

= Canadian comics =

Canadian comics refers to comics and cartooning by citizens of Canada or permanent residents of Canada regardless of residence . Canada has two official languages , and distinct comics cultures have developed in English and French Canada . The English tends to follow American trends , and the French Franco @-@ Belgian ones , with little crossover between the two cultures . Canadian comics run the gamut of comics forms , including editorial cartooning , comic strips , comic books , graphic novels , and webcomics , and are published in newspapers , magazines , books , and online . They have received attention in international comics communities and have received support from the federal and provincial governments , including grants from the Canada Council for the Arts . There are a comics publishers throughout the country , as well as large small press , self @-@ publishing , and minicomics communities .

In English Canada many cartoonists , from Hal Foster to Todd McFarlane , have sought to further their careers by moving to the United States ; since the late 20th century increasing numbers have gained international attention while staying in Canada . During World War II , trade restrictions led to the flourishing of a domestic comic book industry , whose black @-@ and @-@ white " Canadian Whites " contained original stories of heroes such as Nelvana of the Northern Lights as well as American scripts redrawn by Canadian artists . The war 's end saw American imports and domestic censorship lead to the death of this industry . The alternative and small press communities grew in the 1970s , and by the end of the century Dave Sim 's Cerebus and Chester Brown 's comics , amongst others , gained international audiences and critical acclaim , and Drawn and Quarterly became a leader in arts @-@ comics publishing . In the 21st century , comics have gained wider audiences and higher levels of recognition , especially in the form of graphic novels and webcomics .

In French Canada indigenous comics are called BDQ or bande dessinée québécoise ( French pronunciation : ? [ b? ? d d?.si.ne ke.be.kwaz ] ) Cartoons with speech balloons in Quebec date to the late 1700s . BDQ have alternately flourished and languished throughout Quebec 's history as the small domestic market has found it difficult to compete with foreign imports . Many cartoonists from Quebec have made their careers in the United States . Since the Springtime of BDQ in the 1970s native comics magazines , such as Croc and Safarir , and comics albums have become more common , though they account for only 5 % of total sales in the province . Since the turn of the 21st century cartoonists such as Michel Rabagliati , Guy Delisle , and the team of Dubuc and Delaf have seen international success in French @-@ speaking Europe and in translation . Éditions Mille @-@ Îles and La Pastèque are amongst the domestic publishers that have become increasingly common .

= = History = =

= = = English Canada = = =

= = = = Early history ( 1759 ? 1910s ) = = = =

Brigadier @-@ General George Townshend 's cartoons lampooning General James Wolfe in 1759 are recognized as the first examples of political cartooning in Canadian history . Cartoons did not have a regular forum in Canada until John Henry Walker 's short @-@ lived weekly Punch in Canada debuted in Montreal in 1849 . The magazine was a Canadian version of Britain 's humorous Punch and featured cartoons by Walker . It paved the way for a number of similar short @-@ lived publications , until the success of the more straight @-@ laced Canadian Illustrated News , published by George @-@ Édouard Desbarats beginning in 1869 , soon after Canadian Confederation .

In 1873 , John Wilson Bengough founded Grip , a humour magazine in the style of Punch and the

American Harper 's Weekly . It featured a large number of cartoons , especially Bengough 's own . The cartoons tended to be political , and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and Métis rebel leader Louis Riel were favourite targets . The Pacific Scandal in the early 1870s gave Bengough much fodder to raise his reputation as a political caricaturist . According to historian John Bell , while Bengough was probably the most significant pre 20th century Canadian cartoonist , Henri Julien was likely the most accomplished . Published widely both at home and abroad , Julien 's cartoons appeared in periodicals such as Harper 's Weekly and Le Monde illustré . In 1888 , he gained employment at the Montreal Star and became the first full time newspaper cartoonist in Canada .

Palmer Cox , a Canadian expatriate in the United States , at this time created The Brownies , a popular , widely merchandised phenomenon whose first book collection sold over a million copies . Cox began a Brownies comic strip in 1898 that was one of the earliest English language strips , and had begun to use speech balloons by the time it ended in 1907 .

=== Age of comic strips ( 1920s ? 1930s ) ===

Canadian cartoonists often found it hard to succeed in the field of comic strips without moving to the US , but in 1921 , Jimmy Frise , one of Ernest Hemingway 's drinking buddies during the journalist 's days in Toronto , sold Life 's Little Comedies to the Toronto Star 's Star Weekly . This strip was later retitled Birdseye Center , and became the longest running strip in English Canadian history . In 1947 , Frise brought the strip to the Montreal Standard , where it was renamed Juniper Junction . Nova Scotia born artist J. R. Williams single panel strip about rural and small town life , Out Our Way , began in 1922 and was syndicated in 700 newspapers at its peak .

