

The Graphic Novel: An Introduction

This book provides both students and scholars with a critical and historical introduction to the graphic novel. Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey explore this exciting form of visual and literary communication, showing readers how to situate and analyze the graphic novel since its rise to prominence half a century ago. Key questions that are addressed include: What is the graphic novel? How do we read graphic novels as narrative forms? Why are page design and publishing format so significant? What theories are developing to explain the genre? How is this form blurring categories of high and popular literature? Why are graphic novelists nostalgic for the old comics? The authors address these and many other questions raised by the genre. Through their analysis of many well-known figures – including Bechdel, Clowes, Spiegelman, and Ware – Baetens and Frey offer significant insight for future teaching and research on the graphic novel.

Jan Baetens is professor of cultural and literary studies at the University of Leuven. His main research areas are modern French poetry and word and image studies, mainly in so-called minor genres such as comics, photonovels, and novelizations. He is the author of some fifteen volumes (among which is a classic volume on Tintin, *Hergé écrivain*, published in 2006) and has published widely in journals such as *Critical Inquiry*, *PMLA*, *History of Photography*, *Poetics Today*, *Yale French Studies*, *Poétique*, *English Language Notes*, *Romanic Review*, and *French Forum*. In 2007–2008 Baetens was the holder of a Belgian Francqui Chair, and the same year he was awarded the triennial prize of poetry of Francophone Belgium.

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AN INTRODUCTION

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