

CXG 2021

CARTOON
CROSSROADS
COLUMBUS
ANNUAL REPORT
2021



NOTE FROM JEFF SMITH

Welcome!

CXC 2021 turned out to be a wonderful and terrifying year—for all of us. It was the second year of the pandemic and it seemed like we were never sure if we were planning an in-person festival, a virtual online show, or if we would even have a festival at



all! But thanks to the quick thinking of our team and all of our partners, we not only rode the pandemic roller coaster, we forged ahead and created a new kind of memorable event. Extra thanks to our Tech-Ops team for getting us online and allowing us to stream prerecorded and live events

all over the world! For two years running, against all odds, Cartoon Crossroads Columbus has managed to provide a multi-day program free for the public, filled with the same high-caliber cartoonists, helpful and informative “Teach & Talks,” along with many panel tracks dedicated to matters of concern and import to cartoonists and cartoon lovers everywhere. And I mean everywhere! For the first time, attendees and guests were able to interact in real time with people all over the U.S. and around the globe.

We also added a new award in 2021: The Tom Spurgeon Award, named after our founding executive director who passed away in 2019. Tom had a great deal of experience writing about comics and creators in his capacity as an editor at *The Comics Journal*. He also bolstered cartoonists at every level of the art form, often helping them navigate the comics industry through his website *The Comics Reporter*. The yearly award, suggested by his family, will honor individuals who have made contributions to the field but are not primarily cartoonists. The 2021 Tom Spurgeon Award honorees were Mollie Slott, Orrin Evans, and Kim Thompson. I think Tom would be pleased.

As we move ahead in 2022, we all hope things will go back to something like normal, even though it looks like we may be heading into another year of waves and rollercoasters. Having gone through the last two very successful CXC festivals, I am confident that no matter what, CXC 2022 is going to be a great one.

JEFF SMITH

Jeff Smith
CXC Co-founder and Artistic Director,
cartoonist and publisher

NOTE FROM JERZY DROZD

CXC is made of a group of bright, creative people who are in the business of changing lives, and I'm so proud of how everyone came together during some uniquely challenging times to create a rich and meaningful festival.

It has been in CXC's DNA to innovate since its first year. The hybrid festival of 2021, featuring in-person, live-streamed, and pre-recorded programming, along with a lively community on our Discord server, created a multi-faceted experience not seen before in comics festivals. Thoughtful in-person events were simultaneously local and global, with interactions happening between presenters, in-person attendees, and participants on the Discord.

CXC has always worked toward more inclusion and accessibility, and the hybrid festival is another iteration in that direction. I'm excited to see how the festival will continue innovating to serve the cartooning communities in Columbus and worldwide.

Jerzy Drozd
CXC Interim Executive Director,
cartoonist, and teaching artist



Panel discussion *Exploring Queer Expression in Comics Studies: The Graduate Student Experience* as part of CXC 2021 featuring D'Arcee Charington Neal, Rolando Rubalcava, Kaitlin Marisol Sweeney Romero, Lauren Chivington and Sydney Heifler.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Despite some major challenges, CXC 2021 met its goals to celebrate the best in the cartoon arts, provide support for creators, and throw a spotlight on Columbus and its arts organizations as an international destination.

Celebrating Columbus

The Columbus comics community has always been a prominent part of the festival, but it was featured to a larger extent in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and difficulties in planning for presenters to travel long distances. We knew we could do this because of the strength of the Columbus comics community has made a leap in the quality and diversity of its work, with locally raised talents like **BRYAN MOSS**, and newcomers like **C.M. CAMPBELL**, **M.S. HARKNESS**, **SYDNEY HEIFLER** and **BEN TOWLE**, among many others.

This year's highlights include a presentation from Campbell, a cartoonist and Columbus College of Art & Design faculty member, about the mechanics of how panel layouts in comics help to tell the story. Campbell, a vital part of CXC who serves on our awards committee, was also part of a panel about *Superspreader*, an anthology featuring mostly Columbus-based artists who were sharing work they had produced during the pandemic lockdown.

Moss, who is a member of CXC's board, was part of a panel with 10 of his local friends and colleagues in which they described their team approach to producing the art for *The Eightfold Path*, a forthcoming graphic novel from Abrams Books that is an anthology of Afrofuturist parables.

The show continues to demonstrate what can happen when Columbus' arts and educational institutions work together, with events held this year at CCAD, the

Columbus Metropolitan Library main branch, the Columbus Museum of Art, the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum at Ohio State University, and Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University.



