

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Om leksikonet: https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf

Comix

(_sjanger, _tegneserie) Undergrunnstegneserie kjennetegnet av seksualisering, politisering og intellektualisering (Greiner 1974 s. 11). Satirisk samfunnskritikk er vanlig.

“A new type of comics, dubbed “comix” to imply the X-rated nature of much of the content” og som oppstod på 1960-tallet (Todd Klein i <https://kleinletters.com/Blog/lettering-underground-comix-part-1-robert-crumb/>; lesedato 22.03.25). “X-rated” er i USA en gradering av innhold i filmer og andre medier som ikke egner seg for barn eller ungdom, men kun for voksne.

“The late 1960s saw the emergence of underground comics, a new wave of humorous, hippie-inspired comic books that dealt with social and political subjects like sex, drugs, rock music and anti-war protest. For this reason, these new comics became known as “comix” to set them apart from mainstream comics and to emphasize the “x” for x-rated.” (Kees Kousemaker m.fl. i <https://www.lambiek.net/comics/underground.htm>; lesedato 14.04.25) Som motsetning brukes f.eks. uttrykk som “mainstream comics”.

“Underground comic books (which took the name “comix,” using the “x” to signify their adult nature) erupted in the 1960s as a reaction to ultraconservative and patriotic comics produced by the large corporations that featured characters like Captain America and Superman. Bored with moralistic tales, artists such as Robert Crumb, creator of Zap Comix and Fritz the Cat; and Gilbert Shelton, creator of The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, produced a new and revolutionary style, freely attacking politicians, the war in Vietnam, and corporate America. [...] topics ranging from sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll to politics, big business, and women’s liberation. [...] the artwork and countercultural legacy of comix [are] key events in the history of this medium” (<https://books.google.no/books/about/Comix.html>; lesedato 18.10.18).

“Another theme treated with irreverency in underground comix was religion. One of the most splendid examples of this is ‘The New Adventures of Jesus’, created by Frank “Foolbert Sturgeon” Stack in 1962. Another one is ‘God Nose’, by Jaxon.

This comic is considered by many as the first underground comic.” (Kees Kousemaker m.fl. i <https://www.lambiek.net/comics/underground.htm>; lesedato 14.04.25)

“The 1960s were a time of change in many areas of society, including comics. One factor was the availability of cheap printing for the general public. Independent offset printers were setting up all across the country [USA] and small runs of a comic book with black and white interiors and a color cover could be produced for a few hundred dollars. A new generation of cartoonists was exploring that option, first just printing copies for friends, but new kinds of stores were opening up that would sell them. A counterculture focused on drug use, politics, folk, blues, and rock music, and free love was gathering young fans in droves, and they were meeting to buy things in head shops that specialized in drug paraphernalia and literature and posters related to the movement. [...] One of the earliest and most prolific creators of comix was Robert Crumb, whose anthology series *Zap Comix* was a hit, and sold well enough to encourage lots of imitators. Crumb’s work sometimes looked back to sources like the comics he loved as a kid, but more often it drew content from past and current music and culture. Both his art and his lettering had a rough quality that was very different from most mainstream comics, but beneath that rough look was solid cartooning and design skill. The content was raw, sexual and violent, free from any kind of censorship. It helped that court rulings at the time were making prosecution for producing or selling such things harder. Underground comix included everything the Comics Code Authority was sworn to prevent, and that made them all the more appealing. [...] In a way, underground comix reset the idea of making comics back to the beginning, with each creator doing his own complete package. Some were able to produce entire comix themselves, but many joined forces in anthology titles like *Zap Comix*. The center of comix publishing was San Francisco and nearby Berkeley, California, though comix were published in many parts of the country. No longer did a cartoonist have to live in the New York City metropolitan area and gain favor at the mainstream publishers to reach an audience.” (Todd Klein i <https://kleinletters.com/Blog/lettering-underground-comix-part-1-robert-crumb/>; lesedato 22.03.25)

Den såkalte Comics Code var store amerikanske tegneserieforglavs strategi for å beskytte barn og ungdom mot framstillinger av sex, vold og narkotikabruk, og fungerte som selvsensur for å hindre sensur. Undergrunnstegneseriene hadde som strategi å bryte nettopp de tabuene som den konvensjonelle og kommersielle tegneserieindustrien hadde måtte pålegge seg selv for at myndighetene ikke skulle gripe inn med forbud (Joch, Mix m.fl. 2009 s. 314).

