

Jewish Contributions To the Graphic Novel

Some of the Major Jewish Contributors to the Comic Book and the Graphic Novel

Michael Chabon (The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay) 1963-
Will Eisner (The Spirit) 1917-2005
Neil Gaiman (The Sandman) 1960-
Vittorio Giardino (A Jew in Communist Prague) 1946-
Larry Gonick (Cartoon Guides to Science) 1946-
Howard Jacobson (Kalooki Nights) 1940-
Sid Jacobson (9/11 Report)
Bob Kane 1915-1998 and Bill Finger (Batman) 1914-1974
Miriam Katin (We Are On Our Own) 1943-
Ben Katchor (The Jew of New York) 1951-
Etgar Keret (Jet Lag, Pizzeria Kamikaze) 1967-
Jack Kirby 1917-1994 and Joe Simon 1913- (Captain America)
Joe Kubert (Fax from Sarajevo) 1926-
Harvey Kurtzman (Mad Magazine) 1924-1993
Stan Lee (Spiderman) 1922-
Miriam Libicki (Jobnik) 1981(?)-
Rutu Modan (Exit Wounds) 1966-
Harvey Pekar (American Splendor) 1939-
Sharon Rudahl (Dangerous Woman: The Graphic Biography of Emma Goldman) 1947-
Joann Safar (The Rabbi's Cat) 1971-
Jerry Siegel 1914 -1996 and Joe Schuster (Superman) 1914-1992
Steve Sheinkin (The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom
and Wit in the Wild West)
Art Spiegelman (Maus) 1948-
James Sturm (The Golem's Mighty Swing) 1965-
J. T. Waldman (Megillat Esther) 1979(?) -

The Novels Available at Billington Library Johnson County Community College And Local Kansas City Public Libraries

Crumb, R. (USA)

PT 2621.A26 Z772

R. Crumb's Kafka. NY Simon & Schuster, 2004

The master of underground comix takes on the author of weird short stories. It is an interesting method for a narration of Kafka's life.

- Eisner, Will (USA) PN6727.E4 A6
The Contract with God Trilogy; Life on Dropsy Avenue. NY: Norton, 2006
 Set during the Great Depression, this literary trilogy, assembled in one volume for the first time, presents a treasure house of now near-mythic stories that fictionally illustrate the bittersweet tenement life of Eisner's youth.*#
- Eisner, Will (USA) DS145.P7 E37 2005
The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. NY: Norton, 2005.
 This is the last work by Eisner, the man credited with inventing the graphic novel in the United States. He tells the true story of how Tsarist police in Russia fabricated a story to make people hate their Jewish neighbors rather than the government and how the lie created more than 110 years ago refuses to die.*#
- Eisner, Will (USA) NC1355 .E45
The Best of the Spirit. NY: DC Comics, 2005
 This is a compilation of Eisner's original graphic novel with an introduction by modern master Neil Gaiman*#
- Gaiman, Neil (USA) PN 6728.B36 G35
The Absolute Sandman, Volume One. New York: DC Comics, 2006
 This oversized volume includes the first twenty issues of *The Sandman*, Gaiman's highly touted graphic novel series. The graphics are high quality.*#
- Giardino, Vittorio (Italy, Czechoslovakia)
A Jew in Communist Prague. NY: NBM Publishing, 1997-
 Jonas Finkel, the son of an imprisoned intellectual, tries to survive in the dangerous and changing political landscape of Prague under the communists. So far the series has three volumes.*
- Gonick, Larry.(USA) QD37 .G625 2005
The Cartoon Guide to Chemistry. NY: Harper, 2005
 The authors have used the liberating medium of a comic book to produce a chemistry companion that can be read in one or two short and amusing sittings and will lead to a clearer understanding of the chemists' world. * *
- Gonick, Larry (USA) QH436 .G66 1991
The Cartoon Guide to Genetics. NY: Harper, 1991
 The same technique is applied to genetics**
- Gonick, Larry (USA) QA276.12 .G67 1993
The Cartoon Guide to Statistics. NY: Harper, 1991
 The author applies the same technique to statistics**#
- Jacobson, Sid (USA) HV6432.7.J33 2006
9/11 Report: a Graphic Adaptation . New York: Hill and Wang, 2006

