DYNAMITE PROUDLY PRESENTS

MASTERS OF SPANISH COMIC BOOK ART

WRITTEN BY DAVID ROACH

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WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY **DAVID ROACH**

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Dedicated to my friend and Mentor Luis García Mozos, and to all the great Spanish artists who have inspired me as fan, writer and artist over the decades.

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FOREWORD

BY DAVID ROACH

LIKE SO MANY FANS, MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF A WARREN magazine were a mixture of awe, wonder and astonishment, along with a certain frisson of excitement at the tasting of forbidden fruit. My first (and no, you never forget your first) issue was *Creepy* 92 which it turns out was a particularly well selected collection of strips from the previous year or two, with a roll call of artists which still impresses today: Neal Adams, Alex Toth, Bernie Wrightson, Russ Heath, Wally Wood, and John Severin. Two names, however, were new to me: Luis Bermejo and Auraleón though their work evoked wildly differing responses in me. Bermejo's style was immediately familiar, even if his name wasn't. Along with so many British boys of my generation, I had been raised on a diet of war comics which were often drawn by Bermejo, or by studio members working very much in the same visual tradition, so my reaction was a sense of surprised recognition. On the other hand Auraleón's work seemed utterly alien to me, with its visually dense patina of scratches and tones. Confusingly, it was both somewhat ugly but also astonishingly accomplished and seemingly owed nothing to the established schools of comic art as I understood them. Did I even like it? I wasn't at all sure.

My next encounter with a Warren title was *Vampirella* 66 and there all doubts disappeared. It was a mostly Spanish line-up with beautiful art by Bermejo again, José Ortiz (another artist I recognized from my younger days), Ramon Torrents, and, most impressively of all, cover painter Enrich and Vampi artist José "Pepe" González. I know my first reaction on seeing González's work was that I had no idea anyone could draw that well, and my second was that I absolutely had to find more of it. But again, there was this unexpected feeling of familiarity, that somehow González and Torrents looked familiar, not unlike, in fact, the style that so many British girls' comics had been drawn in as I was growing up. Over the next few years I became a devoted fan and searched out both current and back issues of the whole Warren line wherever I could, until 1983 when inexplicably everything just stopped. By that point a lot of Warren's regular Spanish artists had already left but even so there was still a sense that a whole generation of unique talents had suddenly disappeared. And as it turned out, for an English speaking audience that is exactly what had happened. Very few of these artists would ever appear in American comics again and creators who were always somewhat mysterious and unknowable disappeared like wisps of smoke into the ether.

Like many Brits in the '70s and '80s my family often vacationed in Spain, and for a Warren obsessive like myself part of their attraction was the chance to sample the local comics there. Perplexingly, however, the shelves weren't bulging with the brilliantly drawn comics of my imagination. Instead, what I found were humor titles aimed at the very young, repackaged Marvel comics, and Garbo's line of Warren reprints: *Rufus, Vampus, The Spirit,* and *Vampirella.*

Enrich, *Vampirella 66.* Original cover artwork courtesy of Piers Casimir.

It didn't add up; where were all the artists? Soon after Warren's demise in 1983 I came across a copy of a beautifully drawn '60s British romance title called *Valentine* which including a strip that looked extraordinarily like the work of Pepe González. In fact it was González, and this discovery set me reaching back in time, piecing together the story of precisely which comics had been published in Britain and who had drawn them; something that was very much uncharted territory back then. Now, some 30 years of collecting later, I have established that Spanish artists had been active in Britain as far back as 1954, and were working even earlier than that in France. Before and after their decade of visibility in the United States, they were the cornerstones of the publishing industries of Britain, Germany, and Sweden; and were active across the whole of Europe, and beyond. Piece by piece, and country by country, the story of Spain's' Golden generation of artists has come together, revealing the picture of a great artistic diaspora whose artists literally drew for publishers the world over. It is the story of an evolving, unique artistic aesthetic, of ambitious and warring art agencies, of visionary, imaginative, eccentric talents and of an era when comics and illustration embraced a new, mature audience.

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CHAPTER 01

BEGINNINGS

IN ITS INFANCY THE COMICS MEDIUM WAS IRREPRESSIBLE, bursting into life like new shoots in spring. The pattern in Spain closely followed that of America, Britain, and Italy with the earliest visual narratives emerging in humor magazines around the turn of the 20th Century. Titles like *Blanco y Negro* and *Gente Menuda* in Madrid were among the first to showcase this new medium. These earliest strips would typically feature multiple pictures, with or without panel borders, with text running along the bottom of each picture, very much in the British comic tradition. Most of the important early humor titles were published in Barcelona, Including several produced in the Catalan language by Baguna and Cornet: *Patufet* (in 1904), *Mondial Humour* (1904), and *Virolet* (1922) all of which mixed strips with text features and illustrations. The first all-comic title was the short lived tabloid *Dominguin* published in 1915, which was stylistically influenced by American Sunday comic strips. Far more significant was the creation of *TBO* in 1917 by Arturo Suarez and Editorial Buigas which became Spain's longest running comic, lasting an astonishing 66 years. In fact, the title became so synonymous with the comics medium that it leant its name to the art form and to this day comics in Spain are known as Tebeos.

Initially, *TBO* closely followed the British model, right down to strips about jolly tramps like the first British comic strip *Weary Willie and Tired Tim*. The artist most closely associated with the comic was Ricard Opisso who drew many of its covers and even designed the comic's logo. Stylistically, he mirrored the elongated, linear style of the British pioneer Tom Browne, but like Browne there was much more to his talents than just humorous strips. Opisso was Spanish (or more accurately Catalonian) comics' first great master with several different styles and a fascinating life. He started work as an apprentice to the visionary Art Nouveau architect Antoni Gaudi at the age of 12 and later mixed in the same circles as Pablo Picasso. As a humorist he appeared in all the most important early magazines including *¡Cu-cut!*, *Patufet*, *Pocholo*, *Choulto*, and the comics *Dominguin* and *Chicos*. However, under the pseudonym Bigre in the teens and twenties he was also a prolific cover artist for numerous risqué periodicals such as *Eva*, *KDT*, *Biblioteca Venus*, *Flirt*, and *Papitu*. Another altogether different speciality was his chaotically vibrant, impossibly detailed depictions of Barcelona street life for *TBO*. These wonderfully evocative tableaux were rendered in a confident linear style which hints at the deco stylings of the '20s. During the Civil War Opisso was brought in by the Republican government as a poster artist and also exhibited his paintings in galleries. However, even after the Nationalist victory and the resultant reprisals he remained a much loved creator in *TBO* and elsewhere until his death at the age of 86 in 1966.

Apel•les Mestres, Blanco Y Negro, 1904.

Another key figure in early comics was fellow Barcelona resident Joan Junceda whose elegant artwork regularly appeared in *Dominguin*, *Papitu*, *Virolet*, and *Patufet*. Junceda's work spanned the divide between Victorian decoration and Flapper era minimalism. His humorous illustrations could be delineated with a single line and an instinctive use of patterns much like the artist William Heath Robinson. By contrast, his book illustrations could be a riot of crosshatched pen work evoking Mervyn Peake at his most feverishly intense. An early follower of Junceda was Xirinius, (Jaime Juez, 1906 to 2002), whose long career astonishingly ranged from drawing for *Patufet* at 17, to darkly troubling horror strips for Skywald's American horror magazines in the 1970s, and girls comics in the '80s. As a member of the Union of Professional artists in the '30s Xirinius campaigned for ownership of intellectual properties and royalties on reprints; but after the war, because the pen name Xirinius was so associated with the antifascist struggle, he had to use his real name for the next few decades.

Emilio Freixas, original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

Throughout the '20s and '30s the demand for comics grew to include further humour titles such as *Pulgarcito* in 1923 (the first entry into the market for future comics giant Bruguera), *Rataplan*, *Pocholo*, *Charlot;* and in 1935, *Mickey* from Editorial Molino. The lavishly colored *Mickey* title mixed Walt Disney strips, Spanish-drawn serials, and reprints of American strips such as *Terry and the Pirates* and *Jungle Jim* which provided

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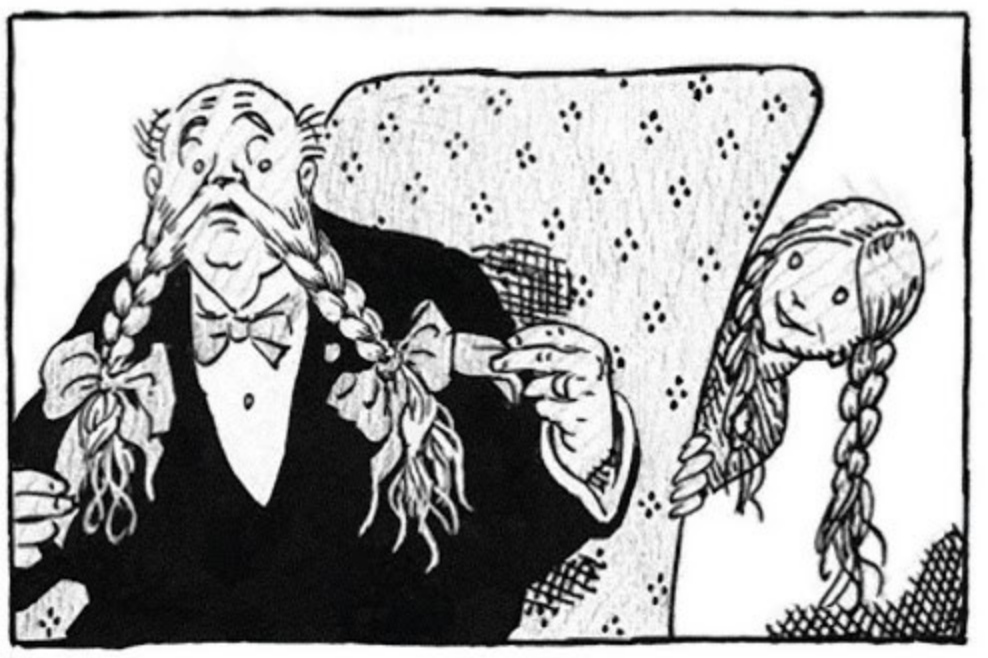
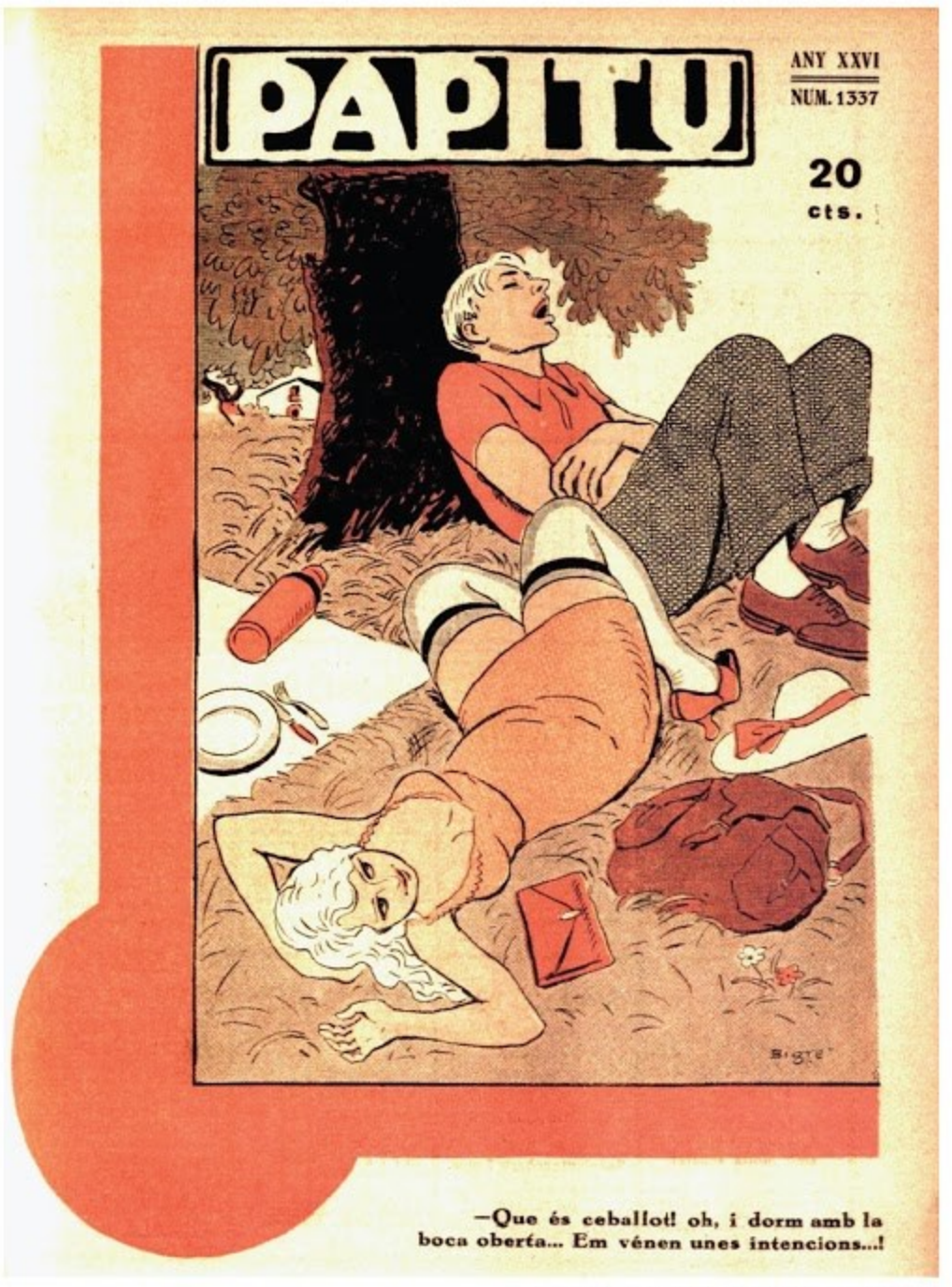
Ricard Opisso, *TBO Almanaque* (Buigas), 1920.



Joan Junceda, original artwork



Ricard Opisso, *Papitu v1337,* 1934.

templates for the emerging home-grown adventure genre. Xirinius was one of the local talents providing illustrations for *Mickey*, as was Riera Rojas, whose well-crafted *Buffalo Bill* and *Peter Jones* strips were among the best of the pre-war adventure series in Spain. Emilio Friexas was yet another contributor to *Mickey* providing story illustrations and adaptations of literary works from Jules Verne, Jonathan Swift, and Rafael Sabatini; but whereas Rojas drew very much in the Alex Raymond model, Friexas came from an entirely different tradition. Freixas was born in 1899 and he came to comics in the '30s after establishing himself as a highly accomplished and refined illustrator for the magazine *Lecturas*, an association that lasted well into the '50s. His early comics work in *Mickey* and *Pocholo* was similarly elegant with a decorative romanticism that was quite different to the vibrant primitivism of his peers. Friexas also illustrated books where his restrained precision was perfect for the fairy tales he was often assigned. After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) he adopted a more dynamic American-influenced style on strips like *El Capitan Mysterio* and *Los Dragones Del Tibet* for Chicos. He also created a number of instruction books on how to draw comics and is often referred to as the father of Spanish comics, though seemingly few artists were stylistically directly influenced by him.

As has been alluded to above, the Civil War created a terrible schism in Spain which took decades to recover from and had a profound influence on the direction of publishing in the country. The spark of war was struck in 1936 when a right wing coalition led by the army mounted a coup against the newly elected Republican government. The Republicans countered with an uneasy alliance of Socialist, Communist, Anarchist and Liberal groups, along with the international

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Ricard Opisso, *TBo illustration,* 1920s.

brigade of 32,000 foreign volunteers. The rebels, consisting of military, Falangist (Fascist), Catholic, and Monarchist groups, were able to draw upon support from like-minded governments including Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and led by the brutal General Francisco Franco, eventually overpowered the Republicans. In March 1939 first Catalonia and then Madrid fell to the Nationalists and the country began decades of totalitarian rule under Franco, which only came to an end with his death in 1975. In the immediate aftermath of the war many Republicans fled to France, a quarter of a million citizens were imprisoned with at least 30,000 executed, and the national identities of the Basque and Catalan provinces were suppressed.

It is clearly a minor footnote to the conflict but it is worth mentioning that throughout the conflict the two sides produced their own comics in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the nation's youth. Two factions of the nationalist rebels each started their own comics in 1936: *Flechas* and *Pelayos* which were then amalgamated into the title *Flechas y Pelayos* two years later and which would run until 1949. These early comics were blatantly propagandist, virulently anti-communist, and crudely executed.

Joan Junceda, *Treasure Island,* 1922.

On the Republican side, Bruguera (under the El Gato Negro imprint) published the much more fun *Camaradas* which lasted for 33 issues. An altogether more bizarre Republican comic was *El Pionero* which appeared for 10 issues in 1937. The cover feature was Popeye, but it was a Popeye re-imagined by the volunteer fighter Ugarte as a Mexican Marxist who travels to Spain to wipe out fascism and save the Republic. In real life, of course, the Republic fell and in an ironically symbolic move the real, American *Popeye* strip began appearing in the victorious *Flechas y Pelayos*. The impact of life under the oppressive new regime on Spanish publishers and artists of was both financial and cultural; Spain remained a poor country throughout Franco's reign, resulting in comics which were often small, poorly printed and low paid, which in turn inspired a generation of artists to look for work abroad. Culturally, the regime enforced strict censorship and a promotion of family, Catholic and Conservative values resulting in a timid and unadventurous publishing industry. However, despite this, the comic community regrouped, flourished amid adversity, nurtured a succession of talented inspired creators and began the search for a new identity; a style that was uniquely Spanish.

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CHAPTER 02

The Comics

Spanish comics, and Spanish comic art, came of age in the '40s and '50s. It was an era where publishers and genres came to maturity and the shape and particular flavor of the Spanish comics industry was formed. It was also a period when most of the key figures in the nation's comics first entered the field and their styles, directions, and individuality were first established. Significantly, for most of this time the agencies who were to have such a profound impact on the lives and careers of its artists, had yet to emerge; so it was the last time Spain was able to enjoy most of its greatest talents working for the domestic market. However, as a portend of things to come, by 1951 the nation's finest comic artist Jesús Blasco had already left for France.

Each country has its own grand masters of comics, artists whose drawing ability, innovation, and sheer talent molds the artform in their own image. In America, the key figures were comic strip pioneers Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, and Milton Caniff; In France and Belgium it was Hergé; In the UK Frank Hampson and Frank Bellamy; Galep in Italy; Francisco Coching in the Philippines, and Osamu Tezuka in

Jesus Blacso, *Chicos*

Francisco Ibanez, *Mortadelo Y Filemon.*
Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

Japan. The father of Spanish comics was Jesús Blasco; an enormously gifted draughtsman with a gift for dramatic staging and energetic storytelling that made him in great demand across Europe. By 1950 Blasco had emerged as the complete artist, working in a highly realistic style, but with the breadth of vision to tackle any genre from Adventure to Romance and even Humour. Spanish adventure comics were the dominant genre in the '50s, but were born in the 40s and while most were somewhat crude and simplistic Blasco's work was the exception.

While still in his teens, Jesús Blasco had spent the war as a Republican radio operator and after the Francoist victory he fled to the relative safety of a French refugee camp. In 1940 publisher Conseuelo Gil convinced him to return home to Barcelona to work on her boys' comic *Chicos* where his first creation was the iconic *Cuto*, which would run until 1951. Cuto was a boy adventurer, very much in the tradition of Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates*, whose thrilling journeys took him as far afield as the Arab world, the Orient, and

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Boixcar, *Hazañas Bélicas 118* (Toray) 1954.

America's Wild West. As the strip evolved, Blasco's art grew ever more realistic and dramatic; a combination of Raymond's classical realism and Caniff's cinematic storytelling which inspired a generation of followers. In truth, Blasco had a polish and sophistication that was far beyond most of his peers and it was perhaps no surprise when he became one of the first artists to work for the more lucrative markets in France and the UK. *Chicos* was joined in 1941 by an equally successful girls counterpart; *Mis Chicas*, also drawn by Blasco (and his siblings), but they proved to be Gil's only successes. Instead, the domestic scene at this time was dominated by several big publishing houses and none were bigger than Barcelona's Bruguera.

Bruguera's flagship title in the post-war era was *Pulgarcito*, a revival of their first comic, with the new version running from 1946 to 1981. As before, *Pulgarcito* was dominated by humor strips and their line-up of creators such as Cifré, Manuel Vázquez, Peñarroya, and Escobar very much created the classic Spanish humor style. This was an approach that owed more to the French school of humorous comic art than the American one; a stylized, simplified approach with an emphasis on slapstick and caricature, embellished with expressive, cursive brush strokes. The most successful Spanish humor strip made its debut in *Pulgarcito* in 1958: *Mortadelo y Filemon*, a pair of extraordinary (and in one case super-powered) P.I.'s, created by Francisco Ibanez. The feature became a phenomenon spawning its own spin-off comic in 1972, vast amounts of merchandise, cartoon series' and numerous foreign editions. It remains in print and is undoubtedly one of the key Spanish strips.

Away from humor there was still room for more serious features in *Pulgarcito* such as Antonio Bosch Penalva's *Silver Roy* (at various times a jungle strip and Spain's first superhero feature) and Eugenio Giner's *Inspector Dan*, a well-crafted crime series set in mysterious, fog shrouded London. Brugeura's best loved adventure strip, however, was the medieval *Capitan Trueno,* written by the prolific Victor Mora and drawn first by Ambros and later by Franc Fuentes Man (Francisco Fuentes Manuel) and Angel Pardo. Much of Bruguera's output in the latter part of the '50s was directed at girls (such as *Sissi*) and a more cultivated, middle class readership (the many classic books the company delighted in adapting) which reflected its conservative outlook. Government censorship was oppressive and all-encompassing so inevitably all publishers were to a degree restricted in what they felt they could produce. The result was broad humor, fairy tales for girls, and escapism for the boys.

Each publisher had its own identity, specialist genres, and key creators. Toray was formed in Barcelona in 1945 and was initially very much identified with somewhat anodyne comics for girls such as *Azucena* and *Alicia*. But in 1948 it diversified into a new genre, war comics, with *Hazanas Belicas* which ran for 323 issues, mostly drawn by Guillermo Sánchez Boix, (better known as Boixcar, as he always signed his work). Perhaps wisely, *Hazanas Belicas* was set in the Second World War, rather than the more divisive Civil War, demonizing the defeated Nazis and Japanese who were, inconveniently, past allies of the similarly fascistic Franco regime. Boixcar soon established himself as the natural successor to Blasco as Spain's top adventure artist with a slickly polished and ultra-detailed art style that was far more accomplished than any of his peers. Most Spanish artists of the era were clearly in thrall to American creators, particularly the trinity of Raymond, Caniff, and Foster, but Boixcar was perhaps closer to the slicker second wave of strip artists like Dan Barry and Leonard Starr, though with an obsessively intricate inking style all his own. Inevitably, he was among the first wave of Spanish artists to make an impact in the UK but his tragic death in 1964, at the age of 47, robbed the nation of one its greatest stars.

As comic books established themselves as a proven, financially viable medium it was inevitable that other publishing houses would take notice. Valenciana (based, as the name suggests, in Valencia) was formed in 1941 as a book and magazine publisher but soon diversified into comics. Its first hit was *Roberto Alcazar y Pedrin* created by Eduardo Vano in 1941 about a young reporter and his friend, a 14 year old stowaway, which ran for an extraordinary 35 years. The intrepid pair's somewhat fanciful encounters with monsters and bizarre creatures were drawn in a functional, if uninspired, style whose appeal is hard to appreciate with modern eyes. Valenciana's next success appears even harder to understand: *El Guerrero Del Antifaz*, a Spanish knight sworn to defeat the ruthless Ali Khan, which was published from 1944-1966. Its artist, Manuel Gago, was highly influential in establishing what came to be known as the Valencia school though by any standards his artwork was crude and unpolished.

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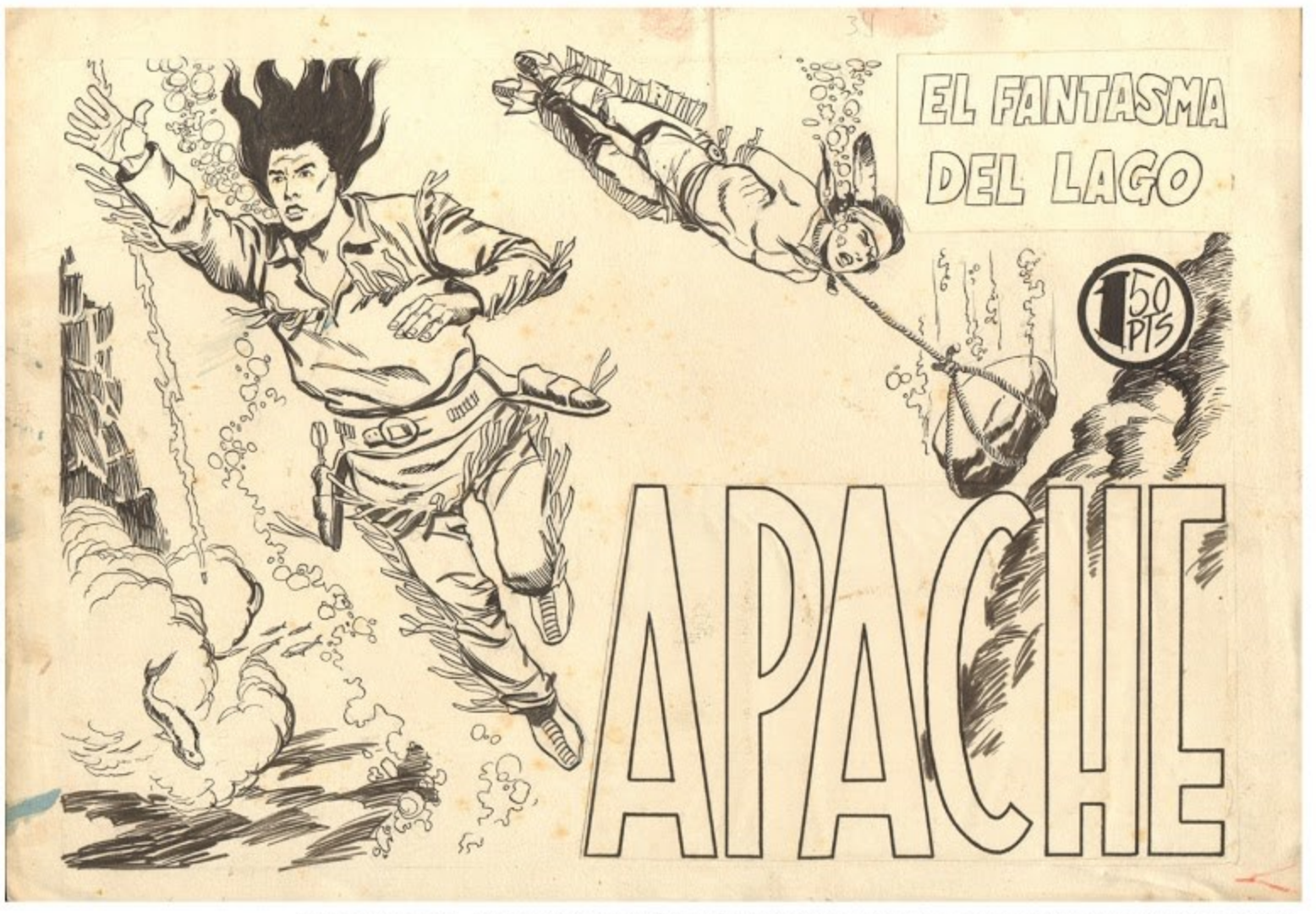
Perhaps in contrast to the pedestrian Vano his work possessed a rough-hewn vitality, and that was certainly a feature of the artists who followed in his footsteps.

In 1951, at the height of his success Manuel Gago joined up with fellow artist Miguel Quesada to form the publishing house Editorial Maga which lasted for a very respectable 15 years (though interestingly, throughout this time he continued drawing *Guerero Del Antifaz* for Valenciana). Maga's output was resolutely aimed at young boys with a flood of titles in the jungle, western, crime and historical adventure genres that had proved so popular at Valenciana, mostly written by Quesada's prolific brother Pedro. Maga's trump card, however, was its artists. José Ortiz came to prominence on Maga's crime feature *Dan Barry* (no connection to the artist!) in 1954 and even in his earliest strips his superior drawing ability and energetic rendering were obvious. The Tarzan-like *Pantera Negra* (1956-1964) was initially drawn by Ortiz and then taken over by Quesada, another gifted draughtsman with a wonderfully controlled brush style. Later in the decade, Luis Bermejo, who had started out in comics assisting Gago, moved from Madrid to draw Maga's *Rogue Brio* and *Apache*. Bermejo epitomized the Valencia school at its best with his muscular, powerful drawing rendered in hard-edged gritty brush strokes, draped in ominous shadows. He was another early pioneer in the British market, initially through A.L.I. and then, joined by Ortiz, Quesada, and others, through a lengthy association with Bardon.

Bermejo had previously been a key mover in the Madrid art scene after moving there in 1951 and linking up with the local publisher Rollan. The company had been formed two years earlier as a paperback publisher and moved over into comics in 1951. Their first release proved to be their most successful, *Aventuras del F.B.I.* powerfully drawn by Bermejo in a style reminiscent of Alex Raymond's *Secret Agent X-9*. Rollan's other major success of the '50s was the western *Mendoza Colt*, elegantly drawn by Martin Salvador who typified the Madrid style. Other notable Madrid artists included José Laffond, Zata, José Bielsa, Jose Garcia Pizarro, José Carlos, Julio Montañes and Roberto Casarrubio, many of whom worked for Rollan or Bruguera.

The Madrid style was notable for its quiet realism, favoring good drawing and carefully observed backgrounds over the more exuberant expressionism of the Valencia group. This was particularly true of Zata's artwork which had a maturity and exquisite draughtsmanship which was years ahead of his peers and could happily have appeared in any American newspaper.

Zata suffered from not being closely associated with any memorable character and in many ways the early Spanish comics scene was more character led than based on the personal appeal of their creators. One clear example was *El Coyote* published by the Barcelona based Ediciones Cliper from 1947-1953. *El Coyote* had



Luis Bermejo, *Apache 27* and *34* (Maga) 1959. Original cover artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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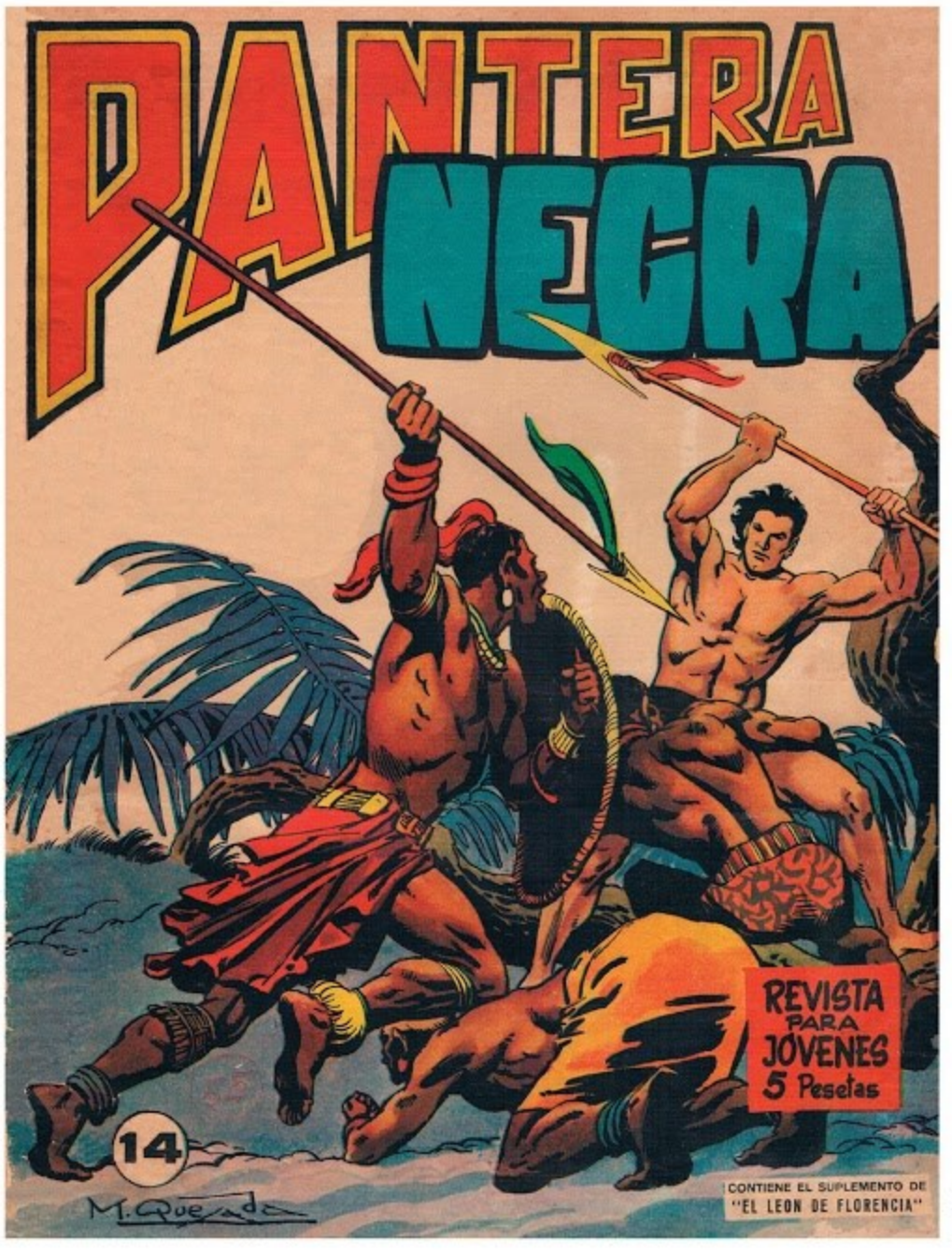
Manuel Gago. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.



Miquel Quesada, *Pantera Negra 14* (Maga).
Image courtesy of Miguel Quesada

first gained a following through a series of almost 200 paperbacks which began appearing in 1944, before being adapted for comics by their author José Mallorqui. El Coyote was essentially Zorro, complete with mask and giant Sombrero; but however unoriginal, the concept clearly resonated with its Spanish audience. Artist Francisco Batet provided artwork that was lively though not enormously accomplished, but despite this the character went on to appear in four films and retains a certain iconographic appeal in the Spanish psyche. Cliper's other big success was the girls comic *Florita* which boasted altogether more aesthetically pleasing artwork by Vicente Roso. His style was beguilingly languid with a highly accomplished technique that was not obviously part of any particular school. Looking at the '50s as a whole it was a decade that saw the emergence of many of Spain's leading artists and the beginnings of a style that could be called definitively Spanish. With the exception of Jesús Blasco however, the predominant artistic influences on the era were overwhelmingly American and indeed many of the best American strips such as *Tarzan* and *Flash Gordon* were being repackaged in Spain by the Publisher Hispano-Americana. More individualistic talents such as Roso, Zata and Boixcar stand out for their superior abilities and it was not until the '60s and '70s that a fully Spanish sensibility was born, but the foundations for that identity were unquestionably laid in the '50s.

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CHAPTER 03

THE AGENCIES

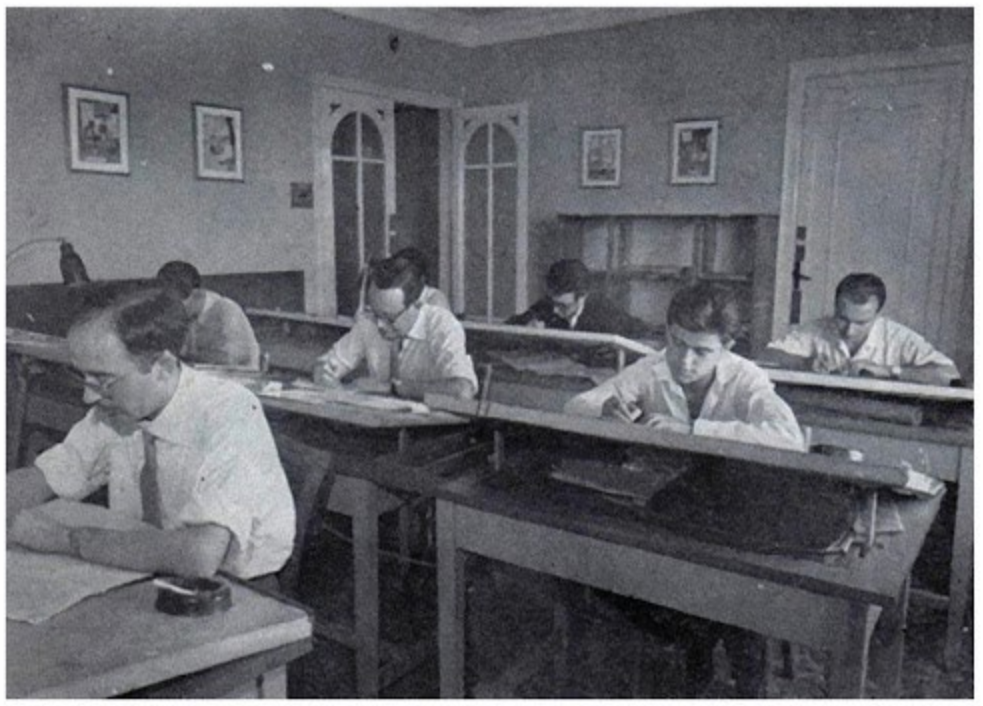
THE 1950S WAS A KEY DECADE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF Spanish comics, not only for the growth of publishers, but also because of the emergence of art agencies which would have such a profound effect on the lives of its artists. The first truly international studio was Selecciones Ilustradas created by one of the era's most forward thinking artists, Josép Toutain. In the early '50s Toutain's pared back, bold, noir-esque drawing had appeared in comics from *Toray* and *Galerias Precioas* — whose eponymous comic was running his crime series *Sylvia Milones*. Toutain had also worked at Ediciones Cliper where he became friendly with artists José María Miralles and Francisco Hidalgo. In 1952 Hidalgo moved to Paris looking for better paid work and his success encouraged Toutain to do the same. Toutain discovered a publishing scene in Paris desperate for talent so on his return to Barcelona in 1953 he gathered together a small studio to handle the workload. His initial artists were Miralles, Francisco Cueto and Rafael López Esp. All were still in their teens and Toutain himself was only 21; but together, with help from Antonio Arnau of Toray, Selecciones Ilustradas (or S.I. for short) was born.

In 1956 the agency became a more professional entity, moving into a pair of top floor apartments in an Art Deco building on the corner of Avenida Diagonal and Paseo de San Juan in the center of Barcelona. The agency initially concentrated on work for the French and Spanish markets but by 1957 it was bombarded with work from the UK and quickly assembled a substantial workforce to cope with the demand. Some, like Jordi Longaron, Joan Marti, and Florenci Clavé were already established artists but most were young, often barely out of school. S.I.'s young workforce included Félix Mas, Josep Maria Beà, Fernando Fernández, Domingo, Enrique Montserrat, Ramon Torrents, Daniel Garcia, and Antonio Romero. As the company grew, its workforce expanded to include painters, translators, writers, a production department run by Marcel Miralles, and a syndication department (for selling S.I. owned strips like *Johnny Galaxia*), run by Manel Dominguez. With so many young people crammed into a small area the atmosphere was a mixture of intense creativity and crazed anarchy.

S.I. logo's.

Manel Dominguez remembers the studio's early days: "Selecciones Illustradas was a strange miracle. Perhaps (probably) inadvertently, Josép Toutain, intended only to create an agency, but at the same time nurtured an area of freedom. He opened a window that wiped clean the debased air of Francoism and conservatism that still filled the corners of the country and allowed in fresh ideas from France and the United Kingdom, replacing that moldy air that had filled our minds since we were born. Virtually all of us at who joined in this project were born after the end of the Spanish civil war. I entered S.I. in 1957 and by 1963 could speak French so Toutain paid for a train trip to Paris so I could visit an editor. It was an overnight journey, squeezed into a third-class carriage, and I had to pay for the hotel myself; but for me it was the realization of my first dream: to be in Paris. There were many others, perhaps more fortunate, who later travelled to London or New York. But it was not just travel. The records that we brought on these trips seemed to come almost from a time warp projected into the future; we listened three, four or five years before the rest of Spain. I often said to my colleagues, 'Do you realize that this is the only place in Spain where you can hear this music?'

"That was our first "cultural revolution". In those years, around 1963, one of the best customers of S.I. was England's Fleetway Publications, publisher of girls comics like *Valentine, Marilyn, Roxy, Mirabelle*, etc., who welcomed a new generation of Spanish artists who came to renew the old and classic style of its native artists. The editors regularly sent British magazines to Barcelona as reference for S.I.'s artists and I can perfectly remember the first of those publications to feature photos of the Beatles. Laughter, teasing, and insults rained down on those poor hairy boys...but after three months, almost all of us sported those same haircuts. It was the victory of freedom outside the gray mediocrity and self-absorption of the Spain of those years. When Toutain was home at S.I. it was a relative haven of peace. All of the artists (some still no more than children), sitting more or less in silence, drawing their various commissions and trying to finish as quickly as possible. But then suddenly a cry would sound out, an altercation occurred, the order was broken and fighting or laughter would break out. Let's put it clearly: underneath it all, S.I. was a madhouse where everyone gave vent to their instincts (some very basic). And when Toutain was not home because he had gone



Luis García Mozos (bottom right) working in Bruguera's studio.

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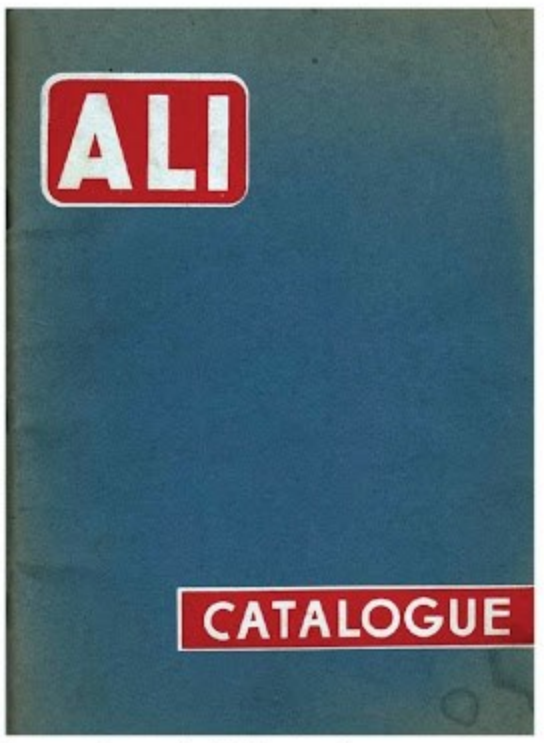

Images from the A.L.I. catalogue

bardon artwork

Bardon

Bardon logos.

away, the chaos was even greater. There are artists who remember their first visit to S.I., being greeted at the door by a famous illustrator in his underwear giving a piggy back to another artist!"

S.I.'s biggest competition in its early days came from Creaciones Editoriales, the art studio of publishing giant Bruguera, also based in Barcelona. Bruguera had formed an alliance with the Belgian agency A.L.I. to represent its artists abroad, initially in France; but from the mid-'50s on, also in the UK as well. A.L.I. had offices in Paris, London, Hamburg, and Brussells so had the well-established network of publishing connections that Bruguera needed. The relationship between the two agencies grew so close that in an early '60s A.L.I. brochure Bruguera's studio was described as "our Barcelona studio". Creaciones' roster of artists was every bit as impressive as S.I.'s as the fold-out brochure displayed: classic adventure artists like the Blasco brothers, José Bielsa, Manfred Sommer, Julio Vivas, and Roberto Casarrubio; polished romance artists Luis M. Roca, Juan Solé Puyal, Alberto Iraola, and the Romero brothers; painters Antonio Bosch Penalva, Ángel Badía Camps, and Antonio Bernal along with girls specialists Trini Tinture, Purita Campos, Sebastia Boada, and Paco Ortega who doubled as Artistic Director throughout the '60s.

But there was a marked difference in tone between S.I. and Creaciones as Juan Solé Puyal recalls, "In my opinion Selecciones Ilustradas included the most competitive talents, but Creaciones also housed a good group of artists. The difference was in the treatment of the artists, I felt it was happy and stimulating at S.I., and cold and authoritarian in C.E. (it's clear enough just looking at its studio which looked like a children's school). As most of us were young, our ambitions were to work for S.I, Josép Toutain was a former artist and knew how to earn the affection of his group." But Bruguera's somewhat patrician attitude towards its employees extended to money. One of the advantages of working for France or the UK was the enormous difference in the page rate, which was often as much as three times that of Spain. However, even after drawing his first strips for Britain, Solé noticed no pay increase, because, as he later learned, after C.E. and A.L.I. had taken their percentage of the fee, he was left with only 30%. Not surprisingly, he soon moved over to S.I. Throughout this time, artists, looking for better pay or more interesting work, often switched from agency to agency. Similarly, the best artists were often poached by rival agencies competing with each other for the top talent. The Spanish comics scene was centered around Barcelona, but there were enclaves of talent in other cities as well. In the early '60s Toutain visited Madrid where he signed up José Carlos and Martin Salvador, and enticed José Bielsa away from C.E.

The biggest concentration of creativity outside Barcelona was in Valencia, and the artists there formed the core of the last great Spanish agency to be formed, Bardon. As its name suggests Bardon (taking the Bar from Barcelona and the don from London) was conceived from the beginning as a joint British and Spanish operation but with the creative headquarters situated in Spain. "It all began in 1956. I was working as the editor of *Cowboy Picture Library* published by Amalgamated Press," said co-director Barry Coker "We were always on the lookout for good new artists and one day Jordi Macabich walked into the office. He had come to London with his wife Violeta looking for work and we were happy to oblige. Jordi and Violeta spent six months in London and I saw them frequently. Despite my limited Spanish we became firm friends. They suggested I call on them if I ever found myself in Barcelona. The following year I did indeed visit

Bardon promotional brochure, mid 60s

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José Ortiz and **Miguel Quesada** posing for a British war strip, early 1960s.
Image courtesy of Miguel Quesada

Barcelona and during the course of my stay, Macabich suggested I represent him and some of his artist friends just as other agents were doing. It was hard going at first, trying to persuade art editors of the merits of Spanish artists when London was brimful with British artists seeking work; but little by little, we began to make progress. Our first definite order (with Odhams Press) came in November 1957 and this is the date I have always regarded as the true beginning of Bardon. Soon we were expanding and seeking artists all over Spain, travelling frequently to Valencia and Madrid. We were mostly on good terms with the other agencies but were sorely pressed by the main Italian agency Creazioni D'Ami, who were extremely competitive and professional. But at the height of our success during the '70s and '80s we represented more than 70 artists."

S.I. might have had the romance market in Britain sewn up, but Bardon's Valencia group proved to be experts at adventure. The Valencia artists were centered around a studio on El Palleter Street which housed Luis Bermejo, Miguel Quesada, Vicente Ramos, José Ortiz, his brother Leopold, and their cousin Leopoldo Sanchez. The group shared a powerfully gritty, muscular style that was perfect for Britain's numerous War comics. Another group of Valencian artists mostly worked at home, including Juan González Alacreu, Emilio Fréjo, Alfredo Sanchis Cortés, Luis Arcas, and Navarro Costa; and these combined exquisite drawing ability with polished inking and (often) painting. This second group could handle anything from war to historical strips and thrived in the lavish British hard backed annual's and color titles like *The Eagle* and *Diana*. A Bardon brochure from the mid-'60s gives an indication of the breadth of the company's growth in just a few years; the Valencia artists are augmented by painters Longaron (poached from S.I.), Penalva and Noiquet, Top Barcelona artists like Torrents, Boada, and a young Jordi Bernet, cartoonists Rafart and Nadal, and even a smattering of British artists. Bardon would go on to sign up a number of the best British artists in the '70s including Dave Gibbons, Brian Bolland, and John M. Burns along with future Judge Dredd creator Carlos Ezquerra.

Bardon were competitive in several ways, not just their international reach which included Sweden and Germany, but also their commission rate which was usually only 20%. But inevitably throughout the '60s other agencies sprang up to feed the enormous workforce in Spain. In time, Bruguera split with A.L.I., launching Creaciones as a separate agency run from London by Luis Llorente which specialized in representing artists from Argentina as well as Spain. S.I.'s representative in the UK, Luis Ferraz, acrimoniously split with Barcelona in the early '60s to found his own agency called, confusingly, The Illustrated, taking the likes of Salvador and Bielsa with him. The venture ended badly with the breakaway agency owing money to various creators. Similarly, one of S.I.'s men in Germany, Alejandro Ortega, used his contacts there to form the much longer lasting Studio Ortega, later renamed Interpubli, to feed the vast pulp market there. Bardon were also hit by defections as the key Valencia artists were enticed away by D'Ami in 1968, and then a splinter grouping of Alacreu, Cortes, and Fréjo formed the Art Studium agency. Artists themselves could move at will, or even work for multiple agencies at the same time. Jesús Blasco was in such demand that he would sometimes represent himself directly, while the very best artists like Longaron, Penalva, and Camps would pick up commissions from multiple agencies simultaneously.

The last of the great agencies was formed by one of S.I.'s key administrators, Rafael Martinez and his wife Norma Kohnke, in 1977. Martinez had become frustrated as S.I. missed out on the rights to *Metal Hurlant*, which were bought up by Nueva Frontera, and felt he could do better. So while Norma functioned primarily as an agency, it was always motivated by an interest in publishing, a clear sign of the direction Spain would go in in the '80s. Norma immediately made a number of impressive signings including such S.I. stalwarts as Pepe González, Enrich, Sanjulián and Miralles along with Sommer, Vicente Segrelles, and Prieto Muriano. As a publishing house, it would go on to outlast all its rivals, but there was an awful lot of art to be created and sold before we get to that point.

Martin Salvador and **Luis Bermejo** in London 1961.
Image courtesy of Miguel Quesada.

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CHAPTER 04

THE SPANISH IN BRITAIN

When Josép Toutain met with Mike Butterworth, the editor of *Valentine*, in 1957 it established a link between Selecciones Illustradas and British comics which transformed comic art in both countries. British comics were in the midst of an enormous expansion which had started with the relaxation of paper rationing in the late '40s. In 1950 three comics were created which revolutionized the publishing industry: the *Eagle* and *Cowboy* comics which between them effectively created a market for boys adventure comics and *Schoolfriend* which was the first significant British comic aimed specifically at girls. As the decade progressed publishers such as Amalgamated Press (A.P.), DC Thomson, Pearson, City, Hulton, Odhams, Micron, and numerous others published ever more titles in formats varying from large tabloid sized weeklies such as *Eagle, Girl and Express Weekly* to small, digest-sized monthlies such as *Thriller, Love Story, True Life,* and *War Picture Library*. Prior to the Second World War, British comics had been predominantly humorous titles, aimed mostly at young children, but the explosion

Jordi Longaron, *Valentine*. 1960.

José María Miralles, *Valentine*. 1958.

of adventure, girls, romance, war, sport, and western comics proved a challenge to the publishers. Simply put, there were not enough artists around to meet the insatiable demand for comics.

The answer to this problem came in 1954 when, out of the blue, an agent from the Belgian agency A.L.I. arranged a meeting with editors at Amalgamated (better known now by its later names of Fleetway and IPC). The agent was hoping to license A.L.I.'s star property *Tintin*, but Amalgamated staff were more interested in the samples he had from a different strip which was drawn by Jesús Blasco. Soon, Blasco, his brothers Alejandro and Adriano, and artists such as Julio Vivas and Francisco Hidalgo were drawing regularly for titles like *Comet* and *Sun*. A year later, the Italian agency Cosmopolitan initiated a trickle of Italian artists into the industry, which turned into a torrent when the rival D'Ami studio started working with Amalgamated. By the early '60s Britain had become the biggest comics producing country in the world with hundreds of titles appearing every week and a creative workforce which included some of the most important

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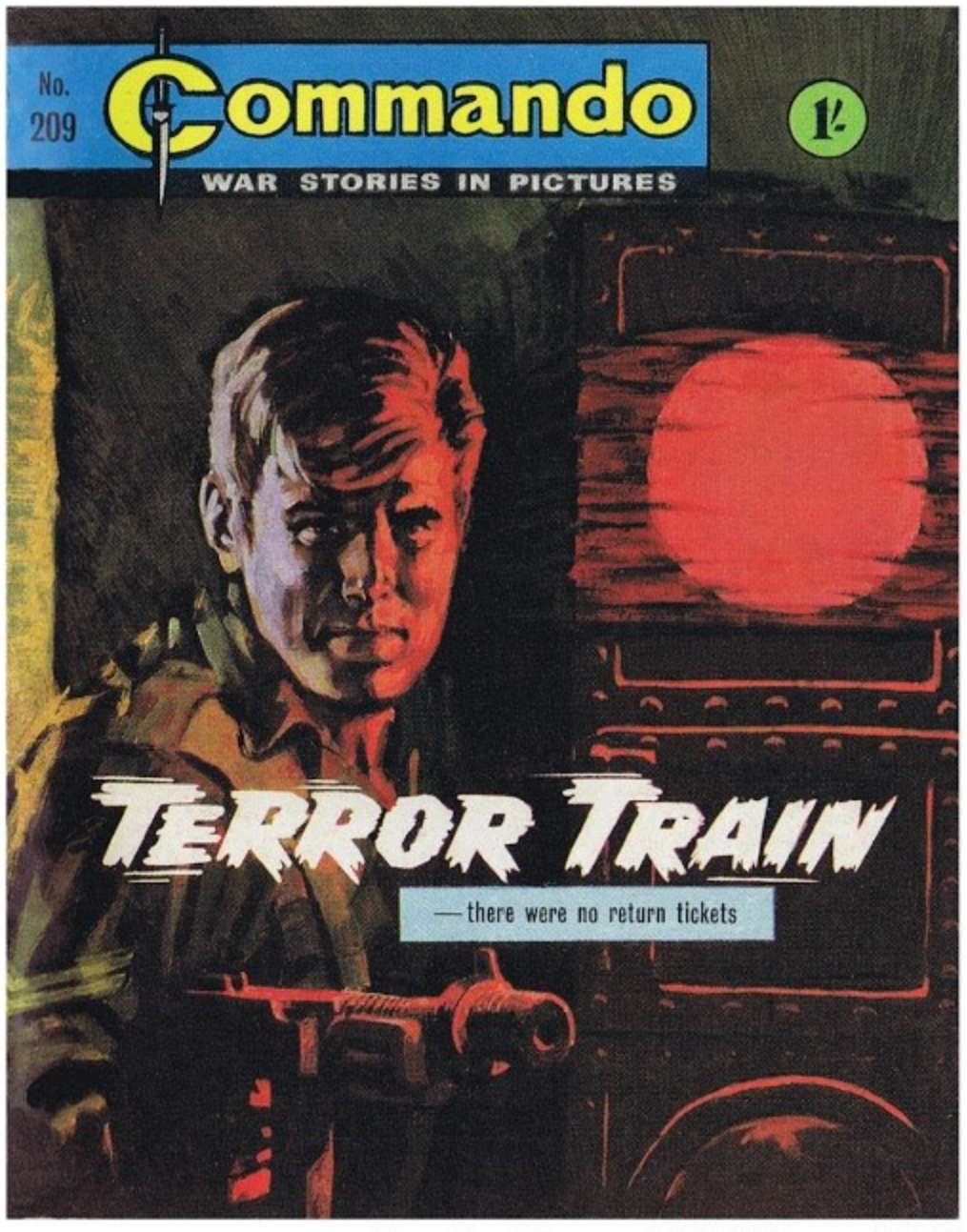
Pepe González, *Valentine*

artists in the world. British stars like Frank Hampson, Ron Embleton, Jim Holdaway, and Frank Bellamy were joined by such giants as Luis Bermejo, Víctor de la Fuente, and Jordi Penalva from Spain; Gino D'Antonio, Ferdinando Tacconi, and Hugo Pratt from Italy; and Solano Lopez, Alberto Breccia, and Arturo Del Castillo from Argentina. It was a golden era for the country.

As British editors became aware of the particular abilities of their new, international workforce, they developed a tendency to see their artists in a very specific way. The Italian and Argentinian artists were regarded as muscular, almost macho, artists and they were most often given War, historical or adventure strips to draw. By contrast, the Spanish approach was seen as much more stylish and decorative so they tended to be given romance strips and it was here that Josép Toutain and S.I. made their mark. Romance comics in the UK had started in 1952 with A.P.'s *Love Story Picture Library* and by 1957 it was one of the most popular genres in the country. Early issues had predominantly been drawn by veteran British artists in an uninspiringly static, old fashioned way, but they were gradually edged aside by the more contemporary-looking Italians such as Guido Buzzelli and Enrico Bagnoli. However, the samples that writer Mike Butterworth was shown were a revelation; attractive, modern and sophisticated artwork which absolutely reflected the emerging culture of the teenager.

