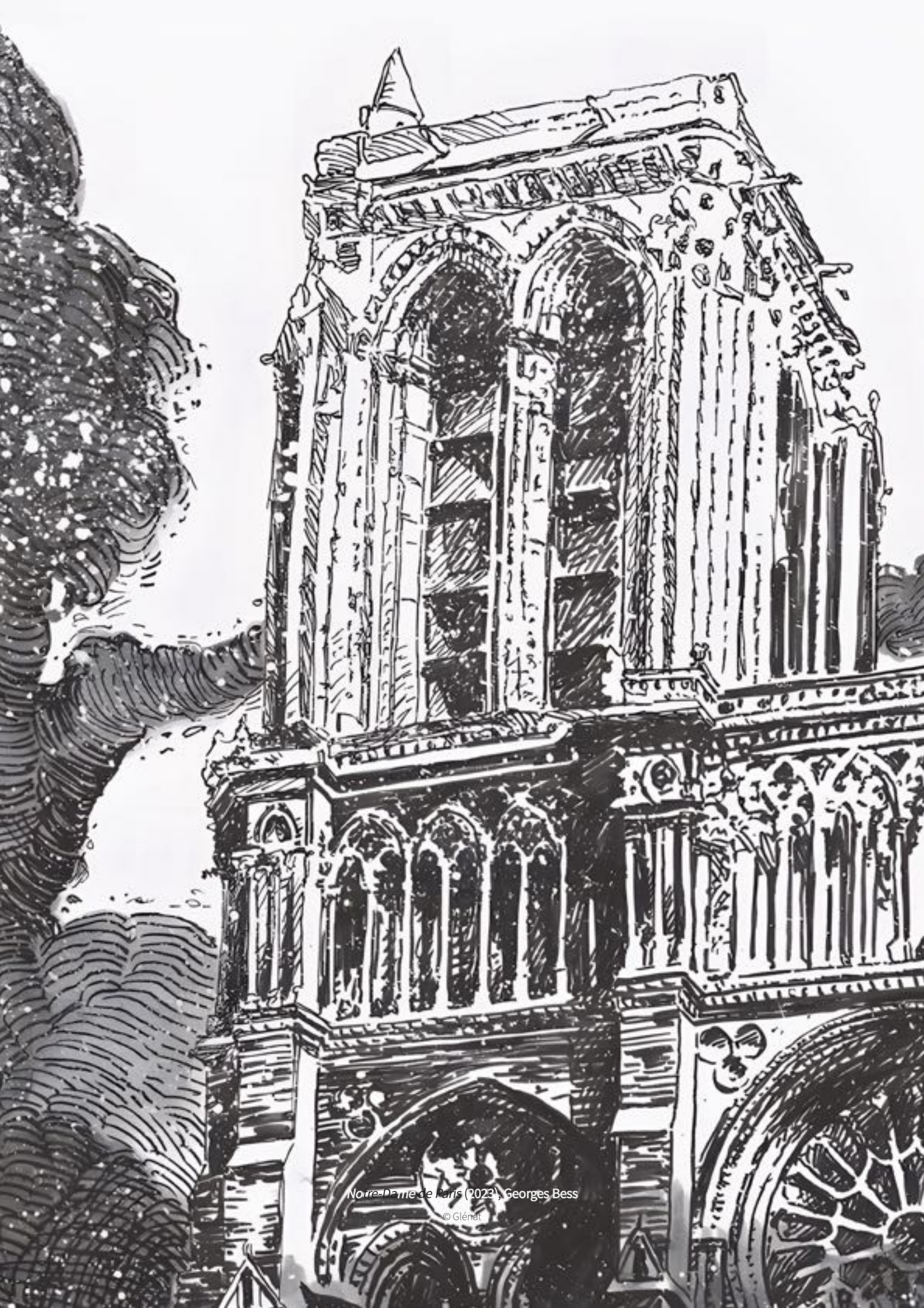
**The many deaths of Laila Starr**

Ram V., Filipe Andrade, Ines Amaro

Reissued on 8 December 2023

[www.urban-comics.com](http://www.urban-comics.com)

