



Art Spiegelman, "Comics as a Medium for Self Expression?". Cover, PRINT Magazine. Ink and watercolor on paper. May-June 1981. Courtesy of the Artist.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***Vancouver Art Gallery Presents Major Retrospective of the Work of
Renowned Comic Artist Art Spiegelman***

Vancouver, B.C. – Opening at the Vancouver Art Gallery on February 16, 2013, *Art Spiegelman CO-MIX: A Retrospective of Comics, Graphics, and Scraps* will present the first retrospective exhibition of the work of acclaimed comic artist Art Spiegelman. This exclusive Canadian exhibition features work from over forty years of Spiegelman's career, including more than 400 preparatory drawings, sketches, studies and panels relating to his early underground comix from the 1970s, his best-known and genre-defying work, *Maus*, and his more recent illustrations and comic art, including his powerful response to 9/11, *In the Shadow of No Towers*.

“We are honoured to bring this powerful and provocative exhibition to Vancouver and Canada,” said Gallery director Kathleen Bartels, “Building on past exhibitions such as *Krazy* and *The Uncanny*, *CO-MIX* is part of the Gallery’s commitment to supporting visual culture and presenting the leading artists working in this field today.”

The exhibition provides insight into Spiegelman’s pioneering work channeling cultural commentary into biting, subversive comics, and demonstrates his enormous influence on the medium. Starting from the artist’s early forays in the underground comix scene with colleagues Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton, the exhibition includes a selection of his contributions to the influential *Arcade* magazine, as well as examples from *Breakdowns*, a pivotal work in Spiegelman’s career. *CO-MIX* also features a wide range of Spiegelman’s work as writer, illustrator, art director, and a graphic designer for Topps Candy Company. In presenting these diverse works, *CO-MIX* traces Spiegelman’s exploration of complex notions of narrative and styles of expression.

“Spiegelman is a pivotal figure in the comic form,” said Gallery senior curator Bruce Grenville, “Drawing on a wide range of influences and inspirations – from various styles drawn from the long history of the comic form to traditional woodcuts to Cubism – he has, and continues to, develop dynamic new ideas within the field of comics which are showcased in this exhibition. Spiegelman’s influence on the modern comic form, both as graphic novel and comic strip, cannot be overstated.”

A notable portion of *CO-MIX* is devoted to *Maus*, the Pulitzer prize-winning work that in its myriad forms has compelled the artist throughout his career. Published between 1978 and 1991, this autobiographical graphic novel juxtaposes Spiegelman’s father’s experience during the Holocaust with an account of the strained relationship between father and son in the present. The exhibition presents rarely seen research material, preliminary sketches, photographs and storyboards related to the production of *Maus*.

Other sections of the exhibition present some of Spiegelman’s work before and after *Maus*, including *RAW*, an influential magazine he created and edited along with Françoise Mouly from 1980 to 1991, *New Yorker* magazine covers, children’s comics and his books *In the Shadow of No Towers* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@?**!

This is the first major exhibition of Spiegelman’s work since the MOMA exhibition of *Maus* in 1992. The exhibition is co-produced with the Ludwig Museum, Köln and the Jewish Museum, New York.

A media preview with the artist and senior curator Bruce Grenville will take place on Thursday, February 14th at 10am in the Gallery. Media attending are requested to RSVP to Carolyn Jack.

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Images are available upon request. A full artist biography is attached.

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