# [Re]Framing Graphic Medicine: Comics and the History of Medicine

The traditional history of medicine has been that of heroic doctors and their scientific and clinical breakthroughs, often accompanied by iconic images that glorify their actions and achievements. This history is incomplete.

Centered around doctors and scientific progress, this history neglects what historian Roy Porter calls the “sufferers’ history—medical history from below.” Furthermore, as historian Sander Gilman notes, the writing of medical history has often ignored images. To account for these distortions and achieve a history that considers the sufferers and the social and cultural contexts in which medicine was practiced and evolved, scholars are increasingly drawing from a wider range of historical sources, including comics and cartoons. Spanning from the origins of comics through their mid-20th century “golden” era to contemporary works of graphic medicine, this exhibit traces a unique visual history of the experience of illness and the evolution of Western healthcare practices and, in doing so, broadens our understanding of how the history of medicine is constructed. Drawn from serialized prints, illustrated newspapers and magazines, comic books, zines, digital comics, and graphic memoirs, the images of those who suffer illness, practitioners, and clinical interactions provide commentary, both critical and complementary, on medical progress and professionalization from a variety of perspectives and eras.

The exhibition reframes the history of medical images from the epic story of progress and “great men” toward a broader socio-cultural history, one that draws “from below” and incorporates the overlooked medium of comics. However, it is important to note that the early historical narrative also reaffirms the traditional history of medicine by centering on the clinician and is a testimony to the systems and hierarchies that contribute to health inequities and limit broad social and cultural representation in medicine and healthcare. Over the last sixty years, beginning with the rise in underground comics and zines, the content, perspective, and uses of health-related comics expanded, contributing to the emergence of graphic medicine as a unifying field of inquiry and creation. Addressing topics such as environmental health, gender and sexuality, disability, health inequities, justice, and ethics created from the sufferers’ point of view, these contemporary comics expand and diversify the narrative and iconographic scope of the history of medicine and enrich our understanding of the illness experience and present-day healthcare.

Displaying these images as an exhibition is meant to engage the viewer with the concept of these works coming together as a metacomic—an unfolding accumulation of images that tells the story of the interrelated histories of medicine and comics. Situated within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this exhibit further connects the historical tension between skepticism of and confidence in science and medicine with contemporary concerns. Collectively, the images in this exhibit offer a complementary history of medicine, one that, in keeping with the medium of comics, is at times subversive, often entertaining, and always thought-provoking.

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# Introduction to Comics

Defined by the interplay between sequential images and text to tell a story, comics are a readily identified form of mass communication. Often considered a lowly and unsophisticated medium, comics are in fact a sophisticated and efficient way to express ideas and, when widely disseminated, reflect and shape popular opinions across a broad audience. The power and immediacy of an image to engage a reader and deliver a narrative layered in visual and textual meaning underlies a comic’s wide-ranging ability to inform, entertain, satirize, and critique.

Evolving from serialized prints and shifting from illustrated magazines and newspapers to classic comic books to graphic novels to digital comics, the comics in this exhibition capture how the evolution of printed media alters the form and dissemination of comics but always maintains a focus on health, illness, and medicine. They are snap-shots of patients, providers, and clinical practice that provide visual evidence of illness, the gestures and accouterments of clinical interactions, and the spaces in which they took place. In this regard, comics are historically important reflections of social and cultural beliefs about science and medicine, many of which mirror contemporary discussions during the COVID-19 pandemic. As historical artifacts, these comics attest to ideas and aesthetics shifting across eras and collectively contribute to the visual mosaic of medicine’s history.

William Hogarth

“Consultation of Physicians” or “The Company of Undertakers”” [reproduction]

*The Complete Works of William Hogarth*

London: The London Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.

f ND497.H7A35 c.3

An English artist of the 1700s, William Hogarth created satirical images. In this image, a group of physicians, adorned with their tell-tale canes, engage in consultation. The title and the motto “Et plurima mortis imago” (And many an image of death) comment on the physician’s proximity and at times, contribution to death.

Rodolphe Töpffer

*The Adventures of Mr. Obadiah Oldbuck : Wherein are Duly Set Forth the Crosses, Chagrins, Calamities, Checks, Chills, Changes and Circumgirations by which his Courtship was Attended: Showing Also, the Issue of his Suit and his Espousal to his Ladye-love*

London: Tilt and Bogue, 1841

obl PQ2452.T2A751 1841 c.1 Rare

The Swiss cartoonist Rudolphe Töpffer is a pioneer of comics and the creator of some of the earliest works of graphic narrative in Europe and the United States. In these early works about the comically wayward tale of love and marriage, Töpffer depicts suicide attempts, consultation with a doctor, and health interventions, including milk and horse therapies.

Rodolphe Töpffer

*Les Amours de Mr. Vieux Bois*

Paris: n.p., 1860

obl PN6790.S93T58 1860 c.1 Rare

First published in 1837 and frequently reprinted, including as the first comic book in the United States, these early satirical depictions, along with Töpffer’s other works, provide insight into the types of interventions individuals sought and skepticism around the intent of medicine and various practices, like phrenology, in 19th century society.

*Vita del Lascivo*

Venice: n.p., n.d.

obl DG447.V58 1600z c.1 Rare

Identifying the first “comic” has led to ongoing debate about the first narrative sequence combining words and text. The 17th-century Italian *Vita del Lascivo* is often a contender for that title, predating Hogarth and Töpffer by nearly two centuries.