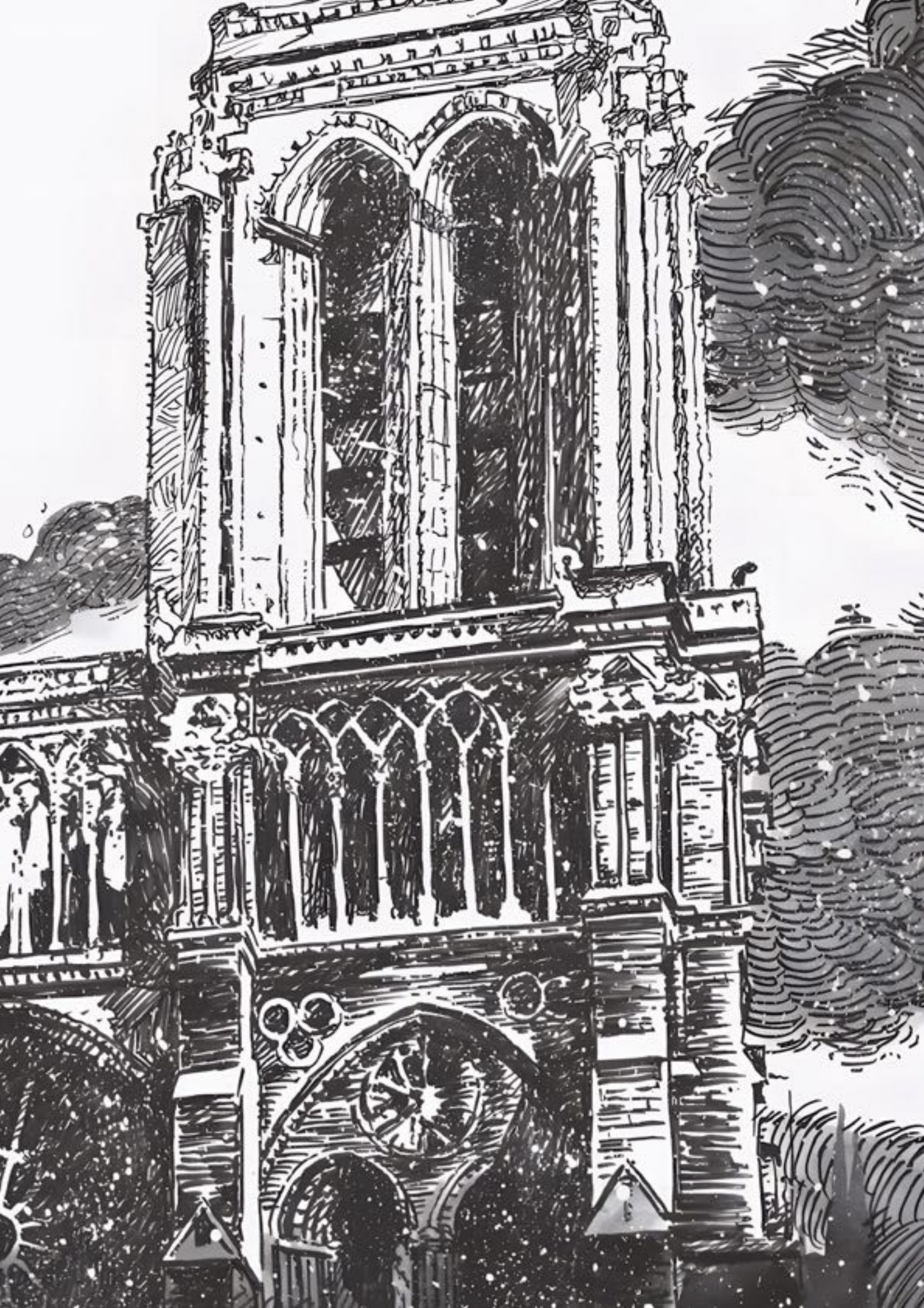




Noire-Dame de Paris (2023), Georges Bess

© Glénat







# NOTEBOOK

## **Notre-Dame de Paris. Graphic adaptation**

The king of adaptations, Georges Bess, strikes again and accurately with this adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel, following his adaptations of *Dracula* in 2019 and *Frankenstein* in 2021. A French illustrator and author, Bess trained at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, then interrupted his studies amidst the events of May 1968 to live in Stockholm, where he began his career in 1971, collaborating with *Mad* magazine and Scandinavian series. Returning to Paris in 1987, he frequently worked with Alejandro Jodorowsky on series like *Le lama blanc*, *Le journal de Mickey*, and *Anibal cinq*. In this graphic adaptation of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Bess' impressive mastery immerses us in a medieval Paris rendered in black and white, bringing to life the characters of Victor Hugo who all revolve around the cathedral, the heart of both the narrative and Georges Bess' drawings. The graphic novel was also selected among the twenty comic books for the Fnac France Inter BD Prize.

### **Notre-Dame de Paris**

Georges Bess

Published on 22 November 2023

[www.glenat.com](http://www.glenat.com)

## **Evol. Youth revolution**

In December last year in France, Atsushi Kaneko published the fourth volume of *Evol*, with graphics inspired by American independent comics and the punk universe. Balancing teenage angst and a rebellious spirit against the established order, the manga plays with the superhero image. In *Evol*, heroes inherit their powers from their parents. However, the story's three protagonists, Nozomi, Akari, and Sakura, acquire their powers after a failed suicide attempt and decide to call themselves *Evol*, referencing the English word "evil". Becoming villains, they decide to take revenge on the world.

