COMIC ARTS: APPROACHABLE MEANS FOR DISSEMINATING

A FEMINIST MESSAGE ON AGING.

By

Joni Taylor

BFA Illustration, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, 2014

A THESIS SUPPORT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF ART + DESIGN

2017

ABSTRACT

This supporting thesis attempts to argue for the use of comics and comic arts as an effective visual language with which to disseminate the question of female ageism (prejudice or discrimination on the basis of one's age). Through familial and self-reflexive references, my hope is to bring attention to the ubiquitous yet undervalued loss of voice of the middle-aged woman by means of an art form that has historically been dismissed within the fine art world.

Through minimal black and white line-work, 2D comic-art iterations are placed in the gallery as a representation of the struggle middle-aged women have endured for a place in contemporary Western society. While intersectional feminism attempts to include all races, economic and social demographics within feminist discourse, ageism has been a silently pervasive phenomenon.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to:

The Emily Carr Community — technicians, instructors, supervisors, colleagues and course leaders who have taken the time to consider my work and offer generous support and feedback.

My 2017 Low Res Cohort — The successful completion of my MFA would not have been possible without the support and camaraderie gained through this close group of women. Your responses, critiques and now friendships, have been invaluable to the development of my praxis.

My family — Your support and patience for graciously excusing my three-year absence has greatly aided in the focus of this work — I miss you all. Put the kettle on, I'm almost done.

And last but not least, my girls — You are strong, confident and creative. You are unique and thoughtful, believing in kindness, justice and equality above all. You are my inspiration.

DEDICATION

To Rome, Ezekiel, Isaiah + Daniel with love.

May you know a world where equality is not in question.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout this Master of Fine Arts program, my interest has been exploring the use of comics and related forms (comic strips and illustrated caricature) that are sometimes grouped together as "comic arts" as a means of disseminating a feminist message–in particular, the invisibility of women as they age. The work for the final exhibition is an investigation into placing cartoon images of elderly women in the gallery space to explore how representations of the aging woman 'read' within a gallery environment. How does the gallery provide a platform for agency and/or recognition of the older woman's autonomy, authority and knowledge? I chose comic stylized drawings techniques as a tool for assessing the social and political 'invisibility' of women within Western culture, as they age. My assumptions about the lack of regard for the older woman are based on my personal experiences. For example, I have experienced strange and debilitating phenomenon where one is spoken-over and/or dismissed within social contexts. I have witnessed my mother acquiesce within public and domestic environments, receding into a position of invisibility. I have also listened to other women acknowledge and question the lack of respect afforded to them as they age. To be clear, my research involves the sphere of my lived experience in North American and British society where women have been objectified in their youth and dismissed as they age. As I consider my matriarchal examples, do I concede to this lack of agency based on my familial role models and perceptions shaped in childhood? This question is germane to my use of autobiography.

Though my interest in this subject matter was evident prior to my entry into the MFA program at Emily Carr, I came to realize that my process was not driven primarily by the social critique or the personal narrative outlined above, but by an investigation of the genre of comics and its visual

vocabularies. In the first semester, my cohort was presented with a body of literature as an aid to determining the orbit of one's practice. The literature pointed to two possibilities: one, art practice that was primarily method (tools and techniques), while the second focused on methodology (thematic concerns). The readings explained that most practices contain both, but in varying degrees. My initial response was that the trajectory of my practice was decidedly method. For example, as an illustrator, I default to the process of drawing narratives as a critical expression in the form of comics. However, as the program progressed, the notion of comic arts as a methodology as well as a method began to emerge. Comics (I have discovered) are my methodology and the tool with which I choose to engage. This program has afforded me the opportunity to explore issues and notions meaningful to my praxis, such as female agency and in particular, female ageism (broadly defined as discrimination of the ageing woman). My aim was to produce work that offers insights into the social and cultural phenomena of ageing and to reach a broader audience through the genre of comic arts, by virtue of its physicality (i.e., through the distribution of printed matter) and its capacity to expose biases and prejudices. In their critical and historical introduction to the graphic novel, Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey, consider Alison Bechdel, Julie Doucet, Rutu Modan, Trina Robbins and Marjane Satrapi as importantly contributing to the growth and validation of the graphic novel in virtue of their discussions of complex personal, social and political issues.[1] They suggest that, "In the last three decades [Bechdel, Doucet, Modan, Robbins and Satrapi], have produced graphic novels that are widely recognized as adding to our culture…"(3) These female artists (and the ones included in the body of my research) propagate their messages beyond the walls of the gallery and into the

[1] Baetens, Jan, and Hugo Frey. *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

public sphere in the form of daily or weekly strips in magazines, newspapers, online web-comics, or published as zines, graphic novels, travelogues and memoirs. This essay, therefore, includes my research of several female comic artists who speak from an autobiographical position, relating insights about daily life that transform the way we think about complex universal topics such as death and loss, mental illness, notions of 'normal life' etc. For example, Bechdel's memoir, *Fun Home* interrogates the notion of death; sickness is at the heart of Sarah Leavitt's account of her mother's struggle with Alzheimer's Disease in *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me*; familial history central to Satrapi's book, *Persepolis*; the functions and dysfunction of everyday life is scrutinized in Doucet's, *My New York Diary* and Lynda Barry's fusion of fact and fiction in her comics which interrogate assumptions about knowing the world in what she calls 'Autofictionography'. These women speak from an intimate space, from their personal experience. Their strategies are the context that informs my own praxis, understood through a reflection on my own lived experience. This paper attempts to argue that the autobiographic narrative not only captures an 'authentic' voice, (i.e., is a tool for revealing the thoughts and feelings an individual author), but also provides a powerful method for communicating more complex universal themes. This raises three questions:

1. What role can comic arts, comic-stylized rendering and, by default, humour, play in facilitating an analysis of the psycho-social problems of aging?
2. How can comic arts operate in terms of representing aging without furthering the objectification of women?
3. How do personal experiences and family history inform an examination of the topic of aging?

INVISIBILITY + THE AGING WOMAN

The unavoidable physiological progression of female aging leads to inevitable disappearance — the spinal column compacts deceasing one's corporeal presence, hair turns white as colour pigment fades, uteruses prolapse, earlobes elongate and creep toward the earth and skin loses its elasticity as the whole body spirals slowly downward back into dust, succumbing to gravity. Is this the aging woman's 'spectacle' as Mary Russo posits in her essay on the *Female Grotesque*– her notion of, "…the older woman making a spectacle of herself." She recalls hearing the phrase as a child which left her with the distinct impression that, as a woman ages, she is meant to be quiet and reserved, in essence, make herself as small, unseen and unheard as possible. As a child, I too heard this derogatory expectation aimed toward the aging woman and recall the impression it left—I worried about making a spectacle and therefore gravitated toward hiding and invisibility. Russo recalls these women were, "…possessors of large, aging dimpled thighs displayed at public beaches…"[2] She describes how she was implanted with the perception that the signs of aging were shameful, in need of being covered-up. Her essay was first published in 1986, but I'm not sure if her notion of the grotesque toward aging women has changed measurably.

Feminist theory posits the objectification of women as pervasive in Western society and decidedly problematic. In their collection of critical essays, *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory* , Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury state that as they were designing feminist theory courses they decided, "…to use the female body as the

[2] Russo, Mary. "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory." *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*(1986): 213-29. Web.

organizing principle. In academic fields the body is the topic generating the most exciting new research and the most interdisciplinary theoretical inquiry."[3] They continue to state that our understanding of the female body is "…constructed through ideologies, discourse and practices." However, as a woman ages, the opposite phenomenon occurs — complete denial of other — an insidious form of silent oblivion. Not hatred or disgust, but absolute dismissal. In their essay entitled, *Ageism and Feminism: From Et Cetera to Centre*, Toni Calasanti, Kathleen Slevin and Neal King posit, "...women grow invisible as sexual beings through the aging process—not only in terms of the disappearance of the desirous male gaze, but also in terms of neglect by younger members of the women's movement..."[4]

Nicola Streeten is an anthropologist and illustrator who was the first British woman to publish a graphic novel, *Billy and Me*, in 2011. Her comic artwork has been exhibited in group and solo shows and she recently completed her PhD dissertation entitled, *The Cultural History of British Feminist Cartoons and Comics 1970 –2010*, focusing on the role of comics in disseminating the feminist message. Her work on female ageism and in particular invisibility, parallels my research. Streeten's loosely rendered illustrations are light-hearted and ethereal, with gentle inked lines and soft watercolours. The text is satirical yet poignant. Her four-panel comic for the *Becoming of Age Series; Women Superheroes*,[5] is an affecting yet humorous study on female invisibility [fig 1]. Streeten's female protagonist sardonically asks if invisibility should be deemed a super power only to have her question completely unheard and unacknowledged. Streeten's work playfully

[3] Conboy, Katie, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury. *Writing on the body: female embodiment and feminist theory*. New York: Columbia U Press, 1997. Print. Pg. 8

[4] Calasanti, Toni M., et al. "Ageism and Feminism: From "Et Cetera" to Center." *NWSA Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. 13–30., doi:10.1353/nwsa.2006.0004.

