

Thorsten, Marie, Doshisha University, Japan

Drawing Moral Spaces: Comic Memory after 9/11

Critics often decry the sensationalism of international reporting and photojournalism that produces forgetting rather than remembrance. An alternative method of writing on human rights atrocities is what we call in this panel “serious cartooning” or what Sacco prefers to call “comics journalism.” Works by artists such as Sacco, Satrapi, DeLisle and Folman overlap categories of literature, journalism, comics and non-fiction, and combine drawings, factual text and personalized elements such as non-linear memory, humor and commentary. Serious cartooning in part responds to demands for more informed, contextualized histories of significant events— but artists produce their works with defiant subjectivity. They aim to fill in spaces and offer memorable stories lost against the saturation of one-dimensional crisis reporting that favors “flashbulb memory” (photos). With attention to questions of visual spectatorship and the ethics of compassion, this paper will probe how recent serious cartooning re-draws moral spaces neglected in conventional reportage.