### **Evol**

Atsushi Kaneko

Published on

6 December 2023



Frontier (2023), Guillaume Singelin  
© Rue de Sèvres





The many deaths of Laila Starr (2022),  
Ram V., Filipe Andrade and Ines Amaro  
© Urban Comics







# DATA

Enki Bilal

Photo Hannah Assouline. © Casterman Editions

## ENKI BILAL

**Author and creator of worlds — including the now famous sport of chessboxing — Enki Bilal envisions dystopian futures that reflect his anxieties and perspective on contemporary society. And as an exceptional illustrator, he produced works that managed to go beyond the comic books sphere, and enter art galleries and museums.**

In 1987, he won the Grand Prix at the Angoulême Festival. Since then, Enki Bilal has become a prominent figure in the French — and International — comic books scene. A polymath, he alternates roles as an author and illustrator, director and screenwriter, and artist, though for him, comics are inseparable from art. His works weave stories that blend science fiction with reflections on the modern world, globalisation, religious obscurantism, and the consequences of fascist political systems.

The societal focus is complemented by a more intimate, personal gaze, both poetic and anxious. Born on 7 October 1951 in Belgrade, Enki Bilal spent the first ten years of his life in Yugoslavia. His father, a tailor for Marshal Tito, fled to France with his family, including Enki Bilal, his mother, and his older sister Enisa. Remaining attached to his homeland, he was deeply influenced by the civil wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s, which greatly inspired the creation of the first volume of his *Monster* tetralogy, *The dormant beast*, published in 1998, while marking a renewal in his graphic style and working method.

His career developed through a series of exchanges and encounters, leading to his first major projects. From early on, Enki Bilal demonstrated a confident, unique stroke, showcasing his drawing talent. In 1971, he won a contest with the journal *Pilote*, for which he wrote his very first story, *The cursed bowl*, the following year. In 1975, he published his first album in collaboration with comic book writer Pierre Christin, *The cruise of the forgotten*, followed by *The stone ship* in 1976 and *The city that didn't exist* in 1977. In 1979, Enki Bilal achieved critical recognition with

*The phalanges of the black order*, his fourth collaboration with the writer, which won the RTL 1980 award for the best adult comic book and was listed among the twenty best books of the year by *Lire* magazine.

However, it was *The Carnival of Immortals*, the first volume of the *Nikopol* trilogy, that brought him widespread acclaim. As both author and illustrator of the story, Enki Bilal created a sci-fi universe infused with mythological references, blending past and present against a backdrop of geopolitical issues, set in a 2023 dystopian Paris. In 1993, he definitively entered the elite circle of great comic book names with the last volume of the *Nikopol* trilogy, *Cold Equator*, selected as the best book of the year across all genres by *Lire*. Through his cinema projects, he soon established his name beyond the confines of comic books: in 1989, he designed the sets for Alain Resnais's film *Life is a Novel* and directed *Bunker palace hotel* with Jean-Louis Trintignant and Carole Bouquet.

Enki Bilal also made a name for himself in France and internationally



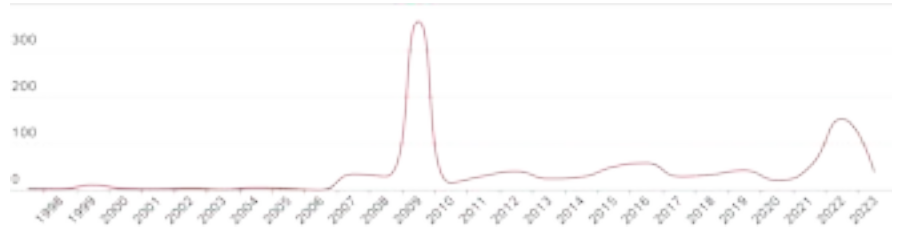
through exhibitions dedicated to his artistic work, which was showcased at the Palais de Tokyo, the Museum of Modern Art, the Louvre...

In 1988, the Palais Tokyo hosted an exhibition of his work, a year after his Angoulême Festival prize — he also served as the 14<sup>th</sup> president that same year — where he exhibited alongside photographer Josef Koudelka and illustrator and painter Guy Peellaert. This period marked an acceleration in collaborative projects and events spotlighting the artist-author. In 1991, the Grande Halle de La Villette featured his works for two months. In February 1992, the “Transit” exhibition presented his drawings on the forecourt of the Grande Arche at La Défense.

