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ART SPIEGELMAN

**Pulitzer Prize-winning Artist/Illustrator,
Author of *Maus*, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, & *Breakdowns***



Photo: Enno Kapitza / Agentur Focus

Art Spiegelman has almost single-handedly brought comic books out of the toy closet and onto the literature shelves. In 1992, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his masterful Holocaust narrative *Maus*— which portrayed Jews as mice and Nazis as cats. *Maus II* continued the remarkable story of his parents' survival of the Nazi regime and their lives later in America. His comics are best known for their shifting graphic styles, their formal complexity, and controversial content. In his lecture, "What the %@&*! Happened to Comics?" Spiegelman takes his audience on a chronological tour of the evolution of comics, all the while explaining the value of this medium and why it should not be ignored. He believes that in our post-literate culture the importance of the comic is on the rise, for "comics echo the way the brain works. People think in iconographic images, not in holograms, and people think in bursts of language, not in paragraphs."

Having rejected his parents' aspirations for him to become a dentist, Art Spiegelman studied cartooning in high school and began drawing professionally at age 16. He went on to study art and philosophy at Harpur College before becoming part of the underground comix subculture of the 60s and 70s. As creative consultant for Topps Bubble Gum Co. from 1965-1987, Spiegelman created *Wacky Packages*, *Garbage Pail Kids*, and other novelty items, and taught history and aesthetics of comics at the School for Visual Arts in New York from 1979-1986. In 2007 he was a Heyman Fellow of the Humanities at Columbia University where he taught a Masters of the Comics seminar.

In 1980, Spiegelman co-founded *RAW*, the acclaimed avant-garde comics magazine, with his wife, Françoise Mouly—*Maus* was originally serialized in the pages of *RAW*. He and Mouly also co-edited *Little Lit*, a series of three comics anthologies for children published by HarperCollins ("Comics-They're not just for Grown-ups Anymore") and *Big Fat Little Lit*, collecting the three comics into one volume. He and Mouly started Toon Books publishing easy to read comics for children. They co-edited the anthology *A Toon Treasury of Classic Children's Comics* published by Harry N. Abrams.

*"Art Spiegelman...to the comics world is a Michelangelo and a Medici both, an influential artist who is also an impresario and an enabler of others...[Maus's] great innovation—unmatched and possibly unmatched—was in its combination of style and subject....It would be almost impossible to overstate the influence of *Maus* among other artists."*

— New York Times



"Spiegelman is well-spoken and insightful, and is one of those rare creators who can talk coherently about his own work and process."

—Boing Boing

Spiegelman's 1978 anthology, *Breakdowns* includes an autobiographical comix-format introduction almost as long as the book itself, entitled *Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!*. McSweeney's has published a collection of three of his sketchbooks entitled *Be a Nose*. His work has been published in many periodicals, including *The New Yorker*, where he was a staff artist and writer from 1993-2003. He also illustrated the 1928 lost classic, *The Wild Party*, by Joseph Moncure March.

In 2004 he completed a two-year cycle of broadsheet-sized color comics pages, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, first published in a number of European newspapers and magazines including *Die Zeit* and *The London Review of Books*. A book version of these highly political works was published by Pantheon in the United States, appeared on many national bestseller lists, and was selected by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the 100 Notable Books of 2004.

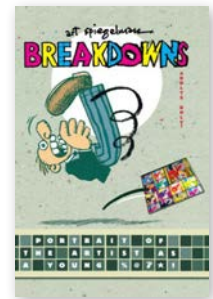
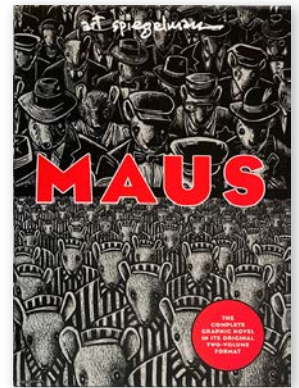
In 2009 *Maus* was chosen by the Young Adult Library Association as one of its recommended titles for all students. In fall 2011, Pantheon published *Meta Maus*, a companion to *The Complete Maus* – it is the story of why he wrote *Maus*, why he chose mice, cats, frogs, and pigs, and how he got his father to open up (the new book includes a DVD of the transcripts of Art's interviews with his father; it is not a graphic novel, but it is populated with illustrations, photos and other images). *MetaMaus* has been awarded the 2011 National Jewish Book Award in the Biography, Autobiography, and Memoir category. In 2020 the New York Public Library voted *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* one of the 125 most important books of the last 125 years.

Spiegelman's project, *WORDLESS!*, a multimedia look at the history of the graphic novel, had its world premiere at the Sydney Opera House in October 2013 and its US premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in January 2014. In 2015 he collaborated with renowned French artist JR on *The Ghosts of Ellis Island*. Spiegelman has also edited a book about the artist Si Lewen titled *Si Lewen's Parade: An Artist's Odyssey*. His next project will be *Street Cop* in collaboration with Robert Coover (Isolarri, April 2021).

A major exhibition of his work was arranged by Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, as part of the "15 Masters of 20th Century Comics" exhibit (November 2005). In 2005, Art Spiegelman was named one of *Time Magazine's* 100 Most Influential People and in 2006 he was named to the Art Director's Club Hall of Fame. He was made an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France in 2007 and—the American equivalent—played himself on an episode of "The Simpsons" in 2008. In 2011, Art Spiegelman won the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival, marking only the third time an American has received the honor (the other two were Will Eisner and Robert Crumb). The honor also included a retrospective exhibition of his artwork, shown in the Pompidou Center and travelling to the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Jewish Museum in NYC, and the last stop at the AGO Art Gallery of Ontario. The accompanying book is *CO-MIX: A Retrospective of Comics, Graphics, and Scraps*. In 2015 he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2018 he received the Edward MacDowell Medal, the first-ever given in comic art.

"Spiegelman has become one of *The New Yorker's* most sensational artists, in recent years drawing illustrations for covers that are meant not just to be plainly understood but also to reach up and tattoo your eyeballs with images once unimaginable in the magazine of old moneyed taste . . . Art Spiegelman's cartoons don't fool around."

— Los Angeles Times



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