

## ***The meeting of Comics and Painting at the end of the 20th century***

From the 60s two parallel processes of interaction will change art forever. On the one hand painters will incorporate more and more drastic elements from mass culture and especially from comics in their work, and on the other hand a new generation of comic book artists will introduce elements from Modern Art and their studies in Fine Arts Schools in the comics medium. These events will happen on both sides of the Atlantic and will play a decisive role in the formation of Pop Art subcategories, on the one hand, and the transition from Underground Comix to the modern Graphic Novel. A little later, in the 80s, a new generation of Greek artists and designers will take part in this osmosis with unprecedented results. The question is to what extent comics can open up to the other areas of the visual arts, especially painting, reviving the conquests of the 20th century quests, e.g. of Expressionism, Cubism, Abstraction, without completely suspending the function of the narrative. Much the same dilemma faced by Experimental Cinema, comics seem to have exhausted these possibilities in the heyday of the 80s.

The basic path of the evolution of comics in the 120 or so years of their presence could be sketched as follows: One-page entertainment (with art nouveau masterpieces from their birth), creation of the special sub-genre of Superheroes in the USA, transfer of culture of comics in Europe and development of its own

category, simultaneous emergence of adult and underground comics, maturation and development of graphic novels, the visual experimentation of the 80s, the export and spread of Japanese manga into a global phenomenon, the osmosis of Superhero culture with Hollywood, the transfer to the new digital world.

It is a fact that drastic experimentation in layout often turns the reader into (merely) a spectator: he admires the visual effect but finds it difficult to follow the plot (if there is one). Of particular note is the fact that comics were (artificially?) kept for far too long in an age and gender ghetto of juvenile boys, while any early attempts to address more "mature" themes were repeatedly subjugated.

This scene has been adequately documented in the US. and France, mainly, but little in our country. This exhibition aspires to do so for the first time on this scale.

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