Simon de Nantua

*Historie d’Albert par Simon de Nantua* [reproductions]

Paris : Imp. Dufrenoy, 34 R. du Four St. Germain, 1860

obl NC1659.N36 A75 1860 Rare

In this short sequence, the reader follows the protagonist of the story, Albert, through his assistantships to a dental surgeon and then “expirpator” of corns and calluses before setting out on his own only to leave town to become wine-taster after all his patients die of tetanus.

# The Art of Dying

Death has long been a source of artistic inspiration and its presence in early comics is not surprising. In works like the *Ars Moriendi* and various versions of the *Dance of Death*, images depicting confrontations with death were widely disseminated and helped shape the iconography of dying while serving as a reminder of death’s omnipresence. Ranging from the comical to the tragic, these images address the uncertainty around and inescapable nature of death and how we navigate the inevitable tension between a “good” death and a “bad” death.

Death comes in many forms and is the great equalizer, shown taking the life of individuals regardless of age, occupation, or social status, but doing so in a lively and often playful manner—engaging humanity in a morbid dance. The selected passages focusing on physicians are also reminders of medicine’s limited ability to intervene, depicting death as a mocking and contemptuous participant in the clinical interaction. Note the repeated representation of the urine flask, a symbol of the diagnostic process of the era and an iconographic signifier of the physician. These comics discourse nicely with the treatment of death in contemporary works of graphic medicine which often contend with the idea of the “good” death but in a highly medicalized context.

Salomon van Rusting

*Schau-Platz des Todes: oder, Todten-Tanz in Kupffern und Versen vorgestellet*

Nürnberg: P.C. Monath, 1736

PN687.D2A196 c.1 Rare

Michael Henrich Rentz

“Der Medicus”

*Geistliche Todts-Gedancken : bey allerhand Gemählden und Schildereyen in Vorbildung unterschiedlichen Geschlechts, Alters, Standes, und Würdens-Persohnen sich des Todes zu erinnern, aus dessen Lehr die Tugend zu üben, und die Sünd zu meyden : erstlich in Kupfer entworffen, nachmahlen durch sittliche Erörtherung und Uberlegung unter Todten-Farben in Vorschein gebracht, dardurch zum Heyl der Seelen im Gemüth des geneigten Lesers ein lebendige Forcht und embsige Vorsorg des Todes zu erwecken*

Passau: Gedruckt bey Friderich Gabriel Mangold, 1753

f NE654.R42A5 c.1 Rare

William Combe

“The Chamber War”

*The English dance of death: from the designs of Thomas Rowlandson, with metrical illustrations*

London: Printed by J. Diggens, published at R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1815-1816

PR3359.C5E6 1815 c.1 v.ii Rare

Physicians quarreling or taking their fee as a patient suffers or dies is a common satirical theme in early comics and cartoons. Prior to the therapeutic revolution, contestation around diagnoses and treatments was indicative of the limited utility and sometimes harmful aspects of medicine.

Archer M. Huntington

*Ars Moriendi*

New York: The De Vinne Press, 1902

Z241.A8 c.1

The *Ars Moriendi* (Art of Dying) is an illustrated medieval text meant to help individuals navigate dying. Depicting the preparation for death as a struggle between good and evil, the work consists of five pairs of woodcuts detailing competing inspirations and temptations of faith, despair, impatience, vainglory, and avarice. The final 11th image (shown here) portrays the death scene in which the dying individual successfully achieves the “good” death, with his soul being embraced by angels.

Richard Dagley

“The Empriric”

*Death's Doings: Consisting of Numerous Original Compositions, in Verse and Prose*

Boston: C. Ewer, 1828

PR1143.D2 1828

Hans Holbein

“The Physician”

*The Dances of Death, Through the Various Stages of Human Life: wherein the capriciousness of that tyrant is exhibited in forty-six copper-plates done from the original designs, which were cut in wood, and afterwards painted*

London: S. Gosnell, 1803

N7720.H6 M4 1803 c.1 Rare

# Dancing with Death (wall reproductions)

The images on this wall are a selection from a variety of “Dance of Death” works, representing different styles and common themes. Whether young or old, rich or poor, death dances with us all and this series of images captures the spirit and playfulness of this genre of death comics.

Salomon van Rusting

*Schau-Platz des Todes: oder, Todten-Tanz in Kupffern und Versen vorgestellet* [reproduction]

Nürnberg: P.C. Monath, 1736

PN687.D2A196 c.1 Rare

Michael Henrich Rentz

“Das Kind” [reproduction]

“Der alter Mann” [reproduction]

*Geistliche Todts-Gedancken: bey allerhand Gemählden und Schildereyen in Vorbildung unterschiedlichen Geschlechts, Alters, Standes, und Würdens-Persohnen sich des Todes zu erinnern, aus dessen Lehr die Tugend zu üben, und die Sünd zu meyden : erstlich in Kupfer entworffen, nachmahlen durch sittliche Erörtherung und Uberlegung unter Todten-Farben in Vorschein gebracht, dardurch zum Heyl der Seelen im Gemüth des geneigten Lesers ein lebendige Forcht und embsige Vorsorg des Todes zu erwecken*

Passau: Gedruckt bey Friderich Gabriel Mangold, 1753

f NE654.R42A5 c.1 Rare

William Combe

Frontispiece [reproduction]

