

# Graphic Novels for Adult Readers: Recommending the Best

11/20/2013

Graphic Novels for Adult Readers:  
Recommending the Best

Wednesday, November 20, 2013  
12 noon to 1 p.m.

Presenter: Francisca Goldsmith  
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## Agenda

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

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## 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

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## 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

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## Oh, Those Genre Possibilities!

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

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## 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

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## 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

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## And on the less positive side...

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

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

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## Appeal Factors (The Readers' Advisory Kind)

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

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## Additional Factors in Graphic Literature

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

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## 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?

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## 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

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## Quick Poll #1

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## Quick Poll #2

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## 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

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## Publishing Houses to Know for Adult Graphic Novels

- ▶ Dark Horse
- ▶ Drawn & Quarterly
- ▶ Fantagraphics
- ▶ First
- ▶ Image
- ▶ NBM
  
- ▶ ...and these "traditional" houses, too
  - Hill & Wang
  - Norton

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## Prizes to Watch and Use for Collection Development

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

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## 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?

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## 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

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## 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

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**And the Essential?**  
Gain familiarity for yourself with a wide range of graphic novels for adults.

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**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!

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**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

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## Local Talent

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

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## Got Assumptions?

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

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## Q&A

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

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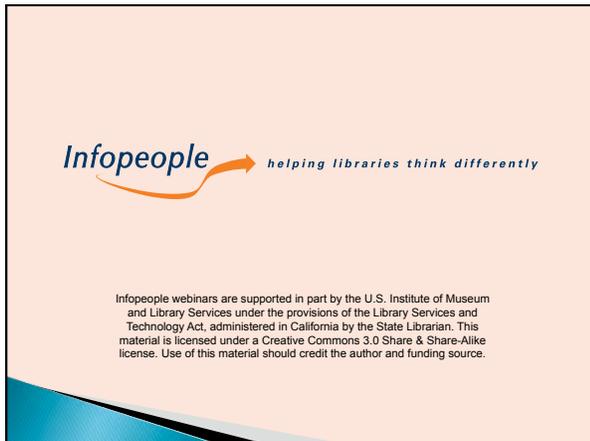
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