

## **Comics in the Expanded Field**

CED0310-1

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### **Course Description**

The basic mechanics of comics is simple: images next to each other create a sequence that tells a story. Within that basic premise, there is a very complex set of relationships. The comic or graphic novel as a medium is a hybrid. It uses techniques and strategies from film, literature, television, old master drawing, printmaking and cartooning. Like film it is expansive and can accommodate a wide range of subject matter and approach—from the highly commercial to the most avant-garde. This six day workshop will begin with some basic ideas of character development and move into strategies for experimental narrative. As an artist you get to “cast” your own story. Comics have a distinct way of delivering a story that exists between the visuals of film and the exposition of language. This intensive will focus on the strengths and boundaries of comics. All participants will publish in a group anthology at the end of the intensive. The nineteenth century notion of the novel has left us with an overriding sense of “good” story moving sequentially from point a to b to c. Most mainstream films and books follow this formula. As experiments in storytelling from John Barth to Quentin Tarantino to contemporary video installation demonstrate, narrative structure need not be linear. In addition to narrative structure, this workshop will look at the physical manifestation of an image. How is the story transmitted differently when it is in a handmade mini comic as opposed to a very slick book? To take that even further, how is the story perceived when painted on a wall in huge scale or seen on a computer screen? How as an artist and writer could you expand the physical dimension of your story? How can the structure of a story expand through different media?

### **Course Objectives**

To explore an expanded idea of visual storytelling.

### **Course Requirements**

Some drawing and writing skills but mostly a desire to tell an interesting story.

### **Supplies and materials**

Drawing media of your choice.

Black ink, bamboo brushes or other small brushes.

Drafting tape, glue, X-Acto knife, scissors etc.

14 by 17 inch pad of Bristol paper.

### **Required texts**

*What it is (The Formless Thing Which Gives Things Form)* by Lynda Barry

*Drawing Words and Writing Pictures* by Jessica Abel and Matt Madden

## **Intensive Outline: Schedule of Topics, Activities and Readings**

**Each class day will be 9-4 with a one-hour lunch break.**

**Morning session from 9-12**

**Afternoon Session from 1-4**

**Lunchtime chats are informal with various guests or faculty**

**4-6 cocktail/happy hour/group discussion with guest**

### **DAY 1**

#### **Storytelling basics**

1. Use of time in storytelling (sequence, temporal order etc.)
2. What are the medium's strengths vs. other media (i.e. film, television, novels etc.)
3. Do genre and conventions give you freedom?

*AM- The basics-A cartoonist's toolbox*

*Lunchtime chat TBA*

*PM- Story structure*

### **DAY 2**

#### **Visual voice and characters**

1. Developing characters
2. Visual style
3. Symbology-color, texture, image (how is character expressed visually?)

*AM- Character creation*

*Lunchtime chat TBA*

*PM- Voice and image*

### **DAY 3**

#### **Media choice**

1. Scale and mark making
2. Minis, floppies, wall drawings and iPhone apps
3. Multiple POV, multiple reading possibilities

*AM- The look of the text/ visual pacing/ the comic as an object*

*Lunchtime chat TBA*

*PM- Extended plots, the physicality of the drawing*

### **DAY 4**

#### **Begin own story. Thumbnails, synopsis etc.**

1. How do you pace a story?
2. One to two page stories
3. Poetry as a guide to economy

*AM- Present thumbnails*

*Lunchtime chat TBA*

*PM- Work time with individual critique/support*

### **DAY 5**

#### **Studio work on stories**

*AM- Round robin in-process workshop*

*Lunchtime chat-Scanning, printing workshop*  
*PM- Work time with individual critique/support*

## **DAY 6**

**Scan, print, upload stories**

*AM- Finish comics*

*PM- Critique comics*

## **Exhibit July 2 at Bridge City Comics**

### **List of Guests**

**TBA**

### **Bibliography (Some history and theory)**

#### **Gravett, Paul**

2004 *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics*. Collins Design

#### **Gravett, Paul**

2005 *Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know*. Collins Design

#### **Harvey, Robert C.**

2004 *The Art of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History*. University of Mississippi

#### **Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, editors**

2004 *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium*. University of Mississippi

#### **Jones, Gerard**

2004 *Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book*. Basic Books

#### **Mamet, David**

1992 *On Directing Film*. Penguin

#### **McCay, Windsor**

1973 *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend*. Dover

#### **McCloud, Scott**

1993 *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Kitchen Sink Press

#### **Oliver, Mary**

1994 *A Poetry Handbook*. Harcourt Brace

#### **Robbins, Trina**

1999 *From girls to grrlz: a history of comics from teens to zines*. Chronicle

#### **Schumer, Arlen**

2003 *The Silver Age of Comic Book Art*. Collector's Press

#### **Spiegelman, Art**

2001 *Jack Cole and Plastic Man: Forms Stretched to their Limits*. Chronicle

#### **Wolk, Douglas**

2007 *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. Da Capo

**Wright, Bradford**

2001 *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. Johns Hopkins