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DAN CLOWES' ALTERNATIVE CLASSIC
**LIKE A VELVET
GLOVE
CAST IN IRON**

NOV 2017— NO. ELEVEN

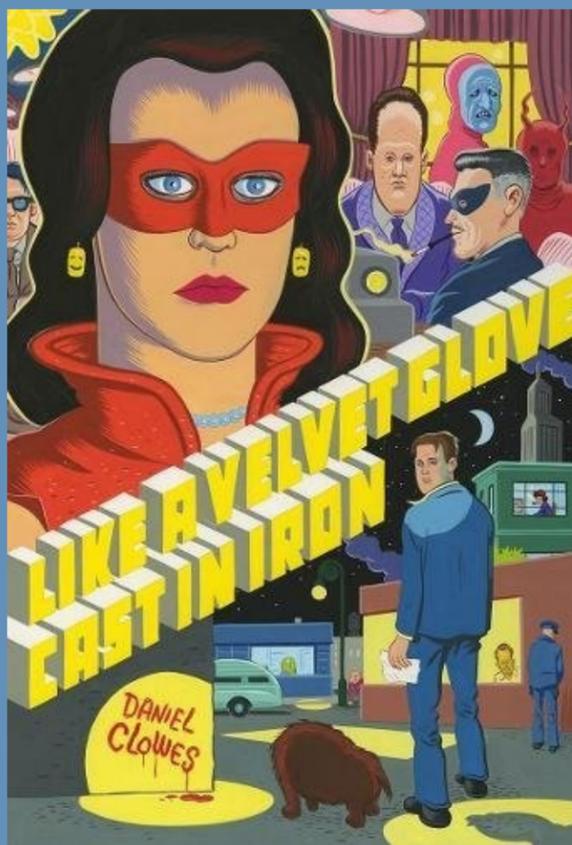
PLUS...CHRIS WARE'S MONUMENTAL MONOGRAPH



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of

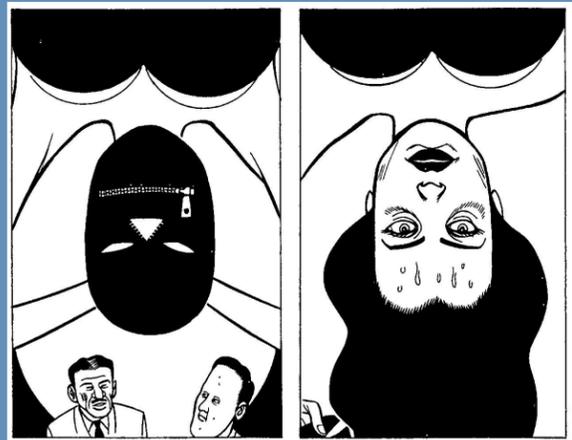


Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron

By Daniel Clowes (Fantagraphics)
741.5 C6261 / Central—Eastside



One of the formative works of modern American comics, *Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron* is a study in opposites: the surreal rendered banal, the banal twisted into the surreal. Against the bland background of a vacant heartland, damaged people pursue sick desires. There is no authority, no one in control. The cops are no better than the crazies they hunt, as the crazies prepare for Harum Scarum, the ultimate war between man and woman. A vast and ancient conspiracy hides behind the goofy smile of a supermarket mascot, and the hideous spawn of a godlike merman takes your order at the local diner. Acromegalic radio hosts...shirtless testosterone junkies...that little girl with the pipe: What does it all mean? Perhaps ask the swami who holds court in the men's room of the derelict theater showing the enigmatic film *Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron*. Our hero Clay Loudermilk (panel right) asks, and his pursuit of the answers leads him into

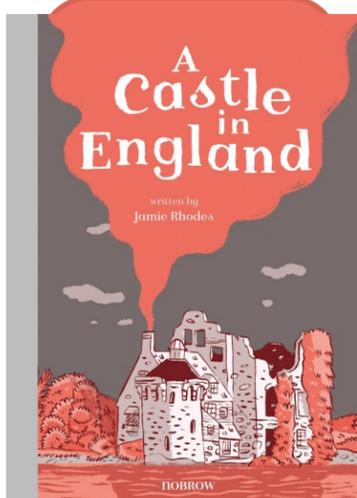
deeper mysteries. Puzzling, perverse, at turns haunting and nauseating, Clowes' first graphic novel was serialized in his periodical *Eightball* (To see how the story originally appeared, check out *The Complete Eightball*, Volumes 1 & 2, available from Beaumont and Tates Creek). Even after 29 years, *Velvet Glove* still packs a punch. Reserve a copy today!



