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Guide to the Daniel Clowes Archive 2000-2014



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.CLOWES
Title	Clowes, Daniel. Archive
Date	2000-2014
Size	18.5 linear feet (16 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Daniel Clowes (b. 1961) is an American artist and writer known for his comic-book series *Eightball*, and for graphic novels such as *Ghost World*, *Ice Haven*, *Mr. Wonderful*, *Wilson*, and *The Death-Ray*. The collection contains notes, outlines, narrative drafts, character sketches, draft layouts, line art, and book dummies for *The Death-Ray*, *Ice Haven*, and *Mr. Wonderful*, as well as exhibition ephemera. Materials date between 2000 and 2014, with the bulk dating from 2003 to 2011.

Information on Use

Access

The Daniel Clowes Archive is open for research.

Researchers are not permitted to use a camera, cellphone camera, personal scanner, video camera, or other recording device on any part of the collection. Please see Special Collections Research Center staff for all duplication requests.

The paper copies of digitally-scanned artwork in boxes 6, 10, and 15 are open for research. The digital files that they represent are, at this time, closed to research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Clowes, Daniel. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

Daniel Gillespie Clowes was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 14, 1961. Clowes spent much of his childhood in Hyde Park where he attended the University of Chicago Laboratory School

until 1979. His grandfather, James Lea Cate (1899-1981), was a scholar of medieval history and historiography and a professor at the University of Chicago from 1930 to 1969.

Clowes attended art school at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, earning a BFA degree in 1984. Following graduation, Clowes spent a year searching for work as an illustrator in New York City. His first paid freelance job in comics came in 1985 when he was hired to draw "Aren't You Nervous When?" for *Cracked*, a humor magazine in the style of *Mad* magazine. Over the next four years Clowes drew nearly two-dozen stories for the magazine, many featuring the Ugly Family - characters co-created with the magazine's editor, Mort Todd. In 1985 Fantagraphics published his first solo comic, *Lloyd Llewellyn*, a parody of 1950s-1960s pop culture named for its private-eye main character. The comic was cancelled in 1987 after six issues. An anthology of the series, *The Official Lloyd Llewellyn Collection*, was published by Fantagraphics in 1989, went out of print, and was reprinted in 1997. A second anthology, *The Manly World of Lloyd Llewellyn*, was released in 1994 by Fantagraphics.

In 1989 Clowes turned his attention to developing a comic-book series, *Eightball*. Each issue featured multiple short stories drawn in a variety of styles. The 23-issue series won multiple Harvey, Eisner, and Ignatz awards and was the source of many later graphic novels by Clowes including *Lout Rampage!* (Fantagraphics 1991), *Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron* (Fantagraphics 1993), *Pussey!* (Fantagraphics 1995), *Orgy Bound* (Fantagraphics 1996) *Ghost World* (Fantagraphics 1998), *David Boring* (Pantheon 2000), *Ice Haven* (Pantheon 2005), and *The Death-Ray* (Drawn and Quarterly 2011). Additional *Eightball* comics were reissued in two anthologies: *Caricature* (Fantagraphics 1998) and *Twentieth Century Eightball* (Fantagraphics 2002).

Wilson (Drawn and Quarterly 2010) was Clowes' first graphic novel that did not draw from *Eightball* material. The next, *Mr. Wonderful* (Pantheon 2011), was a revised and reformatted edition of a comic originally serialized in *The New York Times Magazine* from 2007 to 2008.

Clowes' art extends beyond the genre of comics. Beginning in 1987, he contributed cover art for over twenty-five LPs, EPs, 45s, and CDs, many for Seattle's Sub Pop Records. Clowes created the 1995 animated music video for the Ramones' "I Don't Want to Grow Up." His art was featured in the early 1990s on Coca-Cola's short-lived OK Soda, aimed at the Generation X demographic. Between 2009 and 2012, he contributed six cover illustrations to *The New Yorker*. His work has also been commissioned by *Esquire*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *GQ*, and *McSweeney's*.

In 2001, *Ghost World* was adapted for film. The script by Clowes and director Terry Zwigoff garnered numerous awards and an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay. The two collaborated again in 2006 on a film adaptation of the *Eightball* number 7 story *Art School Confidential* which lampoons Clowes' experience at the Pratt Institute. Clowes has also

written screenplays for Michel and Paul Gondry's *Megalomania*, Terry Zwigoff's *The \$40,000 Man*, *The Death-Ray*, and *Wilson*.

Daniel Clowes lives in Oakland, California with his wife Erika and son Charles.

The following is an explication, in Clowes' own words, of the production process for the books in this collection.

COLOR PROCESS NOTES: ICE HAVEN, THE DEATH-RAY, MR. WONDERFUL

By Daniel Clowes

My objective with these three books was to replicate the flat, unmodulated color of old comic books/strips and children's books.