Valentine was A.P.'s third romance weekly, joining *Marilyn* and *Roxy*, but under Butterworth and his wife Jenny (the comic's main writer) it was by far the most fresh and exciting. Within a few months of the first S.I. artists appearing in its pages the agency was providing most of *Valentine*'s artwork; and from 1958 to its closure in 1974, the comic was almost exclusively drawn by Spanish creators. Soon, *Marilyn* and *Roxy*, as well as *Love Story*, *True Life*, and *Famous Romance* began to hire artists from S.I. and by the early '60s they were dominating the industry from Pearson's *Mirabelle* to City's *Boyfriend* along with *Star Love*, *Romeo*, and *Jackie* from DC Thomson. This period also saw the slow decline in Italian artists to be replaced by yet more Spaniards. The recently formed Bardon agency found enormous success with its stable of talents from Valencia and artists like Luis Bermejo, José Ortiz, and Miguel Quesada were naturals for the vast number of boys war and adventure comics on the newsstands. A.L.I. for their part made an arrangement with Bruguera to represent their artists in the UK reasoning that if the British market was not interested in Franco-Belgian creators, it was apparently receptive to almost anybody from Spain. In fact, such was the demand



Lopez Espi, *Commando 209* (DC Thomson). 1966.

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for talent it is known that at least 385 Spanish artists worked in the UK, almost certainly outnumbering the British artists of that time, a quite extraordinary thought.

Throughout the '60s the dominant force in British comics was S.I., the studio had the best artists (a fact Bardon's co-owner Barry Coker has expressed on many occasions), drew the most strips and was the most forward looking and innovative. The first artists to make an impact in *Valentine* were Carlos Prunes, Florenci Clavé, Antonio Romero, José Garcia Pizarro, José María Miralles, and Jordi Longaron; and their elegant, detailed drawings had echoes of the great American strip artists such as Alex Raymond. However, this style gradually evolved into something that was utterly new and uniquely Spanish. As early as 1958 Longaron and Miralles were beginning to simplify their work, using bold, thick outlines, startling close ups, innovative layouts, and creative storytelling. By the early '60s this had become what we now think of as "the Spanish look"; innovative, sophisticated, modern looking artwork which caught the spirit of the swinging '60s. In fact, it is my belief that in some way this style anticipated the fashion of the '60s. S.I.'s girls with their big lips, elaborately rendered hair and large, heavily mascaraed eyes looked nothing like the typical British girl of the early '60s, but within a few years a whole generation of girls were trying to look this way.

The '60s was a period of enormous expansion for S.I. and soon more artists were flooding into British romance comics: Pepe González, Ramon Torrents, Julio Montañes, Josep Maria Beà, Ángel Badía Camps, Fernando Fernández, Julian Morote, Luis M. Roca, Daniel Garcia, Félix Mas, Victor Ramos, Esteban Maroto, Manfred Sommer, Domingo

Luis Bermejo, *Pike Mason, Boys World 27.* 1963.
Original artwork courtesy of Ron Tiner.

Jorge Nunez, *Super Library 12.* 1967.

Alvarez, and Luis García Mozos. Similarly A.L.I. found great success with Carlos Feixas, Juan Sole Puyal, José Bielsa, and Roberto Gonzalez Casarrubio, while Bardon's Jordi Franch Cubells, and brothers Jorge and Enrique Badia Romero were also immensely important artists in this period. It is no exaggeration to say that for generations of British readers the look of Romance comics was entirely Spanish, and it was a style that would endure until the early '80s. After Longaron and Miralles, probably the most important artist to draw for the UK was Pepe González whose ultra-realistic drawings of pretty girls set a new standard for the industry. Speaking in the '70s Mike Butterworth said that in his opinion, "never in the history of the comic world has an artist drawn such beautiful women as Pepe González".

Boys comics of the '60s were divided into three distinct types: glossy, often full color up-market tabloids such as *The Eagle, Boys World,* and *TV 21*; adventure, sports and humor-themed black and white weeklies like *Buster, Valiant, Lion, The Victor,* and *Wham*; and the many war digest titles such as *Commando, War, Battle,* and *Air Ace.* The king of the boys comics at this time was undoubtedly Jesús Blasco whose ultra-realistic artwork very much set the standard for the genre with his work on Valiant's *Steel Claw*. By contrast with S.I. many of Bardon's artists had the muscularity and grit necessary for A.P.'s War comics and their best talents proved every bit as adept at the genre as the Italians had. The glossies could have their pick of creators and very much monopolised the best British artists, but again Ortiz, Bermejo, Salvador, and Blasco proved to be their equals. Many of the same Spanish artists also found work at DC Thomson's *Commando* while other, perhaps less polished or eccentric, talents became regulars in the company's humbler weekly titles like *Victor, Hotspur* and *The Hornet* including Mattias Alonso, and a very young Jordi Bernet.

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Many of the Spanish artists, particularly at S.I., were extremely young; González, Garcia. and Beá were teenagers when they came to the agency, and their years working in the UK saw their styles evolve and mature. By the early '70s many had become tired of drawing romance stories day after day so when the chance came to work for Warren in America (of which more later), many jumped at the chance. But as the agency gradually turned its focus away from the UK others stepped in. Bardon consolidated its connection with DC Thomson, even to the extent of syndicating their strips across Europe. In 1970 it placed Jordi Longaron with the American *Friday Foster* newspaper strip. What's interesting is that the strip, which debuted in 1970, was the first American comic strip with a black female lead yet it was written by Jim Lawrence, a Caucasian from New Jersey with art by Longaron and later Frank Springer and Gray Morrow.

Bardon followed that up by positioning Enrique Badia Romero as Jim Holdaway's replacement on the legendary *Modesty Blaise* strip in the UK. Other British newspaper strips followed including Romero's own creation; the semi-clad barbarian *Axa* and the long running *George and Lynne* drawn by Josép Gual. By the '70s Bruguera had severed links with A.L.I. and was representing artists such as Purita Campos and Rodrigo Comos directly through its own Creaccione Agency. The newly formed Norma agency also targeted the teen market later in the decade, representing the popular girls comic artist Miguel Ángel Fuster Martínez. Campos and Fuster, along with Victor Ramos, Rafael Busóm Clúa, and Marika epitomized the lighter, more decorative style that typified girl's comics in the '70s, but by contrast the boys market was taking a turn in the opposite direction.

The most influential boys comic of the '70s was DC Thomson's *Warlord*, which first appeared in 1974, revolutionizing the industry with its longer stories and punchier, explosive artwork. In its wake came a slew of aggressive, increasingly violent boys comics: *Bullet* and *Crunch* from Thomson and *Battle* and *Action* from IPC (devised by writers Pat Mills and John Wagner). The touchstone artists of this particular movement were drawn from around the world; Mike White from the UK, Hortacio Altuna and Horacio Lalia from Argentina, and Spain's Ramon Sola all of whom shared a gritty, visceral art style, often employing the sort of textures and scratches that would define the Warren artists. *Action*'s violence, reflecting the social unease of the era, proved to be immensely controversial, resulting in a temporary cancellation, but its success spawned a science fiction based companion title: *2000 AD*, which hit the stands early in 1977. Carlos Ezquerra had been *Action*'s cover artist, and had drawn two of *Battle*'s most popular strips: *Rat Pack* and *Major Eazy*, so he was a logical choice to create the visuals for the new comic's lead strip *Judge Dredd*, written by John Wagner. Dredd was effectively a futuristic Dirty Harry, judge, jury and executioner; but what really made the strip was Ezquerra's dazzlingly vertiginous, organic city which suggested the kind of dystopian future not seen in British comics before. *Judge Dredd* took a while to capture the readers' attention but within a few months he became the most popular strip in the comic. Several decades later, still in print in *2000 AD* and his own spin-off monthly his position as British comics' most iconic creation seems assured.

Ezquerra moved back and forth between *Dredd*, his other great co-creation *Strontium Dog* (in 1978's short lived *Starlord*), and a number of other strips, but his style came to personify the new era of British comics; a mixture of European textures and rendering, with punchier American inspired dynamism. For at least its first decade *2000 AD* was a heady mix of young British talent and Spanish artists often taken from the girls' comics, including Jesús Redondo, Leopoldo Sanchez, Ramon Sola, Carlos Pino, José Casanovas, and Vicente Vañó Ibarra. While the new comics could be at times brutal and shocking, repeated attempts to devise an out and out horror comic for boys proved to be still born. However, the era did see the successful release a pair of girls horror comics — *Spellbound* from DC Thomson in 1976 and IPCs *Misty* (yet another Pat Mills creation) two years later. Both titles were highly attractive and dominated by Spanish talent. *Spellbound* included art by the Romero brothers (on the frothy SF strip *The Supercats*), Redondo, and Jordi Franch. For *Misty*, Mills asked the Barcelona artist Blas Gallego to bring together a group of creators which included Homero, José Canovas, Isidre Monés Pons, Juan Ariza, and María Barrera. Gallego's own art was dark, seductive and powerful, much like the comic itself which has inspired a keen fan base to this day.

The following decade proved to be immensely successful for *2000 AD*, but gradually the titles around it withered and died. The '80s' only successful launch was a revival of *Eagle*, fondly remembered today for the powerful work of the ever reliable José Ortiz. But while the British comics industry was atrophying, *2000 AD* itself was responsible for launching the careers of most of the great British stars who came over to American comics in the '80s and '90s. Their new approach to comics was to prove central in forming the more mature comics scene that exists in the US today. Regrettably, of the Spanish contingent, only Ezquerra found significant work in the U.S. (with DC, Dynamite. and Dark Horse) and even his impact has been minimal compared to his importance in the UK. But the continued vibrancy of his vision lives on in the subsequent generations of artists inspired by his ground-breaking art.

Antonio Bosch Penalva, *Mirabelle.* 1968

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CHAPTER 05

Comics for Girls

One genre which illustrates the way Britain and Spain influenced each other back and forth was that of comics aimed at younger girls. The first Spanish girls title appeared in 1920 and was called *BB* (from TBO publisher Buigas) which mixed strips with fiction and text. The first important all comic publication however, did not arrive until 1941 *with Mis Chicas* (My Girls), published by Consuelo Gil and conceived as a companion to her successful boys title *Chicos*. Like *Chicos* the lead strip in *Mis Chicas*, *Anita Diminuta*, was written and drawn by Jesús Blasco and was typically polished and imaginative. Anita's lengthy serials drew heavily upon myths and fairy tales in free-flowing narratives which Blasco effectively made up as he went along. Initially drawn while the artist was serving his national service, he sometimes had as little as two hours to spend drawing each episode though the quality of the artwork rarely reflected this. The imagination and simplicity of the stories was both born of a desire to reach a young readership, but also reflective of the oppressive political climate they were written under, something that would be typical of the next generation of girls comics.

Anita Diminuta ran until 1950 when *Mis Chicas'* format was changed to attract an older readership; but in its wake a whole industry emerged creating comics for young girls. Led by publishers such as Toray and Valenciana, this new generation of comics, with titles like *Cuentos De La Abuelita, Alicia, Mis Cuentos* and *Linda Florita* were highly decorative, but simplistic and saccharine. Drawn in a style seemingly derived from fairy tale books by a predominantly female group of artists such as Juli, Juanita and Carmen Barbara, these strips lacked the edge and underlying menace found in many of Blasco's strips. The fanciful stories offered a welcome escape from the poverty of their readers' surroundings and for their creators they were a safety net from the government's strict censorship. Following the creation of the Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1951, comics had come under direct scrutiny from the ruling Francoists and the

Vicente Roso, *Mireille 187.*

Manuel Brea, *Romantica 219.*

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following year saw the drafting of a list of prohibited themes and topics. In addition to the predictable list of portrayals of sex, violence, and the need for good to prevail over evil, the list of prohibitions was principally aimed at preserving the authority of the family unit, the state, and the Catholic Church. With even the vaguest hint of family unrest restricted it was almost inevitable that the comics of this period were so simplistic.

One bright spot in the '50s was *Florita* (1949-1960), published by Ediciones Cliper; a girls magazine which delighted in the effervescent artwork of Vicente Roso. The title mixed short light- hearted strips with text pages and cartoons in an attractive, fresh way. Florita herself was a fashionably dressed teenager, a stylish older sister for the comic's readers to aspire to; and Roso's graceful drawings effortlessly evoked an atmosphere of joyful, youthful exuberance.

Francesc Monjo, *Claro de Luna 395.*

Purita Campos, cover artwork for *Princess* 15th January 1972.

A French edition called *Mireille* was launched in 1953 and proved to be even more successful, with sales reaching 180,000 copies per issue by its second year. *Mireille* reprinted Roso's artwork, along with a few other select *Florita* strips, mixed with well-crafted British and French series, outliving its parent title by four years.

Back in Spain, the end of the decade saw two diverging approaches to the girls market, both aimed at the older reader. Bruguera's *Sissi* (1958-1967) offered escapist romances with our heroine inevitably falling for her Prince Charming followed by marriage and domestic bliss, all wrapped up in a few pages. Artwork by Antonio P. Carrillo and Albert Iraola meant that the package was suitably slick, and the comic became the biggest seller of the era; but the picture it presented to the nation's youth was stultifying and conventional. By contrast, Toray and Ibero offered their own romance lines, such as *Rosas Blancas, Claro De Luna,* and *Serenata*, which were more contemporary in feel.

Some of the best romance strips boasted art from S.I.'s rising stars such as Pepe González and José María Miralles; but as these artists grew more proficient, they inevitably found themselves in demand from the UK. Bruguera's response was the creation of *Celia* (1960–1970), its own version of the more mature British strips which featured 64-page stories, with a more contemporary, mature tone. Indeed the comic was subtitled Graphic Novels for Adults, using the term long before it was known in the United States. A more unique, home-grown alternative to the romances was a sort of action girl, personified by Mary Noticias, star of *Heroinas* (1962–1971) published by Ibero and drawn by Carmen Barbara. Barbara's bold, big eyed, cartoony drawing was typical of a uniquely Spanish style that also included Purita Campos, Maria Pascual, and Trini Tinture. It was an approach that did not find favor in the UK in the '60s but was to have a profound impact on European comics in the following decade.

In the early days of the Spanish sojourn into Britain, they were invariably typecast as romance and war artists, with the younger girls' titles almost exclusively the domain of home-grown artists. It is possible that editors felt the very specifically British domestic scenes, fashions, and urban landscapes might prove problematic for artists on the other side of Europe. But gradually this reluctance began to soften, particularly through Bardon's links with DC Thomson. By the mid-'60s Thomson titles like *Diana, Judy,* and *Bunty* were enlivened by classicists such as Juan Gonzalez Alacreu, Emilio Frego, and Agustin Navarro Costa proving that given the right reference they absolutely could bridge the geographical divide. Soon Creaciones artists such as Jesús Redondo, Edmond, Trini Tinture, Santiago Hernandez, and Rodrigo Comos began making inroads into Fleetway weeklies like *Princess Tina, June*, and Sally with their more free-flowing, energetic styles which quickly became the industry standard for the girls genre.

Throughout the 1970s, Fleetway launched a number of highly successful new girls weeklies including *Tammy, Jinty, Sandie, Melanie,* and the horror themed *Misty;* all of which were heavily packed with Spanish talent. Comos' effortlessly fluid style became something of a touchstone for these titles but it was Purita Campos, moving over from the romances, who was to become the most influential and successful Spanish artist in comics history. After years drawing for *Mirabelle* and *Valentine*, Campos was brought on to the creative team at *Princess Tina* in 1970 as the principal cover artist and her vibrant, bold style immediately chimed with the young audience. The comic itself was something of a trailblazer, starting life as *Tina*, audaciously launched in 1967 simultaneously across numerous European countries as the first truly international comic.

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Tina was conceived as a girls' action comic featuring western, science fiction, historical and crime strips, though disappointingly it was the domestic *Happy Days* (no relation to the TV show) strip that seemed to capture its readerships affections. Perhaps inevitably the title found a mixed reception in some countries but proved to be an enormous success in Holland selling 200,000 copies a week and where it is still published today. By 1971, *Tina* had merged with the much older *Princess* to form *Princess Tina* and had abandoned the adventure theme, but was looking for a new identity. The answer was an entirely new kind of strip called *Patty's World*, drawn by Campos and written by Phillip Douglas, which was light years away from the anodyne *Happy Days*. The new strip dealt with the real life problems of its teenage heroine Patty Lucas in a much more frank, realistic way than had ever been touched on before in British comics. Themes like the death of Patty's father, alcoholism, divorce, and unemployment rubbed shoulders with the more usual teenage fare of boys, school and growing up. Douglas had a finely tuned ear for the language of teenagers and Campos' art perfectly captured the changing fashions of the fast-moving decade.

In the UK, *Patty's World* outlived *Princess Tina*, moving on to several teen titles such as *Pink*, *Mates*, and *Girl*, running for 17 years until the publishers decided teenage girls weren't interested in comics any more. Elsewhere, *Patty's World* became a publishing phenomenon. In Spain, the strip was first reprinted in Bruguera's *Lily*, under the new title *Esther y su Mundo* (Esther and her world), where it's hard hitting themes were routinely censored. Nevertheless, it completely transformed Spanish girls comics; here at last was a heroine who was just like its readership, who shared their troubles and fears, but saw it through with humour and resilience. Esther strips were soon collected into her own monthly title and Campos' art became the industry standard, as it had in the UK. *Esther* became the biggest selling comic in its field and over the next decade similar teen strips such as *Emma* (by Trini), *Gina*, and *Jana* (both by Campos) followed in its wake until Bruguera's bankruptcy in 1985. More recently, in 2007, the entire *Esther* series was reprinted by Glenat Espana in 17 uncensored volumes, which in turn lead to an entirely new set of stories. The new series, revived by Campos and writer Carlos Portela, have been released as three graphic novels (with a fourth on its way) starring an adult, divorced Esther and her own teenage daughter Patty (in a nice nod to Esther's original British name) which met with great success and enormous media attention with Campos becoming a star once more.

When the Dutch got round to reprinting *Patty's World* (retitled Peggy's Wereldje) in their version of *Tina*, the reception from fans was just as rapturous. Campos was already the public face of Dutch *Tina* as its cover artist, but in 1975 she was called in to draw a strip specifically for its readers about a girl called Tina, which would run alongside *Peggy*. Tina was more independent than Peggy, with more fanciful stories featuring her as a sort of teen detective, and with the input of local writers it was more focused on portraying a specifically Dutch milieu which its readers could identify with. *Tina* the comic mixed British and French reprints with new strips, many of which were drawn by the same Creaciones artists who had proved so popular in the UK: Comos, Trini, Edmond, and Redondo, along with Maria Barrerra and Angeles Felices. For her part, Campos continued to paint *Tina*'s covers until 1983, and continued to work on the *Tina* strip until 2010, when her long term assistant Edmond took it over completely. *Tina* was also reprinted in Spain as Christie (in *Christie Magazine*), Nina (in *Chicas*) and Jana in her own title, though none quite resonated with Spanish girls the way she did with her Dutch fans.

Trini Tinture, *Lily 1107.* 1983.

Purita Campos, *Biggi 26.*

Meanwhile, in 1982, German publishing giant Bastei launched yet another repackaging of *Patty* — this time as *Biggi* and again Campos was brought in to provide more painted covers. With a month's worth of British strips being reprinted in *Biggi each* week, the comic quickly ran out of *Patty* strips to reprint so the publishers asked Campos to continue the strip with new stories, but faced with an exclusive contract from Bastei, the artist refused. Instead, the publishers turned to Trini Tinture whose style was similar to Campos. She too refused to continue the strip but offered to create a new feature instead. In its first incarnation, *Biggi* reprinted *Patty's World* strips rewritten as if it was set in Germany. Now Trini created an entirely new feature starring a German girl also called Biggi, growing up in California, looking very much like the first Biggi, but drawn in a slightly more realistic style by a studio of top Spanish artists. However confusing, the new strip proved to be another hit and the comic thrived until 1989.

Since the early '70s Purita Campos has been in the unique position of effectively being the face of girls comics in four countries — the UK, Holland, Germany, and her native Spain. In Spain she still defines the genre for a new generation of readers through the endless repackaging of *Patty's World* in its various incarnations. She thought she had left comics behind in1988 when she devoted herself to painting, but comics have kept calling her back. In 2010, her own country awarded her the Gold Medal of Merit in the fine arts as recognition of the cultural importance of her work. By any standard she is the most successful Spanish comic artist, though she remains completely unknown in America.

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CHAPTER 06

Birth of the New

After the emergence of a uniquely Spanish style with the Romance art of José María Miralles and Jordi Longaron, the 1960s was a period of experimentation, diversification, and above all, independence. As of 1965 Bardon's star names like José Ortiz and Luis Bermejo were already fully mature artists operating at the peak of their powers. By contrast, S.I.'s workforce was, for the most part, younger; still exploring the limits of their creativity, and looking for new ways to express themselves. This, after all, was the generation that was growing up with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. They, more than almost anyone else in Spain, could feel the old barriers of class and authority falling away and the new sense of freedom epitomized by swinging London must have felt intoxicating. As some of the first intake at S.I. moved on, new artists emerged as innovators and explorers: Carlos Giménez, Luis Garcia, Esteban Maroto, Enric Sió, Josep Maria Beà and Adolfo Usero. This was a generation who would constantly search out new artistic approaches and influences, innovative types of stories and fresh venues for their work. In fact, in mainstream comics at this time, nobody in the world was more daring or experimental than the Spanish creators at S.I.

In 1965 a number of the agency's artists including Fernando Fernández, José María Miralles, and Carlos Prunes left comics to become painters, working for a variety of publishers. Many of their images were sold for first reproduction rights only, meaning the artwork could subsequently be sold to different countries, making the artist more money each time. Fernández produced an extraordinary number of war, western and crime covers which were picked up by several British publishers such as Fleetway and Famepress, but also sold to Germany and Spain. For any graphic artist plying his trade in Spain, the page rate for comics was poor, so those that could paint would often gravitate towards the higher paying book covers. The Spanish were clearly voracious readers and with other forms of entertainment such as television coming very late to the country (the

Petronius, *Corin Tellado 145* (Rollan) 1968.

Sanjulián, *Corin Tellado 184* (Rollan) 1969.

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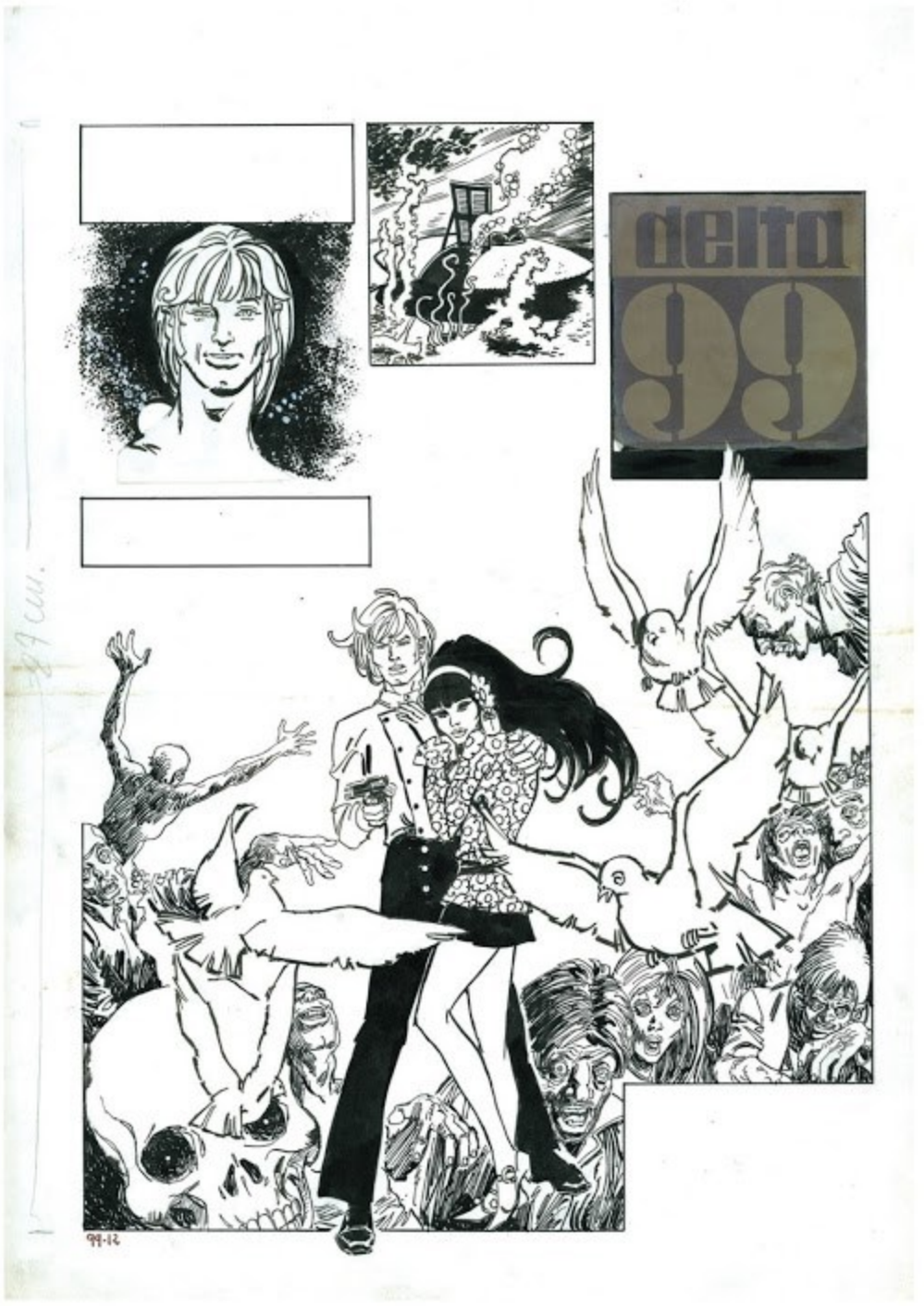
first sets arrived in 1956, a decade or so after Britain and America) there were fewer distractions taking their attentions elsewhere. Many of the top comic publishers also had book lines and no clearly defined boundaries existed between the two areas as they do in most countries. Perhaps the biggest paperback publisher of this time was Editorial Molino whose Biblioteca Oro imprint featured innovative cover art by Miralles, Noiquet, Longaron, and Ángel Badía Camps. Inspired by American illustrators these covers played around with layouts, textures, and perspective to create innovative, challenging compositions that were every bit the equal of their transatlantic peers. Other important book publishers included Bruguera with imprints like Terror, L'Espacio, Novela Goticas (painted by artists such as Camps, Antonio Bernal, Manel Brea, and Salvador Faba), and Editorial Rollán.

Rollán had started life as a paperback publisher in 1949 before diversifying into comics and children's books and their star cover artist was Prieto Muriana, who joined the company in 1956. Muriana's covers for long-running series such as *FBI, Murder Club*, and *ZZ7* (for which he painted 176 covers) were colorful and inventive; often employing a movie poster style montage of images. For Rollán's notorious Galeria Siniestra line, his imagination went into overdrive, summoning up blood-soaked juxtapositions of severed heads, corpses, and demonic rituals. By contrast, Rollán was also a prolific publisher of romance books and in 1964 formed an arrangement with

Fotonovela page starring Luis Garcia and Carol DeHaro. 1960s.



Adolfo Usero, *Delta 99 11*. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

the inexhaustible author Corin Telado to print a line of her books. S.I. was brought in to produce the covers to the series which constituted a significant part of the studio's output in the '60s. Cover art was provided by Petronius (Joan Marti), Thord Sundquist, Fernández, Miralles, and Manfred Sommer among others.

In 1966, Rollán approached S.I. about producing an ongoing series of fotonovelas, literally novels told in photographs, a genre which had become immensely popular in Italy and France. Under the direction of Lluis Ribas and Marcel Miralles the fotonovelas became works of art in themselves, with the stories formatted as comic strips, but told using photos instead of line work, complete with atmospheric lighting, close-ups and compelling storytelling. The stories starred actors and models along with S.I.'s artists, their girlfriends, and family members; with one memorable issue featuring Pepe González's mom! Artists Luis Garcia and Enrique Montserrat's good looks made them regular actors in these magazines, alongside actresses Silvia Tortosa, Encarnita Pacheco, and Margit Kocsis. Another of the stars was the beautiful Carol de Haro who became Garcia's girlfriend and later both she and Kocsis posed for Enrich and Pepe González as models for Vampirella (famously de Haro is the model for the legendary six-foot tall Vampirella poster). The fotonovella's were also popular among S.I.'s artists as the perfect reference for their strips, With de Haro, Kocsis, and Garcia in particular appearing in numerous romance and horror strips by artists like Montserrat, Maroto, Fernández, and Torrents. If the women drawn by Spanish artists have a particular look— a certain smouldering intensity — it is due in no small part to the ubiquity of Carol de Haro and Margit Kocsis as models.

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Enric Sió, *Nus episode 45,* 1968. Courtesy of Carmen Amoros Valldaura.

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Photo of Enric Sió and Josep Maria Beà. Courtesy of Josep Maria Beà.

While S.I. was diversifying into new areas it's artists were becoming increasingly independent. Throughout the '60s as the agency's production department grew the artists drifted away to work at home or in new groupings. In September of 1967 some of the more free-spirited artists gathered together in a house they called the Galleon (complete with pirate flag) in the village of La Floresta, a sort of proto-hippy commune. In retrospect, it feels like a daringly radical declaration of independence in the totalitarian state that Spain still was at the time. The Grupo De La Floresta comprised of Maroto, Torrents, Garcia, de Haro, Adolfo Usero, Carlos Giménez, and Suso (Jesus Pena), many of whom began to work together on a new science fiction strip called *Cinco por Infinito*. The series was intended for international syndication and under the direction of Maroto, its principal artist, the strip was visually groundbreaking. After a few group efforts, Maroto drew the rest of the series on his own in a highly decorative style mixing art nouveau flourishes with psychedelic effects, textures, and collages, along with the archetypal bold, linear rendering of the Romance artists. In fact, Maroto was one of those artists himself, drawing for British titles like *Mirabelle, Romeo*, and *Jackie* alongside *CInco Por Infinito*. What later came to be recognized as the Spanish style when S.I. started its connection with Jim Warren's magazine line in America is very much a mixture of the Romance strips and the tonal experimentation of Argentinian artist Alberto Breccia and the Italian Dino Battaglia, both of whom were greatly admired in Spain.

Before linking up with S.I., Maroto had, through Studio Ortega, drawn the strip *Roy Tiger* for Bastei's *Lasso* comic in Germany. Another Grupo member who had also spent much of his career drawing for syndication was Carlos Giménez, whose first significant feature was the western strip *Gringo* in 1963, co-created with writer Manuel Medina, which was sold to 20 countries. He followed this in 1968 with the SF series *Delta 99* (later drawn by Adolfo Usero, Manel Ferrer, and Mascaro) which was packaged for the Spanish market by the publishers Ibero, where it shared the comic with back-up strip *Cinco por Infinito*. Giménez was one of the few artists never to work in the UK and he refused to work with Warren as well, insisting on writing his own material. Instead, he took a more international approach, creating *Tom Berry* and *Kiko 2000* for Germany and *Dani Futura* for Spain in 1970, later reviving the strip for a four year run in the Belgian magazine *Tintin*. Stylistically, Giménez represented a side of Spanish comics that was rarely seen in America: an energetic, exaggerated, sometimes cartoony approach which fizzed with movement and excitement.

The third significant figure in the evolution of Spanish and Catalan art in the '60s was Enric Sió who had been a little known artist for much of the decade, drawing for the British war comic *Air Ace* in a dark, photorealistic style. Like Giménez, Sió was an intensely independent spirit which first became evident with *Lavinia 2016*, a short strip he drew for *Oriflama* magazine in 1968.This was a surreal, Dadaist satire starring actors and politicians drawn in a bleached out, realist style utterly unlike his, or anyone else's previous work. This was followed by two strips for the educational journal *Vector 1: Nus* and *Sorang* which took visual experimentation to another level. Here, Sió added intense, saturated colors and high contrast drawings (inspired by the solarized photography of Man Ray) to wildly experimental page layouts. Comics had never seen artwork like this before and even today the effect is radical and startling. In 1969, Sió became the first Spanish artist to work in Italy, creating the widely praised *Aghardi* for the prestigious comic magazine *Linus*. *Aghardi* was similarly playful, mixing a daringly explicit sexuality with Pop Art imagery; its effect was so striking that it earned the artist that year's Yellow Kid award at the famed Lucca comic festival.

Like Sió, Josep Maria Beà had drawn several war strips for the UK, but by the decade's end he was creating romance strips for the UK, charmingly naive illustrations for Enid Blyton books, and thrillingly abstract comic strips for the cutting edge Spanish SF magazine *New Dimension*. That one person could reconcile three such diverse styles is a testament to Beá's taste for experimentation and gift for constant reinvention. In 1971, Beá, Sió, Maroto, Pop-Art cartoonist Solsona, and cover artist Enrich were brought together by the new Spanish publisher Buru Lan de Ediciones to produce *Dracula*, a completely new kind of comic book. *Dracula* was a high quality, color magazine

Antonio Hernandez Palacios, *Trinca 1.*

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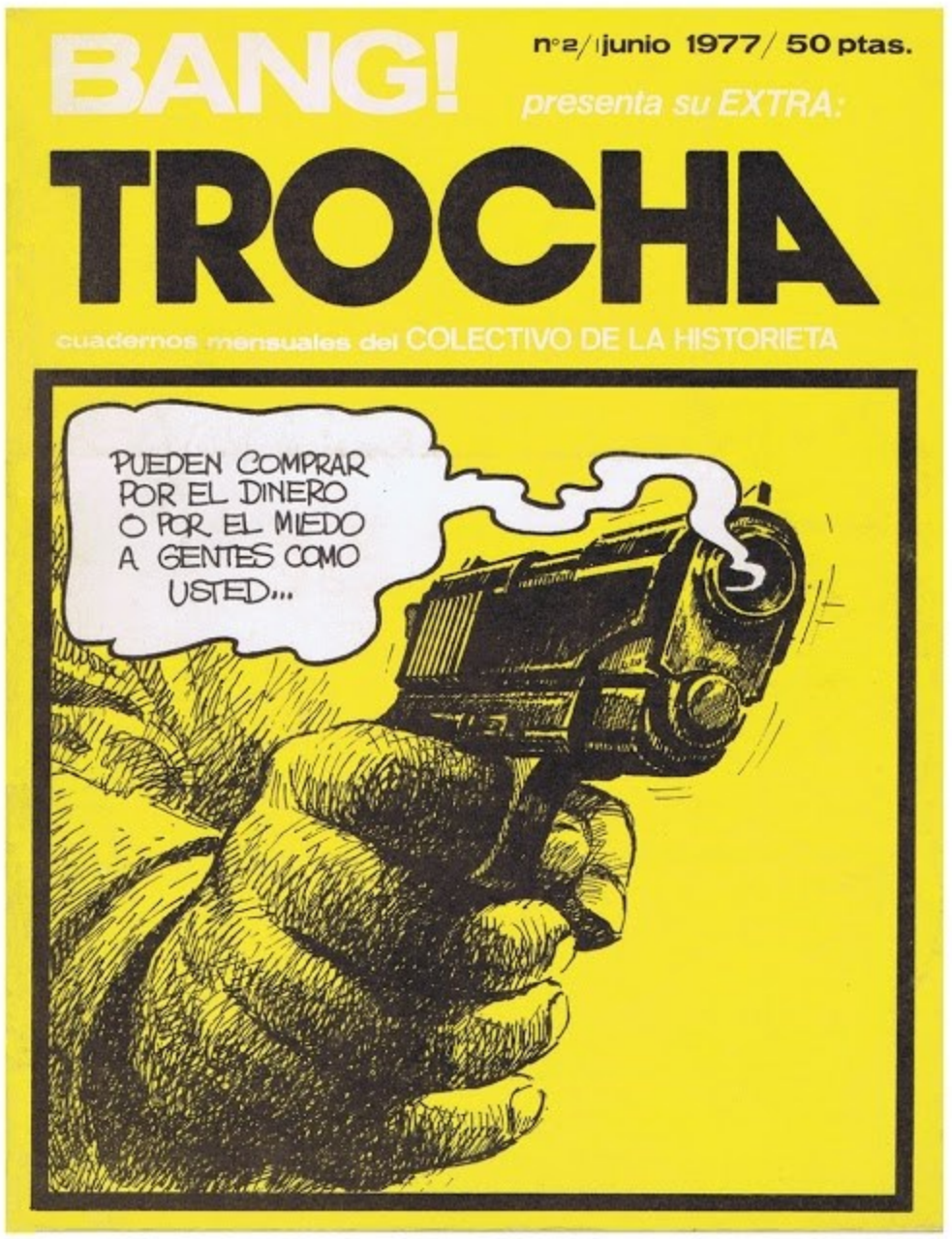
Luis Garcia, *Chicharras.*



Luis Garcia, *Trocha 2.*

appearing every two weeks, conceived so that each group of 12 issues could be rebound into hardback collections. Each issue featured Maroto's elegantly baroque barbarian strip *Wolff*, Solsona's whimsical *Agar-Agar*, a short horror strip by Sió (told in his full-on experimental style) and Beá's bizarrely wonderful Victorian monster hunter *Sir Leo*. *Dracula* was conceived as an ongoing series but after the twelfth issue that July, the title took an about turn and started reprinting *Cinco por Infinito* and *Delta 99*. No reason was given, but in America that month fans had just seen Beá's first Warren strip in *Vampirella* 13 and were soon to be introduced to Maroto and Enrich. *Dracula* had lost half of its artists and the Spanish Invasion of America was underway.

In *Dracula* we can see the full flowering of the Spanish New Look just before it crossed over to America. Beá's work in *Sir Leo* in particular demonstrates the entire repertoire of techniques that entranced and mystified Warren's readership: the thumbprint textures, knife scratches, collages, expressionistic settings, the crazed invention mixed with photo-realism. It all began here. While Beá and Maroto concentrated on Warren stories for the next few years, Sió returned to *Linus* for the disturbingly erotic series *Mara* and eventually moved to Milan in 1974 to escape the repressive atmosphere of Spain. The next decade was spent moving between Italy, France, and Spain drawing for *Linus, Charlie Hebdo, Totem, Pilote*, and *Rambla*. These strips became increasingly personal, explicit and poetic; musings on sex, mortality and existence rendered in a delicately realistic style, still conveyed through his uniquely innovative layouts. Carlos Giménez was a guest in one issue of *Dracula* and like Sió his work through the '70s and '80s became increasingly expressive, typified by the intense SF strip *Hom*, drawn in 1977 for the Italian magazine *Alter Alter* and reprinted in Spain by Ediciones Amaika.

While *Dracula* was making waves, a parallel title from a more unlikely publisher was also pushing back boundaries, albeit against its will. Editorial Doncel was set up in 1959 by the National Delegation of Youth, a government organization created as a way of channelling the country's children away from delinquency, dangerous thoughts, or political insurrection and to "better serve the Fatherland". Doncel ran youth clubs but also published fiction, textbooks, and magazines; and in 1970 decided to launch a comic, *Trinca*. With its mixture of educational features, strips, and high production values *Trinca* was clearly modelled on the Italian title *Il Giornalino*, and similarly brought together an impressive roster of artists. Antonio Hernandez Palacios established himself as a major talent with *Manos Kelly* and *El Cid*; José Bielsa drew the adventures of Mountie Bill Norton; and, there were impressive contributions from Esteban Maroto, Jaime Brocal Remohi, Alfonso Azpiri, and Leopoldo Sanchez, all in full color. However, the standout feature was Víctor de la Fuente's *Haxtur*, a savage fantasy strip which dealt with the themes of inequality, suppression of the people, and the notions of Freedom and Justice. When the strip's revolutionary subtext was "outed" in a newspaper article, the publishers demanded that De La Fuente tone down his politics, and subsequently the message became more coded and subtle. De La Fuente continued to work for *Trinca*, drawing the brutal *Mathai Dor* but subsequently quit over ownership of his strips, illustrating the problems the more radical artists found when working in the mainstream.

The '70s was a time of torrid political unrest in Spain as the yearnings for freedom and self-expression, which the artists at S.I. had sensed a decade earlier, spilt out onto the streets. After over four decades in power, Francisco Franco resigned as president in 1973,

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Carlos Gimenez, *Los Profesionales.* 1982.

but still kept a firm hand on power. That same year, Amaika's first release, *El Papus*, was published; a scabrous, satirical, antifascist humor magazine, whose wholehearted and fearlessly anti-establishment ethos summed up the mood of the nation's youth. The following year Giménez, Luis Garcia, and Adolfo Usero came together as the collective known as Groupo Premia 3, initially to draw an adaptation of *Treasure Island*, with all three becoming immersed in the emerging counter-culture. Garcia's elegiac *Chicharrras* was an autobiographical strip musing on the passing of youth drawn purely for himself and later published in the comics fanzine *Bang*.

In 1977, Garcia co-founded the leftist *Trocha* magazine (later renamed *Troya*) which featured several of his beautifully drawn strips exploring notions of freedom, and individuality; along with work from Usero, Alfonso Font, and José Canovas. At the same time, Gimnenez's poignant *Paraquellos* which was inspired by the artist's upbringing in an orphanage was appearing in Amaika's *Yes* magazine. These were intelligent, highly-crafted, thoughtful strips which were expanding the idea of what comics could be years before the concept of the adult graphic novel gained popularity in the English speaking world. The closest American equivalent was probably the underground comix work of cartoonists such as Robert Crumb and Justin Green; but, here in Spain, these were challenging strips drawn by mainstream artists. However, expressing notions of liberty, collectivism, and self-expression in a totalitarian state could carry a heavy cost. El Papus suffered several forced closures and the kidnapping of its staff. All three artists had worked on occasion for *El Papus* and one evening Usero was drawing in the magazine's offices when a bomb exploded killing a fellow cartoonist. While nobody was ever charged it was widely believed to be a state sponsored agent striking back at the irritant, anarchistic *El Papus*.

Franco died in 1975, with King Juan Carlos appointed head of state, and the Francoist Adolfo Suarez assigned the task of preparing the country for its first free elections in four decades, which took place in 1977. In its early days, the new democracy seemed precarious, a feeling underlined by a failed military coup in 1981, but gradually the country normalized and became an integrated part of Europe. The newly democratic Spain gave birth to a comics magazine explosion with the key players of the '80s all keenly involved. Garcia and Beá created *Rambla*, a glossier re-invention of *Trocha*, and brought in Giménez, Usero, Sió, Marika, and Font. Sió also published his own short-lived magazine *La Ocha*, a Spanish version of *Linus*, but by the mid-'80s the boom was over. Garcia became a painter; Sió moved into television, sadly dying in 1998; and Giménez devoted himself to increasingly successful graphic novels.

Ultimately, what remained of the revolution in Spanish publishing was humor. Amaika became Editorial Iru, publishing *El Papus* until 1987, but also launching *El Cuervo, Hara Kiri*, and *La Judia Verde* which ran until the mid-'90s. After *Rambla*'s demise, Beá worked for these new titles under numerous pseudonyms before turning to a career in music. The new humor magazines were unrepentantly crude, revealing that what still sold once the revolutionary fervor had died down was sex. Today, the sole survivor of the age of rebellion is *El Jueves*, launched by Ediciones Formentera in 1977, fighting against authority alongside *El Papus*. *El Jueves* remains a thorn in the side of privilege, pomposity, corruption and hypocrisy.

Adolfo Usero, *Trocha 2.*

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CHAPTER 07

S. I. IN USA

ALTHOUGH NEVER AS IMPORTANT IN SHEER VOLUME AS THE UK market, S.I.'s entrance into America was to be the defining moment in the company's existence. It was the time when the true potential of the Golden Generation could be realized and appreciated on a truly global scale. By 1971 the artists at the agency were well aware of the ground-breaking stories published by Warren in *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Vampirella* and stablemate Carlos Prunes had already had one story printed in *Creepy* 30, so the scene was set for the agency's next conquest: America. Marcel Miralles recalls the excitement in Spain:

"One day in 1970. Josép Toutain decided that it was the moment. It had been several years since we started working for the British, Scandinavian, and German markets, now it was time for America. Pamela Coop had been our liaison in London (working out of our office at 3 Paddington Street), and had also lived in Barcelona a few years earlier working on the photonovelas. But by this time, she was living in New York. So it was a good opportunity, knowing her abilities, for her to be 'our person in N.Y.' Josép asked me to prepare a very beautiful portfolio of our artists. At that time I was in charge of the Production Department, which meant I was dealing directly with the artists (the client's side was managed by Jordi Sánchez and Rafael Martinez). Much time has passed and I don't very clearly remember the contents of this portfolio, but it was very well presented in a purpose-built box, and it showed the best that the artists were able to do. To make a long story short Toutain contacted Pamela, and he went to New York."

As legend has it, on his journey around the various New York publishers Toutain visited Marvel, DC Comics, and several paperback companies before showing up, unannounced, late in the afternoon at Warren. Jim Warren was about to go out on a date but told his mysterious visitor that he would have a quick look through the portfolio. By the third sample, Warren was convinced he had seen the future of his company and in Pepe González he had the Vampirella artist he had been looking for two years. He forgot about his date, whisked Toutain out to a nearby restaurant, and worked out the publishing deal that would define his company for the rest of its existence.

Back in Barcelona, Miralles takes up the story. "On his return, it was a Sunday, he phoned Jordi Sánchez and me: 'Come and meet me at La Floresta this morning,' he told us. Toutain was living in a rented house in La Floresta, behind the Tibidabo Mountain, not far from Barcelona. Jordi did not have a car so I picked him up and we went together. 'What he is going to say to us? Has the trip not been a success?' we asked ourselves. We were very excited about what he was going to tell us. Toutain received us ceremoniously seated in a big wooden chair in the garden, full of expectation we sat down in front of him as he began: 'If we are smart we are at the beginning of a new era for Selecciones'. He explained to us about his meeting with James Warren (I must say that Warren magazines were almost a myth to us back then), Dell Books, and other publishers; our possibilities in the paperback cover market and the good reception that our artists' work has had.

Josép Marti Ripol, *World of Men.* November 1973.

"The first jobs to arrive from America were some cover commissions from Dell for Enrich, Enrique Montserrat, and Sanjulián, but we were anxiously waiting for news from Warren. When the first script arrived, its title was 'The Escape' (published in *Vampirella* 11), and Luis Martinez Roca was commissioned to draw it. We used to call him 'The Count' because of his beautiful white hair and carefully sculpted beard even though he was still a young man. He was a very reliable artist but...it was the first script for Warren so we were all very cautious. The Count made his rough sketches and Toutain called on his old friend José María Arman, the publisher of *Garbo*, who in past times had been a magnificent letterer. Arman lettered the strip and the title. It was excellent! I remember entering Toutain's office with Arman behind me. We were very impressed, passed the pages over to Roca, and crossed our fingers. Well, later, when Roca

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came in with the art we were more than satisfied, the artist had given the story his best efforts but it was a big responsibility so... We sent it. Thankfully it was well received and we begin receiving a torrent of scripts for our many artists".

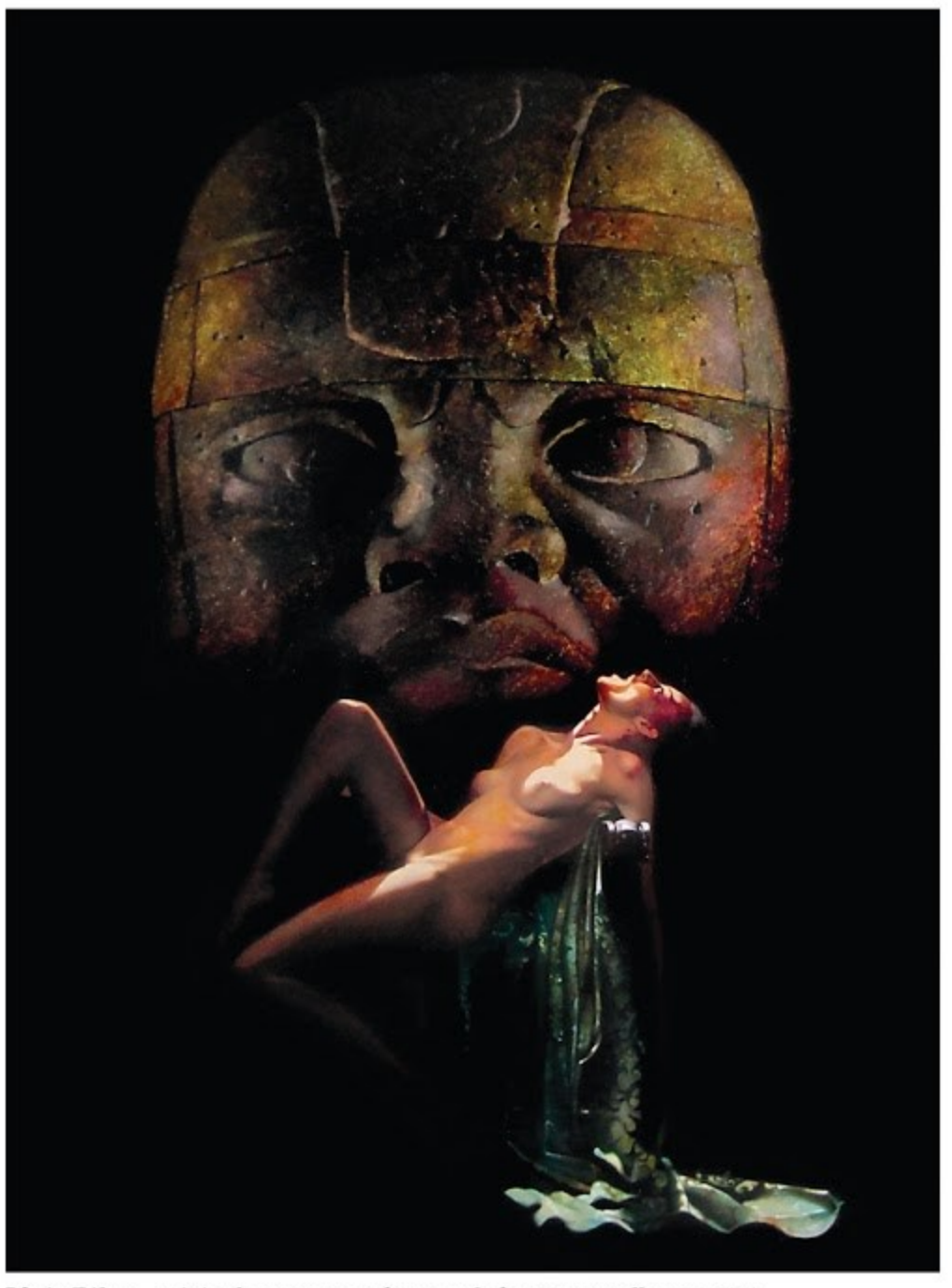
Starting in May 1971 Warren's three magazines quickly introduced an entirely new workforce: Pepe González was the artist of *Vampirella* from #12 on, Sanjulián and Enrich took up the mantle from Frank Frazetta as the company's principal cover artists, and Josep Maria Beà. Esteban Maroto, Luis Garcia, Félix Mas, Ramon Torrents, Fernando Fernández, Adolfo Usero, Jaime Brocal Remohi, Martin Salvador, Isidre Mones, and Rafael Auraleón provided the extraordinary comic strips inside. Most had spent the previous decade drawing British romance strips but here they were emancipated, encouraged to experiment with the tones, textures, and scratches of the New Look. Some like Auraleón and Mones had been laboring in near obscurity prior to signing up to Toutain's great adventure, while others like Roca and Víctor de la Fuente, were sadly too busy elsewhere to contribute more than a few strips. Even with a creative grouping as inspired as S.I.'s there remain a few what-ifs. Clearly the likes of Jesus Blasco, Juan Gonzalez Alacreu, and Jordi Longaron would have become major stars at Warren had they not been with rival agencies; and similarly José María Miralles and Carlos Prunes were kept busy painting covers elsewhere.

On his first scouting trip to America, Toutain had visited numerous publishers and throughout 1971 and 1972. S.I. artists began to appear all over the place. In fact, Enrich's first magazine work appeared on the cover of an Eerie Pubs title, as did Fernando's. Later that year, Fernando and Marti Ripoll artwork was soon also appearing on numerous Emtee men's adventure titles (or "sweat mags") such as *Men Today* and *Man's Story*. Perhaps most damning at all, at least in the eyes of Jim Warren, was the moment in the spring of 1972 when his artists started appearing in *Nightmare* and *Psycho*, comics published by his hated rival Skywald. Warren laid down the law — they could either work for him or Skywald, but never the two. Those that could, like Torrents and Enrich chose Warren, leaving the more eccentric, quirky artists at Skywald. Again, many of Skywald's workforce, such as Zesar, Domingo, Ferran Sostres, and Francisco Cueto would have looked familiar to British readers, even if their names did not. Cover artists Segrelles, Prieto Muriana, Albert Pujolar, Boada, and Jad also contributed greatly to the company's visual appeal. The following year Marvel got into the act as well, recruiting a number of Spanish artists such as Jordi Penalva, Jesus Blasco, and Jordi Bernet for its rapidly growing black and white magazine line. Most memorably Esteban Maroto, one of Warren's most popular artists, drew three beautiful strips for *Vampire Tales* (*Satanna* in 3, "The Drifting Snow" in 4) and *Savage Tales* (a re-designed Red Sonja in 1). Luckily for Jim Warren's blood pressure Marvel's adventure into horror magazines was short-lived.

By the middle of the decade, the original group of artists was fragmenting, with Mas turning to fine art, Beá and Fernández working in Spain, and Garcia in France. Skywald went under in 1975 and a new editorial direction from incoming Warren Editor Louise Jones introduced a far greater number of American artists. On the plus side for S.I. they had enticed over the Valencia grouping of Luis Bermejo, Jose Ortiz, and Leopoldo Sánchez from Bardon, and all three made an immediate impression, going on to become some of Warren's most prolific artists.

Another new arrival, Vicente Alcazar, actually moved to the states

Sanjulián, Alternate version of *Vampirella 16*. 1970s.



Lluis Ribas, original, uncensored artwork for *Vampirella 43*. 1975. Image courtesy of Preciouspaper.com.

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Sanjulián, *1994 12*. 1980.

and made his own connections with Marvel, DC, Warren, Charlton, Archie's Red Circle imprint, and Continuity Associates. He was the first to produce the bulk of his work for the color comic books as opposed to larger, black and white magazines. Still, he worked in all formats and his masterpiece was a lengthy *Satanna* strip in *Marvel Preview* 7, which was a fine successor to Maroto's. By the decade's end Torrents had decided to leave comics behind, Maroto was ensconced at Ace illustrating books (such as *Conan and the Sorcerer* and *The Magic Goes Away*), and even González had abandoned *Vampirella* to concentrate on drawings of movie stars for the newly formed Norma agency. In 1980, S.I.'s American arm, led at that point by Herb Spiers and Bernd Metz, issued a glossy art catalogue which showcased the creators working for them at that point and it quite starkly emphasized where the company felt its main direction should be. With the exception of a few comic pages, the catalogue was overwhelmingly directed towards book covers, and clearly the quality of artwork from Enrich, Sanjulián, Penalva, Pujolar, Longaron, Jad, Miralles, and Domingo was now beyond the financial reach of most comics companies.

S.I.'s connection with Warren persisted though, on several levels. Artists like Auraleón, Ortiz, and Bermejo were still regulars in their magazines until the end and, out of the blue in 1982, Pepe González returned to his beloved *Vampirella*. Sadly this renaissance was sort lived; the last Warren magazines were cover dated March 1983 and later that year the rights to Vampirella were sold to another hated rival, Stanley Harris. After their demise interest in Warren's magazines was restricted to a hard core of devoted believers until Vampirella was revived by first Harris and more recently Dynamite Comics, with an ongoing program of new and archival publications. Internationally, however, the company had made an enormous impact.

Back at their first meeting, Toutain had proposed an unusual publishing agreement to Jim Warren. Warren could keep the copyright to the stories he published (with the occasional exception) and reprint them as many times as he liked. Toutain, for his part, could sell Warren material to the rest of the world, which he did with great enthusiasm. Warren historian David Horne has identified 20 countries, from Finland to Japan, South America to Australia which issued their own Warren titles. Well into the '80s and '90s imagery from Warren, Skywald and Marvel were appearing on *Skorpio* covers in Italy, Spanish horror comics, and German paperbacks and pulps.

Looking back several decades later, Miralles is still full of admiration for the people he worked with. "I believe that we did many wonderful stories. All the artists understood the opportunity they had to demonstrate their quality and they did. As a matter of fact, I rarely remember having problems in the delivery of artwork which was always (more or less) on time. Of course at the beginning they were mostly drawing individual stories, so if they didn't arrive on time for one issue, they could be changed over to another quite easily. I used to visit the artists, to see the progress they were making with their artwork and remember good moments with many of them, having a nice chat while they were working. (Very comfortable for me wasn't it?)

