

741.5

UNDERGROUND HOEDOWN

IN NEW EDITIONS OF COUNTER-
CULTURAL COMICS CLASSICS!

MAY 2019 - NO. 29

PLUS...MONK, MICK & THE MOPTOPS!



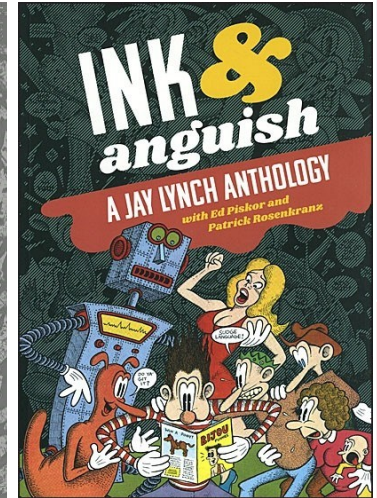
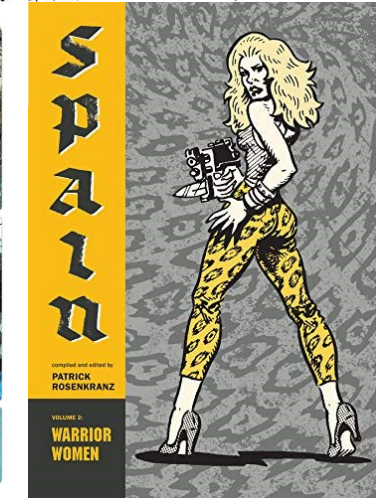
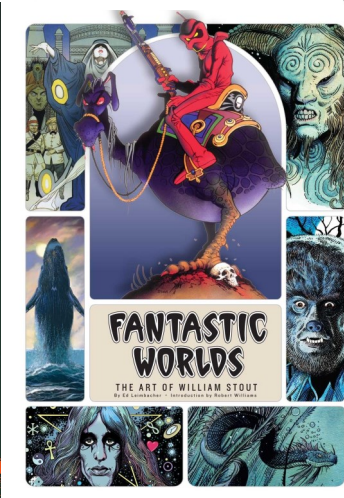
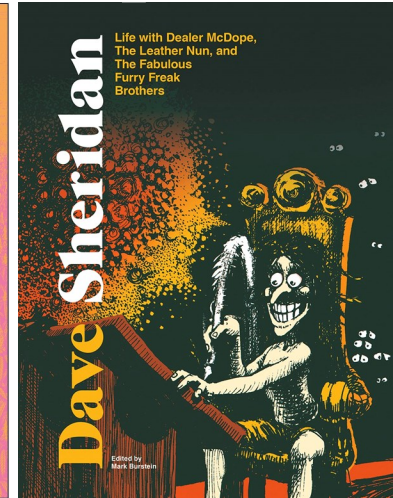
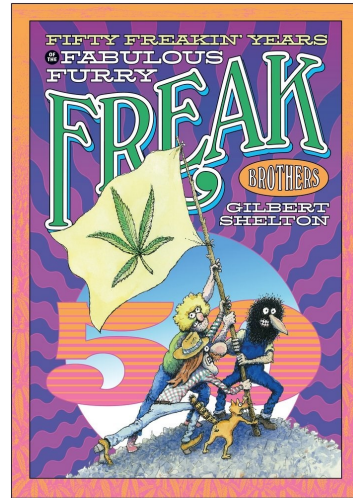
The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