Two new comic strips appeared on the same day in 1929 in American newspapers and fed the public 's desire for escapist entertainment at the dawn of the Great Depression . They were the first non humorous adventure strips , and both were adaptations . One was Buck Rogers ; the other , Tarzan , by Halifax native Hal Foster , who had worked as illustrator for catalogues from Eaton 's and the Hudson 's Bay Company before moving to the US in his late 20s . Other adventure strips soon followed and paved the way for the genre diversity that was seen in comic strips in the 1930s . In 1937 , Foster began his own strip , Prince Valiant , which has become his best known work for Foster 's dextrous , realistic artwork . After struggling to support himself at various Toronto based publications , Richard Taylor , under the pen name " Ric " , became a regular at The New Yorker and relocated to the US , where the pay and opportunities for cartoonists were better .

The Toronto Telegram began to run Men of the Mounted in 1933 , the first home grown adventure strip , written by Ted McCall and drawn by Harry Hall . McCall later penned the strip Robin Hood and Company , which made its appearance in comic books when McCall founded Anglo American Publishing in 1941 .

=== Golden age : Canadian Whites ( 1940s ) ===

The Golden Age of Comic Books and subsequent superhero boom began with the release in June 1938 of Action Comics # 1 . The cover story was the first appearance of Superman , drawn by Toronto born Joe Shuster . Shuster modeled Superman 's Metropolis after his memories of Toronto , and the newspaper Clark Kent worked for after the Toronto Daily Star , which he had delivered as a child . These comics crossed the border and quickly gained Canadian fans as well .

In December 1940 , the War Exchange Conservation Act was passed . It restricted the importation of goods from the US that were deemed non essential to combat the trade deficit Canada had with its neighbours to the south . American comic books were casualties of the Act . In 1941 , to fill the void , a number of Canadian comic book publishers sprang up , starting in March with Anglo American Publishing in Toronto and Maple Leaf Publishing in Vancouver . Adrian Dingle 's Hillborough Studios and Bell Features soon joined them . The comics printed by these companies had colour covers , but the innards were in black and white , and thus collectors

collectors to call them Canadian Whites . Superheroes stories were prominent , and the " Whites " often relied on serials to keep readers coming back for more .

Better Comics from Maple Leaf and Robin Hood and Company from Anglo @-@ American were the first titles to hit the stands . Robin Hood was a tabloid @-@ sized comic strip reprint magazine , while Better was made up of original material in traditional comic @-@ book format , and thus can be said to be the first true Canadian comic book . It included the appearance of the first Canadian superhero , Vernon Miller 's Iron Man . John Stables , under the pen name John St. Ables , was responsible for Brok Windsor 's debut in Better in the spring of 1944 ? a fantasy @-@ adventure set far in the " land beyond the mists " in the Canadian North . The success of Better led to a proliferation of titles from Maple Leaf .

The driving creative forces behind Anglo @-@ American were Ted McCall , the writer of the Men of the Mounted and Robin Hood strips , and artist Ed Furness . The pair created a number of heroes with such names as Freelance , Purple Rider , Red Rover , and Commander Steel . Anglo @-@ American also published stories based on imported American scripts bought from Fawcett Publications , with fresh artwork by Canadians to bypass trade restrictions . Captain Marvel and Bulletman were amongst the characters that had Canadian adaptations . Anglo @-@ American published a large number of titles , including Freelance , Grand Slam , Three Aces , Whiz , Captain Marvel and Atom Smasher , but relied less on serials , and was less patriotically Canadian than its rival publishers . It employed a number of talented artists , but they were kept to a " house style " of drawing , in the vein of Captain Marvel 's C. C. Beck .

In August 1941 , three unemployed artists , Adrian Dingle and André and René Kulbach , formed Hillborough Studios to publish their own work . They started with Triumph @-@ Adventure Comics , whose star was Canada 's first female superhero , Nelvana of the Northern Lights , who appeared several months before Wonder Woman did in the US . Nelvana was inspired by tribal stories brought back from the Arctic Group of Seven painter Franz Johnston . The popular fur @-@ miniskirted superheroine was a powerful Inuit mythological figure , daughter of a mortal woman and Koliak the Mighty , King of the Northern Lights . She had telepathic powers and was able to ride the Northern Lights at the speed of light , turn invisible , and melt metal .