"I remember with special affection my visits to Ramon Torrents whose studio was at his home, close to Montjuic Park. Torrents had a very detailed style, full of lines and designs. We would have very nice chats while he was drawing geometrical patterns in his backgrounds. This was a nice part of the job; the artists were completely engaged in their work and really when they had finished and came to deliver each strip we used to have a happy surprise; each one was better than the one before. But happiness does not last forever and inevitably problems began with the various series. That means that each chapter had to be published on a fixed date. It was not possible to delay. I won't mention all of them, but I never had a problem with Maroto, or Ortiz or even with Auraleón. *Vampirella* was a different story! Pepe González was a genius of drawing, we all loved his *Vampirella* strips which were a big success, however, Pepe was not a genius at dedication to his work; he was completely anarchic. But that was Pepe, he was a master at drawing with a pencil, a master at drawing women, a master at inking. But his abilities at meeting a serious deadline were non-existent. I loved him a lot. But sometimes I hated him too!"

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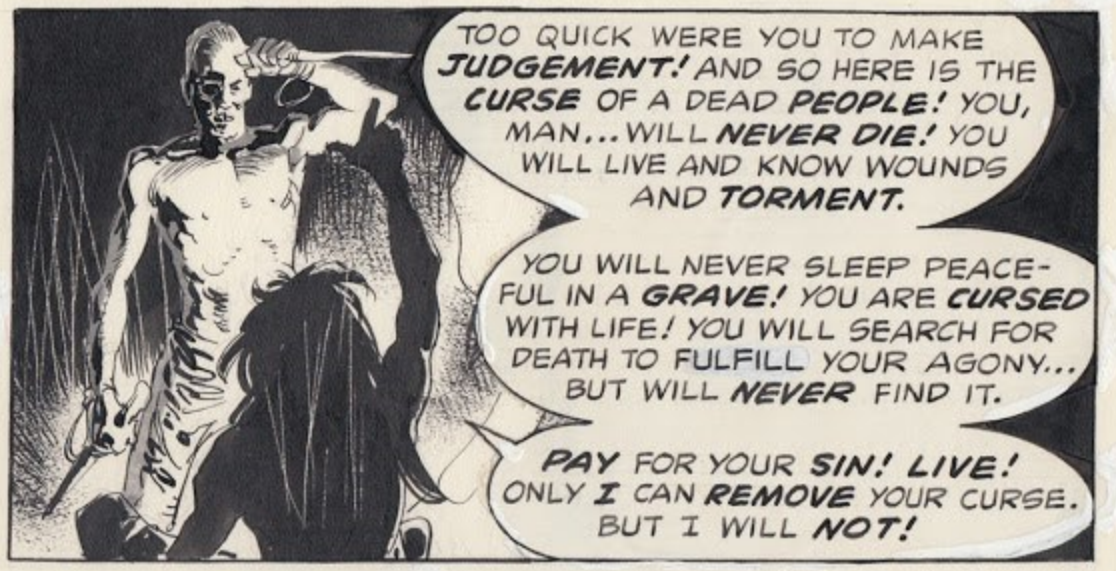

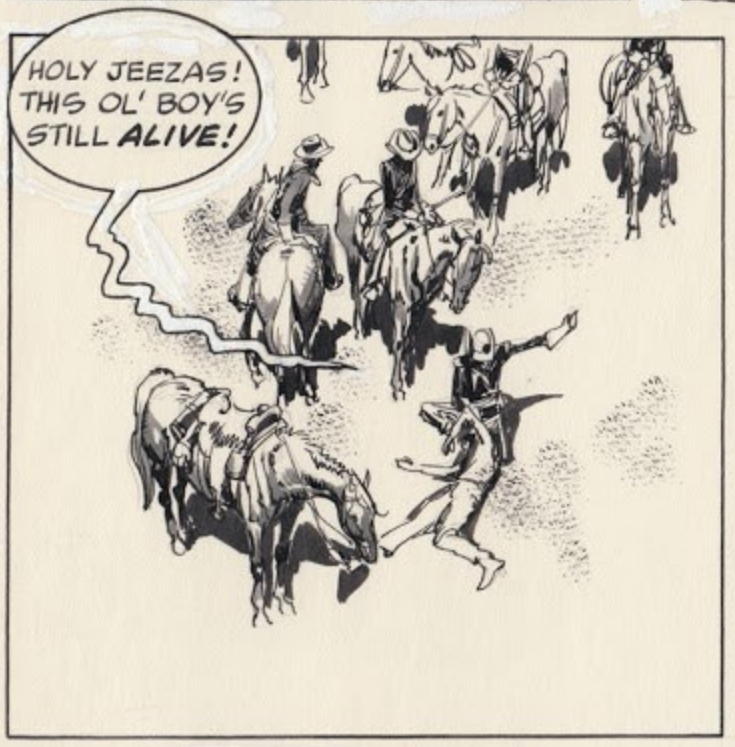

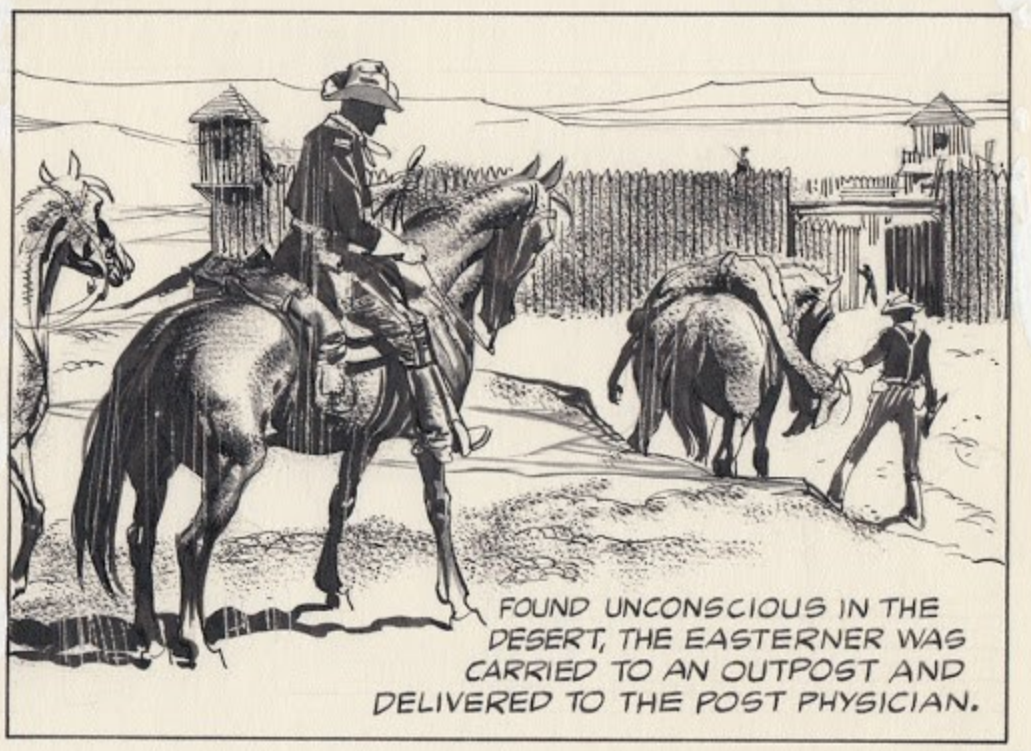

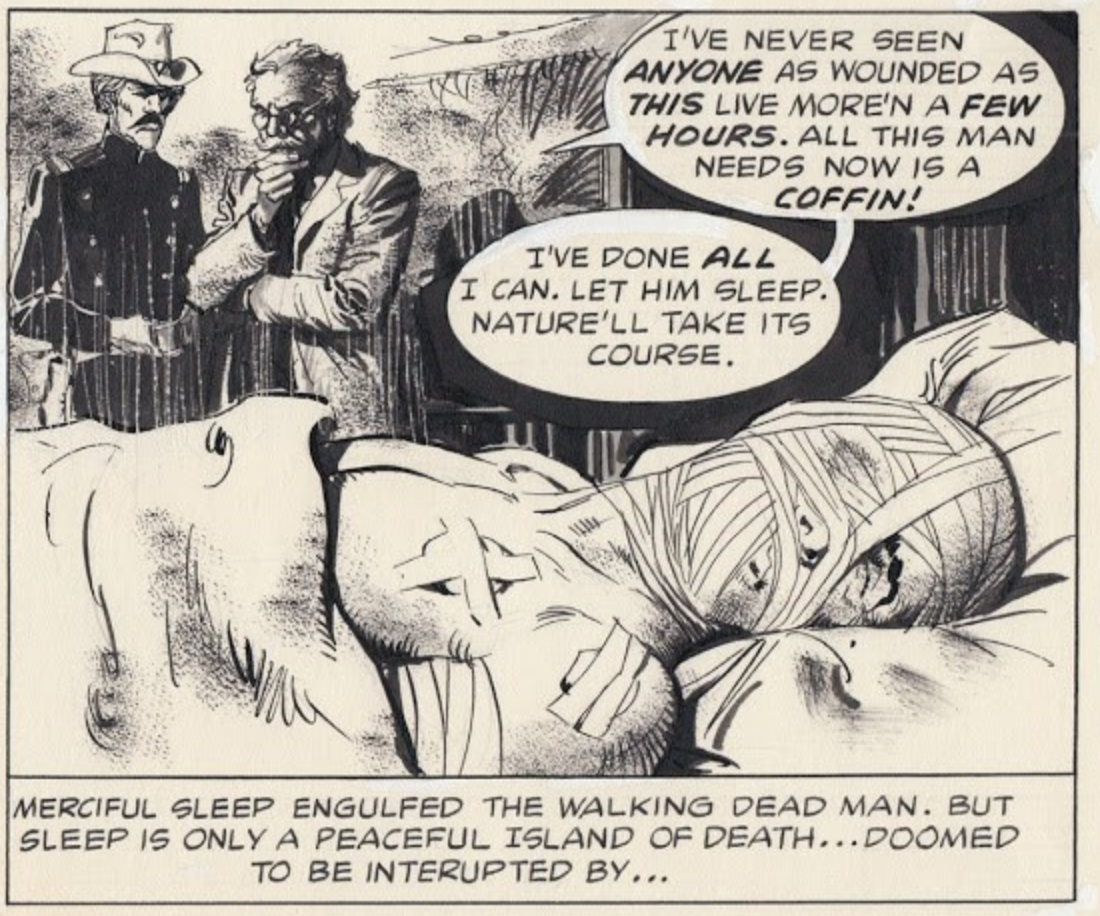

COFFIN - 9

Jose Ortiz, *Coffin,* from *Eerie 61.* 1975. Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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CHAPTER 08

EUROPE AND BEYOND

By the 1970s the Spanish had clearly established themselves as the go-to artists for any country looking either for originated material or the best syndicated strips, and their reach genuinely was worldwide. Writing in *Comix Internacional* 1 in 1980, Josép Toutain Listed S.I.'s sphere of influence as including America, France, the UK, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Australia, and India. And they weren't alone: Bardon, Creaccione, Norma, Ortega, and others cast their nets wide in finding venues for their clients. Of course, the artists themselves were never solely reliant on agencies to find them work and many of the earliest foreign commissions were made by individuals (including José Cabrero Arnal, Jesús Blasco, Julio Ribera, José Ramón Larraz, Manfred Sommer and Francisco Hidalgo) literally getting on a train and travelling to Paris.

This early connection with France was the first instance of Spanish artists being able to sell their talents abroad and lay the foundations of much that was to follow. The French market was one of extreme contrasts and the Spanish found considerable work in both the most and least prestigious venues. Top Franco-Belgian weeklies such as *Pilote, Vaillant, Tintin*, and *Spirou* enjoyed production values that were the envy of most countries and attracted the very best home-grown talent. But while humor strips were dominated by French creators, the Spanish found a willing audience for their adventure artists, particularly at *Pilote*. Florenci Clavé had been one of *Valentine*'s regular stable of artists until his vociferous anti-Fascist campaigning forced him into exile in Paris in 1966. Clavé quickly found work at *Pilote* drawing over 60 short strips in an increasingly realistic, intense style. Other notable exiles at *Pilote* included Francisco Hidalgo and Antonio Parras who specialized in Crime strips and Julio Ribera, creator of the humorous horror strip *Dracurella*. José Bielsa split his time between British and French work, drawing the *Bill Norton* strip for *Pilote* alongside numerous historical shorts with his customary class and elan. Having started life as a wholesome, somewhat educational boys comic, by the '70s *Pilote* took a radical turn into a more irreverent, mature title, transforming into an adult monthly in 1974. The new *Pilote* featured the earliest science fiction strips by Moebius (Jean Giraud), Philippe Druillet, and Enki Bilal (creating the blueprint for *Metal Hurlant, Heavy Metal,* and a whole industry of mature comic magazines), alongside biting satire. Clavé remained an engaging presence in the new *Pilote*, as did a visiting Jordi Longaron, but the most memorable Spanish artist of this era was Luis Garcia with his series *Les Chroniques de L'Innome*, scripted by Victor Mora. Garcia's art on the feature astonished editor Rene Goscinny, and it was later successfully sold to Warren where several episodes were translated for *Vampirella*.

Juan Vilajoana, *Imperia.* Original artwork courtesy of Richard Farina.

Elsewhere in this period Spirou published Jesús Blasco's gloriously drawn western strip *Los Guerileros* ('68–'73), Artur Aldoma Puig's *Brice Bolt* ('70–'75) and José Ramón Larraz's gritty *Paul Foran* (which he also wrote for Blasco and Jordi Bernet). *Vaillant* included art by Hidalgo, Ribera and Francisco Cueto; and later, under the new name of *Pif Gadget* it included beautiful work from Puig, Adolfo Userro, José de Huescar, and Alfonso Font. One of the pioneering aspects of French publishing was the collecting together of strips into large hardback comic albums and by the '70s these had evolved to include new series created specifically for the format. One of the most successful was *Le Vagabonds des Limbes* by writer Cristian Godard and artist Julio Ribera, a ribald, scabrously philosophical science fiction strip which ran for 31 books. By contrast, on the more traditional wing of adventure comics Antonio Hernandez Palacios found great success with 21 albums starring his Western hero *Mac Coy*, while Jaime Brocal Remohi's long running barbarian strip *Taar* was effectively Frances' answer to Conan. All three were published by industry colossus Dargaud, publisher of *Pilote, Asterix,* and *Lt. Blueberry*.

But in parallel to its albums and magazines, the French comics industry also included a number of smaller publishers who thrived in the humbler, pocket book-sized Picture Library format, including

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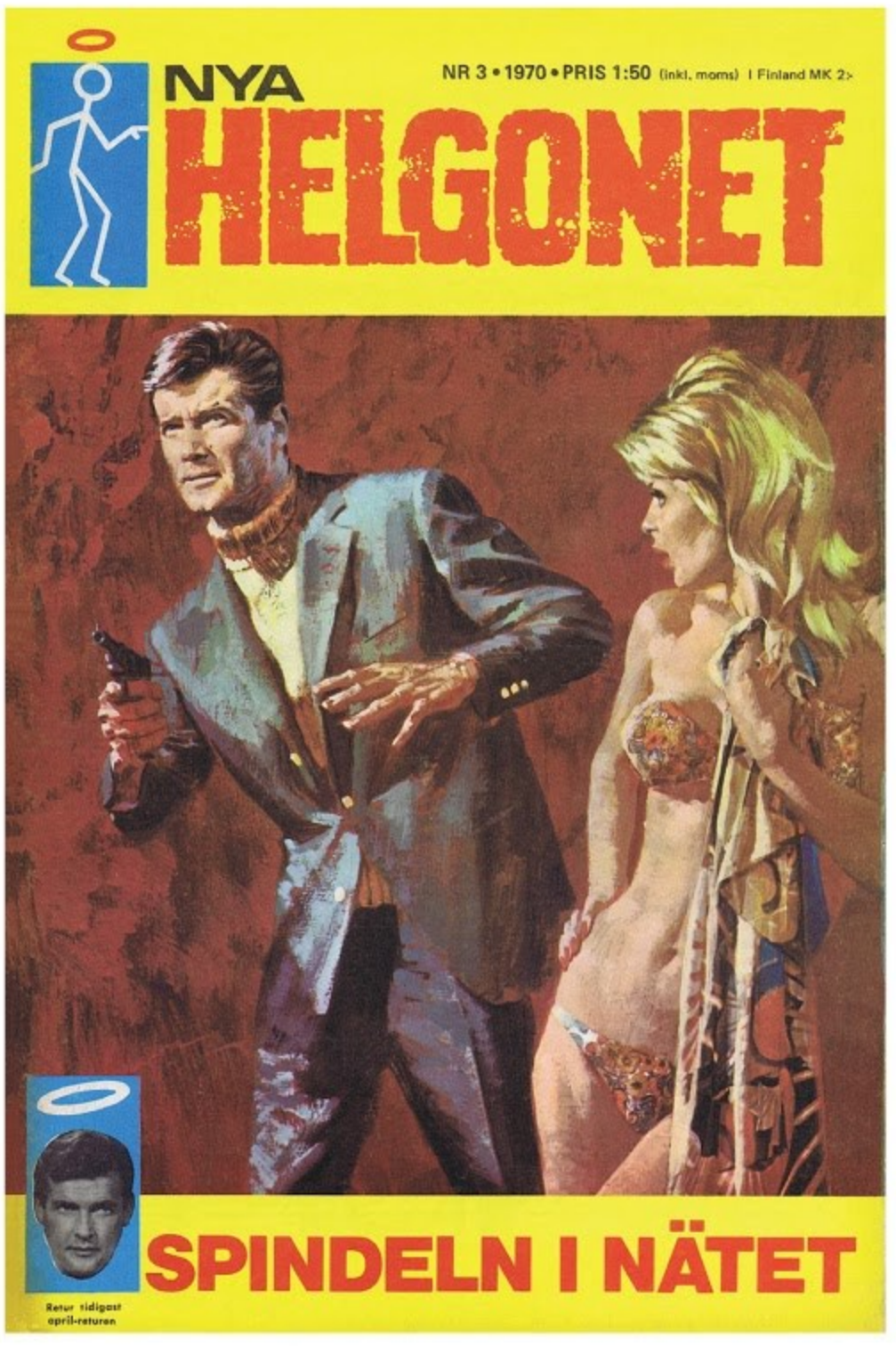
Imperia, Artima, Aredit, and Editions Lug. In the early '60s Bardon made contact with François Bokor's Graph-Lit Service agency to provide artwork for several of these publishers, an arrangement that would last well into the '70s. Imperia's comic line initially grew out of British Picture Library reprints, which were then continued with new strips featuring the likes of *Buck Jones* or *Dick Daring* (*Jim Canada* as the French version was re-named), alongside new features such as *Sandor, Kalar, Ogan, Garry, Zembla,* and *Super-Boy* (no relation to the DC hero). Imperia's rates were no match for the British market so it tended to use Bardon artists who were perhaps too young, quirky, or unpolished for the British market at that point in their careers, including Rafael Mendez, Lopez Espi, Lombardia, César Lopez, Jaime Ortiz, and Carlos Laffond. Imperia's greatest discovery however was a Spanish theatre designer living in Paris: Juan Vilajoana, whose incredibly bright, vibrant Gouache covers enticed several generations of readers to pick their comics up. Vilajoana rarely worked in his native Spain and his nearly 30 year career seems to have been entirely spent in virtual anonymity at Imperia, making his work far less well known than it deserves.

Leopoldo Sanchez, Original artwork for *Eclipso 28*, Aredit.

The company variously known as Artima and Aredit similarly specialized in adventure comics for boys starting with resolutely conventional fare in the early '50s such as *Meteor, Dynamic Toni Cyclone,* and *Red Canyons.* Mixed in with the somewhat naïve local artistry were early syndicated space opera and western strips by teenaged S.I. creators such as Fernando Fernández, Juan Arranz, and Pepe González. By the '60s the company was reprinting material from Britain (through Bardon), Spain, and America including almost the entire output of DC Comics. It was also, however, bringing out a bewildering number of pocket-sized srime and horror series with lengthy strips (anywhere between 100 and 200 pages long) primarily drawn by Spanish creators. Contributors to the likes of long-time dime novel hero *Nick Carter, Le Vicomte, Hallucinations* and *Phantasms* included Vicente Alcazar, Josép Gual, Carlos Pino, Leopoldo Sanchez, Alfonso Font, and Joaquin Blázquez. All were artists on the rise though still learning their trades; but for now, the sheer amount of pages needed to fill Artima's comics kept a small army of artists busy until their big breaks arrived.



Jordi Penalva, *Helgonet 3.* 1970.

After France and the UK the next country to conquer was, surprisingly, Sweden, where the Spanish artists were seen as elite talents. S.I. opened their Swedish office in 1963 and concentrated on selling syndicated covers and strips to the local publishing houses. A year later Bardon enlisted a travelling art student, José Dalmau, who would go on to be their representative in Sweden for 30 years. Bardon's Scandinavian commissions were divided into two distinct areas, the longest lasting of which was a connection with publishing giant Semic. Starting in 1964, Bardon packaged a number of long- running strip reprint titles for Semic including *James Bond, Modesty Blaise, Juliet Jones* and *Secret Agent X-9,* all with glorious new covers by Jordi Penalva. *The Saint* (Helgonet in Swedish) started life as another of Semic's reprint books but soon switched to original material written in London by Donne Avenall, drawn in Spain by Martin Salvador, Jaime Brocal Remohi, Eustaquio Segrelles, and others, with covers by Penalva or Boada and sold right across Scandinavia. It ran for almost 20 years. Elsewhere, Bardon sold syndicated cover artwork and strips to comics like *Serie Magasinet, Attack,* and *Serie Nytt.* In the late '70s Bardon and Semic put together the successful jungle comic *Tumac,* drawn by Jesús Blasco among others, which in turn was sold back to the Spanish market by Semic Espana (a co-publishing venture by the two companies).

Bardon's other main area of interest in Sweden came through

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the selling of high end illustrations to the top Scandinavian womens magazines. The publishing model was ingenious; Bardon would accept commissions for their top artists for story illustrations, often long running historical, romantic or crime serials, but retained the copyright to the images. These could then be sold on to the rest of the world as illustrations or even book covers. Many reappeared in the UK, for instance, as covers to DC Thomson comics like *Star Love* or *Commando*. The magazines were the most prestigious across Scandinavia including *Min Varld, Hennes,* and *Aret Runt* in Sweden, *Dansk Familieblad* in Denmark and *Det Nye* in Norway. Bardon's painters here included the prolific Jordi Penalva, Noiquet, Ángel Badía Camps, and Jordi Longaron; the latter two previously established at S.I., emphasizing the fluid nature of the relationship between artist and agency. As ever, both agency and artist would go where the work took them. For these commissions the artists typically worked at a giant size, often using oils or acrylics and created illustrations which were every bit the equal of their illustrious counterparts in America.

By the '80s the work possibilities in Sweden had fallen off to a degree but there were still outlets for Spanish talent. S.I. provided romance artwork to Semics' long running *Starlet* comic including art by Pepe González and Victor Ramos. After *The Saint* was cancelled, Bardon started creating new material for *James Bond* from artists such as Federico Maidagan, Juan Sarompas, Manuel Carmona, and Josep Gual until the mid-'90s. But by far the most popular adventure comic in Scandinavian countries has been *The Phantom*, and the venerable Ghost That Walks remains a publishing phenomenon there. The Swedish comic started life reprinting the American newspaper strip, which launched in 1936, but began featuring new material in 1963 and since then over 1000 new stories have been commissioned. The most important artist of the Swedish Phantom was a Spaniard living in Sweden: Santiago Jaime Vallvé Peralta who drew over 100 episodes until his death in 2000. In the '80s and '90s he was joined by a number of Spanish artists including Carlos Cruz, Joan Boix, and José Casanovas and it remains an important venue for Spanish artists today.

Soon after the birth of their Swedish ventures both Bardon and S.I. began to make connections in Germany which would prove to be the longest lasting market for Spanish creators. Trying to get a sense of the Spanish involvement in the vast, sprawling mass of German publishing is a herculean task, but broadly falls into two distinct areas: comic strips for Bastei and Rolf Kauka, and covers for the German equivalent of the pulps, or Romanheft (literally "cheap paperbacks") which still proliferate today. Bastei's closest American equivalent was probably Dell which quite happily published books, comics, magazines, and just about anything which might potentially find an audience. Both companies also shared an inherent conservatism when it came to comics, with Bastei's output in particular being almost universally bland and unchallenging. Bastei published numerous children's comics such as *Buffalo Bill, Lasso, Conny, Bessy* (Germany's Lassie), and *Felix the Cat* but with seemingly few outstanding local artists to draw them was extremely reliant on Spanish creators. The German titles may not have paid as much as British or American comics but the regular work was enough to keep numerous Spanish artisans busy. Creators such as Antonio Correa, Andrés Balcells, Jaume Forns, and Vicente Torregrosa spent much of their careers toiling for Bastei. In the late '70s/early '80s the company launched a number of successful horror titles, including *Spuk Geschichten,* and *Gerspenster Geschichten* which mixed American reprints (from Gold Key, a splinter line from Dell) with Spanish drawn originals from Carlos Prunes, Jesús Pena, and Amador Garcia.

Some of the more interesting German comics, however, originated directly with the Spanish agencies S.I. and Bardon. *Roy Tiger* was an S.I. originated feature set in India which ran throughout the '60s in the *Lasso* comic, and later in its own title. Altogether 79 episodes were drawn by some of S.I.'s best artists including Carlos Giménez, Esteban Maroto, and Adolfo Usero. Carlos Giménez proved to be a particular favourite in Germany with his strips appearing in *Mick and Muff, Kiko 2000,* and *Tom Berry* and with his *Delta 99* and *Danny Futuro* strips finding success in syndication. Later in the '70s S.I.'s *Kung Fu* (unrelated to the ABC TV series) found a receptive audience where it outlived the Spanish version by several years. This cash in on the martial arts craze owed a lot to the *Kung Fu* television show but rose above its origins with quality artwork from José Ortiz, Luis Bermejo, and Jordi Bernet and it also spawned a Romanheft fiction magazine; *Kung Fu Western.*

In the early '70s Bardon made an important connection with the venerable humor artist and publisher Rolf Kauka to introduce more mature material to the German market, the first example of which was *Pip International* in 1972. *Pip international* was a comics magazine which had started life reprinting French strips, but Bardon introduced a number of much sexier features including *Odysseus* by Carlos Giménez, *Korsar* by Esteban Maroto, *Wat 69* by Jordi Bernet, and *Otto Pip* by Jesús Blasco. The following year Bardon began supplying strips to Kauka's *Primo* anthology title which has since been regarded as one of the most important German comics. Alongside Palacios' *Manos Kelly* and work by José Bielsa and Jaime Brocal Remohi's Conan-esque *Kronan* the agency created several memorable strips. Perhaps the best remembered was Jordi Bernet's post-Apocalyptic *Andrax*, the strip that first established him as an important artist. Other popular features included the pirate strip *Captain Terror* drawn by Maroto and Ramón Sola; another Maroto strip *The Cosmos Crew* (later reprinted in Warren's *1984* magazine) and features by Josép Gual, Carlos Cruz, and Rafael Mendez' jungle boy strip *Kuma*. Sadly, *Primo* was abandoned in 1974 when Kauka decided to retire to his American ranch though various episodes of *Andrax, Kuma,* and *Captain Terror* emerged over the next few years in titles like *Super Action, Action Comics,* and *Zack*.

If the market for more mature comics failed to take hold in a major way it might be due to the astonishing success of their Romanhefte pulps which remain a significant part of the publishing field in the country today. By the '60s these descendants of the old dime novels (or their German equivalent) had become standardized into the same format as American comic books, with glossy cover stock and 64 pages of text. Typically they shared the same genres that had filled the American pulps: crime, science fiction (personified by *Perry Rhodan*), westerns, wr, and romance, published by a few large houses including Pabel, Bastei, Moewig, Kelter, Marken, and Zauberkreis. The first Spanish artists appeared on Romanhefte covers in the mid-'60s, in Pabel's *Kommisar-X* and *Wild West Roman* titles, arranged through the Ortega agency. José Ortega had worked for S.I. and brought with him a number of the top Spanish painters including Ángel Badía Camps, Noiquet, Rafael Cortiella, and the little known Rafael Griera. By the early '70s Spanish talent had spread throughout the whole genre, particularly with the growth of a new generation of Horror titles led by Bastei's John Sinclair.

Throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s the German Romanheft market provided an enormous amount of work for artists through the

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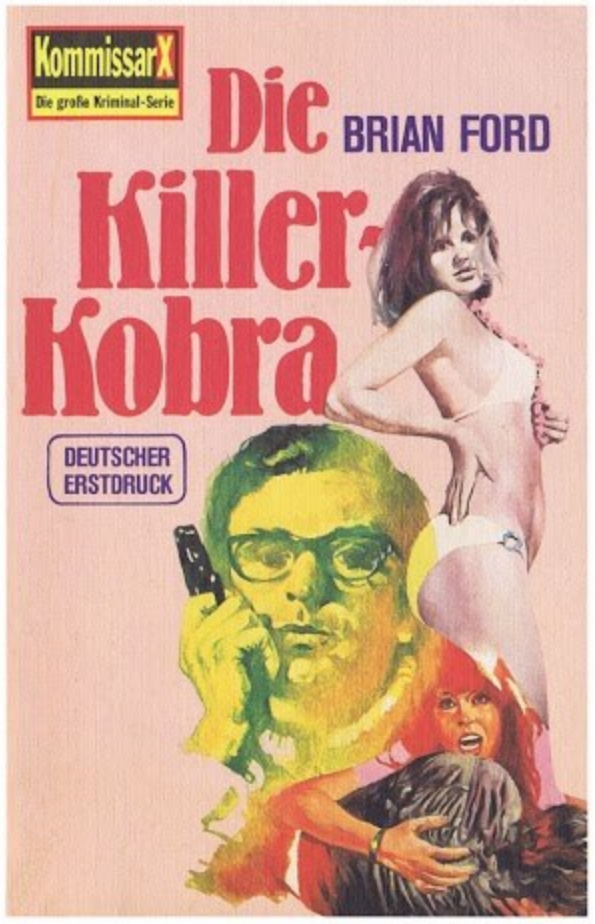

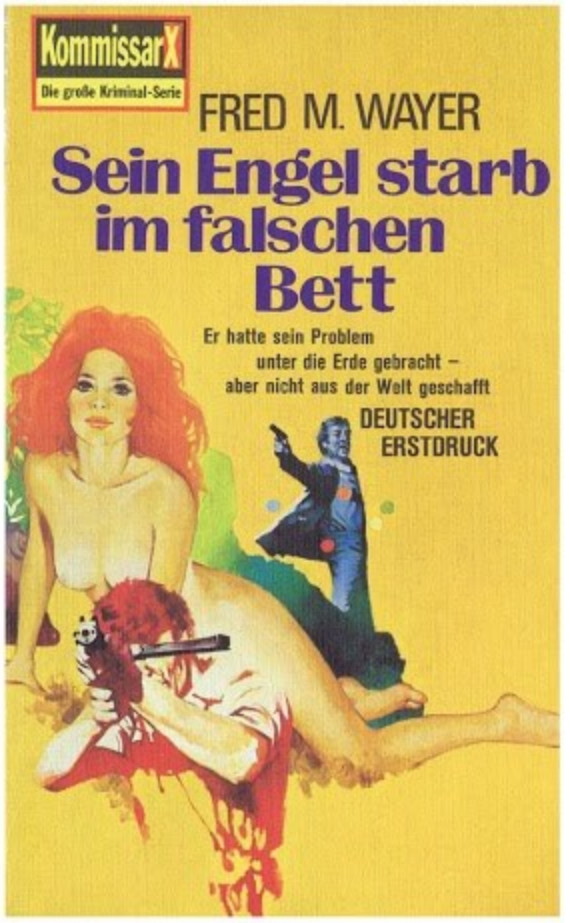

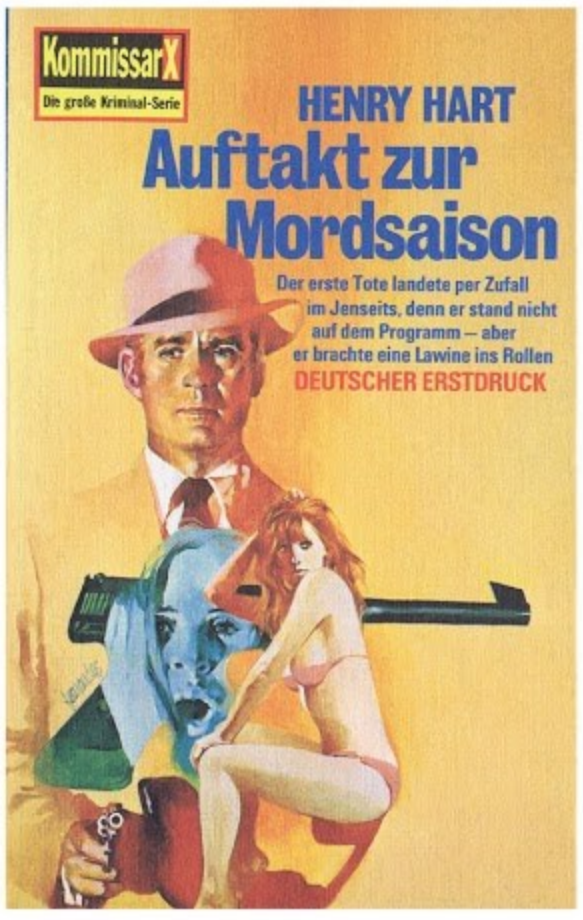

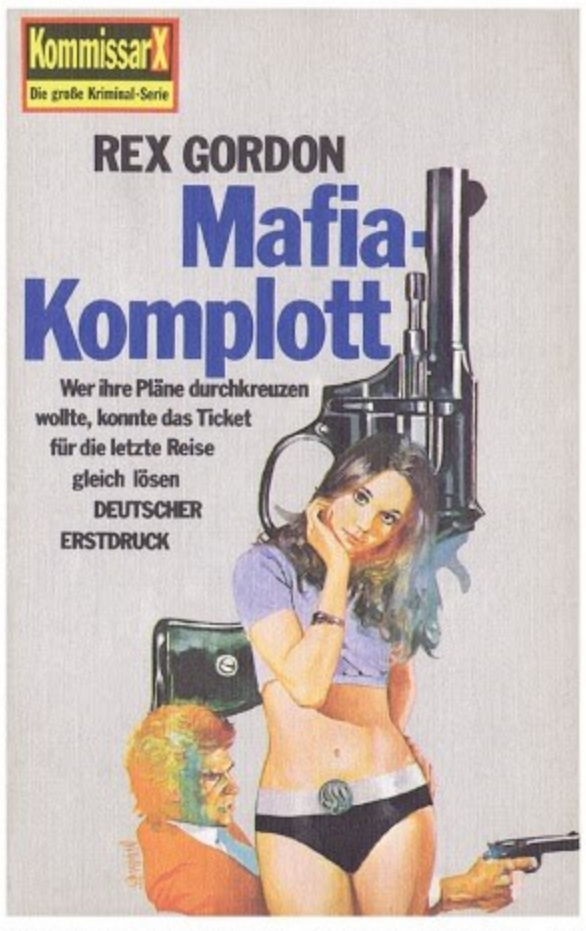

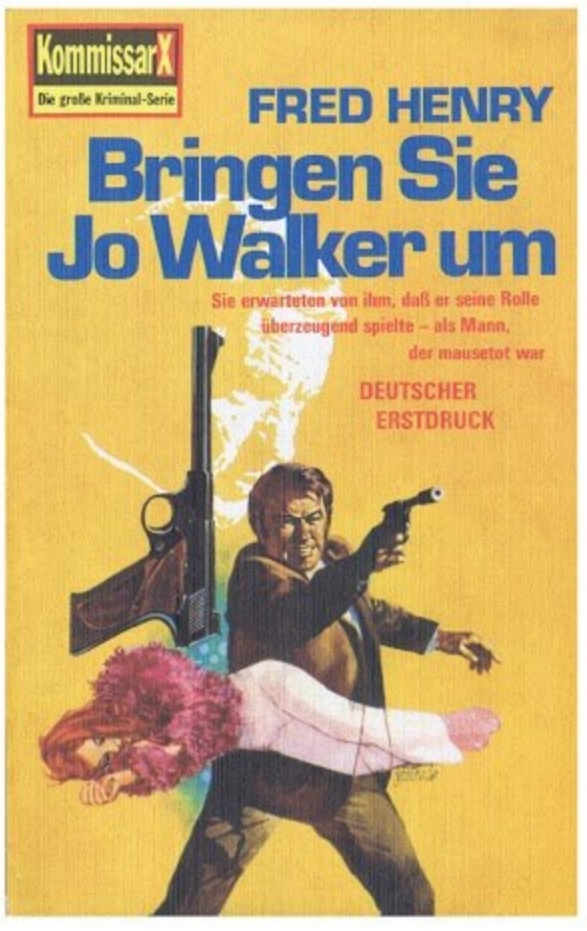

Fernando Fernández, *Kommisar-X.* 1972–1975.

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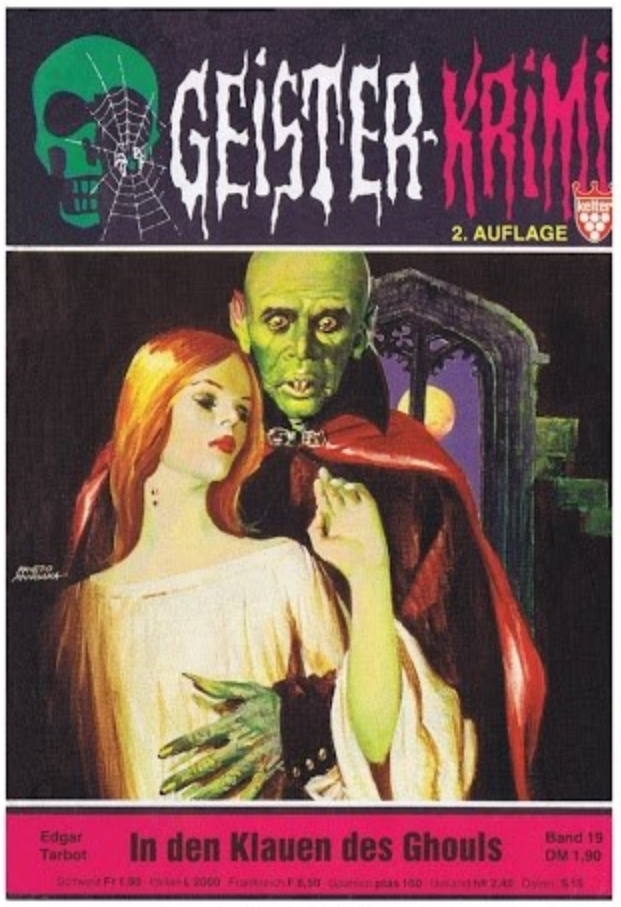
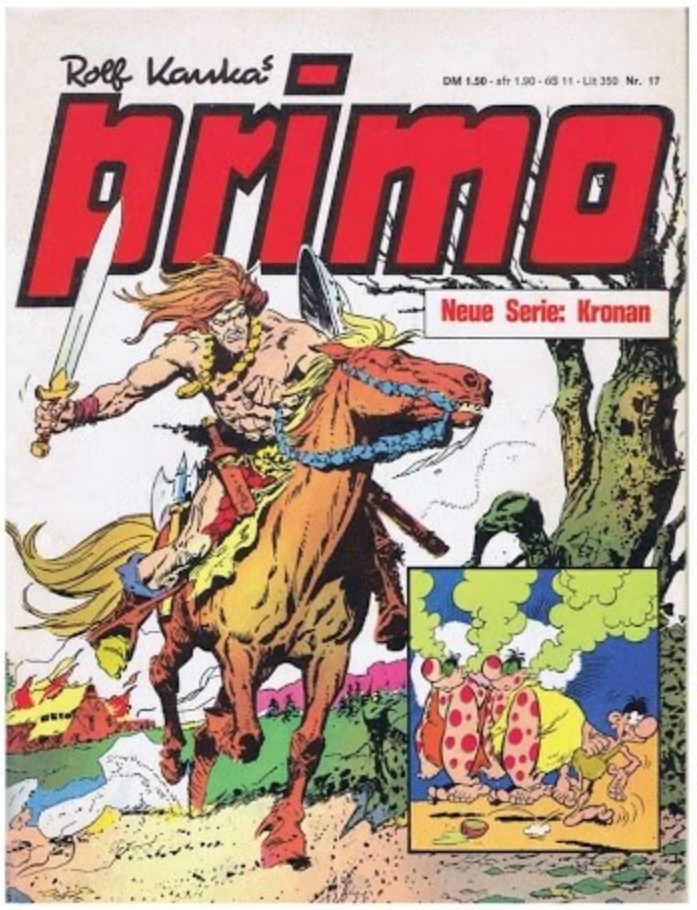
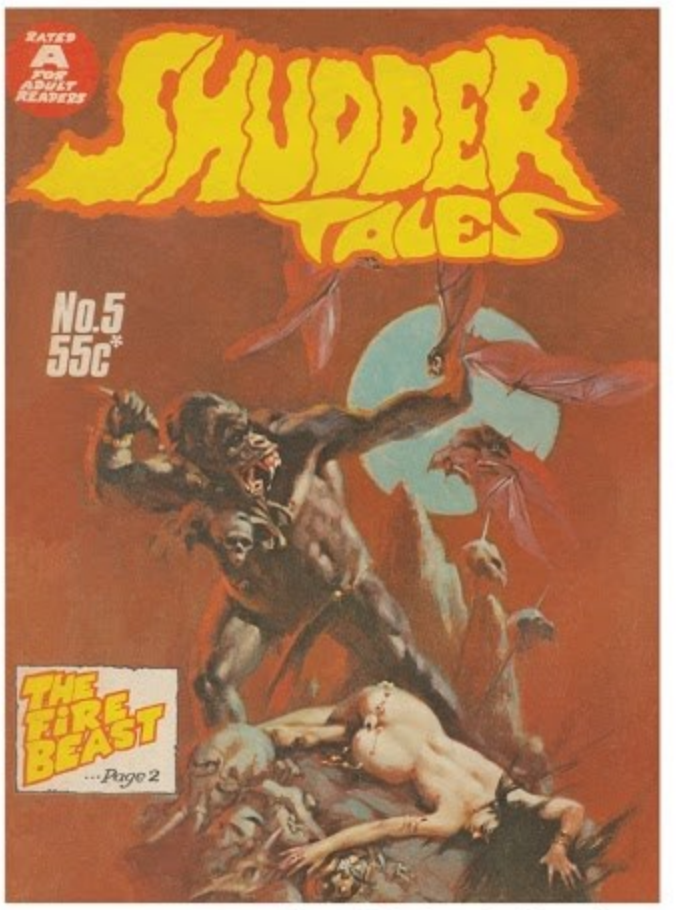


Prieto Muriana, *Geister-Krimi 2*



Jaime Brocal Remohi, *Primo 17*



Albert Pujolar, *Shudder Tales 5*

Ortega (later Interpubli), S.I., and Norma agencies. Crime was in decline throughout the '70s but not before Pabel's *Kommisar-X* and *Flierdermaus* titles ran an enormous number of alluringly inventive covers by Fernando Fernández and José María Miralles. The vast number of western titles included the likes of *Western King, Lady Derringer, Red River Jim, Santana, Colt 45,* and the sexy-western title *Lassiter.* Bizarre western hybrids included *Geister Western* (ghost western), *Kung Fu Western*, and *Redlight Ranch* (western prostitutes). The many impressive western cover artists included Jordi Penalva, Sebastia Boada, Jordi Longaron, Prieto Muriana, Faba, Maren, and Domingo, but the star was undoubtable regular *Lassiter* cover artist Sanjulián.

In 1968 an issue of Zauberkreis' crime romanheft *Silber-Krimi* by "Dan Shocker" (Jurgen Grasmuck) introduced the new concept of the Grusel-Romane, or horror novel. Within a few years all the major publishers had their own horror titles: *Macabros, Silber Grusel-Krimi,* and *Larry Brent* from Zauberkreis, *Vampir Horror-Roman* and Gaslicht from Pabel and a whole shelf full of horror from Bastei including *Professor Zamorra, Gespenster-Krimi, Damona King, Mitternachts Roman, Damonen-land, Mark Hellmann, Melissa,* and the all-conquering John Sinclair. Created by Jason Dark (Helmut Rellergerd) in 1973, John Sinclair is a British police inspector, or more accurately a Ghost-detective, very much a forerunner of DC's John Constantine; and has proven to be immensely successful, appearing in over 2000 stories to date. The series' principal cover artist for its first 30 years was S.I.'s Vicente Ballestar who painted over 1000 covers. The visual template of the Grusel-Romane genre is very much based on the Spanish cover artists and numerous Warren, Skywald, and Dossier Negro covers have been recycled on these over the decades. New art has been provided by a who's who of Spanish horror including Sanjulián, Boada, Maroto, Longaron, Segrelles, Faba, Jad, Prieto, Pujolar, Ripoll, Enrich, Camps, and Sommer, far outnumbering their output in American comics.

While the '70s horror boom was taking hold in Germany, a more salacious counterpart of sexy-horror comics were finding a ravenous audience in Italy. Though Italy had its own sizable workforce, the publisher Ediperiodici utilized numerous Spanish artists on sleazy pocket sized titles like *Terror, Oltretomba, Jolanda,* and *Terror-Blu.* Some of the more notable artists on these titles include Alfonso Azpiri, Luis M Roca, Maria Dembilio, Sarompas, Xavier Musquera, Leopoldo Sanchez, Eustaqio Segrelles, and, astonishingly, the great Víctor de la Fuente. One imagines, having complained about drawing endless war strips for the UK, this was at least an interesting change of scenery for the artist where he would get to draw pretty girls instead of soldiers. De La Fuente also created 12 dynamic issues of his own western comic *Mortimer* which was later reprinted in France. Spanish artists could occasionally be found throughout the '70s in titles like *Corriere Boy* (Miralles, Fernández) and *Bliz* (Jesús Blasco) while Jordi Longaron painted around 200 romance covers for Mondadori's I romanzi paperback series. However the Spanish would only find significant critical success in Italy years later in the '90s.

Australia was the last major territory to be conquered by the Spanish when the K. G. Murry company initiated a line of Warren reprints in 1974, alongside successful launches of Carlos Giménez' *Gringo* (rechristened Ringo) and S.I.'s ever popular *Kung Fu* (replacing Murray's Marvel reprints after that franchise was pilfered by a rival). A year later K. G. Murray was bought up, but soon after, a new company named Gredown quickly appeared, supposedly owned by Greg Murray of the same publishing family. Over the next decade, Gredown published at least 340 magazines (some historians suggest possibly as many as 500) with a bewildering series of titles and wildly varying contents. With Warren and Skywald (published by Page) material ensconced elsewhere, S.I. trawled the darkest reaches of American and Spanish publishing to put together a strange variety of features. Any Gredown title might mix Charlton or Atlas stories from America with quality Spanish features from *Cimoc, Terror*, or *Delta 99*, alongside bargain basement curios from SOS or Editorial Vilmar. Thrillingly, the company adored creating short lived or one-shot titles with the most enjoyably trashy names like *Shriek of Despair, Tentacles of Terror*, and Chain of Pain. But however varied their contents, the magazine's covers were usually beautiful, sharing a lot of the same material from Dossier Negro or the Romanhefts, but also featuring many new images from talents like Jad, Maroto, Segrelles, and Boada. Gredown was bought up in 1984 and their comics abandoned though by this point a newly enlivened Spanish publishing scene had emerged, creating home-grown work for the nations artistic stars.

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CHAPTER 09

The Magazine Revolution

If 1983 was the year when the link with American comics was severed, back home in Spain the publishing scene had never been more exciting. New publishers had emerged, either inspired or directly involved in the partnership with Warren, intent on taking the American model into new, more mature areas. Just as Warren had been re-invigorated by the influx of Spanish talent so too had it in turn directly inspired the birth of the adult Spanish comics magazine. The first flowering of this inspiration appeared as early as 1968 when Ibero Mundial released the first Spanish horror magazine *Dossier Negro* which was clearly indebted to the ground-breaking early years of *Creepy* and *Eerie*. For its first 23 issues the title featured entirely new strips drawn by mostly young, local talent including Alfonso Font, Leopoldo Sanchez, and cover artist Marti Ripoll. But Ibero had enjoyed a close relationship with S.I. going back to its first comic, *Claro De Luna* in 1959 and almost as soon as Josép Toutain had made his first connection with Jim Warren he was licensing Warren strips to Ibero. *Dossier Negro* would eventually run for 217 issues, outliving Warren by five years and in the process established a format and subject matter which was to prove immensely popular in Spain.

Dossier Negro was soon joined by *Vampus* (in 1971) and *Rufus* (1973) both of which also reprinted Warren material, at which point the parent title broadened its reach to include horror strips from Skywald, Red Circle, and DC, along with material from Italy, Argentina, and the UK. It didn't particularly matter that certain American publishers might be sworn enemies, in Spain it all went into the same melting pot. In 1974, Ibero editor Jose Maria Arman created a new imprint called Garbo Comics which took over *Vampus* and *Rufus*, adding *Vampirella*, *The Spirit*, and *Famous Monsters* to his line-up. In the early '70s Pepe González' *Vampirella* strips had been published in heavily censored form in Ibero's humor title *Mata Ratos* but were largely released unscathed in her own comic (though overt nudity was usually covered up). Interestingly, as the Warren and Skywald covers gradually ran out, Garbo/Ibero started to commission new paintings from S.I. mainstays such as Enrich, Sanjulián, Pujolar, Segrelles and Jad. Many Garbo titles included new illustrations from Auraleón and most issues of *Vampus* included centrefold posters by all the best Warren artists making these extremely attractive packages.

Elsewhere, Ibero's success had not gone unnoticed and a myriad of similar publications flooded the market. Editorial Vilmar were first off the blocks with *Panico* in 1972, quickly followed by the long-running *Escorpion* the following year. These were soon joined by *Terror Graffico* and *Macabro* from Ursus, *Horror* and *Horus* from Producciones, *SOS* from Valenciana, *Tarot* from Andina, *Delta* from Gyesa, and *Morbo* from Bruguera. With the best American material monopolised by S.I., these other titles had to produce their own strips, often with mixed results, or scour the further reaches of South America or Italy for suitable material. But however uneven their contents, the horror titles established a place on the newsstands for comics aimed at an older readership which would flower spectacularly in the '80s.

Josép Toutain had dabbled with publishing as early as 1974 with a small humor collection by Alfonso Figueras called *Shock*, which was sold both in Spain and through Warren's Captain Company merchandise pages. This was followed up two years later with a series of intermittent artist monographs called *Cuando El Comic Es Arte* (*When is the Comic Art*) and a couple of glossy co-productions with Warren: *The Odd Comic World of Richard Corben* and *The Vampirella Special*, both in 1977. In 1976 S.I. packaged the monthly *Kung Fu* for Editorial Amaika just as it had in Germany and Australia; while the agency was not the publisher per se, the contents were entirely generated in-house. But when José Maria Arman decided to close Garbo's comic division in 1978 it provided the impetus Toutain needed to become a full time publisher. The first release under the new Toutain Editor imprint was a Spanish version of Warren's *1984*, released only five months after the parent title was first published. This was a fitting choice since Josép Toutain had inspired *1984*'s creation in the first place. He had approached Warren in 1975 with the concept

Jordi Penalva, *1984 (Toutain edition) 64.* 1984.

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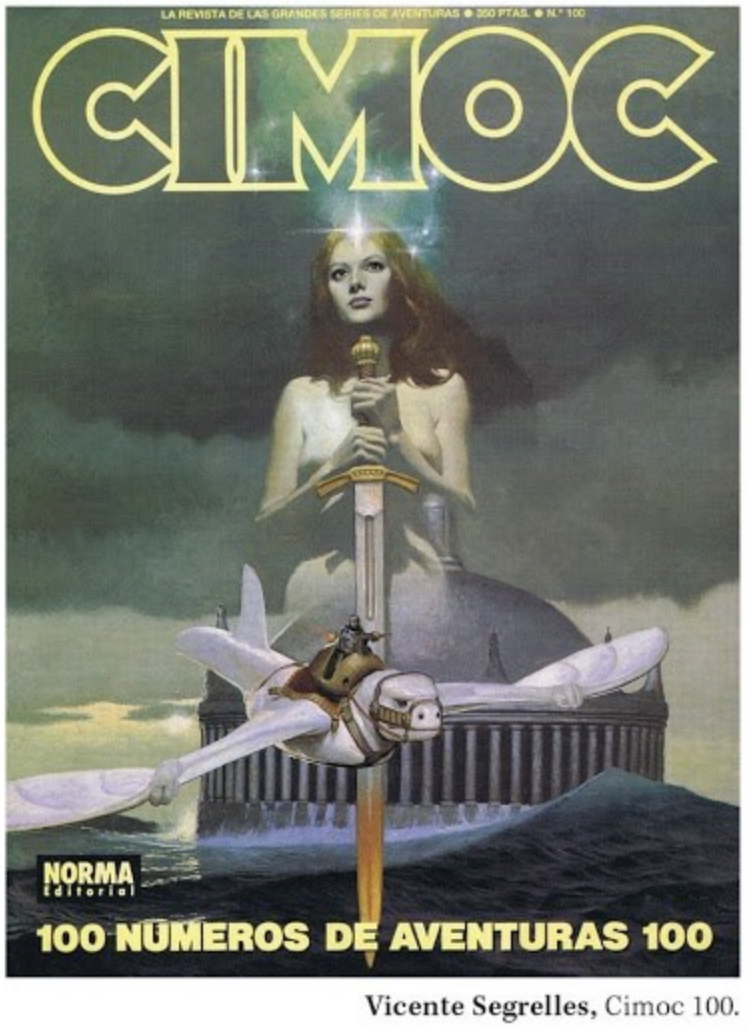
Sanjulián, *Cimoc Numero Extra 4.*



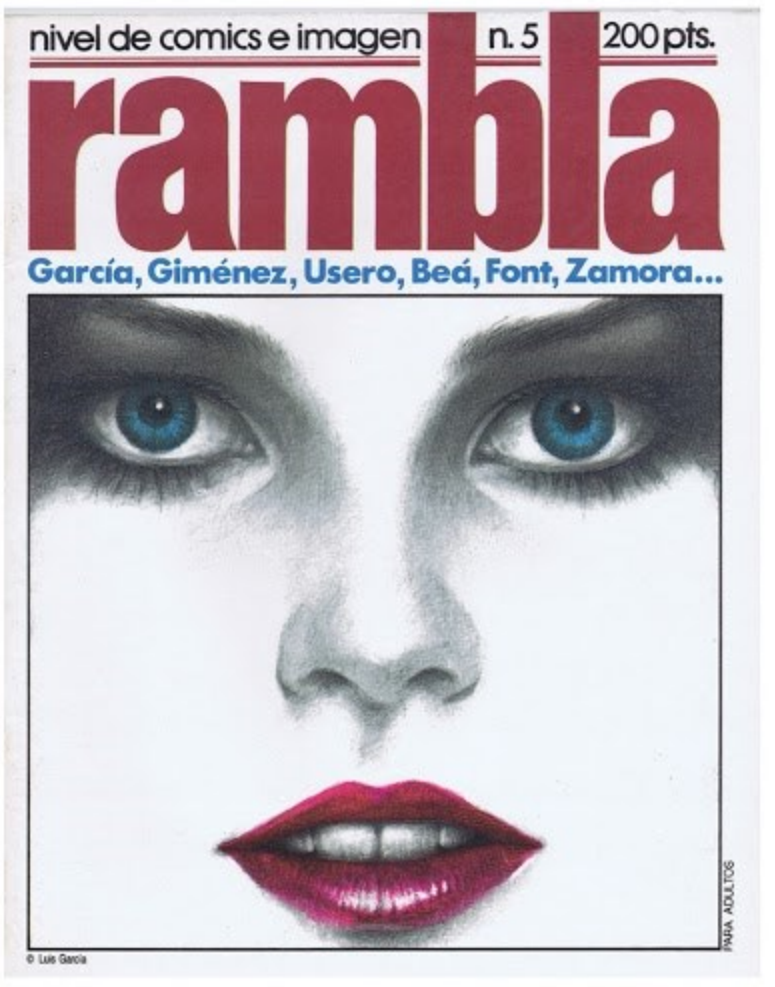
Vicente Segrelles, Cimoc 100.

for a Science Fiction magazine called *Yesterday, Today...Tomorrow*, even going so far as to commission (and write) several strips which were printed up in a dummy copy (print run 12 copies!). Warren felt the concept and title was unwieldy but the notion of a Science Fiction magazine clearly resonated with him which three years later resulted in the beautifully drawn, if outrageously written, *1984*.