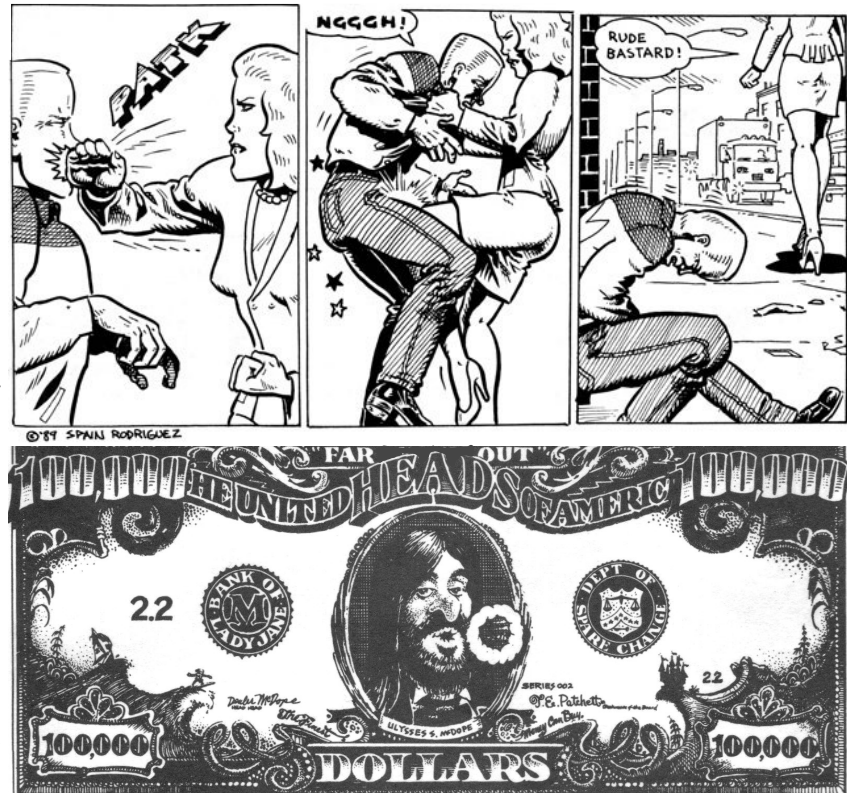
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Reading Is Just the Beginning!

Raw, ribald, rebellious, the underground comics rose and fell with the counter-culture of the 1960s. But their legacy of unfettered self-expression and artistic freedom continues to influence comics to this day.

Some of the artists called them "comix" to distinguish their work from mainstream funnybooks like *Little Lotta* and *Batman*. They really didn't need that—the work itself was so mad, bad and dangerous to read, there was never any risk of customers confusing the likes of *Skull*, *Young Lust* and *Dopin' Dan* with the offerings



available at the drugstore spinner rack. Underground comics got their name due to being published outside the established distribution network for comic books and magazines. They were cheaply made, often on presses run by the creators themselves because "straight" printers balked at the subject matter. They rejected the Comics Code Authority that kept American comics fit for children (and few others). And they reveled in the Swinging Sixties trinity of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. Comix rose with the hippies and died with them, as anti-drug fervor killed the head shops that sold them. But not before they broke new ground for American cartoonists, setting a standard for free expression that continues to shape how, why and by whom comics are made. Half a century later, these works are being collected in new prestige editions. The most popular underground comic of all, the **Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers**, returns with a 50th anniversary release. Featuring recent stories, this slim, full-color volume finds the wit of creator Gilbert Shelton as sharp as ever as he

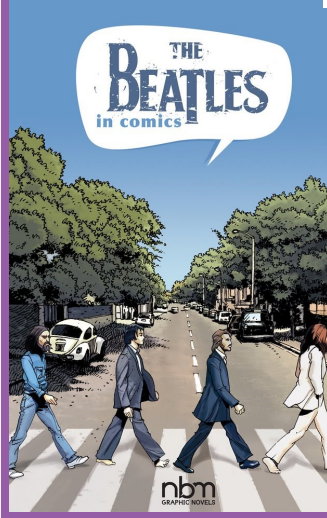


takes on gun culture, religious mania and the 1%. Meanwhile, his longtime assistant on the *Freak Brothers* strip, **Dave Sheridan**, has a book out from Fantagraphics. He was the creator of comix icons **the Leather Nun** and **Dealer McDope**, who was so popular, he had his own board game! **Sheridan** never got the attention received by his peers, perhaps because he went for comedy more than confrontation. Not so **Spain Rodriguez**. A member of the crew behind the seminal underground, *Zap Comix*, **Spain** brought his life experience on the hard streets of Cleveland and New York to the violent adventures of the insurgent **Trashman** and **Big Bitch**. That avatar of female ferocity is the star of *Warrior Women*, the second book devoted to the work of **Spain**; the first, *Street Fighting Men*, is available, too. Underground comics revolted against the bland modernism of contemporary newspaper strips, taking their artistic cues from

