

European Art Adventures - Fall 2019

After my earlier European comic art trip this year to France and Italy, I didn't expect I would have another art adventure for some time. Happily that was an incorrect assumption and I had the opportunity to revisit a few of my favorite comic locales while attending 2 very different comic conventions.

I had heard so many great things about the Thought Bubble Comic Convention in Leeds over the years that I wanted to see it for myself and was looking for an excuse to fly over the pond to attend. I had enjoyed my previous visit to the Lucca Comics Festival in Italy 3 years ago and also wanted to revisit that. When these two events fell onto two



consecutive weekends it seemed to be destiny that I was to attend. To fill the time between the two I decided to storm the two European capitals of comic art, Paris and Brussels, with a hefty agenda. I thought I was done with reporting on my comic art travels and I am sorry to burden you with one more. I will try not to rehash what I talked about in previous articles and will focus more on different aspects of the trip and the art I have seen and brought home with me. Hopefully that might be of interest to other members contemplating similar trips. Exploring Europe through the lens of comics, art, wines, food and friends is quite different than being there just as a tourist. The experiences of spending time with other collectors, viewing exhibitions and adding art to the travel experience adds to my appreciation of the hobby and my understanding of art in both an absolute and personal context. I do hope I inspire others to take similar adventures. It would be my pleasure to pass on advice if anyone is thinking about similar trips and might even be persuaded to act as a travel mate on the right trip.

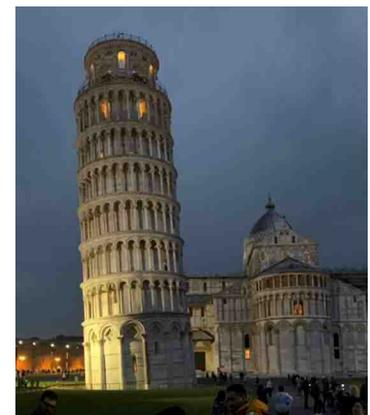
I was hoping not to spend too much money on this trip and just enjoy the friends and food but that was an unrealistic expectation and I knew that but also figured no harm in trying. Prior to travelling I had set up a few things to pick up on the way so that I knew I was coming home with some new treasures. I was going to meet Carsten Laqua in Lucca the first night and had paid for a Gil Kane Marvel Team-ups page for him to bring with him. I had also asked him to bring two other pages from his site for me to see in person. One by Leo Duronona and another early Archie page from the same story my early Archie page is from. As a big fan of Marco Nizzoli, I had arranged a commission to pick up in Lucca which was rather last minute. I knew I was picking up a page in Paris that I had won at auction. In Brussels I had arranged a trade deal with long-time friend Alec Severin for a commission piece. There was also a Barry Windsor Smith

piece to pick up in Lucca from a trade deal I made with a fellow collector. I figured I'd find something small to take home from Harrogate with me and then I'd have an art souvenir from each of my destinations.

Packing was a challenge for the trip as I assumed I'd buy a few books. My initial packing was in a smaller suitcase and lighter but it was a bit tight. I knew it was going to rain everywhere and made the decision to bring rain shoes which pushed me up a size in luggage as I also had to fit an art portfolio bag and a large tube for larger art into my bag. I was hoping to go lighter but in the end went bigger and I am certainly glad I did. More on that as we I go on. I have decided to approach this story like a bit of a travelogue with day by day breakdowns and then at the end sections on the different exhibitions and galleries as well as some more information on the art I picked up. It might seem a bit excessive but I am writing this as much for myself as for others and you will forgive me dropping names and group pictures more often than I should, that is purely for my benefit for later recall when I am old and reliving the experience.

I left Toronto via an overnight flight heading for Pisa, Italy. I arrived in Munich where I had a few hours stop over before heading to Pisa. I managed a bit of sleep on the plane and watched a few movies so I was ready to start the adventure, even at this early way point. I had a decent schnitzel and potato salad dinner with a good German beer at the airport before heading to my gate. At the gate I saw someone that I thought looked a bit like Carsten but wasn't sure. He seemed to recognize me too but we both couldn't be sure. After a few awkward moments of glances we found out it was indeed the two of us. He was in connecting from Berlin. I had assumed he would get a direct flight to Pisa from Berlin but he needed to connect through Munich as well. We had talked about sharing a cab into Lucca from Pisa before the trip not realizing we would be on the same flight but I had never been to Pisa and figured I had to go see the tower which Carsten had seen many times. We had already had plans to meet for dinner later and so we talked, had the short flight and then parted ways after we picked up our bags.

I took the Pisamover train from the airport to the main train station and then walked the 2km to the tower with my heavy suitcase in tow. It was a nice walk through cobblestone streets and by ancient buildings. I got to the tower just as the sun was setting which was pretty early, maybe around 5:30. The tower



is really something to see in person as picture can't do just to how odd it seems being off kilter. It is all a little surreal

and seeing it in the day and night are also quite different experiences. After a half hour of absorbing the tower and the nice church and domo nearby I headed back to the train station. The rain started on my trek back but it was still light by the time I got back to the station. I used the trainline app rather than queing and bought a ticket for the 20 minute ride to Lucca which was to leave in 10 minutes. This is the first trip I have used a lot of etickets for and they worked out fabulously and I'd recommend it to others.

When we got to Lucca, it was pouring to the point where there was over an inch of water on the ground at all times, flooding and lots of deep puddles. I stood in line at the covered taxi stand for about 20 minutes to realize how few and infrequent taxis were. Maybe one taxi came in the 20 minutes and there were 2 dozen people ahead of me. The Uber app didn't find any rides. Normally I'd walk but in that rain, 2 minutes would get you soaked even with an umbrella and the 25 minute walk to my hotel was a damp thought. I decided to try the bus which was supposed to run every 10 minutes. After 15 minutes of standing in the rain waiting for the bus, I decided to walk. I was already wet and nothing was happening and so I started up the lonely path to the ancient city walls. I had known it was supposed to rain on this trip so I had rubber shoes in my suitcase which I had changed into before leaving the train station. The original plan was to meet Carsten and Massimo for dinner after I got to my hotel and settled in. The delay in obtaining any form of transportation to my hotel put me behind and I decided to just go the restaurant directly and I did. Lucca is a bit of a convoluted town in terms of roadways and streets. It is a medieval city so streets curve and turn frequently which can be a bit disorienting if you don't know them. Thankfully smart phone applications help in navigating and I was able to find the restaurant with only one or two wrong turns. I was thankful it was dry and warm and Massimo Cuomo was already there.



Myself, Carsten, Massimo and Panna Cotta

I met Massimo on my previous trip to Lucca. He is a collector from Rome and is one of the Heritage Auction reps for Europe along with

Bernard Mahe. Carsten joined us and we had a nice dinner and I had a chance to dry out a bit. Carsten brought my Gil Kane page for me and the other two pages I had asked about. I ended up buying the Duronana page from Vampirella which I had long admired on his site. I liked the Archie page but the size and thick board it was on made it impossible for me to get home safely as it wouldn't fit in my suitcase and would not be able to be rolled for my art tube. I am still considering it but I have a few things to still pay off from this trip first. I have spent some time with Carsten before at the previous Lucca, at his place in Berlin and on the



phone a few times but this trip gave me a much better chance to get to know him. He is a really passionate collector in addition to being a long time dealer. Some of art he told me about that has passed through his collection was amazing. I got to know Massimo a lot better on this visit too and we had drinks and dinner together every night with our other friends. Massimo raves about the panna cotta at this restaurant saying it is the best he had ever had in his life and he comes back every year for it. With that kind of review, there was no way to pass on it and it was truly heavenly. After the wine was finished, I packed up my two pieces of art and made sure the package was water tight and headed up to my hotel. The rain had stopped. Dinner started at about 8pm and we didn't finish until after eleven. I had told my hotel to expect me around seven and was worried that my late arrival might be a problem but thankfully it was not. San Marco Hotel was located about a five minute walk north of the ancient city walls. I had stayed there a few nights on my previous visit to Lucca but didn't realize that until I checked in as I stayed with my friend Max last time and he had done the booking. I would have preferred staying in the city but the accommodation within the city sell out quickly and are often booked a year in advance. Those that are left are priced at incredible rates. Lucca is very safe to walk around at any hour so the extra bit of walking was no problem.



I got into my hotel and opened my bag to realize that although my bag is plastic/polymer and water proof, the zippers are not. A lot of my stuff got soaked from the downpour and walk in. This led to me having to lay out a lot of things to dry. Thankfully the two pieces of art I brought with me to show a friend in Brussels was fine as were the books and other items that might be harmed by water. I slept well that night.

Day 2. Wednesday Oct 30, 2019. This was the first day of Lucca and I slept in a bit and ate at the hotel which included breakfast with the room. You know you are getting old when you start bringing your own tea bags with you because you are a creature of habit and certain things don't need to be experimented with, especially in the mornings. Well, I am there and I did indeed bring my own tea with me which I

brought down with me to breakfast. After a light breakfast (and my tea), I walked into the city through the main north gates and easily located where to trade in my ticket order for wrist bands. With all the formalities done, it was time to

Chiesa dei Servi Church aka the Art Church



enjoy the convention. I headed in and my first stop was the original art church. It is an ancient church that is rather nondescript from the outside but quite beautiful on the inside. My friends joke that since moving from a tent with

Inside Chiesa dei Servi Church



art into the church, the next move is the graveyard. Inside were a dozen vendors, most of which were art dealers but Heritage Auctions and Catawiki auctions were also set up as well Urania Casa D'Aste auctions. At the back was a nice John Buscema exhibition which featured a complete Thor

and a complete Conan book set up by CART gallery in Rome. I found out later the pages were for sale.



