



Eisner/Miller

Will Eisner, Frank Miller, Charles Brownstein (Interviewer)

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It would be hard to imagine any creators who have more greatly affected their chosen medium than Will Eisner and Frank Miller have influenced the world of comics and graphic novels. Often misunderstood, but enduringly enjoyed by people from all walks of life, the comic book has in recent years been recognized as a "legitimate" art form by cultural institutions ranging from Harvard University to the Smithsonian, from The New Yorker to the Art Institute of Chicago. Now, culture-curious readers and life-long fans of the comics medium are invited to read along as two of the medium's greatest contributors--legendary innovator and godfather of sequential art Will Eisner, and the modern master of cinematic comics storytelling, Frank Miller--discuss one on one in an intimate interview format, the ins-and-outs of this compelling and often controversial art form. Eisner/Miller is profusely illustrated and features rare, behind-the-scenes photos of Eisner, Miller, and other notable creators.

Eisner/Miller Details

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From Reader Review Eisner/Miller for online ebook

Jeremy says

The two creators discuss the comic industry, its history, and their own careers. It was an insightful look into the two men and the difference in their approaches the business of making comics. Miller's pessimistic, rebellious arrogance seems somewhat at odds with his privileged insider status. Eisner, on the other hand, takes a measured, rational view of the industry with which he has had critical but little material success in the second half of his career. So as a character study of two popular creators, Eisner/Miller is a worthwhile read. Personally, I was hoping for more discussion and comparison of their creative processes.

Mark says

While the conversations that comprise this book were concluded before Will Eisner's passing, he didn't live to see their publication in this book. Extending from technique to philosophy, from publishing to readership, Frank Miller's conversations with Will Eisner are rich and informative. Reading this book inspired me to write my graphic novel, *The Waterloo Diaries: The Bedsore Conspiracy*; although, the story line is unrelated to the conversations. This is a great read for anyone at work at any creative endeavor, regardless of medium.

Daniela Pérez nava says

A very interesting conversation! I would like to share all the quotes I found useful, but that would spoil things; so I just want to say that everything they say is valuable, but I can see the comic industry will have more changes than those these masters are talking about. Now I feel a bit sad that Master Eisner didn't live enough to see them. I want to know what Master Miller has to say nowadays.

Tony Laplume says

A great deal of perspective on comic books from two seminal creators, Will Eisner (for whom the Eisner Awards were named; creator of *The Spirit* and *A Contract with God*) and Frank Miller (creator of *The Dark Knight Returns*, *300*, *Sin City*). Eisner was there in the beginning, and came back around the same time Miller started working in the medium, and whereas both have sufficient experience that their work ultimately has little relevance to the majority of what the public will think about concerning comic books, their insight into the history and art of it is invaluable.

Eisner departed the beaten track almost immediately, while Miller spent considerable time working on fairly typical superhero material, which makes their contrasting approaches, and therefore contrasting perspectives, the driving force of the conversation that is the book. If you're looking to have a comprehensive view of comic books, you might be disappointed.

If you don't particularly know Eisner, and are one of the many fans who later turned on Miller, you may end up baffled. As far as the latter is concerned, Miller outlines exactly what he chose to do differently in his

later work, and if you as a reader thought anything negatively of it before, then it's your loss. Unfortunately most readers, and this has nothing to do with comic books, are extremely illiterate, and don't understand the culture around them, which makes for *shallow* readers.

At one point Miller suggests that a caricature of George Will he included in one of his comics is something he thinks his readers should be able to catch in order to fully appreciate the moment. And he harps a great deal on how he wishes comics were less frozen in their most familiar printed form. He and Eisner discuss why comics tend to be scorned as a viable art, and yet both of them weasel out of the dominant form they tend to take, which is superhero comics, which neither is willing to take at face value, and in fact look down on. Miller's one of the few creators who made his name with superheroes and has more or less stuck with them, but his stories have become more and more bombastic (in *All Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder* he manages to alienate readers merely by having the Dark Knight declare "I'm the godd**n Batman," the latest evolution of his less than totally reverent approach that began with *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*, which is to say nothing about *Holy Terror*, received as something like holy *blasphemy*).

