

Call for Proposals

Comics in the Nordic Region

Comics and Society: Research, Art, and Cultural Politics

Nordic Summer University Winter Session

17–19 March 2021

Turku, Finland / Online

We invite scholars, students, artists, and other professionals working with comics to the fifth 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.

After four successful symposia around the Nordic-Baltic region, the three-year cycle of Comics and Society is slowly coming to its end. In these uncertain times, communities and networks have proven to be more important than ever. Even though it is not possible to meet face to face and get together in the same physical space, we would like to invite you to join us once again in our community. In our fifth symposium “Comics in the Nordic Region”, we collaborate with our sister network Narrative and Violence, celebrate the work that has already been done by the members of our network, as well as make some plans for the future.

At this point, the plan is to organize the symposium as a hybrid event online and at the University of Turku, Finland. Final decision on the format will be made closer to the event.

We welcome proposals in three separate tracks:

1. Themed Seminar: Racialised Violence and Comics in the Nordic Region and Beyond

Organized in collaboration with NSU study circle Narrative and Violence

In this collaborative seminar, we will explore questions arising from narratives of violence produced against racial and ethnic minorities and groups, with the specific focus on the medium of comics. We are interested in bringing together international scholars from multiple disciplines in order to investigate the role of narrative as a resource for motivating, justifying and rationalizing structural violence, discrimination and mass violence. We encourage proposals that examine the influence of comics narratives (both fictional and non-fictional) as well as the work of activist artistic movements that counter violent narratives and reflect on how to shape a possible, multicultural and inclusive future. We especially welcome proposals dealing with comics and comics cultures in the Nordic region.

Possible questions include (but are not limited to):

- What is the role of comics as a medium in the construction of violent narratives?
- What is the social process by which violent narratives are produced and sustained?
- Can violent narratives be disassembled?
- How are narratives recycled and reused, multidirectionally, across different historical events, cultures, and social contexts?
- Are some persons more predisposed to appropriating violent narratives?

More information on Narrative and Violence study circle and the full call for papers of their symposium, please see: <http://nordic.university/study-circles/4-narrative-violence/>.

If you are interested in participating in the seminar, please send proposals for papers, workshops, roundtables and performances (max. 300 words) with a title and a short biographical statement (100 words) to narrativeandviolence@gmail.com, ahvuor@utu.fi and lahean@utu.fi. If you are interested to attend both symposia, please indicate that in your proposal.

2. Comics Studies in the Nordic Region Workshop: Work-in-progress and Future Plans

This workshop brings people studying comics in the Nordic region together to discuss their work-in-progress and future plans in the form of a paper seminar. Are you working on an article or a chapter, a research plan, an idea paper or a funding application on which you would like to get feedback from your comics studies colleagues? In this paper workshop, we will share our work-in-progress and future plans with others and get feedback from others in a collegial spirit. All papers will be shared with other participants a couple of weeks before the workshop. If you want to participate in the workshop, please send us (ahvuor@utu.fi and lahean@utu.fi) a short proposal describing the paper/project you would like to present.

3. A Book Party: New Research on Comics in the Nordic Region and Beyond

Last but not least, we would like to showcase research done by members of our network in the form of a book party! All those who have participated in our events in the past two years and recently published a book in comics studies, in English or any of the Nordic languages, please contact us to be featured in this celebratory event. Please send details about your book to ahvuor@utu.fi and lahean@utu.fi.

IMPORTANT! Please note that the deadline to submit all proposals is **December 1, 2020**. Decisions of acceptance will be sent by December 15, 2020.

In addition to the collaborative seminar, the paper workshop, and the book gala, we would like to discuss the future of Nordic collaboration in the comics (studies) scene. While Comics and Society initiative is coming to an end, it does not mean that our collaboration and the network has to. Maybe someone is interested in writing a proposal to continue the circle under NSU, or maybe we will come up with something completely different. All ideas for future networking are welcome!

There will be a participation fee for the symposium, which is the **Nordic Summer University annual membership fee of 25 € (regular), or 10 € (those with low income)**. The membership fee facilitates the existence of the Nordic Summer University, which is a volunteer-based organisation.

We are looking for ways to gather in Turku for a small face-to-face event. If this is possible, it means that a small participation fee for covering lunches and/or coffee might be charged. As we approach March, we will inform all interested participants about this.

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. NSU builds on the values of equality, inclusion, and sustainability by combining two traditions: the continental ideals of learning and cultivation of the self, and the Nordic heritage of folkbildning and self-organization, with its investments in open-access education and collaboration through participation and active citizenship.

For more information: www.nordic.university