



MATERIALITIES OF COMICS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**COMICS AND SOCIETY: RESEARCH, ART, AND CULTURAL POLITICS
NORDIC SUMMER UNIVERSITY WINTER SYMPOSIUM
20-22 FEBRUARY 2019, AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK**

Organized in collaboration by Nordic Summer University, Centre for Literature Between Media & School of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University

**POST-SYMPOSIUM FESTIVAL:
COPENHAGEN COMICS, 23-24 FEBRUARY 2019**

We invite scholars, students, artists, and other professionals working with comics to the first symposium of the network *Comics and Society: Research, Art, and Cultural Politics* (2019-2021). *Comics and Society* is an interdisciplinary three-year initiative that aims to cultivate our understanding of comics as a social and socially defined phenomenon and to strengthen the status of comic art and comics scholarship in the Nordic-Baltic region. Through academic discussion, artistic work, and social engagement we explore how comics take part in making sense of societies, social phenomena, and societal changes especially, but not exclusively, in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

In our first symposium **Materialities of Comics** we want to open up the physical body of comics and explore how they work in the material world around us. Comics creators today are experimenting with the materiality and mediality of comics to a high degree, but comics have always been material. Launching an inquiry into the materialities of comics requires us to consider several perspectives—binding and media, size and length, digital modes. In addition, it forces us to take into account the broader historical, political, and geographical contexts of comics. We need to understand comics as a part of the larger networks of the world—social, cultural, monetary and more. Moreover, investigating the materialities of comics also means that we have to actually open the comics and consider the links between form and content; how images, text and other entities work together in the page layout to form meanings, emotions, stories, and opinions. The goal of this symposium is to investigate comics in a variety of material, medial, and historical contexts to expand our understanding of how comics as a medium works in our contemporary societies.

Some of the focal questions of the symposium are:

- What does form mean for content? How do paper size and shape affect panel or page layouts? How does seriality affect storytelling, and in which ways do print, colour and pens shape the final work?
- How can we talk about the connection between art and material? What kind of a role does digitality play in thinking about materiality? How can material experiments in comics help to investigate the relationship between art and material?
- How should we investigate the historical, political, and geographical contexts of comics? What are the social contexts in which comics are created and read, printed and archived, bought and sold?
- What is the relationship between comics and the book as an object and what kinds of meanings can be attributed to different comics formats (special editions, hardcover collections, trade paperbacks etc.)? How does materiality relate to questions of cultural value?
- What happens when comics are adapted to a different medium or culture? What is the relationship between comics and other forms of art (literature, fine art, theatre, film, photography, etc.)?
- How do we understand comics in the new media landscape—in the light of comixology and Instagram, crowdfunding and scanlations, memes and webcomics? What is the future of comics as a medium?

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Christina Meyer (University of Hamburg)

Dr. Lukas R.A. Wilde (University of Tübingen)

INVITED ARTISTS

Sofie Louise Dam (Denmark): *Fortress* (2017)

Signe Parkins (Denmark): *Tusindfryd* (2017)

Rune Ryberg (Denmark): *Gigant* (2014)

Christian Skovgaard (Denmark/UK): *Picking Up Pieces* (2014)

POST-SYMPOSIUM EVENT: COPENHAGEN COMICS

The biannual comics festival Copenhagen Comics takes place in Copenhagen 23-24 February, right after the symposium. We would like to invite all the participants to join us at the festival to continue exploring the different aspects of comics and to engage with the Danish comics scene. You find more information about the festival here: <http://copenhagencomics.dk/>

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

We are mainly looking for presentations of 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion. However, it is also possible to present in some other format if it suits you better. We welcome contributions from academics, artists, and other professionals interested in comics. Please submit your proposal (max 300 words) and a short bio (max 200 words) to the organizers Laura Antola (lahean@utu.fi), Felix Kühn Paulsen (felixkpaulsen@cc.au.dk), and Anna Vuorinne (ahvuor@utu.fi).

If you would like to attend the symposium without presenting, please email a short bio and tell about your interests to participate.

The deadline to submit proposals is November 15, 2018. Notifications of accepted presentations will be sent before the preliminary program is announced on December 15, 2018 on <http://nordic.university/study-circles/9-comics-society-research-art-cultural-politics/>.

REGISTRATION AND FEE

Students, freelancers, unemployed: 300 DKK
Those associated with institutions: 400 DKK

This cost includes meals (lunches, coffee breaks, and conference dinner) as well as conference materials.

We encourage the participants to apply to their institutions, art councils, local foundations or sponsors to have their travel and accommodation costs covered. For those who cannot get any financial support elsewhere it is possible after the symposium to apply to NSU for some travel funding.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NORDIC SUMMER UNIVERSITY

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Nordic network for research and interdisciplinary studies. NSU is a nomadic, academic institution, which organises workshop-seminars across disciplinary and national borders. Since it was established in 1950, Nordic Summer University has organised forums for cultural and intellectual debate in the Nordic and Baltic region, involving students, academics, politicians, and intellectuals from this region and beyond.

Decisions about the content and the organisational form of the NSU lay with its participants. The backbone of the activities in the NSU consists of its thematic study circles. In the study circles researchers, students and professionals from different backgrounds collaborate in scholarly investigations distributed regularly in summer and winter symposia during a three-year period. For more information: www.nordic.university



Art: Christian Skovgaard