[5] *Studies in Comics*; Dec 2016, Vol. 7 Issue 2, p355-358, 4p, 3, University of Sussex

addresses the lack of scholarly discourse surrounding the aging woman and noted gender studies professor and author, Kathleen Slevin concurs. In her essay, *If I Had Lots of Money…I'd Have a Body Makeover: Managing the Aging Body*,[6] she states, "I seek to challenge feminist scholars to incorporate aging into their gender analyses while also challenging scholars of aging to incorporate gender." She continues, "While the body has garnered significant attention in recent decades, scholarship largely ignores aging bodies."

Helene Moglen, Professor at the University of California, explores the impact of misogynistic ageism in her book *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel*. She writes, "When a misogynistic culture is committed to youth, as ours is, it seeks to eradicate the language, the concepts, and even the appearance of advancing age while bestowing on old women its most withering expressions of contempt."[7] Comparably, Leni Marshal quotes a lecture of Barbara MacDonald's in her essay, *Aging: A Feminist Issue*. Marshal states that MacDonald emphatically attacked feminist scholars at a 1985 convention where she intoned, "Has it never occurred to those of you in Women's Studies as you ignore the meaning and the politics of the lives of the women beyond our reproductive years, that this is male thinking? Has it never occurred to you as you build feminist theory that ageism is a central feminist issue?"[8]

Despite the criticism of feminist scholarship expressed by Slevin and MacDonald for its neglect of

[6] Slevin, Kathleen F. "If I Had Lots of Money…I'd Have a Body Makeover:" Managing the Aging Body." *Social Forces*, vol. 88, no. 3, Mar. 2010, pp. 1003-1020. EBSCO*host*, ezproxy.ecuad.ca:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=49094166&site=eds-live.

[7] Moglen, Helene. *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel.* University of California Press, 2001.

[8] Leni Marshall. "Aging: A Feminist Issue." *NWSA Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. vii-xiii. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4317180.

the aging issue, authors such as Marshal have in fact dedicated their efforts to the subject. She considers two recent events as a measurement of the progress the topic has gained. Marshal writes, "First the NWSA [National Women's Studies Association] governing council decided to focus an entire plenary on aging studies. Then the NWSA Journal agreed to devote a special issue to aging studies."[9] Indeed, Marshal's article critiquing the scholarly voice on aging is included in that very journal.

COMICS

The idea of combining text with images is not only intriguing but has survived for generations. From early cave drawings and hieroglyphs to contemporary comics, images are able to communicate in ways which defy conventional language barriers. Illustrated narratives have been used in various publications appealing to diverse demographics since the late nineteenth century. Graphic stories have the ability to appeal to a broad spectrum of audiences as the collaboration of images and text lends this art form an availability of message, i.e.: outside the gallery. One can easily traverse the narrative of well-placed and considered imagery with thoughtful text and dialogue denoted within the confines of speech bubbles.

Women in Comics

One of the earliest female comic artists, Rose O'Neil, won an illustration contest in 1895 at the age of thirteen. When she went to collect the prize, the judges didn't believe she was the artist, "…so they made her sit down and produce a drawing on the spot."[10]—the critics did not believe a

[9] Ibid

[10] Robbins, Trina, and Kristi Valenti. *Pretty in ink: North American Women Cartoonists 1896 - 2013.* Fantagraphics Books, 2013.

woman was capable of creating a drawing of that caliber. O'Neil went on to write and illustrate a serialized comic strip for *Truth Magazine* beginning a comic arts career spanning fifty years. The early to mid-twentieth century brought a strong female presence in North American comics from women artists. Cartoonists Ethel Hays, Virginia Huget, Virginia Kraussman, Gladys Parker and Dot Cochran, wrote and illustrated weekly comic strips. While still subjected to patriarchal hegemony, their characters were somewhat controversial as they went off to college, got jobs as writers in newspapers, politely hinted at drinking too much and wore men's clothes. Comic artist, Faye King, broke from the 'pretty girl' representations by putting herself into her comics as a strong, opinionated artist who resembled the later Olive Oyl (Popeye's Girlfriend)—characterized with long skinny limbs and nose [fig. 2]. King's female depictions have informed my notion of female representations in my comics as she rejected the flapper and the Betty Boop characterization—dim-witted, full-figured female illustrations of the mid 1900s and introduced a hyperbolic character who wasn't desired by the male gaze, rather, she was intelligent with ambition outside of the stereotypical domesticity of her era. The inclusion of women cartoonists in the comic industry, historically dominated by men, seems to have opened a discourse or a disruption of Western societal gender norms. Trina Robbins has been writing and illustrating comics for more than thirty years. She is one of the founding members of *Wimmen's Comix,* a politically conscious, all female comic collective which ran for twenty years from the early 70s to the late 90s and included contemporary women's issues [fig 3]. A proponent for women's voices in comic arts, Robbin's impetus behind creating an all women comic, was formed as a young child. She states, "I grew up under the assumption that although it says anybody could grow up to be President, really only boys could grow up to be President. That was the accepted assumption – no one even

questioned it."[11] During this time (mid 1970s), Joyce Farmer and Lyn Chevely created the collection, *Tits and Clits* as a reaction to sexism in male-produced underground comics. Chevely states, "The decision to be vulgar […] arose out of sheer ignorance. At the time, I owned a bookstore and sold UGs [underground comics] and was impressed with their honesty but loathed their macho depiction of sex."[12] Women have contributed to the growing genre of comic arts historically and in contemporary practice. I have found the uniqueness of the female voice a rich contributing factor in developing my own autobiographical voice and in particular to my thesis. Their ability to express nuances familiar to the female experience have greatly aided my confidence in expressing the vagaries of my experience as an aging woman.

Humour in Comics

Simon Critchley in his book, *On Humour,* states that humour changes the circumstances, "…humour is not just for comic relief [rather], a transient corporeal affect induced by the raising and extinguishing of tension, of as little social consequence as masturbation, although slightly more acceptable to perform in public."[13] He continues, in agreement with Sigmund Freud, that humour is a form of "liberation and elevation." The ability to laugh and laughter itself, can be a healing panacea. In his book, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Subconscious*, Freud states, "By the help of a joke, this internal resistance is overcome […], and the inhibition lifted."[14]

---

[11] Hicks, Olivia1 and Julia2 Round. "'WWWWD: What Would Wonder Woman Do?': An Interview with Trina Robbins." *Studies in Comics*, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 288-300. EBSCOhost , doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.288_7.

[12] Robbins, Trina, and Kristi Valenti. *Pretty in ink: North American Women Cartoonists 1896 - 2013*. Fantagraphics Books, 2013.

[13] Critchley, Simon. *On Humour*. London: Routledge, 2010. Print. pg 9

[14] Freud, Sigmund, James Strachey, and Angela Richerds. The Pelican Freud library, vol. 6: J*okes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Place of publication not identified: Penguin, 1976. Print.

Mad magazine's, inception in 1952, was rooted in underground subversion but its growth and popularity in the early 70s led it into a more main-stream publication with social and political commentary. The loosely rendered illustrations were the first appeal, as I followed the tiny, yet complex narratives played-out in the margins, I relished the satirical stories mocking contemporary culture, visual and performing arts, movies, books and politics. According to Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey in their book, *The Graphic Narrative: An Introduction*, publisher William Gains created *Mad* as a simple comic book yet it developed into a, "fully fledged adult satire magazine."[15] This idea of loosely held notions of seriousness was foundational in developing a need for light-hearted banter within my thematic concerns. The ability to hold lightly to one's notion of importance enables one to see other perspectives rather than closing one's mind. *Mad's* political and cultural satirical critiques informed generations of critical thinkers on current events and their perceived absurdity. This appealed to my teenaged angst and need for rebellion and it informed my desire to create work which disrupts parochial ways of seeing and thinking.