This is a graphic depiction of the events leading up to and following the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. It is based on the final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States.*#

Katchor, Ben (USA)

The Jew of New York. New York: Pantheon, 2000

The artist takes an obscure historical footnote--an attempt in 1825 to establish a Jewish homeland in upstate New York--and spins it into an intricate tale of a rapidly developing city and its diverse inhabitants, from one-legged actresses, to wandering Jews, to masked anti-Semites. (Amazon)*#

Katchor, Ben (USA)

PN 6727.K28 J86

Julius Knipf: Real Estate Photographer: The Beauty District. Boston: Little Brown, 1996

Katchor takes his photographer on a stroll through a whimsical city, much like New York, but much weirder and more charming. We visit establishments like the Misspent Youth Center and the Institute for Soup-Nuts Research. The author/illustrator is a regular contributor to the *Forward*.*#

Katin, Miriam (USA/Hungary)

DS 135.H93

K38

We Are on Our Own. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2006

In this very moving graphic memoir, the artist relives her experiences as a three-year-old child during the Holocaust in Hungary. In the countryside, she and her mother posed as a peasant and her illegitimate child, in order to escape deportation to a concentration camp.*#

Keret, Etgar & Actus Comics (Israel)

PJ5054.K375 J413 2006

Jetlag: Five Graphic Novellas. New Millford: Toby, 2006

This Israeli author has teamed up with a comic book collective to turn five of his extremely unusual, off-center short stories into five wonderful graphic novels.

Keret, Etgar & Hanuka, Asaf (Israel)

Pizzeria Kamikaze. Gainesville: Alternative Comics, 2006

The afterlife for suicides looks a great deal like Tel Aviv – complete with an Arab quarter - as Mordy, a love-struck suicide negotiates his new non-life with a dead-end job at a pizzeria

Kubert, Joe (Yugoslavia)

DR1313.32.S27 K83 1996

Fax from Sarajevo: A Story of Survival. Leeds: Dark Horse, 1998

Based on a series of faxes from an artist trapped within the war in the former Yugoslavia, this novel describes the everyday life of people under siege.**#

Kubert, Joe (Poland)

Yossel: April 19, 1943: a Story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. New York: Pocket Books, 2005

The title says it all in this gripping true story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising drawn by a master graphic novelist.*

Libicki, Miriam (Israel, USA)

Jobnik. Canada: real gone girl, 2006

A young woman, an American immigrant from a modern orthodox family, chronicles her experiences as a file clerk in the Israeli army.

Modan, Rutu (Israel)

Exit Wounds. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2007

Koby Franco, a Tel Aviv taxi driver is contacted by a young female soldier who suggests that his father was an unidentified victim of a suicide bombing in Hadera. Together they search for clues; and in the process, Koby discovers a father he never knew.*

Pekar, Harvey (USA)

PN6727.P44 A74 2003

American Splendor: The Life and Times of Harvey Pekar. NY: Ballantine, 2003

Much of Pekar's chronicle of the life of an unimportant government clerk is compiled in one volume. The author and the stories in this volume were the subject of an award-winning film starring Paul Giametti.**#

Pekar, Harvey (USA)

Johnson County Library

The Quitter. NY: Vertigo (D.C. Comics), 2005

The author chronicles his personal history of quitting any time a job, sport or activity seemed to be difficult.**#

Sfar, Joann (France, Algeria)

Klezmer: Tales of the Wild East. NY: First Second, 2006

A group of friends, finally out of the Russian army form an itinerant Klezmer band to play at weddings, but they are ambushed by a jealous local band. Only the leader survives to get revenge on his attackers and as the novel unfolds, various misfits come together to create a new band. This is part one of a story to be continued.**#

Sfar, Joann (France, Algeria)

PN6747.S48 C4813 2005

The Rabbi's Cat. NY: Pantheon, 2005

The Rabbi's cat kills and eats the Rabbi's parrot, thus gaining the power of speech. Sfar describes life in Jewish and Muslim Algeria in the 30's when the French held power and both religious groups were persecuted and friendly to each other.**#

Spiegelman, Art (USA)

PN6727.S6 I5 2004

In the Shadow of No Towers. NY: Pantheon, 2004

One of America's foremost graphic artists describes his anguish when the two towers were destroyed in the 9/11 terrorist attack. He relates the attack to early comics.*#

Spiegelman, Art (USA)

D804.3 .S655 1992

Maus I: a Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History. NY: Pantheon, 1986.