All of which is to say, and both icons are perfectly willing to question each other and so it's perfectly valid for readers to question *them* in return (Eisner has an odd respect for Stan Lee, but then there always seems to be praise for enduring names whether earned or otherwise; conversely neither has much positive to say about Jack Kirby, which for me is a first), as much as this is a conversation that you're glad you get to overhear, it's also one that hopefully makes you think about comics as much as they do. There was a time when I allowed Scott McCloud to do that for me, but it's a little more interesting to let Eisner and Miller act as the guides.

Michael says

This book is a really terrific look into the mind of two great creators. It's particularly fascinating that Miller and Eisner seem to have a book length conversation while rarely seeing eye to eye on what they're even discussing. Eisner focuses heavily the medium and the form; Miller is intent on the industry and the format.

Nonetheless, if you're looking for insights into what makes comics great and what comics have to offer, this is a heck of a book. They don't even criticize work-for-hire as badly as I expected. Miller even describes work-for-hire as fun, within reason. His thoughts on DKSA are fairly interesting, also.

Robert Luedke says

A very compelling insiders look behind the mind of two of the comic book industries true giants. I especially enjoyed the contrasting viewpoints of creators who came of age during different era's of the industry.

Bryce Wilson says

As one of the five remaining Frank Miller fans this was a great read. I've got a soft spot for these old master new master discussions, and while Eisner's contribution was a bit muted as I haven't read any of his work (Soon to be remedied I assure you) he proved a dynamic and outspoken foil. As for a fan of Miller it was an illuminating look into the man's mind (as frightening as that might be) and anyone whose wondering what the hell is going on with All Star Batman and Robin need look no further.

The book does get a little "Inside Baseball" at times, I'm still a burgeoning comics fan, and when things got into the inner workings and complaints against some stylistic quirks of the medium, my eyes would glaze over just a bit.

Still an engaging and illuminating piece.

Ethan Young says

A very engrossing interview book with 2 great comic creators. Although it's a little dated now (with the passing of Eisner and the media implosion of Miller), this 2 way interview captures their mutual passion for creating and expanding the sequential art form.

Gurra says

Intressant "samtalsbok" mellan Will Eisner och Frank Miller två personer som betytt mycket för seriemediets utveckling. Om man gillar anekdoter och historier om serie förlagsvärlden i USA och hur om hur dom båda herrarna tog sig fram i serievärlden på sitt egna sätt så är det en utmärkt bok att läsa.

Camilo Guerra says

Una relectura que es necesaria de vez en cuando, para los fanáticos del comic, que nos muestra el punto de vista sobre aspectos importantísimos del medio, como el manejo editorial, evolución de las herramientas, trato con colegas, editores, sueños, fracasos... todo de una manera franca e importante aunque le siga achacando una lucha de egos en muchos capítulos, a ver quien la tiene mas larga, quien orina mas lejos, quien orina mas duro... pero aun así, recomendable.

Stan Heller says

Will Eisner, according to many, invented the graphic novel. Whether he did or not, his influence in how to tell a story can be seen in many of today's artists, among them, Frank Miller.

When I saw the trailer for Frank Miller's treatment of Will Eisner's seminal character, "The Spirit," I was troubled. Miller learned a lot from Eisner, and in many ways Miller's visual style has leapfrogged Eisner. Still, Will Eisner's characters, all lumpy and commonplace have souls; Miller's characters are for the most part soulless.

Before I picked up this book, I was unaware of the friendship and mutual respect of these two artists. Reading their conversations about the art of storytelling and about the craft of comics (or as Eisner likes to call it, sequential stories) was a treat. In particular, their shared interest in paring away the image until only the essential visual elements were quite enlightening. Miller's work in "Sin City" is all about this kind of austerity.

If you have an interest in comics this is a must read. If you think writing comics is a juvenile pastime without much art or craft, this book would be an eye-opener.

Thomas says

Eisner being candid about the craft, Miller being candid about the business. It's like you get to eavesdrop on on their conversations. Crucial reading to understand the craft of comics and the insight of these two creative powerhouses

GONZA says

nemmeno stavolta sono venuta meno alla mia proposizione di non comprare più fumetti, prima di tutto perchè questo libro ha solo un disegno ogni tanto (ogni tanto spesso, ma ogni tanto...) e poi perchè il libro l'ho preso in prestito alla mia mitica biblioteca Basaglia (quale nome migliore?).