Hyperbole: Exageration + Overstatement

Author, Illustrator, and web-blogger, Allie Brosh, depicts the absurdity of the mundane on her website, hyperboleandahalf.ca. Her web-comics are rough and crudely drawn with what appears to be an outdated digital drawing program perhaps in an attempt to be ironic, yet each panel has an uncanny element of truth. She uses crudely exaggerated characters in her style and content. In one series, *Sneaky Hate Spiral*,[16] Brosh describes a sequence of events leading into a

[15] Baetens, Jan, and Hugo Frey. *The graphic novel: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Cambridge U Press, 2015. Print.
[16] Brosh, Allie. Hyperbole and a Half. http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.ca/2010/05/sneaky-hate-spiral.html

monstrously bad day. Her character is detectable as a woman with just a few simple lines and blocks of solid colour yet has no recognizable female physical attributes [fig. 4]. Through her use of exaggerated dialogue and embellished imagery, Brosh captures the reader's empathy and as an observer, I can place myself easily within the narrative as a relatable, every-day and common experience. Her dialogue and simple drawings are socially relevant with an exaggerated emphasis on the monotonous—like waking up to your least favourite song only to have it play over and over in your head all day long. Likewise, Julie Doucet also utilizes exaggeration in her reflexive and intimately revealing autobiographical graphic memoir, *My New York Diary*, which recounts her personal struggles as an emerging comic artist [fig. 5]. Her text and imagery are raw and detailed. Drawn in black and white, her characters appear dark, complex, and jarring. Her disturbing imagery portrays complicated relationships and issues surrounding self-loathing, drugs and sex in her early years as an artist.[17] Both Doucet and Brosch's subtle humour and easy, loose illustrations appeal to the notion of honest and vulnerable depictions of the female body which is foundational to my practice. Implicit in my rendering of female characters, is the playful notion of not taking oneself too seriously – attempted through loose, cartoony caricatures and hyperbole through exaggerated facial expressions and oversized body dimensions as a tool to capture the audience.

[17] Doucet, Julie. *My New York diary*. New York, NY: Drawn et Quarterly, 2013. Print.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My work is primarily informed by personal narratives. I feel that autobiography is a compelling force when creating artwork as one's personal narrative informs much of who they are, and as a woman, the stories of my matriarchal lineage have always interested me. Helene Cixous speaks of the necessity of women's written, autobiographical voice in her article, *The Laugh of the Medusa*:

> "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text as into the world and into history—by her own movement".[18]

Cixous's notion of the female voice and its necessity to be spoken *and* acknowledged, can be seen in graphic memoirs as an effective medium to deliver one's voice in a way which can be disseminated widely. I wrote and illustrated, *What Was Left Unsaid: Lies and Stories my Mother Never Told Me* as an historical account of my mother's life from her birth until her untimely death in 2009 [fig. 6]. My mother is the inspiration behind my research into female agency as she was raised during an era in Western Canada where the female voice was not considered. Even though the work's inception was encapsulated in the notion of female voicelessness and, in particular, my mother's demographics' lack of voice, as I researched her life I recognized the decreasing lack of voice as she aged. The retelling of her story is meant to give a form of posthumous agency to her life as I piece together memories which have been recapitulated through family members—my mother told me very little of her life. After painting the entire text on the Concourse Gallery wall for the Summer 2016 Interim Exhibition, *Pivot*, I recognized an unintentional symbolic moment of

[18] Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Feminisms*, 1991, pp. 334–349., doi:10.1007/978-1-349-22098-4_19.

justice for my mother's unspoken story. She had always claimed to be Jewish, although she was adopted and never knew her biological father and after her death a DNA test revealed that she was indeed 50% Jewish. I think of a Jewish proverb which implies that once words are spoken they never disappear but become atmospheric and change or add something to the narrative. Even though I painted over the text at the end of the Summer exhibition, her story remains, as a quasi-memorial, under a layer of flat, white paint.

During the mid 1960s, my mother was in the midst of 'homemaking'—women who married and had children in the era of second wave feminism were known as 'housewives', their societal worth attributed to their place in the home, supporting their husbands and children, relegated to the necessity of their families' care. During this era, Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* which spoke to this demographic through uncovering the patriarchal mentality of a woman's place being in the home. I'm fairly certain my mother never read Friedan's theories, but having read *The Feminine Mystique* myself, I can see my middle-aged, middle-class mother's frustrations captured through Friedan's writing which she calls 'the problem that has no name' as the women involved in Friedan's research similarly suffered from a lack of identity leading to depression and feelings of insignificance. Friedan writes, "Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, […] lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question, "Is this all?"."[19] My mother's demographic was, and is, Friedan's audience from the 60s, today's elderly women, who have been informed by the misogynistic hegemony of the 60s' (and earlier) gender role designations. One can ascertain that

[19] Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

women have gained a measure of influence and voice since Friedan's research, however, the invisibility of the aging woman is still pervasive.

INTROSPECTION

One year prior to beginning my grad studies, my marriage ended leading me into a traumatically trying time and both introspection and personal therapy aided me greatly in moving forward. When one is wounded, one enters into a season of self-examination as one heals. Autobiography can be a conduit for self-reflexivity and ultimately self-enlightenment. Alison Bechdel has used the graphic memoir as a means to not only reflect upon her own life but delve into exploring her own therapy sessions in her graphic novel, *Are You My Mother: A Comic Drama*.[20] I find her revealing and intimate writings coupled with her compelling illustrations personable and relatable. I cringe, at the exposure of her intimate therapy sessions; however, I appreciate being able to be a spectator and perhaps gain strength from Bechdel's experiences. Her first graphic memoir, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, explores her troubled relationship with her father. She states:

> "I finally sat down to write the book when I was forty, right at that weird midpoint in my life where my father had been dead for the same number of years he'd been alive...That meant confronting my father's artistic fixation head-on. I had to dismantle his inhibiting critical power over me before I could tell the story. But telling the story was the only way to do the dismantling."[21]

Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*: *The Story of a Childhood*, recounts her youth living through the Islamic Revolution. Her imagery is stark in flat black and white bringing a sense of distilled urgency

[20] Bechdel, Alison. *Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama*. Boston: Mariner, 2013. Print.
[21] Chute, Hillary L. *Graphic women: life narrative and contemporary comics*. Columbia University Press, 2010. Pg. 175

to her poignant narrative – the lack of detail reduces the reader's attention to that which the author intends one to focus on. Satrapi's memoir begins when she is a young girl living in a socially and politically progressive family in Tehran and retells her experiences through a child's perspective detailing her thoughts on family, popular culture, religion and politics. The childlike voice Satrapi appropriates juxtaposed with the simplistic drawings bring her audience into her lived-experiences. Art Spiegelman's account of his father's horrific experiences during the holocaust in *Maus*, are also rendered in black and white yet the imagery is more frenetic, causing the viewer to feel a sense of frantic unease as though his illustrations are prophesying of the impending horrors. Also revealed within the pages of Spiegelman's narrative is the troubled relationship between him and his aging father. Spiegelman's narration traverses back and forth through his patriarchal history from the present, where he depicts himself under the overbearing demands of his ailing father, to the past where the viewer follows his father's narration.

Another graphic memoir of note is Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go*. Katin is a survivor of the Holocaust and her memoir uses soft, coloured pencils to retell her personal struggle with revisiting her traumatic history. Her work is both personal memoir and public testament to a terrible time in history yet is a necessary part of her catharsis in coming to terms with her painful past. It is both intimate and revealing as she details poignant memories. Sarah Leavitt is a comic artist and lecturer at the University of British Columbia. Her first graphic memoir, *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me*, retells her experiences with her mother's illness and untimely death [fig. 7]. Leavitt's accessible, line drawn, black and white imagery balance a complicated and painful narrative. Her work is honest, affording her audience an unfettered view into her private struggle. One feels uncomfortable watching

Leavitt come to terms with her mother's impending death, yet also strangely welcome—as her prose has a way of disarming the viewer. On one particularly difficult night, Leavitt comforts her mother who has woken up crying, "Fuck, Donimo, she talks so much better when she's upset. Like the strong emotions somehow make her able to form a whole sentence. Oh, look! Law and Order! Unmute it!"[22] Leavitt infuses humour and humanity into her uncomfortable and painful personal narrative.