Spiegelman relates the story of his parents' life in concentration camps during the Holocaust and shows how it colored their lives in NY after their survival.**#

Spiegelman, Art (USA)

D804.3 .S656 1992

Maus II: a Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began. NY: Pantheon, 1991
The author/illustrator completes the story of his family in the Holocaust.**#

Sturm, James (USA)

The Golem's Mighty Swing. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2001

The barnstorming baseball teams of the 1920s are the grist for this graphic novel that follows a Jewish team, the Stars of David, through the Midwest in a broken-down bus, using the gimmick of exotic ethnicity to draw small-towners to their games. At this level, baseball is as much showbiz as sport, so to boost attendance, the team's sole black player, billed as a "member of the lost tribe," poses as a golem, a creature made of clay and brought to life by a rabbinical incantation. The scheme goes terribly awry, however, when the massive crowd it draws, inflamed by anti-Semitism, storms the field. Like its legendary model, this golem damages its creators. (Amazon)**#

Waldman, J T

Megillat Esther. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006

This is an innovative retelling of the Purim story, totally inclusive of every word of the original text in Hebrew and English, but with the added dimensions of graphic illustration, Midrashic commentary and even a list of sources at the end.*

*This book is available in the Johnson County Library System.

**The Johnson County Library System has other books by this author.

This book is available in the Kansas City, Missouri Library System.

Books about Jewish Artists and Their Contributions

Andelman, Bob

PN6727.E4 Z55 2005

Will Eisner: A Spirited Life. Milwaukee: M Press, 2005

This is another biography of the father of graphic novels in the United States.

Chabon, Michael (USA)

PS3553.H15 A82

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay. New York: Random House, 2000

The story of the golden age of superhero comics is told through the life stories of two young Jewish men who drew them. This novel sets the story of the comics against the threat of Hitler and World War II.

Couch, N.C. Christopher

PN 6710 W54 2004

The Will Eisner Companion: the Pioneering Spirit of the Father of the Graphic Novel
DC Comics, 2004

This is the biography of Eisner and how he developed the graphic novel concept.

Dooley, Dennis

PN6728.S9 S87 1987

Superman at Fifty: the Persistence of a Legend. Cleveland: Octavia Press, 1987

This is a collection of essays honoring the Man of Steel's fiftieth birthday. There is also a discussion of Jerome Siegel and Jerry Schuster, two Jewish kids from Cleveland who were the inventor/creators of the character and who sold their rights to the story to DC Comics.

Jacobson, Howard

Kalooki Nights. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007

The protagonist of this black comedic British novel is a graphic novelist obsessed with Jewish history and is always working on a book entitled, "Five Thousand Years of Bitterness," the graphic history of Jewish oppression.

Lee, Stan

PN6727.L39 Z467

Excelsior!: the amazing life of Stan Lee. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002

This is the autobiography of the man who personified Marvel Comics and created many superheroes, among them Spiderman and the X Men.

Raphael, Jordon

PN6727.L39 Z88

Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2003.

This is a more factual less laudatory look at Stan Lee's contributions to the American comic book.

Reidelbach, Maria

PN6728.M33 R45

Completely Mad: a History of the Comic Book and Magazine. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991

This book relates the history of *Mad Magazine* and is profusely illustrated. *Mad's* creator and guiding spirit was Harvey Kurtzman.

Weinstein, Simcha

Up, Up, and Oy Vey!: How Jewish History, Culture and Values Shaped the Comic Book Superhero. Baltimore: Leviathan Press, 2006

Rabbi Weinstein, a long-time lover of popular culture, explores the history of comic book superheroes and looks at them through the lens of Judaism. This is a fascinating book.

Andrea Kempf/ September 2007

akempf@jccc.edu