I met up with Giovanni who I have told you about in my last trip, he was my host in Milan and a good friend and fellow Frank King-o-phile. We have so much in common as collectors that we can finish each other's sentences when it comes to talking about the art we love. We had made prior



arrangement to meet at the church prior to heading off for an engagement. After an hour of looking at art and talking to people, we headed off to the Urania Casa D'Aste Auction venue and registered for their auction. It was a convoluted 10 minute walk through several small streets and Piazzas to get to the ancient building it was being held in. I am not sure I would have found it on my own without a bit of difficulty. I had intentions of bidding on the Rubino lot and the two Frollo lots. Gio wanted the Gasoline Alley and his friend Umberto had his sights set on another piece by an Italian artist I don't know well but was being offered by the



estate for the first time. Franco Bonvicini aka Bonvi. The art is very much in the Jack Davis vein and although I liked it, I had no context and at this point I was still under the illusion I



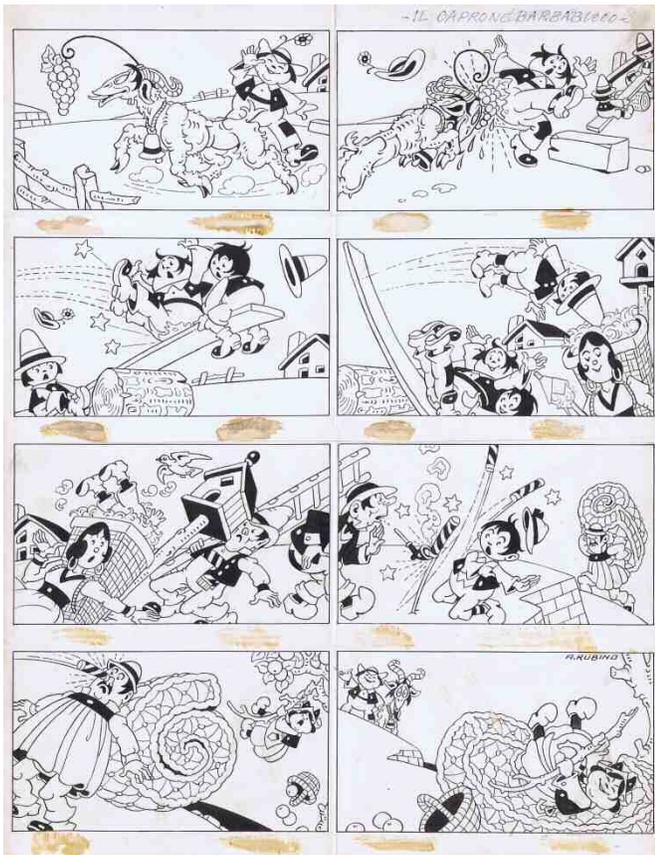
wouldn't spend too much on this trip. I waited for my lots.



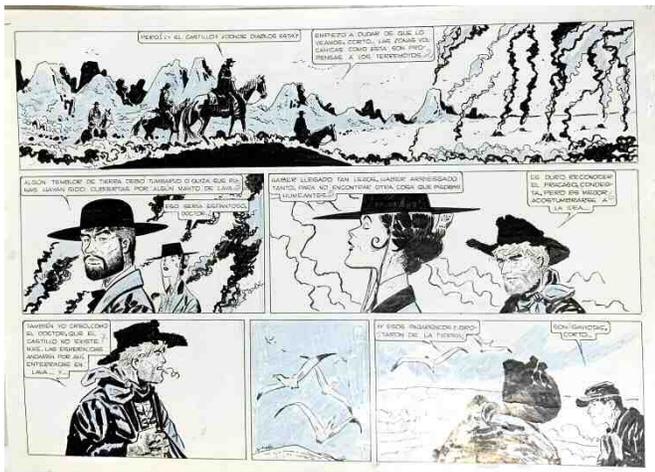
Antonio Rubino was an artist I had seen some work from in the past but it wasn't until my last visit to Milan that I really started to understand his work and appreciate it. My friend



Gio calls him the Italian Winsor McCay. I had an idea of what I wanted in a Rubino but don't have context for his work and career so I asked Gio before about the page they had and it was a good one in terms of content and from being from an early publication. He would have been going after it himself as he is a big fan but had missed it in the catalog and since we both have similar tastes, we were not



going to compete for pieces. It was estimated to sell for around 1500 to 2200 euro which in my experience with the Italian auctions means that is the opening bid and where it goes from there is anyone's guess. It is like a fixed price sale and so about 40% of items go unsold as the initial price is too high but then many others go much higher. It opened at 1500 euros and I figured I'd stop around 2000 euro if got that high. I was bidding against a phone bidder and it hit 2000. I went one higher at 2200 at Gio's urging and won it. The two Frollo pieces broke records for his art of this type. Normally they would be in the 100 to 150 euro range but I was prepared to go to about 300 euro on each but both sold for over double that. They would have been nice but I have 2 nice Frollo pieces already and although I love his work, I didn't need them and I had overspent on the Rubino so I left it alone. I was also very interested in a Hugo Pratt Sgt. Kirk piece they had. It was a beautiful Argentinian era Pratt



written and published by Oesterheld and featured a nice panoramic first panel, sublime seagulls and a gorgeous female with blue highlights. As a bit of a bonus, there



was a large, ink illustration of a witchy by Pratt on the back of the art. I thought the opening bid was fair and I was prepared to bid and possibly go one higher on it. When it came up, there were no bids and so I let it pass knowing there is the potential to negotiate a bit after the fact on auction fees (17%) and even the price via communication with the consignor on lots that don't close. After the auction I did approach the Daniele who owns the auctions and we talked. I made an offer and he was going to get back to me



after talking to the consignor. I would have to wait until the next day to find out if it was accepted.

In the auction room, which is held in the basement of a building that dates back to the roman empire, we sat along with about 20 other bidders plus a few phone handlers taking in phone bids and then the internet bidding. I was assigned a paddle and I sat with Gio and Umberto in the first row. It was a fun experience. Last time I went to the auction at Lucca the line-up was up the stairs to the main room and I couldn't get in due to all the interest in the Battaglia art. This time there were fewer people but also because they were running the auction on a Wednesday instead of one of the main days. After the auction we went back to the art church. I would pay for the auction with a credit card at the booth in the church and then take the art with me. I was later approached by the auction house to resell my piece for a higher amount as they got an offer in on it to pass on to me. I declined because I really wanted a Rubino and had found one but it is nice to know that perhaps I did well on that purchase. The other potential buyer had missed the auction on line or on the phone.

I finished going through all the other art at the dealer tables. I saw some fantastic art including Corto Maltese tiers by Pratt and some top tier Battaglia pages. Most of the great Battaglia pages have been held by the family until recently. At my last Lucca there was an auction where pages came to market and sold at quite high prices. After that auction, a

private collector ended up buying the entire estate's holding of art for a seven figure sum and that is the end of the Battaglia market as they are not going anywhere. The same buyer also sets up as a dealer at the show and he had one really nice page from a Dickens story for sale. It was priced quite aggressively and although I debated it a few times, I decided to wait as my friend Michele who would be in on Thursday with a Battaglia 4 page story he was bringing to show me that we had talked about previously. It too was quite expensive. I was pretty sure I'd be going home with Battaglia as my last visit to Lucca was a really educational experience and I began to see what a giant Battaglia was. On my last visit to Italy, I came home with several Battaglia books and this only furthered my appreciation and desire to find a stand out example for my collection.



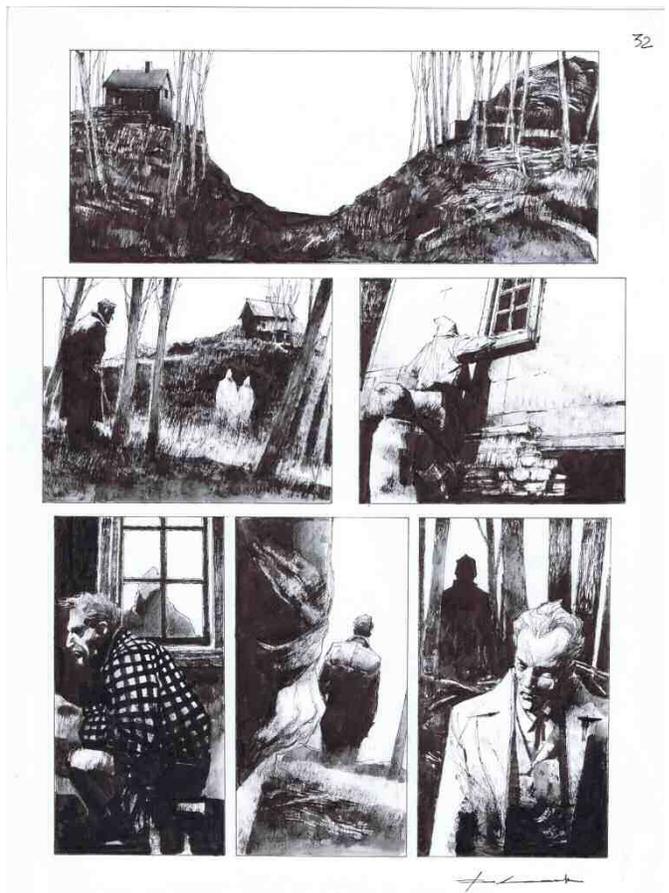
Luca Di Salvatore was working at the CART gallery from Rome's booth and we had arranged a trade deal some months before. I had already sent my part of the deal and so was picking up the art I was getting from him and a bit of pocket money. I ended up with a nice, early Barry Smith Kull page and he had already gotten an EC Two Fisted Tales Kurtzman/Wood page from me in the mail. It was nice to finally meet him after many years of talking on line. Although we planned to go for drinks, it didn't end up working out as the convention gets busy. My wife has never been to Italy and so either our next trip or the one after will

be to Italy. With good friends in almost every city, it will be

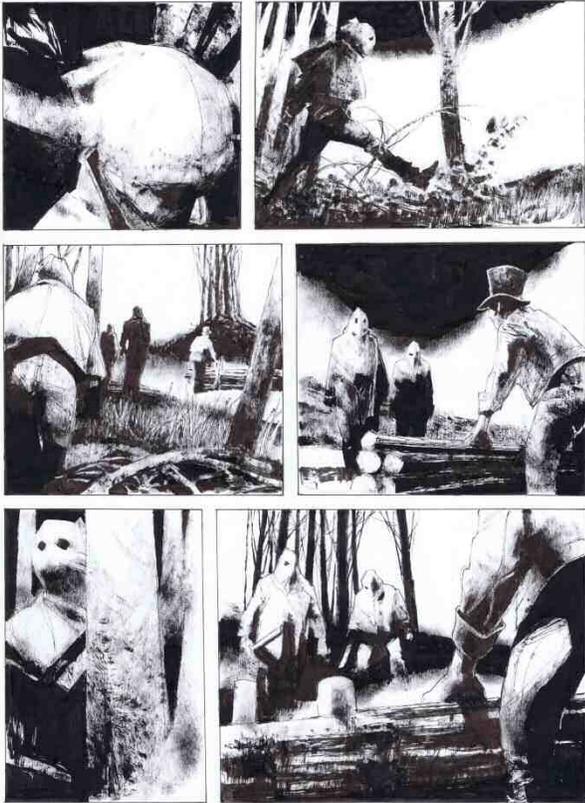


great getting to see all these places with locals as guides and also getting a bit of a comic art perspective on the cities. Jane will have to put up with a bit of comic art talk but she finds the comic art collectors she has met to be very educated, friendly, humble and generally nice people so it doesn't take too much persuasion.