“A major underground influence was the anti-censorship reaction to the imposed ‘comics code’. In the 1950s, there had been a crusade against comics (especially those published by E.C. Comics), which had inspired the passing of the Comics Code, a set of rules to which comics creators had to adhere. As children, the future

underground artists were the very people who had been worst hit – they watched their parents tear up their comics collections [...] The most outspoken production against the Comics Code was the defiant series Doctor Wirtham's Comix & Stories, which appeared around 1977. The colophon read: "We publish good art and underground stories in the E.C. vein, the kind of stuff you know the good doctor would love to hate," which referred to Dr. Fredric Wertham, the man who wrote "Seduction of the Innocent," the book that was responsible for causing the ban on comics in the 1950s by alledging that comic books were corrupting kids. Some of the artists who contributed their work to this series were Doug Potter, Mike Roberts, Al Davoren, Ripp, Greg Irons and Hector Tellez." (Kees Kousemaker m.fl. i <https://www.lambiek.net/comics/underground.htm>; lesedato 14.04.25)

Kvinnelige comix-tegnere er blant andre amerikanerne Dori Seda og Trina Robbins. "The American illustrator and writer Trina Robbins [...] began her career in comics in her native New York in the 1960s as a contributor to the counterculture newspaper East Village Other. She also drew and wrote strips for Gothic Blimp Works, an underground comic. Then came comic strips, covers and spot illustrations for the underground publications Berkeley Tribe and It Ain't Me, Babe, often described as the first feminist newspaper, before before she put together an all-women comic, It Ain't Me, Babe Comix (1970), followed by the anthology All Girl Thrills (1971) and the solo comic Girl Fight Comics (1972). Her black heroine, Fox, was serialised in Good Times (1971) and another of her characters, Panthea, who first appeared in Gothic Blimp Works (1969), was a regular in Comix Book (1974-76). She also became one of the 10 founders of Wimmen's Comix, an all-female underground comics anthology published from 1972 to 1992, and in the late 70s was a contributor to High Times, Heavy Metal, National Lampoon and Playboy." (Steve Holland i <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/may/13/trina-robbins-obituary>; lesedato 24.04.25)

"From his work on underground comix like *Zap* and *Weirdo*, to his cultural prominence, R. Crumb is one of the most renowned comics artists in the medium's history. His work, beginning in the 1960s, ranges provocatively and controversially over major moments, tensions, and ideas in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, from the counterculture and the emergence of the modern environmentalist movement, to racial politics and sexual liberation. While Crumb's early work refined the parodic, over-the-top, and sexually explicit styles we associate with underground comix, he also pioneered the comics memoir, through his own autobiographical and confessional comics, as well as in his collaborations." (<https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Books/T/The-Comics-of-R.-Crumb>; lesedato 22.03.25)

"Since the genre first emerged in the late 1960s, underground comics (or "comix") have delighted and outraged millions of people. The exploits of such characters as Mr. Natural and The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers embodied the psychedelic era

and continue to attract loyal readership today. [...] by the likes of R. Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, S. Clay Wilson, Richard Corben, Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson, Justin Green, Dave Sheridan, Jaxon, Spain Rodriguez, Victor Moscoso, Kim Deitch, Rick Griffin, Foolbert Sturgeon and many others. [...] Social satire in the underground comics usually takes the form of humorous (sometimes bitter) exaggerations of various aspects of American society, from money hunger to art and music. At times, the satire is found mostly in the words. [...] In his “social realism” strips, R. Crumb does not mock American society; rather, he presents it for what it is and trusts the reader eventually to realize that the strips are funny because the society is absurd. Crumb has not been the only underground cartoonist to attempt this special brand of social realism. On occasion, J. Kinney has also worked in this manner. Kinney describes his approach as follows: “I try to put down on paper relatively true visions of middle-class life as I see it. ... Hopefully by capturing all this on paper, I can help people to see themselves more objectively and insightfully. Heheheheh.” ” (<http://www.ronin.pub.com/HisUnd.html>; lesedato 19.10.18)