“The Death Blow” [reproduction]

“The Nursery” [reproduction]

*The English Dance of Death: From the designs of Thomas Rowlandson, with metrical illustrations*

London: Printed by J. Diggens, published at R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1815-1816

PR3359.C5E6 1815 c.1 v.i-ii Rare

Hans Holbein

“The New-Married Pair” [reproduction]

“The Knight” [reproduction]

“The Old Man” [reproduction]

“The Old Woman” [reproduction]

“The Beggar” [reproduction]

“The Child” [reproduction]

“The Miser” [reproduction]

“Untitled” [reproduction]

*The Dances of Death, Through the Various Stages of Human Life: wherein the capriciousness of that tyrant is exhibited in forty-six copper-plates done from the original designs, which were cut in wood, and afterwards painted*

London: S. Gosnell, 1803

N7720.H6 M4 1803 c.1 Rare

# Cancer

Though appearing in educational comics as early as the 1950’s, cancer was practically a taboo subject when Susan Sontag wrote her seminal book *Illness as Metaphor* in 1978, addressing shame and stigma around certain conditions, including cancer and later HIV/AIDS (1990). Sontag addressed the shame that many patients felt about their illness, as well as their ignorance of options and acceptance of the diagnosis as a death sentence. She became, as she would describe herself, a “crusader for the sick.” Since that time, cancer has not only become a subject discussed openly, but also a common topic of memoir, literature, and graphic medicine. In the books displayed, protagonists share their story as they learn about the disease, cope with treatment and the possibility—or imminence—of death.

With the exception of *Mom’s Cancer*, these are memoirs written by the patients themselves.

Brian Fies

*Mom’s Cancer*

New York: Abrams Image, 2006

On loan from Brian Callender

Brian Fries

*Mom’s Cancer*, 2004/2006

Ink on paper

On loan from MK Czerweic

Isabel Franc

*Alicia en un Mundo Real [Alice in the Real World]*

Barcelona: Norma Editorial, 2010

PN6777.F73 A45 2010 c.1 Gen

Jennifer Hayden

*The Story of My Tits*

Marietta: Top Shelf Productions, 2015

RC280.B8H3885 2015 c.1 Crerar

Kimiko Tobimatsu

*Kimiko Does Cancer*

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2020

RC280.B8 T63 2020 c.1 Crerar

Matilda Tristram

*Probably Nothing: A Diary of Not-Your-Average Nine Months*

London: Viking, 2014

RG580.C3 T75 2014 c.1 Crerar

In this work, Tristam chronicles her struggles balancing treatment for cancer that was discovered early in her pregnancy.

# Reproductive Health

Control over the female body and access to reproductive health services have long been sources of contentious debate. However, issues related to reproduction were not well explored or represented in comics until women assumed a larger role in the medium. In the early 1970s, underground comics like *Wimmen’s Comix* were a response to a comics culture reflective of and catering to a male audience. As creators and consumers of comics, women centered these issues in ways that reflected and contributed to contemporary social and political movements. They provided a venue for discussion about subjects like abortion, menstruation, and sexuality. Since then comics have been a medium to express a range of experiences related to reproductive health including contraception, pregnancy, infertility, miscarriage, and menopause. Importantly, comics have also been used to advocate for improved access to healthcare and bring awareness to reproductive health disparities.

Anne Elizabeth Moore

*Safe, Legal Abortion Access: (not pictured) $0*

Chicago: Anne Elizabeth Moore, 2013

PS3613.O5652S34 2013 c.1 Rare

Zines, such as this one, are self-published in limited quantities and largely distributed locally.

Amber Sollenberger

*Jane: Underground Abortions in Chicago’s South Side*

Chicago: Amber Sollenberger and Jean Cochrane, 2015

PN6727.S655 J35 2015 c.1 Rare

One of a number of zines that relate the history of 1960s abortion services to current readers.

Alison Bechdel

*Spawn of Dykes to Watch Out For*

Ithaca: Firebrand Books, 1993

HQ75.5 .B43 1993 c.1

A compilation of Bechdel’s 1980s comic *Dykes to Watch Out For*, in which the protagonists juggle reproduction and outside commitments. Bechdel became well known to a “mainstream” audience for *Fun Home* and most recently the 2021 *Secret of Superhuman Strength*.

Breena Bard

*Hey Baby: A Comic Memoir About Becoming a Mom*

Portland: Easel Ain’t Easy, 2016

PN6727.B373 H49 2016 c.1. Gen

Marnie Galloway

*Slightly Plural: Short Comics About Pregnancy, Birth, and Parenthood*

N.p.: Marnie Galloway, 2018

PN6727.G35S55 2016 c.1 Gen

Cookie Kalkair

*Les 9 Derniers Mois (de ta vie de petit con)*

Paris: Les Arènes, 2016

PN6747.K355 N48 2016 c.1 Gen

Kalkair describes pregnancy by a man reluctant to lose what he perceives to be the fun in life. Here, he creates a chart of things he’ll do in the upcoming nine months, only to be informed by his wife that, as she’s pregnant, there are “only” seven months to go.

Hazel Newlevant, Whit Taylor, and 0.K. Fox, eds.