THE WORK

Coupled with my research on the graphic narrative is the thematic concern my work engages with; female agency — acknowledging the rights and dignity of the female gender through exploring and aggrandizing the female voice and the physicality of the ordinary, aging female. I use sculptural illustration as well as personal narratives to address and focus my inquiry into the perception of the aging woman's identity. My research developed through the three summer residencies:

<u>First Summer Residency, July 2015</u>

For the first summer residency exhibition in July 2015, my research explored caricatures of three women in various stages of aging [fig. 8]. Laser-cut from 1/4" cardboard, the figures were hyperbolized and playful, I used acrylic paint and markers to create the hand drawn/painted lines while leaving parts of the cardboard exposed as a generic skin-tone. My hope was to depict

[22] Leavitt, Sarah. *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimers, My Mother, and Me*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012. Print. page 87

women who were aging without fear of the critical phallocentric gaze, on a progressive trajectory of physical, psychological and spiritual (body, mind and soul) enlightenment. The closest figure was drawn as the eldest—she appeared to be emerging from the ground, seen only from the bottom of her oversized flaccid breasts, up to the top of her thinning hair. She was suspended five inches from the gallery wall to create a shadow adding an appearance of dimension. The eyes were concealed behind dark glasses, gaze cast down, depicted in the midst of old age with stereotypical diminishing hair, sagging breasts and elongated ears. The second figure was a middle-aged, full-body figure, smaller than the first figure and appeared to be slightly behind the older woman. She was suspended two inches from the wall, adding the same shadow as the first figure, and appeared to be defiantly returning the gaze of the viewer. She was meant to appear strong, determined and defiant, not interested in questioning the gaze, but setting her sights elsewhere. The third figure was approximately mid-forties and the smallest and furthest from the viewer. She was created to perform as an autonomous woman—as she cast her gaze upward in jouissance, as though her enlightenment had surpassed the critical eye of societal norms, but is otherworldly—extreme liberation, not based on carnal or corporeal pleasure, but derived from ethereal enlightenment.

The work was critiqued as a brutal depiction of aging women with their drooping breasts, thinning hair, and thickening mid-drifts—less desirous than societal norms of beauty. Likewise, Alice Neel creates her surrealistic nude women in distorted perspective to add to the notion of female vulnerability. Despite receiving harsh criticism of her seemingly grotesque representations, Neel maintains she depicts her female nudes honestly [fig. 9]. In this first Summer residency, my intent

was to represent real women unapologetically—defiant of the glaring critique of female body normativity, not conforming to societal standards. The comic stylization was intended to be approachable, playful, humourous—as if the women are not willing to argue for their appearance, rather they just are—they exist without a need for explanation.

Interim Exhibition, July 2016

My research for the interim exhibition focused on female voice and agency through hand-painting the entire text of my graphic memoir, *What Was Left Unsaid: Lies and Stories My Mother Never Told Me*, onto a forty-foot stretch of gallery wall in Emily Carr's Concourse Gallery [fig 10, 11] entitled, *The Writing on the Wall*. The title is meant to be a play on the biblical story where the hand of God appears and writes an important message on a wall. The text narrates my interpretation of my mother's struggle with agency from her childhood up until her death in 2009. Within this story is the impetus of my work—since my mother passed away, I have been considering the silence of her life and my need to retell, or more accurately, interpret her story.

Portrait artist and 2017 Turner Prize recipient, Lubaina Himid, states the motivation behind her work is that "...there are stories that need to be told. There are stories that are not being told—there are gaps in history, gaps that aren't filled, and I only know how to paint"[23]. Interestingly, Himid is the first person of colour and the oldest woman to receive the prestigious Turner Prize,

[23] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKiN2FHqYFU

a decided victory for intersectional feminism.[24] Her installation piece, *Naming the Money,* (2004) uses life-size cut-out figures, exploring the invisibility of the African diaspora [fig 12]. Himid uses the method at hand to tell stories that are not being told. The same is true of my work—hand-painting the narrative of my mother's life onto a white, pock-marked wall for an ephemeral exhibition—it was a story that had been left out from the pages of history yet needed to be told.

Fiona Banner uses blocks of text drawn and hand-painted onto walls to explore the problems and possibilities of written language as in her piece entitled, *Black Hawk Down* [fig 13]. Banner's work informed my interest in hand-written text on walls, and her audience responds to her work for its aesthetic appeal—often read as more of an image, than a narrative—which she calls wordscapes, much like landscapes of text. Likewise, with my installation, I was expecting a similar read as I expected the viewer to observe the work from a distance, see it in its entirety—not closely examine the narration, but consider its aesthetic appeal—therefore, the viewer's response was unexpected. I was surprised when many viewers took the time to read through the full story and many had emotive responses. Also unexpected was the audience's physical engagement; the text was written from left to right in forty-foot lines so the spectator had to walk the full forty-foot length to read a line, then walk back to the beginning of the second line and start again. Many viewers came back to the wall multiple times to finish reading and/or to reread.

[24] Brown, Mark. "Lubaina Himid becomes oldest artist to win Turner prize." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 5 Dec. 2017, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/dec/05/lubaina-himid-becomes-oldest-artist-to-win-turner-prize.

The work's installation involved a somewhat ritualistic cadence (which took fifty hours), a methodical dipping of the brush, looping of the letters, up and down a small step-stool and up and down the long line of wall. Most of the work took place during the evening when the university was dark and quiet, affording me time to consider the rhythm of my body as I recreated my mother's story. My father was a sign painter for over 50 years, apprenticing in Ireland with the body of his work produced in Canada. While, my focus was on my matriarchy, I felt as though I was appropriating a familial pattern through recreating my mother's story in hand-lettered text—the mode of my father's sustenance.

Included in the installation was one solo figure, *Joyce*, cut from ¾" plywood and painted in flat, black and white comic style—my mother, standing prescient over her story [fig. 11]. My hope was that she would receive a form of posthumous agency, or rather, for me, her daughter, to give her a form of agency. The figure was purposely created to appear in motion, with one foot stepping off the crafted plinth and facing away from her narrative as if leaving it and the plinth (representing a platform, a voice) behind [fig. 11].

Interestingly, the physicality of this work still remains—even though the installation was time-based (three-weeks) and was painted-over at the end of the exhibition, it is still there, underneath three layers of paint. The rest of my cohort de-installed their work, but my mother's story remains, painted-over, still on a prominent wall. The idea that her story remains interests me and adds weight to the idea that words, once they are spoken, can never be taken back.

Graduation Exhibition, July 2017

The final thesis exhibition research culminated in an oversized iteration of three aging women's faces, entitled, *Vase For Sale by Lady Slightly Cracked* [fig. 14-16], cut from one inch thick marine grade fir plywood. The faces were loosely rendered with black acrylic painted lines while the grain from the fir plywood was treated with a light stain to exacerbate their wrinkled and aged appearance—the lines of wood grain, adding an intentional layer of life lines. My hope was that the work would reveal an unabashed depiction of the aging female as one who has a story worth considering—to be counted as equal and confidently exist in a society which has historically dismissed her. Similar to Himid's notion of each character having a story of its own, it explores how one can bring the aging female into serious discourse in a gallery setting. I chose these particular faces by searching Google using 'aging women' and 'wrinkles' as the search parameters and appropriated the first three faces that it revealed. The faces were painted using a comic-art style of illustration—first pencil sketches, then inked lines and scanned into Adobe Illustrator where I created outlines which were cut on a CNC machine. The plywood was chosen intentionally for its density and striking fir veneer. The wood's grain, coupled with the irregularity of the hand-painted, black, illustrative lines were meant to add an element of significance or elegance to the faces. I painted the front of each head as a wrinkled face with the exposed grain enhanced through the light wood stain while the back of each piece was white-washed, hoping to capture an ethereal absence as they rotated away from the viewer and disappeared into the white gallery space. Each piece was suspended individually with a wire cable from the twenty-one-foot ceiling of the Charles H. Scott Gallery enabling it to swing and rotate independently, hopefully affording each face a form of autonomy and therefore, agency. As the faces rotated,

they would turn from the viewer revealing the white-painted backside and theoretically vanishing into the gallery space and rendering themselves invisible. I was curious to explore this as a symbol for the invisibility of the aging woman. This action was meant to be both playful and poignant—in recognition of the very real yet very problematic notion of invisibility of the aging woman as they rotated and disappeared from view.

The title, *Vase For Sale by Lady Slightly Cracked*, is the caption from one of the earliest sarcastic single-panel comics I can recall about aging women. It came from an edition of *MAD* magazine from a mock classified advertisement which depicted an older woman standing, eye-glasses askew, with a cracked vase in her wrinkled hands. I remember the play with sentence structure and how it made the message unclear. This absurd title, reflects a tongue-in-cheek social critique inherent in the work—that of the aging woman, relegated to a one-liner, a punch-line, of equal worth to a cracked vase.