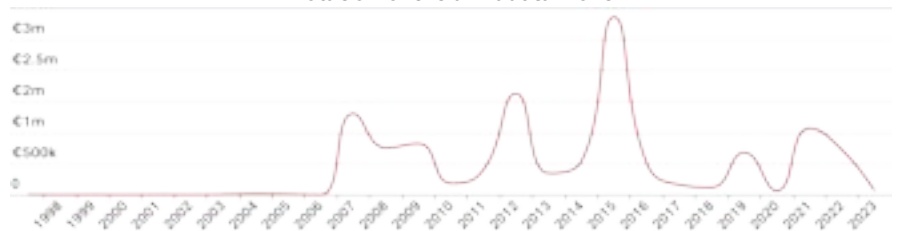
Since then, Enki Bilal has exhibited at the Maison Rouge in 2009, at the International City of Comics and Image in Angoulême in 2011 and 2012, at the Museum of Hunting and Nature in 2016, and at the Institut du monde arabe in 2018 and 2020. Internationally, Bilal’s work has also gained significant institutional recognition through several exhibitions: in Italy, at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Trento and Rovereto in 2004, in Belgium at the Rouge-Cloître art centre in 2013, and at the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo — the birthplace of the protagonists of *The dormant beast* — in 2018. While he has presented his works alongside other artists, he has also been the subject of solo shows, notably at the Louvre in 2012 with “The Ghosts of the Louvre”. Originally a publishing project, it transformed into an exhibition, with director of the Louvre, Henri Loyrette offering Bilal the opportunity to explore the museum and its works.

Enki Bilal’s drawings have also been displayed in galleries. Three solo shows were organised by the Geneva

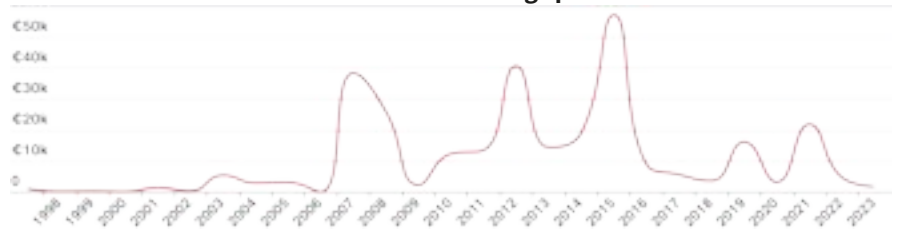
Evolution of the number of lots offered for sale



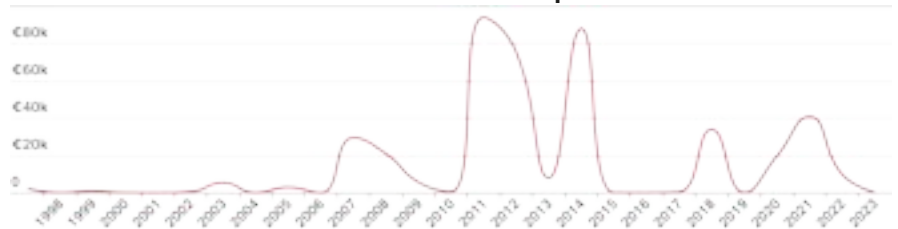
Evolution of the annual turnover



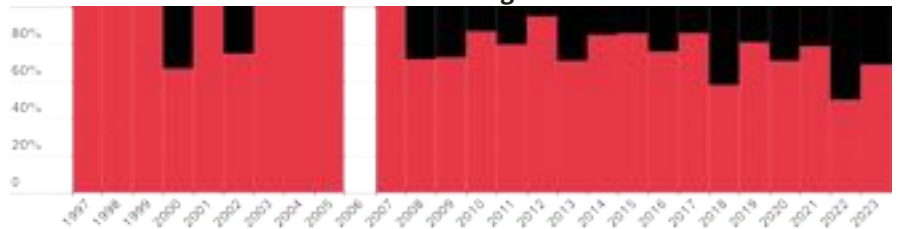
Evolution of the average price



Evolution of the median price

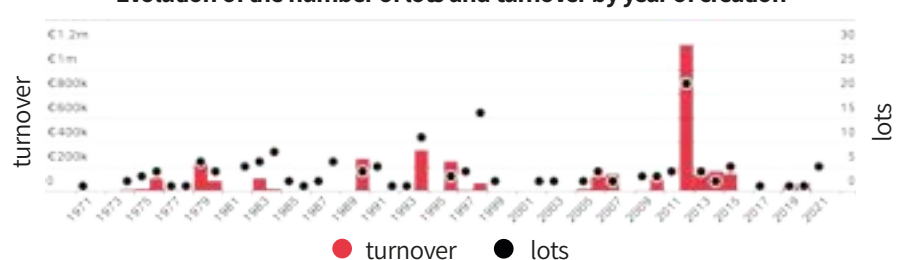


Evolution of the bought-in ratio



● sold ● bought in

Evolution of the number of lots and turnover by year of creation



● turnover ● lots

“The experiences in painting and cinema I had before starting *The dormant beast* led me to completely reconsider my way of working before drawing. — Enki Bilal

### *Sublime Chaos*

*Sublime Chaos* was published on 9 November 2022 as a book in which is gathered the series of interviews between Enki Bilal and journalist and writer Christophe Ono-Dit-Biot. What it is really about, is offering an incursion into the author’s psyche, at the heart of his imagination and the tools he uses to create his universes. But *Sublime Chaos* also stands as the continuity of a previous publication, *Stormy Skies*, published eleven years earlier in the form of interviews, that is here enriched by the more recent exchanges that have been happening since between the author and the journalist.