*Comics for Choice: Illustrated Abortion Stories, History, and Politics*

N.p.: Hazel Newlevant, 2017

PN6720.N49C66 2017 c.1 Gen

Lucy Knisley

*Kid Gloves: Nine Months of Careful Chaos*

New York: First Second, 2019

RG525.K585 2019 c.1 Crerar

Mademoiselle Caroline

*Enceinte!: C'est pas une mince affaire*

Saint-Victor-d’Epine: City Éditions, 2010

PN6747 .M245 E53 2010 c.1 Gen

The play on words in the title has to do with *mince*, with its three meanings as “thin,” “paltry,” and “darn!” [Pregnant! : it’s not a *mince* business]

Luke C. Jackson

*Two-week Wait: An I.V.F. Story*

Brunswick: Scribe Publications, 2021

RG135 .J33 2021 c.1 Crerar

Chin Lyvely

*Abortion Eve*

Laguna Beach: Nanny Goat Productions, 1973

PN6728.45.N3A2 1973 c.1 Rare

QR Code: http://www.ep.tc/eve/

One of the earliest comics on the subject of abortion, *Abortion Eve* tells the stories of a diverse group of women as they make decisions about abortion. Intended to destigmatize and demystify abortion, it made an important contribution to underground information sharing.

*Who Killed Junior?* [reproduction]

N.p.: n.p., 1973

QR Code: http://www.ep.tc/junior/

Early anti-abortion handout from Right To Life.

# Do not go gentle...

As poet Dylan Thomas wrote in the celebrated poem, “Do not go gentle into that good night,” “Old age should burn and rave at close of day; / Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” And it is not only those in “old age,” who rage and seek to accept the ending of a life. The experience of loss may begin before the loss of life occurs, for example those who question loss of memory (Roca) or freedom (Luciani). These comics represent those who foresee the loss of a loved one—or fear their own.

Part of the reason that these narratives of aging and death affect the reader so much is that they know that they will one day be in similar positions. Death is universal to the human and non-human experience and, as earlier depictions of death note, seen as often capricious and unremorseful., Through image and text, loss and the anguish of those bearing witness are laid bare by the author.

Paco Roca

*Arrugas*

Bibao: Astiberri, 2012

PN6777.lR55R5418 2012 c.1 Gen

First published in Spain, *Arrugas* was translated into English as *Wrinkles*.

Eva Müller

*Sterben ist echt das Letzte!*

Weimar: Schwarzer Turm, 2017

PN6757.M85S74 2017 c.1 Gen

German artist Müller explores death through nine comics, translated into English as *In the Future, We are Dead*.

Paul Hornschemeier

*Mother, Come Home*

Milwaukie: Dark Horse Books, 2003

PN6727.H5927M68 2003 c.1 Gen

Brigitte Luciani

*On se reposera plus tard*

Paris: Steinkis-Jungle, 2020

PZ27.7.L83 On 2020 c.1 Gen

[We Will Rest Later], a phrase close to the idiomatic “On se reposera quand on sera mort” [We will rest when we are dead], tells the story of Marie who must spend time in rest home and her response to the threat of aging and inactivity.

Sarah Leavitt

*Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer’s, My Mother, and Me*

Calgary: Freehand Books, 2010

On loan from Brian Callender

Marissa Moss

*Last Thing: A Graphic Memoir of Loss and Love*

Newburyport: Conari Press, 2017

On loan from Brian Callender

Roz Chast

“Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?”

*The New Yorker*

Ink and watercolor on paper

On loan from MK Czerweic

# Pandemics: HIV

When HIV was first perceived to be epidemic in the United States in the 1980s, gay men were almost instantly stigmatized as being responsible for and carriers of this “new” disease. In 1992, HIV infection was the leading cause of death in men 25-44 years old. Activist and educational comics played an important role in raising awareness, promoting prevention, and reducing stigma. Decades after the first case was diagnosed, the comics that emerged from the early years of the HIV pandemic allow us to reflect back on the years that took such a mental and physical toll on patients, family and care givers.

MK Czerwiec is a nurse and artist who cared for patients on a HIV/AIDS ward prior to the availability of effective treatments and when considerable fear, animus, and stigma was attached to the disease. Czerwiec contributes art and artifacts from the creation of *Taking Turns*.

David Wojnarowicz

*7 Miles a Second*

Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2012

f PN6727.W58 S48 2012

*Strip AIDS USA: A Collection of Cartoon Art to Benefit People with AIDS*

San Francisco: Last Gasp, 1988

f NC1763.A25 S84 1988 c.1 Rare

Judd Winick

*Pedro & Me: Friendship, Loss & What I Learned*

New York: Henry Holt, 2009

RC607.A26 W

Bobby Positive

*AIDS 201: Survival tips for symptomatic PWAs*

Milwaukee: BestD Clinic, 1996

On loan from MK Czerweic

Photographs

On loan from MK Czerweic

Newspaper clippings

On loan from MK Czerweic

Unit 317 Brochures

On loan from MK Czerweic

MK Czerweic

Unit 371: Oral History of an Inpatient AIDS Unit

N.p.: n.p., 2009

On loan from MK Czerweic

Photograph, 1996

On loan from MK Czerweic

Storyboard for *Taking Turns*

On loan from MK Czerweic

Sketchbook for *Taking Turns,* 2010

On loan from MK Czerweic

Focus Panel:

*Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Unit 371* arises from the realization that the history of one specific Chicago AIDS care hospital unit, and the history of AIDS in the American Midwest, was virtually non-existent. This graphic memoir is informed by an oral history conducted from 2008 to 2012 and seeks to explore and challenge the boundaries between patients and their care partners.  It also interrogates the notion of ’self-care.’  A goal in creating this text, aside from formalizing some history of Unit 371 and the AIDS crisis in Chicago, was to explore aspects of the unique care provided on this hospital unit which could be potentially be exported to the current day.  —MK Czerwiec

# Pandemics: COVID-19

Creating comics can be a way of coping with difficult and traumatic situations, such as those experienced by many during the global phenomenon that affects nearly every aspect of our lives—the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic became a creative impetus for thousands of comics that collectively help us commiserate and understand what we experience. Created by cartoonists reflecting upon changes in their communities or by healthcare workers processing their frontline experiences, these comics capture the immediacy of the pandemic and graphically demonstrate the “outbreak narrative” from multiple perspectives. Drawing upon comics’ ability to depict and manipulate time and space, both affected by the pandemic, these works zoom across scales, from the microscopic to individual households to local and global communities, mapping the viral spread, chronicling the closing off of spaces, and expressing fear and concern.

Chronicling COVID-19 in comic form has been done online, published in compilations and zines, appeared in major newspapers and magazines, and is beginning to appear in individual volumes. Most of the works in this exhibit were indeed published in 2020, before the Delta and Omicron variants existed.

Focus Panel:

Zinesters, through this popular, quick, and inexpensive means of expressing thoughts and opinions have many takes on the pandemic & its toll.

*Now the Water’s Boiling: The COVID Cookbook, 19 Pandemic Inspired Dishes*

N.p: The Word Distribution, 2020

In process

Anne Elizabeth Moore

*Tips, Gags & Jokes for Girls in Captivity: A Pressing Concern Book Mark*

Chicago: Pressing Concern Books, 2020

In process

Jim Donaghey

*It’s Going to be Anarchy: Anarchist Analyses of the Coronavirus Pandemic*

Portland: Microcosm Publishing, 2020

In process

Tim Spock

*Imprisoned with COVID-19*

Portland: Microcosm Publishing, 2021

In process

Karine Lacombe and Fiamma Luzzati

*La médecin: une Infectiologue au temps du corona*

Paris: Stock, 2020

PN6747.L336 M43 2020 c.1

Telling the story from the doctor’s perspective, Lacombe, who specializes in infectious diseases, confronts COVID-19 and its effects, as well as her life as a female doctor.

Víctor Coyote

*Días de Alarma*

Barcelona: Salamandra Graphic, 2020

f PN6777.C696 D53 2020 c.1 Gen

[Days of Alarm] explores the frightening onset of the pandemic, which affected Spain severely in the early months.

A vos masques!: 120 dessins de presse

Paris: Gallimard, 2020

PN6746.A12 2020 c.1 Gen

Ethan Dacks, Dalibor Talajić, and Lee Loughridge

*COVID Chronicles: True Stories from the Front Lines of COVID-19*

New York: Artists, Writers & Artisans, 2020

In process

*COVID Chronicles: A Comics Anthology*

University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press/Graphic Mundi, 2021

RA644.C67 C668 2021 c.1 Crerar

Focus Panel: Links for QR Codes:

To view a range of comics about the COVID-19 pandemic, scan these QR codes.

Graphic Medicine website collection: <https://www.graphicmedicine.org/covid-19-comics/>

Comics in the Time of Covid-19 research group: <https://www.covidcomics.org/ahrc-project/C>

# Mental Health

One of the earliest subjects of autobiographical comics and zines is mental health, as creators courageously approach an often stigmatizing and shameful topic that may negatively affect the way that they are seen including in the workplace. Creatively utilizing the interplay of image and text, these artists endeavor to represent their inner state of being in ways that communicate a profoundly individual experience to a wider audience. A strength of comics is their ability to simultaneously express multiple feelings and self-perceptions, visually expressing emotions and feelings.

Kevin Budnik

*Handbook*

Chicago: Kevin Budnik, 2016

PN6727.B83 H3632 2016 c.1 Gen

Budnik writes and draws about life with an eating disorder, first through a zine and then converting that format into a comic.

Kevin Budnik

*Epilogue: A Diary*

Chicago: One Percent Press, 2016

PN6727.B83 E656 2016 c.1 Gen

Isabella Rotman

*Burn Your Demons*

Chicago: Isabella Rotman, 2015

NC 1429.R7662 B87 2015 c.2 Rare

KNL

*Qu’est-ce qui monte et qui descend??: Chroniques d’une borderline*

Paris: Marabout, 2018

PN 6747.K6547 2018 c.1 Gen

The anonymous author tells of life in and out of a psychiatric hospital as a person diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

*So as Not to Suicide: A Survival Manual*

Chicago: Publisher not identified,

PM6727.S637 2010z c.1 Rare

Daniel D. Teoli Jr., ed.

*Cutters: There is Nothing I Hate More than Myself*

Pittsburgh: Daniel D. Teoli, 2014

N7433.4.T46 C88 2014 c.1 Gen

Courtney Cook

*The Way She Feels: My Life on the Borderline in Pictures and Pieces*

Portland: Tin House, 2021

RC569.5 B67 C666 2021 c.1 Crerar

Charles Burns

*Black Hole*

New York: Pantheon Books, 2005

PN6727.B87 B53 2005 c.1 Gen

# Expanding Graphic Medicine

Traditionally, the focus of graphic medicine has very much been on that of “medicine”—a patient, a condition, a care-giver, a doctor, and a hospital. There has been a strong emphasis on public health and the use of didactic comics to work with patients, as well as an increase in the use of memoir and fictional comics to assist patients with similar situations.

