

Graphic Novels for Adult Readers: Recommending the Best

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

12 noon to 1 p.m.

Presenter: Francisca Goldsmith
francisca@infopeople.org

Infopeople



helping libraries think differently

Agenda

- ▶ Defining “graphic novel”
- ▶ Applying appeal factor insights
- ▶ Creators, publishers, and prizes
- ▶ Adult collection development
- ▶ Developing entry points for adult readers

Share a Name in Text Chat

- ▶ A graphic novel you've read
- ▶ A creator you admire
- ▶ Or, just a graphic novel someone else has mentioned to you

Defining Characteristics

- ▶ Sequential art spectrum
 - Cartoons
 - Comics and comic strips
 - Comic book series
 - Graphic novels
- ▶ Format/mode
 - Images and text convey a narrative
 - Neither genre nor audience age specific
 - Nor limited to fiction

Oh, Those Genre Possibilities!

- ▶ Sci fi, horror and fantasy
- ▶ Detective and romance
- ▶ Historical and contemporary
- ▶ Realistic
- ▶ Blended genres

Nonfiction Subjects

- ▶ Sciences—popular and complex
- ▶ Cultural history, gender and ethnic studies
- ▶ Politics and political history
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Poetry
- ▶ Biography, autobiography and memoir
- ▶ Instructional
- ▶ Adaptations of canonical literary works

What Adult Readers Bring

- ▶ Deep experience with
 - Narrative in a variety of formats
 - Ability to apply knowledge of events, culture, and symbolism related to expression of content
- ▶ Understanding of personal aesthetics
 - Whether conscious or not
- ▶ Habituated comfort with own personal learning style
 - Whether auditory, visual or kinesthetic

And on the less positive side...

...adult readers are usually more steadfast than youth in dismissing unfamiliar narrative styles or modes.

If you found that last remark
personally resonant, I'm glad you
came today!

Appeal Factors (The Readers' Advisory Kind)

- ▶ Appeal factor theory considers traits such as
 - Pacing
 - Language (rhetoric style)
 - Character traits
 - Mood evocation
 - Plotting strategy

Additional Factors in Graphic Literature

- ▶ Text/image balance
- ▶ Image style
- ▶ Page space use

Pose Open-ended Questions

- ▶ How sensitive are you to color, font size and white space on a page?
- ▶ What do you find most attractive in different styles of visual art?
- ▶ What types of stories or narratives do you prefer exploring in film over reading? In books rather than cinematically?

Fitting Identified Appeal Factors to Graphic Novels

- ▶ Be aware of the reader's level of interest in discovering symbolism
- ▶ Be sensitive to the fit between appeal interests and complexity of collecting input from text, image and layout
- ▶ Be honest when some stated interests seem in keeping with suggesting graphic novel options when the adult reader is inexperienced with the format

Quick Poll #1

Quick Poll #2

Outstanding Creators for Adults

- ▶ Guy Delisle
- ▶ Eric Drooker
- ▶ Emmanuel Guibert
- ▶ Los Bros Hernandez (Jaime and Gilbert)
- ▶ Rutu Modan
- ▶ Jim Ottavani
- ▶ Michel Rabagliati
- ▶ Joe Sacco
- ▶ Adrian Tomine
- ▶ Lewis Trondheim

Publishing Houses to Know for Adult Graphic Novels

- ▶ Dark Horse
- ▶ Drawn & Quarterly
- ▶ Fantagraphics
- ▶ First
- ▶ Image
- ▶ NBM

- ▶ ...and these “traditional” houses, too
 - Hill & Wang
 - Norton

Prizes to Watch and Use for Collection Development

- ▶ Angouleme
- ▶ Eisner
- ▶ Glyph
- ▶ Doug Wright

Graphic Novels and the Collection

- ▶ Balance
 - All-of-a-kind will attract very few readers
 - Diversity of topic, publisher, genre, style shows fair representation
 - The format's own diversity can show up some imbalance in your library's non-graphic novel areas
- ▶ Placement
 - Size requirements
 - Accessibility needs

What does *your* community need for balance to be achieved?

Review Guidance

- ▶ Professional library review sources
 - *Booklist* contains ~10 adult reviews per issue
 - *Library Journal* includes reviews and collection development columns
 - *Kirkus* and *The New York Times* provide occasional coverage
 - *PW* offers early word across a broad spectrum of publishers

Review and Collection Guidance

- ▶ Critical sites and email newsletters
 - [The Comics Journal](http://www.tcj.com/) (www.tcj.com/)
 - [Graphic Novel Reporter](http://www.graphicnovelreporter.com/) (www.graphicnovelreporter.com/)
- ▶ Publishing house extras
 - Interviews and sample pages offer context and exposure to images

And the Essential?

Gain familiarity for yourself with a wide range of graphic novels for adults.

All that said, over to you
for a moment!

Got a favorite graphic novel published for adults?
Please share the title and creator in the text chat now!

Developing Entry Points for Adults

- ▶ Displays
 - Diversify rather than silo
- ▶ Topical lists
 - Include the format among other appropriate suggestions from your collection
- ▶ Book discussion groups
 - Include a graphic novel among non-sequential art selections

Local Talent

- ▶ Artists and editors
- ▶ Reviewers and bloggers
- ▶ Hobbyists and bookstore employees

Got Assumptions?

- ▶ Put them aside
- ▶ Be alert to but don't invite them
- ▶ Play fair

Q&A

- ▶ Questions?
- ▶ Further discussion on the content presented here?

Thank You!

Francisca Goldsmith
francisca@infopeople.org

Infopeople *helping libraries think differently*

Infopeople webinars are supported in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons 3.0 Share & Share-Alike license. Use of this material should credit the author and funding source.