The book thus opens with an introduction and goes back to the origins of Enki Bilal’s visions, deconstructs them, and ventures into his childhood. This is what the weekly interviews aim to trace: to go to the source of his obsessions and the images that make up his stories. Childhood in Belgrade, absence of the father, arrival in Paris... these events make up the visual alphabet of the artist. And the interviews go further, questioning his stylistic evolutions, interrogating shapes and colours in his work. Why did the grey turned to green over the years? Here, *Sublime Chaos* answers and reveals the ideas and thoughts behind Bilal’s visions. The answer is to be found in the book.

Interviews are accompanied by drawings by Enki Bilal, illustrating and weaving links between his words and his work, a reference work by one of the most recognised French comic book authors.

#### **Sublime Chaos**

Enki Bilal and Christophe Ono-dit-Biot. 2022. Casterman  
320 pages. French. [www.casterman.com](http://www.casterman.com)

### *Bug*

2041. As the world is dependent on digital technology, it disappears under the impact of a “great global Bug” that makes access to virtual data impossible. And in this chaos, one man becomes the holder of all human memory... and finds himself hunted by governments, groups, and other global organisations seeking his knowledge. With *Bug*, Enki Bilal tackles the digital world and its grip on today’s world through the prism of memory, while revealing his own anxiety about the loss of transmission in favour of a sprawling, uncanny virtual world. Soon, the fundamentally dystopian universe he imagines quickly proves to be very close to our own. Planned as a five-volume series, the first was published in November 2017. A year and a half later, the second came out in 2019, and the third in 2022. Volume 4, still to be released, is expected by the end of 2024.

#### **Bug. Tome 3**

Enki Bilal. 2022. Casterman  
88 pages. French. [www.casterman.com](http://www.casterman.com)



**Bought-in ratio**

- sold
- bought in

comic book gallery and bookstore Papiers Gras in late 1998, early 1999, and then in 2000. In 2012, HdM Gallery in Beijing also organised a solo show. The author has also exhibited in Paris and Brussels, at the 9<sup>e</sup> Art Gallery in 2012 and at the Huberty & Breyne Gallery in 2019. But perhaps the most significant in his career was the 1994 “Bleu Sang” exhibition, his very first painting exhibition, held at the Christian Desbois Gallery in Paris. For the first time, the author became a painter, using canvas as his medium. This foundational move “freed his hand and gesture”. After this, he abandoned the clear line style and began working differently: he eliminated the conventional comic strip layout to draw frame by frame, applying watercolour directly. *The dormant beast*, the first volume of a new arc published in 1998, reflects this transformation. His film projects also allowed him to renew the narrative accompanying his drawings, first in *Cold Equator*, and then after writing his second feature film *Tykho moon* in 1997, starring Jean-Louis Trintignant, Julie Delpy, and Michel Piccoli. This experience aided him in writing his Monster tetralogy.



“Sci-fi is a way of looking ahead, of looking at humanity. This forward-looking perspective is an approach, an artistic viewpoint. — Enki Bilal

This exhibition also marked a turning point in Bilal's career, entering a new market, that of art, with sales in galleries and auction houses. Between 1997 and 2023, 1,096 lots were auctioned. The first sales took place in France. In 1997, three auction houses offered Enki Bilal's works: Tajan, Cornette de Saint-Cyr, and Aguttes. Artcurial then specialised in his works. The first Enki Bilal auction at this house took place in 2007, initiated by gallery owner Christian Desbois and Éric Leroy, comic book expert and director of the department. One of the paintings from the “Bleu Sang” exhibition, *Bleu Sang (Them)*, sold in 1994 for the equivalent of €12,000 (FRF78,000), was offered for sale again. Estimated at €35,000, it was auctioned for €177,000. Artcurial offered more lots in the following years, with 359 works in 2009. It was also the Parisian house that introduced the artist-author to the Hong Kong auction rooms.

The 2007 Artcurial sale was a pivotal moment in the artist's career in the art market. Sales in the previous ten years had rarely exceeded a total of €10,000, except in 2004, with a result of €14,000. At the famous sale on 23 March 2007 in Paris, Artcurial collected €1,338,900. In the following years, the results fluctuated: €184,870 in 2010, 1.6 million € in 2012, and 2.9 million € in 2015. Since then, while Bilal's works have been less prominent at auctions, they still amounted to a total of 1 million € in 2021 and over €700,000 the following year. Some very high results for a comic book artist.