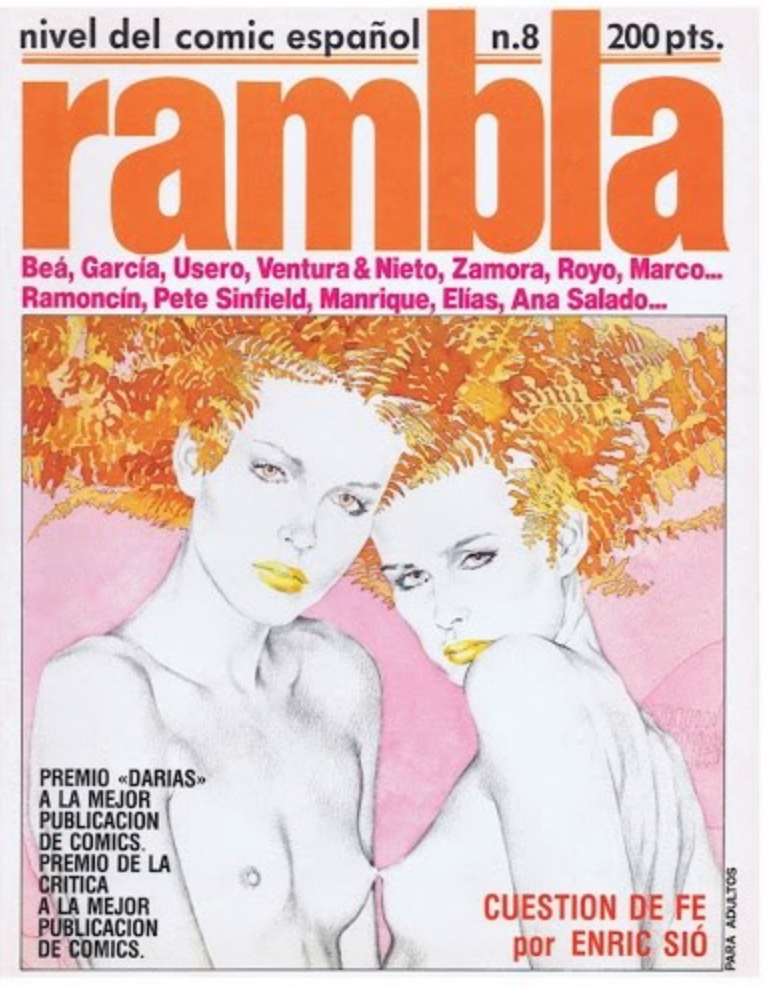
The Spanish *1984*'s immediate success spawned a sister title: *Creepy*, in 1979, and *Comix Internacional* the following year. From this point on Josép Toutain found himself running two parallel companies — S.I. would continue to find work for its artists and syndicate strips internationally while Toutain Editor published three monthly comics and an ongoing number of high quality graphic albums (many of which were also co-published in America under the S.I. affiliate Catalan Comics imprint). Toutain's magazines delighted in far higher printing values than their American counterparts with good paper stock, frequent color, and a beautiful sense of design and typography from Marti Ripoll. Their contents reflected S.I.'s global reach, mixing Warren reprints with new home grown material and the pick of the world's finest artists. *1984* was, unsurprisingly, very much science fiction-based and featured Richard Corben's *Den* and Frank Thorne's *Ghita of Alizarr* along with new Spanish strips such as Fernández's *Zora*, Bernet's *Kraken*, and strips by Argentinian master Juan Giménez. *Creepy*, for its part, included *Vampirella* by González, *Dracula* by Fernández, Bernet and Abuli's *Torpedo* and *Jack the Ripper* by Ortiz and Segura.

Comix International had a less genre-based approach to its material bringing in strips from around the world by Will Eisner, Alberto Breccia, Milo Manara, Horacio Altuna, Solano Lopez, and Alex Toth, along with Spanish creators Giménez, Bernet and Víctor de la Fuente. In addition to their strips, all of Toutain's magazines featured articles and interviews with artists, comics, or illustration and were visually immensely attractive packages. It is tempting to imagine what would have happened to Warren if the company had adopted Toutain's more internationalist approach to material and far superior production values. In Spain, his success almost immediately inspired the publishing phenomenon which became known as the Adult Magazine explosion.

By 1979 Rafael Martinez' Norma agency had emerged as a serious rival to S.I. building up a stable of top Spanish creators and it was almost inevitable that it too would become a publisher. The first few Norma releases were actually a series of portfolios by Pepe González and others but in 1981 it became a publisher when it bought up the Riego Comics line, taking over the western-themed *Hunter* and, more significantly, the Fantasy monthly *Cimoc*. Like Toutain's titles *Cimoc* was glossy, well designed, and with lots of color but without S.I.'s global reach it, by default, featured a higher percentage of home grown talent. Over the span of its 14 years *Cimoc* featured many series which epitomize the vision and craftsmanship of Spain's finest creators including *The Mercenary* by Vicente Segrelles, *Hombre*, and *Atilla* by Ortiz and Segura, *Frank Cappa* by Sommer, *Lorna* by Azpiri, Clark and Kubrick, *Rohner* and *Taxi* by Font, *Bogey* by Sanchez and Segura, *Chantal* by González, and *Sarvan* by Bernet.



Luis García Mozos, *Rambla 5.*



Enric Sió, *Rambla 8.*

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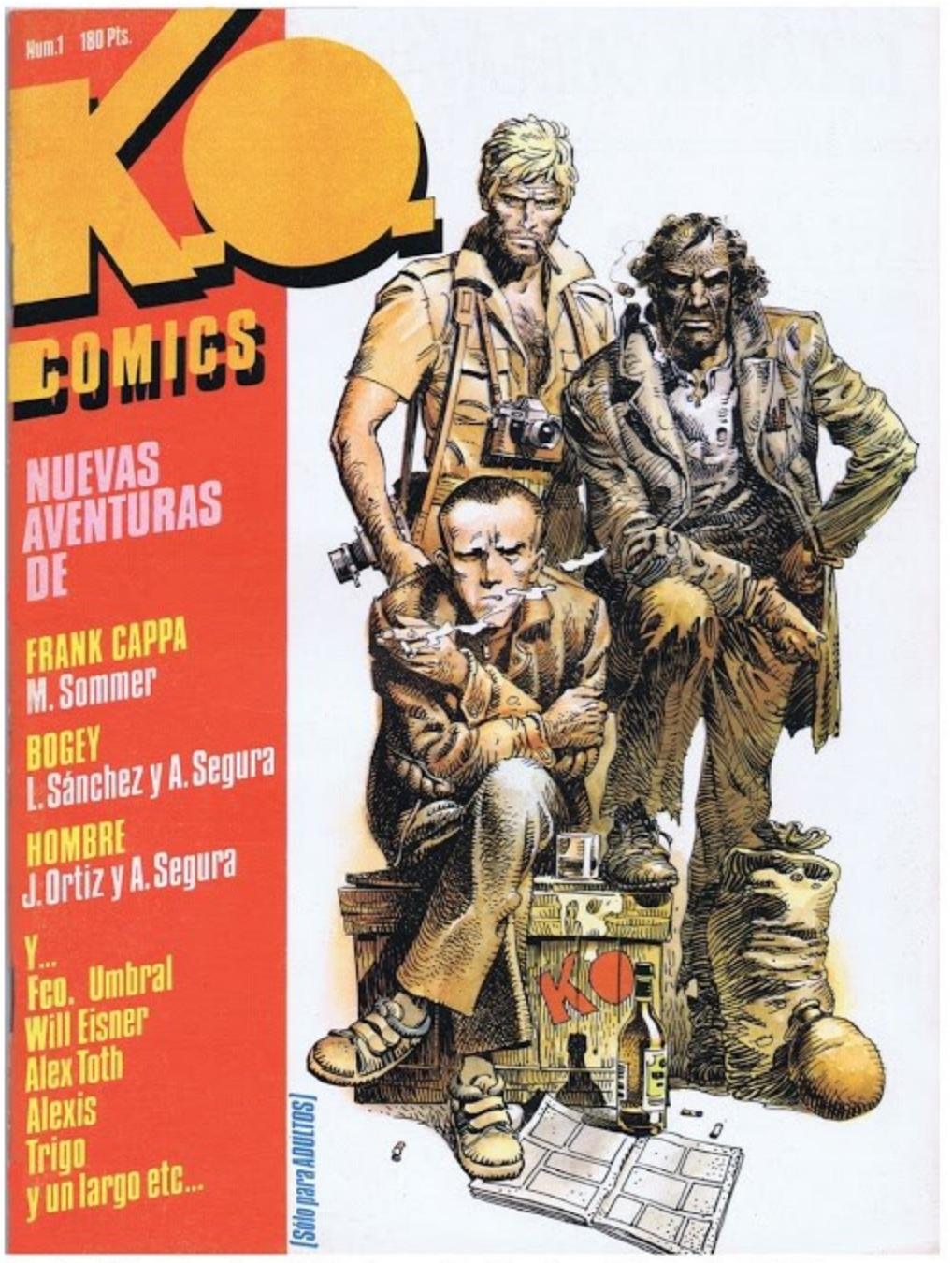
It is one of the ironies of the magazine explosion of the '80s that while many of the titles gave space to emerging talent, relatively few new names broke through to find any sort of mainstream popularity. Undoubtedly Norma's biggest discovery was Ruben Pellejero, who, along with writer Jorge Zentner, created the wonderful 1930s era adventure strip *Dieter Lumpen*. Visually, Pellejero was in some ways a link between the classical drawing ability of the Golden Generation and the more minimalist, French-inspired simplicity that was to follow. In late 1981 Norma had launched a companion title to *Cimoc*, *Cairo*, which championed the work of French stars such as Moebius, Jacques Tardi, and Yves Chaland as well as showcasing a number of striking new talents. Along with Pellejero, *Cairo* introduced the work of Daniel Torres with his retro-futuristic SF series *Rocco Vargas*, drawn in a style that had far more in common with *Metal Hurlant*, or even *Tintin*, than it did with the established Spanish style. Looking back at the era, it's intriguing to note that many of the most successful strips were drawn by the likes of Font, Bernet, Azpiri, and Segrelles, artists who had not been picked up by Warren and were far from being the biggest stars of the '70s. It is also true that almost none of the next generation of artists, from Pellejero on, worked in the traditional style of the Golden Generation. So while the magazines gave a platform for these many great names to express themselves, they also marked the end of that visual tradition.

The Spanish were some of the first comic artists to take an interest in ownership and syndication of their own strips, often by the financial necessity of compensating for the poor pay from their major publishers. Not surprisingly, some saw the magazine boom as the perfect opportunity to take charge of their careers and become publishers themselves. Luis García Mozos already had publishing experience with *Trocha/Troya*, so in 1982 José Maria Beá felt he would be the perfect partner with whom to co-publish a new comic. Garcia had spent the '70s placing his work with a variety of mainstream and left field publishers and had built up a relationship with Nueva Frontera (themselves serious players in the magazine boom with their reprint titles *Blue Jeans, Totem, Bumerang,* and *Metal Hurlant*). With money from Frontera and strips from old friends Font, Giménez, Marika, and Usero, the first issue of their new magazine *Rambla* emerged in 1982. *Rambla* was unique among the magazines in rejecting any defining genre, preferring instead to allow its creators full self-expression. Artistically, the title was a triumph with highlights being Garcia's stunningly drawn, philosophical masterpiece *Nova 2*, new work from Enric Sió, and the full flowering of Beá and Usero as artists. But by this time the collective was entering a crowded market and *Rambla* succeeded in selling only 30% of its 70,000 print run. Garcia and Beá bought out Frontera, the other artists moved on and the title emerged refreshed. Flushed with the possibilities of publishing, the pair released numerous companion titles such as *Rampa Rambla, Rambla Quineal* and *Rambla Rock*. They mixed classic reprints from Guido Crepax and Alberto Breccia with work from young discoveries such as Antonio Navarro, Ana Miralles (one of the very few female artists at this time), Luis Royo, and the painter Herikberto. Sales eventually rose to 29,000 per issue, an impressive figure for such an eclectic, challenging mix.

Soon after *Rambla* fist emerged another collective centred around Leopoldo Sanchez and writer Mariano Hispano sprung up: Ediciones Metropol. Metropol's first release was itself also called *Metropol* and featured hardboiled crime stories set in an imaginary city also called Metropol. The title's main attraction was its stellar line up of creators



Manfred Sommer, Jose Ortiz, Leopoldo Sanchez, *K.O. Comics 1*. 1984.

— Sanchez, Ortiz, Sommer, Bermejo, Bernet, Trillo, Segura, and Abuli. A second title, *K.O. Comics*, was launched the following year with the collective bringing along their big hitting strips from *Cimoc*: *Bogey, Hombre*, and *Frank Cappa*, joined by Alex Toth's legendary *Bravo for Adventure*. It had the top writers and artists in the country and some of the most popular strips of the decade, how could it fail? Four issues later it was cancelled. Soon after that Garcia pulled the plug on *Rambla* and all its off-shoots. A sudden 50% rise in the cost of paper in an already crowded market led to a spate of publisher bankruptcies and the dream of a vibrant Spanish comics market was beginning to crumble and fade.

In 1985 Toutain cancelled *Creepy* despite sales of 140,000 per issue, citing a lack of high quality strips to reprint (having finally exhausted Warren's material), though it was briefly revived in 1990. It still had *1984* (by this point retitled *Zona 84*), its on-going graphic novel collections and in 1986 *Comix Internacional* was rebranded as the erotic-themed *Totem El Comix*. However in 1992, the publishing arm of the company was finally wound up with Toutain's once mighty empire reduced to the art agency he started with. Norma cancelled *Cairo* in 1991 but persisted with *Cimoc* until in 1995 it published its 176th and final issue. By this point, however, its graphic novel releases had long become the focus of the company and continue to be to this day. Norma remains a significant force in Spanish publishing though most of its focus is on repackaging material from America, Europe, and Japan. Select Spanish creators, such as Pellejero, and a new generation of less mainstream voices still have a presence in the company but they are no longer its main focus. So, with their venues at home closing one by one, what did Spain's Golden Generation do? They did what they always had, they went wherever the work took them.

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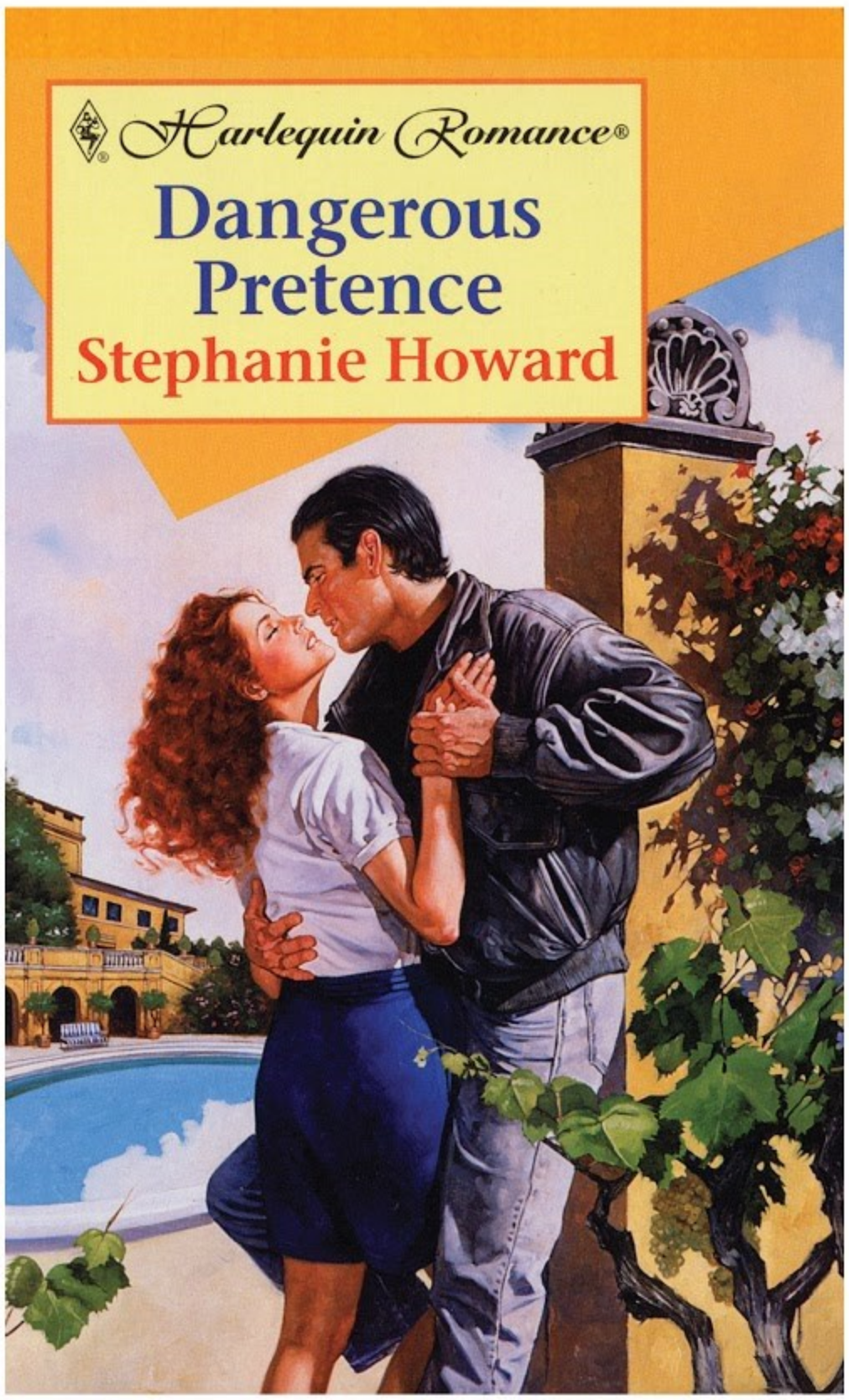
CHAPTER 10

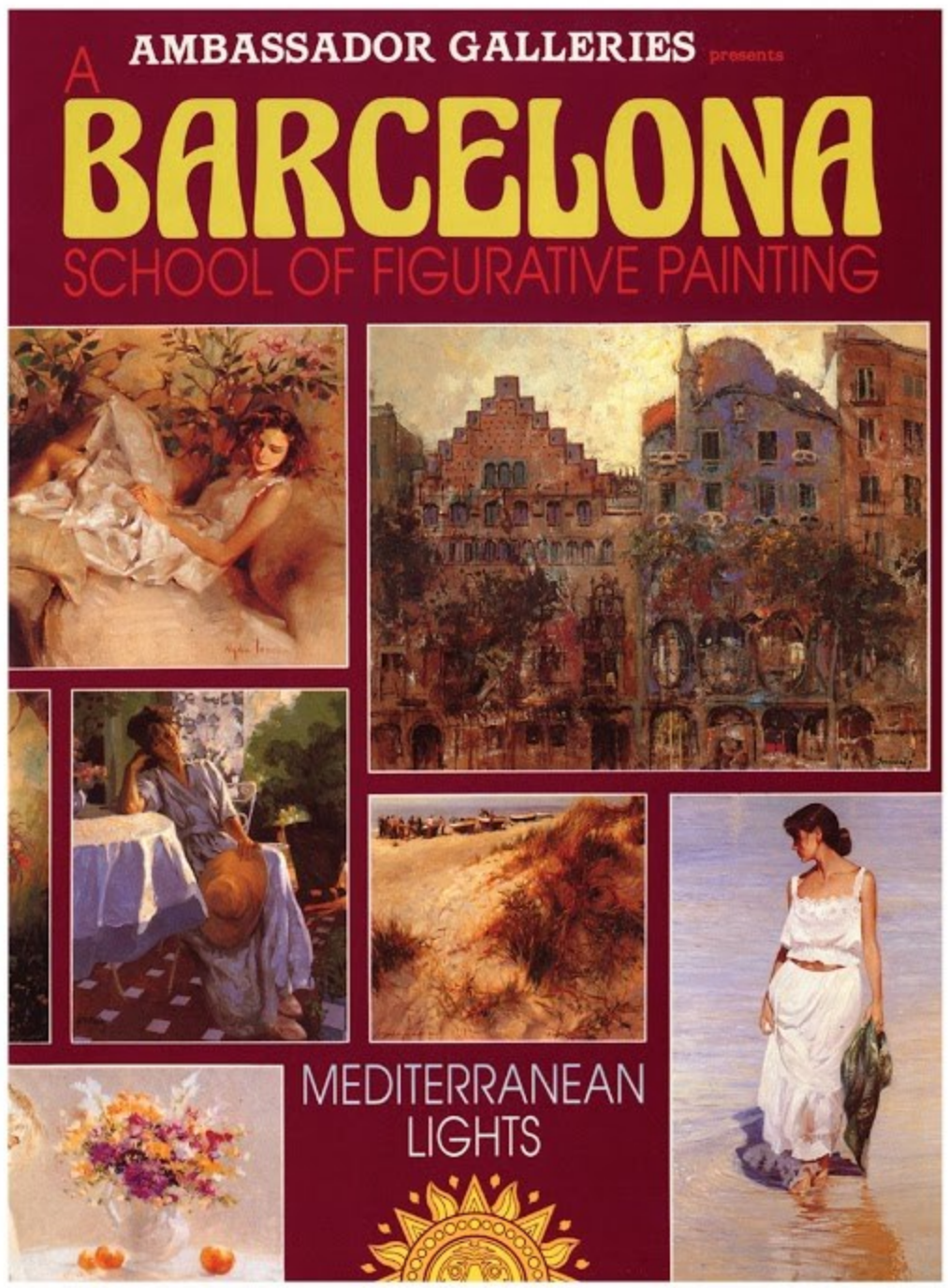
The Last Days

Gabriel Picart was probably the last artist to feel part of Spain's Golden Generation but was born too late to have worked for Warren and never actually worked in comic books at all. Instead, he began his career as an illustrator in Europe and America before moving into fine art, personifying the journey so many Spanish artists would make in the '80s and '90s. Picart was a family friend of Enrich's and as a teenager found himself working in the studio the painter shared with Pepe González. As he explains, "One day an illustrator, from the old times at Selecciones, asked to share their studio. For whatever reason, Enrich and Pepe were not very excited about the idea, and they concocted a ruse with my help. They asked me to move in temporarily to work with them, so that there was no place for anybody else. And this is how I became the third member of the studio, doing my first professional illustrations on a kitchen table. The fact is that we all got along really well, and I ended working together with them for several years, until I got my own studio."

But as a young artist trying to break into the industry in the mid-'80s the agency he turned to was not S.I. "Norma was not paying any better, but at the time I began my art career they were a better agency than Selecciones for finding work in Europe, the main market for most artists. And for some years Norma was as good as S.I. International (Selecciones' sister agency) at finding work in the USA. At that time, things in Selecciones were not always done the way they should, and I am a clear example of that. When I met Enric and Pepe they were working for Selecciones, and I tried to work there at first, too. But they did not pay me much attention; quite likely due to a misunderstanding, and I started my career as a commercial artist at Norma." At this point Norma's line-up of talent included Sanjulián, Enrich, González, Maroto, Sanjulián, Segrelles, Royo, Prieto, and Font, a clear sign of the shifting power among Spanish agencies.



Gabriel Picart, *Harlequin Romance 1309.*



Ambassador Galleries catalogue, 1996.

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Manfred Sommer, *Lassiter 380.*

With the development of digital art, the market for painted covers in America gradually contracted, but the German pulps still remained a constant source of work well into the 21st Century for artists such as Sanjulián, Boada, and Prieto. Picart recalls working for the giant German publishers Bastei: "While at Norma, I mostly worked for Bastei on their horror series *Der Hexer* and a bunch of Western covers. *Der Hexer* was a regular commission process from the start, quite unusual for Bastei. Most artwork intended for the pulps was done in a way that we called syndication. Bastei suggested a bunch of subjects that they required for their novels, e.g. cowboys assaulting a train, an Indian attack, etc. Then the group of 'approved' illustrators freely submitted pencil sketches. When a sketch was approved (which it almost always was), it became a commission. After the color cover had been made for Bastei, it was usual to sell the second rights to the painting on to publishers in other countries. But I was not at Norma long and while I was, I never worked for the US. In the mid-'80s Enrich and Sanjulián decided to leave Norma and work directly for the US market, I joined them due to my loyalty to Enrich, but also because I felt somewhat typecast at the agency. I was convinced I could do much better – and I was right."

Artists including Enrich, Sanjulián, Penalva, and Picart found an enthusiastic market for their paintings with American publishers such as Dell, Scholastic, Harlequin, Bantam, and Reader's Digest throughout the '80s and '90s. However, many of the Spanish artists could see the cover market around the world was contracting, due in part to the rise of digital art, and were also aware of the success some of their old colleagues from the commercial world were enjoying in the fine art arena. As PIcart explains, "In the early-'90s, some former S.I. artists like Beltrán Bofill (a.k.a. Noiquet), Félix Mas, and Joan Martí, among others, were doing very well in the fine arts. As a consequence, several artists pushed Herb Spiers and Josép Toutain to move towards the fine arts. In fact, since I was working directly for S.I. International in New York, I was the one who pushed Herb Spiers the most. Spiers and Toutain could see for themselves that this was a good and natural move in terms of business. In fact, Toutain and James Warren considered the possibility of publishing limited fine art edition prints together. The initial and key point to all this was a group show at the Ambassador Gallery [in New York], where artists like myself who had only been making commercial work up to then, met with former illustrators from Selecciones who had already been in the fine arts for a long time, but had maintained ties with Toutain like Martí, Mas and Lluis Ribas." The Ambassador show took place in November 1996 and featured artwork by Picart, Mas, Marti, Ribas, Ángel Badía Camps, Leopoldo Sanchez, Nydia Lozano, Emilia Castañeda, Fernando Fernandéz, Christian Gaillard, Pedro Roldán, and Román Francés. It was a major success and marked a turning point in the careers of many of S.I.'s painters.

Just before this S.I. had already been diversifying by moving into publishing in America with Catalan Communications, a co-venture between Toutain and S.I's representative in New York Bernd Metz (allowing Herb Spiers to take over the day to day running of the agency). Catalan operated from 1983 to 1991 publishing a wide variety of books, initially collecting together strips from Warren, *Heavy Metal* and S.I.'s Spanish artists, but later including material from France, Italy, and Argentina. Key Spanish works included seven volumes of Jordi Bernet and Carlos Trillo's *Torpedo*, *Rocco Vargas* by Daniel Torres and a number of volumes by the New York-based artist Pepe Moreno, *Casares*. Moreno had debuted during Warren's last few years but made a bigger impact through his work for *Heavy Metal*, Marvel's *Epic Illustrated* and DC Comics. Moreno was also one of the first Spanish artists to explore digital art creation as seen in his DC graphic novel *Batman: Digital Justice*. After the demise of Catalan Communications S.I. moved into licencing with companies like Disney, Warner Bros, and Mattel, working with artists such as Isidre Mones, Carmona, and Francesc Mateu. Famously, S.I. found enormous success with a major series of books starring Barbie drawn by Edmond, Pepe González, and Manfred Sommer.

Josép Toutain died in 1997 and while his agency continued for another decade, the heart had gone out of the company.

Throughout the '80s and '90s the commercial markets for Spanish artists in America and Spain gradually contracted, but there was still work elsewhere in Europe, particularly in the UK and Italy. In the '80s, UK giant Fleetway launched several new titles including a revival of the *Eagle* which ran for 12 years until 1994. The new *Eagle* featured several Spanish artists including Carlos Cruz drawing the legendary *Dan Dare*, Vicente Vano, and the ever popular Jose Ortiz. The era was notable for the emergence of a new generation of British artists at Fleetway, who would later go on to conquer America, leaving little room for Spanish talent. One significant exception however is Judge Dredd co-creator Carlos Ezquerra who has worked for *2000 AD* for almost 50 years now and is widely celebrated as the weekly's most important and popular artist. Fleetway sold off its remaining comic line to the Danish publisher Egmont in the '90s but arch rival DC Thomson has proved to be a much more stubborn supporter of the art form.

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Enrique Badia Romero, *Axa*

Back in the early '60s Bardon had been the first agency to cultivate a market for Spanish artists at DC Thomson, with the Scottish company initially reluctant to use foreign labour. By the '80s however Bardon's Spanish workforce, along with Creacceone's mostly Argentinian artists, had become an integral part of Thomson's talent pool, working in both girls and boys comics. One of the most popular boys comics was *Warlord* which ran until 1986 with gritty War strips drawn by Rezzonico, Jaume Marzal Canós, and Luis Collado. The even longer lasting *Victor* ran for an impressive 31 years, finally closing in 1992 and was drawn for decades by Bardon artists such as Mattias Alonso, Vicente Ibanez, Federico Maidagan, and Manuel Benet. Most impressively, the digest-sized *Commando* is still being published today and over the decades has provided work for numerous Spanish stars including Carlos Pino, Jorge Macabich, Rosendo Franch, and Josep Nebot. Another small format success for the company was *Starblazer,* which ran from 1979 to 1990, with art from Jose Casanovas, both

Purita Campos, *Mandy and Judy 78.* 1992.

senior and junior, Jesus Redondo, and Jaime Ortiz. But as the markets for adventure comics across Europe shrunk, it was the company's girls comics which provided a late refuge for so many Spanish creators. Titles like *Star Love, Emma,* and *Debbie* appeared throughout the '80s, *Mandy* and *Judy* ran until the mid-'90s while the venerable *Bunty* appeared until 2001. While their work might have appeared anonymously, nevertheless artists such as Jorge Badia Romero, Carlos Freixas, Jose Grau, Maria Dembilio, Julio Vivas, Carmen Bernardo, Ana Rodriguez, Eduardo Feito, and Manuel Cuyas were enjoyed and savored by generations of British girls.

At the other end of the age scale, more mature British readers were treated to Spanish artwork over the breakfast table for decades in the strips that appeared in some of the country's top newspapers. Spanish artists were active in newspaper strips as early as the mid-'60s with Jose Ortiz drawing *Caroline Baker;* but it was Enrique Badia Romero's work on *Modesty Blaise* that really raised their profile. *Modesty* was that rarity of strips, a strong, intelligent liberated role model of a female lead. However, after eight years on the strip Romero had ambitions to draw his own creation, and so *Axa* was born in 1978 in the pages of the *Sun*. *Axa* epitomized another peculiar trope of the British newspaper strip; while ostensibly the series was a futuristic barbarian feature set in a dystopian future, in reality the premise was little more than a flimsy pretext for drawing pretty girls in various stages of undress. After *Axa*'s nine year run, Romero returned to *Modesty* for another long stint until the strip's closure in 2001. *Modesty*'s success was something of an aberration however; the prevailing tendency in British strips was far more towards blatant cheesecake. Luis Roca had introduced full frontal nudity into British newspapers with *Scarth* back in 1969, and Josep Gual continued that tradition with his near three decades of service on the *Sun*'s *George and Lynne*. The strip, which was drawn by Gual from 1983 to 2010, centred on a married couple's luxurious middle class life, but was transparently an excuse to linger over Lynne's voluptuous, naked body. Rival paper the *Daily Star* decided to create its own sexy strip in 1988; in their case with the blatant *George and Lynne* clone *Ben and Katie*, it too chose a Spanish artist to draw it; Santiago Hernández, succeeded four years later by Blas Gallego. None had any pretentions to high art, but all were at least beautifully drawn.

Other European countries might not have provided the sheer volume of work that the UK commissioned, but for the elite Spanish creators there was still very much a receptive audience elsewhere. Ruben Pellejero, Víctor de la Fuente, and Alfonso Font continued to find success with their graphic novels (or albums) in France in the late 20th century and beyond. Font was also highly visible in Italy where the Spanish artists were highly prized for their craftsmanship.

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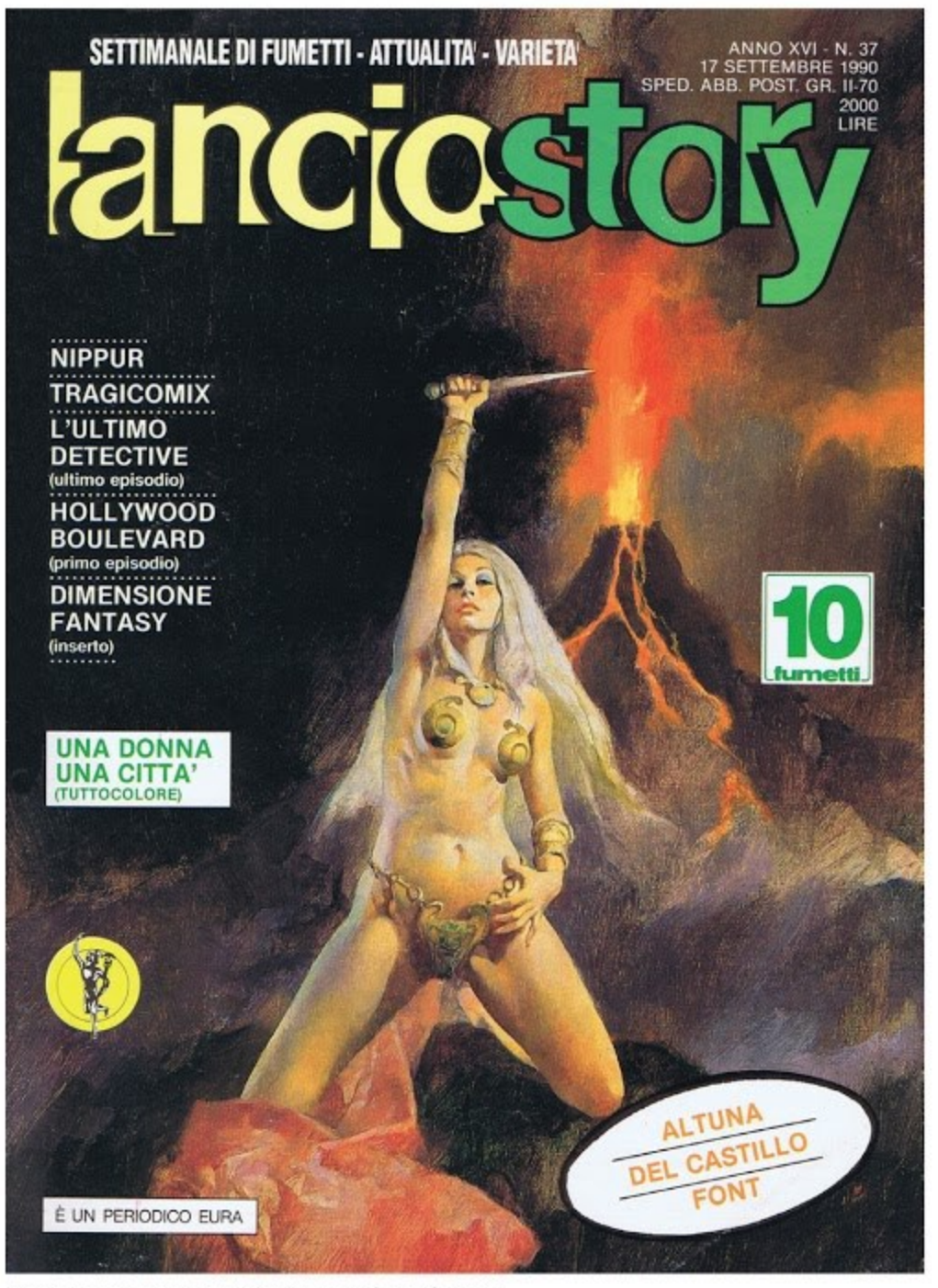
Manfred Sommer, *Tex Albo Speciale 17*

The weekly anthology titles *Skorpio* and *LancioStory* predominantly featured South American creators, but were also highly receptive to Spanish artists. Both Font and Luis Royo have created well over 250 covers for the two titles, with Font's last cover appearing as recently as 2011. Other notable cover artists included Sanjulián, Jad, Fernández, Maroto, and Gonzalez. Inside the magazines, creators like Azpiri, Bermejo, and Ortiz were regulars and almost 1000 episodes of Bernet's *Chiara Di Note* (Clara De Noche) have been printed to date. Italy's most popular and prestigious publisher is Bonelli and here too the Spanish artists have made an impact. Esteban Maroto worked on the Bonelli titles *Brendon* and *Dampyr* from 1999-2013; Jose Ortiz drew several issues of *Magico Vento;* and Ortiz and Font have both drawn the legendary horror strip *Dylan Dog*. But Bonelli's prominence is based primarily on the extraordinary success of the western series *Tex* and it is here that the Spanish have excelled. Jesus Blasco was the first Spaniard to work on the strip (from 1986 to 1994) and he was followed by Ortiz, Font, De La Fuente, and Sommer. The highest accolade as an artist in Italy is to be given the chance to draw an issue of the annual *Tex Albo Speciale*, an oversized, 240 page epic which can take years to draw. Creators of the stature of Magnus, Joe Kubert, and Ivo Milazzo have all drawn issues and it is a measure of the respect given to the Spanish artists that Víctor de la Fuente (in book 5), Jose Ortiz (6) Jordi Bernet (10), Alfonso Font (12) and Manfred Sommer (17) have all been accorded that honor.

Inevitably the 21st century has seen the influence of the Golden Generation wane as tastes change, artists retire and many, sadly, have passed away. It is perhaps a consequence of their diffuse working patterns, with artists appearing literally all over the world, that the true breadth of their achievements has never been fully appreciated. Interestingly, one of the world's most visible comic artists is Spanish, though his name is not as well-known as it deserves to be. Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez emigrated from Spain to Argentina as a small child and started working for DC Comics in 1975 where he quickly became one of the most accomplished artists working in America. For decades he has been DC's principal artist for their licensing department, so wherever their characters appear, be it on a t-shirt, book cover, poster or pencil case, the chances are it was drawn by Lopez. Though stylistically Lopez is not obviously a part of the Golden Generation, he shares their classical draughtsmanship and an appreciation for Alberto Breccia's textures and experimentation. Recently, seemingly without the wider readership realizing it, a second Spanish invasion has been underway, with numerous artists working for Marvel and DC who stylistically owe nothing to their Spanish forefathers, but like Lopez work happily within the superhero idiom.

Over the last few years, there have been so many artists working in the United States that not one but two agents have emerged. David Macho began bringing a portfolio of artists' work with him to San Diego Comic-Con in the late 1990s and began saw his roster, including Ramon F. Bachs, Jesus Saiz and Fernando Blanco, find willing taskers.

However, artistically their inspiration has not come from forerunners like Gonzalez or Ortiz, rather in a clear break with their cultural heritage, this new generation has looked to more mainstream talents like John Byrne, Jim Lee, Alan Davis, Adam Hughes, and Bryan Hitch. The link with the past is severed and perhaps that sense of a specific Spanish identity has been lost.



Jordi Longaron, *Lanciostory 37* (Eura). 1990.

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CHAPTER 11

ARTIST GALLERY

THIS BOOK IS CONCEIVED AS A CELEBRATION OF SPAIN'S GOLDEN Generation and the following pages feature artwork from that era's finest artists. Eighteen of the most important artists are represented by biographies or autobiographies and given a number of extra pages to showcase the breadth of their artistic achievements. Not every artist that deserved to be appreciated became a fan favorite, indeed some terrifically talented artists still languish in complete obscurity. Some artists working almost exclusively in the UK, such as Juan Sole Puyal for instance, will have spent practically their entire careers without a single credited strip to their name. Others, such as Juan Gonzalez Alacreu, Roberto Casarrubio, Jordi Franch and Emilio Frejo remain little known despite the undoubted quality of their artwork. In any collection like this there will inevitably be a degree of subjectivity in the selection of creators, clearly this is one person's choice of artists and my perspective won't necessarily be shared by everybody. I do feel that all the principal creators are well represented but I've also been determined to cast the net wide and there are certainly some lesser known names here. There is an emphasis on those artists who came to prominence working for Warren and I make no apologies for that; not only were that particular group enormously talented, but at Warren they were given the opportunity to express themselves artistically in a way that they had not been before. For many, this period was the most creative of their careers. But one of the purposes behind the book is to present a more complete picture of the Spanish diaspora in the many countries and genres they worked in, and the art selected here is certainly international in its scope. I have also cast the net wider than simply comics, since the division between comics and illustration among Spanish creators has often seemed so amorphous. So many artists moved seamlessly between the worlds of comics, book covers and magazine illustration that the demarcation of professions seems almost meaningless. And, if I'm honest, I didn't want to let a quibble over definitions get in the way of presenting some truly great art. So what we have is a collection of great artists working in comics as interior or cover artists, but represented by the full range of their creativity.

The artists in this gallery section are arranged alphabetically, though in many cases this is not always entirely straightforward. In Spain both the father and mothers surnames are passed on to their children, though the maternal part is not always commonly used. In cases where the artist used both surnames they are listed under the one they are best known by. So for instance Enrique Badia Romero signs his work simply Romero so it makes sense to list him under R. Antonio Bosch Penalva has signed his work both as both Bosch and Penalva over the years, but since his brother Jordi invariably signs his work Penalva it felt right to group them both together under P. Spanish artists love a Pseudonym, or are often know by primarily by their surname (Or in Edmonds case by his first name), and here they are listed under the names by which they are most widely known.

So sit back and prepare to immerse yourself in the world of Spanish comic creators. It is a journey that will take you from British romance comics to American Horror, from Spanish book covers to German pulps, from erotica to fantasy, from experimentation to ultra- realism. It is a collection that will thrill, challenge and amaze you and it is an artistic story that deserves to be celebrated.

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VICENTE ALCAZAR B. 1944

Satanna. Marvel Preview (Marvel) 7 1976.

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Satanna. Marvel Preview (Marvel) 7 1976. Original artwork courtesy of Tom Fleming.

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Artur Aldoma Puig B. 1935

Original artwork from *Zip Nolan*, *Lion* 25th April 1964 (Fleetway).

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Auraleón (Rafael Aura Leon) 1936–93

Rafael Auraleón only ever gave one tantalizing interview and much of his life and career remains obscure. However, it is known that he joined S.I. in 1959 and much of his earliest work was drawn for Syndication to France and the UK. In the UK his work appeared in such comics as *Lone Star, Space Ace, Boyfriend, Romeo,* and *Romance in Pictures*. He was also a powerful war artist and even at this formative stage of his career his strips for British titles like *Commando, Combat,* and *Conflict* in the early '60s were strikingly distinctive. In the mid-'60s he was to be found in Spain drawing for Editorial Manhattan's *Suspense* comic but in 1968 he was back in the UK drawing beautifully for *Air Ace* and *Commando* in a visually dense style which was already recognizably his own. This was followed by more western strips for Spain before he became part of S.I.'s first wave of artists to draw for Warren.

Auraleón's period at Warren stretched from 1971 to the company's demise in 1983, the longest continuous period of work for the company by any of the Spanish artists. Altogether he drew 69 stories for Warren making him their fourth most prolific artist, with much of his art appearing in the pages of *Vampirella*. In 1973 he began drawing *Pantha* and it remains the strip he is best remembered for, with his detailed, oppressively dark renderings of inner city New York mixed with a delight in drawing both Pantha's human and feline forms. Throughout his tenure at Warren, the artist experimented with techniques moving from grey wash to textures and scratches, on to intricately linear pen lines, stark black and white contrasts and finally the exquisite pencil drawings of Sweetwater Nessie. In his final years at *Vampirella* he became the regular artist of the supernatural heroine Cassandra St. Knight drawing nine episodes. During this period he also found time to write and draw 14 short strips for the Spanish edition of *1984* which showed a more psychological approach to horror and SF.

Artistically, he was clearly very much at the peak of his powers, but the devastating collapse of Warren in 1983 hit him hard. He was able to motivate himself enough for one final series: the six-part *Viaje Al Inferno* for Spanish *Creepy,* before disappearing from comics forever. Throughout his career his artwork was characterized by a powerful intensity that perhaps reflected a troubled life. In his sole interview (for Toutain's *Creepy Almanac* 1980) he reflected on the dark subject matter that typified his art: "I remember once I went to a psychiatrist (well...heh, heh...actually several times) and the man said, 'So what pictures do you draw?' 'Well, you see...horror, monsters, murder...' 'But, man of God!, no wonder you are like you are. What you need to do is draw flowers and birds, man!'".

His colleagues at S.I., Marcel Miralles and José Maria Beá, share their memories of the man behind the art:

Marcel Miralles: What do I remember most about Rafael Auraleón? So much time has passed. When I think of him I have an image of a shy man, dressed in jeans, and a denim jacket entering my office to deliver his work, a bit afraid of receiving a bad opinion about it. But his work was always excellent, always conscientiously done though of course sometimes its quality could go up and down depending of the problems in his life.

My earliest contact with his work was when I just had begun working in Selecciones Ilustradas in 1961. One of my first jobs was to "read" the stories delivered by the artists. That consisted in having the original script on one side and the finished artwork on the other, to see if the artist had followed the script correctly. Auraleón was drawing a western series called Nosy Parker, if I'm not mistaken, with a script by Blay Navarro, the accounts man of Selecciones Ilustradas and also a good script writer. I was surprised by the line work of Auraleón in this series; his inking was loose and bold, a bit too loose sometimes, but it had a special personality. I have spoken with other guys that were in S.I. at that time and we agreed that he rarely worked inside the studio. Also that he was very reserved and never made any significant friendships there. He was always polite with everybody but never seemed to make any particular connections with anybody in the studio.

Sometime later we met his future wife, they use to come to the parties that we held in the studio on Sundays. They eventually married but unfortunately the marriage didn't go well. At that time divorce was not legal in Spain and the attitude towards couples who

Vampiros (Paneuropea), 1974.

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Pantha. Vampirella 32 (Warren), 1974.
Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com

Vampus poster (Garbo), 1976.
Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com

had separated was not at all compassionate. There is speculation that possibly this was the moment that his problems with alcohol began. I should say that these problems were not noticeable in the quality of his work. I am speaking about the '70s and this was his best period as an artist. But a closer look at his work might reveal his inner torment at this time. He was admitted at least two times to a clinic to cure his alcoholism. The second time there he developed a relationship with a woman whose father was also being treated there, they fell in love and she became his new partner. Her name was Herminia and she had a very good influence on him. He didn't relapse and on the creative side this was a very good period for his work.

Later, as we all know, Warren finished and he drew a series for Syndication with a script by Carlos Echevarría. After this he stopped working for us; it was a difficult period for S.I. and its publishing arm Toutain Editor; and we didn't have any relationship with him. Years later we heard out about his death — he had committed suicide. I don't know anything about this period after he left S.I. till his death years later. He was a greatly talented artist and we had very nice conversations. In the later years of our relationship he seemed to be a happy person. He had a storm inside, but outside at least he always projected an air of calmness.

José Maria Beá: Auraleón was a wonderful person, very loving. He was a special artist with a very personal style and I was fascinated by his work for Warren.He was very sick and almost nobody knew it. He suffered very serious emotional disturbances, terrible depressions, and he was an alcoholic. He entered psychiatric facilities many times. In 1986 I edited a children's weekly magazine called *Bichos*. One day I spotted him pushing a shopping cart down the street and I ran afer him. I told him I could give him work and he said: "I have not drawn for years and now I'm afraid to do it. Everything scares me". He came to my publishing company (Intermagen SA) and I told him to draw a humorous monster every week, to invent a new character each time and we would write the texts. So each week he came by with a drawing and talked for a while but was very sick. He told me that he did not want his name to appear in the magazine so I didn't credit him. After drawing for Warren, he thought it would be wrong for people to see his drawings in a magazine for children and I did not argue with him. I think he drew for us for four weeks and then never returned. Later I learned that he had committed suicide. We met when we were very young and I will always remember him.

Marcel Miralles and José Maria Beá 2016

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LIKE THE FACE OF AN OLD UNCLE WHO HAS LIVED ***LONG*** IN HIS ***TENT...*** THE LAND HAS BECOME ***TOO FAMILIAR*** TO THE TRIBE OF SHEIKH RAHAMID-***UL-IFNI***.

HERE IS THAT WHISKER OF GRASS TO BE WALKED AROUND UNTHINKING. THERE IS THAT WRINKLE OF EARTH TO BE STEPPED OVER UNNOTICED.

FOR ***MONTHS,*** RAHAMID'S PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CAMPED ON THE COAST EAST OF ***MEDIEVAL TRIPOLI,*** THE GROWING FAMILIARITY OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS INSINUATING ITSELF INTO THEIR LIVES, THREATENING SOMEHOW TO LAY ***CLAIM*** ON THEM.

NERVOUSLY THEY CHAFE TO BE STRIKING THE TENTS EACH DAWN AND ***MOVING ON...!***

...BUT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE!

GAMAL AND THE COCKATRICE

WHY, RAHAMID? I CAN NO LONGER ***MOVE*** IN THIS PLACE WITHOUT WALKING IN MY ***OWN FOOTSTEPS!*** ***WHY*** CAN WE NOT ***LEAVE*** HERE?

AIE! MUST I SAY IT ***AGAIN?*** THE ***COCKATRICE*** IS ABROAD! ALL LANDS BETWEEN B'IR AL HARASH AND THE GULF OF SIDRAN ARE ***SUSPECT.***

COCKATRICE! COCKATRICE! ALWAYS I HEAR THIS ***SILLY*** NAME AND ***STILL*** I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WE MUST ***FEAR IT*** LIKE A CHILD FEARS THE WIND!

AH, ZAOUTAR, YOU ARE TOO ***YOUNG.*** YOU COULD NOT ***KNOW.*** YOUR FATHER, IF HE STILL LIVED, WOULD REMEMBER.

HIS ***HOLDINGS*** ARE MINE, BUT ***NOT*** HIS MEMORY. IF I AM TO LEARN OF THIS TERRIBLE CREATURE, I MUST BE ***TAUGHT.***

WELL THEN, TO ***BEGIN,*** THEY ARE ***UNCOMMON,*** PRAISE ALLAH.

Original artwork from *Vampirella 47* (Warren), 1975.

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"WHITECHAPEL" (WARREN) by ALRAMBRA 1

PROLOGUE

"JACK AN' JILL
WENT UP THE HILL
TO FETCH A GLASS OF ALE.
THE RIPPER CAME DOWN
WITH HALF A CROWN.
THEY CARRIED JILL HOME IN A PAIL."

INNARDS OUTWARD, A SICK ***FANTASY*** SMEARED RED ON A COBBLESTONE CANVAS. HER WOMAN-BLOOD ***PUMPED*** AND ***SPILLED*** IN PULSATING PATTERNS, DOWN FILTHY ***GUTTERS***. AND THE ***RIPPER*** SKULKED AWAY.

FAILURE WASHED HIM LIKE A ***FEVER***, PURGING CONFIDENCE EVEN AS IT FILLED HIM WITH ***CONFUSION*** AND ***SHAME***. HE RAN UNTIL HIS LUNGS'D FILLED WITH ***EXHAUSTION***...

...THEN HE ***RESTED***, AMONG THE RATS, THE GARBAGE, AND THE DARKNESS.

TOMORROW, HEADLINES WOULD PROCRY THAT THE ***MADMAN-RIPPER*** STALKED AGAIN. THE NOTION ***CONSOLED*** JACK AND MADE HIM ***LAUGH***.

HE DIDN'T KILL OUT OF ***MADNESS*** NOR EVEN HATE, ALTHOUGH HE ***DID*** HATE THOSE WOMEN. THEY'D BROUGHT HIM TO THE HEIGHT OF ANTICIPATION, THEN LET HIM ***FREEFALL*** IN HIS OWN ***DISAPPOINTMENT***.

BUT THAT WASN'T WHY THEY HAD TO ***DIE***.

THEY DIED BECAUSE HE HAD AN ***OBLIGATION*** TO ***END*** THEIR WICKED EXISTENCE. THEY WERE EVIL... ***AMORAL***... AND IT WAS ***HIS*** FAULT. HE WAS ONLY THANKFUL HE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ***RECTIFY*** HIS MISTAKES.

HE TOOK A LONG BREATH AND WALKED HOME, DETERMINED THAT TOMORROW HE WOULD ***SUCCEED***.

VAMPIRELLA #51 TITLE: Whitechapel PAGE No# 33

Original artwork from *Vampirella 51* (Warren), 1976.

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Original artwork from *Cassandra St Knight. Vampirella 93* (Warren), 1981.

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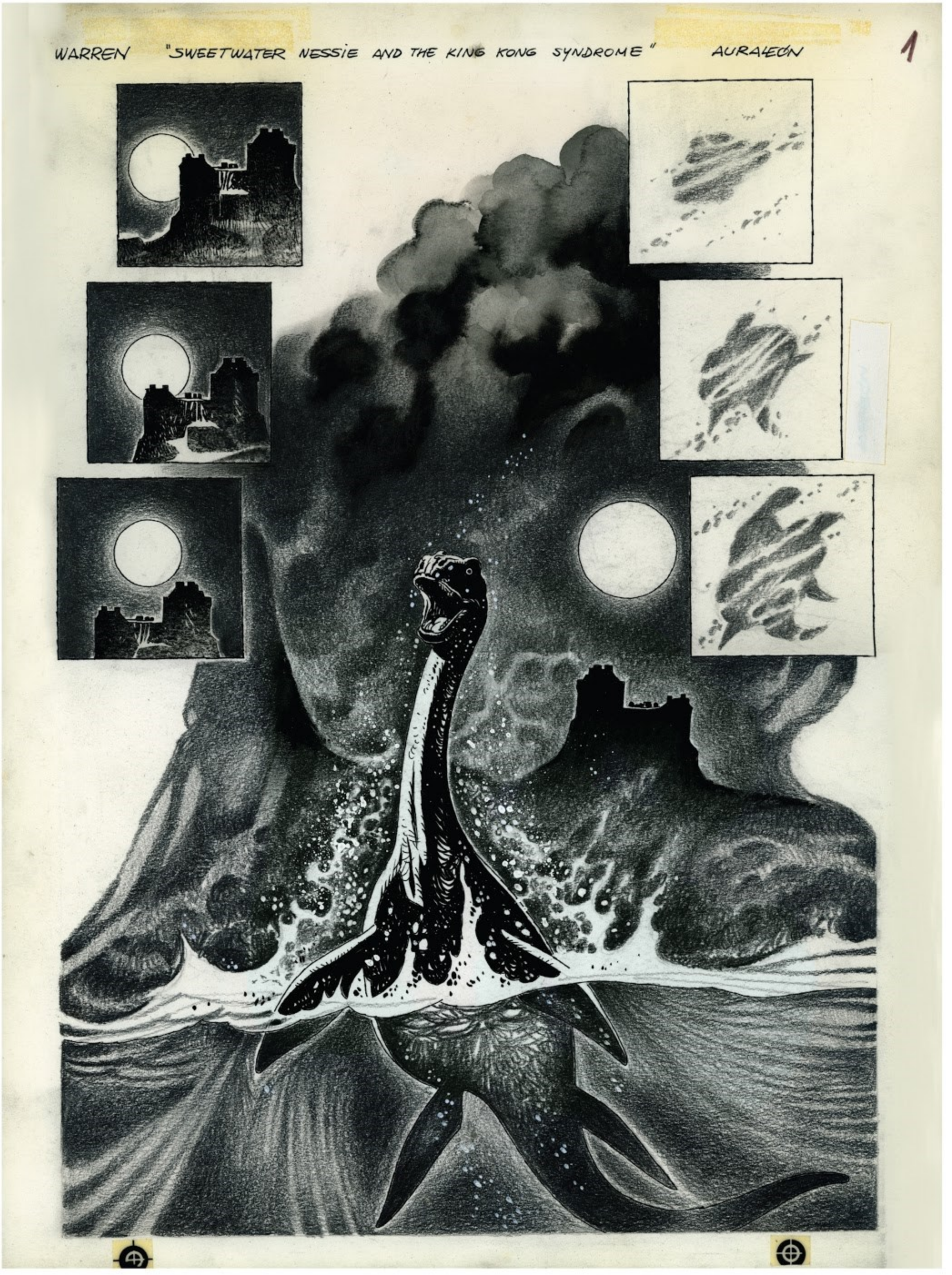

Original artwork from *Sweetwater Nessie. Vampirella 106* (Warren), 1982.

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Original artwork from *Planet of the Damned. Starlord 7* (IPC), 1978.

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Josep Maria Beà *B. 1942*

Josep Maria Beà is one of the most imaginative and versatile Spanish creators, having worked as an artist, writer, cartoonist, illustrator, and publisher, along with a varied career outside art as well. He was trained at the School of Arts and Crafts in Barcelona and in the Parisian Academie Julian and Ecole schools Supérieur des Beaux Arts. As a boy he was influenced by cartoonists such as Frank Robbins, Alex Toth, Dan Barry, and Eugenio Giner. He joined S.I. at the precociously young age of 15 and his first commissions were for the French publisher Artima in 1957. His first important series was the science fiction strip *Johnny Galaxia* which was created for syndication, appearing in France, the UK (as *Space Ace* published by Atlas), Brazil, and Spain among others. His first direct commissions for the UK were covers for Atlas, but he then diversified into war strips for titles like *Commando, Combat Picture Library,* and *Conflict*, followed by crime for *Undercover*. From 1964 to 1970 he diversified into illustration, primarily for Editorial Molino, but also for syndication across Europe through S.I.