Amerikaneren Harvey Pekar ga fra 1976 ut *American Splendor*, men var ikke selv tegner. Han skrev tekstene, og ulike tegnere, blant dem Robert Crumb, lagde bildene til hans ideer og tekster. Pekars utgivelser er selvbiografiske, basert på små og store hendelser i hans liv. Pekar arbeidet som arkiver ved siden av å gi ut sine tegneserier i samarbeid med andre.

A History of Underground Comics (1974) av Mark James Estren hevder at comix “emerged from the 1960s counterculture in the form of publications like ZAP and BIJOU FUNNIES, created by artists like R. Crumb, S. Clay Wilson, Spain and others who reveled in imagery and attitudes that definitely weren’t in synch with the values of mainstream America (with the dictates of the Comics Code Authority of America, strictly enforced in most “aboveground” comics, completely ignored). Another key feature of those comics was the brilliance and sophistication of the artwork, which often belied the crudity of the stories (and is now considered Fine Art). [...] Harvey Kurtzman edited issues of MAD. The next big development was the inception of the San Francisco based ZAP COMIX by the irrepressible R. Crumb, and the movement was off and running with titles like YELLOW DOG COMIX, FEDS N’ HEADS, DEATH RATTLE, INSECT FEAR, SKULL and DEVIANT SLICE FUNNIES. [...] Estren confronts some of the thornier issues surrounding underground comix, such as the sexism employed by its cadre of nearly all-male practitioners. It’s not lost on Estren that these guys profess to be anti-puritanical revolutionaries yet share some mighty outdated attitudes about women, apparently the “one area in which the underground comics have been largely unable to break from the society in which they were created.” ” (Adam Groves i <https://thebedlam.files.com/nonfiction/a-history-of-underground-comics/>; lesedato 01.02.25)

Robert Crumb “has continued to praise artists who refuse to idealise their images of humanity, calling Pieter Bruegel “one of the greatest artists of all time”. Robert

Hughes, in turn, called Crumb “the Bruegel of the last half of the twentieth century”, explaining that “he gives you that tremendous impaction of lust, suffering, crazed humanity in all sorts of bizarre gargoyle-like allegorical forms”. The comparison is intriguing because Bruegel, like Crumb, concerned himself with the animal qualities of human existence, and he explored this interest in paintings which fuse the mundane and the fantastic. [...] R. Crumb’s work is regularly accused of being sexually violent, misogynistic, racist and generally grotesque and sordid. As recently as 1994, his *Troubles with Women* (1990) was seized by UK Customs and Excise and tried for obscenity. Underground cartoonist Trina Robbins has repeatedly criticised Crumb for his “sexually hostile” material, and it is often implied that Crumb’s representations of rape, incest, ethnic stereotypes and so on are something of an embarrassment for defenders of his comics. Frank. L. Cioffi says that “one comes away from Crumb’s works feeling slightly soiled, ashamed of having spent the time reading them”. [...] The fact that his comics are deliberately, self-consciously riddled with the ideological and psychological flaws of their creator makes his engagement with questions of personal and social identity appear perfectly in tune with the intellectual currents of the 1960s and 70s.” (Emma Tinker i <http://emmatinker.oxalto.co.uk/downloads/crumb.pdf>; lesedato 20.12.16)

