

CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference: Comics, Migration, Minorities

DATE: June 3–5, 2020

VENUE: School of History, Culture and Arts Studies at the University of Turku, Finland

SUBMISSIONS close by January 15, 2020; presenters will be notified by January 31, 2020

The *Comics, Migration, Minorities* conference welcomes comics scholars, comics artists, educators, cultural workers, teachers, activists and other representatives of the comics field interested in the different ways in which comics, migration and minorities intermingle. There is currently an international boom in migration-themed comics, but migratory movement has had an effect on comics throughout the art form's history.

In the last decade, comics have become an important forum for the depiction and discussion of various aspects of migration. Comics depict forced displacement, seeking refuge, asylum-seeking processes, detention policies, border control and violence, labor migration, international adoption, and studying abroad. Through their stories they explore and reflect diasporic and minority identities, the differences between immigrant generations, family histories, memories of former homelands, and the different experiences and emotional aspects of involuntary and voluntary migration.

Migration has become a prominent issue in comics of a whole range of genres, including both fictional and documentary comics. Comics autobiographies and biographies, journalism and historical narratives have recorded migration in different parts of the world and displayed personal histories and social analyses. Fictional stories for adults, young adults and children have highlighted the predicaments of refugees and others on the move. Comics are also an activist and educational medium in the fight for immigrant rights and against xenophobic and racist policies and sentiments.

Whose stories are told in comics, whose voices are heard in them, and who gets to tell graphic narratives are central questions when considering the narration of migration, as well as regarding the relationship between hegemonic majority groups and minority groups in societies at large and in comics fields in particular. Cross-border migration and the formation of immigrant communities are shaped by historical and current power relations and processes of colonialism and slavery, white supremacy, growing global neo-fascism and racialization, as well as formations such as Fortress Europe and border policing. Questions concerning representation and diversity in comics and the field of comics are not delimited to issues of migration, however. While the focus of the conference is on migration and comics, a broader discussion on diversity and the similarities and intersections of minority positions is encouraged.

We welcome proposals for individual presentations in the traditional academic format (20-minute presentations with a 10-minute discussion), but we also encourage proposals of alternative presentation forms (e.g., roundtables and workshops) on topics related, but not limited, to the following:

- Migration and minorities in various comics genres
- The representation of migrants and other minorities in comics
- Displacement and seeking refuge in comics
- Ethics of narrative and representation
- Histories and memories of migration
- Labor migration, studies abroad and international adoption in comics
- Asylum-seeking processes, detention policies, and border control and violence in comics
- Racism, xenophobia and stereotypes in comics
- Activism and social justice initiatives

- Comics and political discourses about migration and minorities
- Comics as a tool for integration
- Comics as a tool for education about migration and minorities
- Comics in language education for migrant groups
- Diversity in the comics field
- Comics by migrant and minority creators and in minority languages

The conference's invited plenary speakers are:

- Amalia Alvarez (<https://amaliaalvarez.wordpress.com/>)
- Paula Bulling (<http://paulabulling.net/>)
- Dominic Davies (<https://www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/dominic-davies>)
- Golnar Nabizadeh (<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/humanities/staff/details/golnar-nabizadeh.php>).

Please submit an abstract of your proposed presentation in English by January 15, 2020, as an attachment to the email address comics@utu.fi. The abstract should be no longer than 200 words. Please include your name, affiliation and contact information in the abstract document. Authors of submissions will be notified by January 31, 2020. For further information, please contact comics@utu.fi. In due time, information concerning the conference will be found on the conference web page at <http://conference.migrationcomics.fi>.

The *Comics, Migration, Minorities* conference is organized by:

- Comics and Migration: Belonging, Narration, Activism project (<https://migrationcomics.fi/>) funded by the Kone Foundation (<https://koneensaatio.fi/en/>)
- Departments of Finnish Literature (<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-humanities/finnish-literature>) and Comparative Literature (<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-humanities/comparative-literature>), University of Turku
- SELMA: Centre for the Study of Storytelling, Experientiality and Memory, University of Turku (<https://selmacentre.wordpress.com/>)
- Migration Institute of Finland (<http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/en>)