By the end of decade, Beá's style had moved away from the clear American influence seen in *Johnny Galaxia*, and embraced influences from Pop Art and psychedelia. In this period he mixed children's book illustrations in Spain, with numerous romance strips for UK titles such as *Romeo, Mirabelle, Valentine,* and *Jackie*. At the same time he appeared in the innovative new science fiction magazine *Nueva Dimension* supplying surrealistic strips and illustrations. He debuted as a writer/artist in 1970 with his wildly imaginative series *Sir Leo* for Buru Lan's *Dracula*. His work on *Sir Leo* was one of the first manifestations of the densely textured horror artwork that was to define Spanish art in the '70s

Photo from 1959, courtesy of Josep Maria Beà.

Beá was among the first group of Spanish artists to work for Warren Publishing, starting in 1971, where he drew 28 stories for *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Vampirella* over the course of five years. He was the first Spanish creator to develop and draw their own scripts in the United States; one of which won the Warren Prize in 1973 for story of the year. These Warren strips juxtaposed realistic figures with wild flights of the imagination, savage caricatures, and an uneasy evocation of Victorian illustration — sometimes all on the same page.

After Warren, the artist created the more playful, but deeply surreal *Peter Hypnos* for syndication, with three episodes appearing in *Eerie*, and.s in Spain and Australia. During the Spanish democratic transition he worked for several magazines of satirical humor including *El Papus, Muchas Gracias, El Vibora, Eh!,* and *Por Favor* under the pseudonym Norton. By contrast, in 1978 Beá made an unexpected return to British romance comics drawing four issues of DC Thomson's *Star Love Stories* in a breezily straightforward, realistic style.

In 1979 Beá was one of the first stars to embrace the emerging magazine explosion when he joined the creative team on Toutain editor's *1984* title. For the science fiction magazine the artist created what he feels were his strongest and most unique works: *Tales from the Galactic Inn*, which ran for 15 episodes and was collected in a book from Toutain in 1981, and *En Un Lugar De La Mente* (In a Place of Mind) whose 11 episodes were compiled in two volumes by Rambla in 1983. These darkly satirical strips, drawn in Beá's most realistic style covered with layers of tones and textures, mixed imaginative science fiction with psychological insights and adult concepts of gender and identity. These strips received several awards at the International Comic Salon in Barcelona, including La Mejor Obra de Autor; the best creator of the year. At around this time he also enrolled in the School of Psychology at the University of Barcelona.

Beá left Toutain in 1982 to become the Publisher and Editor, along with Luis Garcia (and initially several others), of the comic magazines *Rambla, Rampa-Rambla* and *Rambla Rock*. For *Rambla* Beá adopted two distinct personalities: under his own name he was the creator of accomplished, dense, wildly imaginative SF strips (such as *La Esfera Cubica*), while as Sanchez Zamora he drew contemporary, erotic slice of life drama's in a simpler, more minimalistic style. Rambla's publishing empire lasted for four years until economic issues forced it to close. Undeterred, Beá immediately formed his own publishing company, the short lived Intermagen. This new venture was principally devoted to republishing Beá's past work (such as *Peter*

Space Ace 33 (Atlas), 1962.

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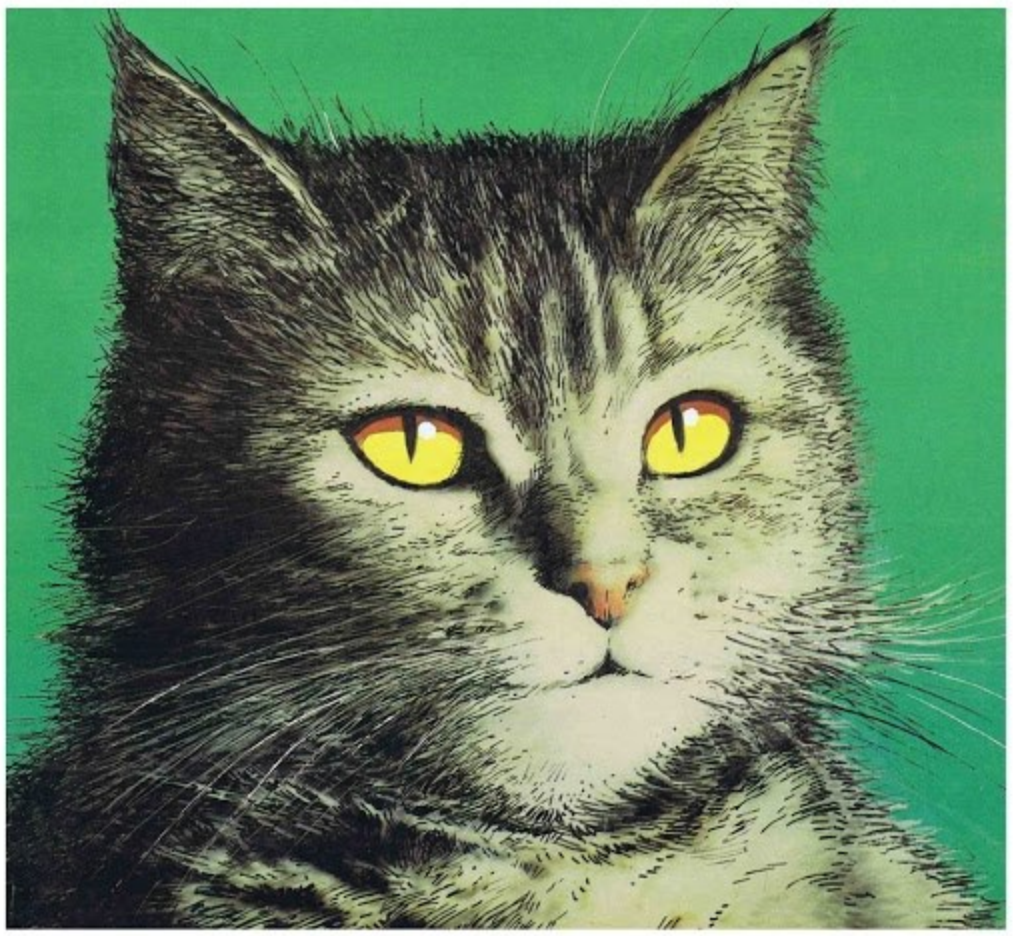
Rambla 18 (García & Beá), 1984.

Hypnos and his best Warren strips) in a series of graphic novels; but it also created several new humor titles such as *Canibal* and *Gastopato*. Intermagen also published Beá's 12-part instruction series *La Tecnica Del Comic* which garnered yet another reward for the artist at the Barcelona International Comics Convention.

The rest of the decade was bewilderingly diverse, starting with work for the children's comics *Monstruos and Co.* and *Bichos* which he edited for Bruguera in 1986. The following year a series of strips for *Zona 84* ended his long association with Josép Toutain and mainstream comics. After this Beá devoted several years to drawing cartoons under the pen names Valls and Norton for such scabrously disreputable titles as *El Cuervo, La Judia Verde, Makoki, Kana,* and *Hara Kiri.*

In the 1960s, Beá had played guitar in the legendary Los Dalmatos with José González and the '90s saw a return to music along with work in a variety of media for television and advertising. In parallel to this he devoted himself to fantasy literature writing five novels: *Walking Among the Stars* (1994), *If I Could Remember* (1995), *Beyond the Light* (1996) *Fugitives of Reason* (1997), and *A Place in my Dreams* (1999). In 2000 he co-created the Digital Art company with artist Jaime Martin, dedicated to digital illustration for advertising and educational products. The new millennium saw a return to art with new covers for Editorial Juventud's *Enid Blyton* books, illustrations for Editorial Teide and other educational work.

Since 2001, Glenat has been re-issuing Beá's finest work and in 2003 he was awarded the Grand Prix at that year's Barcelona Comic



Rambla 12 (García & Beá), 1983.

Fair. In 2016 he received the prize of the AACE (Association of Authors Comic Spain) in recognition of his career in comics. Currently he is dedicated to literature, electronic music and digital experimentation.

JOSEP MARIA BEÀ and DAVID ROACH 2016

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Vampirella 13 (Warren), 1971. Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com.

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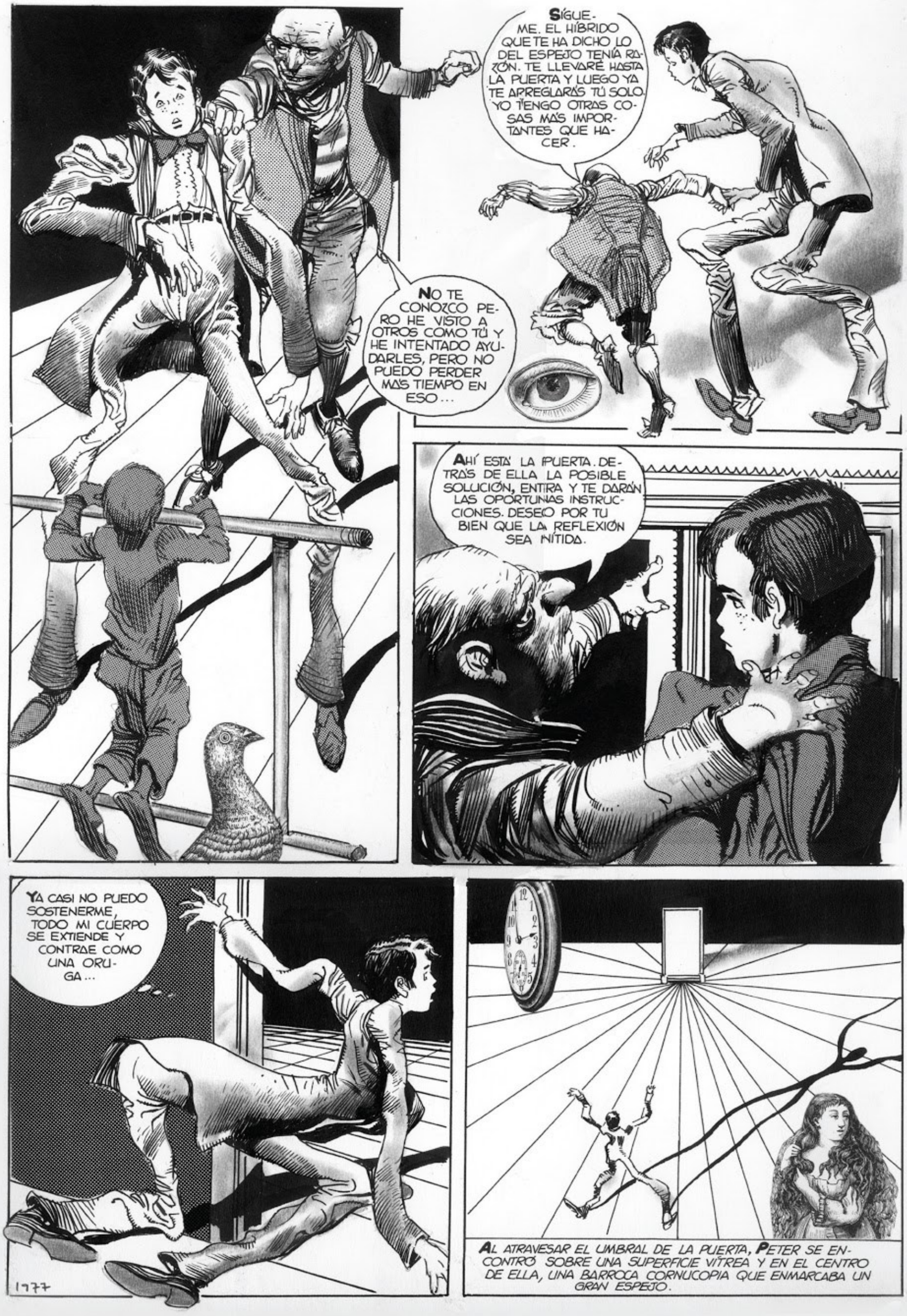

Peter Hypnos, 1977. Original artwork courtesy of Josep Maria Beà.

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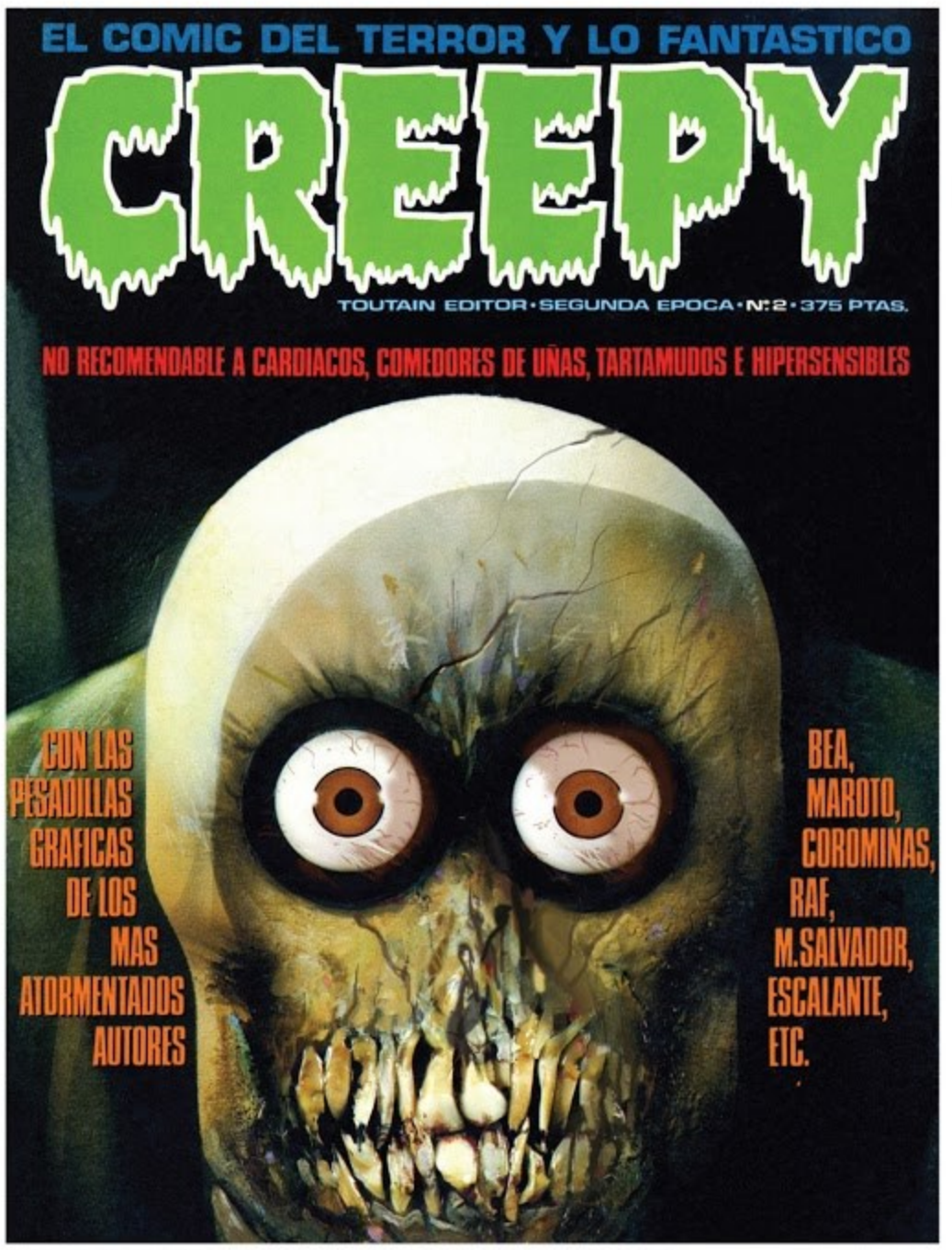
En Un Lugar De La Mente 2. Coleccion Rambla (García & Beá), 1983. Original cover artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.



Creepy 2 (Toutain), 1990. Image courtesy of Josep Maria Beà.

Emotivaciones 68, Nueva Dimension 5 (Dronte), 1968.
Image courtesy of Josep Maria Beà

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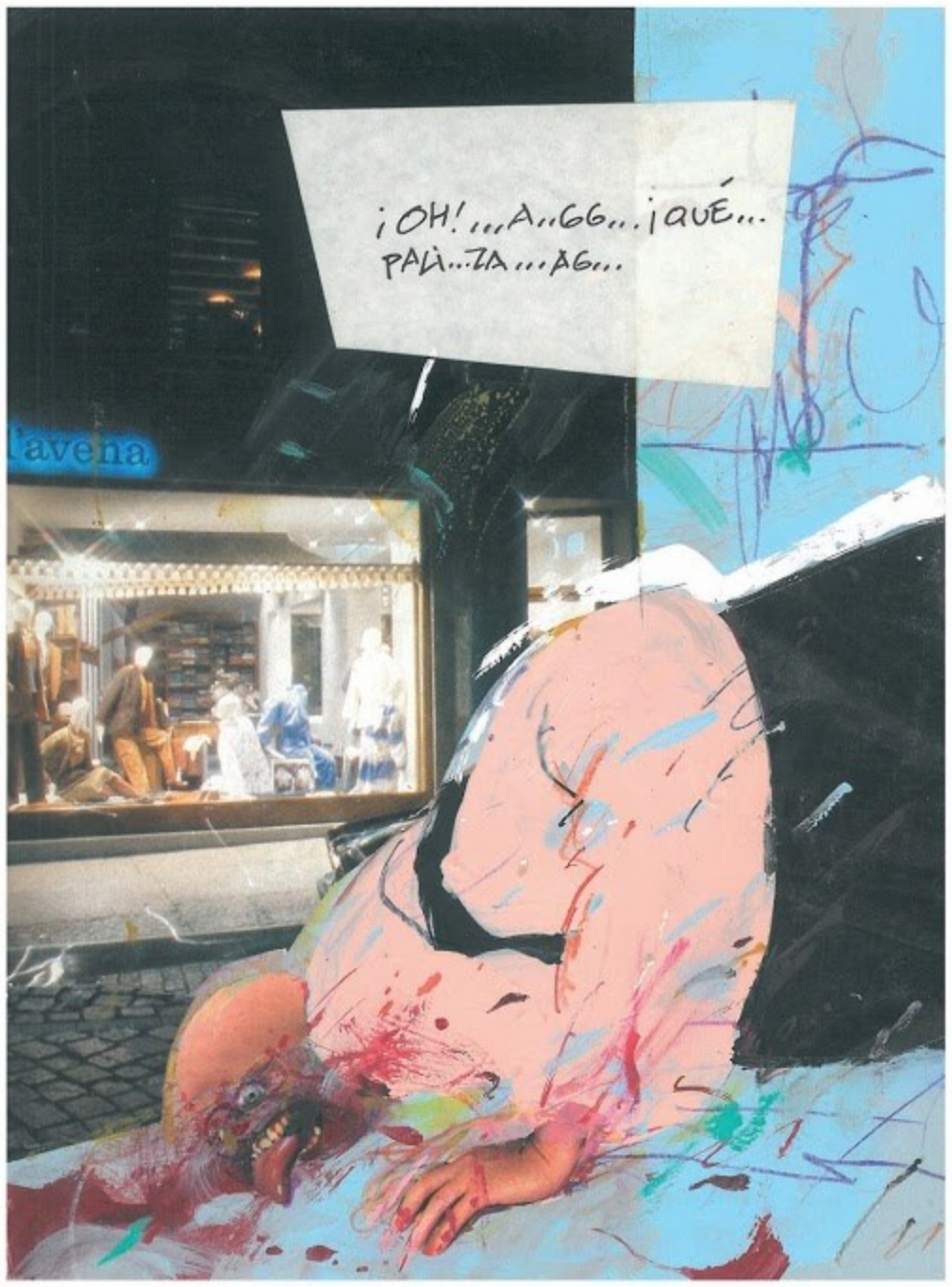

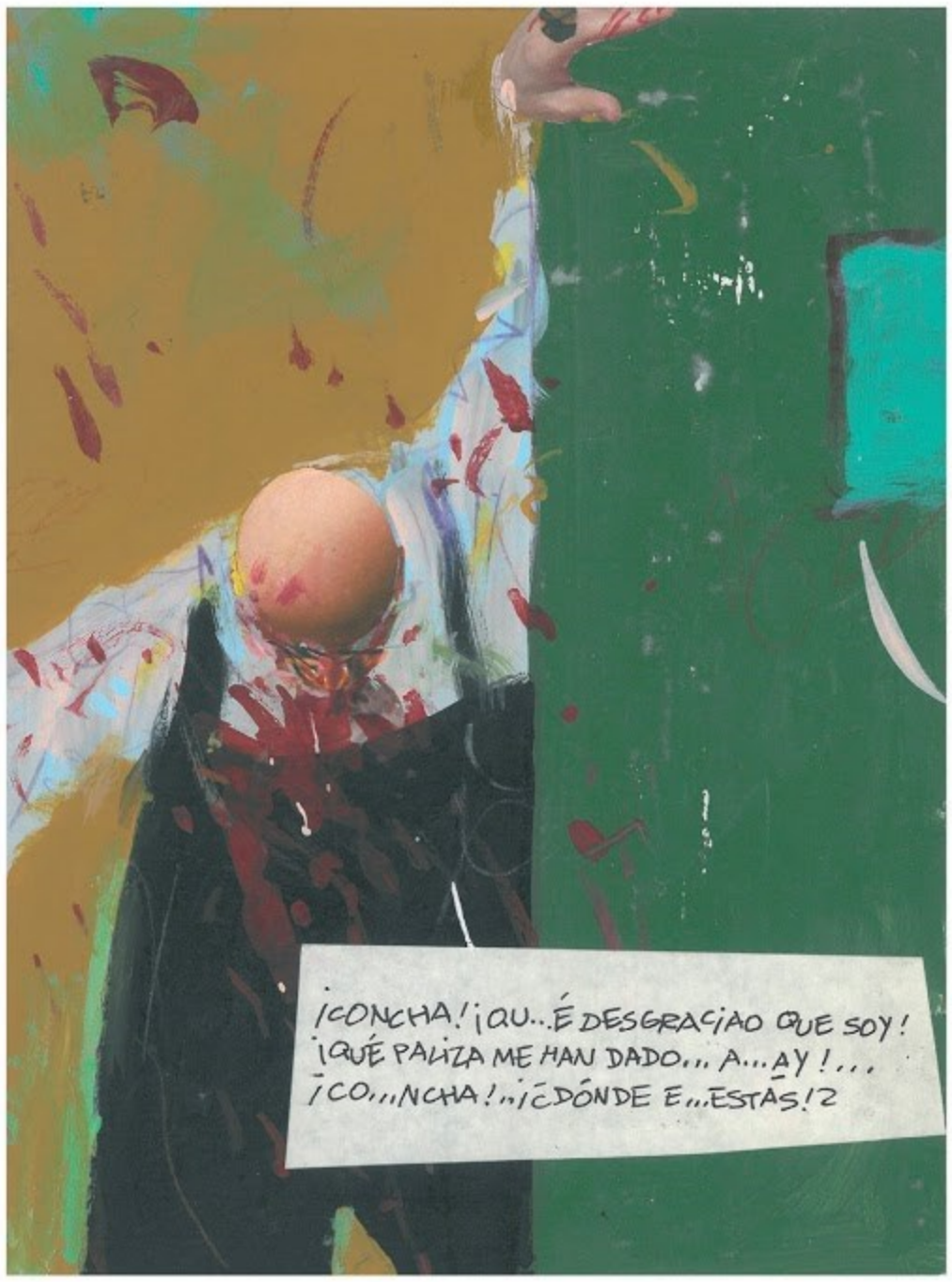

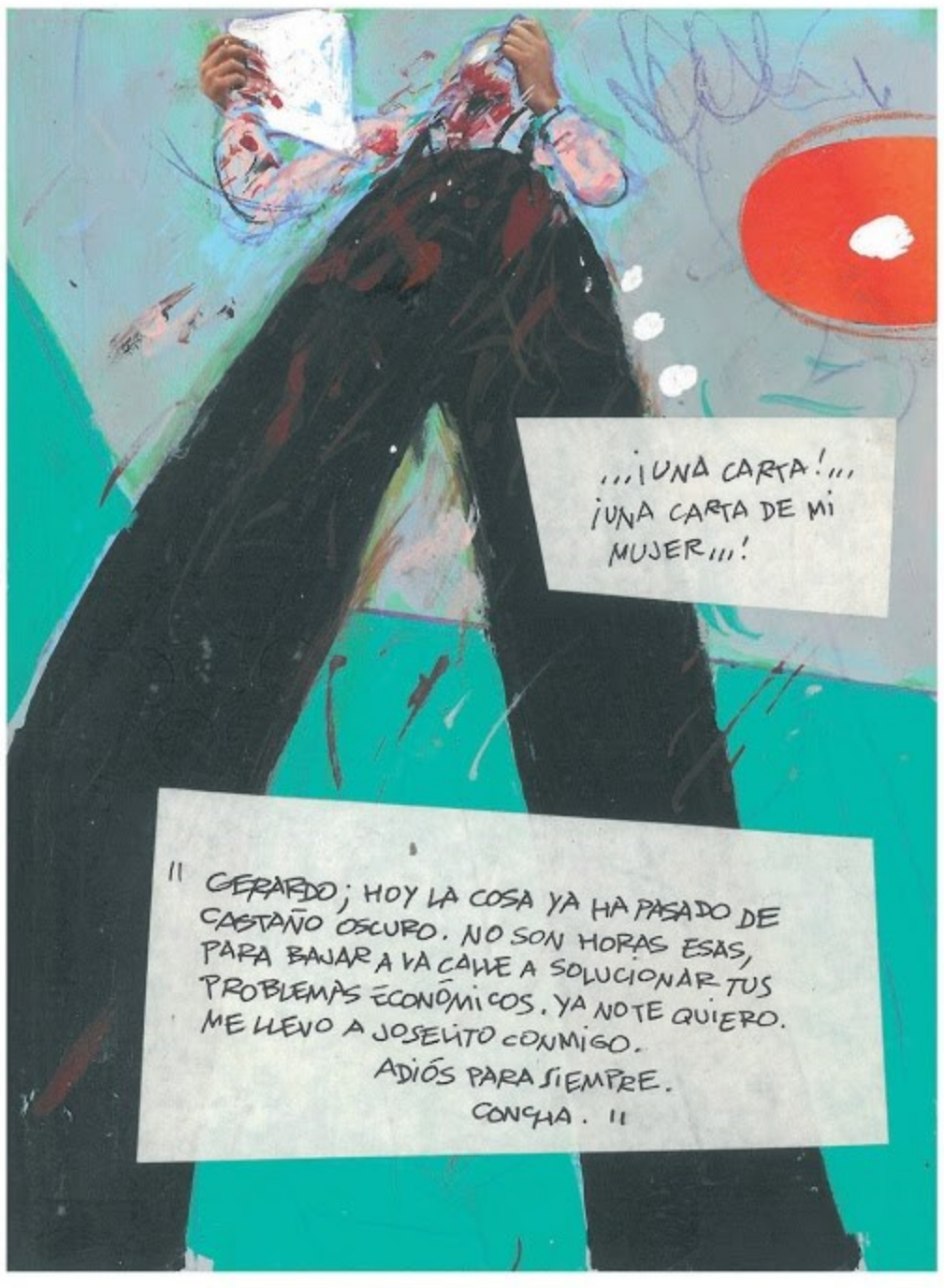

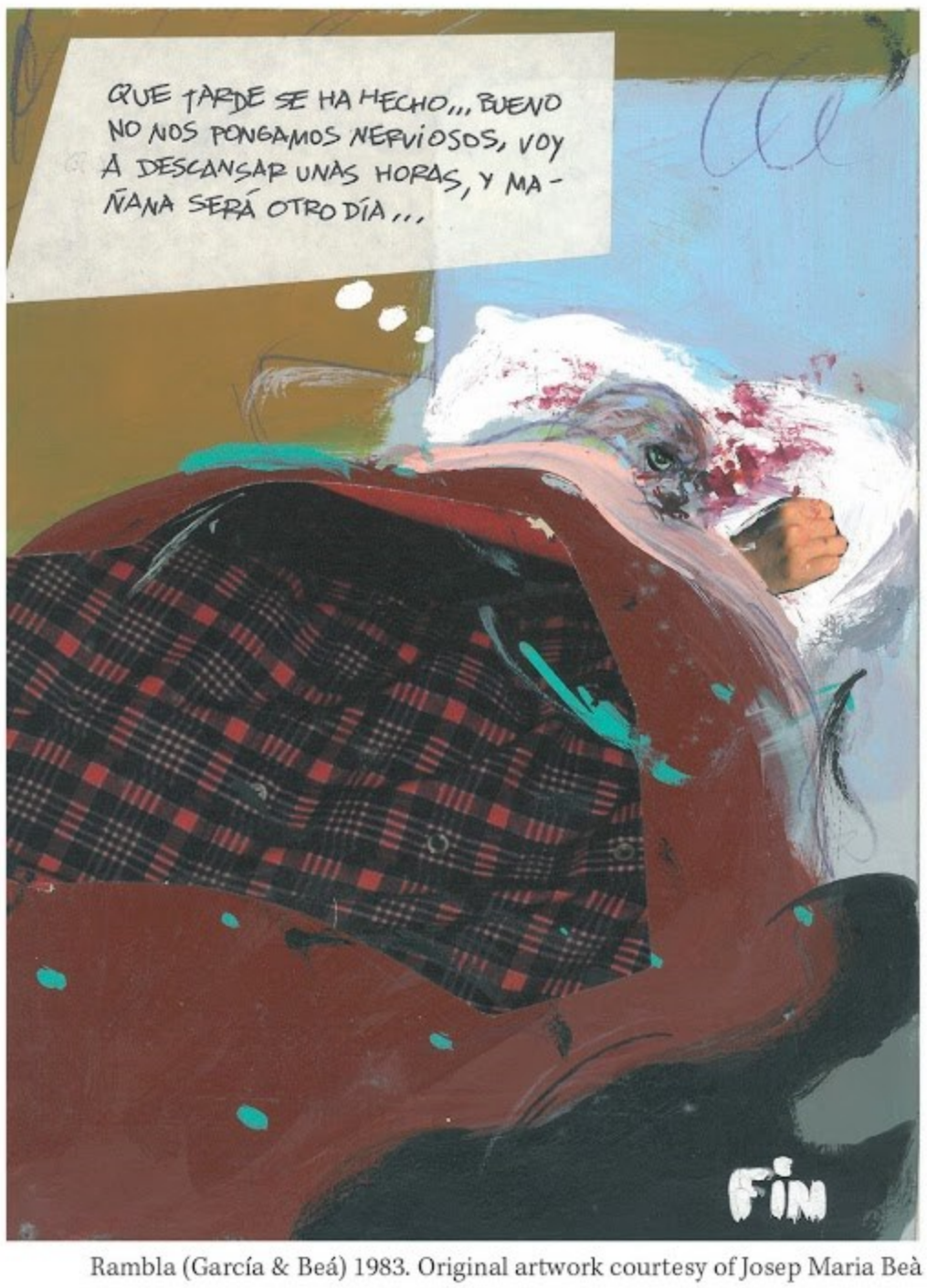

Rambla (García & Beá) 1983. Original artwork courtesy of Josep Maria Beà

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Luis Bermejo 1931–2015

Luis Bermejo was one of the first stars of Spanish comics and an important contributor to the evolution of an artistic identity for the country. Bermejo was born in Madrid but moved to Albacete when he was three. Albacete was also the home of comics pioneer Manuel Gago, and in 1946 the 15 year old Luis started his career as Gago's assistant. Within two years he had matured enough to draw his first solo comic, the very creditable *El Ray Del Mar* (for *Valenciana*) which displayed early signs his powerful drawing ability. He returned to Madrid in 1951 to attend the School of Fine Art of San Fernando where he fell in with a group of future comic artists known as the Madrid school. Bermejo soon contacted local comics house Rollan and began a five year tenure on *Aventuras del FBI*, the strip that would make his name. Over the course of 131 issues he grew into one of the country's finest artists, working in the accomplished, polished tradition of Alex Raymond (whose *Secret Agent X-9* and *Rip Kirby* strips were key influences), but adding his own dynamism and verve.

Photograph courtesy Miguel Quesada.

In 1956 Bermejo left Madrid and moved to Valencia where he set up a studio with José and Leopold Ortiz, Vicente Ramos, and Miguel Quesada. He started working for Manuel Gago's recently formed Editorial Maga. At Maga Bermejo's style matured on comics such as *Roque Brio* and *Apache*, which he drew for 56 issues. Inevitably, his talent was noticed by the agencies and in 1957 A.L.I. began to pick up work for him from the UK on titles like *Mirabelle, Valentine, Super Detective*, and *Girls Crystal*. The following year Barden began to represent a large number of Valencia artists who became the backbone of the new agency, with Bermejo emerging as one of its unquestioned stars. His first few commissions for Romeo — *Cherie* (Don't Tell Father in 1–12) and *John Steel* in *Thriller* — in 1960 revealed an artist of immense ability with a gift for unique characterisation, powerful drawing and a dramatic use of shadows. For the next 14 years Bermejo worked almost exclusively for the UK creating a body of work that established him among the world's most accomplished comic artists.

In the early '60s Bermejo worked on a variety of titles including war strips for *Commando, Battle, Air Ace*, and *The Eagle* (*Mann of Battle*) and the adventure series *Pike Mason* for Odhams' *Boys World* in 1963. Having established himself as a master of action and exotic locations he was given the ultimate accolade of joining Britain's best artist, Frank Bellamy, on the Roman Legionnaire series *Heros the Spartan* in *The Eagle*. From 1963 to 1965 Bermejo and Bellamy would alternate on stories rendered in full color across the comic's centrespread, and even in such revered company Bermejo shone. In between *Heros* assignments Bermejo made an unexpected return to Mago drawing a number of fabulous covers for *Pantera Negra* and *Flrecha Roja* among others. After *Heros* Luis returned to war strips and short stories in *The Eagle* for the next couple of years before drawing the superhero feature *Johnny Future* for Odhams' *Fantastic* comic in 1967. In fact, early episodes of the feature were essentially a British version of the Hulk (*Fantastic* primarily reprinted Marvel series) before becoming

John Steel, Thriller Picture Library 419 (Fleetway), 1962.

a rather elegantly drawn superhero series. By this point the artist's style had changed from the elaborate ornamentation and detail of *Pike Mason* and *Heros* towards a starker, more design oriented approach. Bermejo's British career took a number of abrupt turns in 1968; firstly joining the up market DC Thomson girls comic *Diana*

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where he drew a succession of simple, almost cartoonish strips for three years. In 1969 he began work for an even younger audience with *Princess Marigold* in *Treasure* and the following year fully painted fairy tale strips for *Once Upon a Time*.

In the early '70s Bermejo mixed yet more fairy tale features with simply drawn girls strips for *Tammy* and *Princess Tina*, classic fiction adaptations for *Pixie*, and medieval action on *The Song of Roland* for *Look and Learn*. He was never less than professional, but the inspiration of his '60s heyday seemed to have deserted him. Salvation came in 1974 when he joined S.I. and started working for Warren where he recaptured the intensity of his earlier work. The strips from his first year at Warren were the equal of his best British strips and he clearly revelled in the chance to drench his work in shadows, details, and textures, showing a clear inspiration from the Italian master Dino Battaglia. Most of his early strips were held over until they could be presented together in the all Bermejo issue of *Creepy* (71),

Illustration from *Jannisaries* (Ace books), 1979.

Original artwork courtesy of Vidal Ares.

but he was never able to quite reach those heights again. In 1977 he began drawing the adventures of the time travelling cowboy the Rook (starting in *Eerie* 77) and altogether drew 78 strips for Warren, becoming their third most prolific artist. In his last years at the company, Bermejo drew nine episodes of the Chinese set *Fox* strip, a late triumph, but long before Warren's collapse in 1983 he had branched out into other diverse directions.

Despite the workload from Warren, as early as 1976 he was taking on extra commissions from the Spanish *Kung Fu* comic where he drew the *Jeff Blake* series for two years. This was followed by several issues of *Storia Del West* for Italy and then in 1979 he began work on a serialization of *Lord of the Rings* which was adapted by writer Nicola Cuti (spotted at Warren by S.I. boss Josép Toutain). Released as three graphic novels in 1980 and '81, the series was sold around the world in the wake of the recently released Ralph Bakshi film and became a big hit.

After Warren's collapse, Bermejo was one of many artists to join Norma where he crafted strips for *Cimoc* (*Orka* and *Arena*) and co-created the western strip *Mestizo* with writer Echevarria. Twelve episodes of *Mestizo* appeared in *Hunter* and then *Sgt. Kirk*, but the series proved to be a bigger hit in Italy where it ran for 54 episodes from 1982–1988 in *Lanciostory*. Other features from this era include an album about Andalucía in 1983, an adaptation of Isaac Asimov's *I Robot* for Bruguera the following year, and strips for *Metropol*, *Vinetas*, and *Zona 84*. His last series was a nine issue revival of the venerable *El Capitan Trueno* for Planeta Deagostina in 1987, after which he drew only one further strip, an album in the *Relatos Del Nuevo Mundo* series in 1992.

However, by this stage Bermejo had already established an artistic life for himself away from comics, painting cards for Tabernero. In 1989 he set about reinventing himself as a galley artist where his subtle watercolors of oriental scenes, languid women and Catalonian scenes proved to be highly popular.

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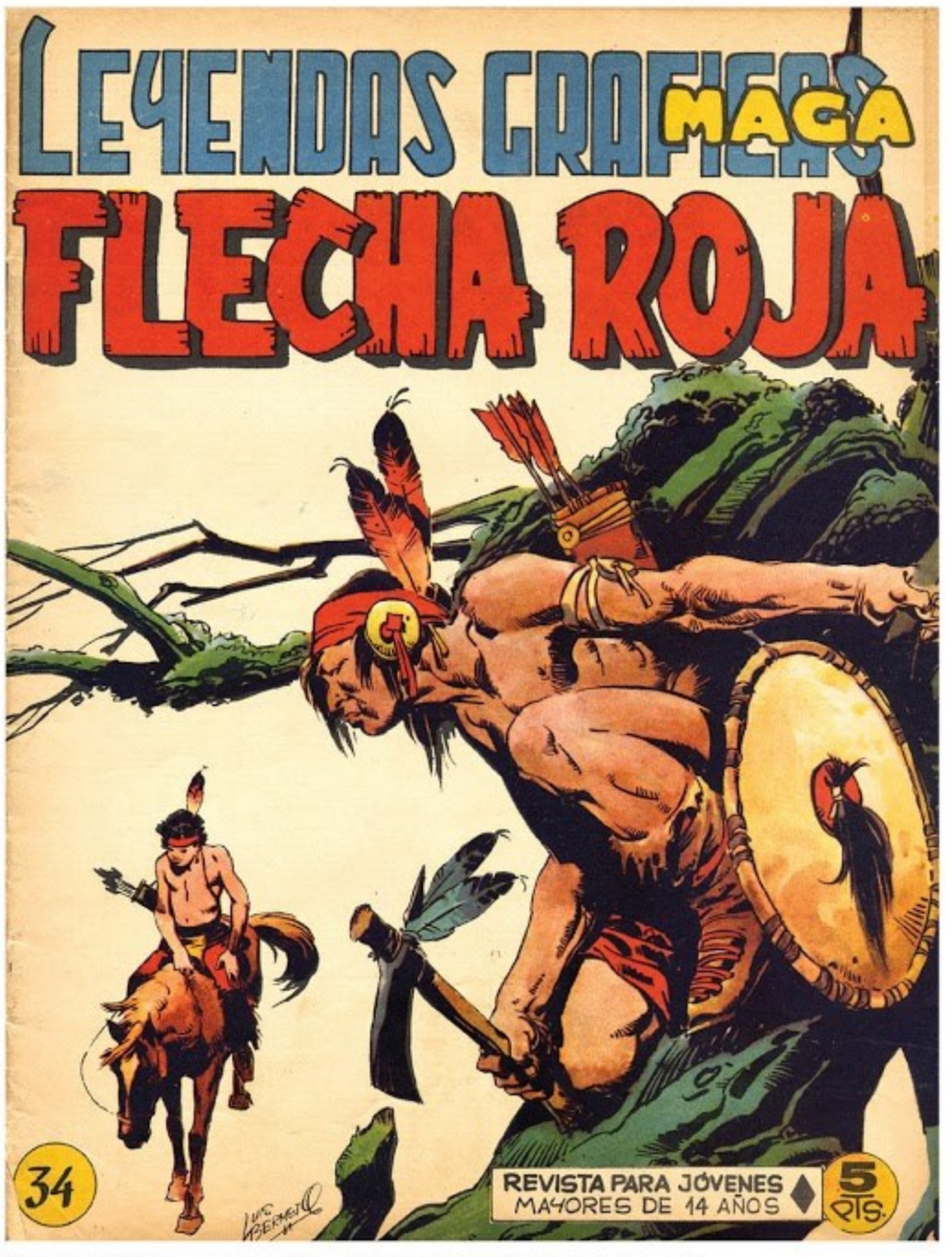

Editorial Maga covers 1964–65. Courtesy of Miguel Quesada.

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BW-34/19.

SUDDENLY . . .

STEADY! IT'S ONLY A TAPIR . . .

LOOK, OUT!

BUT THE SUDDEN, STARTLING APPEARANCE OF THE BEAST WAS TOO MUCH FOR PAULO . . .

IT IS AN OMEN! THE SPIRIT OF ZENTACA PREPARES TO STRIKE AT US!

PAULO . . . COME BACK!

THE CRAZY FOOL! I KNEW WE'D HAVE TROUBLE WITH HIM . . .

GET AFTER HIM, QUARRO!

OKAY, CAPTAIN!

QUARRO PLUNGED INTO THE JUNGLE. SOON, THE OTHERS WERE LEFT FAR BEHIND . . .

FEAR GIVES HIM SPEED! I MUST STOP HIM BEFORE HE COMES TO HARM!

CLOSING AT LAST WITH THE TERRIFIED BRAZILIAN, QUARRO DIVED . . .

AAAGH!

LOCKED TOGETHER, THEY ROLLED DOWN AN INCLINE, AND FOUND THEMSELVES STRUGGLING IN DARK, SLIMY WATER . . .

NOW, SENOR . . . FIRST WE CALM DOWN — THEN WE GO BACK TO THE OTHERS . . . YES?

WAIT! PLEASE . . . I . . .

THERE IS SOMETHING MOVING . . . OVER THERE!

FROM THE SHADOWS, AN EVIL SHAPE GLIDED TOWARDS THEM . . .

AN ALLIGATOR! THE BIGGEST I'VE EVER SEEN!

QUICKLY, SENOR! THOSE DEVILS MOVE LIKE LIGHTNING!

MY . . . MY LEG! I MUST HAVE BROKEN IT WHEN WE FELL! I CANNOT MOVE!

IT SEEMS I MUST FIGHT FOR PAULO'S LIFE . . . BUT WILL IT BE AT THE COST OF MY OWN . . ?

TO THE BRAVE FILIPINO, IT SEEMED THAT THE CURSE OF ZENTACA WAS ABOUT TO STRIKE AGAIN!

Vol 1/34/2.

Pike Mason. Boys World 34 (Odhams), 1963. Original artwork courtesy of Ron Tiner.

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INSIDE M.-38 (1)

Johnny Future

YOU ARE WITNESSING THE MOST INCREDIBLE GAOL-BREAK OF ALL TIME! SAVOUR THIS MEMORABLE MOMENT FOR ITS LIKE MAY NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN — AS WITH UNIMAGINABLE STRENGTH JOHNNY FUTURE BURSTS ASUNDER THE GREAT DOORS OF MANNINGTON PRISON!

DID ... DID I REALLY SEE THAT HAPPEN?

IT HAPPENED ALL RIGHT, GOVERNOR! JOHNNY FUTURE'S BUSTED RIGHT OUT! AND HE'S TAKEN WITH HIM THREE OF THE TOUGHEST TEARAWAYS THIS GAOL HAS EVER HELD!

FOLLOWED BY CURLY "KING" KALO AND THE OTHER TWO THUGS JOHNNY RACES FROM THE PRISON!

GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!

THAT PARKED CAR! INTO IT!

WE'RE RIGHT WITH YOU, JOHNNY BOY!

RESTAURANT — AR

VPZ 217

WITH JOHNNY AT THE WHEEL THE BORROWED CAR **SPEEDS** THROUGH THE LONDON STREETS!

HEY, KING! WHERE'S THIS GUY IN THE FANCY DRESS TAKING US?

RELAX! WHEREVER JOHNNY GOES IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!

LET US RACE AHEAD OF JOHNNY AND VISIT THE PLACE TO WHICH HE IS HEADING! A SCENE OF INCREDIBLE VIOLENCE AND DESTRUCTION AS BRITISH TROOPS WREAK DELIBERATE HAVOC IN CENTRAL LONDON!

HEY! I NEVER KNEW BEING IN THE ARMY COULD BE SO MUCH FUN!

KEEP THAT GUN FIRING, BOYS!

AND WATCHING THE SENSELESS SAVAGERY IS THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR IT ALL! **MR. OPPOSITE** - THE EVIL BEING WHO HAS THE POWER TO MAKE MEN BEHAVE IN A MANNER ENTIRELY OPPOSITE TO THEIR NORMAL NATURES!

FAN 38/16

7"

Original artwork from *Johnny Future. Fantastic 38* (Odhams), 1967.

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Original artwork from *Vampirella 39* (Warren), 1975.

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Antonio Bernal 1924–2013

Original cover artwork from *Battle 302* (Fleetway), 1967.

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Jordi Bernet B. 1944

It took over 20 years for Jordi Bernet to gain recognition in his home country after years of working abroad, but when it came, it propelled him to the top ranks of Spanish comic artists. Bernet was born in Barcelona to a cartoonist father, Miguel (working under the name Jorge Bernet), who had fought in the Civil War. When his father died suddenly at the age of 38 in 1959, the 15 year old Jordi took over his strip *Dona Urucca*, which he went on to draw for a year in *Pulgarcito*. After this, he teamed up with Jordi Buxade to assist him on Toray's *Jim Huracan* strip before joining the Barden agency in 1963. With Barden he initially worked for the French market before moving over to British comics where his energetic, edgy style began to develop. From 1964 to 1967 much of his work appeared in DC Thomson's weekly *Victor* comic including strips such as The *Town Tamer, Ulysses the Wanderer, Lycidus the Spartan*, and *The Sacred Kaross*. For the same company in 1965 he drew a viscerally powerful issue of *Commando*, "They call him Yellow" (190). The first significant strip of his career was the *Legend Testers* which ran for over a year from 1966 to 1967 in *Smash*, which was followed by a six month tenure on *Jungle Jak* in the *Lion*. Bernet was a great admirer of American stylists such as Alex Toth, Frank Robbins, and Noel Sickles and even at this early stage of his career his fascination with expressive brushstrokes and black and white artwork was evident.

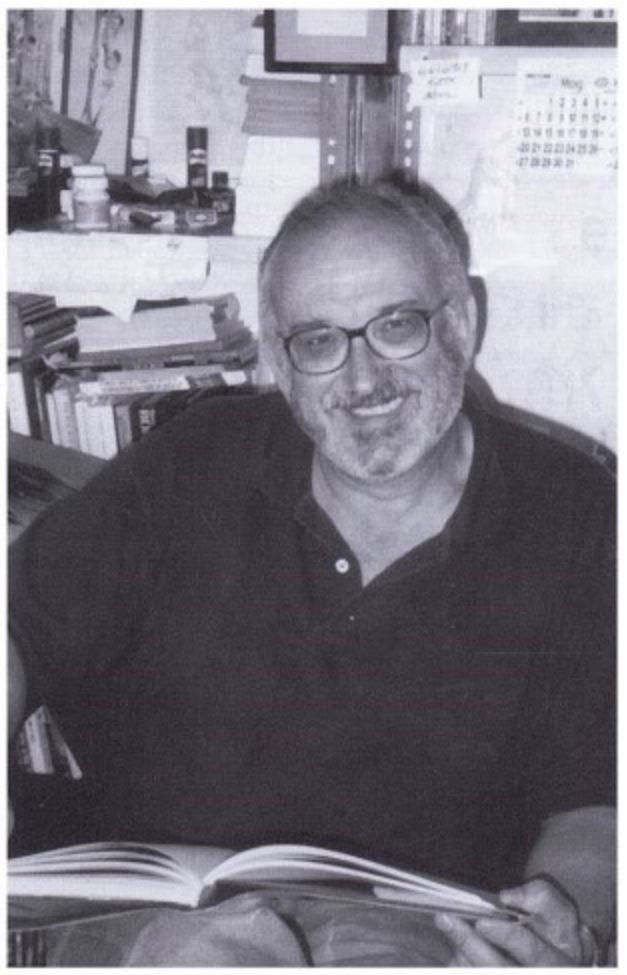

Photo courtesy of Manuel Auad.

However, Bernet became frustrated at not getting his artwork back so in 1968 began working for the Belgian comic *Spirou*, initially assisting Jose Ramon Larraz on the *Michael* strip; then teaming with his script writer uncle Miguel Cusso on *Dan Lacombe*. This was followed by the detective feature *Paul Foran* — from 1968–72 and again from 1975–77 — which began to establish him as an artist of note. Re-joining Bardon in 1972 he created the humorous horror strip *Wat 69* for the German magazine *Pip International*. The following year he made his first appearance in America with a gorgeously dark strip for the first issue of Marvel's *Vampire Tales*. More significantly, he also created the sword and sorcery series *Andrax* which was serialized over the course of four years in a succession of German comics starting with Rolf Kauka's *Primo*, then in *Super Action, Action Comics*, and *Zack*. It featured some of his best art and was reprinted in Atlas' *Barbarians* #1 in America. His next strip, *El Cuervo*, was part of S.I.'s syndicated *Kung Fu* comic and it too first appeared in Germany. From 1975–79, Bernet drew 42 episodes of the *Kung-Fu* detective which were also reprinted in France, Spain and Australia. Throughout this period he also wrote and drew a number of short strips for Italian comics such as *Bliz* and *Intrepido*, but his years of working in relative anonymity were about to end.

In 1981 Bernet contributed to *Comix International*'s *El Comico Vivo* series and was soon being courted by both Josép Toutain of S.I. and Rafael Martinez of Norma. Bernet's first entry into the burgeoning magazine explosion was a series of darkly humorous, cynical short stories for *Makoki* and *Comics International*, later collected a an album called *Historias Negras*. Then in 1982 Martinez approached him to create a competitor to Frank Thorne's *Ghita of Alizar*, then running in Toutain's *1984*. Together with writer Antonio Segura he created the attractive fantasy series *Sarvan* for *Cimoc*. At the same time, Alex Toth had just left *Creepy*'s new hit series *Torpedo* over the strip's violence, and Toutain picked Bernet to be his replacement. The following year Bernet again teamed up with Segura for *Kraken*, a futuristic series pitting a police lieutenant against a giant sewer dwelling monster which appeared in all 10 issues of the artists' collective *Metropol* magazine. Even for an artist as productive as Bernet, the workload was overwhelming, so after 15 episodes he finished working on *Sarvan*. *Kraken* transferred to *Zona 84* with the entire series finally collected in three albums from Toutain.

As Bernet's popularity grew, more strips followed in quick succession: *De Vuelta A Casa* with Enrique Sanchez Abuli In *1984*, the downbeat future world of TV reporter *Custer* with Carlos Trillo in 1985 and then the mismatched spies *Light and Bold*, again with

Sarvan. Cimoc Extra Colour 18 (Norma), 1986.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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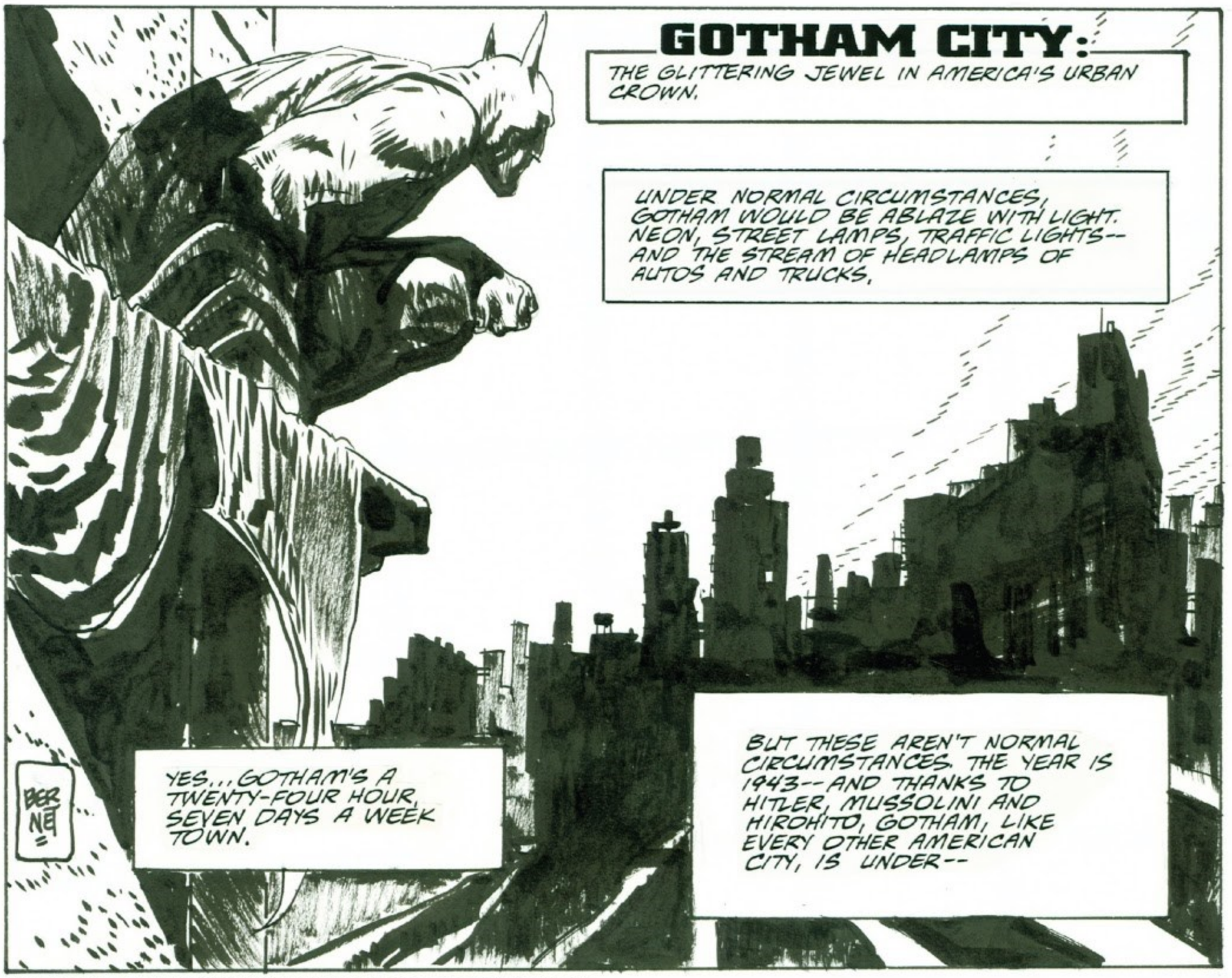

Batman: Gotham Knights 9 (DC), 2000. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

Trillo, in 1987, all of which ran in *Zona 84*. But it was *Torpedo* that caught the public's imagination and established Bernet as a star. Set in the New York of 1936, the strip starred the violent hitman Luca Torelli and his henchman Rascal in a series of tightly plotted, ultra-violent stories by Enrique Sanchez Abulli. The era was wonderfully brought to life by Bernet, reflecting his appreciation of film noir, adept storytelling, and love of drawing glamorous women. *Torpedo* ran from 1982 until 1996 in *Creepy, Comix International*, *Totem*, and a number of later venues until the creators fell out. The series has been collected in numerous volumes ever since and remains in print around the world. Abuli and Bernet also collaborated on the sexually charged *La Naturaleza De La Bestia* for *Totem* in 1987 and the western *Snake* for the French magazine *L'Echo Des Savannes* in 1998. But it was his relationship with Carlos Trillo that was to prove more enduring.

Their horror strip *Ivanpiire* appeared in five issues of *Splatter* in 1989, followed by the much longer lasting *Clara De Noche* three years later. Clara was a fun loving hooker with a young son, whose irreverently sexy adventures appeared every week in the satirical magazine *El Jueves*. Drawn in a simple cartoony style the strip lasted until 2016 for a total of 1243 two-page episodes and has since been collected in numerous albums. In 1998 Bernet, Trillo, and co-writer Eduardo Maicas created another sexually adventurous heroine, Chicca Dum-dum, a gangster's moll in 1920s Chicago. These much more explicit stories appeared in the Spanish *Penthouse* magazine from 1997–2006 and *Penthouse Comix* from 2003–2011 giving the artist ample opportunities to express his love of the female form.