In March 1942 , Dingle and most of the Hillborough staff moved with Nelvana to Toronto @-@ based Bell Features , which had begun publishing comics in September 1941 with the first issue of the successful Wow Comics ? in colour at first , but Bell soon switched to the familiar " White " format . Bell was the most prolific of the Canadian comic @-@ book publishers . Its comics were drawn by a large pool of artists , including freelancers , adolescents , and women , and were unabashedly Canadian . Aside from Nelvana , there were Edmund Legault 's Dixon of the Mounted , Jerry Lazare 's Phantom Rider , and Fred Kelly 's Doc Stearne . Leo Bachle 's Johnny Canuck was the second Canadian national hero , and debuted in Bell 's Dime Comics in February 1942 .

The new Canadian comics were successful ; Bell reached accumulated weekly sales of 100 @, @ 000 by 1943 . By this time , Educational Projects of Montréal had joined , selling comics in the " White " format . Educational specialized in a different sort of fare : biographies of prime ministers , cases of the RCMP , and historical tales , drawn by accomplished artists including George M. Rae and Sid Barron . Educational 's Canadian Heroes earned endorsements from cabinet ministers and appealed to parents and educators , but was not as appealing to the kids it was aimed at until Rae convinced publisher Harry J. Halperin to allow him to include a fictional character , Canada Jack ? a hero who battled Nazis .

With the end of World War II in 1945 , Canadian comic @-@ book publishing faced competition from American publishers again . Educational and latecomer Feature Publications folded immediately . Maple Leaf tried to compete by switching to colour and by trying to break into the British market . Anglo @-@ American and another newcomer , Al Rucker Publications , tried to compete directly with the Americans , and even achieved distribution in the US . By the end of 1946 it was clear that the remaining publishers could not compete , and for the time being original comic @-@ book publishing came to an end in Canada , although some publishers survived by republishing American books until the War Exchange Conservation Act was officially abolished in 1951 . The cartoonists who insisted on drawing for a living faced several choices : some moved

across the border to attempt to make it with the American publishers , and some moved into illustration work , as Jerry Lazare , Vernon Miller , Jack Tremblay , and Harold Bennett did . Another avenue was the route Sid Barron followed into political cartooning . By 1949 , out of 176 comics titles on the newsstand , only 23 were Canadian .

= = = = Post @-@ war ( late 1940s ? early 1970s ) = = = =

With the end of most original Canadian comic book publishing in 1947 , Canada 's superheroes disappeared , and the country entered a phase of foreign comic book domination . In the late 1940s , a crime comics scare hit the country when a pair of voracious comic book readers in Dawson Creek , British Columbia , shot at a random car while playing highwaymen , fatally wounding a passenger . When authorities discovered their taste for comic books , media attention focused on the emerging crime comics genre as an influence on juvenile delinquency . A bill to amend Section 207 of the Criminal Code was drafted , and passed unanimously , making it an offence to make , print , publish , distribute , sell , or own " any magazine , periodical or book which exclusively or substantially comprises matter depicting pictorially the commission of crimes , real or fictitious " , on 10 December 1949 . Comics publishers across Canada banded together to create the Comic Magazine Industry Association of Canada ( CMIAC ) , a Canadian industry self @-@ censoring body similar to the American Comics Code Authority that would be formed a few years later in response to a similar crime comics scare in the U.S.

Superior Publishers , however , defied the ban , while also moving into the U.S. market . Watchdogs turned up the heat , and in 1953 a distributor was found guilty of distributing obscenities . Some of Superior 's titles found themselves in Fredric Wertham 's notorious and influential diatribe on the influence comics had on juvenile delinquency , *Seduction of the Innocent* , published in 1954 . The United States Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency , established in 1953 , had public hearings a few months later , and called upon Kamloops . BC Member of Parliament E. Davie Fulton , one of Superior publisher William Zimmerman 's most outspoken enemies , as a witness . The Comics Code Authority was soon formed , and Superior , like fellow American publisher EC Comics , saw their sales dwindle throughout 1955 . Prosecutions increased throughout Canada , with Superior successfully defending themselves in one , and another supposedly comics @-@ related murder was reported in Westville , Nova Scotia . Superior shut its doors in 1956 , and until the 1970s , English Canadian newsstand comic book publishing was no more , although a number of " giveaway " comics continued to be produced by Orville Ganes ' Ganes Productions and Owen McCarron 's *Comic Book World* , who produced the educational and cautionary comics for governments and corporations , aimed at kids and teens .