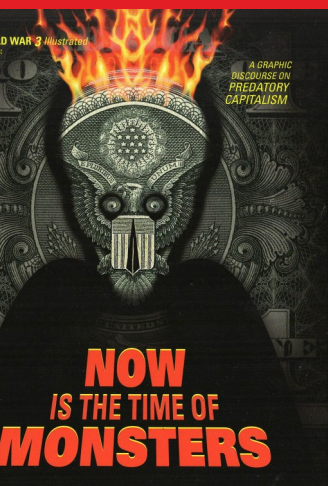
older comics. **Jay Lynch** was a leader of the Chicago comix scene whose main characters **Nard & Pat** looked like low rent versions of **Krazy Kat** and 1920's superstar **Andy Gump**. Lynch's intensely detailed art and bawdy outlook led to later contributions to *Playboy* and the **Garbage Pail Kids** trading cards. One of the few underground artists with a day job in straight comics, **William Stout** assisted **Russ Manning** on his *Tarzan* strip while drawing comix and covers for bootleg records. Influenced by EC artists like **Wallace Wood**, Stout's slick art stood out among the scruffy crowd in comix like *Slow Death* and *Fear and Laughter*, an underground satirizing Kentucky-born bohemian hero **Hunter S. Thompson**. Find *Fantastic Worlds: The Art of William Stout* and these other examples of the best of the '60s underground at [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org/)

Middle row, top to bottom: **William Stout**, **Jay Lynch**, **Spain**, **Dave Sheridan**

Music was the flame that set the world afire with the heat of revolution. In the 1960s, musicians were, for good or ill, the true leaders of the Youth Movement. Now the careers of the *yin* and *yang* of rock and roll, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, get captured in comics thanks to NBM's series of graphic biographies. Both books are anthologies featuring multiple cartoonists work-



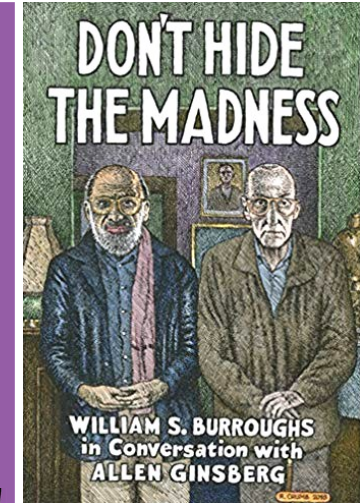
ing in a variety of styles. The Beatles book features the more straightforward pieces; for all their raucous rep, the Stones seem to inspire more introspective work. From First Second comes Youssef Daoudi's gorgeously drawn bio of pianist **Thelonious Monk**, whose physical approach to playing jazz influenced many a rad rocker. Look under 785.42 M749d at **Beaumont & Tates Creek!**



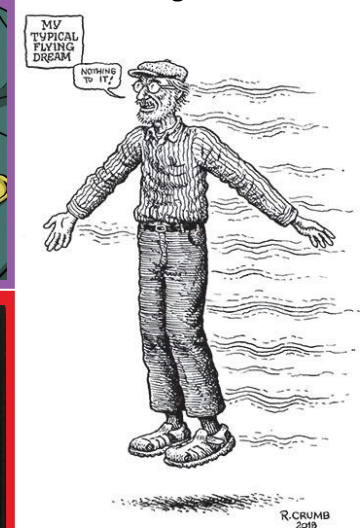
Though the 1960s counter-culture went quiet in the Seventies, a new generation of rebels came of age during the 1980s. Spawned in the punk and queer communities opposed to the social and political conservatism of the Reagan Era, many of the more artistic agitators found a home in alternative comics anthologies such as *RAW* and *World War 3*. From the pages of *WW3*



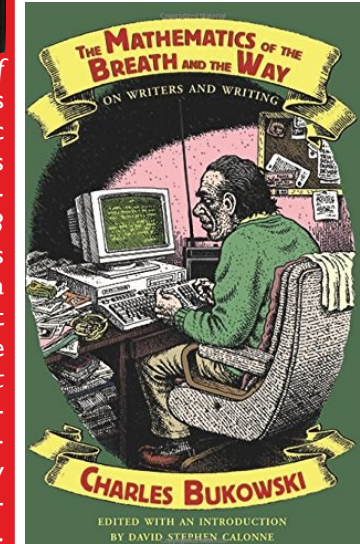
comes *Now Is the Time of Monsters*, a dark, furious collection of both poetic and reportorial comics against the predatory capitalism of our age. *WW3* and *RAW* vet **Sue Coe's** solo work *Zoicide* is a visual jeremiad against that beloved institution, the zoo. And *The Antifa Comic Book* is a well-drawn, well-written chronicle of historical and contemporary fascism and the worldwide resistance to its evils.