For printing clarity, there is customarily a solid black line-art file and a separate color file. In the final process, the color file is printed first and then the line art is overprinted in (we hope) perfect registration in a separate run through the presses.

BASIC PROCESS:

1.) The original LINE ART is created entirely by hand – India ink on Bristol board – at somewhere between 150% to 250% scale of the printed page. Corrections are made with white gouache and occasional paste-ons using one-ply drawing paper.

2.) The pages are scanned as 1200-dpi bitmap files in Photoshop. They are reduced to final print size and saved as TIFF files.

3.) The line-art file is imported into Adobe Illustrator, where it is used as a guide for creating the color file. The various shapes are filled in (not unlike a (joyless, digital) coloring book) and assigned colors, which are precise CMYK mixtures. Once the page is fully colored, the line-art file is discarded, and we're left with a file that contains only the color shapes. This is saved as an EPS file.

A. VARIATIONS: Occasionally, the line art is also assigned a (non-black) color (usually a very dark – almost black – blue or brown). In these cases, the line art is simply added to the color file, and there is no separate black-line file. An example of this would be the LEOPOLD AND LOEB strip in ICE HAVEN.

B. ADDED TONES: Sometimes there are tones added for which there is no black outline (e.g.: The LOGO and dark pink sky shape in the title panel of THE HOLE, ICE HAVEN). These are originally hand-drawn on clear overlays placed over the original art, and scanned to match the scale of the final page before being added to the color file. At that stage, the entire shape is assigned a CMYK color.

4.) The pages are then assembled – black line art on top of the color file – and put together in the correct page sequence in Adobe InDesign. This file is sent to the printer.

OVERVIEW:

I use this method because it enables me to give the printer specific, precise colors with no “loss in translation.” It's very much a modern version of the way comics have been colored for the past 80 years, though in previous eras the color choices were usually fairly limited and inexact.

There is also no "drawing" of any kind done on the computer—I'm merely assigning colors to shapes that have first been delineated by ink and brush on paper. It's essential to me that the final printed comics have the sense, on some level, of having been created entirely by hand.

View a slideshow created by Clowes about his color process for the 2016 Special Collections Research Center exhibition, “Integrity of the Page: The Creative Process of Daniel Clowes.” (PDF).

Scope Note

The Daniel Clowes Archive contains material related to the evolution of Clowes' art from conception to production to publication. This includes notes, outlines, narrative drafts, character sketches, draft layouts, line art, book dummies, and exhibition ephemera. Materials date between 2000 and 2014, with the bulk dating from 2003 to 2011. The collection is divided into four series:

Series I, The Death-Ray, contains material pertinent to Clowes' work on this superhero comic originally published in Eightball number 23 in 2004 by Fantagraphics, and later issued by Drawn and Quarterly in 2011 as a graphic novel. The series includes material for both versions of the comic. Materials are roughly arranged to follow Clowes' creative process, beginning with notes, written outlines, rough sketches and layouts, then moving to more detailed sketches and color scans of line art, and concluding with a book dummy for the Drawn and Quarterly publication. Series II and III are arranged in the same manner.

Series II, Ice Haven, contains material for Clowes' comic about a fictional Midwestern town and its citizens, each connected by the story of a kidnapped boy. The comic was originally published

in Eightball number 22 in 2001 by Fantagraphics, then revised and published as a book by Pantheon in 2005. The series includes material for both versions of the comic.

Series III, Mr. Wonderful, contains material relevant to the creation of Clowes' comic about romance and loneliness originally serialized in The New York Times Magazine from 2007 to 2008. Clowes reformatted and revised the comic for publication as a book by Pantheon in 2011. The series includes material for both versions of the comic.

Series IV, Exhibition Ephemera, contains publicity for two exhibitions of Clowes' art at the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University in 2014: "Eye of the Cartoonist: Daniel Clowes's Selections from Comics History," and "Modern Cartoonist: The Art of Daniel Clowes" (a traveling exhibition organized by the Oakland Museum of California).

Related Resources

Browse finding aids by topic.