Bernet's versatility brought in Illustration commissions from *Playboy, El Pais* and hard-boiled crime paperbacks, as well as an epic strip for Bonelli's *Tex Albo Speciale* (10, 1996). After this, he struck up a relationship with DC Comics, contributing to titles such as *Fanboy, Weird Western, 100 Bullets*, and *Batman Black and White*. In 2005 he was given an entire issue of *Solo* to express his versatility and in 2007 drew an issue of *The Spirit*. But his time at DC was dominated by westerns, drawing 19 issues of *Jonah Hex* between 2007 and 2011, followed by *El Diablo* in *All-Star Western*. More recent American strips have included three issues of Vertigo's *American Vampire* and a contribution to *Scalped*.

In Europe, Bernet's career is constantly re-packaged and appreciated by new generations of fans. He has won numerous awards including the Alfred at Angouleme in 1985, the Gran Premio at Barcelona in 1991, and The Yellow Kid at Lucca in 1995 and he remains unquestionably one of the leading creators in world comics.

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Holernes, ich an deiner Stelle würde auf weitere Wettkämpfe verzichten!

Ich auch, hahaha!

Jetzt will ich's wissen! Gebt jedem von uns ein Schwert! Mal sehen, ob du auch so dreist bist, wenn es um Leben und Tod geht!

Was soll der Blödsinn! Willst du so deine Niederlagen aus der Welt schaffen!?

Spar dir deine Reden! Los, verteidige dich!

Zögernd pariert Andrax die wuchtigen Hiebe...

Mach ihn fertig, Holernes!

Ja, genau so!

Jetzt! Endlich wehrt sich das Milchgesicht!

PRIMO 27 | Pag. 28

Andrax. Primo 27 (Rolf Kauka), 1973. Original artwork courtesy of Christian Stoklas.

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El Cuervo. Kung Fu (Amaika), 1977. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Kraken book 1 (Toutain), 1986. Original cover artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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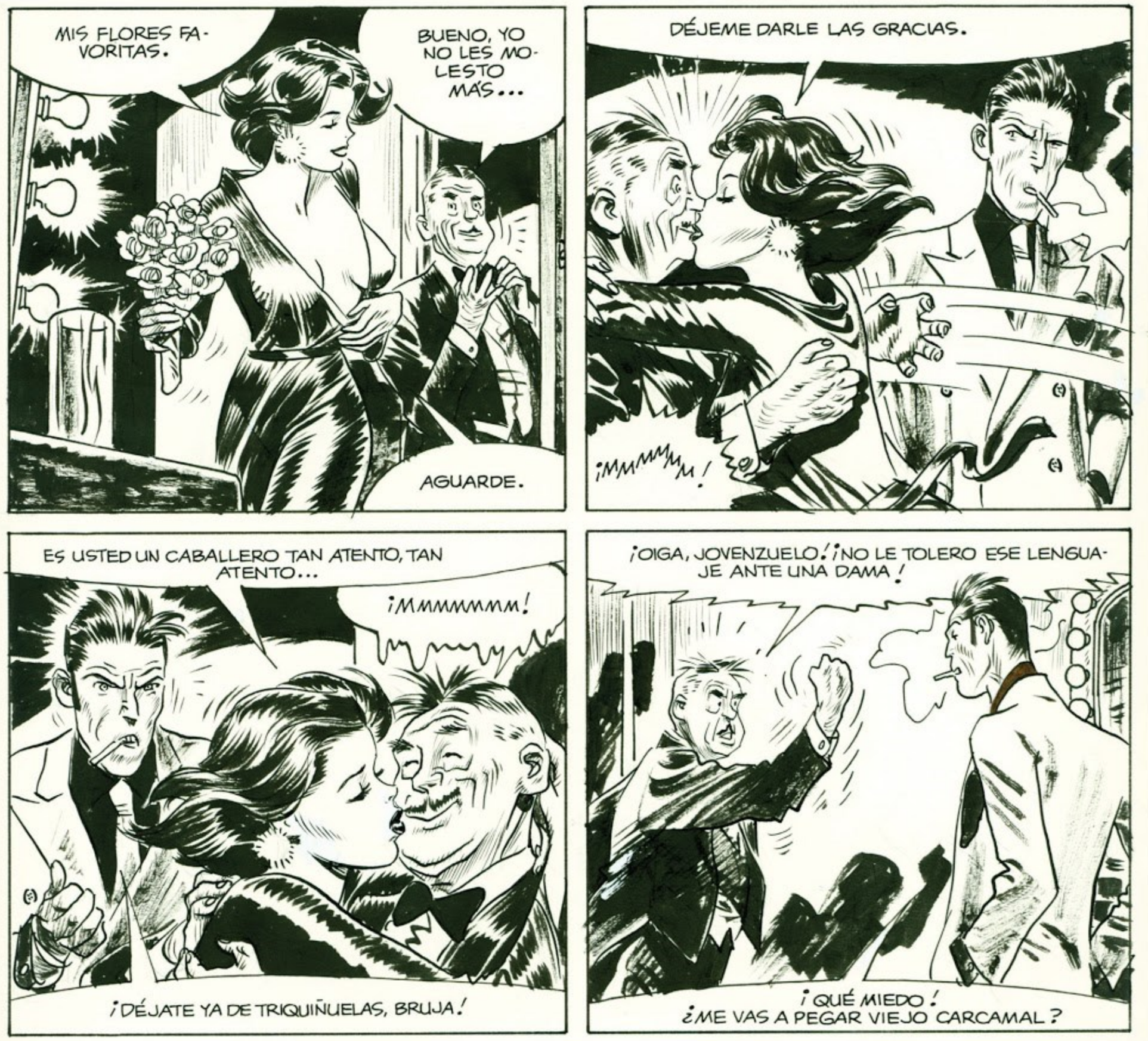

Torpedo. *Creepy 57* (Toutain), 1984. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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HEART IN HIDING. 2

* IMPRINT *

"AND I FELT DISAPPOINTED ALL OF A SUDDEN ..."

JUST MY LUCK TO COME ACROSS A NICE-LOOKING BOY WHO I'LL PROBABLY NEVER HEAR OF AGAIN!

"BUT THEN ... AS IF HE'D READ MY THOUGHTS..."

SHOOT ME DOWN IF YOU THINK I'M JUST A FRESH GUY ... BUT HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME FOR A TRIP TO THE SEASIDE ON SUNDAY?

IN ... IN NOVEMBER?

"YET I'D HAVE GONE IF IT'D BEEN CHRISTMAS DAY!"

WOULDN'T RECOGNISE THE PLACE WITHOUT THE CROWDS AND ICE-CREAM, WOULD YOU?

IT'S ALMOST LIKE A DESERTED ISLAND!

BUT OUT THERE ARE THE REAL DESERTED ISLANDS ... JUST WAITING FOR ME!

YOU'RE A REGULAR ROBINSON CRUSOE, AREN'T YOU?

"I TRIED TO KEEP MY TONE LIGHT ..."

BUT I BET YOU MEET A GIRL SOME DAY AND YOU'LL SETTLE DOWN JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER BOYS!

I'LL SETTLE DOWN ONLY WHEN THEY PUSH ME TO THESE SPOTS IN A BATHCHAIR!

THAT'S WHEN I KNEW I COULD NEVER LET HIM SEE I WAS FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM!

I KNOW THE SORT. ONE HINT THAT THEIR PRECIOUS FREEDOM'S IN JEOPARDY AND THEY'VE VANISHED IN A CLOUD OF EXHAUST!

"AND I COULDN'T RISK THAT WITH JACK. BUT EVEN IN MY HAPPIEST MOMENTS ..."

HOW LONG BEFORE HE SAYS GOODBYE INSTEAD OF GOODNIGHT?

"THEN, AS I'D FEARED FROM THE FIRST ..."

IT'S ALL FIXED, DI! I'VE JOINED UP WITH A COUPLE OF LADS WHO ARE TRAVELLING OVERLAND TO SOUTH AFRICA! WE'RE PULLING OUT AT THE END OF THE MONTH!

"I GABBLED ON ... MAKING IT UP AS I WENT ..."

NEW YORK, AS A MATTER OF FACT! A SORT OF SECRETARY EXCHANGE JOB. IT ... IT'S A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY!

YES, I SUPPOSE IT IS!

"SUDDENLY, BEFORE I KNEW WHAT I WAS SAYING..."

THAT'S FUNNY! I'M LEAVING MYSELF NEXT WEEK... FOR AMERICA!

WHAT?

"FOR THE REST OF THE EVENING HE LOOKED SO CRESTFALLEN, I WAS ALMOST TEMPTED TO ADMIT I WAS FIBBING. BUT WE GIRLS MUST HAVE SOME PRIDE!"

YOU'RE VERY QUIET TONIGHT, JACK. THINKING ABOUT YOUR SOUTH AFRICAN TRIP?

NO ... ABOUT YOU POPPING OFF TO THE STATES. I JUST CAN'T GET USED TO THE IDEA!

Valentine 4th April 1964 (Fleetway) Original artwork

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Jesus Blasco 1919–1995

Chicos 435 (Gilsa), 1947.

Original artwork from *El Gran Jefe. Cida 94* (F Valls), 1979.

Spirou 1592 (Dupuis), 1968.

Once Upon a Time 89 (City), 1970.

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Original artwork from *Return of the Claw*, *Valiant* 28th April 1973 (IPC).

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Original artwork from *Slave of the Screamer*. *Valiant* 30th May 1970 (IPC).

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Original artwork from *Slave of the Screamer*. *Valiant* 6th June 1970 (IPC).

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Joaquin Blasquez 1946–1986

Original artwork from *Vampirella 49*, 1976.

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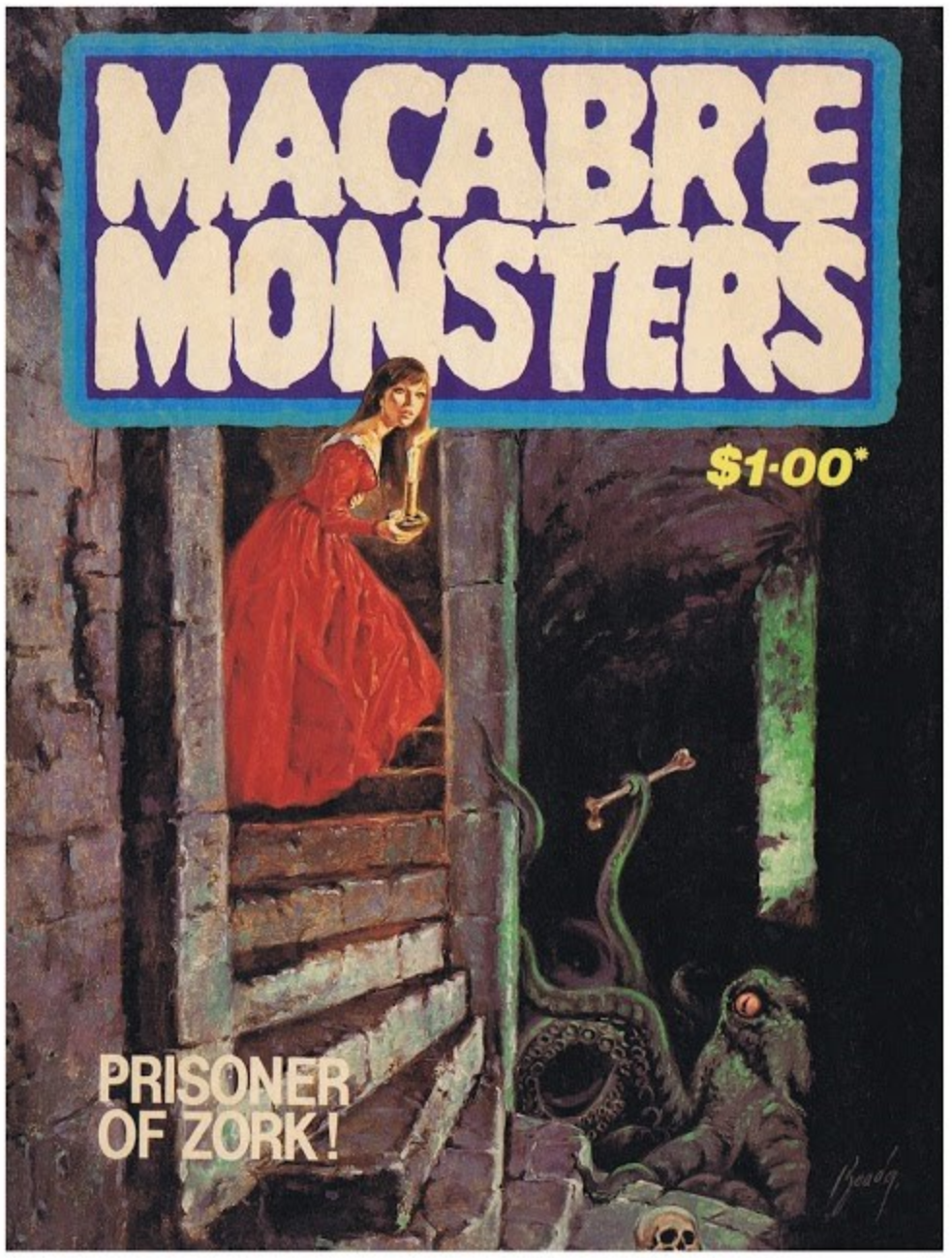
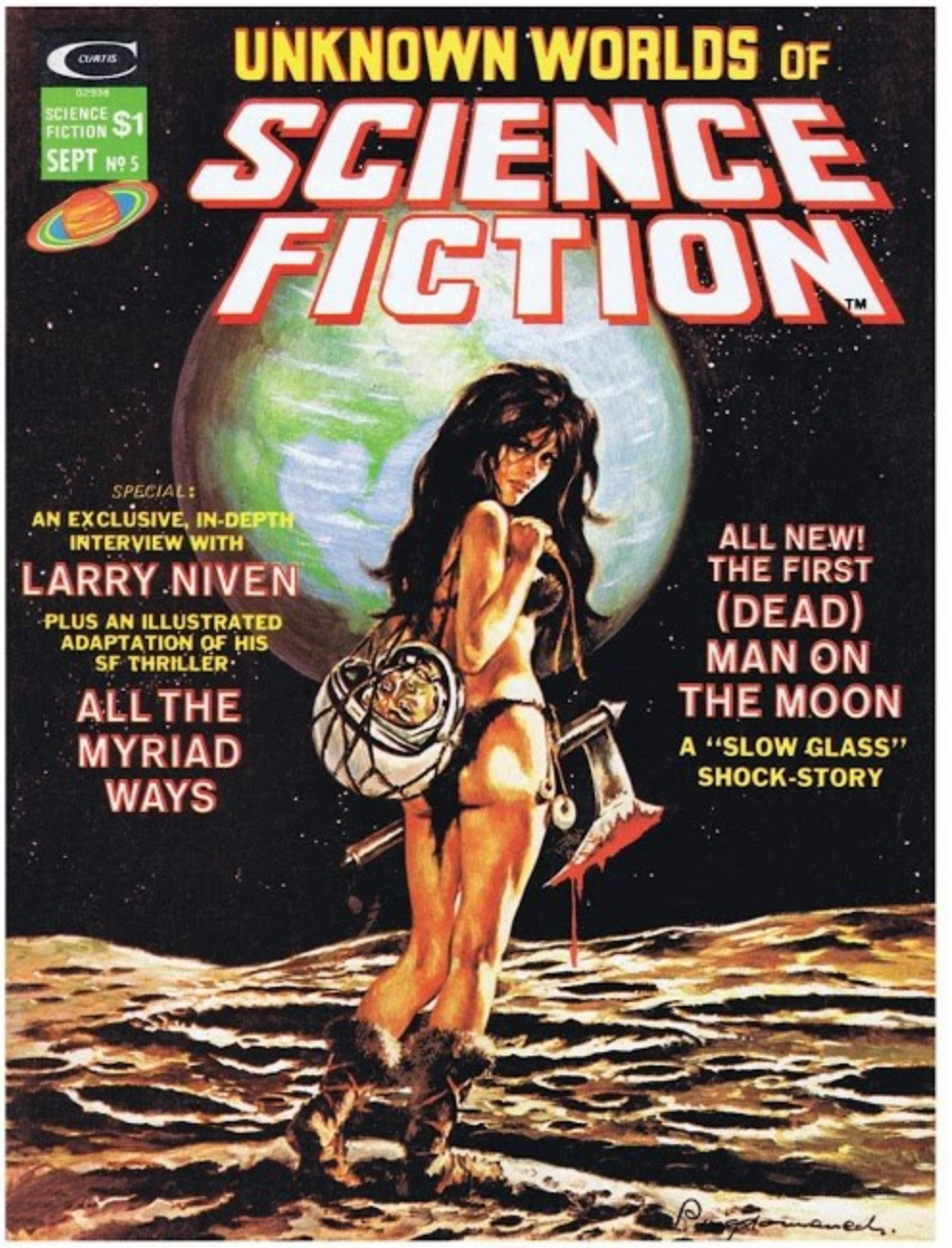
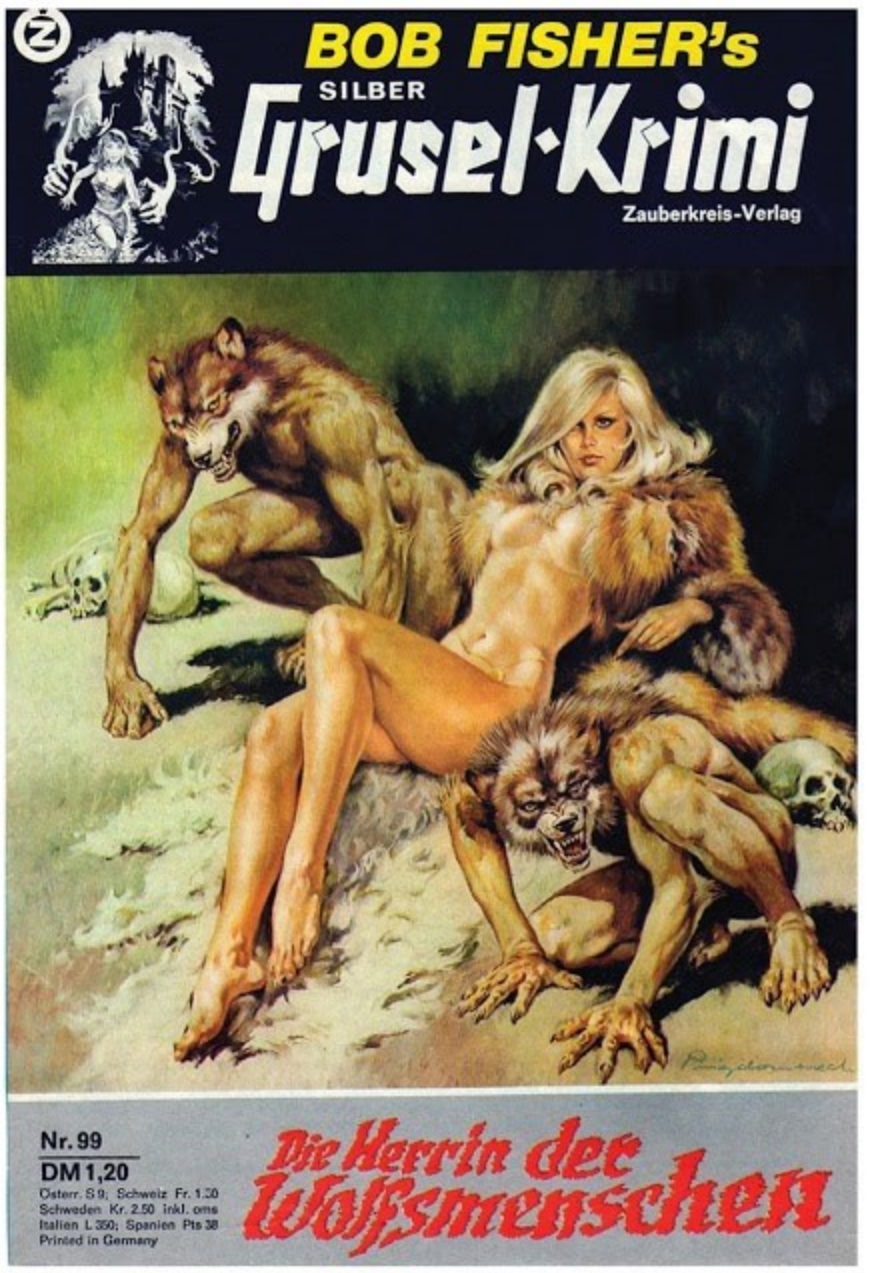


Macabre Monsters (Gredown), 1982.



Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction 5 (Marvel), 1975.



Grusel-Krimi 99 (Zauberkreis), 1975.
Image courtesy of Sebastia Boada

Nightmare 17 (Skywald), 1974.

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Joan Boix B. 1945

Robny El Vagabundo. Senda El Comic 4 (Nedisa), 1979. Image courtesy of Joan Boix.

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Robny El Vagabundo. Papel Vivo 27 (De La Torre), 1981. Image courtesy of Joan Boix.

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Boixcar (Guillermo Sanchez Boix) 1917–1964

Ocurrió una Vez 11 (Toray), 1958. Original artwork courtesy of Luc Cornillon.

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PAM

¡GRACIAS, AMIGO! ME HA SALVADO LA VIDA.

ME LLAMO NOLAN. FUI ABANDONADO POR MI SAFARI.

YO ME LLAMO GRAY. ¿QUIERE UNIRSE A NOSOTROS?

DE ESTA MANERA, AQUEL DESCONOCIDO ENTRÓ A FORMAR PARTE DE LA EXPEDICIÓN DE GRAY, CON GRAN DESCONTENTO DE BATT, EL AMIGO DE GRAY.

AQUELLA NOCHE...

¿POR QUÉ HAS PERMITIDO QUE SE UNIERA A NOSOTROS, GRAY?

¿QUÉ OTRA COSA PODÍA HACER?

ABANDONARLO A SU SUERTE HUBIERA SIDO UN CRIMEN.

NO LO CREAS.

ES FÁCIL REGRESAR AL POBLADO MÁS CERCANO. EL AGUA NO FALTA EN EL CAMINO Y CON UN FUSIL HUBIER PODIDO PROCURARSE ALIMENTO.

ME DISGUSTA OIRTE HABLAR ASÍ, BATT.

¿NO TE DAS CUENTA DE LO ARRIESGADO QUE RESULTA LLEVAR A DESCONOCIDOS CON NOSOTROS? EL MÉDICO PASE. PERO ÉSE...

NO TE PREOCUPES: TENDRÁ SU PARTE. Y ESTARÁ SATISFECHO CON ELLA, TE LO ASEGURO.

PERMÍTEME QUE TENGA MIS DUDAS.

LUEGO...

¡POBRE BATT! ¡CUÁN PRECIPITADO ES EN SUS JUICIOS!

PERO AQUELLA NOCHE, EN EL CAMPAMENTO, ALGUIEN, DOMINADO POR LA CODICIA, TRAZABA PLANES CRIMINALES.

Ocurrió una Vez 12 (Toray), 1958. Original artwork courtesy of Luc Cornillon.

HotComic.net

Ángel Badía Camps B. 1929

Ángel Badía Camps was one of the first Spanish artists to move from comics to illustration, and then on to fine art. He was also one of most prolific and artistically acclaimed. Camps was born in Colonia Pons in Catalonia whose father was a political exile, only returning to Spain after nine years in France. Camps drew all his life, supported by his family who bought him art supplies, and inspired by comics such as *Pulgarcito* and artists including Alex Raymond and Milton Caniff. In 1950 he began studying fine art at the Escuela Superior de Barcelona and also began his comic career drawing strips for publishers such as Ameller, Marco, and Cliper (on *Lupita*). Much of his early work was for Ricart including strips like *Sentimental, Capa Negra* and the medieval series *Flecha y Artur*. After years of practicing, by the mid-'50s he was accomplished enough to join industry giant Bruguera where he drew the *Luis y Raul* strip and illustrations for countless classic children's' novels.

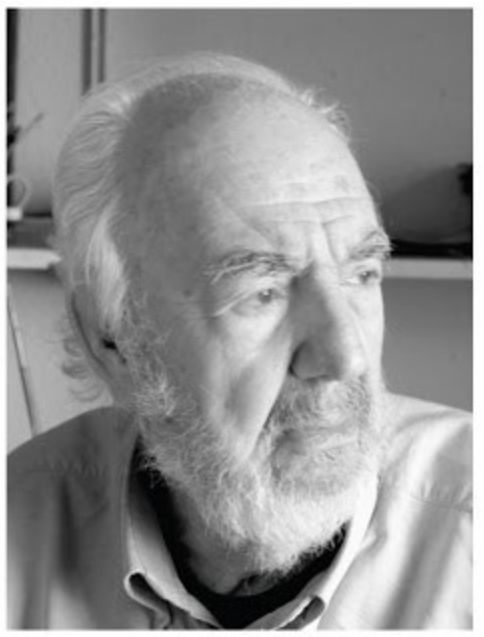
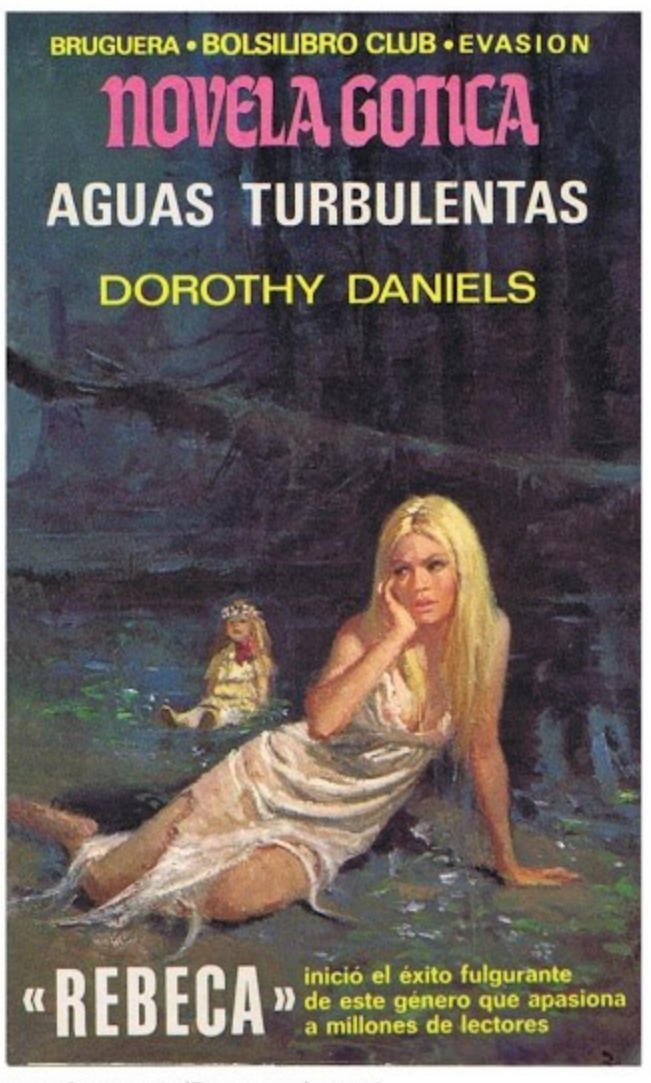


Photo courtesy of Ángel Badía Camps.

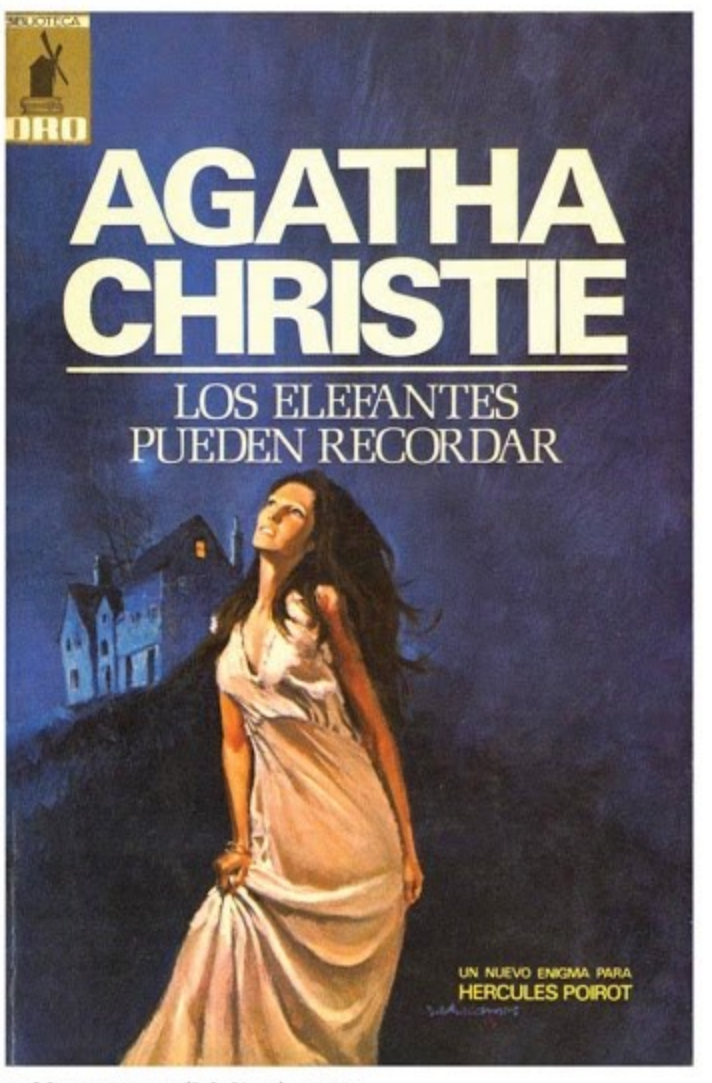
By the end of the decade, having studied the techniques of the great American illustrators Camps had graduated to painted covers for both Bruguera's comic and book lines. On comics such as *Sissi,* romance books in the *Dalia* series and countless western paintings for *Buffalo, Ases Del Oeste,* and *Coleccion Bissonte,* he emerged as a skilful artist with an increasingly strong compositional sense. In 1961 he joined S.I. and returned to drawing comic strips as one of the many Spanish romance artists making waves in the UK. After his first attempt at drawing British settings the artist felt he needed to immerse himself in the country, so he travelled to London taking hundreds of photos of anything he might conceivably be expected to draw. In a spell that lasted six years his strips appeared in *Valentine, Roxy, True Life, Marilyn,* and *Serenade*, drawing with an elegance and invention that ranked him along artists like Longaron and González as a master of the genre. His strips for *Serenade* were particularly striking with an inventive, almost abstract use of color on its covers. This was art that was both beautiful and strikingly modern.

But in the UK, Camps was never just a strip artist and from the beginning his stylish covers were gracing such titles as *Love Story, True Life, Sexton Blake, Oracle, Pop Pic Library, Star Love*, and *Charm.* His paintings are known to have appeared on over 250 British comic covers between 1961 and 1979 and it's entirely possible the actual figure is significantly higher. Camps was incredibly prolific, creating up to five covers a week, but assessing the scale of his output is almost impossible because throughout this period many of the same images would appear in both Spain and the UK. Indeed, throughout the '60s his art could be found on Spanish romance comics such as *Celia, As de Corazones, Serie Romance, Salome*, and *Cherie* and on countless Bruguera romance novels in such series as, *Corin Tellado, Ampola Romances, Camelia, Coral, Corinto*, and *Mujeres Marcadas.* As if this torrent of artwork was not enough, he was simultaneously working for Barden, creating enormous canvases for the seemingly insatiable Swedish womens' magazine market, many of which were then sold back to the UK as comic and book covers.

Camps drew his last strip in 1967 and began to concentrate on covers for Spanish books where he was able to express his versatility as an artist. Many of his most design oriented covers were created for Molino's *Biblioteca Oro* series and as the artist was moving from acrylics to oils, his work became noticeably more textural. Molino's Oro paperbacks included crime, romance, and western imprints, all of which he contributed too; and he produced all eight of their eerie *Novelas Goticas* covers in 1969. However, the majority of his Molino



Novela Gotica (Bruguera), 1976.



Biblioteca Oro (Molino), 1972.

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Syndication illustration, 1960s.Original artwork courtesy of Ángel Badía Camps

Cuantos de Ayer y de Hoy (Afha), 1974.
Original artwork courtesy of Ángel Badía Camps.

commissions came from their children's department and in 1967 he took over from Noiquet as the lead artist on their *Enid Blyton* books. In his decade-long association with the publishers he worked on numerous successful childrens series including covers for *Tom Swift, Encyclopedia Brown, Sandokan, Laura,* numerous children's' classics and 29 books in Alfred Hitchcock's popular three Investigators series. Some of his best children's' artwork was created for AFHA's lavish mid-'70s books such as *El Puqueo Heroe,* which featured his expressive oil paintings of adventure stories from around the world.

Bruguera kept his earlier children's' illustrations in print for decades but his later work for the company explored much wilder imagery. In 1968 Camps began painting for the *Enviado Secreto* series, ultimately producing over 100 covers of James Bond-inspired spy caper action. In 1973 he created a number of Warren-esque horror illustrations for *Seleccion Terror* and *Gotica* that were widely reprinted across Europe in horror magazines such as *Chock* and *Grusel-Krimi.* But most of his Bruguera covers in this period were far more futuristic as he contributed 14 covers to their Ciencia Ficcion paperbacks and 37 broodingly dark paintings for *Espacio.* The artwork to *Espacio* 138 was recycled on a 1975 *Savage Sword of Conan* cover, his only appearance in American comics. He also contributed a striking image for *Rufus* 21 in Spain. While much of career was spent working for Spain and the UK, he also appeared on German pulps such as *Kommisar-X, Jack Slade, Professor Zamorra,* and *Moewig Western.*

Throughout the '70s Camps had as much work as he could possibly handle, but by the middle of the decade he made a conscious decision to step back from the pressures of commercial art. With his friend and fellow cover artist Roberto Cortiella, he opened the Art Academy in Barcelona which ran for over ten years with the pair teaching on alternate weeks. One day while painting on holiday at Olot, Camps was approached by an art dealer who expressed an interest in what he was doing. Despite protesting that he was only a Sunday painter (!) the dealer insisted on going back to the artist's studio where he promptly bought nearly everything there, setting Camps off on the second half of his career as a fine painter. He had first exhibited his work in 1974 and in the '80s was enjoying one man shows at the Sala De Arte Ruaz. Since 1987 he has been represented by Barcelona's prestigious Sala Pares, once the home of Picasso. There is an aesthetic continuity between the last of Camps commercial period and his fine art, a similar use of thickly layered paint, but the gallery work is more acutely observed, with an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, even melancholy. Most of these later pieces involve the figure, often nude studies in the bare interior of his studio, but his subjects also include still lives and hazy, atmospheric city scenes. He still works today and must be considered one of his country's finest artists.

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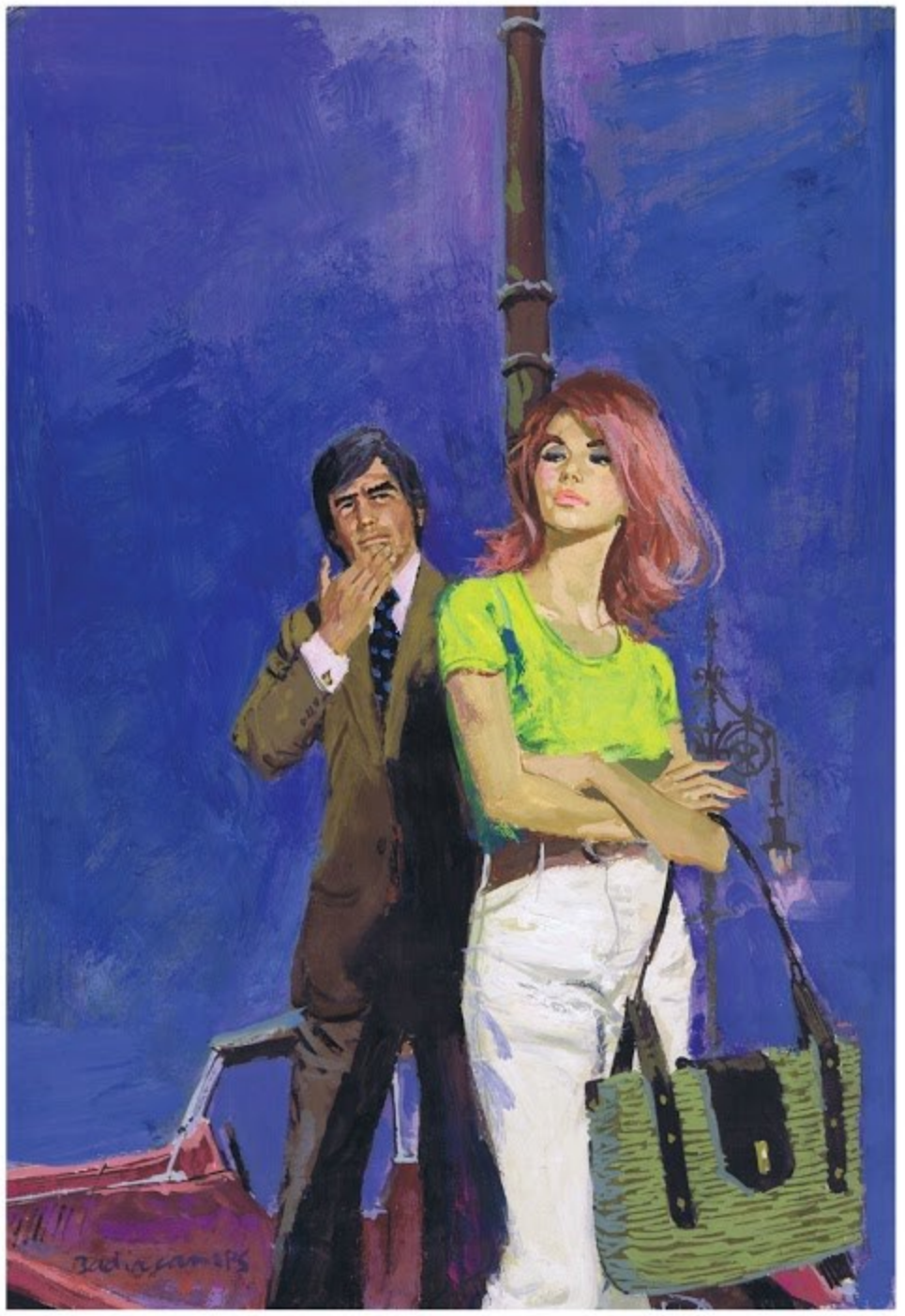

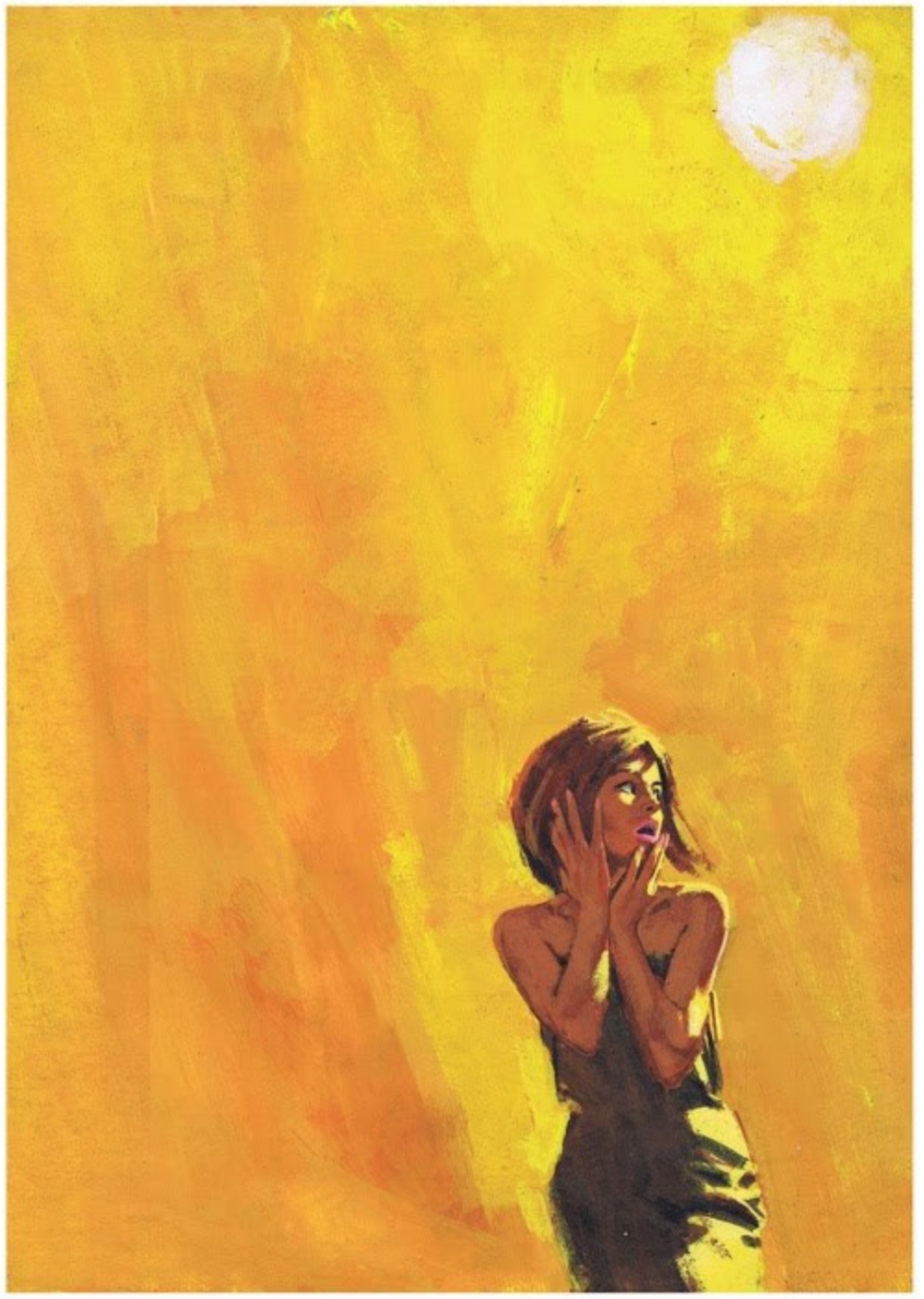

Illustrations for Syndication, 1960s Original artwork courtesy of Ángel Badía Camps.

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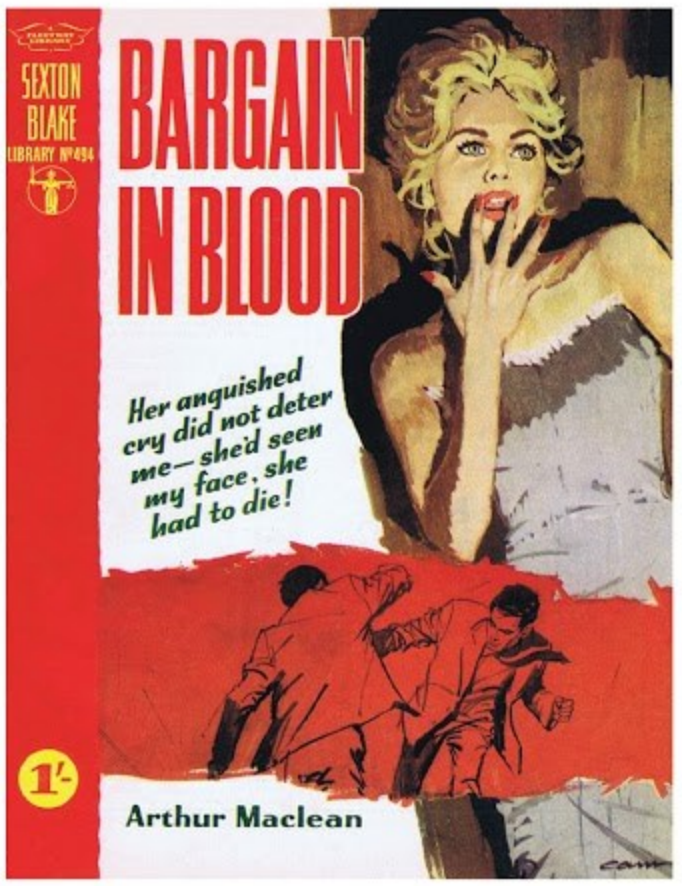

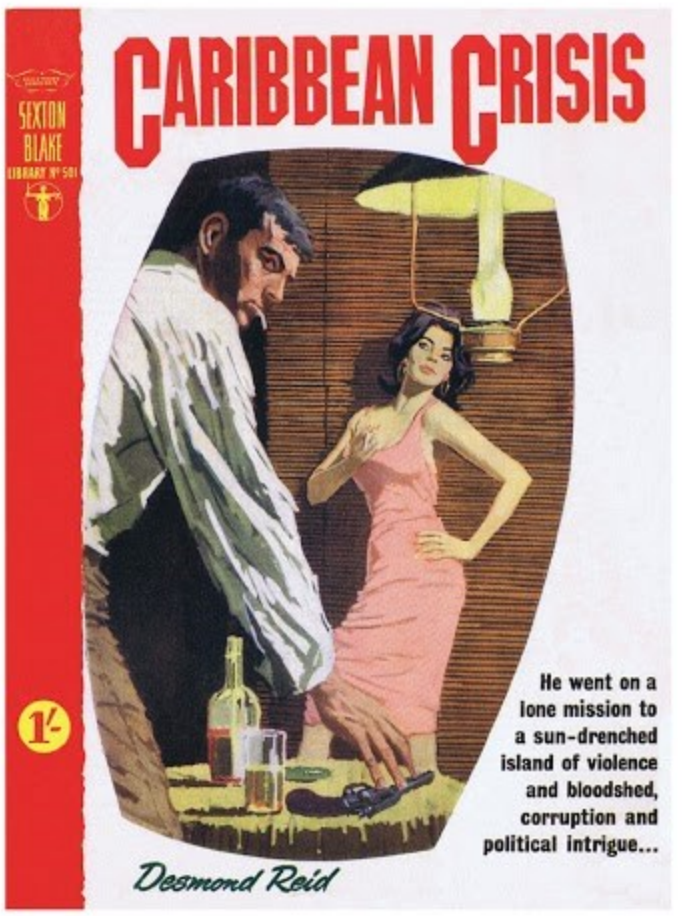

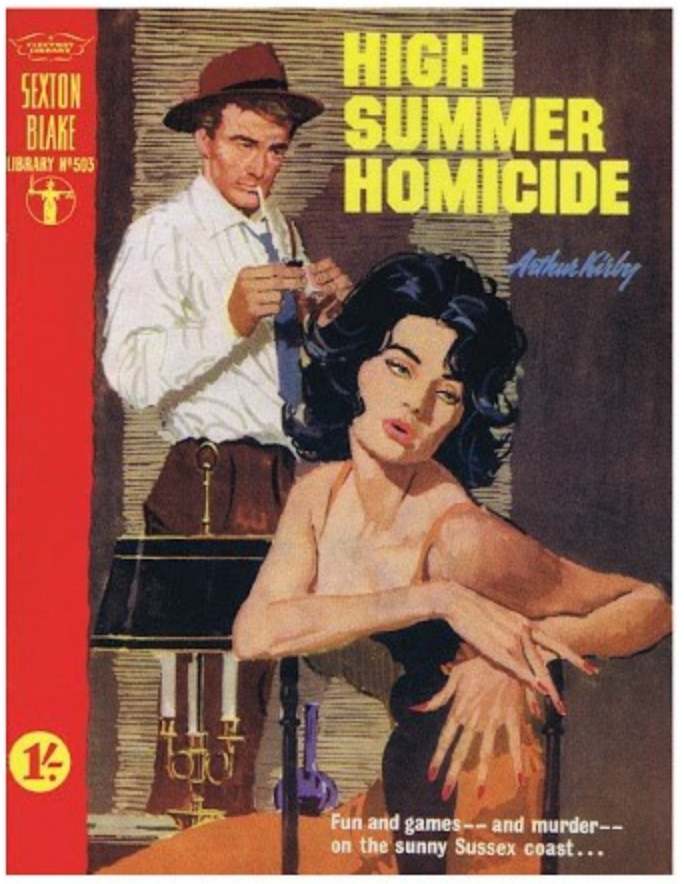

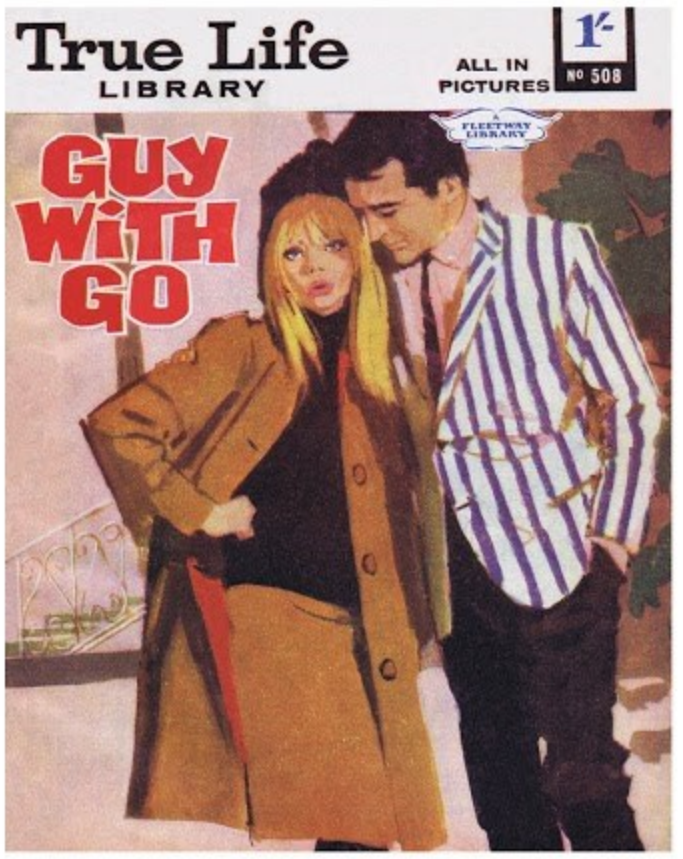

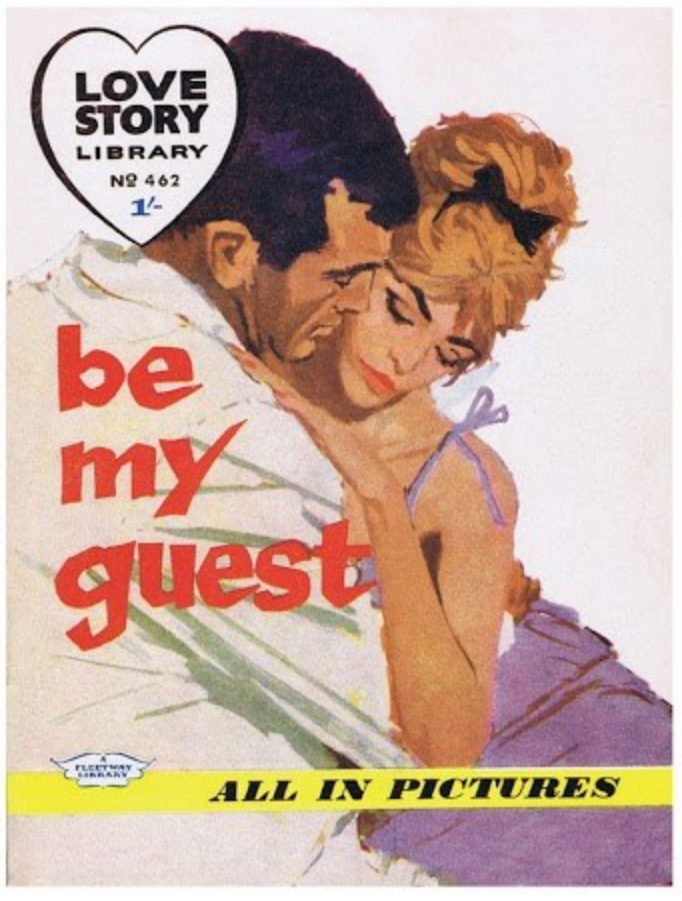

Fleetway Picture Libraries, 1962–1966.

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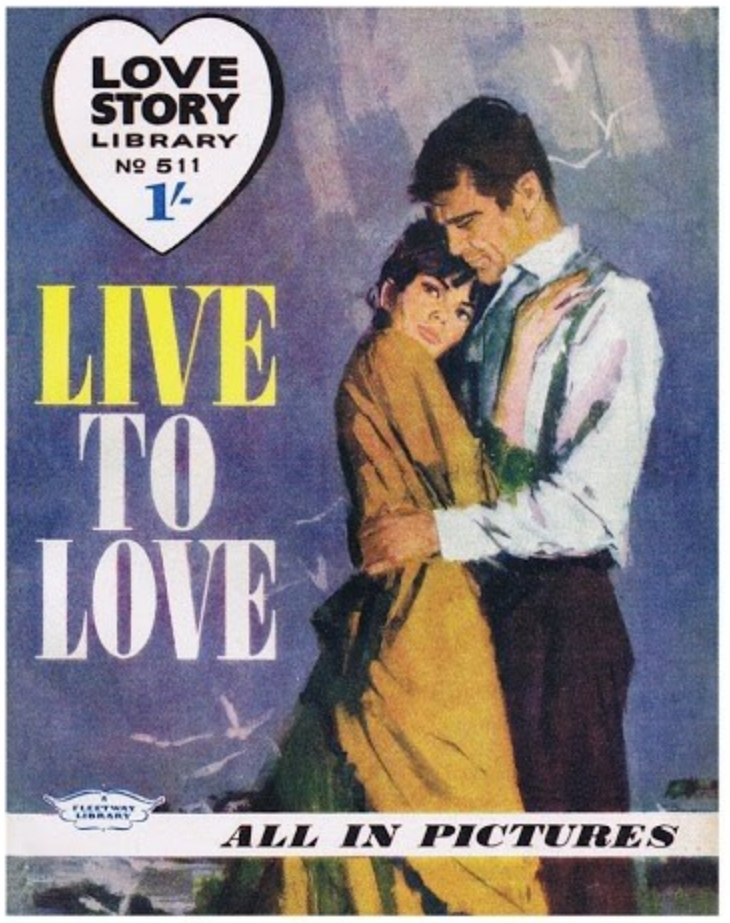
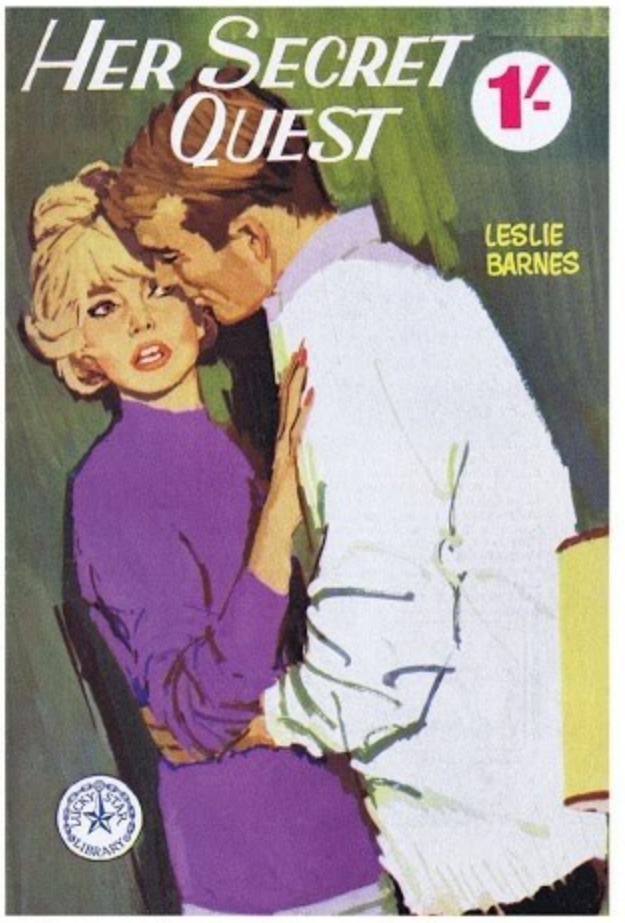
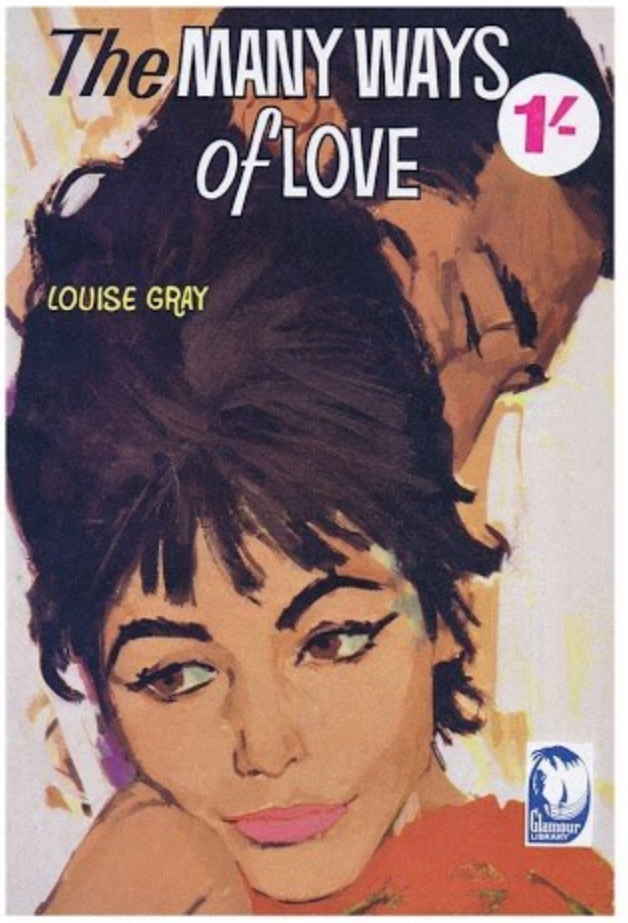


Love Story 511 (Fleetway), 1965



Lucky Star Library 359 (Pearson), 1964.