Alison Bechdel (left) and Hilary Price (right) during their discussion at the Columbus College of Art & Design at CXC 2021.

CXC 2021 SPECIAL GUESTS

Alison Bechdel
Ben Towle
Bianca Xunise
Brian Walker
Bryan Moss
Charles M. Schulz Museum
Chip Bok
Chris Samnee
CM Campbell
D'Arcee Neal
Derek Kirk Kim
Elsa Charretier

Emi Gennis
Erin Cosgrove
Graham Annable
Hilary Price
Jamila Rowser
Jay Hosler
Jeff Smith
Jerry Craft
Joey Alison Sayers
Jonathan Lemon
Jules Rivera
Katie Shanahan

Katlin Marisol Sweeney-Romero
Lauren Chivington
Lewis Trondheim
Lisa Sterle
Lora Innes
M.S. Harkness
Matthew Erman
Matt Fraction
Nick Anderson
Omar Mohamed
Patrick McDonnell
Rafael Rosado

Robert Triptow
Roberta Gregory
Robyn Smith
Rolando Rubalcava
Ron Wimberly
Shary Flenniken
Shena Wolf
Steenz
Sydney Heifler
Thierry Mornet
Trina Robbins
Victoria Jamieson

National and International

At the same time, some of our focus—and almost more importantly, the audience—was national and international. The online format allowed for the presence of participants like French comics legend Lewis Trondheim.

ALISON BECHDEL appeared in person for a conversation with fellow cartoonist **HILARY PRICE**, sponsored by and held at CCAD before an audience of about 300. Bechdel, the groundbreaking and best-selling queer cartoonist, doesn't often travel to comics festivals. Her latest book is a memoir about her obsession with physical fitness. Price, the cartoonist behind the syndicated strip *Rhymes with Orange*, conducted a fun and challenging interview with Bechdel that was structured like a workout. The result was a highlight not just of CXC 2021 but a highlight in the seven-year history of our festival.

SHARY FLENNIKEN, the pioneering cartoonist behind *Trots and Bonnie*, traveled from Seattle and was part of several days of in-person programming that was also available to online audiences. One of the highlights was a session at the Columbus Metropolitan Library Main Branch in which she led the audience through approaches to character design.

Building Community

The festival had a thriving community on our interactive online channels. As it was our second year online, we were humbled that national and international audience members joined us and were eager to interact with each other and with comics professionals. Some of those online audience members spoke of plans to visit Columbus for a future CXC.

The challenges brought on by the pandemic forced CXC to become more flexible and learn how to be much more than an in-person festival, and we intend to build on that in 2022.

59

Number of
events/activities

5,000

Total Audience

58

Number of
artists paid

\$56,299

Total paid to artists

28

Artists who are
Columbus based

99

Total number of
participating artists

2021 AWARD WINNERS

Master Cartoonist Award

The Master Cartoonist Award recognizes significant and sustained professional artistic accomplishments. **SHARY FLENNIKEN**'s use of historic comic strip imagery to convey women's concerns and experiences in her comics, like *Trots and Bonnie*, was creative and groundbreaking. Her work continues to have an impact on graphic storytelling today.



Flenniken



Bechdel



Smith

Transformative Work Award

The Transformative Work Award recognizes a work's significant impact on the direction, quality, and expression within cartoon art. *Fun Home* by **ALISON BECHDEL** opened new possibilities in graphic memoir by demonstrating how storytelling can further our understanding of family and self.

Emerging Talent Prize

The Emerging Talent Prize recognizes artistic accomplishment, potential growth, and the uniqueness of a cartoonist's achievements early in their career. The Awards Committee was especially impressed with both the writing and the artwork of **ROBYN SMITH**, as well as the published presentation of *The Saddest Angriest Black Girl in Town*. This is a poignant, important work.

Tom Spurgeon Award

2021 marked the introduction of the Tom Spurgeon Award. The award is named after CXC's founding executive director who died in 2019 and was a champion of the cartoon arts. The award, suggested by Tom's family, is a way to honor individuals who have made substantial contributions to the field but are not primarily cartoonists.

"The breadth and depth of Tom's experiences as a journalist, comics historian, and reporter make him the ideal model for an award celebrating the contributions of non-cartoonists to the field," said Lucy Shelton Caswell, founding curator of the Billy

Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum at Ohio State University and a co-founder of CXC.