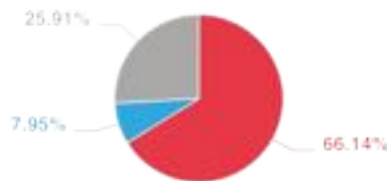
In total, the ensemble of sold lots represents a total of €12,293,934: 73.8% of the lots offered for sale were sold. The unsold portion accounts for 26.2%. The results are more mixed internationally: in Italy and the United Kingdom, the two lots offered did not

find buyers. Elsewhere, the results are more positive: Belgium only has 12.1% unsold, Hong Kong 5%, and Japan or Switzerland, 0%. In France, 71.5% of the lots have been sold in recent years.

France is the leading country in offering Enki Bilal's works with 940 lots (87.93%). This is followed by Belgium with 66 lots, then Monaco with 26 lots... In total, European countries, excluding France, represent 10.1% of the lots presented. In Hong Kong, the presence of the illustrator is rare but still amounts to around twenty sales, even though three-quarters were made in the same year, 2015. Just like the exhibitions dedicated to the author, the auction

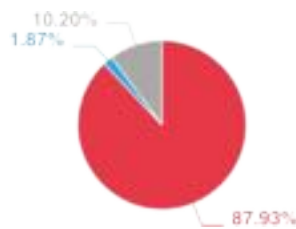
sales of his works really started abroad only in the 2010s. While Belgium is an exception, it still only offered a single work for sale in 1999. It wasn't until 2011 that new auction houses began gathering lots. From 2013, sales offering Bilal's works were organised every year until 2023. The year 2022 offered the most lots (17), compared to two and six in previous years. Monaco managed to gather 25 lots in 2022 (96.2% of the total in Monaco).

It's also worth noting that with a small share of the number of lots offered for



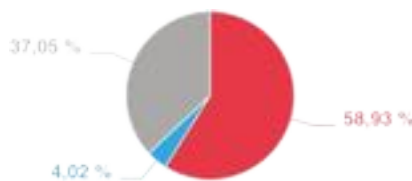
Number of lots by medium

● drawing ● editions ● other



Number of lots by country of sale

● France ● Belgium ● other



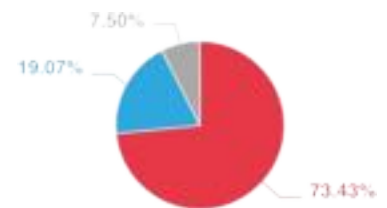
Number of lots by auctioneer

● Artcurial ● Sadde ● other



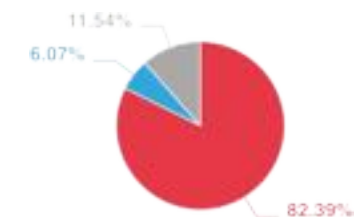
Turnover by medium

● drawing ● editions ● other



Turnover by country of sale

● France ● Belgium ● other



Turnover by auctioneer

● Artcurial ● Sadde ● other



Une fois les regards couchés et le tremblement de Terre de 7,2 passé, il faut encore se préparer au typhon Léon et aux sautoirilles carrossées géantes du Mozambique, à moins qu'avec la Coréenne la Savane ne brûle d'abord et que la situation se dégage avec la boue du barrage qui peut céder, sauf si la glace le prend et qu'alors on meurt de froid.

Christian Desbois (*Bleu sang*, 1994), Enki Bilal  
Sold for €49,500 on 21 May 2016 by Christie's Paris





*Animal's*, Enki Bilal  
Sold for €8,528 on 18 November 2023 by Artcurial Paris  
Courtesy Artcurial







“For me, comics are art. They rely largely on graphics, and narration certainly, but there have been painters who mixed texts and paintings. — *Enki Bilal*

sale, Hong Kong is nevertheless the marketplace that totals the highest sums: the five most expensive works of Enki Bilal were offered in 2015 and sold well above the high estimate (€90,000-170,000), fetching prices ranging from €197,000 to €350,000. France may be the leading country in selling Bilal's works, but it doesn't hold the top spot in terms of price. Panel 8 from Volume 2 of the *Nikopol* trilogy, *La femme piège*, went for €355,000. In France, the sales made on the territory still represent almost half of the total sales of Enki Bilal's works.

Primarily, it's the artist-author's drawings that appear at auctions: 707 drawings have been offered since 1997, making up 66.1% of the lots. His paintings, numbering 85, constitute 8% of the lots, and prints 25.2% (270). Besides these, Enki Bilal has sold other works, albeit in extremely limited numbers: two photographs, five sculptures, and even a tapestry. Naturally, it's the drawings and paintings that fetch the highest prices. His more recent works from the 2000s have sold well, attesting to the productivity of this illustrator who has distinguished himself through his drawing and storytelling skills... and has successfully evolved his style, in both comics and painting.







SAVON  
!