CONCLUSION

After installing the work in the Charles H. Scott Gallery, I stood at a distance and experienced a sensation of being slightly underwhelmed, the pieces appeared dominated by the white-washed, light infused gallery. I was expecting the largess of the faces to fill the space and was worried they would be too obtrusive alongside the work of my cohort and possibly crowd their pieces. As I stood back observing, I realized my concern was pointless—there was plenty of room for the work to freely rotate and allow the viewer to walk amidst each piece as they hung collectively alongside my cohort's work. The 'white cube' seemed to reshape how I perceived my own work, not as obtrusive, but dignified, serious figures to be considered. I also wondered if my concern for taking up too much space was emblematic of my mistakenly inherent acquiescence to the notion of being small and invisible? Once they were hung, each piece was able to revolve independently which afforded them a sense of agency as they seemed autonomous with a will of their own.

As I stood reflecting, a tourist stopped to take a picture from the other side of the gallery window. As he pointed his camera, the piece in question slowly and almost deliberately spun away from the camera's probing eye. The tourist tried to follow the trajectory of the spin, but alas, the piece seemed to anthropomorphize and turned her white-washed back to his persistent gaze. Interestingly, this action added a level of frustration for all the viewers during the exhibition as there was no fixed location from which to observe. I found this added a question as I watched the audience try to observe the work throughout the exhibition—the level of frustration one experienced with the rotating faces seemed to be both playful and poignant. Did the work take on a feminist rebuff toward the lack of voice by turning its back to the viewer? Was the viewer captivated by this snub? Or did it cause them to lose interest?

The work addresses the questions raised through my MFA research; how to facilitate an analysis of the aging woman using personal narrative and comic arts as a stylistic choice. In particular, *The Writing on the Wall*, afforded the viewer an embodied experience as they faced both the aesthetics of the text taken from my graphic memoir, coupled with the 3D figure of its protagonist. This figure and the three faces in *Vase for Sale by Woman Slightly Cracked*, from the 2017 Thesis Exhibition, were confrontational in nature through their hyperbolic size and rendering. While these pieces might not have answered the questions, they brought a sense of unease to the idea of overlooking the aging woman.

I have observed artists expressing stories through their art practices—most appear to have an element of autobiography. Whether one paints or sculpts or creates narratives by combining words and images, the message comes from a personal place–a space the artist is not only interested in exploring further, but from deep within, like Lubaina Himid, and her unction to retell stories that need to be told, to fill in the gaps in history. In Marina Warner's epilogue to her book, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self*, she posits:

> "We continue to demand that stories be told over and over; we want them to metamorphose themselves from the recipes of the manuals into drama and poems, into novels and texts, we want them not only for themselves, but for how they seed storytellers' imaginations, how they make other stories, how they change in different poets' or novelists' or playwrights' hands into works-into opera, and indeed operas, into poesies."[25]

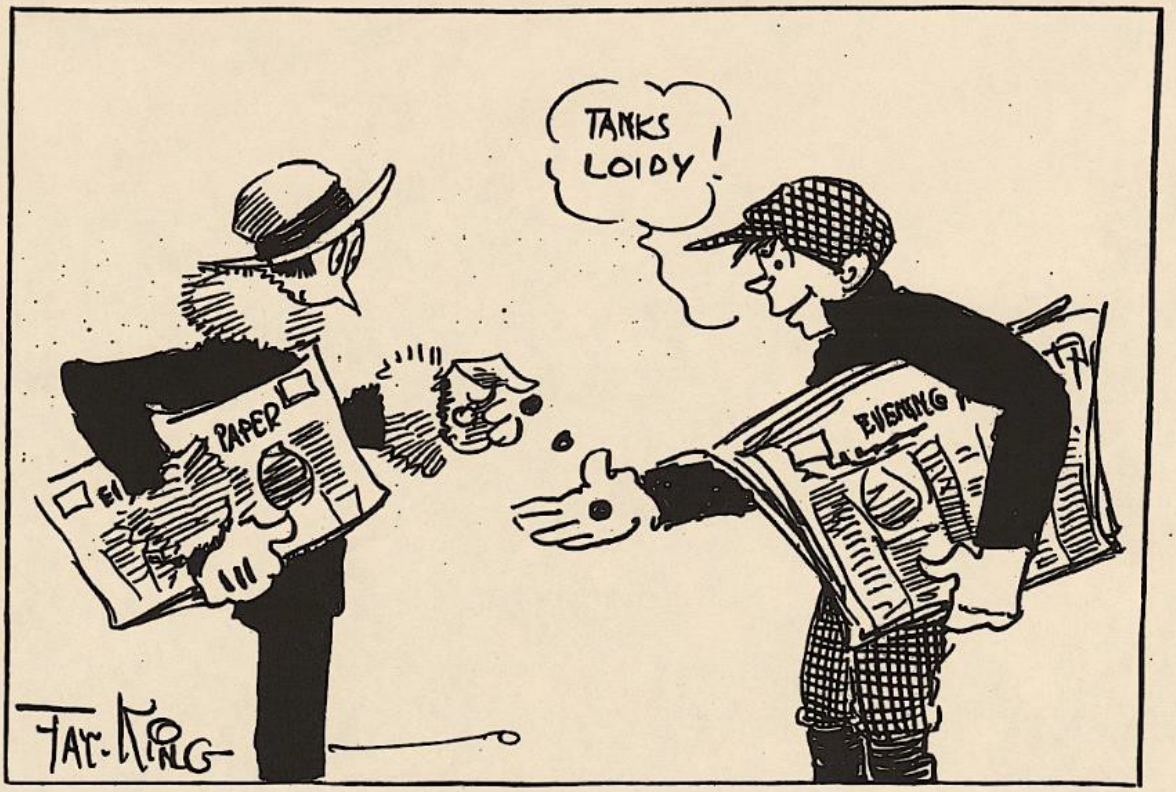
[25] Warner, Marina. *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self*. Oxford: Oxford U Press, 2007. Print. Pg. 205

Warner leaves no room for words falling to the ground. She argues that words grow from conception into seedlings and continue evolving and touching all who stop to read. Her reflection on the generative power of stories suggest further questions that fuel my inquiry. Can words and images combine to recount small events like the love between two people of no consequence, or the silent death of a mother? Through the readily disseminated genre of the comic or graphic novel, can one can gain a larger audience than that of the gallery and its white-washed walls? Are difficult or problematic messages eased into the audience's understanding through the use of humour, satire and hyperbole? Is one able to gain greater understanding of one's message though the art of autobiography–telling a familiar story of which one can relate? Through the hotly argued critiques of my first residency installation and the affronts received by the viewers of my aging women's flaccid breasts, to the visceral responses to *The Writing on the Wall*, one might assume the work affected some form of change—at least in some of the audience—or if not change, it may have added to or created a new perspective. A new perspective from an invisible woman.

Moving forward, I am interested in creating larger faces while also including the aging woman's body. I'm curious about taking the idea of satire and hyperbole to an extreme place, similar to Ron Mueck's hyper-realist sculptures of aging women [fig 17]. Oversized and decidedly unsettling, they seem to question how we perceive the common, the ordinary—and through their largess, they are elevated from societal invisibility to a place of importance.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Streeten, Nicola. *Becoming of Age Series,* 'Women Superheroes'. Dec 2016, University of Sussex. Used by permission of the artist, Nicola Streeten.



Why Newsies Get Rich

By FAY KING

I THINK the reason that so many guys that started out as newsies get rich is because they learn the power of pennies while they are still in knee pants.

figure out how much he is going to make in a year if he gets one more cent on so much.

Men know much more about money be-

knows how many papers he can sell, how much they cost him, and what he makes. He learns to stand his ground and keep his customers.

Fig. 2. King, Fay. *Why Newsies Get Rich*, Circulation #11. 1923.

