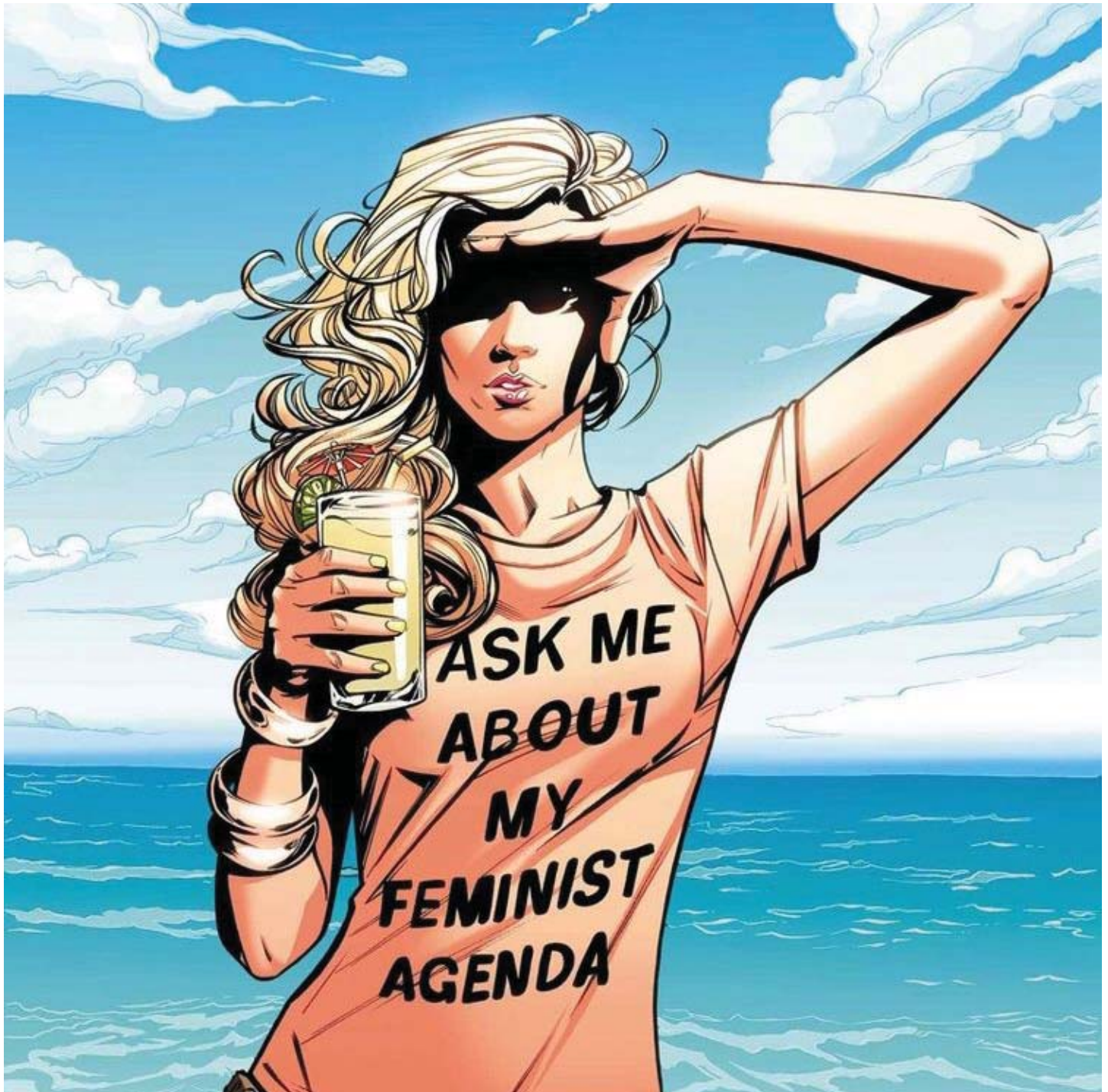


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**FROM POWER GIRL TO
GIRL POWER:
WOMEN IN COMICS**
CREATORS, READERS, CHARACTERS

MARCH 2017— NO. THREE

PLUS...25 YEARS OF IMAGE COMICS!