In the 21st century, the field examines itself in regard to under-represented groups and intersectionality. As the historical documents attest, medicine lacks racial, cultural, and gender diversity. Additionally, the stories of the sufferers provide insight into the gap between the healthcare system and the patients it claims to serve. While such groups as the Graphic Medicine International Collective bridge the distance among groups that fall under the graphic medicine umbrella, there remain distinctions between healthcare workers and those creators representing groups outside of that community, for example, aid workers and refugees.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to think more broadly about wellness, medicine, and public health in an increasingly connected world. How do we look beyond medicine, often practiced at the individual level, and think about health and illness at community and global levels? In recent years, Graphic Medicine has expanded its scope of inquiry and practice to include such topics as refugees, migrants, and the environment. Here again there is distance between creator and subject, in which the person responsible for the work is more often an observer rather than a participant in the crisis. Yet, as with many graphic medicine works, they bear witness to the harms and trauma inflicted by broader geopolitical systems.

The works on this wall represent Syrian & Vietnamese refugees, life under the Khmer Rouge, the rebuilding of Puerto Rico, and the effects of climate change.

Hamid Sulaiman and Francesca Barrie

*Freedom Hospital: [A Syrian Story]*

London: Jonathan Cape, 2017

PN6790.S95 F74 2017 c.1 Gen

Don Brown

*The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees*

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018

DS98.6 .B76 2018 c.1 Gen

Tian and Helge Dascher

*Year of the Rabbit*

Montréal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2020

DS554.82.T5313 2020 c.1 Gen

Gaby von Borstel and Peter Eickmeyer

*Liebe Deinen Nächsten: Auf Rettungsfahrt Im Mittelmeer an Bord Der Aquarius. 1*

Auflage: Splitter, 2017

f HV640.4.E8 B677 2017 c.1 Gen

Alexander Gallagher et al.

*120 Project Anthology*

N.p.: Mertzenheim Productions, 2021

In process

Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez

*Ricanstruction: Reminiscing & Rebuilding Puerto Rico*

New York: Somos Arte, LLC, 2018

In process

Leila Abdelrazaq

*Baddawi*

Charlottesville: Just World Books, 2015.

DS80.55.P34 A234 2015 c.1

G. B. Tran

*Vietnamerica: A Family's Journey*

New York: Villard Books, 2010

E184.V53 T73 2010 c.1 Gen

Jake Halpern and Michael Sloan

*Welcome to the New World*

New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2020

PN6727.H2577 Wel 2020 c.1 Gen

Mana Neyestani

*Petit Manuel Du Parfait Réfugié Politique*

Bussy-Saint-Georges: Çà et là, 2015.

DC34.5.I65 N49 2015 c.1 Gen

Jon B. Cooke and Ronald E. Turner

*Slow Death Zero: The Comix Anthology of Ecological Horror*

San Francisco: Last Gasp, 2020

PN6727 .S5369 2020 c.1

# Pedestals

Wound Man

Hans von Gersdorff

*Feldtbuch der Wundartzney*

Augspurg: H. Stayner, 1530

f R128.6.F7 1529 c.1 Crerar

“Wound man” is a medieval icon representative of early medical images that were often infused with a sense of humanity. Depicting a variety of wounds and trauma, the image was not meant as a surgical diagram, but as a character—he elicits sympathy from the viewer. Standing in stoic defiance despite the trauma inflicted upon him, he exemplifies the narrative body, onto which is inscribed the harms and wounds of human existence.  In an almost comical way, his pain and vulnerability is palpable, forcing viewers to imagine the experiences and calamities that he has endured. Existing in a surgical text, he is emblematic of the absurdity of our achievements: the brutality we inflict upon one another and the knowledge and skills to repair the damage. The sense of artistry and humanity that exists in early medical imaging is later removed in favor of anatomical uniformity and realism for educational and scientific purposes. However, within contemporary works of graphic medicine, the artistic aesthetic is revived through the common use of the narrative medical diagram, often personalized and expressive of the illness experience.

Heroic Doctors

The overlap of the “golden” ages of medicine and comics in the mid-1900s resulted in medicine-themed series that glorified the practice of medicine and its clinicians. During this era of classic comic book superheroes and societal confidence in medicine, doctors and nurses became heroes performing life-saving acts not only in the hospital or operating room, but at the scene of a car accident or in the home of a dying child. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the narrative and aesthetics of “healthcare workers are heroes” resonate in contemporary comics.

Whether facing a challenging diagnosis, an ethical question or a criminal patient, the white-coated (and often white and male) physician solves the dilemma with clinical skills, resolve, and professionalism. The heroic narrative of medical history was also emphasized in comics like *Real Heroes* and *True Life Comics*, with stories about Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, and Alexander Fleming told alongside those of war heroes and presidents. The comic book treatment of doctors during this era reaffirmed their social status and power that was emblematic of the “golden” age of medicine.