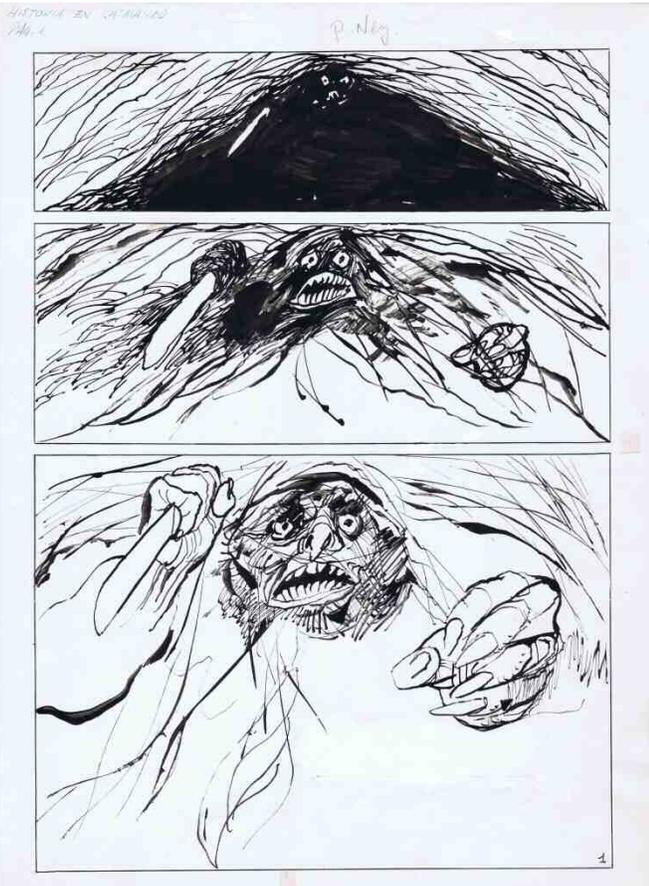
I started to pick out a few pieces at Francesco Bazzana's booth to work on a bigger deal with him for. It is always a pleasure talking to him and getting to see the art he brings. He is the biggest Bill Sienkiewicz collector I know of and so



he already knows what I like. He showed me art by Corrado



Roi which he just got from the series UT which is his best work to date and most personal. Many consider Roi the heir of Dino Battaglia in terms of style and influence and I am sure you will see why. I got to be one of the first to see



these pages as he had only showed it to a few before and they won't be going on his site. I picked out two I liked. Francesco also showed me some art he just got back from his restorationist by Alberto Breccia. I had bought a half dozen Breccia pages from him over the past year and so he knew my interests. I thought I was done with Agente Nessuno pages but these were really special. I put two aside.



I met a few new dealers including Nando and Stefano who have a long history of dealing in Italy. At the last Lucca I had looked at their art and bought a few pages from them but never really met them until this year. There were a few heavy hitters in the Italian art market that I got to meet including one I had bought a Terry and the Pirates daily from via a deal brokered by an auction house after a piece had not closed. I have bought other pieces from Italian Auction houses after auctions didn't close. I think the model has flaws from a business perspective if 40 to 60% of auctions don't close as there is not commission generated when the prices are set at or near market value giving no room for a steal. It does provide a good opportunity after the fact for interested buyers which I do like as now the seller might have more realistic or flexible expectations. I did discuss this auction strategy with other collectors and they agree it is strange but the way they do thing and since the auction houses have been around 30 years, clearly it must be viable for them.

As they closed the church for the night, Gio and I went back to Massimo's place for a short sit down before meeting up

with others for dinner. He had a nice flat that was right in the middle of the convention which was procured by Heritage Auctions as he was their representative meeting clients and securing consignments for future auctions. We



Gio, Massimo, Nando, Bruno, Michele and Myself

went out with Nando, Gio, Massimo, Michele from Bologna, Bruno from Switzerland and his wife. We ate in a small restaurant that I had visited last time in Lucca and the food was nice. Michele and Bruno were both big Magnus collectors. On my previous trip to Italy I had the goal of better appreciating Magnus art and made a point of seeking an education from the Italian collectors I knew. I had learned a lot and was starting to see the light but it still eludes me a bit. These guys know Magnus art. Carsten was to join us but in the end was unable to after going out with a well-known Disney artist for drinks and cigars. After dinner I headed home in the rain to continue to try and further dry out my belongings.



few hours of walking around I headed back to the church of art and met up with a few new arrivals to the scene. Enrico Salvini was in as was Michele from Milan. Although I have only known Michele for 3 years since last Lucca, we have a friendship and familiarity that feels decades old and it was good to see him again. Enrico and I go back literally decades. I went back to Daniele to see if the offer I made on the Pratt was accepted and he said the consignor said he was not going to budge but Daniele said he would waive buyer's commission to make the deal work but still had to charge me a 3% credit card fee. We were going to revisit this the next day. From there I went on the exhibitions. I have decided to do a separate section in the back of the article on the various exhibitions, galleries and museums I visited so look



Japantown area

Day 3. Thursday Oct 31st. Knowing how busy the convention would get on the Friday and the rest of the weekend I decided to dedicate the day to seeing the show. I started in



the Japantown section to see the various vendors they had there as that area gets super busy early. I then went through some of the publisher tents and other pavilions. I had a map of where all the exhibitions were going to be that Gio had helped to mark up the night before and I planned to visit them all. After a



for details and many pictures there. The Jeffrey Jones show was fantastic as was the Emil Ferris exhibition. I did enjoy some of the others but they were smaller and of artists I didn't know well but all were well presented and curated. I don't think it is quite the level of the Angouleme gold

standard but some were pretty close. After an afternoon of looking for the hidden exhibitions, I came back to the art church and went back with



Jones Idyll page from Exhibition

umbrellas in a Piazza. It so happened that while we were drinking I spotted two fellow Canadians walking by. Chris and his partner from the Beguiling were in town and I knew that they would

be at the convention but we had forgotten to make any plans to meet. I ran after them and said hello. I have met Chris and had drinks with him in Japan, France, Canada and the US so we have shared many travels together. We talked about meeting up later. After drinks in



Emil Ferris illustration from Exhibition

the piazza, we went to meet Gio's family and Enrico and family for dinner under rain curtains at a nice patio restaurant. Carsten joined us for his last night in Lucca and I sat with Michele. After dinner, as I was walking back to the hotel with my friends, I came across Chris again in a bar and stopped in for a beer after saying ciao to the Italians. What are the chances of the only three people from Canada running into each other twice in the same night in Lucca...it must be about the same as my chances of not having spent any money at the show....pretty close to zero! They were with comic creator Jesse Jacobs and so I had a chance to meet him outside of a formal setting which was nice. After a few drinks I headed home in the rain as they were off for more drinking and I am getting to old for that.

Day 4. Friday November 1st. Lucca. This was my last day at the convention as I am crowd adverse. This was also a national holiday in Italy and despite the rain, 89,000 attendees on this day alone. In total there were over 270,000 attendees over the 5 day convention. It was a big day for me as my best friend in Italy, Max was coming in. I was also going to meet Slaven from Croatia and Marco Nizzoli. The hotel I was staying at was over and I was to stay with Max and his friend Davide for the following night which turned out to be in the same hotel I was checking out of which was very convenient. On the way in, I met up with Marco Nizzoli to pick up a commission I had

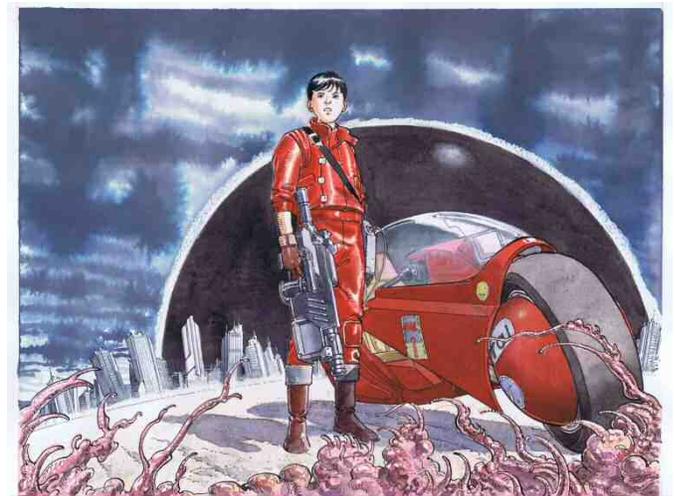


Carsten, Slaven and myself



Max, Michele, myself and Gio – fellow art travelers

arranged prior to the convention. I have had a number of commissions done with Marco over the years and have met him at the previous Lucca in person so it was good to see him again. He was to be signing later so I joined him in the tent and I bought a book from one of his publishers to have

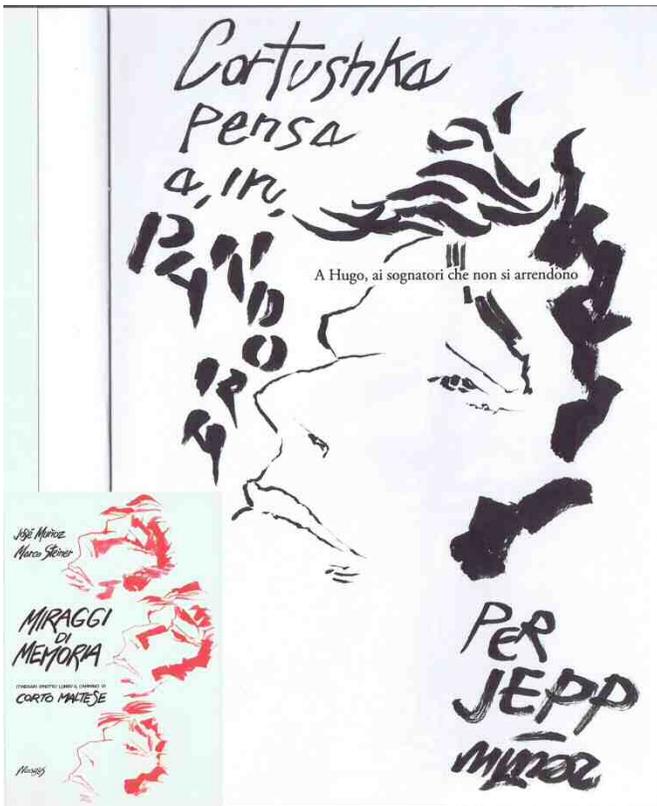


a dedication done it later in the day. I decided since it was early, to look around this main tent again a bit more as there

was lots of great looking books. I happened upon a gallery from Rome who was set up and had Jose Munoz signing. It was strange, he was just finishing off a dedication and I

