



# WOMEN'S COMICS ANTHOLOGY

EDITED BY:  
ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE  
AND  
JAMES PAYNE



WOMEN COMICS ANTHOLOGY

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INDIVIDUAL CREATORS 2010

INTRODUCTION COPYRIGHT  
JIMI PAYNE & ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE  
PRESSING CONCERN BOOKS

# Introduction

Comics have long been the rumored domain of nerdy boys who live in their mommies' basements, old fat men in bathrobes, and pretentious, nasal-voiced misanthropes who only quiet their own rude hypothesizing when a live human female walks by. This, however, is evidently untrue. If anthologies are to be taken as any sort of state of the industry, women comprise exactly 16% of it, far too great a number to justify such boy-replete imaginaries.

This comics anthology, *Women's Comics Anthology*, argues that indeed, anthologies *are* to be taken as a state of the industry. Not, however, a mathematically accurate one. My own experience, for example—the driving force behind this project—tells me that far more than sixteen out of every hundred creators are female. During the times when I made it my business to read every comic I came across, including but not limited to reading for the *Best American Comics* series, it was clear to me that women comprise closer to 40% of the industry. Few are published by anyone but themselves, however, and even fewer stick around long enough to make names for themselves. Women comics artists, it would seem, simply don't often have what it takes to make it.

Or perhaps there's another explanation for why so many women artists made so few appearances in the anthologies we researched for this volume—if they appeared at all. Indeed, in a series of interviews, surveys, public discussions, and panel presentations with female and trans creators both famous and forgotten (to be published in a forthcoming volume), women who

work in comics tell remarkably similar stories: of barely perceptible gender-based discrimination; of very occasional social discomfort; and of vague, gnawing sensations that, indeed, their sex has kept them from or allowed for opportunities in the industry that should have been available based on talent.

The men whose work appeared in these same anthologies tell a similar story, too: the comic-book editor who told me he didn't put many women creators in books because "you have to go out and put pencils in their hands," meaning: teach them to draw. The editor who told me gender doesn't affect his work, but who failed to acknowledge that he is financially supported by his wife. The artist who told me he doesn't think about gender at all. The other one who said he didn't know anything about gender. A different one who wrote that he was not in the habit of checking genitalia before decreeing merit, yet argued vehemently against a wide swath of women artists as underdeveloped, untested, immature.

Such ridiculousness would not matter if it were not bolstered by our collectively imagined comics industry; Both would be inconsequential if they were unprovable in math. James Payne and I spent a couple days in various libraries analyzing the following anthologies: *Top Shelf Under The Big Top* vol. 8, Top Shelf, 1999 (Brett Warnock); *Comics Journal Special Edition* vol. 5, Fantagraphics, 2005 (Gary Groth); *Kramer's Ergot* vol. 5, Gingko Press, 2004 (Sammy Harkham); *Kramer's Ergot* vol. 6, Buenaventura Press / Avodah Books, 2006 (Sammy Harkham); *Flight* vol. 4, Random House, 2007 (Kazu Kibuishi); *The New Comics Anthology*, Macmillan Publishing, 1991 (Bob Callahan); *Raw: Comics on the Verge*, Last Gasp, 2004 (Paul Candler); *Mindriot: Coming of Age in Comix*, Aladdin / Simon & Schuster, 1997 (Karen D. Hirsch); *Oddballs* vol. 3, *Thunder Baas*, 1988, (Al Greenier); *9/11 Emergency Relief*, Alternative Comics, 2002, (Jeff Mason); *Mome* vols. 1 and 3-8, Fantagraphics, 2005-2007 (Eric Reynolds & Gary Groth); *Drawn & Quarterly Showcase*, 2 & 4,

*Drawn & Quarterly*, 2004 - 2006 (Chris Oliveros); *Abstract Comics*, Fantagraphics, 2009 (Andrei Molotiu); *Blab*, 16, Fantagraphics, 2005 (Monte Beauchamp); *Roadstrips*, Chronicle, 2005 (Pete Friedrich); *Hickee*, 3, Issue 2, Alternative Comics, 2006, (Hickee Collective); *Put The Book Back On The Shelf*, Image, 2006 (Erik Stephenson); *The Book of Boy Trouble*, Green Candy Press, 2006, (Robert Kirby & David Kelly); *The Dark Horse Book of the Dead*, Dark Horse Comics, 2005 (Scott Allie); *Hi Horse Omnibus*, Alternative Comics, 2003 (Howard John Arey, Andrice Arp, Joan Reilly & Bisakh Som); *SPX 2005*, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (Brian Ralph); *Non* vol. 5, Red Ink, 2001 (Jordan Crane); *Best American Comics*, vols. 1 & 2 Houghton Mifflin, 2006 - 2007 (Anne Elizabeth Moore, Harvey Pekar/Chris Ware); *McSweeney's* vol. 13, 2004 (Dave Eggers, Chris Ware); *An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, True Stories*, Yale University Press, 2006 (Ivan Brunetti); *The Amazing Adventure of the Escapist*, Dark Horse Comics, 2004 (Diana Shutz).