Crumb's *Head Comix* (1967) “consists of thirty-six panels on a single page, which is more or less the densest concentration of any Crumb strip. The world it depicts is farcical and chaotic, full of pantomime violence and surreal links. As it turns out, this strip tells the story of a dream, but the reader remains unaware of this until the last row of panels, and on rereading, this dream context raises as many questions as it answers. The comic consists of a string of erratically connected incidents and images, and it is difficult to piece together a narrative at all. It begins with two distorted male figures, known to regular readers as Snappy Bitts and Crazy Kraks, walking along in the exaggerated style now familiar from the infamous “Keep on Trucking” comic, published later in 1967. Inexplicably, given that the two figures initially appear to be walking alongside each other, they collide and fight. One of them sexually assaults a passer-by and is pulled away by the other, which precipitates another fight. They later cause an explosion from which another man comes running. This third figure goes on to experience various other forms of vaguely defined persecution. In the final few panels the dream descends into meaningless theatrical jollity and ends with what looks like an advertising image. In the final row of panels another regular character, Mr Natural, awakes from “[a] dream about my youth” to find a strange inscription on his hand. Before he can decipher it, Angelfood McSpade licks the text from his skin and runs away. This plot synopsis may seem bewildering enough on its own, but to make matters worse, there are several panels that make almost no sense at all but appear to represent fragments of other stories. A car is shown driving in the moonlight in panel 5, for example, then in panel 13 a similar car appears in daylight, and a moonlit car crash takes place in panel 14. The connection between these images, and between them

and the rest of the comic, remains unclear.” (Emma Tinker i <http://emmatinker.oxalto.co.uk/downloads/crumb.pdf>; lesedato 12.01.17)

“In “Head Comix” images of paranoia, spiritual searching and the false joviality of stage shows and advertisements jostle for space alongside “low” themes like sex and violence. Old intellectual and cultural divisions are abandoned as serious philosophical questions are juxtaposed with apparently juvenile toilet humour. Grouping sex and violence together in the manner of censors would be inaccurate and misleading with most comics artists, but it seems appropriate in a discussion of Crumb. In his comics the line between consensual sex and violent assault is a hazy one, constantly in danger of being breached: fights turn into sexual encounters, sex turns into an abusive game, a carnival tangle of female flesh. In this particular page, the protagonist steps on a woman’s face whilst performing cunnilingus (panel 9). Fluid drips from open orifices (panels 9 and 24), and from figures sweating with fear (panels 20-22). Unlike many of Crumb’s comics, however, this narrative does not follow its brief sexual encounters into a sustained erotic fantasy. This strip is concerned with the hectic pace and incoherence of twentieth-century American life, of which sexuality forms only a small part. As a result, “Head Comix” features a lot more violence than sex: men punch, cars crash, dynamite explodes, someone gets struck by lightning, picked up by the scruff of the neck and dropped into a void.” (Emma Tinker i <http://emmatinker.oxalto.co.uk/downloads/crumb.pdf>; lesedato 12.01.17)

Roger Sabin og Teal Triggs omtaler i boka *Below Critical Radar* (2001) “tre tema som man finner både i fanzinene og i seriene: For det første punkens sinte og trassige cut-the-crap-holdning. Fremtredende serieskapere er amerikanske Gary Panter og britiske Simon Gane, som begge har en røff og hektisk strek. Mens Panter nærmer seg surrealisme, er Gane utvetydig hatsk i kritikken av politi og andre autoriteter. Et annet tema er selvbiografi. Typisk for alternativutgivelsene er gjør-det-selv-filosofien, og de springer ut av et behov for å uttrykke seg. Forbildet er Robert Crumb og Justin Greens bekjennende serier på 70-tallet. For det tredje er ekstreme fremstillinger typisk. Utgivelsene veksler mellom bevisst provokasjon og en gi-faen-holdning som gir freidig behandling av sex, narkotika, vold og ekstreme politiske standpunkt. De blir imidlertid lett foreldet, etter hvert som storsamfunnets holdninger endres.” (Morten Harper i *Morgenbladet* 4.–10. mai 2001)

“Hvor øm kombinasjonen sex og vold kan være, fikk den amerikanske serieskaperen Mike Diana oppleve. Ikke bare ble serien hans *Boiled Angel* beslaglagt. En periode var han fengslet og mistenkt for et bestialsk drap, på grunn av lignende skildringer i seriene. [...] Art Spiegelman (som redigerte *RAW* og laget *Maus*) uttalte i et intervju at alternative tegneserier spres “below critical radar”. Fristilt fra synspunktene til tradisjonelle smaksdommere kan serieskaperne bryte tabu og eksperimentere, og ikke minst kan nye talenter slippe til. Typisk for de alternative utgivelsene – og da ikke bare tegneseriene – er opprør mot såkalt god smak. Sabin og Triggs skriver at “den samlede effekten er en estetikk som ennå

ikke har stivnet til et 'brand'. En estetikk som – i dette sett-alt, firmadominerte, postmoderne 21. århundre – har en glans som er hypnotiserende som... det flakkende lyset fra en kopimaskin.” ” (Morten Harper i *Morgenbladet* 4.–10. mai 2001)