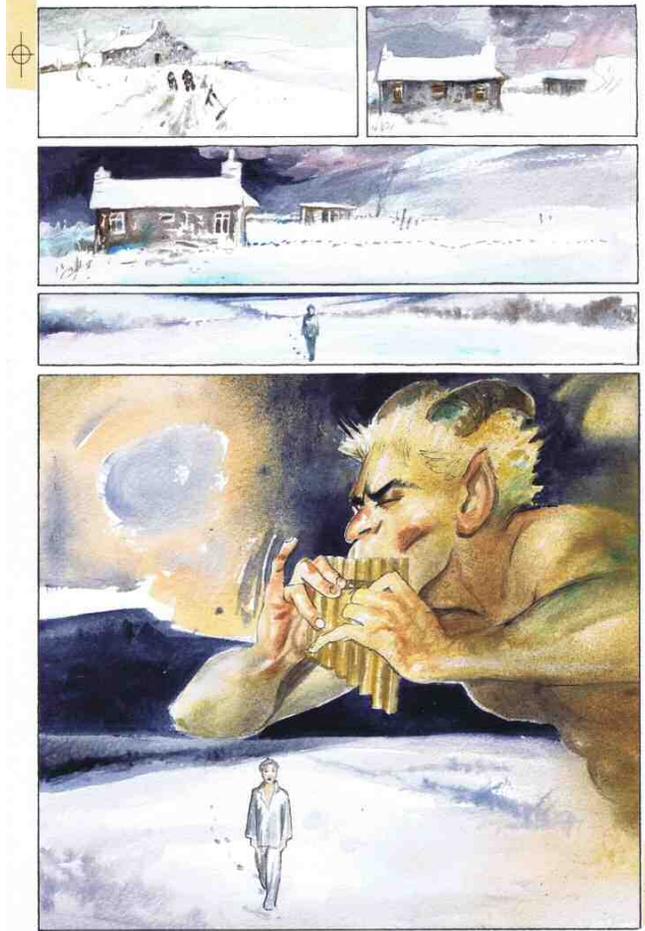


didn't see a line. I asked if there was a line and there wasn't and so I bought a book and asked for a dedication and I was up next. He had happened to illustrate a book of mainly text



on Corto Maltese and so by getting this book, I got a small Corto drawing/dedication. Just as he was finishing a handler came over to tell him that he was a no-show for another commitment and he needed to go there now as there was a

line of people waiting. He finished off quickly, signed it and headed off. It was pure luck I was able to meet Munoz and get a little dedication. He is one of the biggest names in the

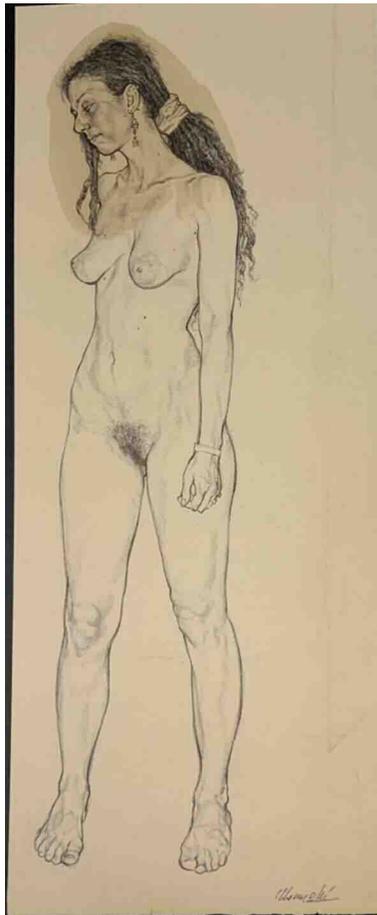


world of comic art and to luck in to him sitting alone and getting to say hello was a small miracle. I had missed John Bolton being set up the on my walk around the day before but found him this time. We talked a bit about his recent visit to Toronto and some of the art I had by him from previous dealings. I ended up getting a nice Sandman: Winter's Edge painted page from him. I rushed back to the art church and met up with Max and Davide.



Enrico, myself, Gio, Massimo, Joe West, Davide, Max and Giovanni

Max was a bit delayed getting in as he was driving in and got stuck in traffic so I met up with Slaven and his helper/friend for a quick lunch. I knew Slaven from deals on line for about 7 or 8 years and we met for the first time at Lucca 3 years prior and again about 2 years ago when Jane and I visited Croatia. We spent a half day with him as our tour guide in Zagreb. We had a lunch together and he told me about developments in his comic convention, his new comic shop and publishing company in Croatia. He knows everyone personally and so is a good contact to keep relations with plus he



is such a nice guy. With Danele I finalized a deal on the Pratt piece that worked out to me saving about 20% from what it would have cost me if I had just made the opening bid on the auction. There was a surprise too, on the back of the Pratt was a full page illustration of a witch done by Pratt. Crazy! I went back to Francesco's and picked up the pages I had decided on and added a few more. I ended up with 2 pages from Corrado Roi's new personal book UT, 2 Alberto Breccia pages from different issues of Agente Nessuno, a Riccardo Mannelli nude illustration and a pair of Magnus pages from Necron and Alan Ford. I also finalized a term payment deal with Michele on the Battaglia art. I know I over spent but as I get more into Italian comic art and understand the rich history of this niche, the pieces I am picking up are of some importance and maybe things I look back on in a few years kicking myself for not having gone deeper into my pockets. I have covered a century of Italian art in this trip with the Rubino from 1920 to the Roi from 2019. We said good-bye to Carsten who was leaving in the afternoon and we had one more big dinner this time joined by another Giovanni from Rome, Joe West along with Max, his girl and Davide. It was a nice dinner and I had a chance to talk to quite a few of the people there. We went back to our hotel and I got ready to sneak out of the room at 4:45am to catch an early train to Pisa to make my flight. I don't like crowds so I try and attend cons and travel on lighter days and in the wee hours.

Quando Fioriranno le rose

Assisi, inverno 1207.

CRAZIE, FRANCESCO! LA TUA VOCE È DOLCE COME LO STORMIRE DELLE FOGLIE NEL BOSCO. TORNERAI DOMANI SERA?



SÌ, CHIARA TORNEREMO TUTTI.



LA FINESTRA DI DIO? MA DOVE?



IO NON VERRÒ ANDRO A CANTARE SOTTO LA FINESTRA DI DIO.



CHIARA E FRANCESCO SI RECANO INSIEME ALL'ERROBOSCHIO POCO LONTANO DA ASSISI.

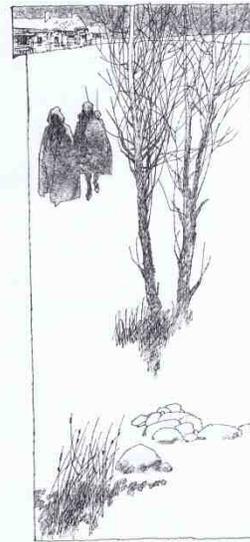


CHE VITACIA! CHE CAMBIAMO A FARE?

MA SÌ, FINIA MOLTA UNA BUONA VOLTA...



OH, NO, FRATELLI! LA VITA È SEMPRE DEGNA DI ESSERE VISSUTA. È LA SPERANZA CHE STA NEL CUORE A TRASFORMARE OGNI COSA. GUARDATE LA NEVE... SOTTO LA NEVE STA GERMINANDO IL GRANO. SUGLI ALBERI TORNERANNO PRESTO LE FOGLIE. NEL CORPO, ANCHE NE L'INFERNO, C'È IL SEME DI UNA FELICITÀ ETERNA.



UNA VOLTA CREPEVO CHE DIO FOSSE IN PARADISO E NELLE CHIESE. ORA SO CHE STA ANCHE NEL DOLORE DEGLI UOMINI. VI SEMINA LA SPERANZA... L'ATESA DI UN MONDO SENZA PENE.



ORA DOBBIAMO SEPARARCI. CHIARA VA' DER LA TUA STRADA!

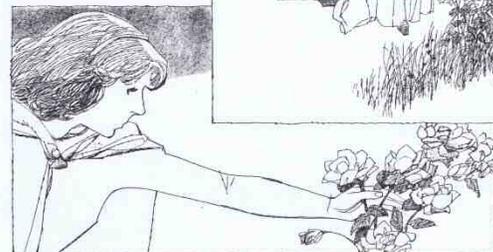
QUANDO CI RIVEDREMO?



QUANDO FIORIRANNO LE ROSE.



QUANDO FIORIRANNO LE ROSE... MA LA PRIMAVERA È LONTANA.



ECCO FRANCESCO! LE ROSE SONO SBOCIATE!



È COSÌ CHIARA DA RILINCIARE DEL LAO DELLA SUA FAMIGLIA PER DIVENTARE COME FRANCESCO. E METTERSI AL SERVIZIO DEI POVERI PER AMORE DI DIO.

FINE

Day 5. November 2nd, Paris. I arrived in Paris about noon via Orly Airport. I took the train and metro into town. I knew that today was to be my busiest day of the trip. I had ambitious plans to visit all 8 original comic art galleries in Paris and I had a plan mapped out but the logistics of travel between galleries had not been worked out. I decided to start at Gallery Napoleon and move on from there. The next stop was Daniel Maghen's and the Gimenez exhibition. I picked up the Manara I had won at auction a few weeks prior and had paid for but wanted to pick up in person rather than having it sent. From there I went to the Hubery-Breyne Paris location followed by Galerie Glenat, Galerie Martel, Galerie Barbier-Mayer Mathon's two sites and then



finally Galerie 9e art which was close to my hotel. Through my travels I found out that Galerie Octopus was closed so it was only 7 galleries. I managed to do it. I wrote a bit more on each gallery in a supplement to this article. I ended my day at Galerie 9em, Bernard Mahe's gallery. I have been four times in the past and every time I manage to miss Bernard. Either he is still in Angouleme or Lucca or San Diego. Normally he attends Lucca but was absent this year so I was hopeful I might catch him at the gallery. I arrived at his gallery as the sun was setting at about 6pm. They were to close at 7. Bernard was there and I had been told before of all the art he has in his collection and in the back. We were able to talk and it turned into one of his legendary 3 hour show and tells. I got to see multiple top tier examples of Little Nemos, Raymond Flash Gordons, prime and early Foster Prince Valiants and Moebius pieces you would not believe. Long after the gallery was closed and all the assistants had departed, we said good night and I went up

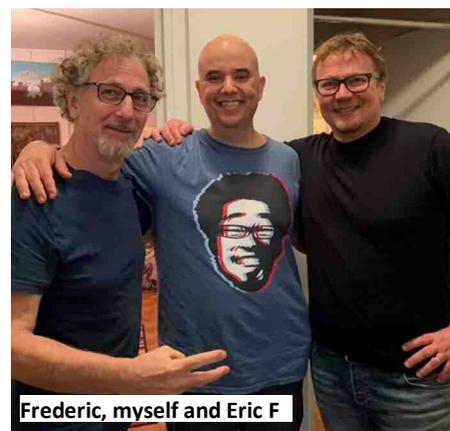
the street to my hotel with by suitcase still in tow. I was a good boy, despite all the galleries I saw, I only ended up with one book and one piece of art both from the Barbier Mathon gallery and an artist named Bati who was one of Moebius's assistants for 15 years and was there doing dedications at his exhibition.