The comics in *Women's Comics Anthology* were created by a diverse group of artists interested in gender and also interested in comics. They believe in the potential of the art form to create a new imaginary and in its duty as a form of media to be accountable to the public in a democracy. These young artists—male, female, and otherwise—have created a hilarious series of drawings not out of rage, bitterness, or frustration, but out of curiosity, enthusiasm, and the knowledge that the time has come for the comics industry to include all of them, for as long as they are interested in working in it.

— Anne Elizabeth Moore

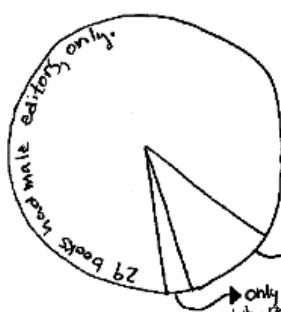
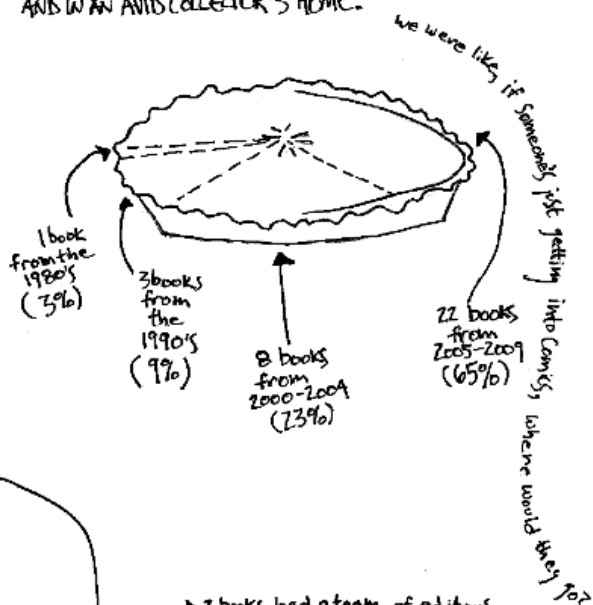
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**Covers by Sara Drake**

**Front Matter by Francis Kang**

BASICALLY, WE READ ALL THE ANTHOLOGIES IN THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY, ON THE SHELVES OF AN ART SCHOOL COLLECTION, AND IN AN AVIS COLLECTOR'S HOME.

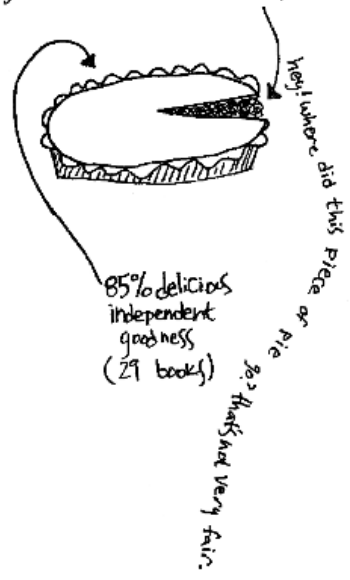


3 books had a team of editors with at least 1 male and 1 female editor.

THIS IS NOT A PIE BECAUSE IT HAS TOO MUCH OF ONE INGREDIENT TO BE DELICIOUS.

only 2 books had only women editors, but what's weird is that we forget to include any actual women's anthologies, not that either library had any!

15% corporate-owned publishing houses



ANNE ELIZABETH MURPHY: I DON'T KNOW WHAT PIE THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE.

# THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ♀ CREATORS IN ALL THE BOOKS WE LOOKED AT.

[% OF WOMEN CREATORS IN ALL BOOKS, AVERAGED:]  
147 OF 897 = 16%

BOOBS...  
ESTROGEN... I SENSE...  
A REAL FEMALE NEARBY...