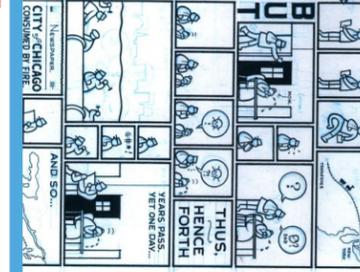
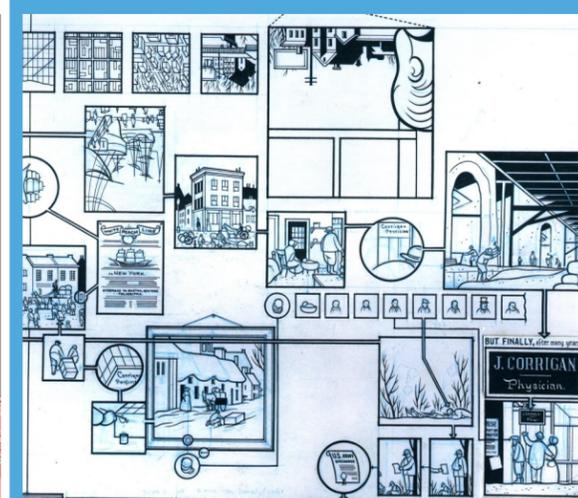
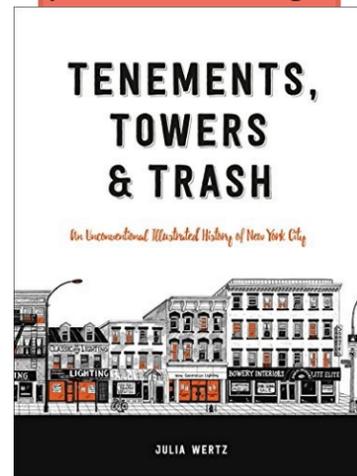
Baking With Kafka: Comics by Tom Gauld

(Drawn & Quarterly) Beaumont — Central — Eastside

"Socrates with Time Machine and Dinosaur Egg". The Monstrous Fishmonger and Malignant Barista. "JG Ballard's Books for Children." If you're already laughing or just intrigued, then check out *Baking With Kafka* (Drawn & Quarterly), the latest collection of Tom Gauld's literary laff-riots for England's finest newspaper, the *Guardian*. A follow-up to 2013's *You're All Just Jealous of My Jetpack* (still available from Beaumont and Central), *Baking...* continues Gauld's run of culture vulture riffs on "Major Styles in Troll Bridge Architecture" and "This Season's Hot New Publishing Trend: SPINSTERS!" *Baking with Kafka* is smart and funny—and funny because it's smart!



Writer **Jamie Rhodes** spent several months living onsite at Scotney Castle in Kent, England. "I walked the ancient holloways," he writes. "I sat amongst the old castle ruins.." That depth of fascination bears fruit in *A Castle in England* (Nobrow). The history of the castle is described in five chapters drawn by five different cartoonists, from the brutish line of **Isaac Lenkiewicz** regarding the medieval peasant revolts to **William Exley's** dashing brushwork on "The Smuggler" to **Becky Palmer's** lovely use of sfumato in the Victorian chapter. Elsewhere and -when, former Brooklynite **Julie Wertz** collects her architectural drawings-cum-historical comics for *Harper's* and the *New Yorker* in *Tenements, Towers & Trash* (Black Dog & Leventhal). Wertz charmingly draws people like a child, but her buildings are amazing, from "Independent Bookstores of NYC" to the comparisons of New York streets then and now. Spoiler alert: they're much more boring now.



