



Masters of American Comics

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Comic strips and comic books were among the most popular and influential forms of mass media in 20th-century America. This fascinating book focuses on fifteen pioneering cartoonists—ranging from Winsor McCay to Chris Ware—who brought this genre to the highest level of artistic expression and who had the greatest impact on the development of the form.

Organized chronologically, *Masters of American Comics* explores the rise of newspaper comic strips and comic books and considers their artistic development throughout the century. Presenting a wide selection of original drawings as well as progressive proofs, vintage printed Sunday pages, and comic books themselves, the authors also look at how the art of comics was transformed by artistic innovation as well as by changes in popular taste, economics, and printing conventions.

First appearing in newspaper Sunday supplements, the comic strip became immediately successful and created the largest audience of any medium of its time. The comic book first began as a way to print existing newspaper comics, then subsequently established the mass popularity of superheroes in the 1940s and 1950s before it matured as a vehicle for independent personal expression in the underground comic books and graphic novels of the 1960s.

Included in the book are insightful and entertaining essays on individual artists written by major figures in the fields of comics, narrative illustration, literature, popular culture, and art history. *Masters of American Comics* convincingly positions the genre of comics into the history of art and is destined to become a classic text for years to come.

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