\*DROOL\*

\*GURGLE\*

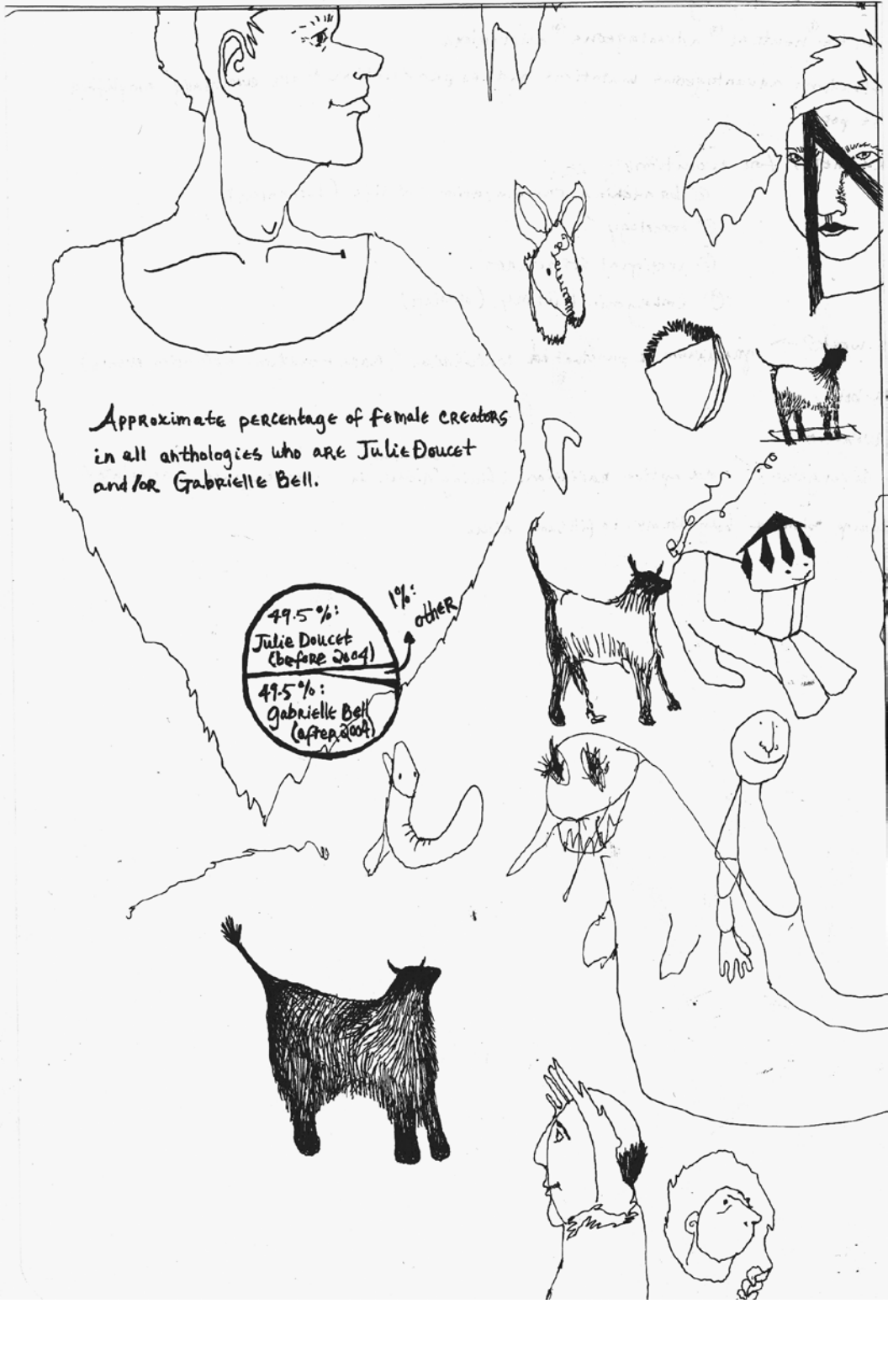
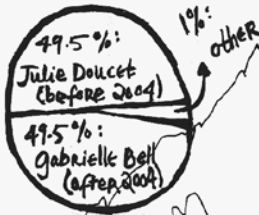
\*SNIFF\*



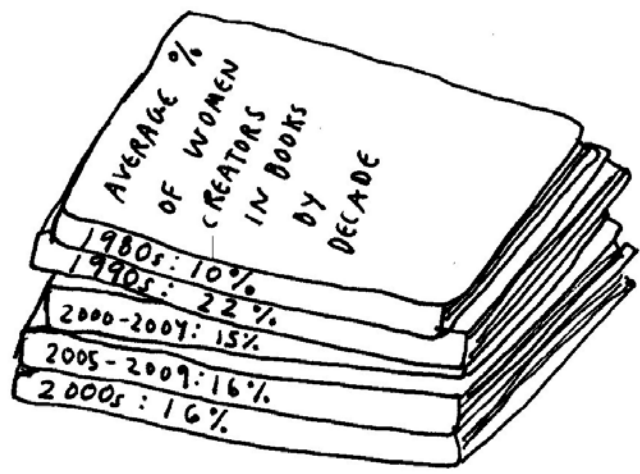
NOTE: WEBB DICTIONARY DEFINES A SAUSAGE FEST AS "A PARTY, WHERE GIRLS ARE SURROUNDED BY GUYS."  
IN BASICALLY, A PUNCH DRINK PARTY WHEREB THINGS NO POSSIBILITY OF GETTIN LAYED, AND  
WHERE THE GUYS ARE GETTIN AND DRUNK TO FORGET ABOUT IT.