I stay in Montmartre whenever I visit Paris because I like the area, it is convenient being close to the main train station and subways and with easy access to the main airport. I like walking up the *Sacré-Cœur* to look over the city at night if I have nothing else to do. This time I stayed in the same rundown hotel I did on my last trip and had to drag my bag up the same 6 flights of stairs I did last time but otherwise the stay was good. I got changed and quickly headed off to a dinner I had arranged at a Michelin starred restaurant. It was a long day. It started at 4:45 am. I walked through most of Paris as the galleries were either only a few minutes apart or just over a mile apart and not worth getting on the metro for so I walked. It was a lot of walking and my suitcase now was over 50 lbs so it was a good work out and I was glad to be done with it. That night, I got home from the tasting menu late and a bit drunk.

Day 6, November 3rd Paris. I got up and got on the Subway to meet up with my friend Eric F. who comes down from Lille to visit with me whenever I am in Paris. We met and went to the Centre Pompidou to see the modern art collection which included some truly iconic pieces including Marcel Duchamp's paradigm altering urinal. We spent a few hours there and then we caught a quick bite to eat and headed over to visit with Frederic at his apartment. I had some money for Frederic from a previous art deal that involved one of the 3 Rarebit Fiends I got earlier



this year. It was a nice visit looking at his art and meeting him in person again for the third time. Frederic was involved in publishing and print making during his career and has many great examples by everything from EC artists and



Crumb to Strip art and Tardi. After a few hours visit, Eric and I left and headed back up to my area as he had to take a train home and I had concert tickets to see a Belgian band, Whispering Sons in concert a few



Whispering Sons Concert Paris

subway stops from my hotel. I didn't have plans for my evening in Paris so I made plans to do a few things so as not to just end up walking around and heading back to the hotel early. Tonight it was this band I had never heard of but when

I checked out their music, they had an 80's Echo and the Bunnymen, Bauhaus, Siouxsie and the Banshees vibe to them so I thought I'd check them out. I spent the concert about a meter from stage and it was great. I am smart enough to bring ear plugs with me to concerts and they were needed. It is a fun band that probably takes themselves a bit too seriously but one I will follow for the next few years to see where they go.

Day 7, November 4th, Paris. The arrangement for the day was to hit some

of the comic shops in the Paris comic district where there are about dozen shops. I was meeting up with another Eric from



Arnaud, Eric M, Benoit and myself

outside Paris and we were to hang out together and then meet up with Arnaud and Benoit for lunch a few subway stops away. I saw a lot of comic shops and I ended up with a few more pounds of books I had no idea where I was going to fit in my luggage. The Paris comic shops are quite variable and range from the bright and shiny to the old school, dingy and smelling of paper shops. I prefer the later and had a great time going through old comics and books. If I had the capacity, I would have bought dozens of things but couldn't. I probably could have had them shipped but decided against



Of Monsters and Men Concert, Paris

that as I also have to manage my overflowing bookshelves at home. Lunch was nice catching up with Arnaud and Benoit who I have had a chance to meet a few times in the past in Paris and earlier this year in Angouleme. I spoke about how

much a visit with Arnaud changed my collecting a few years ago in a previous article. Although Benoit is a Paris detective, Arnaud an automotive design engineer, Eric an IT specialist, when we sit down we are all just fans of comic art and the language is universal. I have found that a singular truth in this hobby, no matter what profession someone is in, when it comes to comic art we are all brothers talking the same dialect. Eric and I headed back around 5 and I got ready to go out again. I had a nice meal that included beef tartare, French onion soup, merlot and absinthe in Montmartre before walking down the street to see Of Monsters in Men in concert. I know the band and was a fan already. The show was fantastic. Packed. It was to open at 7:30 but at 6:15 there was already a long line. I decided rather than to line up, just to go have a nice dinner and see about squeezing in on the main floor when I got back. It worked out well and I ended up about a meter from the stage for the whole show. Normally I wouldn't go to a concert alone but I figured I am in Paris and having nothing better to do so go out, have fun and experience something cool like a rock concert in an old venue. As I mention from time to time, my job keeps life in perspective seeing how quickly things can change or come to an end so living life without regrets is my motto of sorts and hence the trip, eating at nice places and going to concerts at my age. No regrets.



Day 8, November 5th. I got to sleep in. Relatively. I got up and was already packed up. After dragging my suitcase back down those six flights of stairs I checked out. I caught a metro to the Gare du Nord and awaited my train to Brussels. I arrived just after 11 in Brussels as the train was delayed by almost an hour. I took the Belgian metro and found my hotel. I was prepared to just leave my bags and check in later but I was glad they had a suite ready for me and I left my things. After having gotten a piece of art out of my suitcase, I got back on the Metro to meet up with artist Alec Severin for the day. I have written about Alec in one of my



Alec Severin in studio

previous early submissions but as a quick recap, I have known Alec for over 15 years and we have done many trades for his art and some of my favorite commission are from him. He is a well published, classic artist working in comics. We met in person about eight years ago on a previous visit to Brussels. It had been about 2 years since we had last written as Alec doesn't have email and so most of our communication has been through letter mail. I did call him before coming to Brussels to arrange a visit. He met me at a metro station and we took the tram to his apartment where we would have lunch and spend the next 5 hours talking. I had arranged for him to do a little commission for me and in trade I gave him a Cisco Kid daily as he is a big fan of horses and had always wanted a Salinas piece. It was a surprise what I gave him in trade as was the commission for me. I had asked him to do a Franco-Belgian character themed piece with Tintin, Asterix, Lucky Luke, Smurfs and the like



and let him take it from there. We didn't exchange art until later in the day. After a nice meal we went on to look at his art and talked a lot about his career and current frustrations with his publisher. While talking, he sat at his drawing board and asked me what I wanted him to draw. I asked for one of his creations and chose Harry which he said he had not drawn in many years. He showed me some of his recent work for Spirou magazine which had a very Eisner Spirit feel to it. It was stunning but when he showed a few pages to his publisher, they were not interested and didn't even look at the whole story as it was not the type of story they normally would associate with the character. With their permission, Alec took it to Le Soir, the newspaper who loved it and published it in full page format over 8 pages with other pages interviewing Alec. It was a great piece and proved Alec's point of how great it was but also highlighted some of the issues he was having with editors. We talked a lot about how editors in comics all over the world are no longer interested in the art, artists or characters but on sales. No longer do you have former artists in this role but instead accountants and bean counters that might make more money for the company but don't understand the fundamentals of the comics and fans and ultimately hurt the franchise. When the day was getting late, we said goodbye and I went back to my hotel before going out for dinner.

This was my fourth time in Brussels and I enjoyed the city a lot more than I had in the past. My previous impression of Brussels was of a bit of a sad city with a beautiful Grande Place that you only really need to see once in your lifetime. The main reasons for me coming back to Brussels were to visit the Musee Herge which I missed on my last visit, to see Alec again and to go to a few of the original comic art galleries. The city was a lot livelier than it had been in the past but perhaps it was the location of my hotel that made a difference or the way they created pedestrian only streets. Whatever it was, it was a lot of fun even on a dreary, rainy and cold November nights. Mussels, tartare, Belgian sausages, soups and good beer made for nice meals and despite the rain, my opinion of Brussels changed greatly. I forgot to mention the chocolate. No other country can compare to the Belgians...full stop. I bought 2 pounds of chocolate at Neuhaus which is my favorite maker before remembering that I was already over my weight limit on the suitcase even with rearranging things. Oh well, I figured I'd sort it out.

Day 9, November 6th. Brussels. I actually slept in for the first time on this trip and it was much needed. Everywhere I went it had rained every day and everyone was coughing and sneezing on the subways. It is a miracle I didn't get sick on this trip. Perhaps there is something in the wine and beer. My plan for this day was to go to the original art galleries. There are three in Brussels. 2 are closed except on very limited days. The biggest was open and I went there first. I had contacted Huberty-Breyen ahead to arrange to see some Breccia art. I had seen the Mort Cinder pages they had in Paris a few times and on line but they had another

dozen in Brussels that were not on their site. I was not expecting to see these pages and had expected to see some later Breccia art which they did not have available to show me. Mort Cinder is a high point in comic art and my favorite

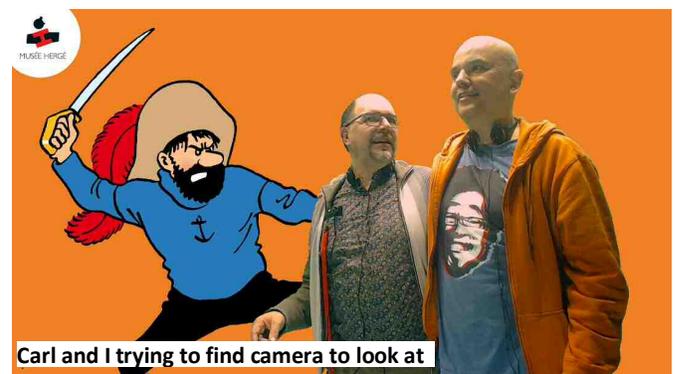
my radar. I had also hoped to visit Galerie Champaka who I have had business with in the past but they were not open and could not arrange a visit on this day. I headed back to the hotel for an early night, watched a movie and went to



sub-story is the Penitentiary story due to the striped uniforms, bars and lighting used. Breccia was a master of light and shadows and his skill set really shun on this chapter. They had 2 nice pages from that story. Maybe not the best but really nice and I settled on one of those. They also had the Marc Antoine Mathieu art in Brussels and they pulled those out for me. I had been lusting over a page for the better part of 3 years on their site and when I saw it person, the decision was almost made for me. I have known Alain Huberty for years and we use to meet in New York before the comic con for a few years for dinners and to deal art. I would almost always leave with a new Manara from those dinners. I had not met his partner Marc Breyne until this visit. We negotiated a bit and worked out a deal on the two pieces. After paying, I took my treasures, hopped into an Uber and headed over the Comic Art Factory to meet up with Frederic who was opening up his gallery especially for me. He had a nice exhibition up by Keith Burns. He also shared with me his personal art collection and some of the works of his new artists. I spent over 2 hours with him and we talked a lot about art, the industry and hobby. A very insightful and entrepreneurial young gallerist I expect to hear a lot more about in the future. I didn't end up buying anything from him this time but have a few new artists on

sleep.