The crackdown was not aimed at comic strips , however , and several notable new ones appeared , like Lew Saw 's *One @-@ Up* , Winslow Mortimer 's *Larry Brannon* and Al Beaton 's *Ookpik* . After Jimmy Frise 's death in 1948 , *Juniper Junction* was taken over by Doug Wright , " one of Canada 's best post @-@ war comic @-@ strip artists " . He would continue with the strip until 1968 , while also working on his own *Nipper* from 1949 . In 1967 , *Nipper* became Doug Wright 's *Family* when Wright moved from Montreal to Ontario , and the popular strip continued until 1980 . The Doug Wright Awards were inaugurated in his honour in 2005 . From 1948 to 1972 , James Simpkins ' cartoon *Jasper the Bear* appeared continuously in *Macleans* ' magazine . *Jasper* was hugely popular across Canada and was used , and is still today , as the symbol for Jasper National Park .

To express his anger at the US military 's nuclear tests in the Bikini Atoll in 1946 English @-@ born artist Laurence Hyde produced a wordless novel in 1951 called *Southern Cross* . In 118 silent pages , the book depicts atomic testing by the US military and its effects Polynesian island inhabitants . While it had no direct effect on comics at the time , it has come to be seen as a precursor to the Canadian graphic novel .

Early editorial cartooning lacked a local flavour , tending to be a pale imitation of American examples . It tended to be cheery , non @-@ confrontational , and supported good causes . Following the War it broke from typical American clichés and took on more of a savage bite , especially compared to the more allegorical tendencies of American editorial cartoons . At *Le Devoir*

, Robert Lapalme was the first to cartoon in this particularly Canadian idiom , and in 1963 organized an International Salon of Caricature and Cartoon in Montreal . Lapalme was later followed by Duncan Macpherson at the Toronto Star , Leonard Norris at the Vancouver Sun and Ed McNally at the Montreal Star . These cartoonists frequently took political positions contrary to those of the papers in which they were published . Macpherson drew a cartoon of John Diefenbaker as Marie Antoinette saying " Let them eat cake " in response to the Prime Minister 's cancelling the Avro Arrow project , which historian Pierre Burton has called the beginning of Canadians ' disillusionment with Diefenbaker 's government . Macpherson in particular fought fiercely for editorial independence , challenging his editors and threatening to quit the Star if not given his way , which paved a new path for other cartoonists to follow .

In 1967 , Canada saw its first comic shop open its doors . Memory Lane in Toronto , established by George Henderson , inspired pioneering retailer Harry Kremer and Bill Johnson to open Now & Then Books in Kitchener , Ontario . Its newsletter , the Now and Then Times , published early work by the young Dave Sim in its inaugural issue in 1972 , and later employed him from 1976 to 1977 .

In the late 1960s , along with the countercultural movement , a new form of comic art appeared from the avant @-@ garde and literary scenes ? underground comics ( or " comix " ) aimed at an adult audience . Early examples appeared in certain magazines , but an early precursor of Canadian underground comic books was Scaptures , as a special issue of the Toronto avant @-@ garde literary magazine grOnk in 1967 . In 1969 , Canada saw its first true underground comics , with SFU Komix and Snore Comix . These comix drew their inspiration from the American underground movement that exploded after the release of Robert Crumb 's Zap in early 1968 . Martin Vaughn @-@ James produced an early graphic novel when he had Elephant released by Press Porcépic in 1970 . The underground movement paralleled that of the US , in that it peaked from 1970 to 1972 with the peak of the counterculture , and witnessed a sharp decline afterward . Saskatoon , Saskatchewan 's Dave Geary and Vancouver , BC 's Rand Holmes were key figures , Holmes being the creator of the Harold Hedd comic strip .

Humour magazine Fuddle Duddle , named after a famous euphemism by then @-@ Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau , was a short lived attempt at a Canadian Mad @-@ style satirical magazine . It was the first comic book of Canadian content to be available on newsstands since 1956 . Two of its contributors , Peter Evans and Stanley Berneche , would soon go on to bring superheroes back to Canada for the first time since the demise of Nelvana in 1947 , with Captain Canuck .

The fan press and fandom grew throughout this period , and was bolstered when Patrick Loubert and Michael Hirsh , the founders of the animation company Nelvana , published of The Great Canadian Comic Books in 1971 , a book @-@ length study of the Bell Features comics , and the touring of a related exhibition mounted by the National Gallery of Canada , Comic Art Traditions in Canada , 1941 @-@ 45 , which together served to introduce English @-@ Canadian comics creators and fans to their lost heritage .

Towards the middle of the 1970s , comics aimed at children gradually disappeared . The new breed of underground , alternative and independent comics was aimed at a more mature audience , which ran counter to the public 's perception , as well as to legal restrictions . The first wave of alternative comics in the seventies was largely made up of science fiction and fantasy comics , made by budding cartoonists like Gene Day , Dave Sim , Augustine Funnell , Jim Craig , Ken Steacy , Dean Motter , and Vincent Marchesano .