Glamour Library 357 (Pearson), 1964.

Serenade 4 (Fleetway), 1962.

Serenade 16 (Fleetway), 1963.

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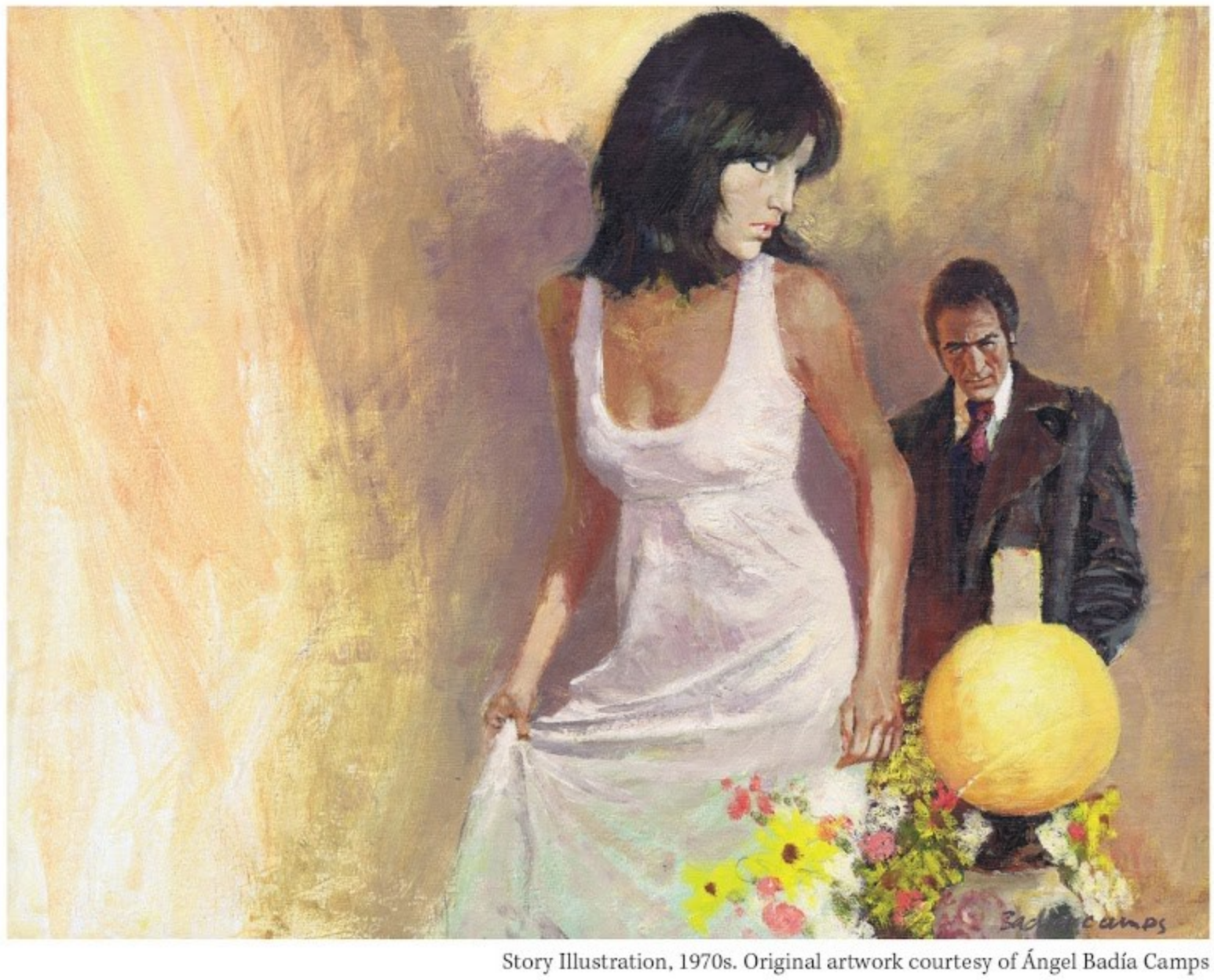
Original artwork from *Kommisar-X 414* (Pabel), 1966.

Jack Slade 401 (Bastei). Original artwork courtesy of Ricardo Guillamon.



Story Illustration, 1970s. Original artwork courtesy of Ángel Badía Camps

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Purita Campos B. 1937

Original art from *Pattys World Episode 12. Princess Tina* 16th October 1971 (IPC)

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MAX HURRIED TO THE INTERVIEW.

ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF HUMAN BRAIN CELLS ARE EVER USED. RENTABRAIN HAS FOUND A WAY TO UTILISE THESE UNUSED PORTIONS AS CHEAP, BUT VERY EFFECTIVE COMPUTERS. WE COULD HIRE YOUR BRAIN FOR A STUDY OF, SAY, TWENTIETH CENTURY INSECT PESTS. ER—PERHAPS THERE ARE A FEW DANGERS I SHOULD WARN YOU OF.

WRITE ME ABOUT THEM, MISTER BENSON! WHERE DO I SIGN?

THAT EVENING, MAX PREPARED TO DO HIS FIRST 'NIGHT SHIFT'.

GOOD NIGHT, TREE. GOOD NIGHT, ROSE BUSH. GOOD NIGHT, SWEET GREENERY. DADDY'S OFF TO SLEEP-WORK NOW. TOMORROW I'LL HAVE LOTS OF LOVELY MONEY—AND ALL DAY TO SPEND WITH YOU.

GETTING PAID FOR SLEEP! HUH! I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT!

AN HOUR LATER, MAX'S BRAIN WAS HARD AT WORK...

AND NEXT MORNING...

GOOD MORNING, MR. HIBBLE. YOUR BRAIN WORKED A TOTAL OF 7 HOURS LAST NIGHT. HERE IS YOUR CHEQUE FOR 175 CREDITS.

YAHOO! AND I'VE STILL GOT ALL DAY TO SPEND IN MY GARDEN!

LOOK, HONEY! ALMOST 200 CREDITS FOR DOIN' A STUPID INSECT STUDY! YOU WERE ALL WRONG ABOUT THIS JOB!

I TAKE BACK EVERYTHING I SAID, MAX. LET ME GIVE YOU A BIG KISS TO SAY I'M SORRY...

Original art from *Future Shock. Starlord 16* (IPC), 1978.

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Roberto Gonzalez Casarrubio B. 1936

Marilyn, 3rd February 1962 (Fleetway).

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Original artwork from *Highway of the Sun. Princess*, 22nd December 1962 (Fleetway).

HotComic.net

LION 29 FEB 64 ½ scale Capt Condor(6) bardon artwork

Captain Condor

CAPTAIN CONDOR HAD COMMANDED A SPACE LINER CARRYING STUDENTS WHEN IT COLLIDED WITH A WRECK. CONDOR TOOK A BOATLOAD OF SURVIVORS TO THE PLANET ARGOL VI. HE AND A STUDENT, MIKE CASTLE, SEARCHED FOR A SECOND BOAT, WHICH HAD ANOTHER STUDENT, PAUL HENSON, ABOARD, WITH THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES. *THEY FOUND THE BOAT, BUT HENSON HAD VANISHED AND THE FOOD LOCKERS WERE EMPTY.*

HENSON'S SELFISH AND HE'S A COWARD, CAPTAIN... HE COULD HAVE GONE OFF, TAKING ALL THE RATIONS FOR HIMSELF!

YOU COULD BE RIGHT, MIKE. IF SO WE MUST FIND HIM... *FAST!*

HENSON'S THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RATIONS, AND WITHOUT THEM NONE OF US STANDS MUCH CHANCE OF LASTING UNTIL WE'RE RESCUED!

BACK AT THE LIFEBOAT, THE OTHER SURVIVORS WERE GROWING RESTLESS.

WHEN ARE THEY COMING BACK WITH THE GRUB?

STOP MOANING, TUBBY. IF THEY AREN'T BACK SOON WE'LL HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN THE STATE OF YOUR STOMACH!

THEIR TEACHER, PROFESSOR WYLMANN, TOOK A FIRM LINE...

WE'VE HAD CAPTAIN CONDOR'S ORDERS. WE WAIT FOR HIM TO COME BACK!

BUT HOW LONG DO WE WAIT? SUPPOSING SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG. DO WE STAY HERE DOING NOTHING UNTIL WE STARVE?

CONDOR AND MIKE WERE SEARCHING ANXIOUSLY FOR HENSON.

HENSON! WHERE ARE YOU?

CAPTAIN! I HEARD SOMETHING MOVING OVER THERE!

NEXT MOMENT...

THE HIDEOUS ALIEN CREATURE SUDDENLY BOUNDED AWAY...

THAT WAS A LUCKY BREAK, CAPTAIN. IT DIDN'T SEE US!

LUCKY? I'M NOT SO SURE...

THEN CAME A TERRIFIED SCREAM...

HEAR THAT? IT'S HENSON. THE BRUTE'S AFTER HIM!

HELP! HELP!

LION 29 Feb ½ scale Capt Condor (6) 1110

Original artwork from *Captain Condor. Lion* 29th February 1964 (Fleetway)

HotComic.net

Original artwork from *Zip Nolan*. *Lion*, 30th May 1964 (Fleetway).

HotComic.net

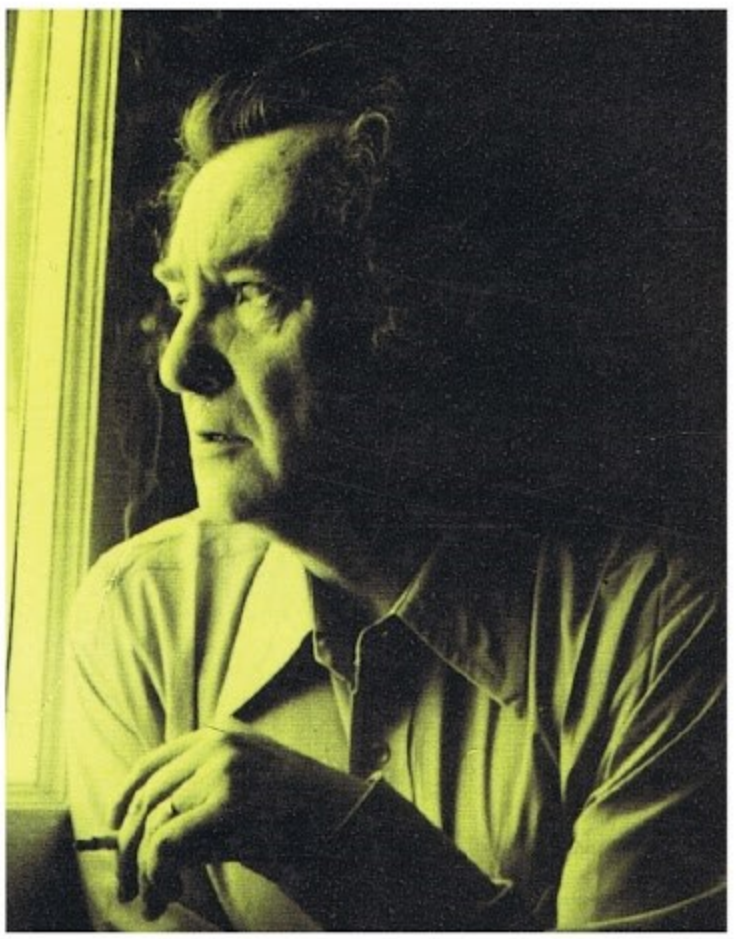
Ramon De La Fuente 1927–1984

Original artwork from *War Picture Library 453* (IPC)

HotComic.net

Víctor de la Fuente 1927–2010

Víctor de la Fuente Sanchez was one of the first, and most influential, artists of the Golden Generation, despite working and living outside of Spain for most of his career. Victor was born in Ardisana de Llanes, Asturias, the oldest of three brothers (Ramon and Jose Luis) who also followed him into comics. His earliest work came as an assistant to Adolfo Lopez Rubio in 1944, and a year later he was drawing professionally for the comics *Legion del Espacio* and *Zas*. However, that same year Victor decided to emigrate to South America hoping to get to Cuba to look for better job opportunities, landing first in Buenos Aires and then heading on to Chile. In Chile he found work both in comics on *El Cabrito* and *El Peneca* (published by Zig Zag) and in advertising with his own agency, Zenith. His first Chilean strips for *El Cabrito* were enormously accomplished, perhaps reflecting the influence of Hal Foster. In the early '50s he is believed to have also worked for Dell drawing *Zorro* and *Zane Grey* for the publisher's *Four Color* series.

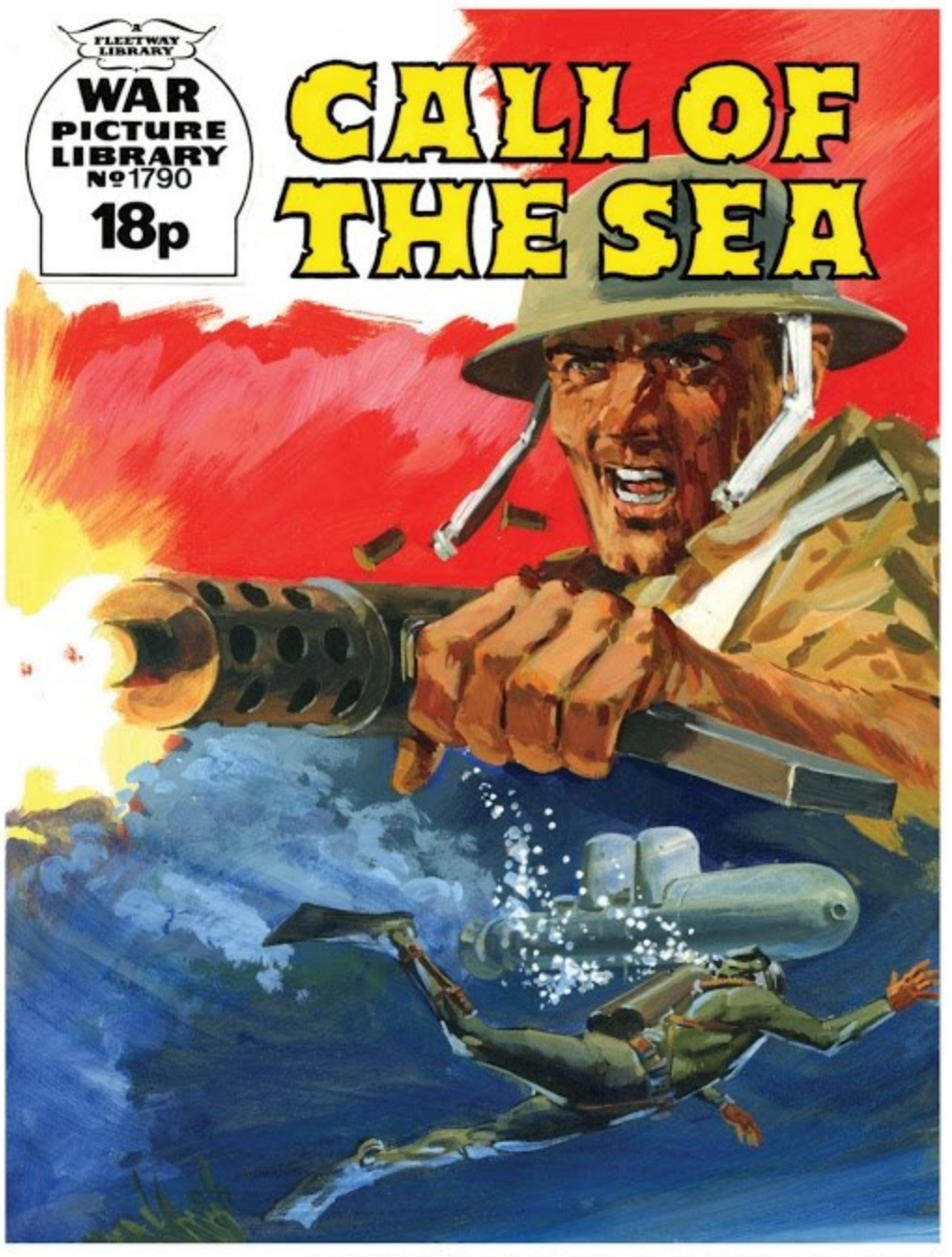


In 1957 De La Fuente took over as director of El Peneca, changing its name to El Entrepido Peneca and reprinting strips from *Spirou* and *Tintin*. He transformed the title into an all-comics publication, contributing cover art and interior illustrations. However, two years later, the artist returned to Spain for a holiday and on his return found that his business partner had sold the company and he was broke. So it was that in 1960 De La Fuente returned to Spain, signed up with S.I. and began the second part of his career, drawing for the UK.

By this stage, De La Fuente's artwork had evolved into a viscerally dynamic style, typified by movement, energy, and an edgy, effervescent ink line. He was snapped up by Fleetway in the UK and after initially drawing for their romance titles *Valentine* and *Roxy* he was soon identified as a natural for their war comics *War* and *Battle Picture Library*. Commissions to draw *Blackbow the Cheyenne* for *Eagle* in 1963 and *Trelawney of the Guards* for *Lion* (from 1967 to 1968) also augmented his war strips; but, the majority of his 10 year British career was spent producing art for the 64-page *Picture Library*'s. He increasingly found more work from DC Thomson's *Commando Library* in 1966 as well, resulting in an astonishing workload; in fact for his entire British career he rarely produced less than 600 pages a year and in 1968 it rose to almost 1000. As De La Fuente later remarked, "I should have been awarded the Victoria Cross for valor!"

Despairing of yet more war strips, at the dawn of the '70s De La Fuente turned to more stimulating genres, drawing a beautiful strip for *Eerie* (#35's "I am Dead Egypt, Dead") and a dozen episodes of the western series *Sunday*, written by Victor Mora. *Sunday* was syndicated around the world and marked the first time he had been allowed to sign his name to any of his strips. In 1971, he created the allegorical barbarian strip *Haxtur* for the Spanish comics magazine *Trinca* which cemented him as one of comics' most important artists. After its pacifist undertones caused friction with his employers, the artist followed this up with the less political (but visually similar) *Mathai-Dor*; but left Trinca before the series could be concluded after an argument over its ownership. By 1973, *Sunday* had been serialized in France and Dargaud had released two volumes collecting *Haxtur* so, with the promise of work from Dargaud and Pif Gadget, De La Fuente moved to Paris. Unexpectedly, this work failed to materialize so he turned to the notorious Italian publisher Ediperiodici where he created 12 issues of the western series *Mortimer*. He also drew several issues of the sexy horror titles *Terror Gigante, Oltretomba,* and *Super Isabella*, churning out as many as 15 pages a day purely to make ends meet.

After this unhappy period, Victor's luck changed in 1974 when the French publisher Hachette repackaged the completed *Matthai-Dor* in a pair of albums, and then released two.s of *Sunday* the following year. These then lead to an entirely new western *Amargo*, which was released directly in two books and although questions over ownership subsequently soured that relationship, the Hachette books established him as a major force in France. For the rest of his career much of his work was drawn directly for French comics albums which would typically be



War (IPC). Original cover art courtesy of Rufus Dayglo.

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Mortimer 8 (Ediperiodici), 1973. Original artwork courtesy of Jaume Vaquer.

48 page stories, released as hardcover books. His next few projects — five volumes in Larouse's *History of France* series and a biography of Charles de Gaulle — were suitably well crafted, but the following series saw a return to one of his favorite genres. *Haggarth* first appeared in Casterman's *A Suivre* magazine in 1978 and was another brutal barbarian strip in the tradition of *Haxtur*, De La Fuente was 51 and at the very peak of his powers. *Haggarth* was conceived as a four-part series though *A Suivre* only published the first two stories, Spain's *1984* magazine started reprinting it in 1980 as did Warren the following year, serializing it initially in their own *1984* comic and then for several years in *Eerie*. Both printed the first three stories but De La Fuente abandoned the strip half way through the final part, and it was not until 2013 that Casterman finally published a book collecting the entire series, including the completed pages from book four.

After *Haggarth*, the artist embarked on a succession of varied series and genres for France, initially teaming up with writer Jean Michel Charlier for *Gringos*, set in the Mexican revolution. Fleurus released two volumes of *Gringos* in 1979 and 1980, with Dargaud belatedly printing another four in the '90s. This was followed up in the early '80s by six volumes of Larousse's *Decouvrir le Bible* which encouraged the artist to really express himself with thrilling, panoramic battle scenes and some of the best drawing of his career. At the same time he teamed up with Victor Mora again for *Les Anges D'Agier* (Steel Angels) which ran for four volumes set in the early days of aviation, published by Dargaud. Throughout this period Victor maintained a friendship with Al Williamson and Archie Goodwin resulting in his ghosting Williamson's *Star Wars* newspaper strip in both 1979 and 1982. The following year he and Goodwin collaborated on a strip for Marvel's *Epic Illustrated* 20, and a subsequent collaboration appeared two years later in #31, his last appearance in America.

The late '80s were devoted to less visible projects such as a biography of Molière for Bayard, and a number of religious albums for MSM. However, the humorous sword and sorcery strip *Francis Falko* (for Novedi in 1987) and *Siberian* for *L'Echo Des Savanes* were crowd pleasers and a Civil War story for *Cimoc* in 1986 kept him in the public eye in Spain. More significantly, in the early '90s he was approached by Bonelli to draw for their prestigious *Tex Albo Speciale* (issue 5, released in 1992), a very public recognition of his standing in European comics. De La Fuente had already won the Angouleme award for Best Foreign artist in 1974, and the Yellow Kid at Lucca in 1980, and in the latter years of his career he won the Barcelona Grand Prix, the pinnacle of recognition in Spanish comics.

The *Albo Speciale* led to seven more *Tex* strips before Victor returned to French comics in 1996 for a collaboration with Alejandro Jodorowsky on *Aliot* for Dargaud, though the series was abandoned following a plagiarism lawsuit over its script. The following year, De La Fuente teamed up with Patrick Cothias for a series for Glenat looking at the life of Christ: *Josue De Nazareth*, but it too was abandoned after two volumes. After these disappointments, the artist effectively retired from comics devoting his time to painting. Apparently he felt that because he was never associated with one major character he never quite got the acclaim that some of peers attained, and while there is some truth to that, for his fellow artists and many fans he was undoubtedly one of comics' true greats.

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War Picture Library 440 (Fleetway). Original artwork courtesy of Rufus Dayglo.

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Commando 371 (DC Thomson), 1968. Original artwork courtesy of and used by permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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Haxtur. Trinca (Doncel), 1971. Original artwork courtesy of Manual Auad.

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Decouvrir La Bible Vol. 6 (Larousse), 1984. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Domingo (Jose Domingo Alvarez) B. 1942

Jackie (DC Thomson), 1969. Used by Permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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Edmond (Edmond Fernandez Ripoll) *B. 1938*

Jan Europa 8 (Bruguera), 1985. Original cover art courtesy of Edmond.

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Doctor Impossible. Mortadelo 156 (Bruguera), 1983. Image courtesy of Edmond

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Enrich (Enric Torres Prat) *B. 1940*

Enric Torres Prat, or Enrich as he signed his early paintings, is best known to fans for his extraordinary covers for *Vampirella* which are among the most iconic images in the world of comics.

"I was born in Barcelona and while no one in my family was artistic I had wanted to be an artist since I can remember. It has wrongly been stated that my inspiration was Rembrandt, but this is not accurate. Rembrandt was only one in a long list that included the great American Illustrators Norman Rockwell, N.C. Wyeth, Dean Cornwell, and many more. The beginning of my collaboration with S.I. was as a graphic designer, title letterer, etc. I never tried to draw comics, it took so much effort to draw them and I would never have got them done, I was too slow and my passion was for Illustration and preferably in color," he said.

"I owe my ability as an illustrator to technical book covers and especially medical and science fiction books for British publishers because they were the first to give me the opportunity to work in that market. On my first trip to London, and in a memorable interview with one of the editors with whom I worked, I was offered the opportunity to take the place of Art Director of the company, in addition to continuing the work I was already doing. Unfortunately I could not accept. I won't go into details except to say perhaps that the negotiations S.I. carried out on my behalf were not as deft and enlightening as they could have been," Enrich said.

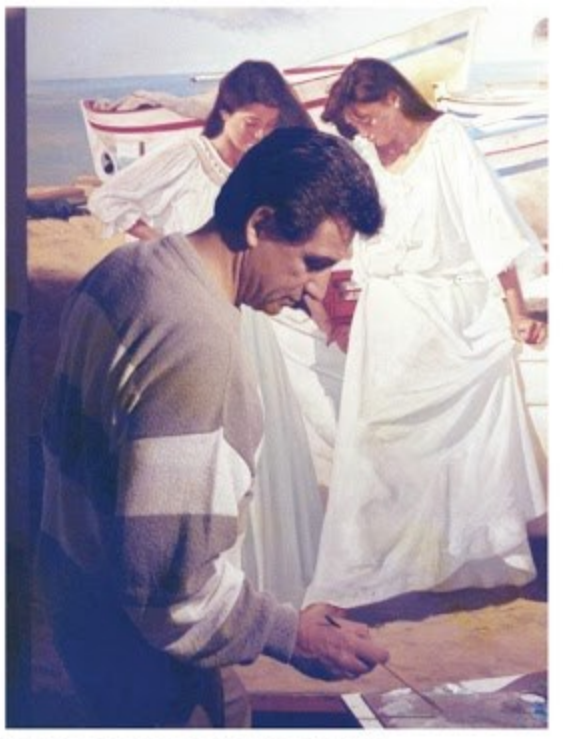
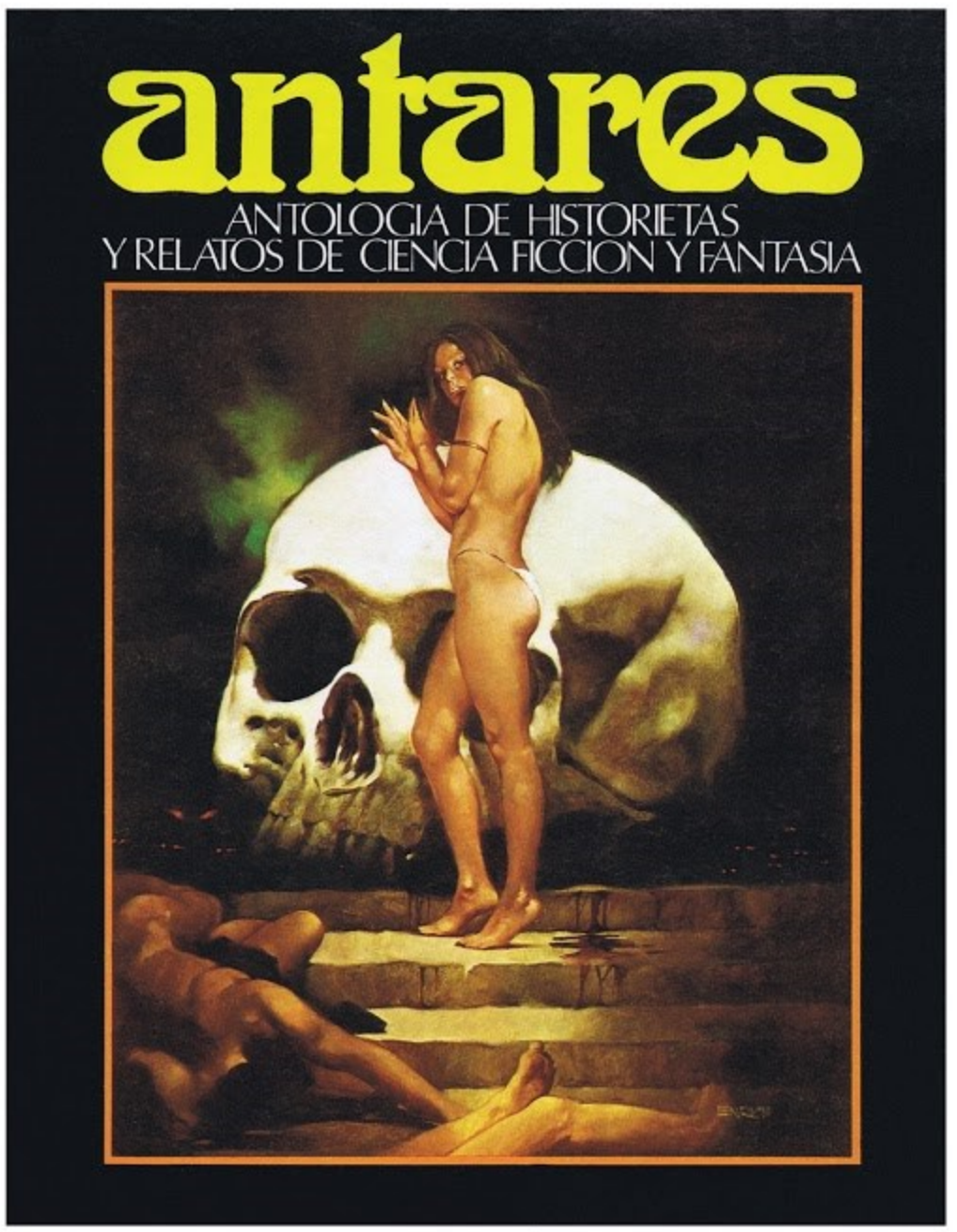


Photo courtesy of Enric Torres.

Enrich's earliest work in comics were covers for the Spanish publisher Vertice's line of British and American reprints, including *Zarpa De Acero* (The Steel Claw) and *Patrulla-X* (The X-Men) from 1967 to 1971. Memorably In 1971 he painted a series of covers for Buru Lan including *The Phantom* and their legendary *Dracula* series which very much foreshadowed his work for Warren. Throughout this period he also created a stream of paperback covers for such series as *Infinitum, Popular Petronio, Terror, Biblioteca Oro, Bang Agent 000, Espanto,* and *Terror Extra*. His longest association was with the science fiction magazine *Nueva Dimension* published by Edtorial Dronte for which he created a succession of innovative covers from 1968 to 1978.

"In the '60s Editorial Pomaire, Molino, Grijalbo and Rumeu were some of the publishers I worked with in Spain. My contact with Ediciones Vértice came from the hand of my friend and fellow artist Florencio Clavé. He told them about me and showed them my work which had absolutely nothing in common with the work they were publishing. Still, I was accepted and those were my first steps into the world of comics. At the same time S.I. asked me to create a sample romantic illustration to show to the Scandinavian market. These were paintings that illustrated romantic stories which were serialized in women's magazines. This was an ideal place to use models and experiment with different techniques so I did not hesitate. I finished the sample which was accepted without any problems and



Antares (Dronte), 1976.

Vampirella 112 (Warren), 1982 unused cover.
Original artwork courtesy Heritage HA.com

HotComic.net

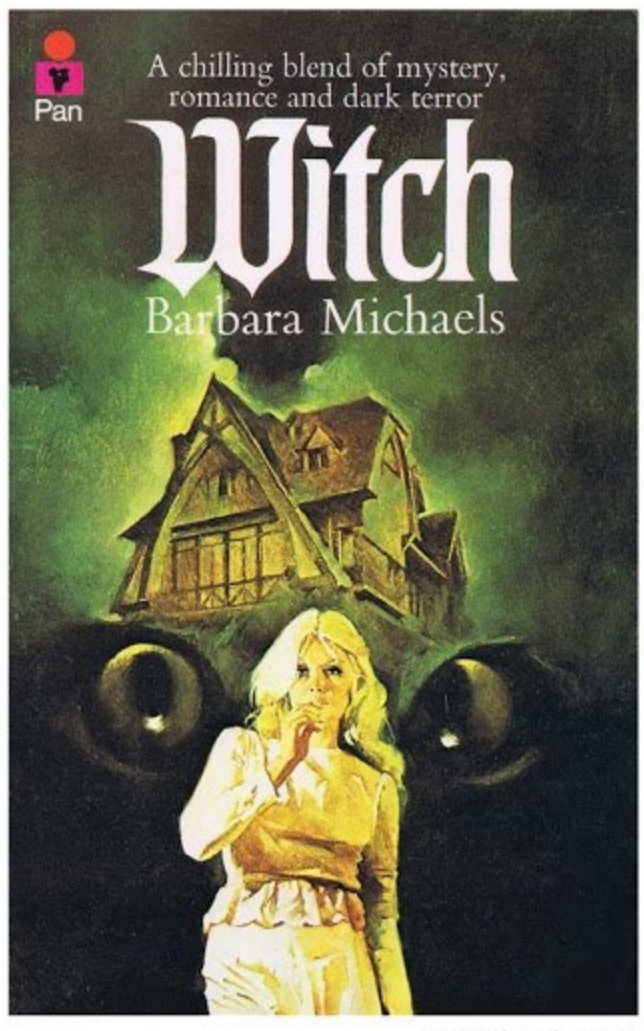
Creepy 12 (Toutain), 1980. Original cover artwork courtesy of Enric Torres.

which began a long association with that market. This was most likely the precursor of my future work for the paperback market in the USA.

"My entry into the North American market, worked in the same way, I was asked to create a sample, in this case I worked up a science fiction cover which was accepted and purchased by Ace Books. That cover was named the best science fiction title of the year in the USA. and the result was that Ace commissioned many more paintings from me. Something similar happened with Dell, which was then followed by Signet, Bantam, Harlequin, and others." Enrich became an extremely prolific paperback artist for the American market working for Dell, Bantam, Ace, Avon, Berkley, Popular Library, Zebra, Signet, and Playboy Press. Most memorably he crafted a number of striking images for Avon's notorious *Satanic Gothic* series all of which could quite happily have graced a Warren magazine. But it was at Warren that he made his name with American fans painting 61 covers for the company making him their third most prolific cover artist. He was most closely associated with *Vampirella* where he created 55 stunning paintings of the seductive vampiress which appeared as comic and book covers, posters, T-shirts and all manner of merchandise. As much as José González, Enrich is responsible for making her one of the most instantly recognizable figures in comics around the world.

Throughout this time he was also a regular presence in the UK creating romance covers for such publishers as Pan, Corgi, Fontana, and Troubadour. Many of his Warren covers were reprinted in Spain but he also found time to create new artwork for magazines like *Dossier Negro, Blue Jeans,* and *Bumerang*. His last work in comics came in the early '80s with several covers for Toutain's Spanish edition of *Creepy*, but much of the decade was devoted to American paperbacks. Along with the many romance covers for Harlequin, Silhouette, and Dell in this period he also produced several *Star Trek* covers for Bantam and teen fiction series such as *Nancy Drew* and *Fear Street* for Simon Pulse. Meanwhile, Enrich also had a significant presence in the German market at this time, including covers for Bastei's *Caprice* series and work for Heyne and Pabel.

This Comic is Haunted 2 (Gredown), 1978.



Witch (Pan), 1977.

Warren's bankruptcy in 1983 was a blow to many artists, including Enrich. "I was able to continue making covers for paperbacks. For my book covers I followed instructions more or less stringently according to the art director, but the Warren covers (speaking for myself) were made with total freedom. In many cases the script for the interior strip was inspired by my cover illustration, which made the work very pleasant and satisfying. By contrast I would not say that my experiences with Gallery (Fine Art) painting were a huge success but they were not all bad. It was working very well and the paintings were very well received, but unfortunately I had some unpleasant experiences with gallery owners. On the other hand I have had excellent relations with many fans and collectors which made my "return" to their world possible. This has led to the creation of large paintings of comic characters including Vampirella."

ENRIC TORRES PRAT and
DAVID ROACH 2016

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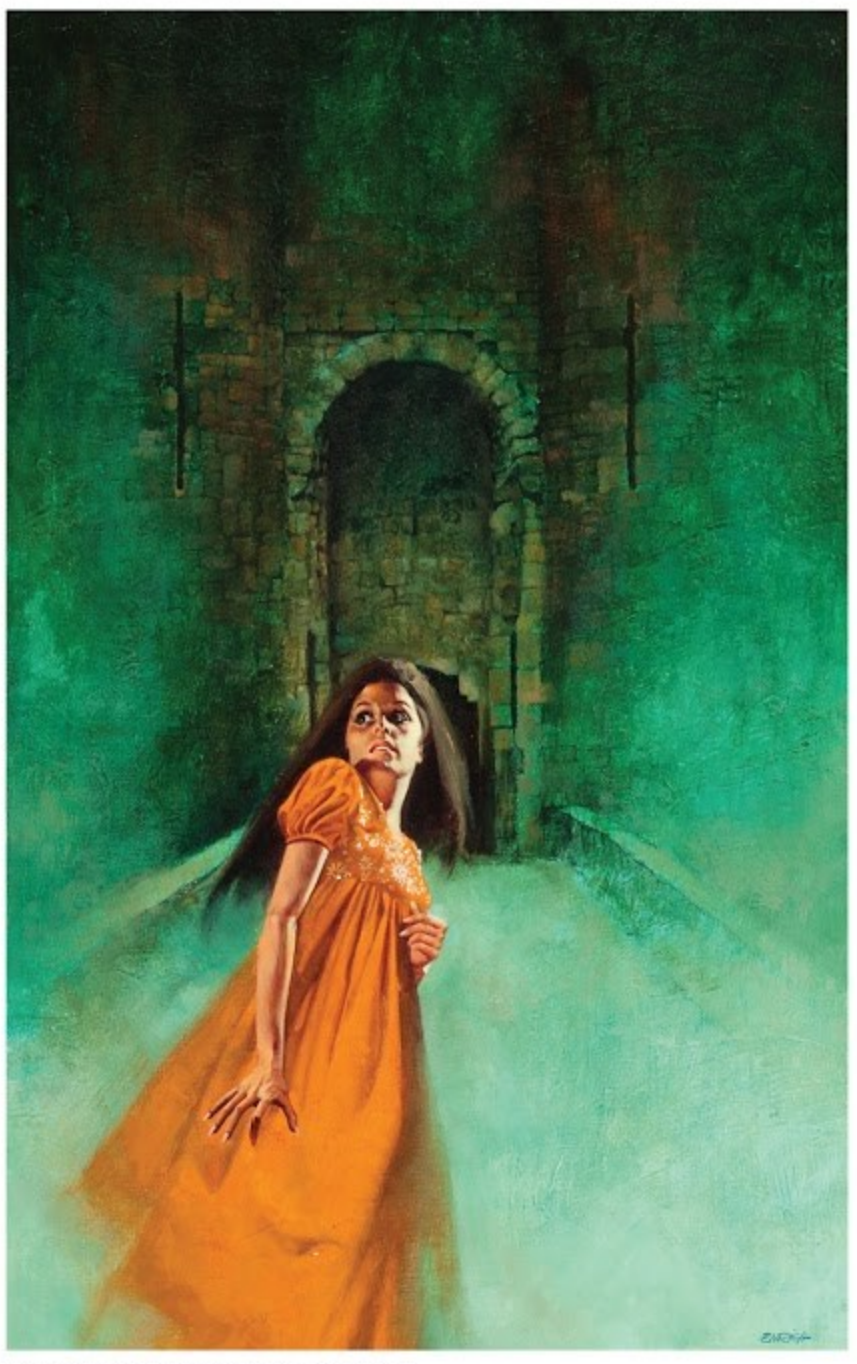
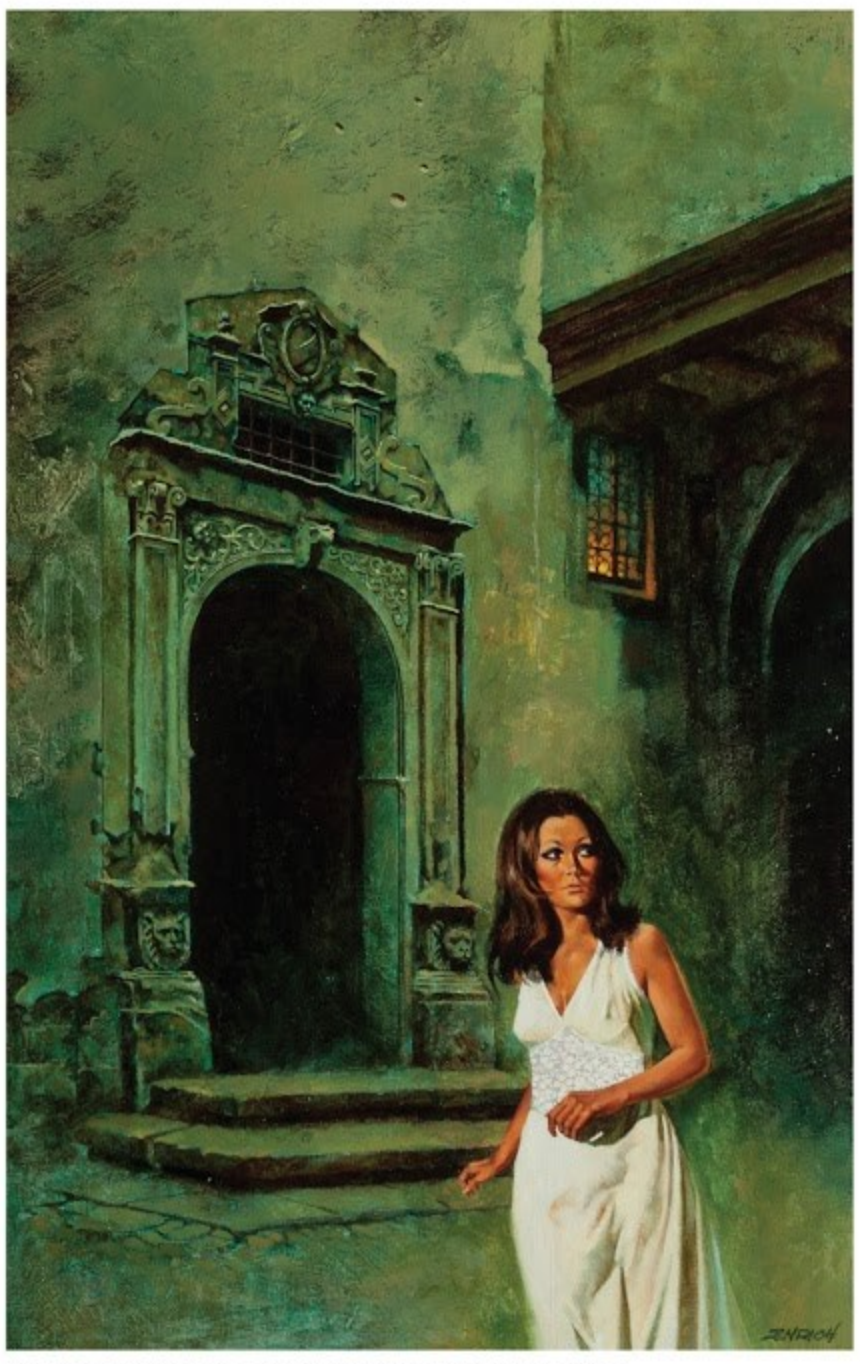
Her Demon Lover (Avon Satanic Gothic), 1973. Original cover artwork courtesy of Ruben Azcona at www.PaperbackArt.com.

Red Wine of Rapture. (Avon Satanic Gothic), 1973. Original cover artwork courtesy Heritage HA.com.



Don't Look Behind you (Ace), 1972. Original cover artwork courtesy Heritage HA.com.



The House of Sinister Shadows (Avon Gothic), 1972. Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com

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Lord Satan (Avon Satanic Gothic), 1972. Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com.

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Vampirella 43 unpublished cover (Warren), 1975. Original artwork courtesy of Enric Torres.

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Fallen Angel. Original artwork courtesy of Enric Torres.

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Carlos Sanchez Ezquerra B. 1947

Strontium Dog: Starlord 22 (IPC), 1978. Original artwork courtesy of Rufus Dayglo.

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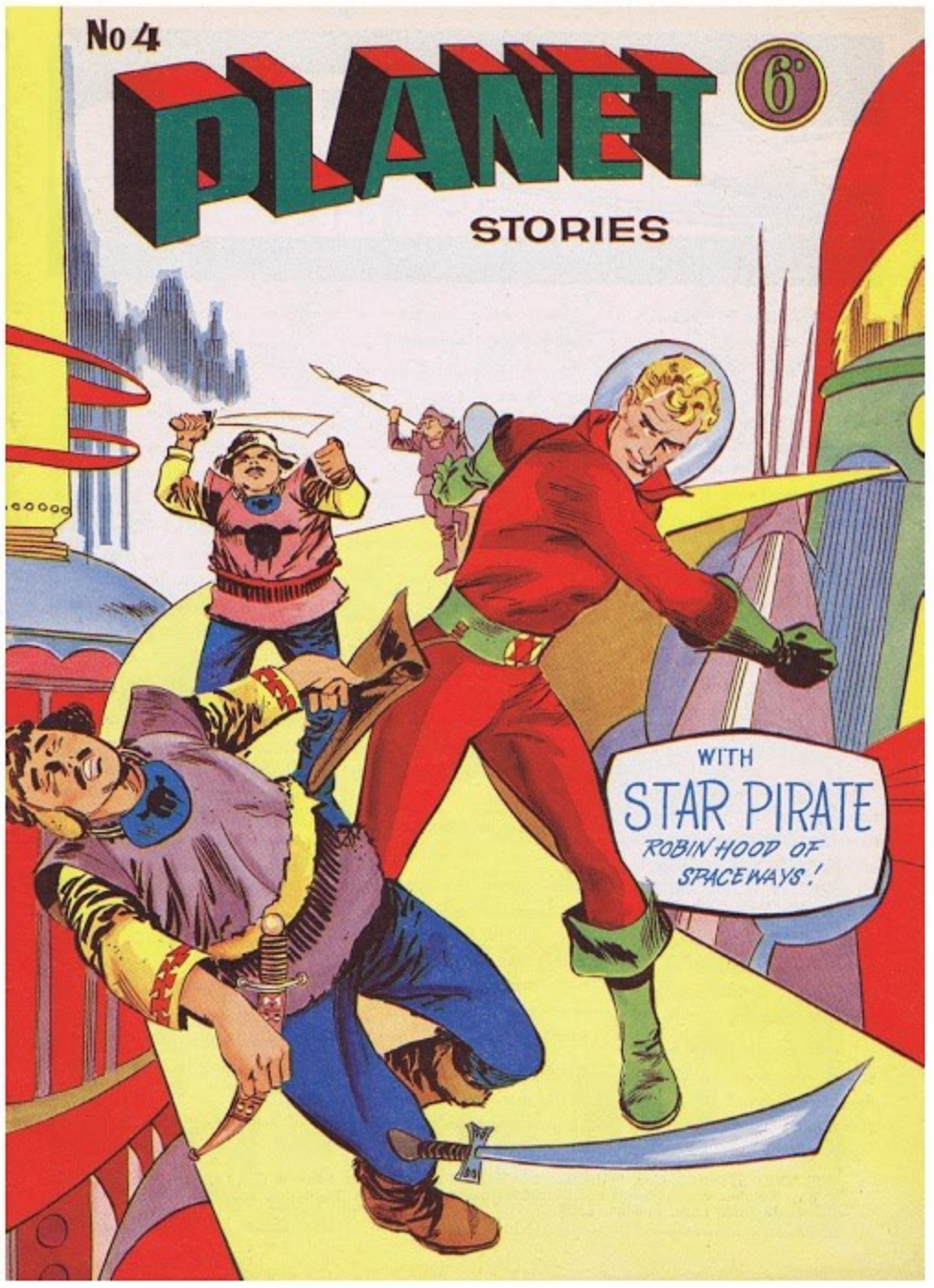
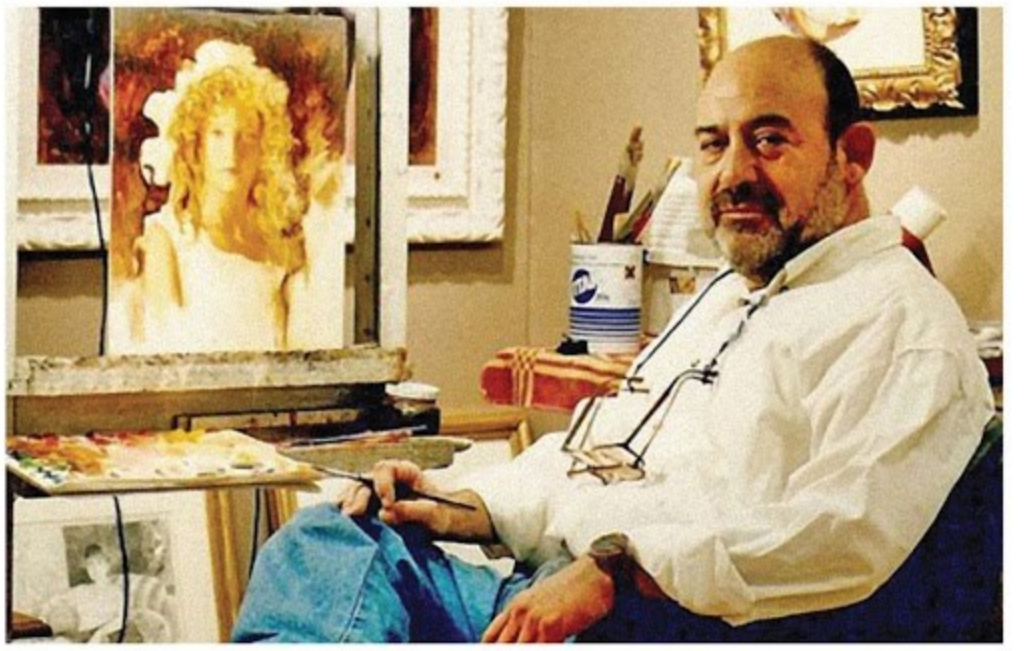
Fernando Fernández 1940–2010



Planet Stories 4 (Atlas), 1961.

Nightmare Annual (Skywald), 1972.



Fernando Fernández Sanchez grew up in Barcelona, the son of a taxi driver, and inspired by the work of Boixcar, Emilo Freixas, Alex Raymond, and Frank Frazetta, he dreamt of becoming a comic book artist. He entered comics in 1955 at the age of 15 assisting Antonio Biosca on *Chispita* for Editorial Grafidea and the following year joined S.I. Fernandez's early work was dominated by science fiction covers and strips for Artima in France, appearing in comics like *Cosmos, Mystic*, and *Mister TV*. In 1958 he drew his first strips for Fleetway in the UK which appeared in *Schoolgirls Picture Library* (issues 29 and 56) and several issues of *Valentine*.

However, later that year, the young artist emigrated to Argentina with his family, leaving his girlfriend Rosa Lleida behind. He maintained his British work through S.I. while also contributing to local comics like *Totem Gigante* and *Puno Fuerte*, but Sanchez desperately missed Rosa so within a year was back home in Barcelona. Having re-joined S.I. Fernandez took on commissions from Toray in Spain and drew episodes of *Johnny Galaxia* for syndication but for the next five years most of his work came from the UK.

Fernandez's British work was divided equally between war and romance. The war strips were almost entirely drawn for Fleetway's *Air Ace* and over the course of his 15 book-length issues, spread between 1961 and 1965, he grew from an illustrator indebted to American artists to a master draughtsman with a unique style. His many romance strips appeared in *Valentine, Marilyn, Roxy,* and *Boyfriend*, displaying a lighter touch and a gift for subtlety and design. In 1965 he left storytelling to devote himself to painting, creating an enormous body of illustrations for syndication around the world. For the next decade his paintings regularly appeared on British war comics such as *War, Battleground, Commando*, and *Battle;* along with titles such as *Star Love, Pocket Chiller,* and *Fleetway Super Library*. The German Romanheft pulps also proved to be a lucrative market with his stylish, sexy crime paintings appearing on titles including *Kommisar-X, Franco Solo*, and *Fledermaus*. Fernandez's versatility was similarly evident in his many western paintings which were picked up in German titles such as *Lassiter* and *Kelter-Western* and paperbacks in Britain and the US. Back home in Spain he became a regular cover artist for paperback publishers Molino, Bruguera, Ferma, and Sopena and was a prolific artist for Scandinavian women's magazines.

However, throughout this period Fernandez maintained some links with comics, writing scripts for the Spanish comics *Suspense* and *War Actions*, drawing covers for *Delta 99* and directing several fotonovella's for Rollan, occasionally using his wife Rosa and family as models. In

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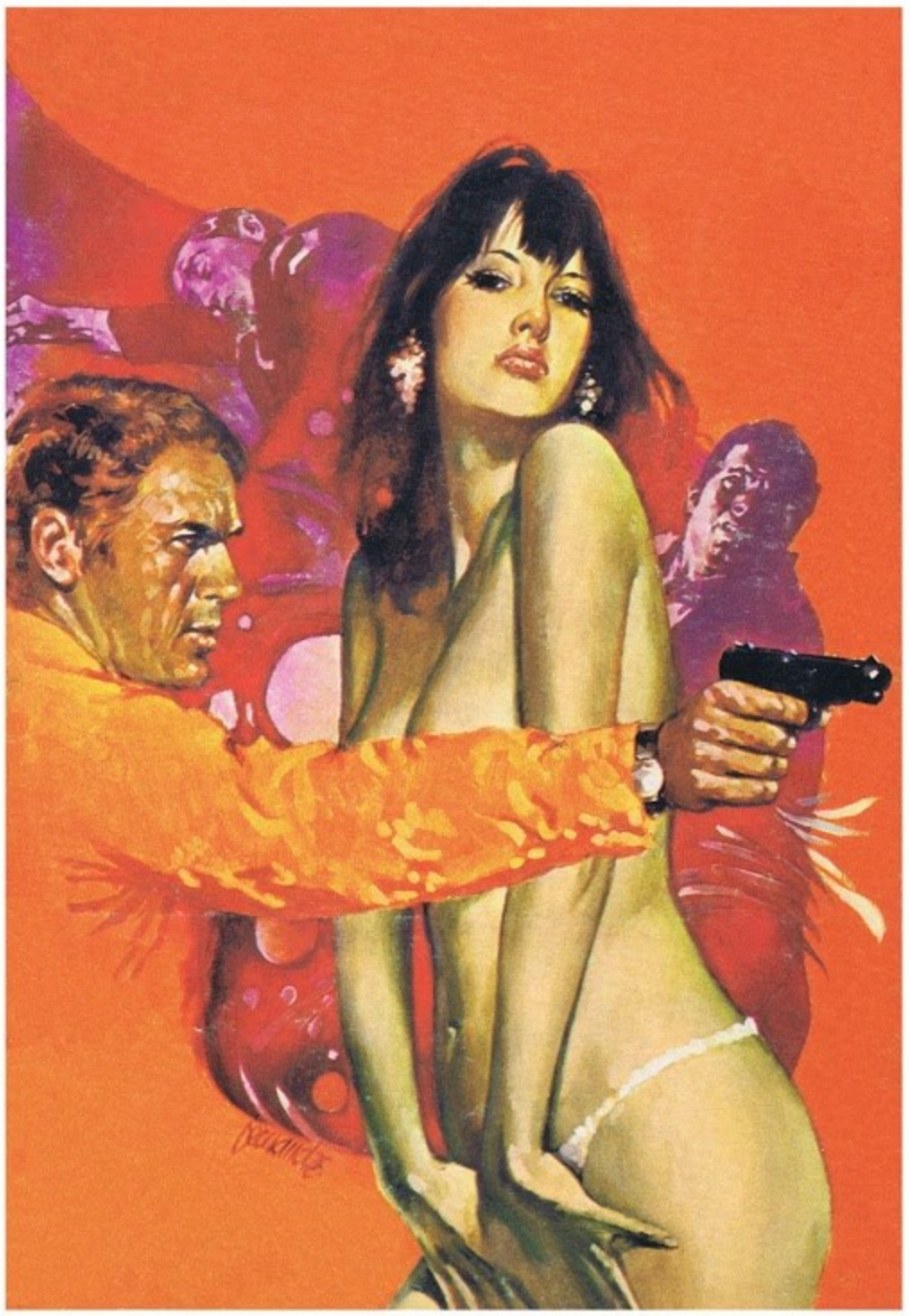
1970 he began drawing a humorous cartoon entitled *La Mosca* (The Fly) for the *Diario De Barcelona* newspaper which ran for three years. When Josép Toutain first travelled to New York in 1971 he came back with an array of commissions and many of the most diverse were for Fernandez. In these first few years of S.I.'s American adventure the artist could be found painting 11 gruesome horror covers for Eerie Publications; violent exploitation covers for Emtee magazines like *Men Today* and *World of Men*, comic covers for Skywald, gothic romance artwork for Beagle books and Avon, and science fiction for Signet. The artist later added clients such as Dell, Bantam, and Random House, but in-between the book covers he created a series of horror stories for *Vampirella* which were much more personal expressions of his art. Fernandez suggested that he could both write and draw a series of strips dealing with different, often psychological, themes, each rendered in different styles, which would be sold to Warren for a reduced fee, but where he would own the copyright. Altogether the artist produced 13 strips from 1973 to 1975, (though only 11 were actually published by Warren), which marked a new highpoint in comic art and were sold across Europe to great acclaim. The writer Javier Coma later described them as Comic Poetry.

