

Drawing Is Thinking [C1]

Il rinomato disegnatore Chris Ware riflette sull'isolamento sociale, sull'impatto dell'intelligenza artificiale e sul suo rifiuto dei social network.

American comic artist Chris Ware explores usual themes such as social isolation, emotional torment and even depression in his work. Born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1967, Ware started doing [comic strips](#) while studying at the University of Texas in Austin, where he was invited by [fellow cartoonist](#) Art Spiegelman to contribute to anthology magazine [Raw](#). From 1993, Ware became a regular [contributor](#) of covers and cartoons to The New Yorker. Not long after, he began publishing the [ongoing](#) Acme Novelty Library comic book series. This summer, a new show dedicated to Ware fills the cool dark spaces of the CCCB in Barcelona. Speaking at a presentation for the exhibition, Ware explained that while comics seem an unsophisticated medium, their [engagement](#) with life and politics is an inevitable component of his work. Technological developments, such as AI, are also infiltrating comics, as the appropriation of creative style and its financial consequences become increasingly [of concern](#). Ware says he tries to take a holistic view of AI. Chris Ware: I sort of think it's at the core of something much larger going on in a planetary scale that we don't quite understand. We're putting all of our resources into something with such energy that I think there's something larger going on. I don't think humanity necessarily needs to be on the planet for as long as we think it needs to be. I don't think human beings are necessarily all that great or consciousness is all that it's [cracked up to be](#). It's just the way that we navigate the world, but it doesn't mean that it's the greatest thing that there is. And, besides, like, I don't care if AI imitates what I do, whether it's... Everything I've ever seen in AI, and this is just at its very nascent phase, seems just completely dead. Even the videos themselves seem like animated [corpses](#), which is interesting, because it's almost like we're encountering kind of an alien intelligence trying to understand us.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Given that his comics deal with social isolation and there is a concern that this tendency is incubated by online activity, we asked Ware about his own relationship with social media. Chris Ware: The thing about social media that really makes me uncomfortable is the fact that you can see if people like you or hate you. And I don't need to know that, I don't wanna... I spent my entire life trying to structure my existence so I don't have to find that out except in limited circumstance. Like I don't understand the impulse for that. I would not want to show unfinished pages on the internet. I'm not concerned with trying to get at certain people or get at more people. I'm just trying to make something that other people might find interesting if they happen [to come across](#) it. I think that's all that you can really do as an artist. If you put any effort into trying to reach more and more and more people, then you're putting your energy in the wrong place.

UNIQUE ENERGY

Ware's comic style is evocative of 1930s art. But this doesn't mean he's nostalgic, as he explains. Chris Ware: Well, I'm not a... like a big fan of cholera. So I'm kind of happy to live in the 21st century for a variety of reasons... Antibiotics are great! But there was something that happened in the 1930s or so in newspaper comics where they were really developing as this expressive language that had their own kind of energy on the page. Like there was a real life captured in the page in this kind of really almost [bloody](#) way, it was very raw. But then the [cartoonists](#) started to imitate movies. They started [to frame](#) things within a camera view and to move in and out and truncate the human body in a way that seemed very uncomfortable and they sort of lost their way. So I kind of went back to the early stuff and I worked from that point on. Which is not to say that films and movies are not powerful. You can't deny that there's a definite effect on these metaphors for life and storytelling and how they affect the way that we remember the world.

UNPREDICTABLE

For Ware, after you learn a discipline it is important to improvise, because life itself is unpredictable. Chris Ware: At a certain point I guess, I can't... [I thought] I'm just going to draw and just see what happens. And amazingly, I found that whatever I drew immediately suggested all these different things, just the drawing of a room or a house or an object, and it kind of opened up on the page. And if I just allowed whatever occurred in my memory to create a sort of flow of the story, the story wrote itself, if that makes any sense at all. It sounds like I'm advocating just making it up as you go along, but what else is the difference between that and sitting and trying to plan everything? You can't plan your life. You might think, "Oh, I'm going to get married and have a kid and then die," but a lot happens in between there [that] you can't predict.

DRAWING IS THINKING

An exhibition held at Barcelona's Centre de Cultura Contemporània invites us to take a chronological look at the work of Chris Ware (Omaha, Nebraska, 1967). Curated by Jordi Costa with input from the artist, the show features original pieces, animations, objects and sculptures, highlighting Ware as a master of the comic strip and as a inventor of language through funny and serious pictures. The show, entitled Drawing is Thinking, ends 9 November 2025. www.cccb.org

Glossary

- **to come across** = imbattersi in
- **bloody** = violento
- **contributor** = collaboratore
- **cracked up to be** = non essere granché
- **corpses** = cadaveri
- **comic strips** = vignette
- **fellow** = collega
- **of concern** = preoccupante
- **making it up** = inventare
- **ongoing** = in corso
- **engagement** = coinvolgimento
- **to frame** = inquadrare
- **you go along** = man mano che si va avanti
- **cartoonist** = fumettista
- **Raw** = crudo