== == New wave ( mid @-@ 1970s ? 1980s ) == ==

The mid @-@ 1970s saw the beginning of a new wave of Canadian comics , one in which the creators chose to remain in Canada , rather than seeking their fortunes south of the border . Richard Comely 's Captain Canuck appeared in July 1975 , the first appearance of a non @-@ satirical superhero in Canada since the 1940s . During the 1950s and 1960s , the idea of native comics seemed unattainable to Canadian kids , and the appearance of Captain Canuck gave these kids the optimism to make their own . This was followed up with James Waley 's more professional , newsstand @-@ distributed Orb , which featured a number of talents that would later take part in the

North American comics scene .

The comics magazines showing up in Canada at the time suffered from promotion and distribution problems , however , getting most of their support from the fan press . Phil Seuling 's California @-@ based comics distributor Bud Plant was supportive of these underground and alternative comics , though , and helped get them into stores . Eventually , distributors like Bud Plant and the emergence of specialty comic shops would form a distribution network for small press comics that would thrive independently of the traditional newsstands .

The world of comic strips saw a number of works pop up . Ben Wicks was doing *The Outsiders* and Wicks , Jim Unger 's *Herman* debuted in 1975 , and Ted Martin 's *Pavlov* in 1979 . In 1978 , Lynn Johnston , living in Lynn Lake , Manitoba , began *For Better or For Worse* , which was noted for following the lives of the Patterson family as they grew older in real time , and dealt with real @-@ life issues . The strip based a number of its storylines on Johnston 's real @-@ life experiences with her own family , as well as social issues such as the midlife crisis , divorce , the coming out of a gay character , child abuse , and death . In 1985 , she became the first female cartoonist to win a Reuben Award , and the *Friends of Lulu* added her to the Women Cartoonists Hall of Fame in 2002 . The strip was very popular , appearing in over 2000 newspapers in 25 countries .

Editorial cartoonists held considerable sway between the 1950s through the 1970s . Former Prime Minister Joe Clark has been quoted that he lost votes in the election of 1980 due to political cartoons about him . They have also experienced the fear of censorship through the courts , or " libel chill " . In 1979 , Robert Bierman and the *Victoria Times* was the subject of a libel suit when he criticized the policies of William Vander Zalm , the British Columbia Minister of Human Resources , with a cartoon of the Minister pulling the wings off flies . When the courts ruled in Vander Zalm 's favour , newspapers across the nation ran their own versions of the cartoon in support , until the BC Court of Appeal reversed the ruling in 1980 , deeming the cartoon " fair comment " . It was later acquired by the National Archives of Canada .

*Captain Canuck* and *Orb* both folded by 1976 , but in Kitchener , Ontario in December 1977 , Dave Sim 's independent comic book *Cerebus* debuted , and would become the longest @-@ lived original Canadian comic book . Benefiting from distribution in the emerging comic shop market , it started as a *Howard the Duck* @-@ like parody of Barry Windsor @-@ Smith 's *Conan the Barbarian* comics . The story eventually grew to fit Sim 's expanding ambitions , both in content and technique , with its earth @-@ pig protagonist getting embroiled in politics , becoming prime minister of a powerful city @-@ state , then a Pope who ascends to the moon ? all within the first third of its projected 300 @-@ issue run . Sim came to conceive the series as a self @-@ enclosed story , which itself would be divided into novels ? or graphic novels , which were gaining in prominence in the North American comic book world in the 1980s and 1990s . While Sim and his partner Gerhard 's technical achievements impressed and influenced his peers , Sim also spoke out for creators ' rights , promoted his peers and up @-@ and @-@ coming creators , and fiercely promoted self @-@ publishing as an ideal . Americans Jeff Smith with *Bone* and Terry Moore with *Strangers in Paradise* took Sim 's cue , as did Canadian M 'Oak ( Mark Oakley ) with his long @-@ running *Thieves and Kings* . Eddie Campbell took Sim 's personal advice to self @-@ publish the collected *From Hell* at the turn of the century . Sim also stirred considerable controversy , sometimes with the content of *Cerebus* , and sometimes with his editorials and personal interactions .