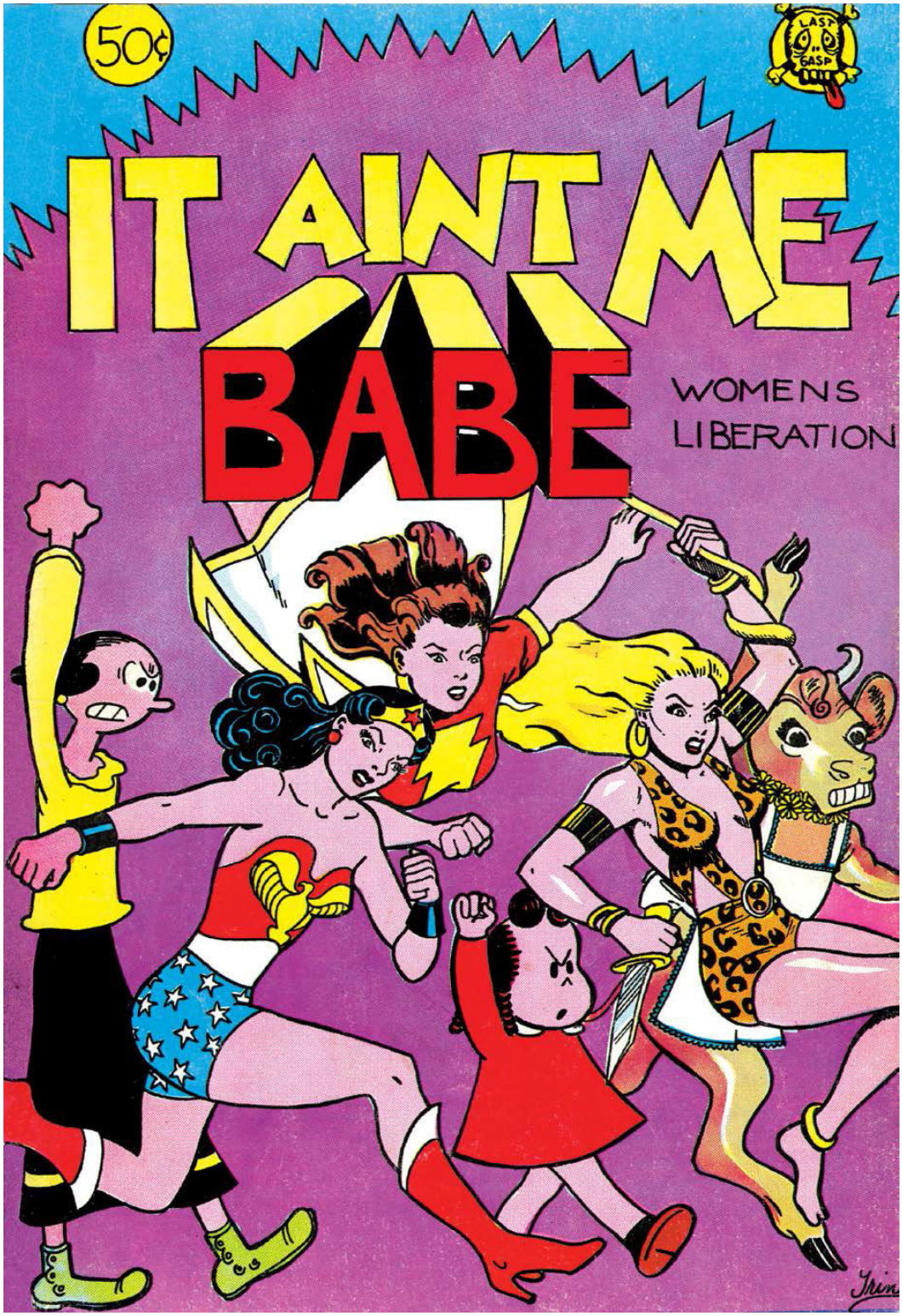


Fig 3. Robbins, Trina. *Wimmen's Comix.* Cover Art. 1972 – 1992.

Fig. 4. Brosch, Allie. *Sneaky Hate Spiral*. 2010.

Fig. 5. Doucet, Julie. *My New York Diary*. Drawn and Quarterly, 1999/2010. Used by Permission from Drawn and Quarterly

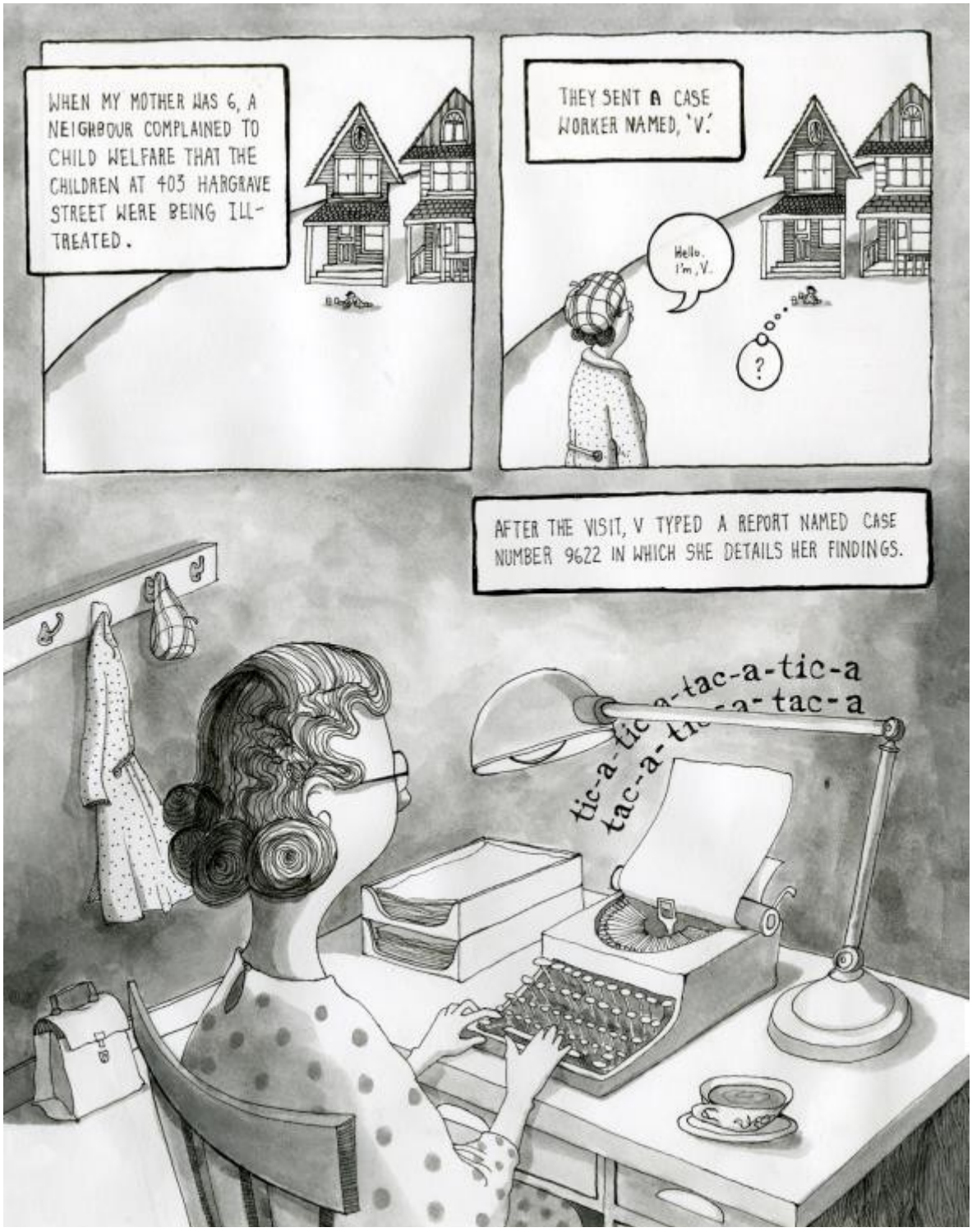


Fig. 6. Taylor, Joni. *What Was Left Unsaid*. (2013 – ongoing).

Fig. 7. Leavitt, Sarah. *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me*, 2014. Used by permission of Sarah Leavitt

Fig. 8. Taylor, Joni. *Untitled*. The Art of Unknowing, Acrylic paint, cardboard. Mitchel Press Gallery, 2015

Fig 9. Neel, Alice. *Alice Neel Self Portrait*. 1980. Oil on Canvas.