"So yeah, I don't draw much any more," he said. "It's all right. A lot of ink has gone under the bridge. It's enough." So spoke the King of Underground Comics **Robert Crumb** in a recent interview. Fortunately for fans of fine cartooning, Crumb was not

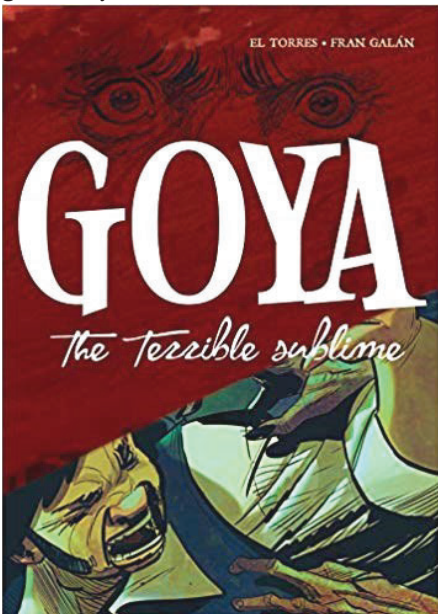


entirely truthful. Recent works include covers for new books by hipster godfathers **Charles Bukowski**, **Allen Ginsburg** & **William S. Burroughs**, not to mention **R. Crumb's Dream Diary** (above), all available at **Central**.





Marijuana was the daily sacrament of the counter-culture of the 1960s. It played a central part in underground comics, whose characters were either users or dealers. The other side of the story, sordid sagas of the “assassin of youth,” had been told years before in the pages of pre-Code crime and romance comics. Bug-eyed reefer addicts and good middle class girls led astray by jazz and “pod” fell afoul of the law and paid the price for trifling with “the weed with roots in hell”. Now those archivists of the obscure at Yoe! Books have compiled another Best of the Worst in *Reefer Madness*. Available from Central and Northside, this gloriously lurid tome reprints not just work from comic books like *Sweethearts* and *Racket Squad in Action*, but also daily comic strip continuities. The rural dramedy *Abbie & Slats* confronts the infiltration of “banzai weed” into Crabtree Corners while Rex Morgan MD deals with *Teen-Age Dope Slaves* (the comic book version of which goes for almost \$2000). There’s also examples of the freebie comics given away in schools and churches to warn



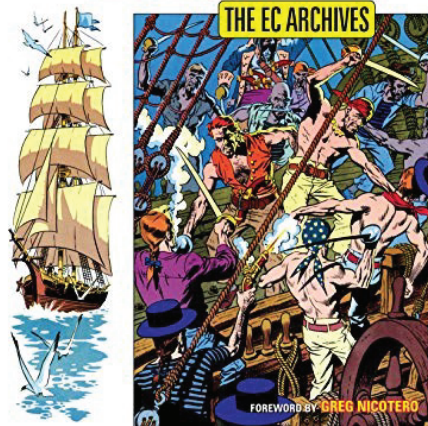
MEANWHILE

kids away from dope. Judging from the comics made by the kids who grew up reading these anti-drug strips, I’d say they didn’t work. But lovers of the campy and creepy should give *Reefer Madness* a read. Meanwhile, madness of a different sort claims the painter called “the last of the Greats, the first Modernist”. Spanish artist **Francisco Goya** (1746-1828) plied his painterly trade like most of his peers, garnering the favor of the rich and powerful. But he had a secret life, pursuing his obsession with the weird and occult. In the graphic biography *Goya: The Terrible Sublime* (Pegasus), writer **El Torres** and artist **Fran Galán** recast the artist’s struggle with his demons as a literal battle with unearthly forces. His only true ally is the Duchess of Alba. Despite her high-born station, she is haunted by the same mob of *brujas* as **Goya**. As deafness and disease ravage him, **Goya** follows his muse to the bitter end, where he discovers the true leader of the witches. Available at all locations, *The Terrible Sublime* will thrill fans of both historical and horror. Speaking of which,