Max Brand (Frederick Schiller Faust)

*Dr. Kildare*, no. 3

New York: Dell Comics, 1962

On loan from Brian Callender

Al Feldstein and Carl Wessler, script; George Evans, Joe Orlando, Graham Ingels, and Reed Crandall, art

*M.D.*, no. 2

New York: EC Comics, 1955

On loan from Brian Callender

Joe Gill, script; and Vince Colletta, art

*The Young Doctors*, no. 4

Derby: Charlton Comics Group, 1963

On loan from Brian Callender

Heroic Nurses

Nurses also received heroic treatment. Yet their depictions and roles often upheld gender stereotypes and professional hierarchies. Focusing less on their clinical skills to cure and more on their clinical skills to comfort, the nurses in these narratives often had to navigate sexual tension between and emotional attachments to/from doctors or patients. The medical hierarchy, in which the nurse is subordinate to the doctor, is firmly entrenched in these stories, but provides an opportunity for heroism when a nurse challenges suspect or unethical physicians.

Joe Gill, script; Charles Nicholas and Vince Alascia, art

*Three Nurses*, no.22

Derby: Charlton Comics Group, 1964

On loan from Brian Callender

*The Nurses*, no.1

Poughkeepsie: Gold Key, 1963

On loan from Brian Callender

Jean Thomas, script; and Win Mortimer, art

*Night Nurse*, no.3

New York: Marvel Comics, 1973

In process

# Ando

During the 1800s, a “therapeutic revolution” swept medicine. Physicians’ abilities to diagnose and treat diseases expanded with innovations in sciences like microbiology, pathology, and physiology, the expansion of medical institutions like hospitals and laboratories, and radical technologies like vaccines, anesthesia, and x-rays. Doctors of the era often used these developments to justify new forms of professional organization, education, and regulation and assert a heroic narrative in which enlightened doctors improved society by sweeping away the quacks and dubious remedies of an earlier era.

While many physicians of the era celebrated their accomplishments, others remained skeptical and contested the claims and intentions of medicine’s ascendance. Could physicians routinely offer effective therapies to the sick? Were their motives suspect?

Coinciding with a revolution in print technology and the rise of widely disseminated illustrated magazines and newspapers, comics of the era richly illustrate the skepticism, contestation, and achievements of the therapeutic revolution. They provide a critical history of this era of medicine, drawn from outside the field and expressive of broader social and cultural concerns, ones that maintain contemporary resonance.

Read as if panels on a page, the images across this case follow the progression of the therapeutic revolution from critical depictions of physicians and dubious remedies to narrative depictions of illness before highlighting, yet remaining skeptical of, the successes of medicine. Illustrated newspapers depict educational and clinical spaces and draw attention to epidemics and public health issues. The last images highlight the scientific and pictorial turns that occur at the turn of the century.

William Hogarth

“The Harlot’s Progress”

*The Works of William Hogarth*

London: Baldwin & Craddock, 1835

ffND497.H7A28 c.1 Rare

Hogarth’s series *Harlot’s Progress* depicts the “moral fall” of Moll, a country woman who begins sex work upon arriving in the city. Here, Moll is dying from syphilis while two physicians quarrel over her treatment. About the room is evidence of failed remedies, including mercury, a clyster bag for enemas, an “anodyne” necklace, and opiates.

Richard Earlom

“Plate III—The Inspection”

“Plate VI—The Lady’s Death”

*Marriage à la mode: Engraved from the Original Pictures*

London: J & J Boydell, 1795-1800

ff ND497.H63A65 1795 c.1 Rare

Hogarth’s *Marriage-a-la-mode* critiques high society and physicians in depictions of an arranged marriage. In *The Inspection*, a syphilitic elite and a young prostitute consult a quack, whose office is decorated with symbols of quackery. In *The Lady’s Death*, the lady has committed suicide, while her child suffers from congenital syphilis. The doctor, meanwhile, is already out the door.

Thomas Rowlandson

“Medical Dispatch”

“The Dying Patient or Doctor’s Last Fee”

“A Going A Going”

“A Visit to the Doctor”

*Medical Caricatures*

New York: Editions Medicina Rara, 1971

ff NC1479.R85A4 1971 c.1 Rare

François Fabre

*Némésis médicale illustrée : recueil de satires, rev. et corr. avec soin par l'auteur; contenant 30 vignettes dessinées par M. Daumier, et gravées par les meilleurs artistes, avec un grand nombre de culs-de-lampe, etc.*

Paris: Bureau de la Némésis médicale, 1840

“The Physician of the Period” [reproduction]

*Puck*, December 22, 1897

George Cruikshank

“Water Therapy”

“Milk Therapy” [reproduction]

*The bachelor's own book: being the progress of Mr. Lambkin, (Gent.) in the persuit [sic] of pleasure and amusememt [sic], and also in search of health and happiness*

London: Sold by D. Bogue, 1844

NC1479.C83 1844 c.1

*Helen and Ruth Regenstein Collection of Rare Books*

George Cruikshank

*The bachelor's own book; or, the progress of Mr. Lambkin, (gent.), in the pursuit of pleasure and amusement, and also in search of health and happiness*

Glasgow: Bryce, n.d.

NC1479.C83 1844z c.1 Rare

Cruikshank’s *Lambkin* provides insight into health-seeking behaviors and the types of common remedies of the era, including milk therapy and hydrotherapy, which is given its own comical treatment in Onwhyn’s *Pleasures of the Water Cure*. These works highlight the tension between desiring a remedy but remaining skeptical about its effectiveness.