David Boswell was amongst those in the 1980s who made the jump from the fanzine world when he began self @-@ publishing *Reid Fleming* , *World 's Toughest Milkman* in 1980 . From out of the same scene , Bill Marks started publishing the anthology *Vortex* in Toronto in 1982 . Marks ' *Vortex Comics* expanded into publishing other comics . The publisher gained publicity for *Mister X* , which employed the talents of Dean Motter , Gilberto and Jaime Hernandez and , later , Torontonians Seth and Jeffrey Morgan . Most notably , Marks picked up Chester Brown 's *Yummy Fur* , a taboo @-@ breaking series which started in 1983 as a self @-@ published , photocopied minicomic . It had generated some buzz , and *Vortex* started publishing it professionally at the end of 1986 . *Yummy Fur* 's stories were a mix of genres , with the improvised , surreal *Ed the Happy Clown* , straight adaptations of the Gospels , and revealing , bare @-@ all autobiographical stories . Brown would become a major figure in Canadian comics .

As the content of comics matured throughout the 1980s , they became the subject of increasing scrutiny . In 1986 , Calgary comic shop Comic Legends was raided and charged with obscenity . In response , Derek McCulloch and Paul Stockton of Strawberry Jam Comics established the Comic Legends Legal Defense Fund to help retailers , distributors , publishers , and creators fight against obscenity charges . To raise funds , they published two True North anthologies of Canadian talent .

During this time , large numbers of Canadian artists were making waves in the American comic book market as well , such as John Byrne , Gene Day and his brother Dan , Jim Craig , Rand Holmes , Geof Isherwood , Ken Steacy , Dean Motter , George Freeman and Dave Ross . Byrne was particularly popular for his work on X @-@ Men , and also originated Alpha Flight , about a team of Canadian superheroes .

= = = = 1990s = = = =

In 1990 , Montreal @-@ based publisher Drawn and Quarterly began with an anthology title also named Drawn and Quarterly . It quickly picked up a number of other titles , such as Julie Doucet 's semi @-@ autobiographical , bilingual Dirty Plotte , which , like Yummy Fur , had started out as a minicomic ; Seth 's Palookaville ; illegal resident from the US Joe Matt 's Peepshow ; and Yummy Fur , which made the jump with its twenty @-@ fifth issue . At the time , an autobiographical comics trend took place . Brown , Seth and Matt in particular were thought of as a Toronto comics rat pack , depicting one another in their comics and doing signings and interviews together .

Drawn and Quarterly was at the forefront of the maturation comic books saw in the 1990s , publishing and promoting the works of adult @-@ oriented Canadian and international artists . The publisher avoided genres like superheroes , which publisher Chris Oliveros saw as stifling comics ' growth . These comics had artistic aspirations , and graphic novels became increasingly prominent , with Brown 's autobiographical The Playboy and I Never Liked You , and Seth 's faux @-@ autobiographical It 's a Good Life , If You Don 't Weaken garnering considerable attention .

Todd McFarlane from Calgary had been making waves since the late 1980s illustrating comics for DC and Marvel Comics , becoming a fan favourite writer / artist for Spider @-@ Man . He eventually left to co @-@ found the creator @-@ owned comics publishing collective Image Comics , where he debuted the enormously successful Spawn . Spawn holds the record for most copies sold of an independent comic , and was the most financially successful comics franchise of the decade .

= = = = 21st century = = = =

At the dawn of the 21st Century , the comics industry had changed considerably . The graphic novel had come into its own , and traditional comics sales dropped significantly . Louis Riel , who had been a major target of John Bengough 's caricatures in the early days of Confederation , was the protagonist in Chester Brown 's award @-@ winning , best @-@ selling " comic @-@ strip biography " . With his graphic novels and book collections , he gained a wider audience than he had with his serial comic books , and he abandoned serial comics entirely to focus on original graphic novels after Louis Riel . Greater appreciation of the artform was shown when Brown and Seth became recipients of grants from the Canada Council for the Arts . Dave Sim 's Cerebus completed its planned 26 @-@ year , 300 @-@ issue run in 2004 .

Foreign comics , especially Japanese , became quite successful in Canada , and stood out for gaining large numbers of female fans , who had traditionally stayed away from comic books . They also had a significant influence on artists such as Bryan Lee O 'Malley and his Scott Pilgrim series . Due to differing social norms , the content of these comics are sometimes censored or ran afoul of Canadian customs officials . Incidental nudity could be interpreted by them as child pornography and result in jail terms .

Drawn and Quarterly has become known as a house for art comics , translations of non @-@ English works , like Montrealer Michel Rabagliati 's Paul series , and archive editions of classic comics , such as Wright 's Little Nipper . The publisher has earned a reputation for the special attention they put into book design , and has played a pivotal rôle in shaping comics ' rise in artistic

prominence , and in getting comics into mainstream book stores in both Canada and the US . D & Q publisher Chris Oliveros , along with Art Spiegelman , lobbied bookstores to include a section for graphic novels , which would be subdivided by subject .