"Tom often talked about the need to formally recognize the many ways non-cartoonists have advanced the art form," said Rebecca Perry Damsen, president of CXC's board of directors. "We are happy to be able to realize his dream of his with the Spurgeon Award."

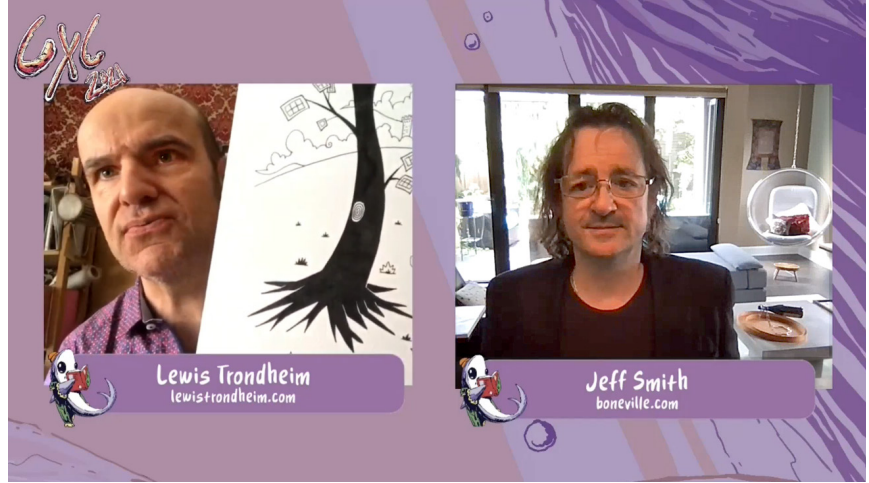
In 2021, we honored a posthumous slate of contributors:

MOLLIE SLOTT, 1893-1967: During her fifty-six year tenure at the Chicago Tribune-New York Daily News Syndicate, Mollie Slott began as a stenographer and rose through the ranks to become vice president and director. The comic strips she shepherded included *Brenda Starr*, *Dick Tracy*, *Gasoline Alley*, *Little Orphan Annie*, and *Terry and the Pirates*.

ORRIN EVANS, 1902-1971: Motivated by his love of comics and his belief that comic books were a medium that could celebrate the contributions of Black Americans to history, Orrin Evans published *All-Negro Comics* #1 in June 1947. The 48-page comic book, created entirely by Black cartoonists and writers, featured a glossy color cover and the typical newsprint interior. Evans' plans for issue #2 were unrealized because vendors refused to sell him the newsprint required for the book, most likely due to racial prejudice and pressure from competing publishers.

KIM THOMPSON, 1956-2013: As co-publisher of Fantagraphics Books, Kim Thompson played a key role in establishing comics as a medium to tell many kinds of stories for readers of all ages. He edited works by a wide range of cartoonists from Stan Sakai to Chris Ware. Thompson also was a major influence in introducing American readers to Western European graphic novels, many of which he translated for publication.

Cartoonist Lewis Trondheim is interviewed from France by CXC Artistic Director Jeff Smith as part of CXC 2021.



Colleen Dunne, executive assistant to the Mayor's Office presenting CXC Interim Executive Director Jerzy Drozd a Certificate of Recognition honoring Cartoon Crossroads Columbus from Mayor Andrew Ginther.



Karen O'Connell and Jenny Robb, Curator and Associate Professor at The Ohio State University's Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum, at the OSU Urban Arts Space at CXC 2021



The group that created the book *The Eightfold Path* after their presentation about their process making the book. Led by cartoonist Bryan Christopher Moss. From left to right, Raeghan Buchanan, Jeff Sims, Rachel Miller, Mike Wright, John Martino, Sara Guzman, Bryan Christopher Moss, Taylor Chiu, Mel Sealy, Stacie Laparo and Kaycee Nwakudu.



Cartoonist C.M. Campbell before his presentation about panel design in comics.



Robyn Smith, Jamaican cartoonist of comics including *The Saddest Angriest Black Girl in Town* and *Nubia: Real One* (written by LL McKinney) is awarded the Emerging Talent Prize CXC 2021.



Jerzy Drozd, a cartoonist and teaching artist who served as CXC's interim executive director in 2020 and 2021.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

Because of your support, Cartoon Crossroads Columbus is able to provide the annual CXC Festival free of charge and offer high quality programming.