Come si capisce già dal titolo, questo più che un saggio è una conversazione a due tra autori che hanno fatto la storia del fumetto e soprattutto hanno conosciuto, cooperato e lavorato con altri mostri sacri delle tavole, uno su tutti Kirby.

Eisner mi era meno conosciuto, almeno così pensavo, fino a che non ho capito che era l'autore di Spirit e un sacco di suoi disegni mi sono tornati in mente.

Per Miller dico solo: 300, Dark Knight e Sin City, probabilmente avrete visto i film oltre che avere letto i fumetti.

Non ci sono capitoli ma argomenti per suddividere questo libro, per esempio le chine e i colori, i formati, gli editor e il futuro. Puttosto Eisner è morto prima della pubblicazione dell'ultima revisione di questa "conversazione", ma sicuramente la sua legacy appartiene a tutti gli autori di ultima generazione a cominciare da McFarlane, IMHO.

Attraverso questi dialoghi arriviamo non solo a capire meglio i disegni e l'organizzazione che gli autori stessi danno alle tavole, ma ci sembra quasi di parlare e conoscere queste persone che secondo me, per alcuni versi, non solo hanno cambiato la concezione del fumetto, ma hanno avuto ripercussione anche sugli storyboard delle sceneggiature e sulle sceneggiature stesse, nel perenne scambio di vedute tra fumetti e film.

Non è un libro solo per aficionados, anzi secondo me servirebbe a capire meglio anche un'epoca, ma sicuramente chi conosce i fumetti può comprenderlo appieno, gli altri potrebbero usarlo come strada per arrivare ad alcuni capolavori disegnati.

Io ve lo consiglio comunque, unico lato negativo è che la casa editrice l'ha fatto uscire con le pagine ancora attaccate in alto, ma come si fa?

Tutto sommato costa anche parecchio...

Tyler Hill says

A brief summary:

Miller: "Comics have always been such an outlaw medium."

Eisner: "Well, Frank, it's a little more complex than that."

In recent years, Miller has tended to come off as a parody of himself, but I have to give him credit for keeping Eisner talking and making for an interesting discussion. Honestly, some chapters drag at times, and I feel like both creators dwell on their pet topics a little too much. But, when it's interesting, it's very interesting. And, it's worth listening to both their takes on the comic industries past, present and potential future. Definitely a recommended read for fans of either creator and aspiring comic creators.

Lisa Feld says

I've reread this a number of times, and I continue to enjoy it and find insights about the craft, business, and history of comics here. It's a conversation, over the course of several days, between longtime friends and colleagues Will Eisner (who created one of the first superhero comics in the 1930s, ushered in a new chapter for comics through his graphic novel *A Contract with God* in 1978, and continued creating comics until his death in 2005) and Frank Miller (who revitalized *Daredevil* and *Batman*, became a leader in the fight for creators' rights, and was acclaimed for his gritty approach to *Sin City*). The conversation ranges from how often they wash their brushes to the complex relationship between creators, publishers and readers and how it plays out in issues of censorship, exploitation, and storytelling. Miller describes pounding out a huge chapter of *Sin City* in a creative fever pitch. Eisner remembers working with the wild personalities who shaped the early comics industry. Eisner's perspective is particularly fascinating because he's been an independent creator, a boss, and an employee, and has been pushing the limits of what kinds of stories the medium can tell through some of the worst censorship and wildest experimentation of the twentieth century. So when he talks about contracts, for example, he's been the creator worrying about losing rights to his character, but he's also been the one setting salaries and howling at a late or sloppy artist who has thrown off a production schedule. It's also nifty to see a firebrand like Miller wanting respect and recognition from Eisner: no matter how badass we are, we all fanboy over someone.

The conversation format brings out elements that I don't think a solo book by either would have explored as well: while the two are in agreement on some issues, they tell different kinds of stories and are of two vastly different generations, and Eisner often questions Miller, "How have things changed for young creators?" or "That statement feels more rooted in your experience than in absolute truth, how do you account for X?" What's surprising is that neither of them has any clue how the internet was already transforming their field in 2005, let alone the changes that have occurred in the decade since, which makes some of their advice for breaking in feel more like a time capsule than a handbook. But the back-and-forth is delightful, and their insights into their craft and the history they've experienced (and shaped) make this a valuable read for anyone interested in reading or making comics.