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of

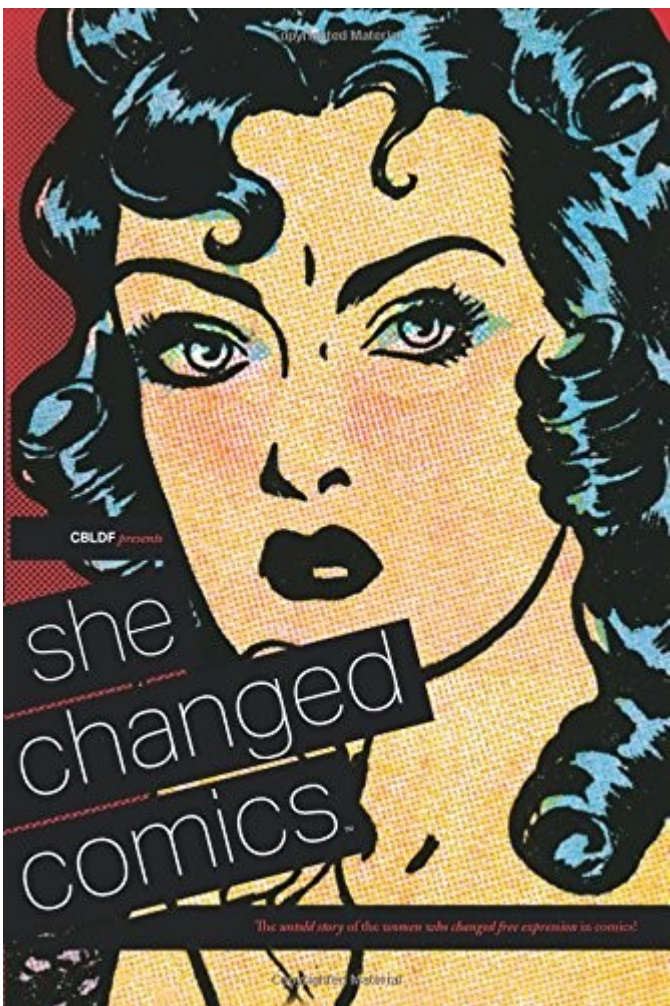
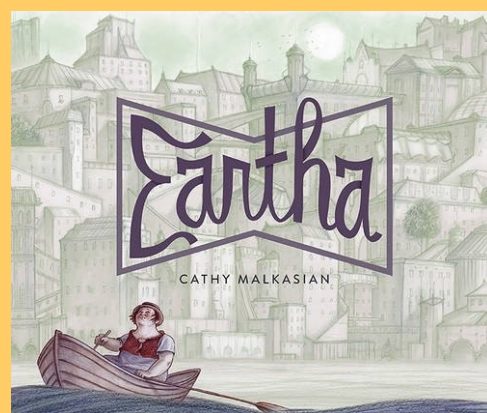
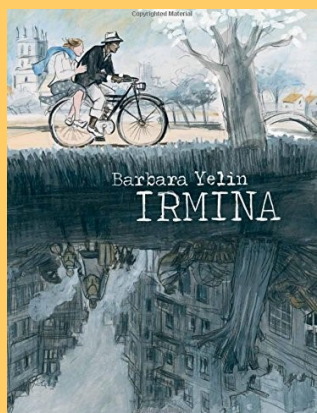
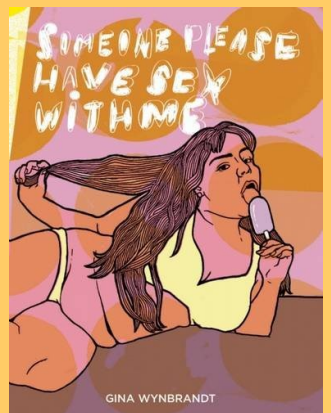


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Reading Is Just the Beginning!



of the first collection of *Mockingbird* surged, as those who support the new age of woman writers, artists and editors voted with their dollars. Marvel has been at the forefront of diversity in comics, with many of their best-sellers taking older concepts and reviving them with female leads. From distaff twists on legacy series such as *Thor: Goddess of Thunder* and *Spider-Gwen* to revived takes on established characters such as *Scarlet Witch*, *Spider-Woman* and the new *Captain Marvel*, Carol Danvers, Marvel Comics has been living up to their old tongue-in-cheek nickname, the House of Ideas. Most of the publicity has been garnered by Danvers' replacement as *Ms. Marvel*, Kamala Khan, a Pakistani American teen from Jersey City. But the next big hit should be *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur*, which updates one of Jack Kirby's goofiest ideas with a heroine who is black, nine years old, smarter than Tony Stark and has a big red T. Rex for a pal. Meanwhile, the proudly ridiculous *Patsy Walker* AKA *Hellcat* and *The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl* showcase what really sets these series apart from their dudely counterparts — they're FUN! Go to lexpublib.org to find them and place a reserve now!