Day 10, November 7th. Brussels. This was the day for Musee Herge. It is outside of the city and I originally had plans to take a bus out to see it but when I made arrangements to meet up with both Carl and Olivier in Brussels, both were interested in going so I put it off to the last day. Olivier had to cancel our day together at the last minute so I went to the comic strip art museum by myself in the morning and then met up with Carl to go out the Musee Herge. Both galleries were fantastic with great designs and layouts to help support the art they were showcasing. More on both



Carl and I trying to find camera to look at galleries after the main article. The Musee catalog was

nicely done and I ended up with another brick of a book to add to my overloaded suitcase. We drove back and I said good-bye to Carl. I was off to England early in the morning.

Day 11, November 8th. I left my hotel at 5 am for an early flight to Leeds via Heathrow. I took an Uber to the airport and was there on time. Thankfully I was a bit early as the line up to drop bags off was long followed by a long line for security screening and then another long line for passport control. The early airport arrival made it less stressful and I was at my gate early only to find out my flight would be

but it turns out that flight was delayed as well. In the end it all worked out ok.

I took the Flying Tiger bus in from the airport to Harrogate and we passed the most picturesque English country side landscape I'd ever seen. Storybook sheep spotted the green hills and I knew lamb was on the menu for the evening. I arrived in town and made my way to the bed and breakfast I was staying at and my room was ready early so I was able to leave my bags. I decided to explore this small English city as the convention did not start until the Saturday. I got some



Afternoon Tea – Mama Doreens

advice from the owner on where to have English high tea and also where to eat lamb. He made a few recommendations that would not have shown up in tour books and I tried the two that sounded most local. The first was high tea and Mama Doreens. That was a bit of an adventure as they had recently moved so the app took me to an abandoned storefront. Luckily the host had marked where it was on a tourist map and I found it. I had never had English afternoon tea before so was quite surprised by the offerings. It was great! I wandered the streets and visited a few shops including a used books store and a few art galleries. I had to keep reminding myself that I couldn't add any more weight to my suitcase and so stopped from buying a complete run of James Bond from the 70's for a pound each. In one of the galleries that specialized in older oils and watercolors I asked about any illustration, comic or children's book art and after a bit of digging a few things



The old woman helps the boy to cross



The Return of King & Queen



delayed due to fog in London. We were not told this until we were on the plane and we sat at the gate for 45 minutes before heading off. I only had a short connection time in London and so I figured I was going to miss my connector



popped up. They were quite nice and I ended up taking 3 home with me. Two are by Constance Foxley for a 1900

publication called *Books for the Bairns* and featured the Snow Queen by Hans C. Andersen from which these two pieces are. The third piece I would guess would be circa 1912 and was done for a book publisher that closed in the 50's but published children's books for over a century. I liked it because of the characters that are similar to those in works of McCay and Outcault. My research so far does not help me in identifying the artist beyond the Jenner signature. I took the art back to the room and then went out for dinner. I normally like lamb but this was on a different level, perhaps of because of how fresh it was. It was one of the best meals in a trip full of great meals. The place I went to was packed with locals but since I was alone they were able to seat me. I started to explore the world of Gin a bit further. They put things like fresh gooseberry and cucumber into their gins and I liked how the fresh stock added depth, character and taste to the gin. The area around Harrogate is famous for several well know gin producers and so this was gin country. I headed home to get ready for the convention the next day.

Day 12, Harrogate. I was attending Thought Bubble. My place was a 2 minute walk from the convention center and so I didn't get up too early and headed in around 9:30 for



the 10 am opening. There was already a long line up. I had tickets already and so did everyone else in line. They came through the line, scanned tickets and handed out wristbands so that

when the doors opened there was no delay. It was a very efficient system. I knew this was going to be convention very much like TCAF and SPX in North America. Small press and indie artists but at the same time some bigger name artists like Sean Phillips. Once inside, there were three large main halls and then an upper floor where panels were held. I had planned to attend a few panels but this never transpired. This is the first year the convention was being held in Harrogate as it was previously in Leeds for the past 12 years. Harrogate is about a half hour

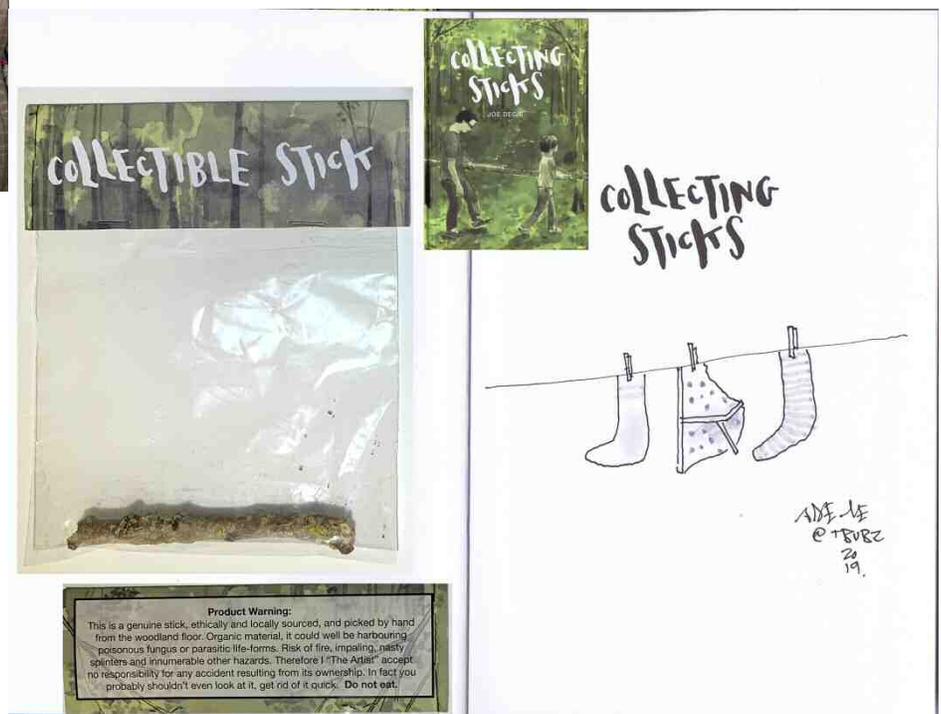
country drive from Leeds and I believe the move was



spurred by the need to grow the convention and perhaps some uncooperative municipal organizers in Leeds. Regardless, I was very glad it moved as Harrogate is absolutely perfect and I'd gladly come back for another visit.



After entering through the main entrance, I started down the first aisle and kept going. I stopped and talked to many artists and picked up many books but had to put them all



back down again as I was so far over what I could carry. I did eventually pick up one graphic novel, *Collecting Sticks*, which was brilliant, quiet and easily relatable having to do with camping and the value of a good stick. When you bought the book you also got a bagged, collectible stick with it which was a fun promotion that I realized only after I had made the decision to purchase. It was a very enjoyable read and I now have a collectible stick.



I met up with David Roach who is a UK artist who I have known online for years. In addition to knowing David as an artist, I know him as an art collector and comic art historian.



He has written several books and is writing more for which I have lent several scans for. It was a real pleasure to meet him. We talked for some time and I ended up with a Judge Anderson page from him as my UK comic art souvenir. I was to meet up with Joe Melchior who had decided to come up with his partner and a friend. I didn't know until later the

friend was Malcolm Borne who I have met in passing before but have had many conversations with over the years as we have similar collecting interests. I met Joe in the middle hall as I discovered David Roach's table. Of course, Joe knew David and had been trying to buy the art I was talking with David about but it was not for sale. After some discussion, we decided to go for afternoon tea again and so we met up with Natalie and Malcom and we went to the Mama Doreens again. I picked a lighter meal this time and it was nice afternoon. After, we returned to the conventions, I finished off my rounds, went back to my room to drop off art and came back to meet up with Joe for drinks. The group grew to include Malcolm, Sean Phillips, Tim Prichard, Charlie Adlard and a few others and after a few drinks we dispersed. I decided to go back to the same restaurant again as the food was so good and had a Sheppard's pie and more gin. I came back, packed up and got ready for a mid-morning departure for the airport and flight home via London. All went smoothly. I was home and thankfully had the next day off as I needed a rest.

I used my umbrella every day of the trip as the rain seemed to follow me but at no point did it dampen my enjoyment of the trip. I drank everyday on the trip too. At home I often go 2 or 3 months without any alcohol and only drink with friends or if we go out for dinner as my wife can't drink. I will have the rare glass of wine when I am cooking too but for the most part I don't drink but when I travel I enjoy adding the local alcohol preferences to my experiences. I came home with a suitcase that just made the requirements for weight after jettisoning every extra thing I could leave behind and then moving everything dense and heavy over to my back pack and putting on my heavy boots to wear rather than carry in the suitcase. I kept adding books and chocolate to my overweight suitcase and somehow made it all work in the end. I do carry a suitcase scale with me when I travel so I can avoid problems at the airport and it sure got good use this time.

As an aside, here is one more part of this story that didn't really fit into the narrative. I got an email just before I left about a local reporter wanting to talk to a comic art collector. He had spoken to another collector who suggested that we have seen a big increase in comic art prices that was secondary to the Marvel movies success. I am not of this opinion and was happy to talk with him. We texted a few times during the early part of my trip and in the end I managed to speak to him from my hotel in Lucca on the night of the art auction. Although I think the Marvel movies have made the characters more of a household name and speculators already in the comic field have capitalized on certain comics tied into the movies, I don't think it has really impacted the art market much. There has been an increase in the value of comic art in recent years and I would say there was a substantial bump in the past 3 or 4 years but I can't tie it to Marvel movies, it is more of a general trend. A few comic art pieces might have benefited such as first appearances of certain characters, maybe

Thanos art and the likes but that is such a small part of the hobby. I don't think there are a lot of people that watch the movies and then decide to drop 5 figures on a piece of comic art that are not already invested in the hobby. So, the rise in comic art prices may coincide with the Marvel movies but I don't think there is any correlation and I told the reporter my thoughts on this. I am sure his initial thoughts on the story would make for better copy and reading but I don't think it would be accurate. In this day and age, news isn't accurate anyways and even if it was, one could still label it fake news and ignore it.