Greater Columbus
Arts Council



UBS



ORANGE BARREL | MEDIA

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

Billy Ireland
CARTOON
Library & Museum
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



CXC guest Alison Bechdel (left) tours the The Billy Ireland Cartoon Library with OSU Professor Jared Gardner (right) at CXC 2021.



BOARD AND COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

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Lucy Shelton Caswell, Vice President
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Michael Brown (Chief of Staff for Columbus City Council President Shannon Hardin)
Jami Goldstein (Greater Columbus Arts Council)
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Vijaya Iyer
Laurenn McCubbin
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Rachel Miller
Rafael Rosado
Tracie Santos
Jeff Sims
Jeff Smith
Anne Touvell

Gallery tour and talk with cartoonist Patrick McDonnell at the OSU Urban Arts Space at CXC 2021.

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Rebecca Perry Damsen
Matthew Erman
Emi Gennis
Scott Hoffman
Andrea Jimenez Mudafar
Jenna Lee
Rafael Rosado

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Caitlin McGurk
Rafael Rosado
Jeff Sims
Ben Towle

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Joe Miller, Library Liaison
James Moore
Tracie Santos

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Maya Jenkins
Luke Herr

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Rebecca Perry Damsen, ex officio



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Donations as of December 31, 2021

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Seventh Son

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Steve Hamaker & Jenny Robb

CXC Fairy Godparent (\$250+)

Michael Ashman
Anne & Jerzy Drozd
Claudia Perry

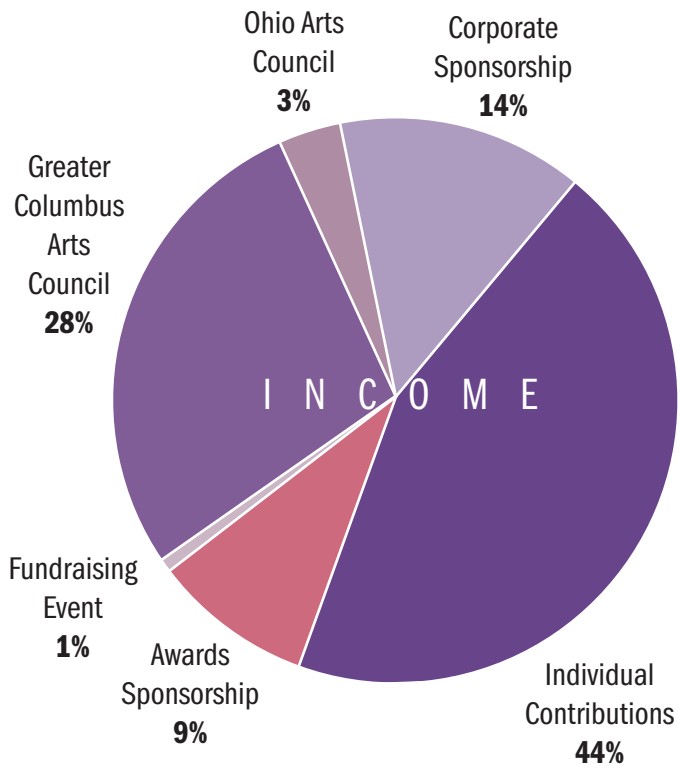
CXC Sparkplug (\$20+)

Jonathan Baylis
Shawn Conley
David TheDaneMen
Lauren Houser
Pete Johnsen
Matthew Regallis
Robby Weiss



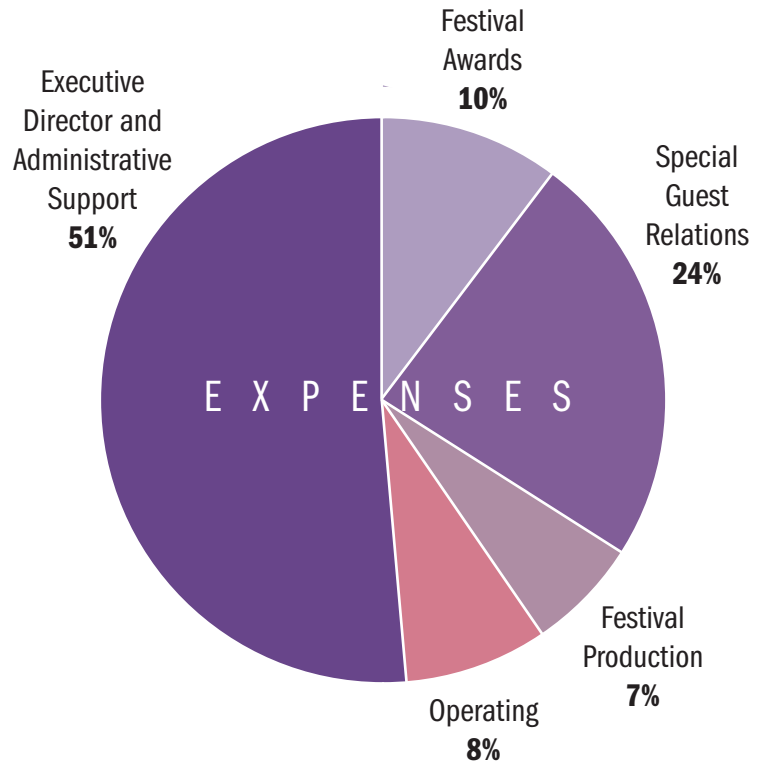
CXC Board president Rebecca Perry Damsen, Archie (Our CXC logo) and Caitlin McGurk, associate curator Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum.