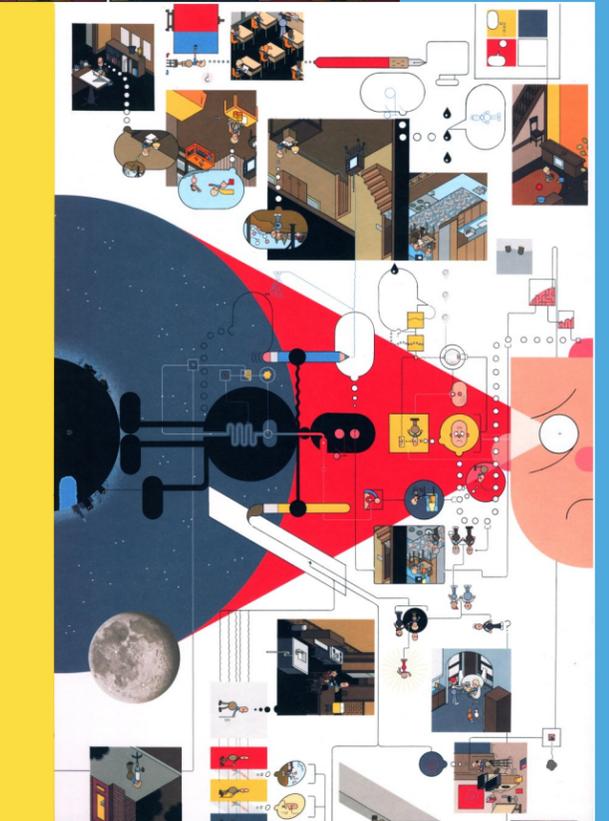
Through his periodical *The Acme Novelty Library* and his award-winning graphic novels *Jimmy Corrigan* and *Building Stories*, Ware has explored his concept of comics as "a linguistic, (not) an illustrative form, a system of drawing based more on the transparency of reading than on the uncertainty of seeing." Expanding the visual language of comics, Ware has taken inspiration from old textbooks and encyclopedias, maps and blueprints, the exploded drawings of technical design, the verbose and ornate advertising of the early 20th century, even the hand-lettered covers of ancient ragtime 78s. Ware's artistic odyssey from fanboy to alternative trend-setter is covered in exhaustive detail in *Mono-graph*. Written in his typically self-effacing prose, Ware's recollections are accompanied by toys, family photos, original drawings, detailed sketches, and plans for home-made machines. It's a monumental journey through the life and mind of a bashful titan.

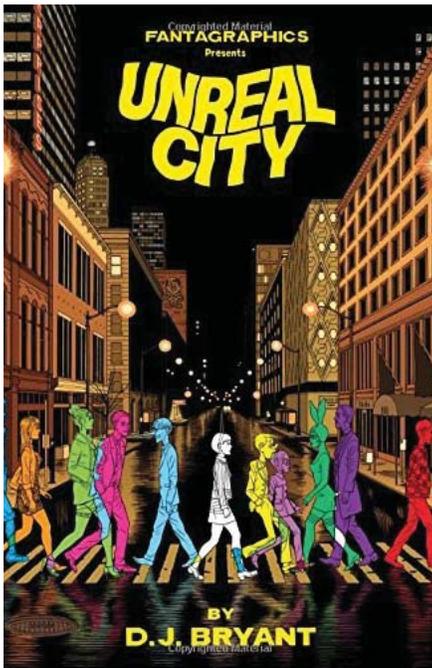
BY
CHRIS WARE
(RIZZOLI)
CENTRAL

As artistically ambitious as he is personally timorous, Chris Ware has always pushed the boundaries of comics formats. *Mono-graph* is no exception. This book is a slab of paper and ink, measuring more than 13 inches wide and 18 inches tall and weighing just under ten pounds. It's a daunting object. It's **HUGE**.

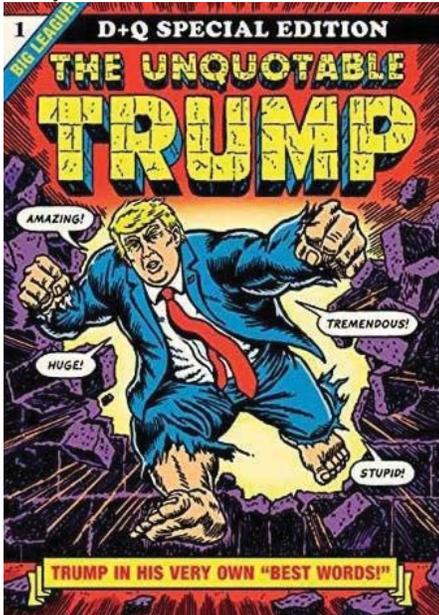
You see his work every time you order Jimmy Johns sandwiches & chips. Critics' darling, an artist's artist, **Chris Ware** is the most famous cartoonist you've never heard of. But his influence—on other cartoonists, graphic designers, even engineers—is as oversized as, well, this book about his career. Don't believe me? Take a look at the newly decorated traffic light control boxes downtown, beseeching pedestrians to pull their heads out of their apps. They're pure Ware.