*Savon!* (1982), Enki Bilal  
Sold for €112,000 on 27 June 2021 by Millon in Brussels  
Courtesy Millon Belgique



# FEUCOLOG

Photo Miguel Sousa







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## DIVING INTO GREEN CLEANING AT TATE

Associated with the GREENART project, the Tate overlooks discussions and collaborations around the assessment of the green cleaning products that are being elaborated. The team's director Bronwyn Ormsby sheds a brighter light on its role and objectives.

Acting as Principal Conservation Scientist at Tate — a position she has been holding since her nomination in 2016 —, Bronwyn Ormsby graduated with a PhD in Heritage Science from Northumbria University in Newcastle in 2002. This is where her collaboration with the institution initially started. Since, she has worked in various roles in Conservation Science and today leads and manages the Conservation Science and Preventive Conservation teams. She also supervises PhD students, oversees and devises scientific research, while providing scientific support for the Conservation Department. Hence her important position within the GREENART project, where she is responsible for Tate's project design, content, and delivery with a team comprising Conservation Science, Paintings Conservation, as well as support from the Collection Care, Curatorial and Research and Interpretation. She further reveals what her role and Tate's are about.

### **What is your role in the GREENART project?**

Tate is an Associate Partner in the GREENART project. Our involvement is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee grant. We were partner in another EU-funded project, NANORESTART, from 2015 to 2018 so I was familiar with the inter-university research consortium (CSGI). As the Principal Investigator for Tate's contribution to GREENART, I designed Tate's project accordingly. Research is primary to Tate's mission and every proposal must be accepted by a range of internal and external stakeholders. The project must be aligned with institutional values, relevant to the Collection and needs to address urgent research and/or

practice-based questions. We have a substantial body of research into modern painted works of art and cleaning science to draw from, as well as ongoing programmes around sustainability, so we were well-placed to join GREENART. Tate is the leader for Work Package 2 (WP2) Task 2.3: we co-ordinate discussion and facilitate collaboration around the assessment of the green cleaning materials produced as part of WP2. We meet monthly on Zoom to discuss a range of topics from ethics to the new GREENART materials and beyond. This role is particularly important as well as being enjoyable, where we meet with colleagues from across the globe on a regular basis to learn from each other's experience and research.

### **In simple words, can you tell us what is involved in cleaning a work of art?**

#### **What is removed?**

Cleaning a work of art is never simple, it depends on the context of the situation, on what you are trying to remove, or how materially complex the work of art is. And it also depends on the time and resources available. One key task is to determine whether



something is unwanted and why. Sometimes it is a dirt layer, a coating — or both —, or a retouching. It can also be a graffiti, a range of accidental marks... On occasion it can be the artwork materials themselves degrading and forming obscuring layers on the surface. Once the primary query has been explored, the next step is to assess any risks that might be associated with the cleaning processes. This involves exploring the artwork materials as well as the possible cleaning systems that you may want to use in depth, which leads to consideration of the benefits and risks of each option. When this has been completed (with a whole lot of accompanying due diligence and documentation) the cleaning process, usually slow and meticulous, may then proceed with caution and a regular assessment of progress. Sometimes, however, it may still be advantageous to choose not to clean as we may not know enough about the materials involved, or the artwork may be simply too fragile. Equally, choosing not to clean may bring its own risks, such as the embedding of soiling layers, which generally become harder to remove with time.

**What exactly is an assessment of a green cleaning fluid?**

GREENART aims to produce cleaning materials that are “green” — i.e., they should have low environmental and human impact — in the form of various gels and liquids called microemulsions or nano-structured fluids. Before they can be used on works of art, they need assessment across a range of parameters. All the GREENART WP2 materials involve direct application to works of art; hence they need to be risk-benefit assessed with diligence regarding their impact on the materials to be removed as well as the works of art.

Assessments involve characterising the cleaning system properties such as porosity, stiffness, and liquid retention/release capacity which is conducted by the work package leaders (CSGI) at the pre-production stage. Once the materials are with the heritage partners, other types of assessment also become relevant, including how the materials handle, their cleaning efficacy, ease of use, capacity for re-use, adaptability to various conservation challenges, potential for cleaning system residues remaining on artwork surfaces, safety and disposal protocols, amongst others. This is conducted through collaboration between the material manufacturers, conservation/heritage scientists and conservators and is often focused on case study works of art that have been noted as requiring conservation treatment. Assessment tools range from the unaided human eye to multi-light-wavelength imaging and photography, increasingly sophisticated microscopy, as well as a range of scientific assessments from the macro to the sub-micron level and beyond. The tools used will vary with the cleaning material type, the artwork materials, shape and size, the availability of instrumentation and expertise, as well as people and financial resources. One of the benefits of working within a large collaboration such as GREENART is that we can approach others within the consortium to discuss, offer and share ideas and skills, as well as the results of these assessments across a range of works of art, from ancient stone to contemporary art.

