

Conference “East Asian Comics”, Call for papers Université de Paris — Campus Paris Diderot, 2020, November 19-21

In the context of the 2020 Comics Year launched by the French Ministry of Culture¹, this conference focuses on a whole side of global comics through a regional approach : comics art in Eastern Asia. The aim is to look beyond American comics and *bandes dessinées* (Franco-Belgian comics), and to expand the already numerous discourses on Japanese manga to other nearby comics traditions, in Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong.

The main focal point of this conference stresses a geographical space, characterized by a certain cultural and linguistic cohesion — “comics” is indeed called by similar terms in Japanese *manga*, Chinese *manhua* and Korean *manhwa*. This cohesion, showed in particular by the use of the ideograms 漫画 in both Chinese and Japanese, also comes from a unity in the narratives, as some transnational traditional stories are adapted and absorbed multiple times by authors from these countries, for example *Journey to the West*. European comics research already had the occasion of considering *bande dessinée* with a continental point of view, widening the Franco-Belgian spectrum to Switzerland, Italy, Germany, etc. Now that there are more and more studies on Chinese and Korean comics, it becomes possible to consider Asian comics as a whole, and so did Paul Gravett in his book *Mangasia* and the exhibitions drawn from it². However, his neologism proposed as the title of his work sanctions the dominant position of Japan and manga to the detriment of other aspects of East Asian comics. If Japan has certainly impulsed some cultural unification in the first half of the 20th century, other comics traditions have existed nonetheless, and still exist today in the Chinese and Korean worlds. Hence, we don't aim to study Asian comics in the light of manga, but to analyse the different forms of comics art which emerge and evolve in Eastern Asia from the end of the 19th century until today.

The conference will be structured upon two main lines, historical and formal. In the first one, we invite participants to come back to the history of the comics medium in the different territories addressed during the conference (Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong). We will discuss the circumstances of its appearance, its developments, and its potential interruptions; we will also debate on the history of what is sometimes called « proto-comics » and recount the graphic productions which precede or accompany the birth of the medium. It will be of particular interest to study the meeting points between the different national comics traditions, and the new hybride forms that these points may trigger. Within each national production, we will also analyse the multiple genres (children comics, humor comics, propaganda comics, science-fiction comics, autobiographical comics, action comics, horror comics, erotic comics, fantasy comics, historical comics, etc.) and their evolution as much as their interactions. Eventually, this first line of the conference allows us to outline a social history of East Asian comics, by studying the wide range of its operators (authors, artists, scriptwriters, editors, specialized bookshop owners, etc.) as well as the audience, whose fluctuation can indicate a change of popularity for comics throughout history. In the second line of the conference, we encourage participants to pay attention to the formal characteristics of comics and to how it relies on text and image to convey a story or a message. Questions of form being intricately tied to questions of format, we will examine the various materials of comics (press, book, digital, others), along with the growing heritage process in a time when comics works, pages, or drawings are shown in exhibitions and museums, and become real pieces of art. This inter-media ambiguity between painting and comics is also an opportunity to look at the connections between comics and other forms of art, with or against which it grows. Analyzing the comics medium in itself and within each national media spectrum allow us to acknowledge its

¹ Ministère de la Culture, « BD 2020, la France aime le 9e art », <https://www.bd2020.culture.gouv.fr>

² Paul Gravett, *Mangasia, The Definitive Guide to Asian Comics*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2017.

place and its role, but also to explore the possibilities of transmedia dynamics, including theatre, cinema, cartoon, video games, or merchandising. In the end, through these two historical and formal lines, we will be able to build in-depth research on East Asian comics.

Finally, there will be a short statement on the reception of Asian comics in France, during which we will evoke questions of translation and publishing. We will also organise workshops with comics creators.

Schedule

You can submit to the organizers your contribution in a 400-words proposal, and a short biography, before 2020, April 1 :

Jacques Dürrenmatt (jacques.durrenmatt@paris-sorbonne.fr),

Marie Laureillard (marie.laureillard@univ-lyon2.fr) and

Norbert Danysz (norbert.danysz@ens-lyon.fr).

You will receive an answer to your contribution on 2020, June 30.

Contributions in French or English.

We will hold the conference at Université de Paris — Campus Paris Diderot, from the evening of Thursday, November 19 to the evening of Saturday, November 21.

Organizing Committee

Norbert Danysz (ENS Lyon, IAO)

Jacques Dürrenmatt (Sorbonne Université, STIH)

Marie Laureillard (Université de Lyon, IAO, CEEI)

Cécile Sakai (Université de Paris – Paris Diderot, CRCAO, CEEI)

Scientific Committee

Norbert Danysz (ENS Lyon, IAO)

Jacques Dürrenmatt (Sorbonne Université, STIH)

Paul Gravett (independent researcher, London)

Benjamin Joinau (Hongik university, Seoul)

Marie Laureillard (Université de Lyon, IAO, CEEI)

Cécile Sakai (Université de Paris – Paris Diderot, CRCAO, CEEI)

Marianne Simon-Oikawa (Université de Tokyo, CEEI)