



# Drawing Connections – Comics as Art and Inquiry

## **Symposium at Malmö University November 15-16, 2024.**

Comics, with their unique blend of text and visualization, offer a rich field for artistic research, particularly in terms of their material components from the techniques used in creating the comic to the tools used to reproduce the comic. As an artistic research symposium, *Drawing Connections* aims to look at the material aspects of comics creation, exploring how these elements shape storytelling within the medium. While comics are a globally practiced form of storytelling, much remains to explore about the tools, techniques, and tactility that contribute to what makes the story tick.

The symposium will address the role of comics in artistic research to emphasize how practical research in comics can facilitate inquiry and generate knowledge, particularly in understanding and innovating the narrative structures within the medium. To that end, we want to invite reflexive practitioners as well as researchers who *make comics* to test theories *on comics*, but also those whose research focuses on the materiality of comics production. While we recognize the significance of digital production and publishing in comics, our discussions this time will exclusively explore the materiality and craftsmanship of analog comics. The symposium will take place at Malmö University and is arranged by MUCH (Malmö University Comics Hub) in collaboration with the Swedish Comics Archive and is designed to showcase how comics serve as a unique platform for narrative innovation, critical inquiry, and interdisciplinary dialogue. MUCH is a platform for research, artistic development, and cooperation within the field of comics, hosted by the School of Arts and Communication (K3) at Malmö University.

We welcome submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- *Comics as a methodology*: Looking at how comics can be used as a method to explore complex ideas about narrative structure.
- *The aesthetics of comics*: Looking at how comics artists can use design and layout to influence the narrative experience.
- *Exploring production*: Looking at how comic book production – including technological and material constraints – has influenced storytelling styles and formats.
- *Materiality and medium specificity*: Looking at the physical aspects of comics (such as material quality, publishing techniques, and formats) and their impact on the development of comics as an art form.
- *Archival research in comics*: Understanding archival materials in the historical context of comic production and how past practices influence current trends.
- *Future directions*: Anticipating new trends, technologies, and methodologies in the creation and study of comics.

**Deadline for submission of 300-word abstracts and a short author note (c.150 words):**

**June 30, 2024** to [oskar.aspman@mau.se](mailto:oskar.aspman@mau.se)

We hope you will join us in exploring the aesthetic, narrative, and theoretical potential of comics!