CXC INCOME/EXPENSES



Vendor Fees 0%

No Exhibitors were charged vendor fees for the 2021 CXC online expo



Cartoonist and CXC special guest Shary Flenniken (left) is interviewed at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University by comics scholar and CXC committee member Rachel Miller.



Cartoon Crossroads Columbus is proud to have high-caliber cartoonists, creators, scholars and cartoon lovers as our guests.

2015

Art Spiegelman
Craig Thompson
Dorf Backderf
Dylan Horrocks
Francoise Mouly
Grace Ellis
Grace Griffith
Jaime Hernandez
Jeff Smith
Jerry Beck
Kate Beaton
Katie Skelly
Lalo Alcaraz
Rafael Rosado

2016

Ann Telnaes
Ben Katchor
Brandon Graham
Carol Tyler
Charles Burns
Ed Koren
Garry Trudeau
Jay Hosler
John Canemaker
Julia Gfrörer
Keith Knight
Mark Osborne
Raina Telgemeier
Ron Wimberly
Sacha Mardou
Sergio Aragones
Seth
Skottie Young
Stan Sakai

2017

Alexander Stewart
Ann Marie Fleming
Ann Nocenti
Chip Zdarsky
Chris Sprouse
Chris Ware
Connor Willumsen
Dana Simpson
David Mack

Dorf Backderf
Emil Ferris
Howard Cruse
Jarret J. Krosoczka
Judd Winnick
Kat Fajardo
Kelly Sue DeConnick
Kevin Huizenga
Kyle Baker
Laura Park
Leslie Stein
Lilli Carre
Matt Fraction
Mike Maihack
Mimi Pond
Nilah MaGruder
Peter Bagge
Signe Wilkinson
Tillie Walden

2018

Annie Koyama
Brian Michael Bendis
Charles Vess
Darrin Bell
Dustin Harbin
Georgina Webber
Hartley Lin
Jason Lutes
Jeff Smith
Jessica Campbell
Jim Woodring
Kazu Kibuishi
Keiler Roberts
Kelly Gallagher
Kriota Willberg
Liana Fink
Liniers
Lynn Johnston
Matt Fraction
Michael Deforge
Ngozi Ukazu
Noah Van Sciver
Olivia Jaimes
Richie Pope
Roberta Gregory
Sally Cruikshank

2019

AAEC
Adebukola "Buki" Bodunrin
Carta Monir
Dav Pilkey
Eleri Harris
Ezra Clayton Daniels
Frank Santoro
Georgina Webber
Hellen Jo
Hilary Price
Ho Che Anderson
Ivy Atoms
Jaime Hernandez
Jay Stephens
Kevin Huizenga
Liana Fink
Mary Fleener
Matt Bors
Matt Lubchansky
Mike Mignola
MK Czerwiec
Natasha Alterici
P Craig Russell
Patrick McDonnell
Rachel Lindsay
Robb Armstrong
Terri Libenson
Terry Moore
The Nib
Tom Tomorrow