Webcomics , such as Kate Beaton 's Hark ! A Vagrant , Ryan Sohmer and Lar deSouza 's Looking for Group , and Karl Kerschl 's The Abominable Charles Christopher , became an increasingly popular outlet for Canadian cartoonists . The popularity of Beaton 's work has led to it being published in book form , with Time magazine placing it in the top 10 fiction books of 2011 .

The comics community in Canada has grown , and has grown appreciative of its talent , celebrating it with awards such as the Doug Wrights and Joe Shusters , as well as with classy events such as the international Toronto Comic Arts Festival , which has been cosponsored by the Toronto Public Library since 2009 .

= = = French Canada = = =

The comics of Québec , also known as " BDQ " ( bande dessinée québécoise ) , have followed a different path than those of English Canada . While newspapers tend to populate their funny pages with syndicated American comic strips , in general comics there have followed Franco @-@ Belgian comics , with The Adventures of Tintin and Asterix being particularly popular and influential . Comics also tend to be printed in the comic album format that is popular in Europe . Aside from humorous parodies , there is no superhero tradition in Québec comics .

= = = Early history ( 1790s ? 1960s ) = = =

Québec comics have alternately flourished and languished , seeing several brief periods of intense activity followed by long periods of inundation with foreign content . Comics first appeared in the humour pages of newspapers in the 19th century , following the trends coming from Europe . In the late 19th Century , Henri Julien published two books of political caricatures , L ? album drolatique du journal Le Farceur , after which the number of cartoonists began to increase in newspapers in Québec City and Montreal . 1904 saw , in the newspaper La Patrie , the publication of Les Aventures de Timothée ( The Adventures of Timothée ) by Albéric Bourgeois . This is said to be the first French @-@ language comic to feature speech balloons . Joseph Charlebois 's comic @-@ strip adaptation of Le Père Ladébauche ( Father Debauchery ) also debuted in 1904 , in La Presse , a popular strip that would last until 1957 .

Raoul Barré had the first comic strip to appear in a Québec daily newspaper in 1902 , called " Pour un dîner de Noël " ( " For a Christmas Dinner " ) . In 1912 , he created a strip called Noahzark Hotel for the New York @-@ based McClure Syndicate , which he brought to La Patrie in French the next year . Soon after he moved into animation , becoming an innovative pioneer in the field .

Québécois cartoonists would propose a number of strips to compete with the American strips that dominated the Sundays and dailies . The native Québec presence on those pages would become more dominant after 1940 , however , with the introduction of the War Exchange Conservation Act , which restricted the import of foreign strips . Albert Chartier created the comical character Onésime in 1943 , a strip that would have the longest run of any in Québec . After World War II , during the Great Darkness , comics publication became dominated with religious comics , most of which were imported from the US . Native Québec comics did flourish for a brief period between 1955 and 1960 , however , but were soon replaced again with American content , while also facing competition from the new Franco @-@ Belgian publications , which appeared in full @-@ colour , and by the mid @-@ 1960s had put the local Catholic publications out of business .

= = = Springtime of BDQ ( 1970s ? present ) = = =

The revolutionary 1960s and the Quiet Revolution in Québec saw a new vigour in BDQ . What Georges Raby called the Spring of Québécois comics ( printemps de la BD québécoise ) is said to have begun in 1968 with the creation of the group Chiendent , who published in La Presse and



Dimanche @-@ Magazine . Jacques Hurtubise ( Zyx ) , Réal Godbout , Gilles Thibault , and Jacques Boivin were particularly notable cartoonists , and numerous short @-@ lived publications with strange names appeared , like Ma ® de in Québec and L 'Hydrocéphale illustré . The comics no longer focused on younger audiences , instead seeking confrontation or experimenting with graphics , drawing influence from French comics for mature audiences like those published in Pilote magazine , as well as translations of American undergrounds , translations of which were published in the journal Mainmise . During the 1970s , BDQ were sometimes called " BDK " , bande dessinée québécoise .

In 1979 , Jacques Hurtubise , Pierre Huet and Hélène Fleury would establish the long @-@ lived , satirical Croc , which published many leading talents of the era , many of whom were able to launch their careers through the magazine 's help . Croc begat another magazine , Titanic , dedicated to comic strips , and in 1987 , Safarir , a Mad @-@ like publication patterned after the French Hara @-@ Kiri , rose in competition with Croc . By the mid @-@ 1980s , a number of professional comics publishers began to flourish .

In Montreal in the 1980s and 1990s , in parallel to mainstream humour magazines , a healthy underground scene developed , and self @-@ published fanzines proliferated . Julie Doucet , Henriette Valium , Luc Giard , Éric Thériault , Gavin McInnes and Siris were among the names that were discovered in the small press publications .