Fig. 10. Taylor, Joni. *The Writing on the Wall*. Detail. Acrylic paint, plywood. Concourse Gallery, 2016

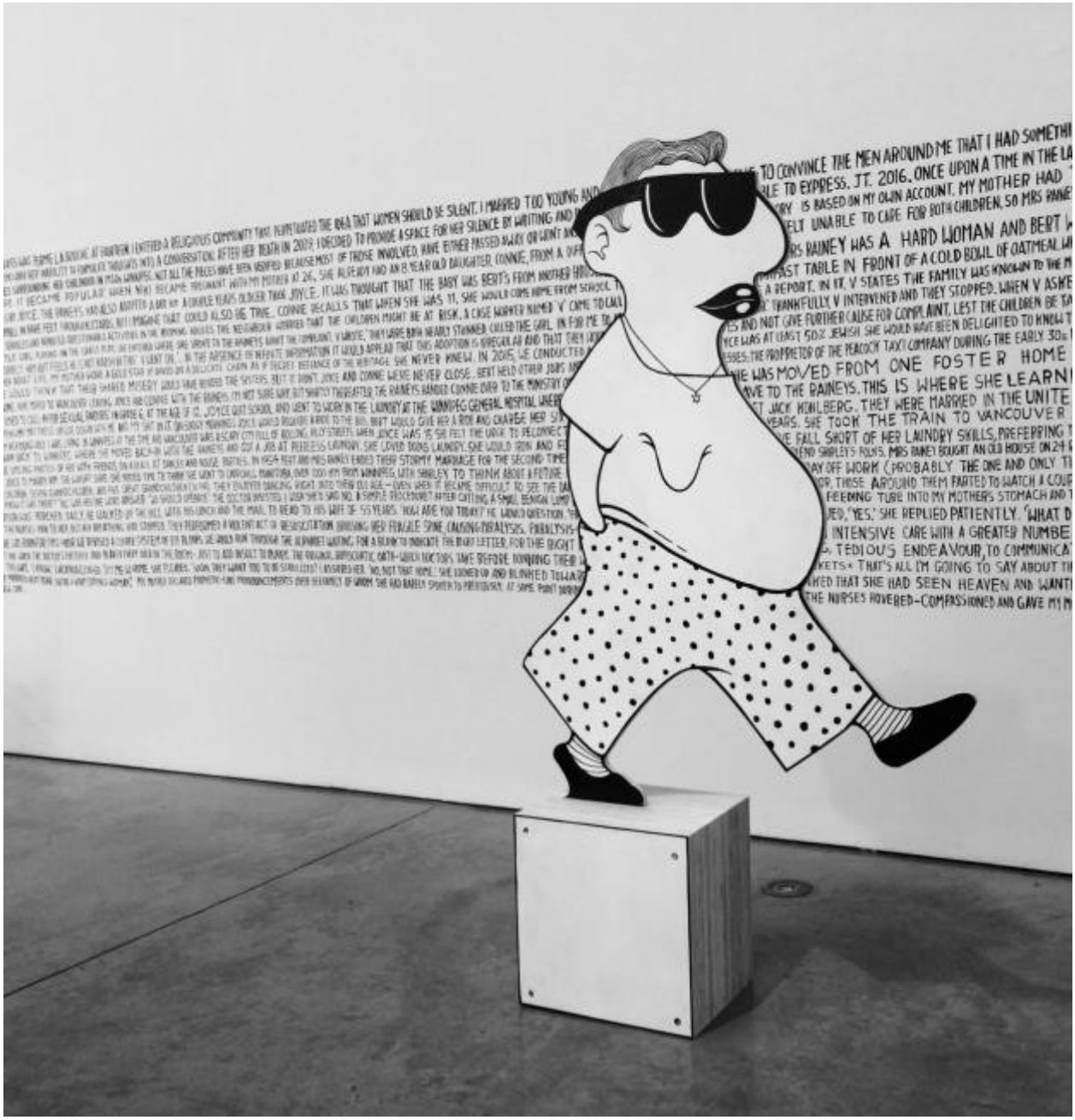


Fig. 11. Taylor, Joni. *The Writing on the Wall*. Detail. Acrylic paint, plywood. Concourse Gallery, 2016

Fig. 12. Himid, Lubaina. *Naming the Money.2004. 100 Cut-out figures. Acrylic paint on wood.*

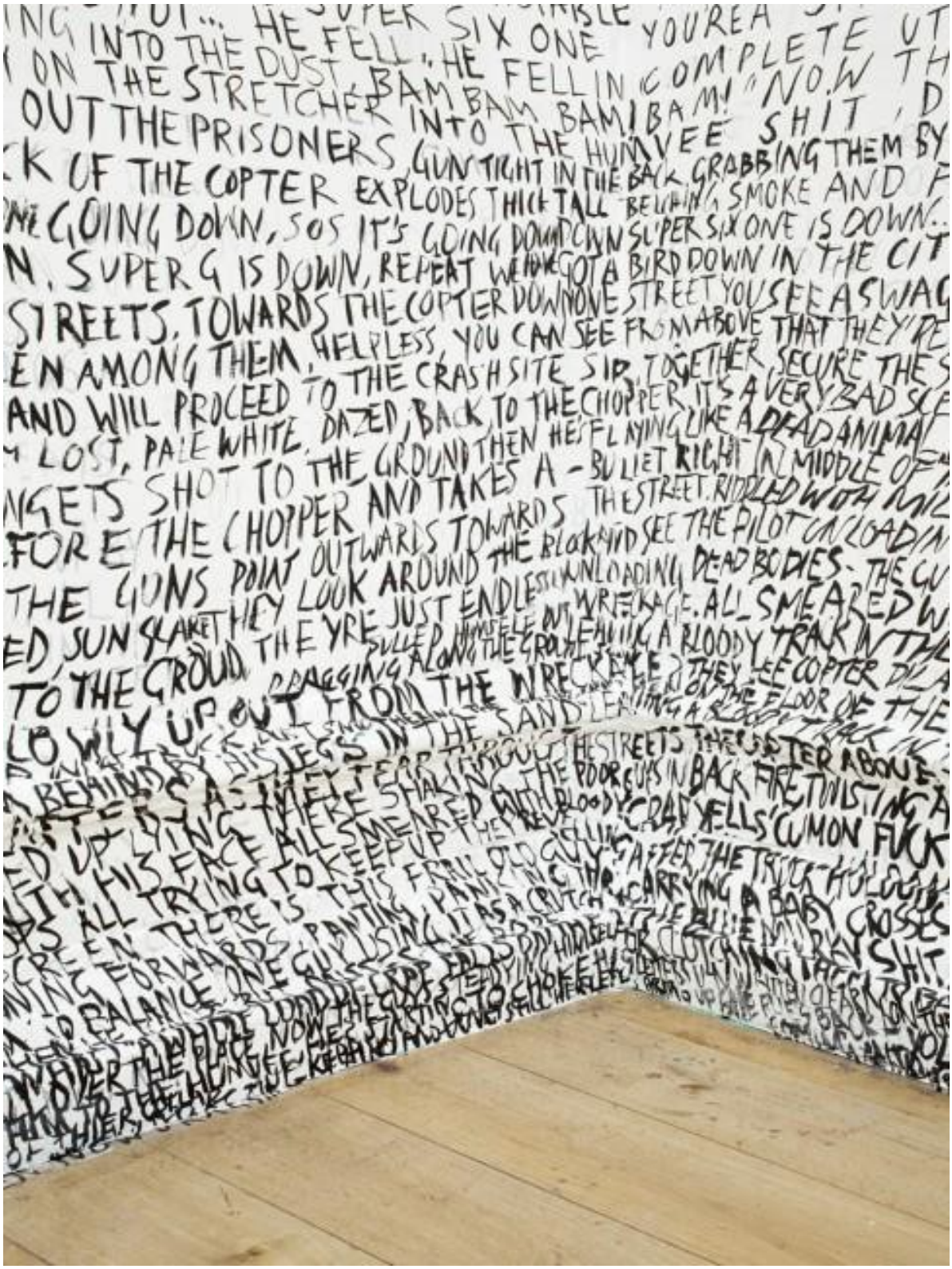


Fig. 13. Banner, Fiona. *Black Hawk Down*, India Ink on wall. Installation view at South London Gallery. 2004. Used by permission of Fiona Banner.

Fig. 14. Taylor, Joni. *Vase For Sale by Lady Slightly Cracked*. Acrylic paint, plywood. Charles H. Scott Gallery, 2017

Fig. 15. Taylor, Joni. *Vase For Sale by Lady Slightly Cracked*. Acrylic paint, plywood. Charles H. Scott Gallery, 2017