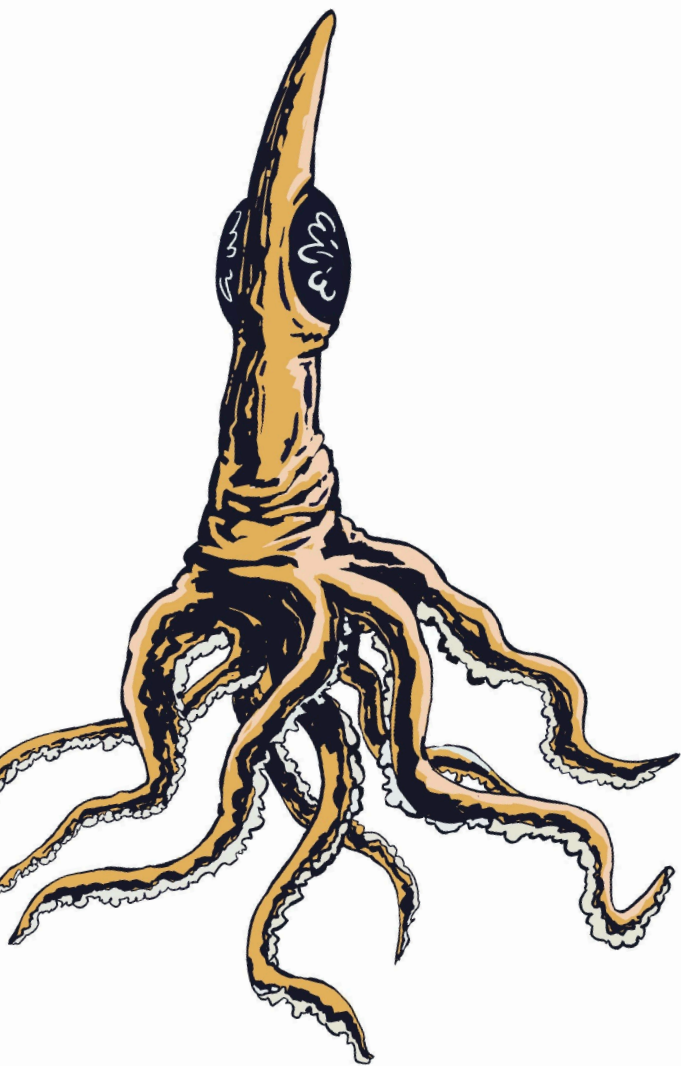
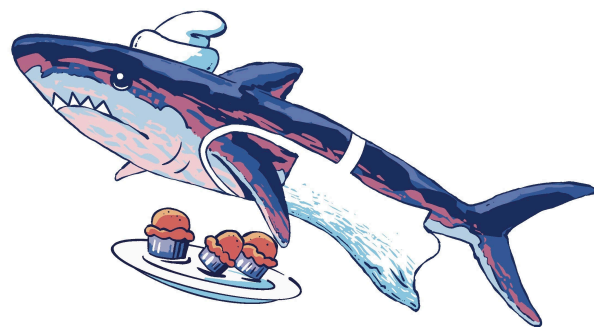
2020

Amanda Connor
Amy Hwang
Angelo Lopez
Ben Hatke
Blue Delliquanti
Brian "Box" Brown
Carta Monir
Coni Yovaniniz
David Brown
David Walker
Désha Stewart
Diane Noomin
Dylan Edwards
Ebony Flowers
Elaine Grogan Luttrull

Ellie Moody
Emma Allen
Eric Garcia
Fábio Moon
Faith Erin Hicks
Gabriel Bá
Gene Luen Yang
Graham Annable
Gregg Schigiel
Isabella Rotman
Jack Beeler
Jeff Smith
Jen Sorensen
Jennifer Holm
Jessi Zabarsky
Jimmy Palmiotti
Jo Rioux
John Patrick Green
Jose Pimienta
Josh Bayer
Joyce Farmer
Julia Gfrörer
KAL Kallugher
Kat Fajardo
Kate Beaton
Katie Skelly
Keith Knight
Kim Deitch
Liz Montague
Marcele Estevez
Mark Waid
Matt Fraction
Matthew Holm
Mel Gillman
Mike Cavallaro
Mike White
Miriam Centeno
Nate Powell
Nicky Rodriguez
Pat Bagley
Roz Chast
Shannon Wright
Shing Yin Khor
Spike Trotman
Stacey Robinson
Steenz
Steve Hamaker
Tara Booth
Tim Fielder



Cartoonist Ben Towle gives a presentation on his latest book *Four Fisted Tales: Animals in Combat* and its influences and inspirations at CXC 2021.



Alison Bechdel touring the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum archives at CXC 2021.



www.cartooncrossroadscolumbus.org

Credits

Artwork by Gabby Metzler

CXC Logo by Gabby Metzler

Graphic design by Frank Pauer

Executive Director Jay B. Kalagayan

Administrative Assistant Hannah Donovan