Walter C. Dopierala Comic Book Collection

Hank Scotch Moby Dick Comic Books Collection

Chicago Zine Collection

Subject Headings

- Clowes, Daniel
- Comic books, strips, etc
- Graphic novels

INVENTORY

Series I: The Death-Ray

Box 1

Folder 1

Yellow letter-size notepad with written outline, draft layouts, 2002

Box 1

Folder 2

White legal-size notepad with written edits, 2003

Box 1

Folder 3

Written and drawn outlines, 2003-2004

Box 2

Folder 1

Brown Strathmore drawing pad with written and drawn draft layouts, cover sketch, Eightball 23 title lettering in color, circa 2003-2004

Box 2

Folder 2

Green Strathmore drawing pad with written and drawn draft layouts, 2003-2004

Box 3

Folder 1

Color cover sketch, color treatment for cover, circa 2003-2011

Box 3

Folder 2

Written outlines (5), character and layout sketches (4 pencil, 2 pencil and ink), circa 2003-2006

Box 3

Folder 3

Full character sketches (2 black-and-white ink, 2 red pencil, 2 color pencil and ink), circa 2003-2011

Box 3

Folder 4

Draft layouts and page breakdowns (47 pencil, 4 pencil and ink), circa 2003-2011

Box 4

Folder 1

Draft layout (1, pencil and ink), and sketches (2, pencil), circa 2003-2004

Box 4

Folder 2

Cover sketch on tracing paper (pencil and ink), and title lettering (pencil and ink), circa 2003-2011

Box 4

Folder 3

Tracing paper title sketches (2, pencil and ink), character sketch (1, pencil), and layout sketches (5, pencil), circa 2003-2011

Box 5

Cover sketch for Eightball 23 (transparency, pencil and ink), 2003

Box 5

Character sketch for front end papers (transparency, pencil and ink), signed, circa 2010-2011

Box 6

Folder 1

Color scans of original drawings, covers, front matter, and end pages, circa 2011

Box 7

Folder 1

Book dummy, circa 2010-2011

Series II: Ice Haven

Box 8

Folder 1

Written outlines (2) and layout mockup (1), circa 2003-2004

Box 8

Folder 2

Color character sketch of David Goldberg, circa 2004-2005

Box 9

Folder 1

Black sketch pad with "The Luck of Harry Hathaway" sticker, original layout, and sketches for Eightball 22, circa 2000-2001

Box 9

Folder 2

Canson drawing pad with layouts, circa 2003-2005

Box 9

Folder 3

Strathmore drawing pad with draft layouts and text, circa 2003-2005

Box 9

Folder 4

Draft layouts (8), and written outlines (2), circa 2003-2004

Box 9

Folder 5

Written outline (1), cover and character sketches (4), circa 2004-2005

Box 9

Folder 6

Written and drawn draft layouts (10), circa 2004-2005

Box 9

Folder 7

Tracing paper sketches (67), circa 2001-2005

Box 9

Folder 8

Cover sketches (4 color, 2 black-and-white transparencies, 1 color transparency), circa 2004-2005

Box 10

Folder 1

Color scans of original drawings, covers, front matter, and end pages, circa 2001-2005

Box 10

Folder 2

Color scans of sketchbook pages, circa 2003-2005

Box 11

Folder 1

Book dummy, circa 2004-2005

Series III: Mr. Wonderful

Box 12

Folder 1

Brown notebook with written and drawn outlines, character sketches, 2007

Box 12

Folder 2

National brand notebook with written and drawn outlines for "Lonely Street," 2007

Box 12

Folder 3

Universal brand notepad and notepaper with written storyline, 2007

Box 12

Folder 4

Typescript narrative, 2007

Box 12

Folder 5

Written outlines, narrative, corrections, and email, 2007

Box 12

Folder 6

Newspaper clipping, East Bay Express, circa 2007

Box 13

Folder 1

Full-page draft sketches (25, pencil), character sketch of Mr. Wonderful (1, pencil), circa 2007-2011

Box 13

Folder 2

Author portrait (pencil and ink on tracing paper), circa 2008-2011

Box 13

Folder 3

Character sketches (1 color, pencil and ink; 1 black-and-white, pencil and ink), circa 2007-2011

Box 13

Folder 4

Written ideas, to-do list for New York Times, 2007-2008

Box 13

Folder 5

Full-page draft sketches (29 pencil, 6 pencil and ink) for New York Times, 2007-2008

Box 13

Folder 6

Cover design, color (pencil and ink), circa 2008-2011

Box 13

Folder 7

Draft layout sketches, pencil (5), circa 2008-2011

Box 13

Folder 8

Draft character sketches, transparencies (57 pencil and ink, 2 pencil), circa 2007-2011

Box 14

Character sketches (5 pencil and ink transparencies), circa 2007-2011

Box 15

Folder 1

Color scans of original drawings, covers, front matter, and end pages, circa 2010-2011

Box 16

Folder 1

Book dummy, circa 2010-2011

Box 16

Folder 2

Book dummy, circa 2010-2011

Series IV: Exhibition Ephemera

Box 16

Folder 3

"Modern Cartoonist: The Art of Daniel Clowes," and "Eye of the Cartoonist: Daniel Clowes's Selections from Comics History," Wexner Center for the Arts, May-June 2014