Thomas Onwhyn

Pleasures of the Water Cure

London: Rock & Co, 1857

f RM810.O59 1857 c.1 Rare

“Patent-Medicines” [reproduction]

*Puck*, September 14, 1881

“Death’s-head Doctors—Many Paths to the Grave” [reproduction]

*Puck*, August 3, 1881

“The Physicians and the Patient” [reproduction]

*Puck*, April 29, 1885

William Combe

“The Quack Doctor” [reproduction]

*The English Dance of Death: From the designs of Thomas Rowlandson, with metrical illustrations*

London: Printed by J. Diggens, published at R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1815-1816

PR3359.C5E6 1815 c.1 v.ii Rare

George Cruikshank

“The Cholic” [reproduction]

“The Blue Devils” [reproduction]

Cruikshankiana: an assemblage of the most celebrated works of George Cruikshank

London: M’Lean, 1835

f NC1479.C91A5 c.1 Rare

Horace Mayhew

*The Tooth-ache*

London, D. Bogue, 1849

PR4989.M52T67 1849 c.1 Rare

Notable for its unique format, *The Toothache* depicts comical attempts to remedy a common malady, making note of a variety of ineffective home remedies before succumbing to the success of the dentist. Cruikshank demonstrates a graphic dexterity, using close-ups, physical gestures, and motion to create an engaging and kinetic narrative.

James Gillray

“Three Sick Figures” [reproduction]

“Taking Physick” [reproduction]

“Gentle Emetic” [reproduction]

“Breathing a Vein” [reproduction]

“Charming Well Again” [reproduction]

*The Works of James Gillray*

London: C. Whiting, 1851

NC1479.G5A2 c.1 Rare

“The Bottle Imp” [reproduction]

*Harper’s Weekly*, April 11, 1874

“A Day in Bellvue Hospital” [reproduction]

*Once a Week Illustrated Newspaper*, January 20, 1891

“The New Hospital for Babies—Lexington Avenue” [reproduction]

*Once a Week Illustrated Newspaper*, September 30, 1890

“New York City—Medical College for Women” [reproduction]

*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, April 16, 1870

Louise Ibels

“IV—Aprés la visite Opéations”

“V—Aprés la visite: Pansements”

“VI—Visite des docteurs”

*Une Journée à l'Hopital*

Paris: n.p., 1916

ff NC1763.S5I34 1916

*The Daily Graphic*, September 11, 1878

*The Daily Graphic*, September 16, 1878

Rodolphe Töpffer

*Monsieur Pencil*

Paris: Librairie de Garnier frères, 1861

NC1499.T6 A4 1861 c.1 Rare

In this sequence, Tӧpffer comments on those who profit from death and epidemics. In the first image, physicians declare that the patient died of cholera. Afterwards, the pharmacist rubs his hand in excitement while those in the funeral business drink on credit, anticipating an increase in business.

“The Trailing Skirt: —Death Loves a Shining Mark” [reproduction]

*Puck*, August 8, 1900

“The Tenement House of New York”

*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, July 1, 1865

“The Streets of New York” [reproduction]

*Harper’s Weekly*, February 26, 1881

“Pasteur in his Laboratory” [reproduction]

*Once a Week Illustrated Newspaper*, October 7, 1890

“The Pasteur Institute for Treating Persons Bitten by Dogs” [reproduction]

*Once a Week Illustrated Newspaper*, November 4, 1890

“How Antitoxines are Developed” [reproduction]

*Harper’s Weekly*, January 5, 1881

“Partners in the Bogie Business” [reproduction]

*Puck*, August 8, 1900

“The New Photography” [Reproduction]

*Harper’s* Weekly, February 22, 1896

Focus Panel: Scientific and Pictorial Evolutions

By the end of the century, scientific knowledge allowed physicians to successfully prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases. Illustrated print media chronicled these advances with a technological revolution of their own as a pictorial turn towards photography documented medicine’s accomplishments. While many saw heroism in these contributions of medicine, others saw old conspiracies in new packaging.

# Contemporary Graphic Medicine

Late in the 20th century, underground comics, zines, and graphic memoirs increasingly addressed often stigmatized or neglected health concerns. Coinciding with the patients’ advocacy movement, graphic narratives of the illness experience offered patient perspectives from within an increasingly corporatized, depersonalized, and complex healthcare system. Healthcare workers, too, were turning to comics to express their experiences. Within this environment, graphic medicine as a field of inquiry and practice emerged to connect scholars and practitioners. Coined in 2007, graphic medicine is commonly defined as “the intersection between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare.” Intentionally broad, the field embraces a wide range of topics and practices, including reading and creating comics, patient education, advocacy, and medical and humanities education. As the contemporary materials attest, comics address an expansive range of health topics across a variety of styles and formats. Importantly, they also reflect a diverse range of experiences from groups that have historically been marginalized or neglected. This exhibit reframes graphic medicine within a deeper historical context, situating these contemporary works within the history of comics to both reflect upon the past and contemplate the future. Collectively these works bear witness to this moment and will become the future’s historical artifacts, not only providing a “sufferers’ history—medical history from below,” but challenging the traditional history of medicine by elevating the voice of sufferers and care providers to an equal level of importance and inquiry.