The article did get published but with a different take than I was expecting and rather than taking a quote or two from me, it did focus a bit on my collection. This led to a live talk radio segment and two television spots. You can read the article, listen to the radio and see the news segments here if you are so inclined.

- <http://www.art4comics.com/torstar01.jpg>
- <http://www.art4comics.com/torstar02.jpg>
- <http://www.art4comics.com/22524.mp3>
- <http://www.art4comics.com/ctvnoonfull.mp4>
- <http://www.art4comics.com/ctvnewsfull.mp4>

So...those were my most recent adventures in comic art. I hope I have shared some of the fun and experiences I had with you in a meaningful way. It is always a quest of mine to find something comic related during all my trips but when you build a trip around comics and friends, it can really turn into something special. My collection certainly grew with some unique pieces from this trip. Each of those pieces has an extra level of appreciation and enjoyment that I'll be reminded of each time I see them. With the philosophy of always a student, I have been learning more about the history of Italian comic art and the masters and it is truly impressive. The innovations Italian comic artists brought to the media cannot be overlooked with so many innovators and pioneers.

To fill up the rest of the page, a few stories Alec shared with me when we were visiting and then some more pictures. The first, I asked about him having met Moebius and he had. Alec started his professional comic art career very early on and was 16 or 17 when his first comic was published. He was sitting at a booth at one of the comic conventions when he was just 17 and in line to see him was Moebius and Charlier. This would have been in the late 1970's. Moebius

had wanted to see what this young artist was all about and had only positive words and then turned to Charlier and said...here is your next artist for Blueberry. Alec told me met Moebius a few times and each time he treated him as a fellow professional with respect and encouragement.

At another convention, Alec was sitting next to Burne Hogarth and there was a long line up. In line was Rene Follet, a well-known Belgian artist and when he got up to Hogarth's table, he was so overcome that he could not speak and turned a bright red. I am told he was a large man and so this large, bright red man handed a painting to Burne Hogarth. Hogarth looked at the painting and said, this is a Rene Follet. He went off on a speech about how great Rene was and how he teaches his students about Follet and that he is among the favorites of his students. Alec quietly tells him that this is Rene Follet. Burne had assumed Follet was a much older and veteran artist and had not made the connection to the person standing in front of him. When he realized it was the artist he so admired, Hogarth stood up and shook his hand with reverence. When he finally understood the painting was intended as a gift to him by Follet, Hogarth broke into tears.

Parrots...not something you would expect to hear about here but Brussels has an invasion of parrots. A few years ago a number were released from zoos with the expectation they would not survive. They did and are thriving to the point where they have pushed out many domestic species as they are big and aggressive and are eating all the food. I bring this up as I thought it was fascinating and Alec Severin's studio window is out to a park and he mentions how much he likes the colors and noise of the parrots but realizes what a problem they are too. In the few hours I spent with him a dozen parrots flew within inches of his window. It was quite impressive.

Three weeks after this trip I was back in the UK again. Originally I had planned this trip and was going to have my youngest, Carsten, who is 15 and an English Premier League Football fan fly out and join me for two games. It turned out that the timing of the first trip was such that all the teams were on international break. Now that I had football on the brain, we decided to come back to England and squeezed in 3 games in 5 days with some pretty tight travel arrangements. We saw his favorite team, Tottenham Hot

Spurs play in their new stadium in London. We then went to the small town of Burnley to see Manchester City play Burnley where we sat in the away section which was quite a fun experience. We also ended up getting our tickets for that game which we had pre-ordered over a month ago only about 2 hours before the game and we had to get it from a tote in an off-site betting establishment. Extra memories. From there we went to Manchester and did a VIP game day experience to watch Manchester United play Tottenham. Three amazing games in three different venues...it was a lot of fun and hopefully something my son will always have fond memories of. What this got to do with comic art...nothing...other than I did manage to squeeze a tiny bit of comic art into the trip. I met up with fellow APA mate Marcelo at the Tate gallery and for a lunch. It was a nice afternoon that went by too quickly talking about art and comics. I also met up with Joe Melchior for the second time in a month for a nice pub meal in central London. Other than seeing some old football related comics in the National Football Museum, there were no further comic relatable experiences to report on.

A further update. Since the two trips above, I made two more comic art trips before the pandemic and travel bans hit. The first was in late January to Atlanta. I had a list of people I wanted to visit while I was down there. I arrived early on the first day and took the public transit to meet up with Brian Stelfreeze at the transit stop. We went back to his studio where we hung out and talked for a few hours. Michelle, Brian's studio mate, joined us for part of the day. We had a nice lunch and went back to talk for a while. I think after about 6 hours of me it was time to move on. I always find Brian one of the most insightful artists to talk to as he has spent so much time dissecting art and storytelling that we can get into conversations I can't with anyone else. He is a natural born teacher too and very generous with his time and talent. Alan Dion came out to pick me up from Brian's studio and we went back to his place for dinner. Benno came over later to hang out and Joe Dragunas drove in from Ohio to join me for my stay in Atlanta and joined us at Alan's place. It was a very nice evening and Alan and Joni were great hosts. The main impetus for this trip was to visit with Bob Murphy again. I think you have been introduced to Bob before through Benno and myself. Bob is in his 90's and

and Pirates original art collection in the world and I had the pleasure of being introduced to him 5 or 6 years ago by Benno when I was in town for DragonCon. We have kept in contact and I was looking forward to seeing him again. Originally I had planned on revisiting DragonCon but it falls on the weekend of move in dates for Universities in Canada. Now that my kids are heading off to schools, DragonCon is not going to be possible for at least another 6 years and I didn't want to wait that long to see Bob. So, on day 2, Joe and I went to pick up Alan and we headed out to visit with Bob. We spent a good portion of the day with Bob and were treated to his art collection which is incredible. In the late afternoon we parted ways and headed back to brave Atlanta rush hour and personal injury lawyer signs en route to an evening with Benno and a few other friends. If any of you have visited with Benno before, you know how great a host he is and at some point we stole away from wives and went to look at art. I got to see some of the treasures Benno recently acquired in person and the new things he had just gotten framed. Benno has always had one of my favorite galleries in CAF and has certainly influenced my collecting over the years. The next day Joe and I went to art Museums including the Booth Gallery about an hour outside of Atlanta which specializes in Western art. We returned to Atlanta to



still actively collecting comic art. He has the biggest Terry



visit the High Art gallery and then went on to have a quick dinner before heading off to see the new Guy Ritchie movie. The next day we met up with Alan and Benno for Brunch before I headed off to the airport and Joe headed home.



I'd be visiting with Joe again just a few weeks later in Chicago at C2E2. These plans came together at the very last minute. The convention was held a lot earlier than normal this year and flying into and out of Chicago in the winter I think

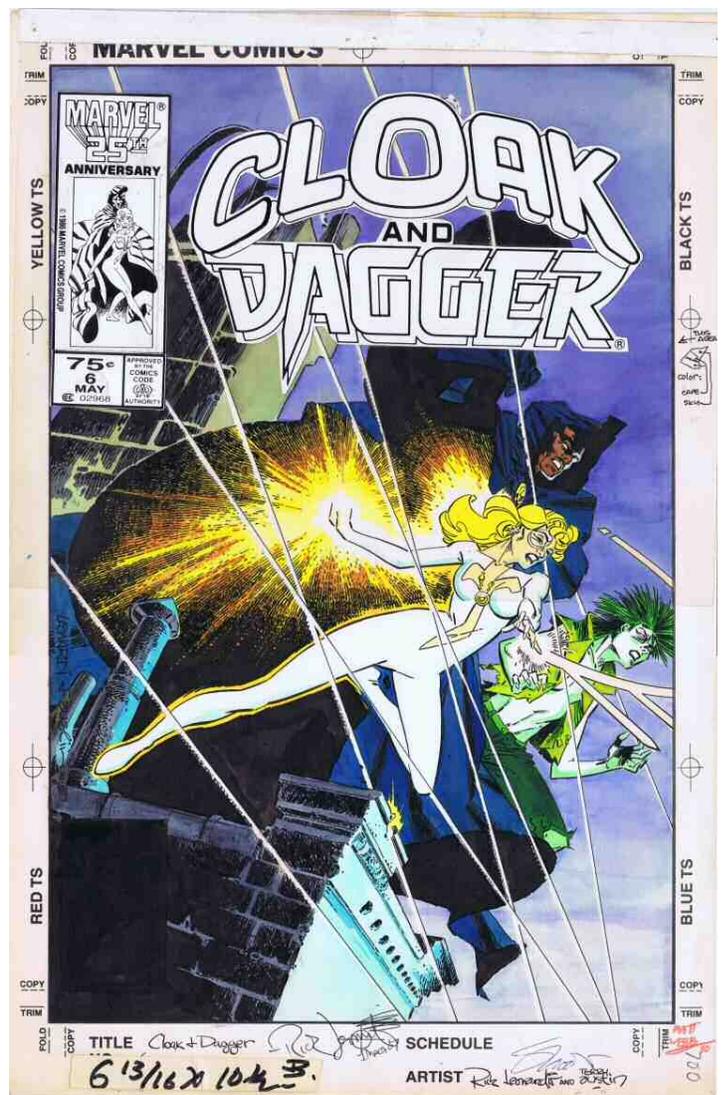
is always a bit of a gamble. We go lucky. My buddy from Toronto, Rob G came down with me. We were there only for two nights. The first night we met up with Steve Davich for dinner and drinks before calling it an early night and heading back. The next morning we attended the convention.

I was to get a pass from Joe and Rob was getting one for Albert. I spent the morning at the convention and then Rob and I headed off to meet up with former CFA-APA member Chris Kilackey for a nice lunch overlooking the Chicago waterways.