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What is reality? The question that has consumed philosophers through the ages is an easy one for cartoonists to answer: Reality is what I put on the page. Some realities are more unreal than others, though. **D.J. Bryant's** artwork is pretty realistic, sleek and detailed yet alienated and dreamlike, the unholy spawn of **Clowes** and **Crandall**. A series of stories connected more by ambience than plot, *Unreal City* (Fantagraphics) explores how reality can be distorted by love and lust. So it's definitely not for the kiddies! Frankly, artists aren't the only ones who create their own reality. For good or ill, politicians do it, too. And few have bent and burnished the truth like the current President of these United States, Donald Trump. Showbiz has always been a part of American politics tics, and few have understood the biz of show like Trump. His bombastic personality was a good fit for professional wrestling and reality television- and an even better fit for

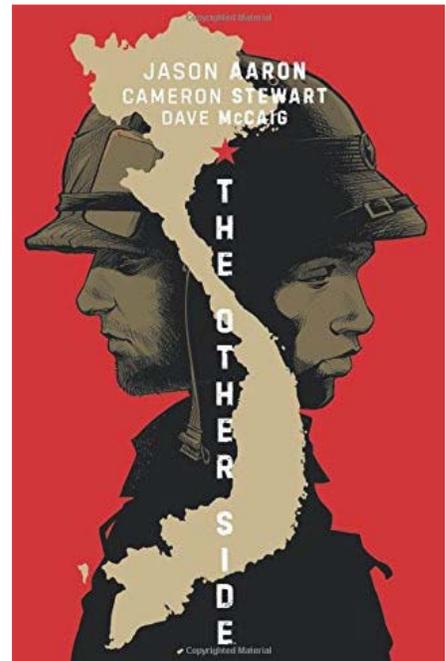


MEANWHILE

comic books. Published in the oversized format of Marvel's "Treasury" editions of the 1970s, *The Unquatable Trump* (Drawn & Quarterly) reprints the mini-comic created during the 2016 campaign by **R. Sikoryak**, the master mimic behind this year's *Terms and Conditions* (still available from Beaumont, Central & Eastside). Sikoryak parodies Trump and his verbiage as a series of comic book covers from throughout the history of the medium, from *Peanuts* to *Mr. Natural*, *Spawn* to *Baby Huey*, *Giant-Size Super-Villain Team-Up* to *Picture Stories from the Bible*, each and every one using Trump's own words. Online, the most re-shared of these images has been *Nasty Woman*, a reproduction of a WW2 era issue of *Wonder Woman*. Diana of Themyscira has had a great 2017, but she's not the only superheroine to break out. Even as more established characters



had their titles cancelled (Sorry, Scarlet Witch! See ya in the movies, Black Widow!), **Gwenpool** soldiers on. Trapped in the Marvel Universe after the multiverse collapsed (don't ask), nerdy girl and former citizen of the real world Gwen Poole decides the only way to survive her new home is to put on a costume and join the fray as *The Unbelievable Gwenpool*! Pictured above, her first collection, *Believe It* (Marvel), actually came out in 2016. But LPL has the rest of this hilariously written and beautifully drawn series, which is a two-fisted hoot, and actually kind of sweet for being so manically meta-fictional. Convinced the world she's living in isn't really real — I mean, one of her few friends is a talking duck, can you blame her? - Gwenpool takes courage from that sense of unreality. Her way of dealing with a dangerous world isn't that uncommon, as shown by *The Other Side* (Image), a hard-cover special edition of the comic that intro-



duced writer **Jason** (*Southern Bastards*) **Aaron**. Rendered by the unforgiving art of **Cameron Stewart**, the madness of the Viet Nam War is experienced by two farm boys, one an American grunt, the other a volunteer for the Army of North Vietnam. Both see things on the battlefield that others do not. The American is haunted by the war-maimed ghosts of the GIs who came before him while the Vietnamese soldier sees the spirits of his slain countrymen. A savage indictment of the War that nonetheless respects the combatants, *The Other Side* is available at Central and Eastside. Meanwhile, some of the best agitprop for the Good War can be found in *TwoMorrow's Reed Crandall: Illustrator of the Comics*. The Golden Age great drew the best Uncle Sam ever, even better than Jimmy Flagg. From WW2 heroes like Blackhawk and Doll Man to his gorgeously gruesome work for EC and Warren, **Reed Crandall** set a global standard for comics art!