In the 21st Century , Michel Rabagliati and his semi @-@ autobiographical Paul series has seen Tintin @-@ like sales levels in Québec , and his books have been published in English by Drawn and Quarterly .

Around the turn of the century , the government of Québec mandated La Fondation du 9e art ( " The 9th Art Foundation " ) to promote francophone cartoonists in North America . There have also emerged events such as the Festival de la bande dessinée francophone de Québec in Québec City and la Zone internationale du neuvième art ( ZINA ) .

= = Publication , promotion and distribution = =

As in the US , large Canadian newspapers typically have a page of comic strips in their daily editions and a full @-@ colour Sunday comics section on Saturdays or Sundays . Editorial cartoonists are also common ; the Association of Canadian Editorial Cartoonists is a professional association founded in 1988 to promote their interests .

There are a number of English- and French @-@ language publishers active in Canadian comics . Drawn and Quarterly is a Montreal @-@ based English @-@ language publisher of arts comics , translations , and classic comic reprints . Founded by Chris Oliveros in 1990 , Drawn and Quarterly is one of the most influential publishers in alternative comics . Arcana Studio of British Columbia publishes a large number of titles , and Koyama Press joined the fray in 2007 . In French , Les 400 coups , Mécanique Générale , La Pastèque and the Québec arm of Glénat are amongst the active publishers . The small press has played an important rôle ; self @-@ publishing is a common means of putting out comics , largely influenced by the success of Dave Sim 's Cerebus . Minicomics is another form that has remained popular since the 1980s , when Chester Brown and Julie Doucet got started by distributing self @-@ published photocopied comics . The minicomics scene has been spurred on by Broken Pencil , a magazine dedicated to promoting the zines .

A number of fan conventions are held throughout Canada , including the Central Canada Comic Con , Fan Expo Canada , Montreal Comiccon , Paradise Comics Toronto Comicon , Ottawa Comiccon , and Toronto Comicon . The Toronto Comic Arts Festival ( TCAF ) , modeled after European festivals such as Angoulême and the American Small Press Expo , has grown since 2003 , and since 2009 has enjoyed the support of the Toronto Public Library .

= = = Awards = = =

A number of awards for Canadian comics and cartooning have appeared , especially since the beginning of the 21st Century .

The National Newspaper Awards was established in 1949 with a category for Editorial Cartooning honouring those that " embody an idea made clearly apparent , good drawing , and striking pictorial effect in the public interest " . The award 's first recipient was Jack Booth of the Globe and Mail .

The Bédély's Prize ( French : Prix Bédély's ) has been awarded to French @-@ language comics since 2000 . It comes with bursaries for the Prix Bédély's Québec ( for Best Book from Québec ) and Prix Bédély's Fanzine .

Since 2005 the Joe Shuster Awards have been handed out by the Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards Association , named after the Toronto @-@ born co @-@ creator of Superman . It is open to all Canadians , including those living abroad , as well as permanent residents , for comics in any language . Along with awards for Outstanding Cartoonist , Outstanding Writer , Outstanding Artist and others , it also features the Joe Shuster Hall of Fame , and the Harry Kremer Retailer Award , named after the founder of Canada 's oldest surviving comic shop .

The Doug Wright Awards also began in 2005 . Awards are given for Best Book , Best Emerging Talent , and since 2008 the Pigskin Peters Award for non @-@ narrative ( or nominally @-@ narrative ) comics ; Pigskin Peters was a character in Jimmy Frise 's Birdseye Center . The Doug Wright Awards also inducts cartoonists into Giants of the North : The Canadian Cartoonist Hall of Fame .

= = Academia = =

From the 1990s onward an increasing amount of literature on Canadian comics has appeared , in both official languages . Books such as Guardians of the North ( 1992 ) and Invaders from the North ( 2006 ) appeared by comics historian John Bell , who became senior archivist at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa . American magazine Alter Ego ran a special issue on Canadian comics in 2004 . In French , Michel Viau wrote a book on francophone comics called BDQ : Répertoire des publications de bandes dessinées au Québec des origines à nos jours ( 2000 ) . Bart Beaty and Jeet Heer have been writing about comics academically and professionally , and regularly have articles educating the public on comics published in newspapers such as the National Post and the Boston Globe , as well as comics and literary magazines . Canadian feminist scholars such as Mary Louise Adams , Mona Gleason , and Janice Dickin McGinnis have done research into the anti @-@ crime comics campaigns of the late 1940s and 1950s , from the point of view of the moral panic and social and legal history of the era , and the sociology of sexuality .

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