Best-selling author Chelsea Cain gave it her best shot. Her first work in comics, Marvel's secret agent book *Mockingbird*, was critically acclaimed, but sales were such that the series was cancelled with the eighth issue. Cain and the book's artist, Joelle Jones, decided to end things with a joke: Bobbi Morse, AKA *Mockingbird*, on a beach, in a t-shirt reading "ASK ME ABOUT MY FEMINIST AGENDA." Some people did not laugh—specifically, the legions of fanboys whose dudgeon over the growing number of female characters and creators in the comic book industry was the butt of the joke. Their reaction was so fierce, so ugly, that Cain was forced to delete her Twitter account. She was not, sad to say, the first woman to endure such abuse. But the future of comics will most likely be defined by the reaction against the reaction: sales



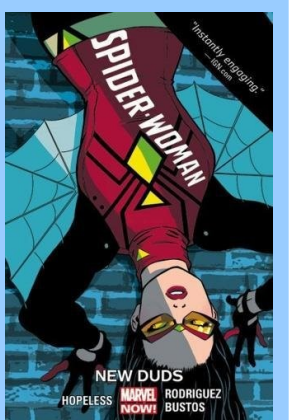
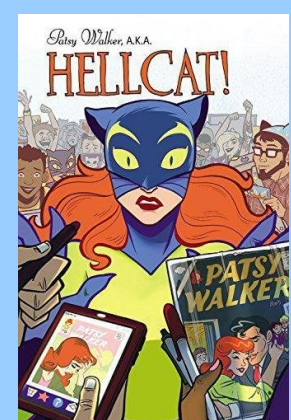
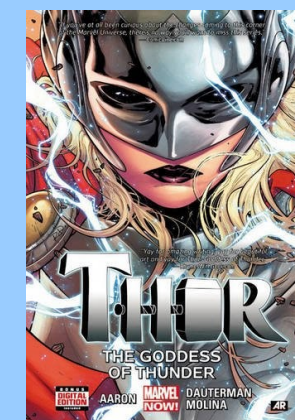
She Changed Comics: *The Untold Story of the Women Who Changed Free Expression in Comics* — Betsy Gomez, Editor (Image Comics)

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The history of women in comics is long, but too often overlooked and diminished. Now Image and the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund team up to present this volume which acts as both chronicle and guidebook. It's a deep and diverse selection, from the creators of the Kewpies, Rose O'Neill, and the Campbell Kids, Grace Drayton, to underground trailblazers such as Diane Noomin and Trina Robbins (whose own history of women in American comics, *Pretty In Ink*, is available from Central). New attention is given to older cartoonists from the Golden Age of newspaper comics, including Dale (Brenda Starr) Messick, African American rebel Jackie Ormes and Tarpe Mills, whose self-inspired crimefighter Miss Fury, featured on the book's cover (left), was the first female superhero, beating Wonder Woman to the newsstands by a few months. Alt-comix troublemakers such as Jessica Abel, Sue Coe and Julie Doucet join modern cartoonists like Fiona (Saga) Staples and Noelle (*Lumberjanes*) Stevenson. Plus lots of info on international artists, as well as the women behind the scenes such as DC's Jenette Kahn, Diana Schutz of Dark Horse and Vertigo's Karen Berger. *She Changed Comics...for good!*

While women working in the comics mainstream often deal with a hostile audience, that's not the case with female creators working in the so-called "alternative" market. Probably because said "alternative" is closer to the actual market for books, which has long been driven by women writers and readers. The variety of genres and styles of the regular market is also present in "alternative" comics. Real life comedy can be found in Gina Wynbrandt's *Someone Please Have Sex With Me* (2Dcloud), a drily licentious look at the trials of a plus size gal looking for love. Travel cartoonist Lucy Knisley details her DIY wedding in her latest, *Something New* (First Second). And how! The book's 302 pages long, but Knisley's sleek brushwork and warm colors make it a joy to read. At the other end of the thematic and aesthetic spectrum is *Monstress* (Image). Gorgeously rendered in a lush, baroque style by Sana Takeda and written by Marjorie Liu, *Monstress* is a steampunk fantasy with undertones of horror. Fear of a less fantastic sort infuses the watercolor panels of *Irmina* (SelfMade Hero), based on actual papers found by author

Barbara Yelin after the death of her grandmother. *Irmina* follows a young German girl in the 1930s, first in England where she takes up with an African American émigré, then to Nazi Germany, where Irmina slowly but surely bends to the harsh winds of history. Those winds blow ill indeed in the world of the late Middle Ages. In contrast, Vertigo's *Clean Room*, written by Gail (Birds of Prey) Simone, is all too modern, yet just as dirty, as science, sex and the supernatural conspire to unravel reality. Surreal is the word for Cathy (Percy Gloom) Malkasian's upcoming *Eartha* (Fantagraphics), one woman's boat ride to Dreamland. Reserve one now! Below: detail from *Monstress*.