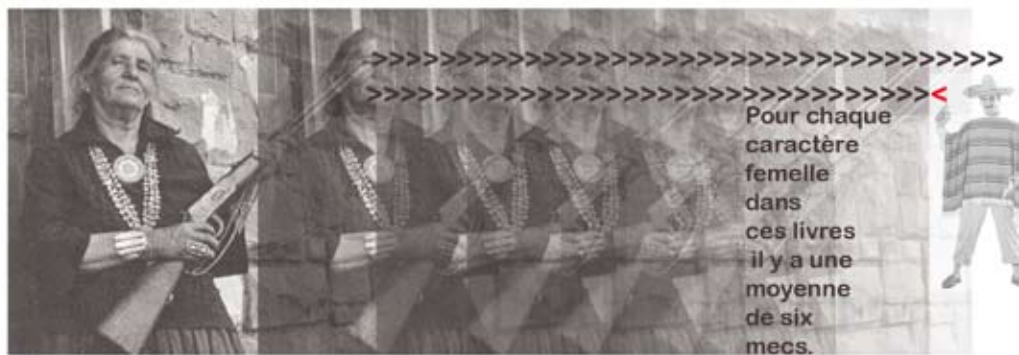
Approximate percentage of female creators  
in all anthologies who are Julie Doucet  
and/or Gabrielle Bell.



IT'S A LITTLE BIT DIFFICULT TO GENERALIZE BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE VERY MANY BOOKS FROM THE 1990'S, & EVEN FEWER FROM THE 1980'S, BUT JUST IN ~~THE~~ CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED:



\* KEEP IN MIND THAT TIME MAGAZINE PROCLAIMED FEMINISM DEAD ON JUNE 29, 1998.



V

IDENTIFIABLY  
MALE  
CHARACTERS

AS COMPARED TO...

IDENTIFIABLY  
FEMALE  
CHARACTERS

(AS AVERAGED BY DECADE)

MICHELLE WEAVER  
MAY 2008

1980's

21:1 = 4%

1990's

19:1 = 5%

2000-2004

6:1 = 17%

2005-2009

3:1 = 33%

2000's

4:1 = 25%

Q: ARE SHE-HULK & THE HULK 2005-2009 THE SAME? A: YES!

1980's  
(1 title)<sup>1</sup>  
11



1980's  
(1 title)  
4



1990's  
(10 titles)  
5



1990's  
(3 titles)  
3



2000-  
2004  
(8 titles)<sup>2,3</sup>  
6



2000-  
2004  
(8 titles)  
4



2005-  
2007  
(10 titles)<sup>4</sup>  
5



2005-  
2009  
(22 titles)  
4



2000's  
(30 titles)  
5



2000's  
(10 titles)  
4





number of naked women characters per book per decade

number of naked men characters per book per decade

avg. # of naked women characters per book: 5

avg. # of naked men characters per book: 4

Footnotes:

1. which is for sure because most women in the 1980's actually were naked
2. and 20% of them are blowing some guy
3. the first female character to appear in Dark Horse's The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist (Dark Horse, 2004) appears with a mock editorial note demanding her bust size be increased. Twice.
4. in Hickee vol. 13, issue 2, 100% of all identifiably female characters were 100% NEKKID.
5. note the remarkable consistency.

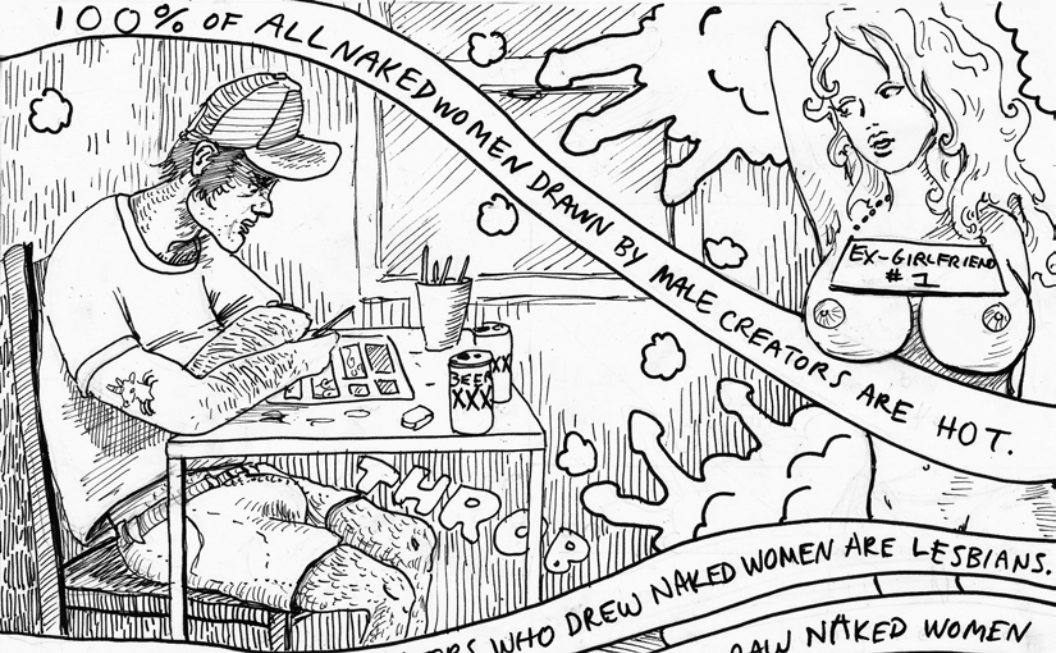


There were 5 rapes total in 34 books, with an average of 1 rape for every 7 books. This is slightly lower than the number of women (1 in 6) who were raped or assaulted with intent to force sexual activity.



