

## **Call for Papers**

International Conference of the Research Center of Excellence “Écrire une histoire nouvelle de l’Europe” (EHNE), the National Library of France (BnF) and the Goethe-Institut Paris, June 9-10, 2016.

Deadline for paper proposals: September 30, 2015

Place: National Library of France (BnF), Goethe-Institut Paris

### **Title**

When Comics go to War. Representations, Confrontations, Receptions in European Societies

### **Summary**

In Europe, stories about war have always played a certain role in comics as a means of propaganda and glorification, but also of denunciation. Besides, comics represent transmission belts for memories, knowledge and images about war, by sometimes even going beyond what is allowed to be visualised. Thus, comics do not only feed the imagination on war, but they modify it at the same time – all the more in recent times since the amount of stories drawn on war keeps increasing, the range of topics, spaces and perspectives expanding and the propagation of stories across Europe intensifying.

### **Argumentation:**

Although some historians are particularly focusing on comics dealing with war, historical research on these stories remains marginal and scattered as comics altogether continue to have a negative connotation as a historical object. Hence, the conference does not intend to provide an exhaustive overview of the subject. It rather aims at understanding the role, comics play in Europe’s war history and its aftermath, and at opening new perspectives for future research.

Three aspects will be at the heart of the conference without being exclusive:

- 1) Making use of war

It has already been mentioned that more and more comics deal with war. In this context, many albums are dedicated to World War I or World War II. However, current wars are also taken into consideration in formats such as reports, testimonies or memory books. We want to understand the temporal dimension of comics on war

by looking at their coming-into-existence, circulation and reception during and after wars.

## 2) Visualising war

Secondly, we will examine the impact of comics on the iconography of war. Indeed, drawing war can break with visual conventions, play and change the *imaginaire* of military conflicts. Sometimes comics even transgress the limits of what may or should be shown and pictured, thereby destabilizing preconceived visual stereotypes or even cause controversy or resistance, like Art Spiegelman with “Maus”.

## 3) Capturing European societies

Comics about war are part and parcel of political, economic and social processes. They have for instance been a place where heroes, particularly male ones, were produced. They also played an important role in the creation of the “young boy”. In the third place, we will therefore focus on the way European societies make use of comics in time and space (political, educational, commemorative, economic, etc.) with a particular interest in entanglements across borders.

## **Publication**

Encouraging interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives, the conference is open both to junior and senior scholars working in the field. Contributions can be presented either in French or in English. A publication of the conference proceedings is planned.

## **Paper proposals**

Paper proposals on one of the three guiding issues of the conference or any other aspect concerning the relationship between comics and war should comprise an abstract of no more than 2000 characters and a short CV (in PDF format only). Please send it to [bdguerres@gmail.com](mailto:bdguerres@gmail.com) before October 15, 2015.

The Academic Advisory Board will make its decision in November 2015.

The conference will be held in Paris on June 9-10, 2016. The first day will take place at the National Library of France (BnF) and the second day at the Goethe-Institut Paris.

## **Academic Advisory Board:**

Nicole Colin-Umlauf (University of Aix-Marseille)

Mathieu Jestin (UMR-SIRICE, LabEx EHNE)  
Sylvia Kesper-Biermann (University of Cologne)  
Olivier Jacquot (BnF)  
Vincent Marie (Université de Versailles Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines)  
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Bettina Severin-Barboutie (UMR-SIRICE, IHA, LabEx EHNE)  
Fabrice Virgili (UMR-SIRICE, LabEx EHNE)

**Organisation:**

Mathieu Jestin  
Bettina Severin-Barboutie