We went back to the con for the rest of the day and I managed to walk about 90% of the con on that first day. I caught up with fellow APA members David Applegate, George Hagenauer and Stuart Sayger. I spent quite a bit of time with Joe Dragunas as well. I had no expectation on coming home with any art (you know where this is going...). David and I were walking and talking and came up to Albert's booth. I had stopped by briefly earlier but had not really looked around. This time something caught my eye. It was the cover to Cloak and Dagger #6 by Leonardi and Austin but it was colored. I asked Albert about it and he said he got it colored and on ebay many years ago and it was part of his personal collection. He gave me a price that I thought was

quite reasonable. Albert has been to my place a few times and so he knows what I have and we have talked trades before and so there were pieces we had mutually valued ahead of time. I added an Arthur Rackham to the deal and was able to negotiate a trade on the spot that would involve Albert giving me some pocket money next time we meet up (the last part of the deal was negotiated a few days after I got back). I also picked up two pieces by Sean Beezer who had a style I liked. He had these two awesome, large banners behind him and I found the art for the Banners in his portfolio for an embarrassingly low price. I paid him more than he was asking for them and took those home too. That evening Rob and I left the show to meet up with Chris K and others for dinner. Steve Morger and Frank Cho joined us. Steve brought some beautiful Aparo Batman covers to show and others pulled out their convention finds. It was a nice evening. Rob and I headed back to the hotel. The next morning I got up to meet up with Joe for breakfast and a pre-con walk around. I finished seeing the parts of the con I had not seen and met up with an old friend from my jungle girl fan days for lunch before heading to the airport and home. I think C2E2 was the last really big convention that has been had due to all the pandemic related cancellations.



Mailing Comments CFA-APA 108 (missed getting submitted last issue so there may be a bit of redundancy).

Already a favorite issue as I love my comic strip art. Great job on putting this one together. A BIG thank you to everyone that contributed. A huge standing ovation for David as our maestro and John as our facilitator/printer.

Stephen Stein – Star Wars has been blessed with some of the greatest comic artists having working on it. I have never read it and although a fan of the original movies, I never really got into anything outside of that original cannon. I'd like to add a Manning to my collection and I have owned a few Williamson Star Wars pieces over the years.

Wally Harrington – I love the sci-fi themed comic strips. As good as the original Buck and Flash were, I do think the British really did the best job with the theme. Nice overview of Dan Dare.

Ray Cuthbert – Fun landscape format to your article and very fitting for the topic (wished I had thought of that). Nice selection of strips to show from classic adventure and sci-fi to romance and gags.

Ron Sonenthal – I very much enjoyed your impressions of being in the room at Heritage. If I ever have the chance to go to Dallas for something art related, I will hopefully be able to time it so I can attend a big Heritage Auction live.

John Butler – very touching story of friendship and art. It was among my favorite articles of the year!

Bill Leach – a very welcomed alternative interpretation of the **Strip Art** theme! Great collection of pin-ups.

Marcelo Anciano – great to meet you in person in London. I very much enjoyed our visit and talk. Thank you for the Gianni book, it was a treat to go through. Those were some gorgeous Bolland Killing Joke pages you owned.

Joe Latino – Nice and detailed research on Ditko.

Bob Kopman – Nice seeing you present and talk about the strip art in your collection. My favorites are easy, LOA and GA.

Michael O'Connell – what a great collecting story and a follow up to your last article. Among my favorites this issue.

Benno – I have long admired Prince Valiant but always put off the daunting task of diving in and reading 5 decades of work. I just started recently now that the Fantagraphics reprints have reached the end of Foster's run and I have to say I am so impressed with the stories and art so far. Foster hit the ground running with this strip, perfect from the beginning. It make take me months or years to get through it all but I am motivated and am looking forward to joining in on the adventure of a life time. I enjoyed the interviews you did, very insightful. Hopefully I'll be seeing you and Alan around the time this issue gets published.

Lee Banaka – it is always fun reading your articles and seeing what the art collecting landscape was like long before I was a part of it.

Tom Vincent – interesting perspective on Wrightson and Marvel's attempts to control his style.

John Stuart – Modesty Blaise ... there can never be too many images or articles on her. Nice overview.

George Hagenauer – nice seeing you again at the comic art party. I've always like police dramas.

Hal Turner – Nice story about the Gray Morrow art. I was a big fan of his art when I first started collecting but over the years my tastes change. I still think he was a great artists, just no longer art that fits in my collection. Funny how that happens. Tony Millionaire, there is someone I need more art from in my collection.

Alan Dion – nice Strip art collection. You have a Gumps...nice. The Brick Bradford I think is my favorite. Perhaps I can talk you into being a travel mate on a future Europe art trip.

Michael Hranek – Nice seeing Archie art in your article. I am becoming a much bigger fan. Although a little stalled, I am hoping to have a big project done for a future mailing along with my co-writer Bob Kopman.

Aaron Sultan – Nice to read about your thrift shop find. Spectacular.

Chad Kolean – I have some nice Jones images in this issue of APA for you and in the next I will have pictures from the Jones exhibition in Lucca. I hope you enjoy.

Roger Hill – seeing the cover to HOS #92 and Swamp Things 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 all in one place...it is inconceivable to me. What a great story.

David Applegate – Holtz Strip art book is my bible. I call it my magic book and I have a few friends who are too cheap to get their own consult me about looking things up for them in my magic book. If I had to give up all other comic books and guides a I have and keep only one, this would be it. I loved seeing you talk about For Better or For Worse. It is the comic strip of my childhood having grown up at about the same time as Michael was and sharing the Canadian experiences like bags of milk. It is such a part of my psyche that I don't even see it as comic strip, it is just part of my life and I happy to own a few examples.

Satya – Welcome to the club. Your articles were missing from my copy. Hopefully something I can rectify.

Mailing Comments CFA-APA 109

Another spectacular presentation and issue!

Ray Cuthbert – Great series of recreations you have had done. Bruce is the perfect artist to be featured in this APA volume.

Rob Reinter – welcome! Very nice layouts and I enjoyed your submission very much. Looking forward to hearing more about your collecting and collection.

John Stuart – Loved seeing the prelim for Cryptic Inks. A little plug for the book which I bought a print on demand copy from Amazon and enjoyed very much.

John Butler – Nice C&H drawing. Fun creations/recreations you have created in good humor. I want to hang out with you more often.

Bill Leach – Nice set of recreations. Interesting Corben piece.

Wally Harrington – McWilliamson is among my all time favorites and so grossly underappreciated. I have a soft spot for Bob Lubbers art too so nice to see your finds. Jungle Jo, Tangi...as obscure as they are, I know them well from my early days of Jungle Girl Fandom. I totally credit Russ with bringing Gasoline Alley back into the public eye. I thought he was flooding the market when he was selling dozens each auction but he was building the market and once it was primed he released the dailies from the first week in reverse order. I was very impressed with both this approach and the success he had in bringing more light to the genius that is Frank King.

Steve Smith – Dorman did a great job on Frazetta knock offs as did Hoffman. You need a to get Tom Grindberg in on the action as I think he does a pretty good Frazetta style.

Bob Kopman – I like Hembeck art too. Always fun to see. I agree that Bob Layton wasn't charging enough for his time and work when he was doing these great cover recreations.

Michael O'Connell – brilliant and meticulous detective work. I think you missed you calling. I thoroughly enjoyed your step by step solution to mysterious nude.

Benno – it was great seeing you again just recently. I wish I had seen more of your Little Benno pieces. I knew there were a few but didn't realize just how many you had. Fun stuff.

Satya Chetri – Nice overview of the year in sketches. You have been busy my friend. I met Trondheim last year and got a little sketch in Monster. If he had been English, he would have been the main guy at MAD Magazine. I love everything I have read by him. That is quite a collection of sketches you got and that color piece is amazing. I am glad you got to meet Ito in Toronto. It doesn't look like there will be many conventions to attend in 2020. Sigh.

Stuart Sayger – great to see you again and chat at C2E2. I enjoyed your submission very much. Nice to see your earliest Batman art...I had no idea you were that much of a fan.

Scott Stewart – Nice selection of art you choose to share. I like Comolo's work very much. It is not a style you think would work with Kirby but it does.

Lee Banaka – Nice to see these Colan cover recreations. I would be happy owning the DD 56 recreation although even today I think the price is too high.

Chad Kolean – very cool analysis. I had not picked up on those trademark Jones poses/imagery before but now I will not be able to unsee them.

Alan Dion – it was a great pleasure to hang out with you while visiting Atlanta. Your hospitality and the art collection you shared were both enormous. The Hotlz book doesn't have it indexed and has Mary Worth starting in Oct 29, 1934.

I saw a few online references that state Apple Mary began in 1934 too, both by Martha Orr. The publisher insist they are separate entities and not in continuity. If you have any examples that are from '32 or '33, I'd love to see them. My Mary Worth collection is limited to a Sunday from '62 and daily for '77, both by Ernst.

David Applegate – it was nice to see you again at C2E2. Sorry our talk got cut off as I got the scent of some comic art at Albert's table. I guess I am a like a bird dog.."squirrel". Even though we spent several hours enjoying your art collection, I don't recall seeing the recreations. I suspect we were treated to just the tip of the iceberg and I am sure another few visits are in order. I appreciate the choices you have made and although I might have picked differently, I can fully agree with what you picked.

Tom Vincent – I like this theme of a year in review that you and Satya approached. I like hearing about the circumstances of why and how art is acquired as much as a I like hearing about what was found.

Michael Hranek - I enjoyed the back story to the Jones purchase. It is always interesting dealing with undisclosed flaws/damage in art. It is a balance between accepting some imperfections in unique pieces vs. damage/flaws that would otherwise undermine the value of what you bought.

Dave Karlen – I never get tired of looking at old comic art advertising.

Hal Turner – Interesting to read Alex's impression of trying to do a direct recreation. I always imagined it would be a tedious project and done by artists so they could eat, not because they really wanted to copy someone else's work. I don't have any Gasoline Alley art by artists other than King. I have most of the King reprints that have been done to date and I'd like to dive into them when I am done my current readings to get into the characters a bit more. For me, the early Gasoline alley art is enough to carry me but the later art is not and so the story and characters better be good to keep me going.

George Hagenauer – our brief chat at C2E2 was too short. I had hoped to run into you again but it didn't happen. Hopefully my annual art gathering is far enough ahead that it can still go on safely in September and we can meet up again. I don't see any conventions happening between now and then. I'd argue I get a lot of utility out of my comic art...I if didn't I would not own it.

Ron Sonenthal – . Hulk, Sasquatch and Wendigo battling, great content! Sad to hear about Bill's fate. It was hard for me to write about King as the best when I have such a deep seated love of Caniff's work but it is impossible for me to make a compelling argument even with my starry eyes. It's a ood thing I don't have to choose just one to love.

Henry Franke III –I enjoyed the visit through your comic strip collection. I see the Nick Cardy Tarzan and Brenda Starr pieces I once owned. I am glad they found their way to your collection.