MEANWHILE....

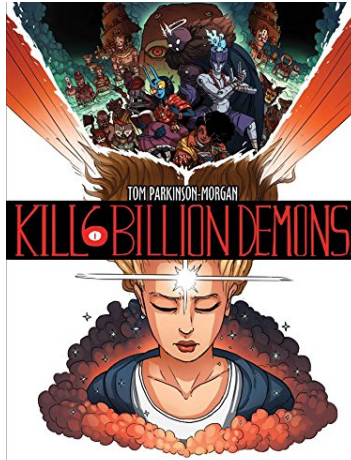
Image Comics turns 25 this year. The story began in 1992, when a gang of superstar artists led by Todd McFarlane, Eric Larsen and Rob Liefeld became fed up with making millions for Marvel Comics while earning only basic page rates and then-unimpressive royalties. Once Marvel refused their demands for more money and creative control, these artists and others formed Image Comics, an umbrella organization under which

Hahn • Hurley • Huddleston • Weidle • Green

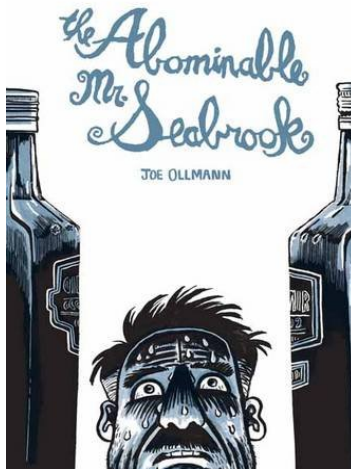
BEAUTY



each artist's personal studio (eg. Jim Lee's Wildstorm and Marc Silvestri's Top Cow) would produce creator-owned and operated content and titles. The results quickly upended the funnybook business, as Image became the third most powerful comics publisher in the nation. Admittedly, most of the early work, jacked-up "cutting edge" superhero books such as *Spawn*, *Savage Dragon* and *Gen13*, wowed fans more than critics and forward-thinking readers, who remained unimpressed by the flashy artwork and thin plots bouyed by hype and gimmicks. But as the company and its core concept of creator control matured, the output began to diversify, both



aesthetically and politically. Founded as a boy's club of "rock star" comics dudes, Image is now one of the leaders in the new market of comics made by women and read by women. The surprise hits *Saga* and *Sex Criminals* have made such an impact in large part because of their female readership, while the breakthrough book of 2015 was *Bitch Planet*, written by Kelly Sue DeConnick, a two-fisted polemic on bodies, gender and power disguised as a cross between *Rollerball* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Image continues this trend with the series *The Beauty*, co-written and drawn by Jeremy Hahn, in which physical perfection becomes a transmissible disease, at first delightful, then



horribly dire. Unlike the original assortment of Image projects, though like many recent Image series such as *The Wicked and the Divine* and Warren Ellis' *Trees*, *The Beauty* is similar to a Vertigo title, in that the art is secondary to the story. The first volume of *Kill Six Billion Demons* is more like the Image of old, in which insanely detailed art is the story. Collecting the popular web comic, *Kill...* comes on like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on ketamine, the art by Tom Parkinson-Morgan a hybrid of Frank Quitely's hyper-realism



and the visceral dreamscapes of Jim Woodring. Elsewhere, demons both supernatural and everyday haunt the subject of *The Abominable Mr. Seabrook* (Drawn & Quarterly). A stone drunk and avid fetishist who introduced voodoo to the wider world, the once-celebrated, long-forgotten William Butler Seabrook gets his due courtesy of Joe Ollmann's unflinching biography...which you'll find in the *Biographies*. Meanwhile, from the land of trolls and house elves comes *Hilda*, the girl adventurer for our age. Luke Pearson's blue-haired heroine finally shows her disbelieving mom the secret world of magic in *Hilda and the Stone Forest* from Flying Eye. It rocks! **Composed by Bill Widener**