*Mome 3*, (Fantagraphics, 2006) had the most rape scenes, followed by *RAW: Comics on the verge* (Last Gasp, 2004)





100% OF ALL NAKED WOMEN DRAWN BY MALE CREATORS ARE HOT.

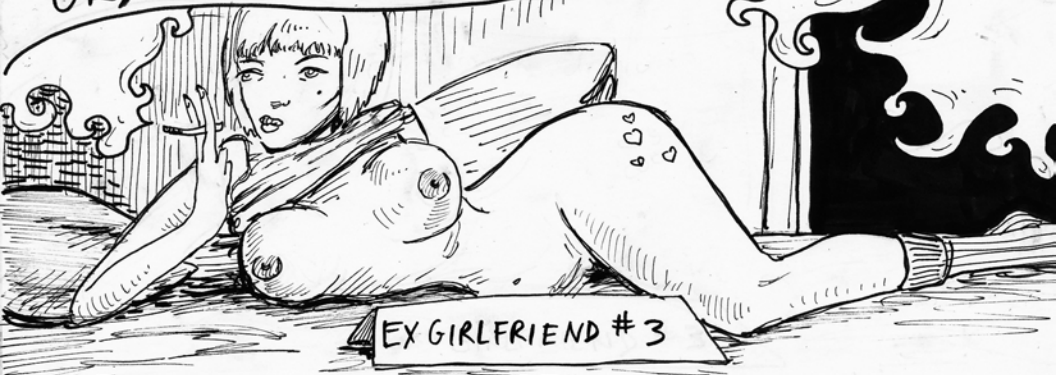
100% OF ALL FEMALE CREATORS WHO DREW NAKED WOMEN ARE LESBIANS.

100% OF ALL GAY MALE CREATORS DON'T DRAW NAKED WOMEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN ANY.



100% OF ALL NAKED WOMEN ARE TOO COLD TO DRAW ANYTHING.

OK, NONE OF THIS IS TRUE.