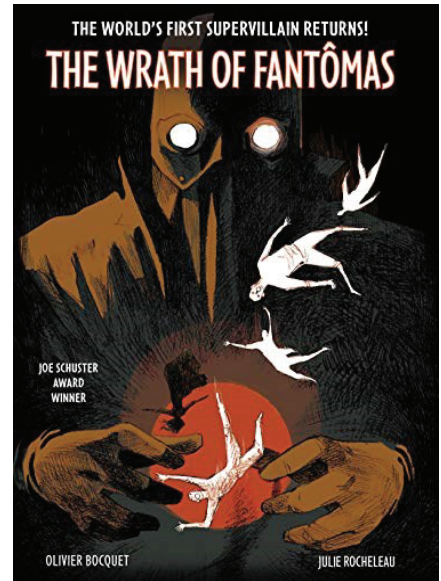
SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PUNDR AND...



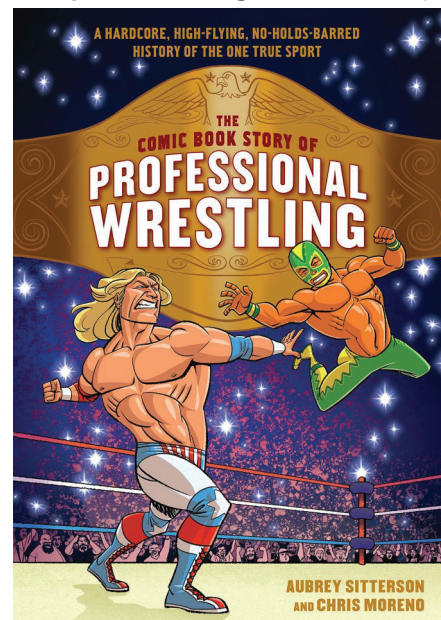
PIRACY



Doctor of Horror is the third and last of Fanta-graphic’s EC Artists Series dedicated to “**Ghastly Graham Ingels**”. Available at Beaumont, Central and Tates Creek, this collection includes not only the grisly horror tales that gave **Ingels** his well-deserved nickname, but some of his pre-Trend love and cowboy comics. Stablemate **Jack Kamen** returns to Eastside shelves with *The Martian Monster*, another collection of his work from *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*. An entertaining hybrid of sci-fi, soap opera and murder mystery, these snap-ending short stories were often centered around a love triangle featuring one of his trademark “Kamen Kuties”. Too bad the man couldn’t draw a decent robot to save his life! Though one of EC’s most prolific artists, **Kamen** didn’t contribute to all the line’s legendary titles. He never drew for the war comics nor their replacements such as *Piracy*. But other EC mainstays did, such as **Jack Davis**, **Al Williamson** and **Wallace Wood**. Each brought their specific styles to these swash-buckling tales of adventure and avarice. The real stand-outs, however, are **Reed Crandall** and **Bernard Krigstein** (see 741.5 no. 16). The former followed in the sea-swayed steps of his influences such as **Howard Pyle** and **N.C. Wyeth**; the latter brought a sharp, savage edge evoking both **Hoggarths**, **William** and **Burne**. A big, beautiful book in full color, *Piracy* is available at Beaumont, Cen-



tral and Eastside. Thievery is but one of the multitude of crimes perpetrated by the nihilistic namesake of *The Wrath of Fantomas* (Titan). A French sensation in the early 20th Century, “the Lord of Evil” set the standard for super-villains (and more than a few heroes) to come. **Olivier Bouquet**’s script is as wickedly inventive as the original novels; the blood-smeared art of **Julie Rocheleau** is a mad mix of mood and mayhem. The figure of hooded menace influenced not just literature, but sport. Specifically, the King of Sports, professional wrestling! Masked men such as **El Santo**, **Dr. X** and the **Super Destroyer** played both the face (hero) and the heel (villain) in the squared circle. The complicated history of this perennially popular and controversial art form is detailed in *The Comic Book Story of Professional Wrestling* (Ten Speed Press). It’s a well-drawn, well-written, well-researched book that exposes not just wrestling’s past, but its future in indie, transnational and women’s wrestling. “Fallen Angel” **Christopher Daniels** digs it, so go to lexpublib.org to reserve it today!



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