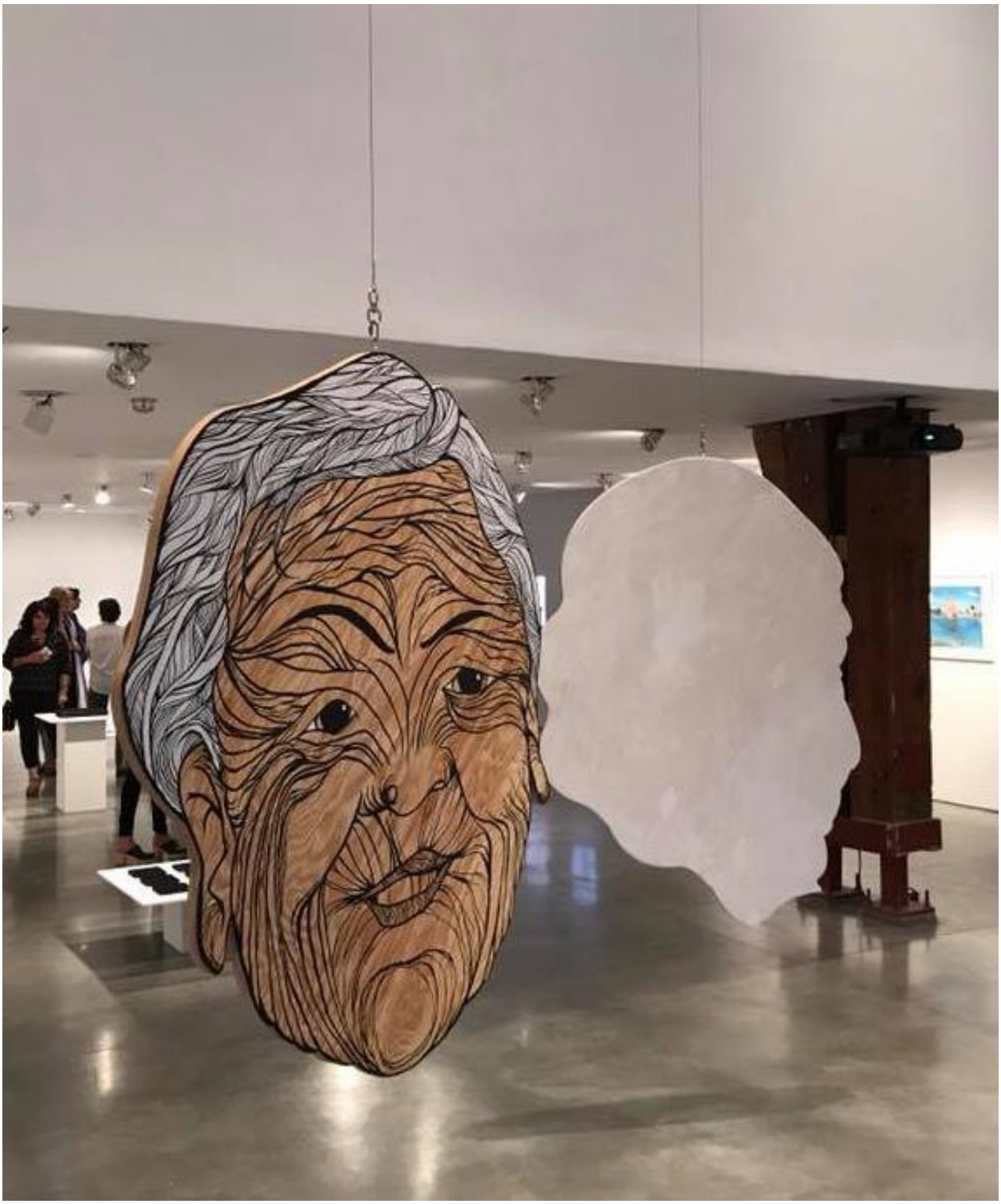


Fig. 16. Taylor, Joni. *Vase For Sale by Lady Slightly Cracked*. Acrylic paint, plywood. Charles H. Scott Gallery, 2017.

Fig. 18. Mueck, Ron. *Standing Woman*. Towada Art Center, 2008

REFERENCES

Achenbaum, W. Andrew. “Biography.” *Biography*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1999, pp. 605–608. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23540334.

Bechdel, Alison. *Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama*. Boston: Mariner, 2013. Print.

Bechdel, Alison. Fun *Home: a Family Tragicomic*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2015. Print.

Bechdel, Alison. *Dykes to Watch Out For*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand, 1986. Print.

Baetens, Jan, and Hugo Frey. *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Cambridge U Press, 2015. Print.

Brodsky, Alexandra, and Rachel Kauder. Nalebuff. *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*. New York: Feminist Press at the City U of New York, 2015. Print.

Chast, Roz. *Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant*? New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Print.

Chute, Hillary L. *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics*. Columbia University Press, 2010. Print.

Conboy, Katie, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury. *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia U Press, 1997. Print.

Critchley, Simon. *On Humour*. London: Routledge, 2010. Print. pg 9

Denes, Melissa. "'Feminism? It's Hardly Begun'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 16 Jan. 2005. Web. 16 Apr. 2017.

Denson, Shane, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein. *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Print.

Doucet, Julie. *My New York Diary*. New York, NY: Drawn and Quarterly, 2013. Print.

Freud, Sigmund, James Strachey, and Angela Richards. The Pelican Freud library, vol. 6: *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Place of publication not identified: Penguin, 1976. Print.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

Greer, Germaine, et al. *The Female Eunuch*. London, Fourth Estate, 2012.

Groeneveld, Elizabeth. *Making Feminist Media: Third -Wave Magazines on the Cusp of the Digital Age*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier U Press, 2016. Print

Herriman, George, and Bill Blackbeard. *Krazy & Ignatz: Comprising the Complete Full-Page Comic Strips*. 1925-26. Seattle: Fantagraphics , 2004. Print.

Leavitt, Sarah. *Tangles: A Story About Alzheimers, My Mother, and Me*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012. Print. page 87

Marshal, Lenil. "Aging: A Feminist Issue." *NWSA Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. vii-xiii. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4317180.

McCloud, Scott, and Mark Martin. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York, NY: William Morrow, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2014. Print.

Riley, Jeannette E. "Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature." *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2000, pp. 138–141. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1348142.

Robbins, Trina, and Kristi Valenti. *Pretty In Ink: North American Women Cartoonists 1896-2013*. Seattle, WA, Fantagraphics Books, 2013.

Robinson, Jerry (1974). *The Comics: An Illustrated History of Comic Strip Art*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. N.P.: Pantheon, 2005. Print.

Seldes, Gilbert, and Michael Kammen. *The 7 Lively Arts: The Krazy Kat That Walks by Himself*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2001. Print.

Seth, and Luc Chamberland. *Seth's Dominion*. Montréal, Québec: Drawn & Quarterly, 2016. Print.

Spiegelman, Art, Chris Oliveros, Tom Devlin, Jeet Heer, and Art Spiegelman. *Co-Mix: A Retrospective of Comics, Graphics, and Scraps*. Montreal: Drawn Quarterly, 2013. Print.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivors Tale: vol. II: And Here My Troubles Began*. New York: Pantheon, 1986. Print.

Streeten, Nicola. *Billy, Me & You a Memoir of Grief and Recovery*. Brighton: Myriad, 2011. Print.

Warner, Marina. *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self*. Oxford: Oxford U Press, 2007. Print.

WEB SOURCES

Brosh, Allie. Hyperbole and a Half. http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.ca/2010/05/sneaky-hate-spiral.html

Brown, Mark. “Lubaina Himid becomes oldest artist to win Turner prize.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 5 Dec. 2017, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/dec/05/lubaina-himid-becomes-oldest-artist-to-win-turner-prize.

Burdock, Maureen1. "Pathways: A Graphic Meditation." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 359-365. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.359_1.

Charlie Hebdo. https://charliehebdo.fr/en/

Cowan, Sam1. "The Pull of 100 Voices." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 367-369. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.367_1.

Hansen, Karen Liv1. "Mad without Comics: How My Life Was Saved byReading Comics." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 333-354. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.333_1.

Hicks, Olivia1 and Julia2 Round. "'WWWWD: What Would Wonder Woman Do?': An Interview with Trina Robbins." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 288-300. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.288_7.

Kahn, Ariel1. "Pursuing Paradise: Jewish Travel Comics as Feminist Spiritual Quests." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 237-264. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.237_1.

Lightman, Sarah1. "Drawing the Pathetic Parent Creature: Aline Kominsky Crumbin Conversation with Sarah Lightman." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 301-324. EBSCOhost,doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.301_1.

Lightman, Sarah1 and Catriona2 Macleod. "Centre Stage on the Page: Women In, on and Making Comics." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 215-220. EBSCOhost,doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.215_2.

Murray, Don (8 January 2015). "France even more fractured after the Charlie Hebdo rampage". CBC News. Retrieved April 28 2017.

PressReader.com - Connecting People Through News. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Apr. 2017.

Rousseau, Henri. Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 05 Apr. 2017. Web. 17 Apr. 2017.

Russo, Mary. "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory." Feminist Studies/Critical Studies (1986): 213-29. Web.

Slevin, Kathleen F. "If I Had Lots of Money…I'd Have a Body Makeover:" Managing the Aging Body." Social Forces, vol. 88, no. 3, Mar. 2010, pp. 1003-1020. EBSCOhost, ezproxy.ecuad.ca:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=49094166&site=eds-live.

Streeten, Nicola1. "A Year at 50 and Becoming of Age." Studies in Comics, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 355-358. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1386/stic.7.2.355_1.

Wimmen's Comix: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/the-radical-story-behind-the-first-all-womens-feminist-comic-book-series_us_574f181be4b0eb20fa0c7264