EX GIRLFRIEND #3



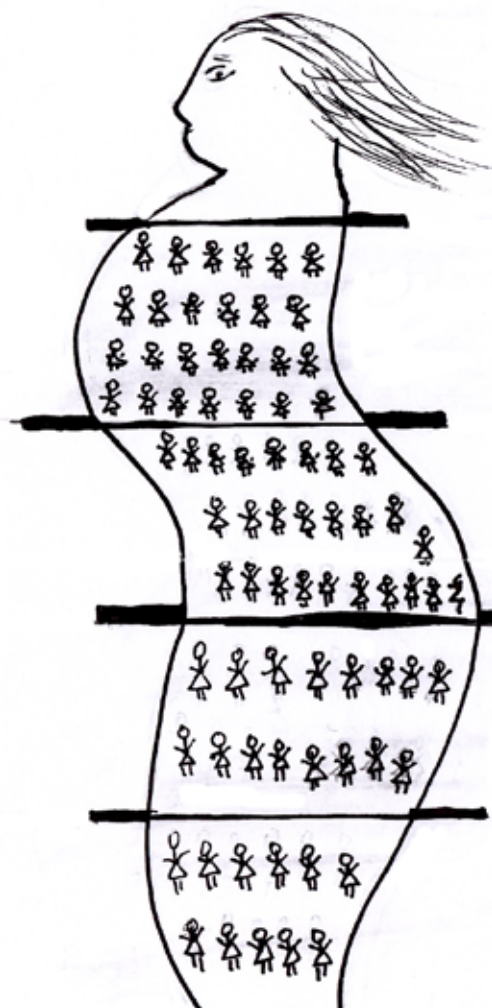


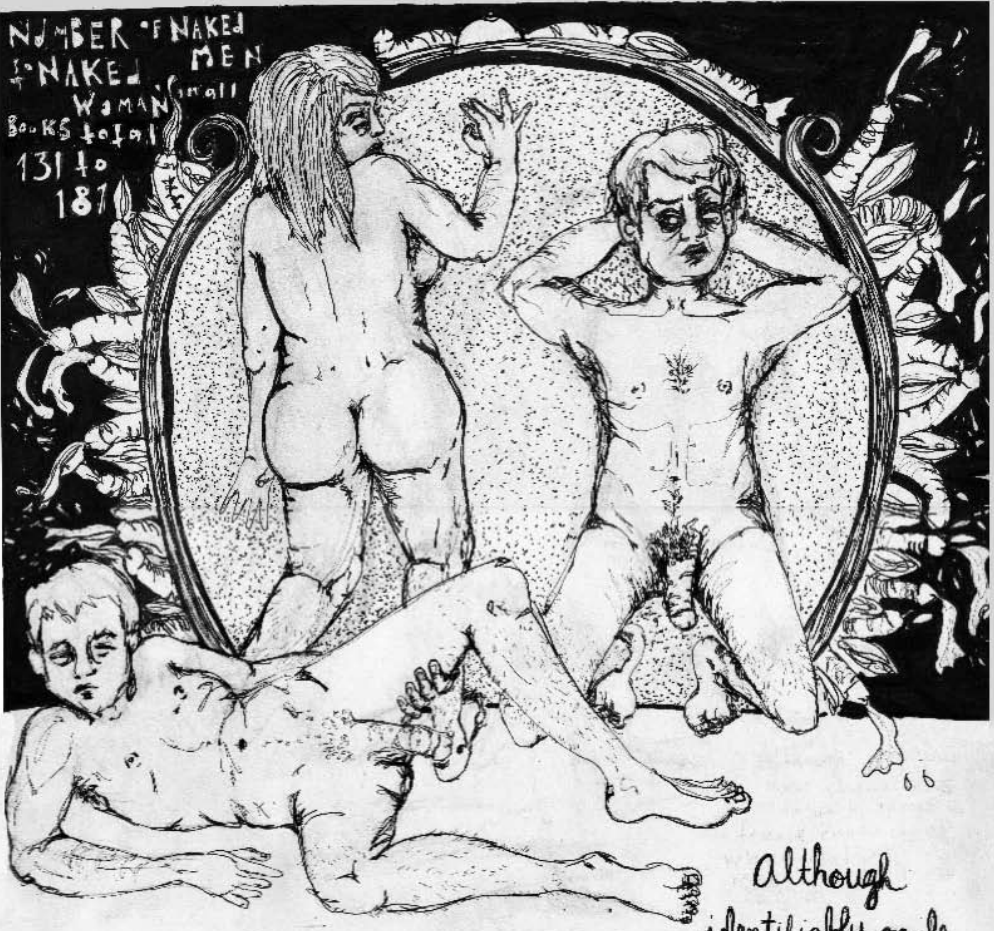
2005-2009  
 $\frac{\text{男}}{\text{女}} = 4 \text{ NUDES}$

2000-2004  
 $\frac{\text{男}}{\text{女}} = 2 \text{ NUDES}$

1990s  
 $\frac{\text{男}}{\text{女}} = 1 \text{ NUDE}$

1980s  
 $\frac{\text{男}}{\text{女}} = 1 \text{ NUDE}$





Although  
 identifiably male  
 characters outstrip identifiably female characters  
 when clothed, they might be kind of frigid.

In terms of who is going to get NAKED in a comic book ANTHOLOGY...



women are slightly MORE LIKELY.

WE ARE NOT EVEN  
GOING TO TALK ABOUT  
RACE RIGHT  
NOW

SCREW SLOW AND  
STEADY WINNING  
ANYTHING...THIS TIME IT'S  
BALLS-TO-THE-WALL  
SHELL-BOY!

PAT  
PAT  
PAT

HEY!

Emanata



women in comics are significantly more likely to show up  
as naked characters than they are to  
create them.