Boka *Rebel Visions: The Underground Comix Revolution 1963-1975* (2003) av Patrick Rosenkranz er en “provocative chronicle of the guerilla art movement that changed comics forever. This comprehensive book follows the movements of 50 artists from 1967 to 1972, the heyday of the underground comix movement. Through interviews with the participants and other materials, *Rebel Visions* is the most intimate look ever at the people and events that forged the phenomenon known as underground comix, from New York to San Francisco, from the corn belt to deep in the heart of Texas, beginning that day in 1968 when R. Crumb debuted *Zap #1* from a baby carriage on Haight Ashbury Street. Rosenkranz has spent over 30 years researching this book and acquiring the cooperation of every significant underground cartoonist who worked throughout this period, including Crumb, Gilbert (*Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*) Shelton, Bill (*Zippy*) Griffith, Art (*Maus*) Spiegelman, Jack Jackson, S. Clay Wilson, Robert Williams, and many more.” (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/608354.Rebel_Visions; lesedato 19.10.18)

“Without the financial, strategic and moral support from the publishers and comic stores behind the scene, the comix couldn't have survived. Print Mint, Last Gasp, S.F. Comic Book Company, Kitchen Sink, Apex Novelties, Comics & Comix stores and others were the vital links to keeping the comix alive and flourishing. They faced the financial risk of the books being commercial flops or even worse, being arrested for promulgating literature considered “obscene according to the standards of the local community.” ” (Kees Kousemaker m.fl. i <https://www.lambiek.net/comics/underground.htm>; lesedato 14.04.25)

“Arne W. Isachsen (1949) var den aller første skaperen av undergrunnstegneserier i Norge. Hans første, egne utgivelse kom i 1971; *Mennesker eller betong?* Men da hadde han allerede bidratt med tegneserier i forløperen for *Gateavisa* og andre publikasjoner. Gjennom fem hektiske år produserte han tegneserier som var ulikt noe man hadde sett i Norge tidligere. Innenfor et medium preget av masseprodusert søppel, laget Isachsen serier som var både personlige, politiske og lekne. Plutselig viste tegneserier seg å kunne gi uante muligheter for kreative serieskapere. Seriene har i liten grad vært tilgjengelige de siste tiårene, men i 2009 ble seriene han laget på begynnelsen av 1970-tallet samlet i boka *Undergrunn!*” (<https://www.jippi.comics.com/tegnerne/arne-w-isachsen/>; lesedato 15.04.25)

“The Adler Archive of Underground Comix is a collection of underground comix, books, and archival newspaper and magazine clippings on cartoonists and ephemera. [...] published between the 1960s and 2000s by artists such as Robert Crumb, Justin Green, Bill Griffith, Aline Kominsky Crumb, Harvey Pekar, Dori Seda, Art Spiegelman and many others, as well as anthology titles such as *Arcade*

Comics Revue, RAW, Weirdo, Young Lust and Zap. The rare books in the Adler Archive are located in Special Collections and include examples of early to mid twentieth century cartoonists such as Charles Addams, Helen Hokinson, and Myron Waldman [...] The range of publications spans national titles, local press, and underground newspapers, specialty publications devoted to comics such as The Comics Journal, Juxtapoz, etc., the National Lampoon, Playboy, and some foreign language publications. These items were mostly published between the late Sixties and the present day.” (https://www.jstor.org/site/risd/adlerarchiveofundergroundcomix/?so=item_title_str_asc;lesedato01.02.25)

Litteraturliste (for hele leksikonet): <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/litteraturliste.pdf>

Alle artiklene i leksikonet er tilgjengelig på <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no>