**Is it a methodology that can be adapted to all cultural property materials?**

There are established and modified conservation research and examination methodologies

that have been used for these types of assessments for decades which can be used for most materials-based works of art (and can also be improved along the way). Most start off with exploring the cleaning materials and artworks separately, followed by an assessment of the effects of the cleaning systems applied to what we call mock-ups, or if super lucky, using some archival material sourced through the artist/ other colleagues/institutions which is close if not identical to the artwork in composition and age, such as a preparatory piece. These types of materials are hugely valuable and hard to come by. This process, particularly when research time is funded well, leads to the narrowing down of options and the lowering of inherent risk as the need to test options on the work of art is reduced. The use of mock-ups also facilitates the development of knowledge about how these novel materials handle, behave and can be optimised to the specific cleaning challenge.

**Will you also assess the eco-sustainability of the novel material?**

Tate will not be assessing the eco-sustainability of any of these materials directly, though we will be exploring the constituents carefully and looking to the life cycle assessments conducted in WP8 with keen interest!

**Are you also planning to make a comparative analysis with more traditional methods?**

Yes, we always include comparative studies within our cleaning research as it offers better quality and less biased information to the wider field and adds necessary rigour to our risk assessment process. We never guarantee to use novel systems on Tate works — we always



D<sup>r</sup> Morana Novak and D<sup>r</sup> Angelica Bartoletti carrying out X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analysis of Bridget Riley's *Fall* to help identify the pigments present

Photo D<sup>r</sup> Bronwyn Ormsby. Courtesy Tate. © The Bridget Riley 2020



devise, rigorously assess, and choose the best option for the work of art in question whether it is a novel system, or not. We will at the very least be using several similar materials, including established systems such as agar that have been used in conservation for at least two decades as well as the NANORESTART materials which we now have considerable experience in using. Our exact mix of materials has yet to be finalised it is one of the several questions we are currently thinking through.

#### **How does a new product make its way from the research laboratory to the restoration studios?**

It depends. With GREENART, this process is embedded within the project and is relatively formalised through technology readiness level outputs (TRL). Outside of multi-year funded research, this is done on a smaller scale through focused collaborations between industry/academia and heritage professionals or by heritage professionals themselves with a specific problem to resolve. In GREENART, as the heritage partners move into the assessment phase using rigorous methodologies and carrying out case study treatments, particular products will begin to rise above others as being most suited. This in turn will mean that the preferred options will receive further finessing and development. The products that meet all the required criteria and show promise across a range of conservation cleaning challenges are most likely to be included in a commercial production phase towards the end of the project.

#### **Which other institutions are involved in this validation process?**

In WP2 the team at Tate works with conservation and scientific colleagues from a range of institutions and private practice in addition to our CSGI colleagues to contribute to the assessment and modification of the WP2 novel cleaning materials. This includes the University of West Attica (UNIWA, Greece); Ministero Della Cultura Italian Cultural Ministry (MIC, Italy); The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation (Peggy Guggenheim Collection Venice, Italy and New York, USA), Antonio Mirabile (France and Brazil), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA, USA), the Hungarian National Museum, (HNM, Hungary); the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; Tokyo University of Science, Japan; the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH, USA).

#### **Which works from Tate's collection do you intend to clean?**

Tate is delighted that our case study research and conservation treatments will focus on two important paintings by renowned British artist Bridget Riley (b. 1931) dating from the early to mid-1960s, called *Hesitate* (1964) and *Fall* (1963). These paintings have delicate, unvarnished polyvinyl acetate (PVAc) based painted surfaces, with accumulated soiling and marks which can detract from the impact of these ever-popular works of art. This paint type has had relatively little attention and is widely represented in Tate's collection. These paintings will benefit enormously from the careful, rigorous, and diligent practice-based research afforded through the GREENART project to underpin decision-making and treatment design to deliver optimal, appropriate outcomes. For these artworks, the primary risks include working with inherently water-sensitive paints and burnishing the surface from even the lightest applied pressure, which could result in unacceptable, permanent change. We are currently carrying out further in-depth examination and analysis of the paintings, exploring Bridget Riley's working processes, making mock-ups based on the painting materials and structures while researching into PVAc paints. Soon, we will start trialling comparative treatment options on these mock-ups. As we acquire knowledge over the course of the research, if any of the GREENART materials prove able to afford low-risk, appropriate and sustainable cleaning outcomes the conservation treatment of *Hesitate* will proceed first, followed by *Fall*. This will be supported by a full evaluation of the treatments themselves as well as research into GREENART cleaning system residues and the characterisation of any impact of their use on PVAc paints which we also hope will be of use to heritage professionals globally.



D. Marina Novak carrying out colour measurement, on soiling materials used for mock-ups of Bridget Riley's Hesitate

© Tate Project, © Country Gate Gallery







D<sup>r</sup> Bronwyn Ormsby, Katey Twitchett-Young, Anna Cooper and D<sup>r</sup> Morana Novak in front of Bridget Riley's *Hesitate*

Photo Annette King. © Tate





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