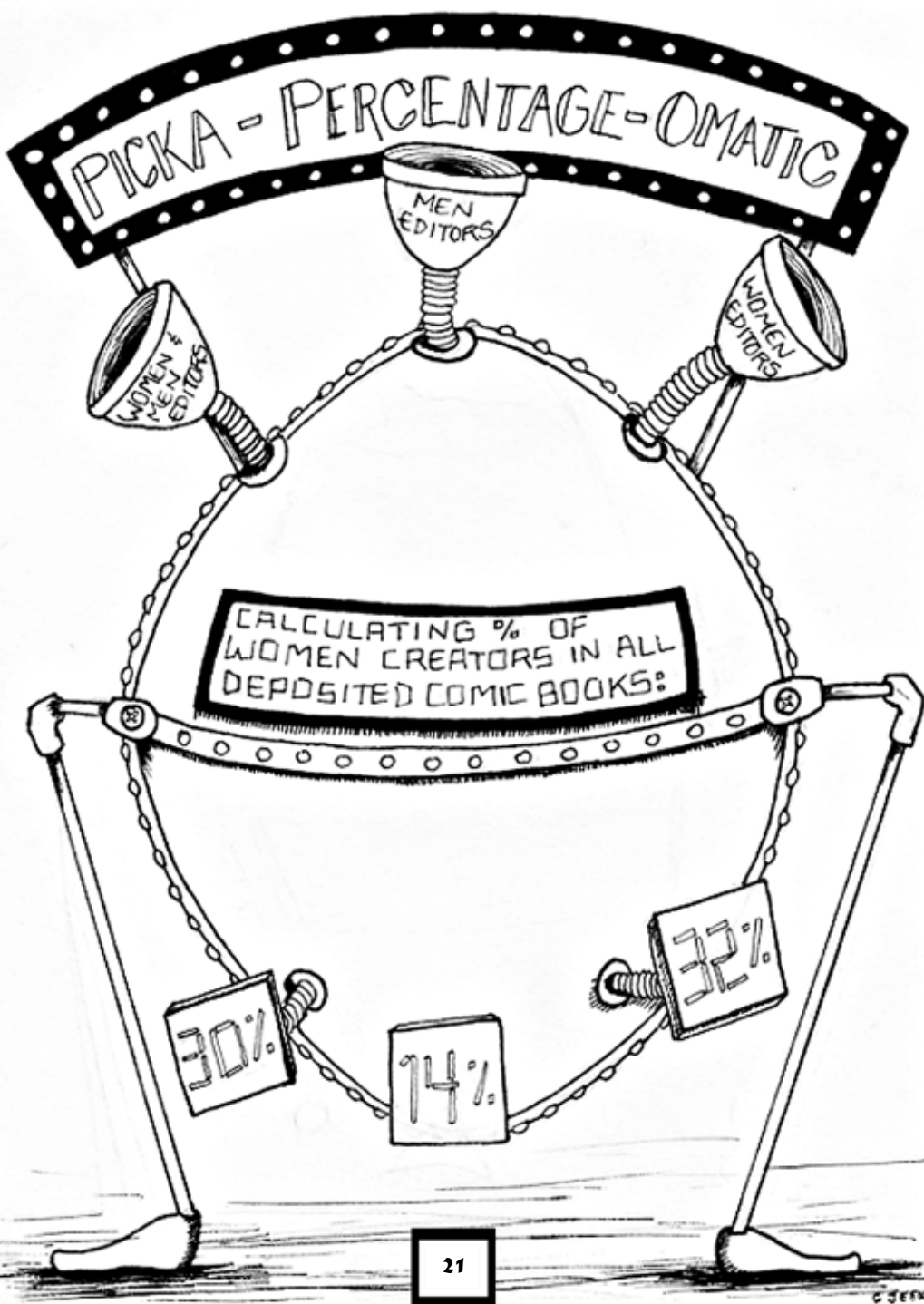


(one hundred eighty one naked female  
characters

to

one hundred forty seven female creators)

FEMALE EDITORS APPEAR TO BE TWICE AS LIKELY TO INCLUDE COMICS BY WOMEN IN ANTHOLOGIES.



# Biographical Information

**Ramsey Beyer** is a 24-year-old illustrator living in Chicago, IL. She makes a zine called *List* and freelances. [www.everydaypants.com](http://www.everydaypants.com)

**Coty Colson** is a student in the Visual Critical Studies Department at SAIC, and doesn't remember how that happened or why since all he wanted out of life was to be valedictorian of his high school graduating class . . . and a world renowned concert organist . . . and a lawyer. [ccolso1@saic.edu](mailto:ccolso1@saic.edu)

**Candace Corbin** lives and works in Boston where she is pursuing a BFA in painting at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. [candaceleecorbin@yahoo.com](mailto:candaceleecorbin@yahoo.com)

**Sara Drake** is a student at SAIC and the creator of *Trope*, *Transmission*, and *Arty Party*. She recently co-organized The Comics Symposium of Chicago and is the co-editor of *Xerox Candy Bar*. [www.blaseatbest.blogspot.com](http://www.blaseatbest.blogspot.com)

**Krystal DiFronzo** has been self-publishing minicomics for about four years and she really likes it when she catches animals yawning. [kdifronzo@saic.edu](mailto:kdifronzo@saic.edu)

**Emil Emanata** is a Chicago-based artist and a Masters candidate at the School of the Art Institute. She is currently working on her first graphic novel, which will be titled *Monsters Are My Favorite Things* By Karen Reyes.

**Karla Hewitt-Blackie** is 24, lives in Toronto, attended the Ontario College of Art and Design for Integrated Media. [Karla\\_h\\_blackie@yahoo.ca](mailto:Karla_h_blackie@yahoo.ca)



**Caitlin Jefko** is pursuing a career in making pretty, funny, disgusting, weird creations for all to enjoy. [caitlin.jefko.com](http://caitlin.jefko.com)

**Francis Kang** is a multidisciplinary artist currently enrolled at The Art Institute of Chicago. [fkang@artic.edu](mailto:fkang@artic.edu)

**Chelsea Dirck** is from Boston, but moves a lot. She likes to draw with black ink pens and nothing else. [www.chelseadirck.com](http://www.chelseadirck.com)

**Kira Mardikes** is an illustrator at SAIC currently majoring in aliens, girly boys, boyish girls, and old pioneer men. [kmardi@saic.edu](mailto:kmardi@saic.edu)

**Anne Elizabeth Moore** does not draw. [anneelizabethmoore.com](http://anneelizabethmoore.com).

**Ingrid Olson** is a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she makes paintings, drawings, and friends. [bolson1@saic.edu](mailto:bolson1@saic.edu)

**James Payne** is an artist, writer, and curator who currently lives nowhere in particular. [www.banalization.blogspot.com](http://www.banalization.blogspot.com)

**Leslie Perrine** lives in Chicago with her cat Bum. [leslieperrine@gmail.com](mailto:leslieperrine@gmail.com).

**Sabina Sun**: 22 year old Seattlite. Loves sushi but not bell peppers. [Ssun1@saic.edu](mailto:Ssun1@saic.edu)

**Shannon Torii** is studying Art History at SAIC. [storii@artic.edu](mailto:storii@artic.edu)

**Alma Vescovi** lives in Houston, Texas. [alma.vescovi@gmail.com](mailto:alma.vescovi@gmail.com)

**Michelle Weaver** is a student at SAIC. [Michellerweaver@yahoo.com](mailto:Michellerweaver@yahoo.com)



# **Translation**

*From the French, page 10:* For every female character in these books there is an average of six guys.

# Addendum to the Electronic Edition

It is true that what is left out of any anthology may speak more eloquently to the state of the medium anthologized than what has been preserved and collected. This edition, an attempt to correct this scenario, is no exception. A few key points either missing from, or buried deep within, this volume, include:

- The percentage of women creators in all books averaged 16%, and they were awarded only 14.5% the total pages of all books, combined. Titles from the 1990s averaged a higher 22% female creators, who received a commensurate 22% of the page count from that decade. Titles from the last five years averaged only 15% female creators, receiving 15.6% of the total pages of comics anthologies.
- Identifiably female characters made up 17% of the characters in all the anthologies we looked at. The average number of naked, identifiably female characters per book was five, with characters from the 1980s being slightly more likely to appear *sans culottes* (Translation from the French: Without benefit of pants.) The average number of naked identifiably male characters per book was four, with characters from the 1990s being slightly more likely to retain their modesty.
- Female creators were about twice as likely to show up in books either edited or co-edited by female editors, although one title edited by a woman contained no solo female creators. Four supposedly gender-blind titles and one by and for gay and

bisexual men included no female creators whatsoever.

- There was an average of one rape for every seven books, and I meant to count blowjobs too but I forgot. Because guess why? For some of us, blowjobs can get kinda boring.

- All books had more male than female characters, by margins of at least three to one. While the scourge of naked women appeared to be consistently double that of naked men for two decades, recent years have seen a drastic increase in the number of male characters in their birthday suits. So in terms of nudity of characters, gender parity is much closer to being achieved now than it ever has been in history. However, in terms of gender parity in publishing opportunities, women are more likely to get into a comic book if they are fictional and naked than if they know how to draw, by a ratio of 181 to 147.

- The books we chose were pulled from the library of a major art institution, the downtown public library of a major urban center, and the private collection of a long-term enthusiast. Not a single of the volumes we analyzed were all-women's comics anthologies. This was not by design—in fact, we aimed to compare supposedly gender-blind anthologies to those that house all female or all male creator's works. Unfortunately, in none of the three above-named collections were all-women's comics anthologies available during our research phase. While this may or may not reflect the popularity of these titles, it is certainly a reflection on the state of comics that no all-womens comics anthologies appeared in three large collections during the course of our research.

Additional notes on illustrated texts:

- The illustration on page 8 is a joke, and intended to underscore the frequency with which Julie Doucet and Gabrielle Bell have

been anthologized, particularly in volumes in which they are the only non-male creators.

- The mid-1990's Riot Grrrl movement, and its many comics and self-publishing efforts, may be partially responsible for the drastic rise in anthologized female cartoonists over the previous decade, as noted on page 9.
- The illustration on page 14 neglects to underscore that the average of one rape for every seven books in three decades of comics anthologies is slightly higher than the average of women raped or assaulted every year in the US (1 in 6).
- All the statistics on page 15 are made up, but you probably won't notice or care because there are so many boobs. I didn't, and I was the one who made them up.

Finally, in the interest of full disclosure:

Total female creators in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 18

Total male creators in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 2

Total female editors in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 1

Total male editors in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 1

Total female characters in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 62

Total male characters in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 42

Total naked female characters in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 46

Total naked male characters in the *Women's Comics Anthology*: 22

— Anne Elizabeth Moore

An abstract painting featuring a dark brown, textured, angular shape on the left side. To its right is a section with horizontal stripes in shades of yellow, orange, pink, and light blue. Below these stripes is a solid red rectangular area. The bottom of the image is a dark, almost black, textured background.

PRESSING CONCERN BOOKS