The artist's next move was to combine painting and narrative, initially through a series of five award winning illustrated education books for the Spanish publisher AFHA. These mixed comic strips with text in imaginatively decorative page layouts and techniques mixing oils, acrylics and inks. In 1979 he returned to mainstream comics with the heavily researched *L'Uomo Di Cuba* which began a run of exceptional comic projects. The following year saw the release of a



S.I. Illustration for Syndication, early '70s.

S.I. Illustration for Syndication, early '70s.

Cuando el Comic es Arte devoted to his work, and the serialization of *Zora* in Toutain's *1984*. *Zora* was a wildly imaginative, erotic science fiction strip rendered in his multimedia AFHA style, featuring his astonishingly assured understanding of anatomy and design. It was later translated for *Heavy Metal* magazine, released as a graphic novel in Spain and America, and earned the admiration of director Federico Fellini. The following year his faithful adaptation of *Dracula* was serialized in the Spanish edition of *Creepy*, painstakingly painted in oils on a vast scale. In 1984 his black and white adaptations of Isaac Asimov stories were published by Bruguera, while in 1985 the painted fantasy strip *La Leyenda De Las Cuatro Sombras* (written by Carlos Trillo) ran in the first nine issues of *Zona 84*. Astonishingly, throughout this period, Fernandez kept up his cover commitments from the US, including work for Playboy Press, illustrated books for Ace, children's books for McMillan and collaborations with his wife on licenced properties. For good measure he also started teaching at a comics workshop.

The late '80s were a less happy time for the artist with a heart problem leading to his requiring assistants to help work on his next few projects. *Lucky Starr* was space opera aimed at the French market which saw print in 1991. *Argon* was sword and sorcery which appeared in *Zona 42* in 1988. Seven out of a planned 12 episodes of *Zodiaco* appeared in *Totem*, while a collaboration with Victor Mora; *Terrifik*, was abandoned after 16 pages over dissatisfaction with the publisher. So, in 1989, Fernandez officially, and for the last time, left the world of comics, and commercial illustration behind, to devote himself to painting. His subjects were split between portrait commissions, beautiful women, eastern themes, Spanish scenes, equestrian art, or wherever the muse took him. He had been exhibited at various points since the mid-'60s and over the course of his career took part in over 100 group or individual exhibitions. In 2004 he added an unexpected coda to his life in comics when Glenat published his fond look back at his career and the early years of S.I.; *Memorias Ilustradas*. This was followed by magnificent re-issues of *Zora, Dracula,* and *Leyenda*, confirming his position as one of Spanish comics most gifted artists.

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Vampirella 28, 1973. Original artwork courtesy of Jeff Singh.

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Crime covers (Pabel), 1972–1976.

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Zora. 1984 22 (Toutain), 1980 Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Zora. 1984 31 (Toutain), 1981. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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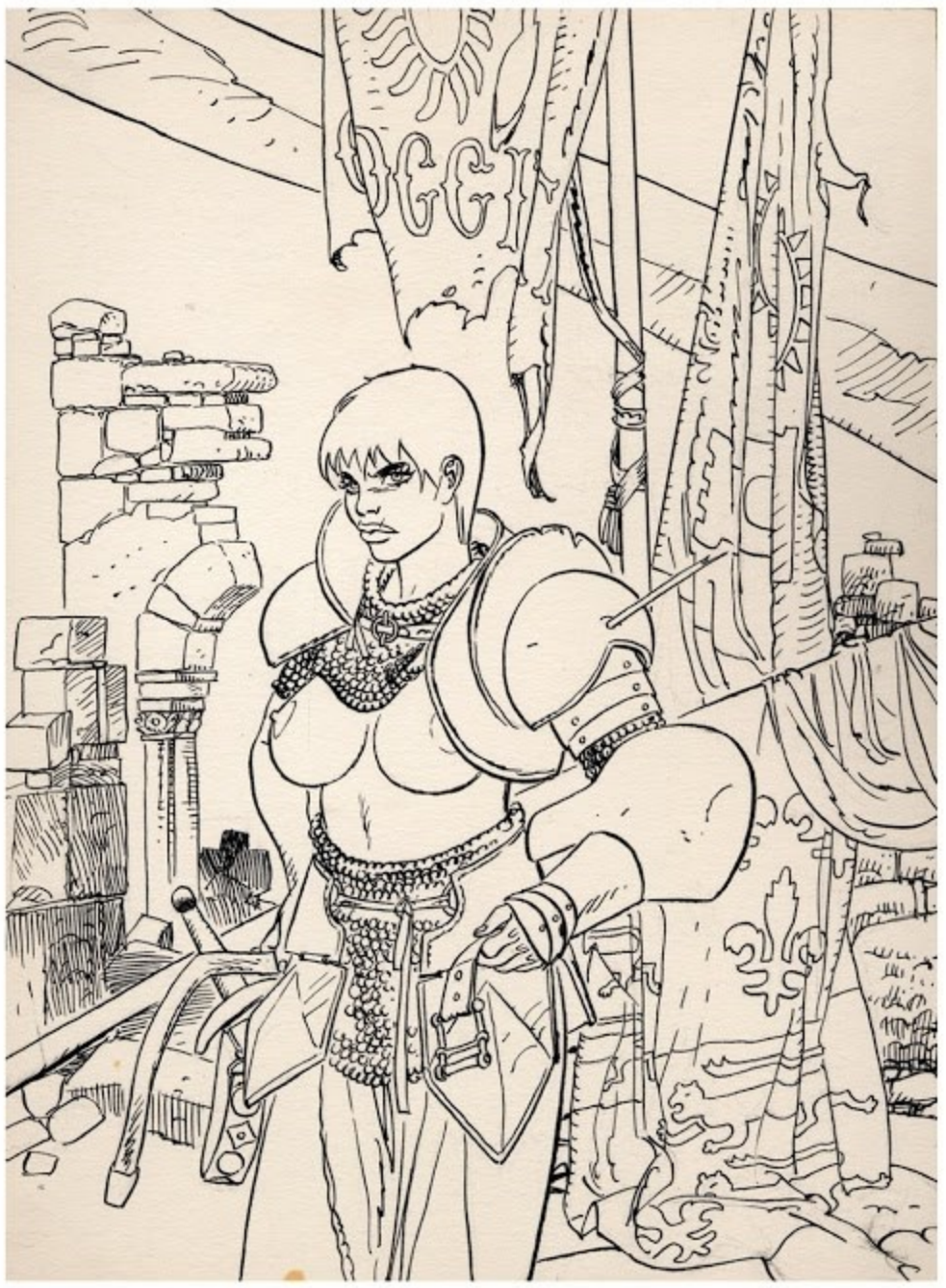
ALFONSO FONT WAS THE LAST ARTIST OF THE GOLDEN Generation to become a star, after years of working across Europe and America. Even as a child he knew he wanted to draw comics and after studying fine art he broke into the industry in 1962, joining Bruguera's graphic design department. At Bruguera he principally created illustrations for their juvenile novels and it was only two years later, at Toray, that he produced his first comic strips: drawing westerns for such comics as *Sioux* and *Hazanas del West*. More significantly, he subsequently joined the Barden agency through which he worked for the French, Scandinavian, and British markets. It was in Britain that he found his first success, drawing the horror-flavored First World War series *Black Max* which ran in *Thunder* and then *Lion* from 1970 to 1972. With his Fokker Triplane, giant bat, and vampiric appearance *Black Max* is one of the era's most fondly remembered strips among British fans. Font followed this success with more strips for *Lion, Look and Learn*, and *Wizard* (the beautifully drawn *Carter's War*), and a stint pencilling *Friday Foster* for his fellow Bardon artist Jordi Longaron — his first appearance in America, albeit anonymously.

After moving over to S.I. in 1973, Font drew a succession of strips for the emerging black and white horror comics market starting with Marvel's *Dracula Lives* 3. Throughout the following year his strips appeared in Skywald's *Nightmare, Psycho*, and *Scream*, Marvel's *Monsters Unleashed* 6; and Font also drew a highly atmospheric strip for Warren though it would not see print until 1982 (*Vampirella* 102). After this, the artist teamed up with the writer Carlos Echevarria for the First World War spy series *Geminis*, which was syndicated



Norma Illustration. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

around the world by S.I., finally seeing print in Spain in *The Spirit*. Font's artwork during this period showed all the typical Spanish hallmarks of textures, scratches, and dark, intensely detailed pen work. However, in in 1975, he moved to France where he drew a number of strips for *Pif Gadget* including *Sandberg Pere Et Fils* and as the decade progressed he began to develop a more unique style.

Font moved back to Barcelona two years later and split his commissions between France and Spain. For *Pif Gadget* he teamed up with Roger Lecreux for 22 episodes of the mainstream SF strip *Robinsons De La Terre*, but in Spain his work became darker, more political, and erotic. In the late '70s his strips appeared in *El Papus, Mata Ratos, Totem, Bumerang, Troya,* and *Blue Jeans*. In 1978 he teamed up with writer Victor Mora for the Marxist model *Tequila Bang* whose anti-imperialist adventures appeared each week in the radical newspaper *La Calle*. But it was in 1980, with the emerging Spanish magazine explosion, that Font finally found a significant audience. For Toutain's *Creepy* and *1984* he created a number of savage, dark, ironic short stories under the Cuentos de un Futuiro Imperfect and Historias Negras banners which showcased his strengths as an artist of great power and imagination and, for the first time, as a writer. In 1982 he joined the artists collective Rambla where he created the popular, light-hearted SF series *Clarke and Kubrick* which showcased his gift for humor, visual invention, and imaginative use of color.

Font's career truly took off when he joined the Norma agency and became a regular in their flagship comic magazine *Cimoc*. Over the course of the title's 14 year existence Font created a succession of iconic series which he both wrote and drew, and he undoubtedly became one it's most important talents. His first *Cimoc* series was the gritty SF strip *El Prisonerio De Las Estrellas* (which ran in 1982 and again in 1986) whose imagery rivalled the French master Moebius in its futuristic invention. This was followed by a revival of *Clarke and Kubrick* and then in 1985 the adventure strip *Jann Polynesia*. *Jann* was revamped a few years later as *Rohner* and was subsequently re-written as the first *Rohner* story when the series was released in

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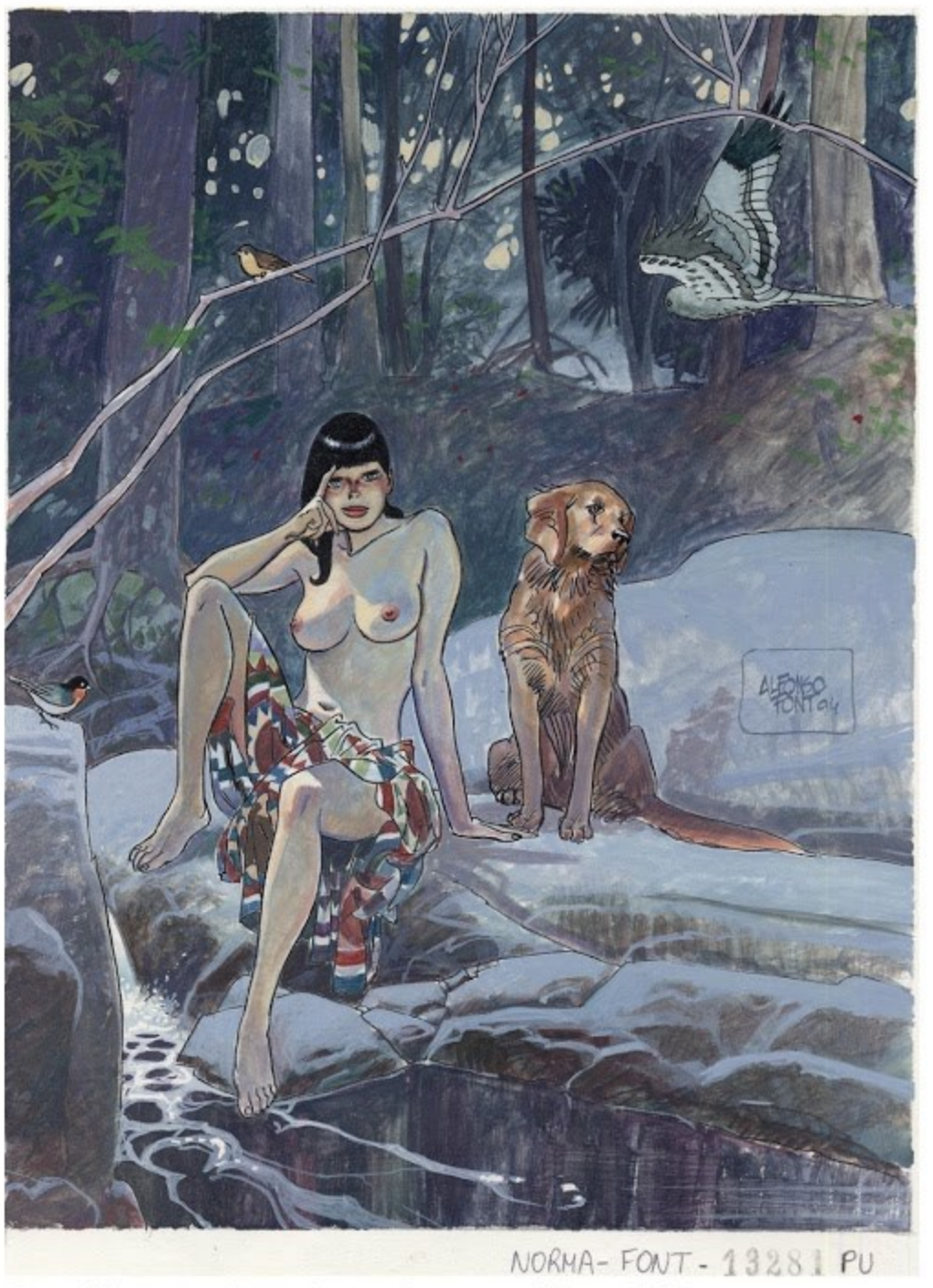
Skorpio 52 (Eura), 1992. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

album format. *Rohner* was a delightful strip inspired by the writings of Jack London and Robert Louis Stevenson (who appears as himself!) which revealed Font's mastery of composition and his gift for beautifully realized settings. Away from *Cimoc* in 1985 he also found time to draw the erotic series *Carmen Bond* for Norma's *Humor A Tope*. The following year Font created with the writer Patrick Cothias a more memorable female character *Alise Et Les Argonauts* for the French magazine *Circus*. The futuristic series was set in a totalitarian 21st Century France and ran for three years in *Circus* and was also serialized in *Totem* in Spain and *L'Eternauta* in Italy. In 1987 Font created a Spanish heroine for *Cimoc*, the intrepid reporter *Taxi*, set in his home city of Barcelona, whose adventures were subsequently released as three albums. This period was Font's creative peak as an artist and again, in *Taxi* Font revelled in imaginatively angled cityscapes and cinemascope vistas of enormous depth.

By the '90s the magazine explosion had collapsed with *Cimoc* its last surviving title. After a third and final *Rohner* serial in 1992, Font's last successful creation was the hardboiled detective *Privado* which ran for five strips in 1984. The artist had planned to follow this up with an ambitious trilogy set in the time of the Crusades; *Bri D'Alban*, but there was just time to serialize the first book in *Cimoc*'s last two issues before the title disappeared forever, and the story remains unfinished. However, he had already began to find work elsewhere and the decade was notable for the diversity of his commissions. Many of his best strips had been translated in the Italian comics *Skorpio* and *Lanciostory* and from 1991 to 2011 he became a regular cover artist for them, creating a succession of quirky, sexy pin-up illustrations. In 1992 he contributed a gloriously detailed volume to Planeta Deagostini's *Relatos Del Nuevo Mundo* series re-telling the discovery of America. *Barcelona Al Alba*, with a script written by Juan Antonio De Blas based on real events from 1925 was serialized in *Vinetas* in 1994. By complete contrast, in 1996 the artist also drew the *Dr. Dare* and *Brown's Delights* strips for *Penthouse Comix*, his last appearance in America. Ever the globetrotter, in 1999 Font popped up in Germany, drawing a *John Sinclair* graphic novel for Bastei.

Font's most prestigious commission of the '90s, however, was when he was asked to contribute to Bonelli's prestigious *Tex Albo Speciale* series, with number 12's 240 page story appearing in 1998. This lead to a lengthy run on *Tex* throughout the next decade, establishing him as a key creator on the series, and he has also drawn an issue of the company's notorious *Dylan Dog* strip (*Dylan Dog Colorfest* 8 in 2012). At the same time the artist maintained his links with France, drawing *Les Aventures De Trelawney* for *Pif* in 2005 and three albums of the beautifully researched medieval strip *Heloise De Montford* for Glenat from 2010 to 2012. Along with Jordi Bernet and Carlos Gimenez he is one of the last of the great Spanish artists to remain active in comics, creating new strips through the SAF agency who are also masterminding the long overdue translation of his classic strips for an English speaking audience. For his work in comics, Alfonso Font has received a number of international awards, including the esteemed "Yellow Kid" award in 1996. Alfonso is happily married to Pili, the love of his life, and they have one daughter, Anna.



Norma Illustration. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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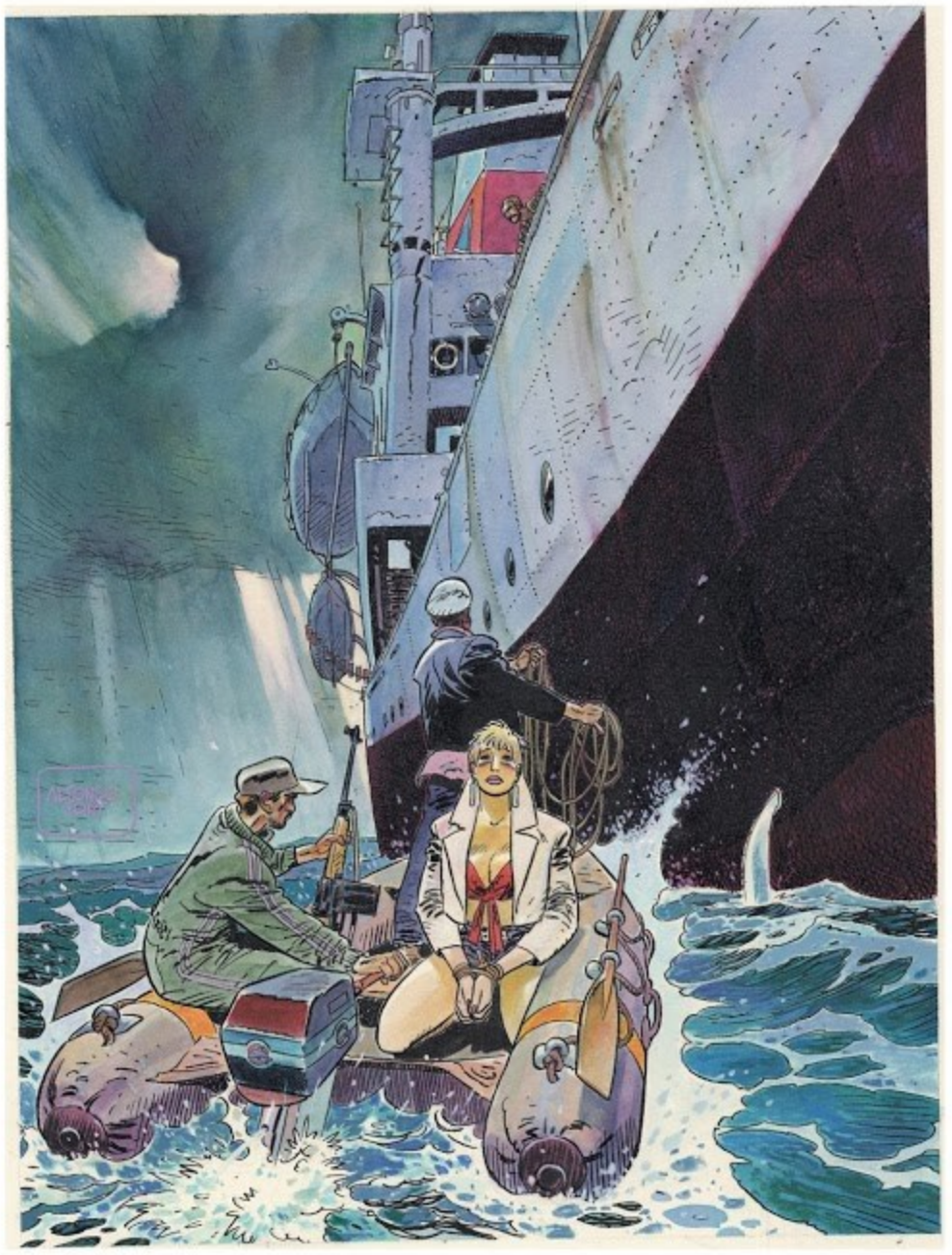
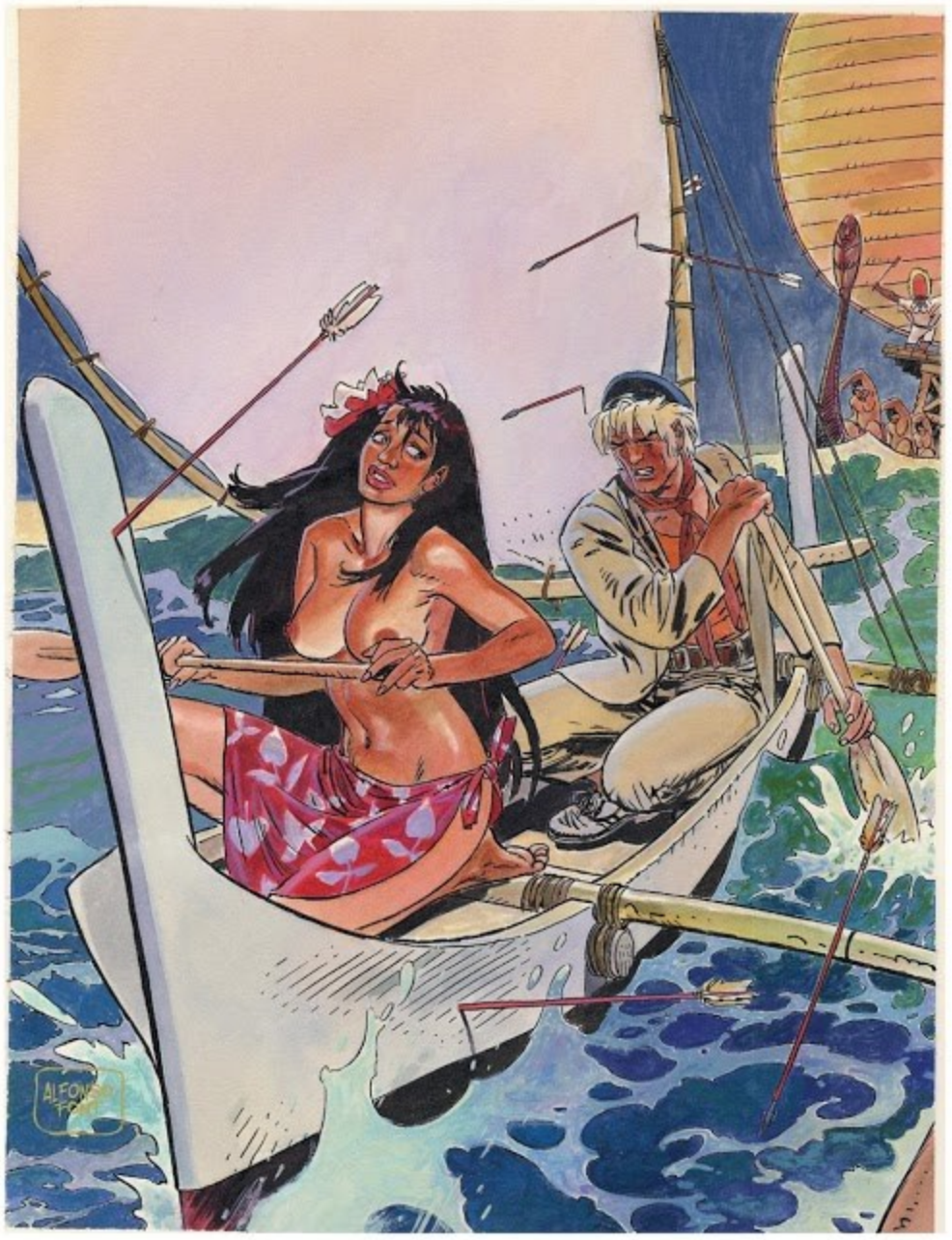
El Paraiso Flotante (Norma), 1988.

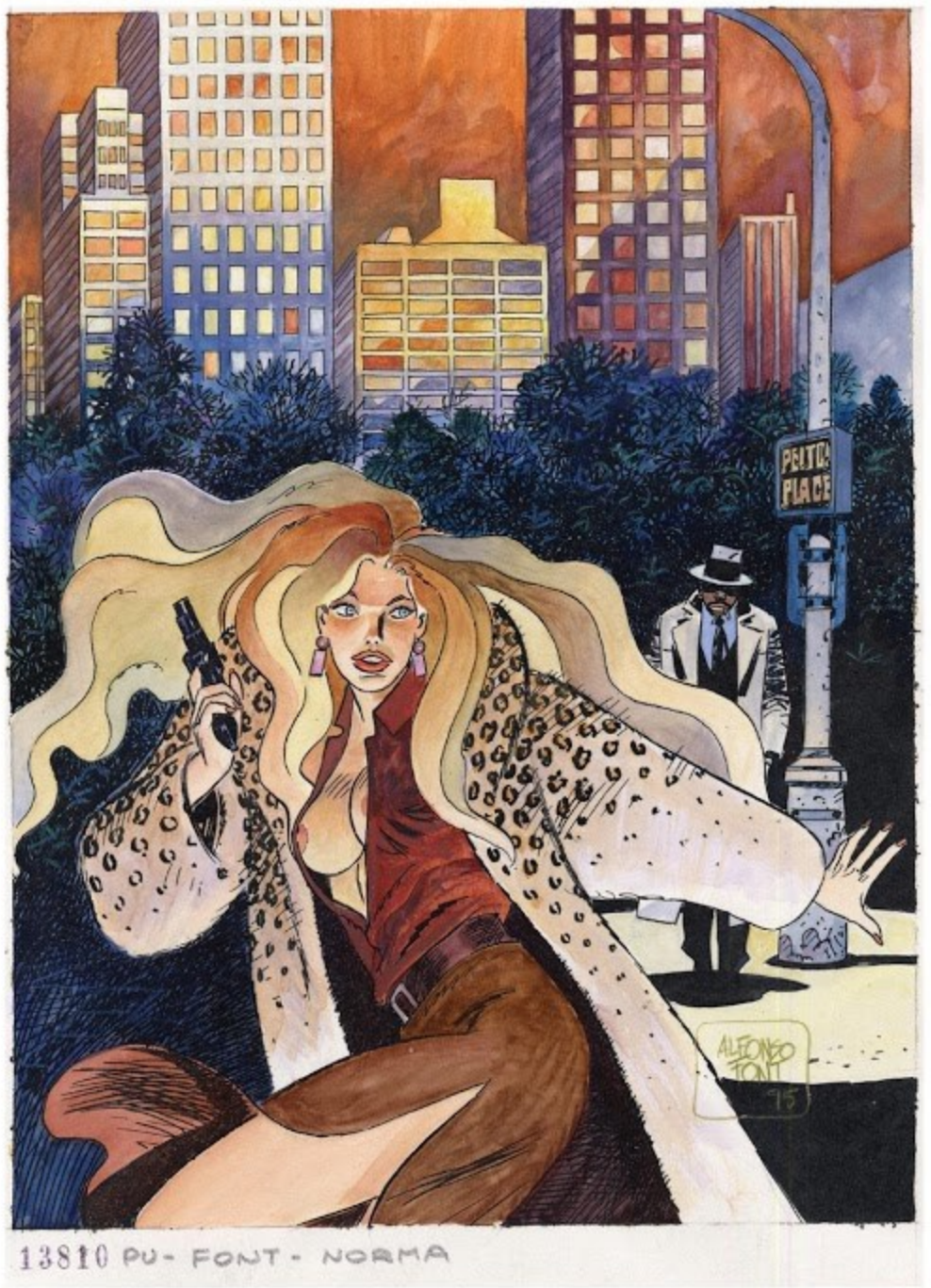


Taxi: Un Crucera Al Infierno (Norma), 1989.



Rohner. Cimoc 99 (Norma), 1989.

All original cover artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.



Alise et Les Argonautes, 1995.

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Taxi: El Laberinto Del Dragon (Norma), 1988. Original cover artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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"ALISE ET LES ARGONAUTES"
TOME I ("LA NUIT DU PRESIDENT")
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Alise et Les Argonautes book 1 (Glenat), 1987. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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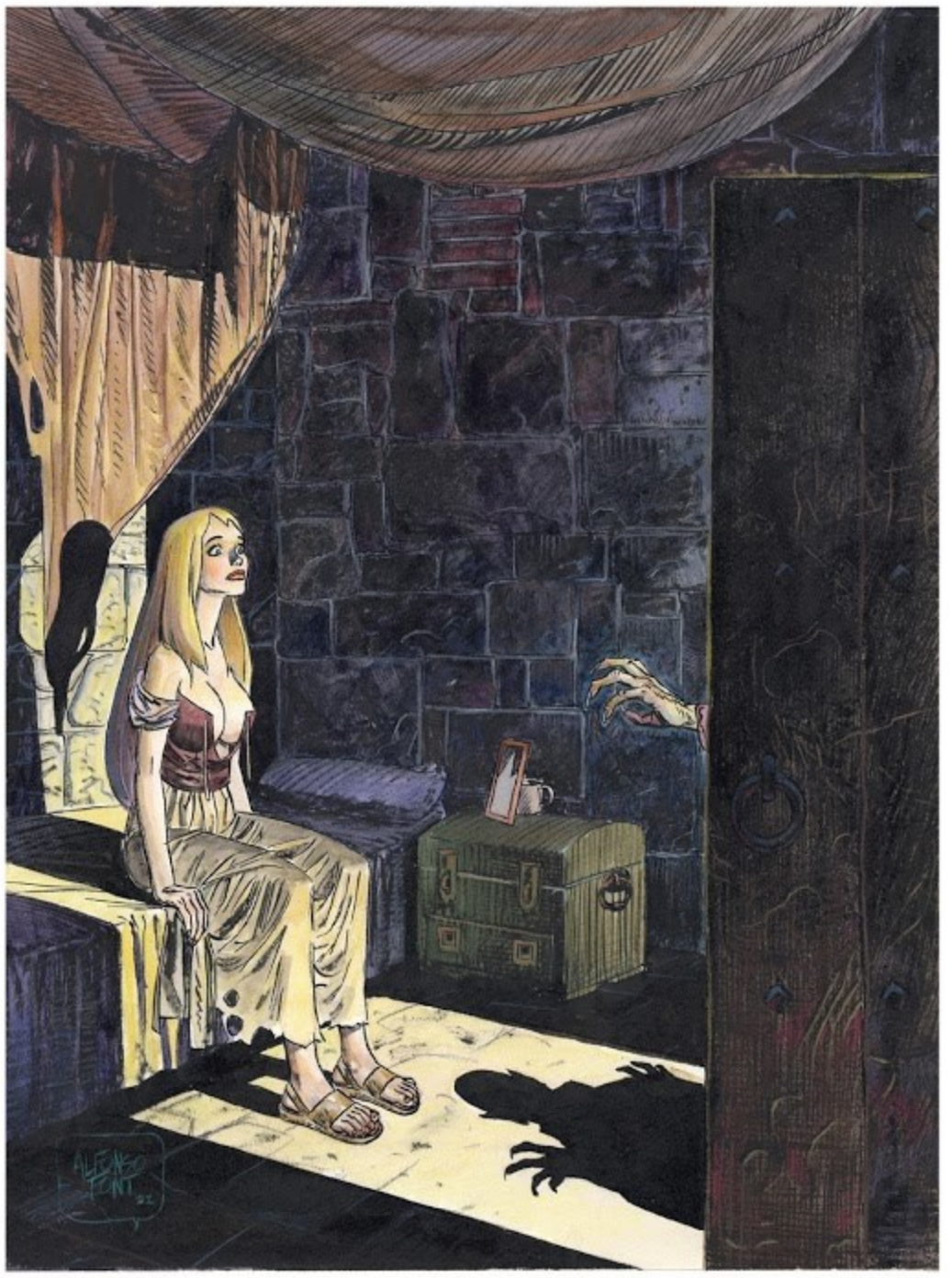

Skorpio and *Lanciostory* covers (Eura) 1997–2005. Original cover art courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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Jordi Franch 1936–1980

My Story (Chicago Tribune), 1973. Syndicate Proofs and Original artwork.

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Emilio Frejo 1931–2013

Laughing Cats. Diana 230 (DC Thomson), 1967. Original artwork courtesy of and used by permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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Starr of Wonderland. Diana Annual (DC Thomson), 1969. Original artwork courtesy of and used by permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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Miguel Fuster B. 1944

Original artwork from *The Runaway Clown. Princess 25,* 10th March (IPC).

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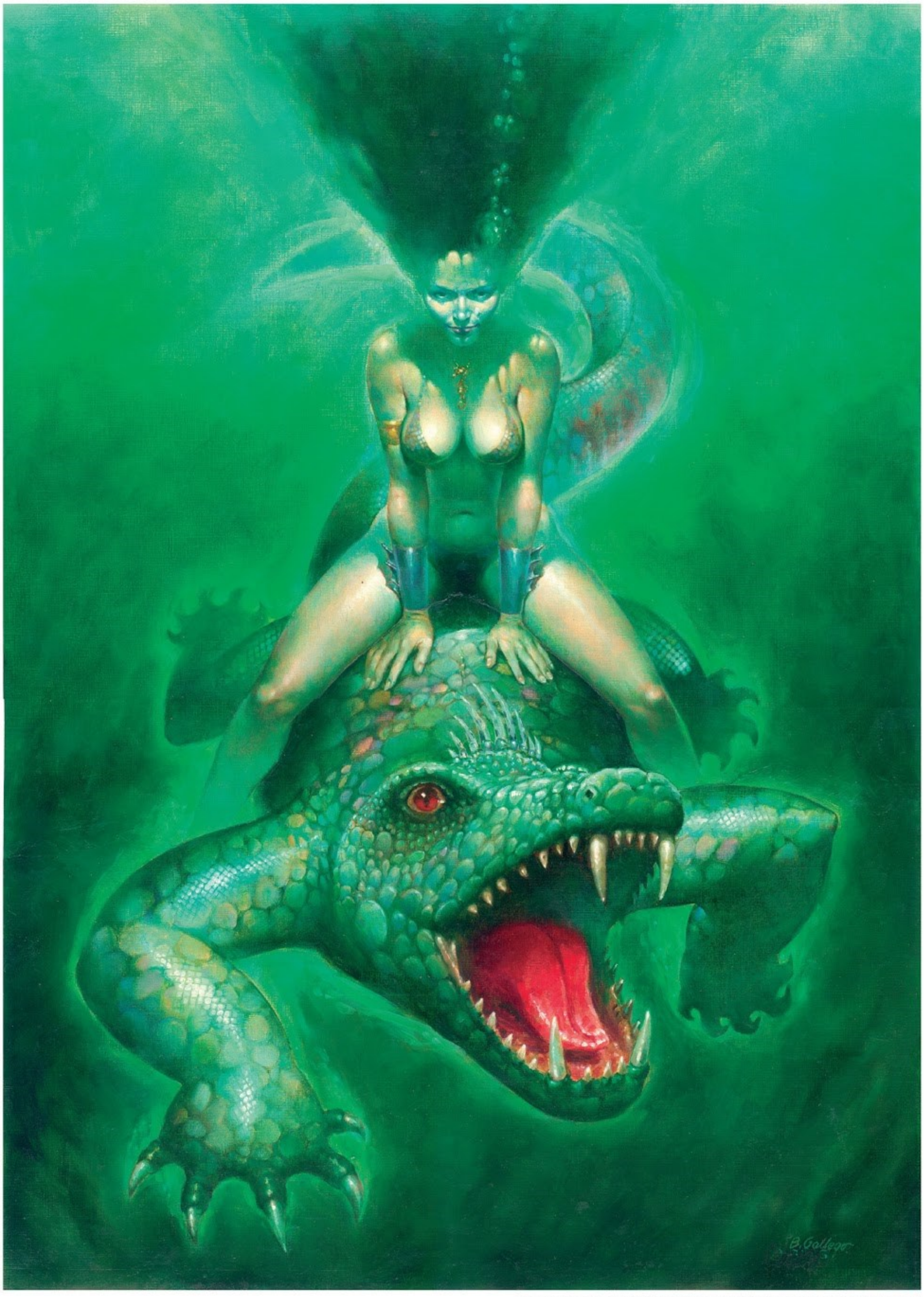
Blas Gallego b. 1941



Beauty and the Beast, 1988. Original artwork courtesy of Blas Gallego.

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Zona 84 49 (Toutain), 1988. Original cover art courtesy of Blas Galego.

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Luis García Mozos B. 1946

I was born on January 10, 1946, in Puertollano, a mining town in the province of Ciudad Real. In 1948, my father, a railway worker, was transferred to Santa Cruz de Mudela, an agricultural town, in the same province. When I was 10 my teacher advised us that art was my true vocation so my father requested a transfer and moved the entire family to Barcelona, so I could develop my abilities. I started studying elementary degree in the Academy, and in the evenings, from 6 pm until 8 pm, studied charcoal drawing, copying casts of heads of statues in the School of Arts and Crafts. But I only studied for two years because In 1959 I started drawing as an apprentice for Editorial Bruguera and in 1960, just 14 years old, I started my career in comics. For a child like me, to see the original pages being drawn was Nirvana, I was literally enchanted. The atmosphere there was formal but friendly and outgoing, there were no cruel jokes. Everyone behaved very well towards me, and introduced me to the great American masters of comics: Alex Raymond, Stan Drake, Milton Caniff, etc. I also met the cartoonist Miguel Fuster, who I'm still friends with today.

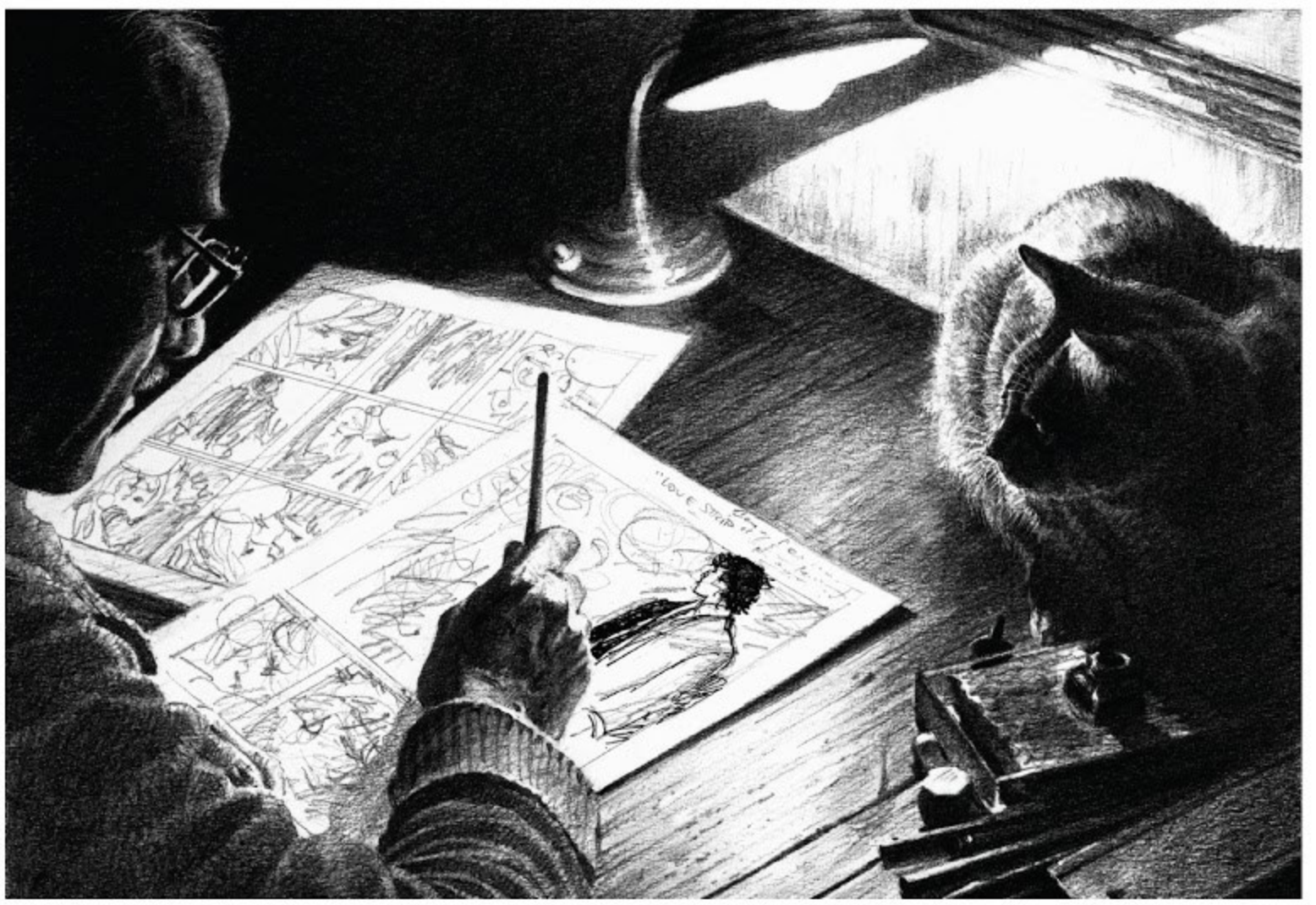
In 1961, I went to see Josép Toutain at S.I. who gave me syndication work at his agency. My first strip was a western starring a Davy Crockett-type character. Later, at around 17, I started working for the British market drawing romances for young girls. The atmosphere at S.I. was more festive and fun than Bruguera, but the artists played very cruel jokes; it felt more aggressive than Bruguera, and quite hostile to me. But Pepe González became a good friend of mine there and some others were also kinder to me.

In 1967, with Carol (Juana) de Haro, (later Pepe González's model for Vampirella) and I joined the "Group of La Floresta" along with Esteban Maroto, Suso Peña, Ramón Torrens, and Adolfo Usero. Together we created the *5 x Infinity* series and later, when the group broke up, Maroto continued on his own. In 1971, after spending some time living in London, I returned to Barcelona and started

Garcia with Salvador Dali and model Silke Hummel, 1972.

drawing cartoons for Warren's horror magazines. When I started my first horror strip, I was "horrified" because I had never drawn that subject; my work for many years had been comic romance strips for young girls, and that style was useless for terror. However, I was very excited, and I started thinking, how could I draw that strip, in what style? I began to remember my knowledge of carbon and graphite drawing pencil, the pen technique that I practiced in Bruguera, and the creation of the Infinite character in *5 x Infinity* series. It was all very intuitive, and exciting. And I started to create my own style... It was a magical experience. I felt an inner voice telling me what to do. For that story I was awarded Warren's prize for best artist, and because of a translator's error, also drew the first interracial kiss in American comics. It was in my first cartoon for Warren in *Creepy* 43: "The Men Who Called Him Monster".

In 1972 I met the painter Salvador Dalí; we were introduced at the Ritz Hotel in Barcelona. In a suite surrounded by models Dalí had organized a party to sell a painting to an American collector. Then we went to dinner at the restaurant Via Veneto and later had a drink at the Pub 2, 40, where I exhibited my portraits of the characters and musicians who acted there. Silke Hummel, Dalí's favorite model, captivated me. After spending a few days with Dalí in his home Porlligat, Silke finished her job with Dalí and together we went to Paris. Among other things, I took the Warren magazines where my strips had been published. In Paris, after observing my work in those publications, the director of the French magazine *Pilote*, René Goscinny (writer of *The Adventures of Asterix the Gaul*), a friendly man of ruddy complexion, told me in perfect Spanish: "I know your work. You're like those Spanish



Panel from *Nova 2*, 1981. Original artwork courtesy of Luis García Mozos.

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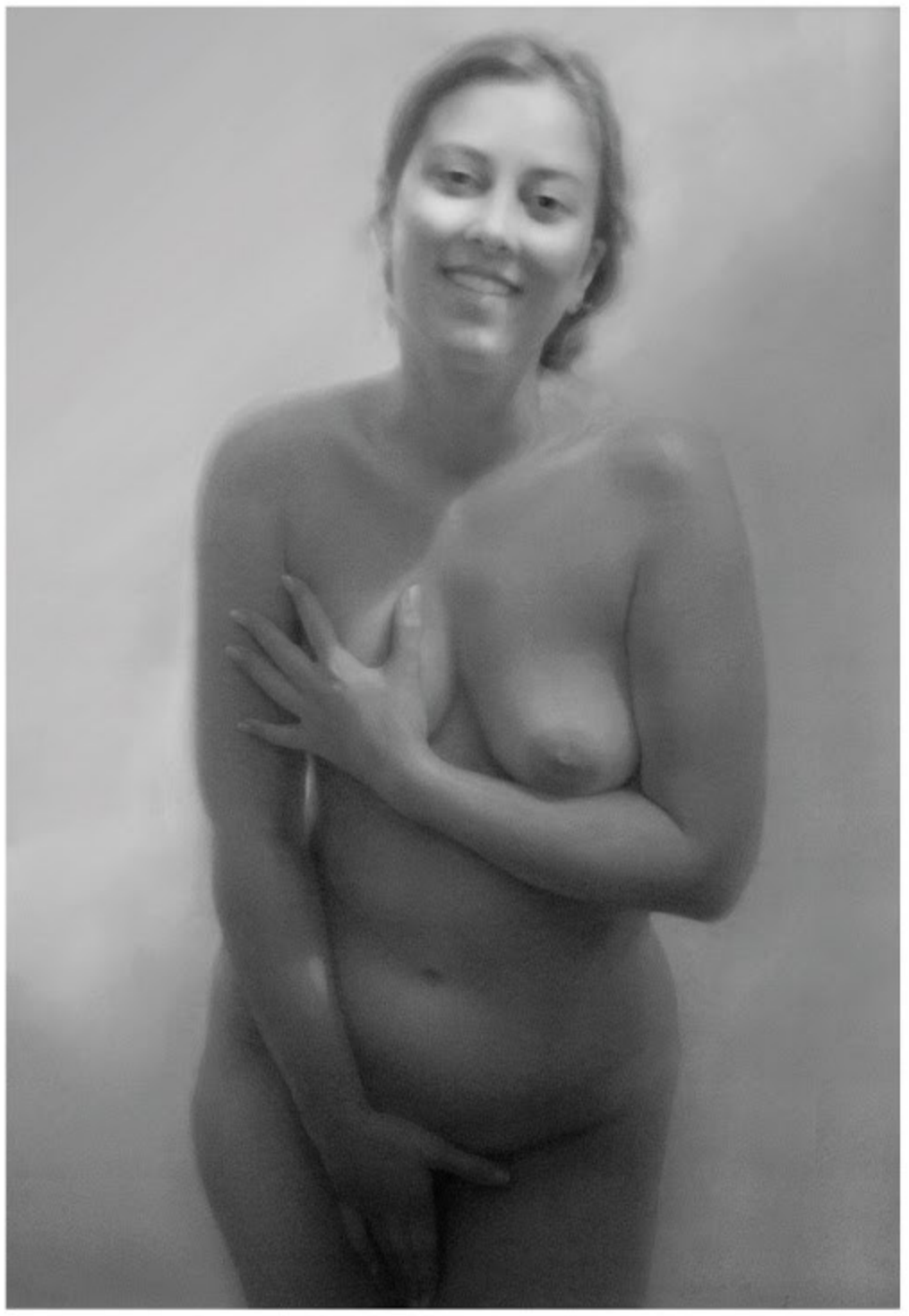
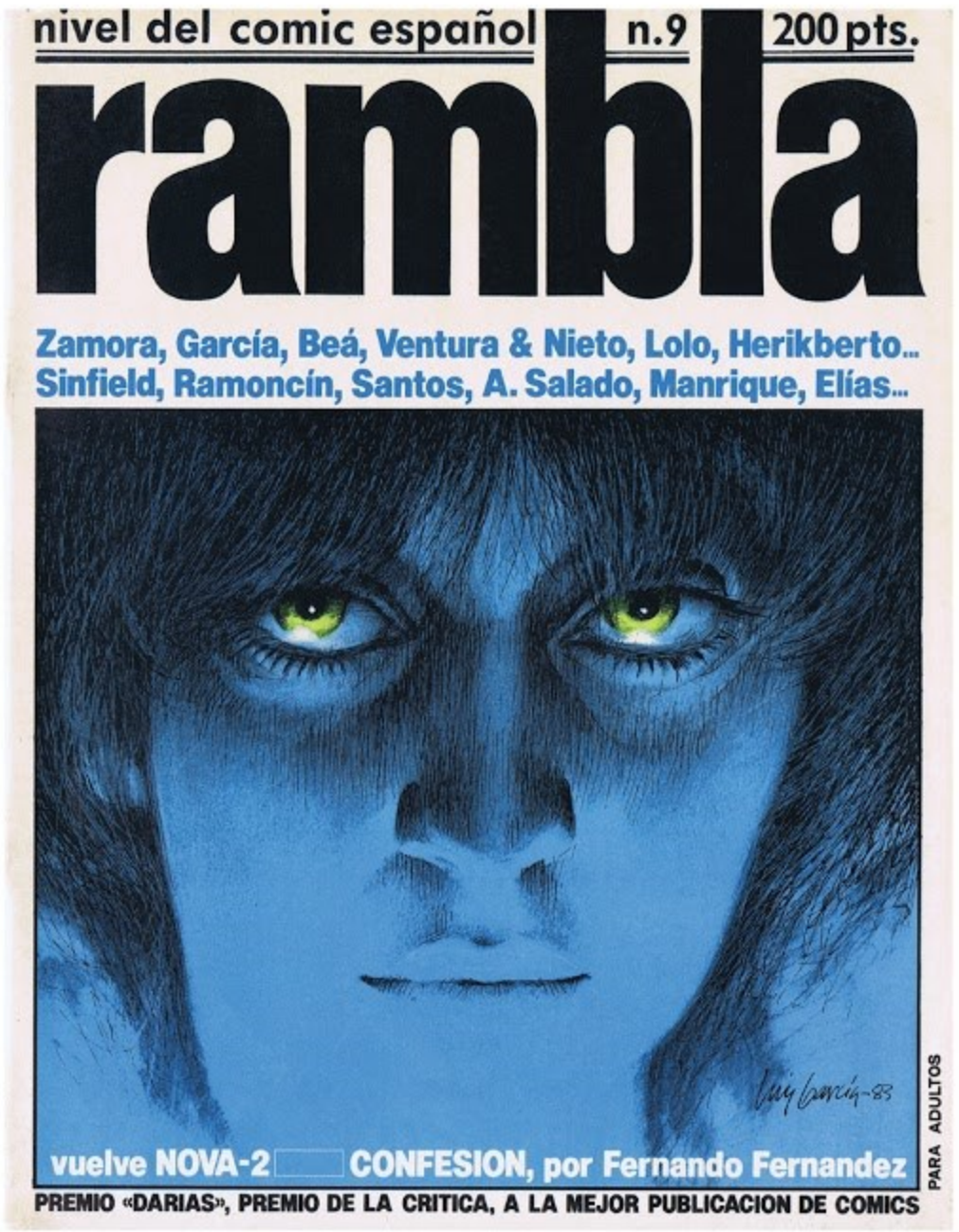
conquerors who crossed the Atlantic looking for 'El Dorado'. You will do a series for *Pilote*. What do you prefer? A French or Spanish writer?" "Spanish." I replied. I left Silke in Paris and returned to Barcelona. The writer Víctor Mora agreed to write the scripts for the series *The Chronicles of Sin Nombre*. I told Victor I didn't want to have one particular character and that every story should be different "... I do not know, think of something." "Okay," he replied, "I'll think of something."

In 1975, I returned to Santa Cruz de Mudela, to see the places of my childhood. I had never gone back before and hadn't seen it since I was 10 years old when my family went to live in Catalonia. The memories and excitement were very powerful, I remembered the good and bad times of my childhood. For that reason I felt compelled to create my strip *Chicharras* as an insight into my childhood. It was a historical recollection of the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War from the child's memories, my memories. And without meaning to I created the autobiographical comic strip for adults in Spain. Carlos Giménez saw me draw it because at that time, along with Adolfo Usero, we shared a studio in Premia de Mar, Barcelona. Giménez lettered the strip (you can clearly see that the lettering, sound effects, and Bob Dylan Lyrics are made by Giménez) and declared that: "I, too, want to do comics about my childhood." Some months later, he start drawing *Paracuellos*.

After creating several albums of comics, *Etnocidio, Argelia, Chicharras*...in parallel to *The Chronicles of Sin Nombre*, I started work on *Nova 2* from my own script. Some stories in *Etnocidio* and *Chicharras* were first published in *Trocha/Troya Magazine*, which I had created with a group of writers, artists and comic theorists. *Nova 2* was drawn in 1981 and the following year was published in the American magazine *Heavy Metal*, led by the editor Julie Simmons-Lynch.



Venus Pudica, 2004. Personal Drawing.



Rambla 9 (Distrinovel), 1983.

In 1982, a group of authors: Adolfo Usero, Alfonso Font, Carlos Giménez, Jose María Beá, and I, decided to publish our own comic magazine *Rambla*. The first issue's sales were not as good as we'd expected (the country had just entered an economic crisis, and there were too many comics on the stands). The poor sales caused three of the cartoonists to go, leaving only José María Beá and myself. We carried on with the magazine but the economic crisis deepened and Beà left after number 29. I continued publishing *Rambla* on my own for a year up until issue 40 when, for economic reasons, I had to cancel the magazine in October 1985. Apart from the discussions we had as a group, and subjective reasons they may say (I prefer to omit my subjective reasons), the fundamental reason that all they left *Rambla* was economic: if the magazine had produced many benefits, a lot of money, no one would have left.

Finally, in January 1986, just as I turned 40, I started to paint. From that time I have dedicated myself exclusively to art. Currently, I work as a professor of painting, especially Baroque art, and especially the art of Velázquez. I also teach the techniques of the Great Masters of the nineteenth century, Sargent, Sorolla, and Zorn. I have thoroughly researched their art, particularly, "The four colors of the Zorn," and there are video summaries on the Internet of my painting classes. Now I am preparing an exhibition, and a course of oil portrait painting in Barcelona's MEAM Museum (European Museum of Modern Art).

Luis García Mozos June 2016

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Original artwork from *L'hiver du Derrnier Combat. Pilote 738* (Dargaud), 1973.

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DE NUEVO, MI CUERPO CONTRA EL TUYO, MIS LABIOS CONTRA LOS TUYOS... ¡DE NUEVO, COMO EN UN RELÁMPAGO, NUESTROS AÑOS DE JUVENTUD, NUESTRO AMOR DE ENTONCES Y NUESTRO AMOR PRESENTE Y FUTURO, TODO ELLO COMO SI FUERA UNA ETERNIDAD DE FELICIDAD CONTENIDA EN TAN SOLO UNOS SEGUNDOS! JAMÁS HABÍA SENTIDO ESTA COSA EXTRAORDINARIA... ¿CÓMO ES POSIBLE? ¿QUÉ OCURRE?

¡HA HABIDO ESE GRITO ESPANTOSO! Y ALGO HA ESTALLADO EN MI CABEZA...

PERO ¿QUÉ HA PASADO? ¿QUÉ SIGNIFICA ESTE CASTILLO DESTARTALADO Y VACÍO DE REPENTE?... ¿DÓNDE ESTÁN TODOS? ¿Y ELEONOR?

JAMÁS HABÍA VISTO AQUELLA TUMBA, ANTES DE AHORA... HE APARTADO LA NIEVE, SOBRE LA LOSA... ¡*Y HE LEÍDO LO QUE TEMÍA!*

ELEONOR DE ANSWYN

12

Original artwork from *L'hiver du Dernier Combat. Pilote 738* (Dargaud), 1973.

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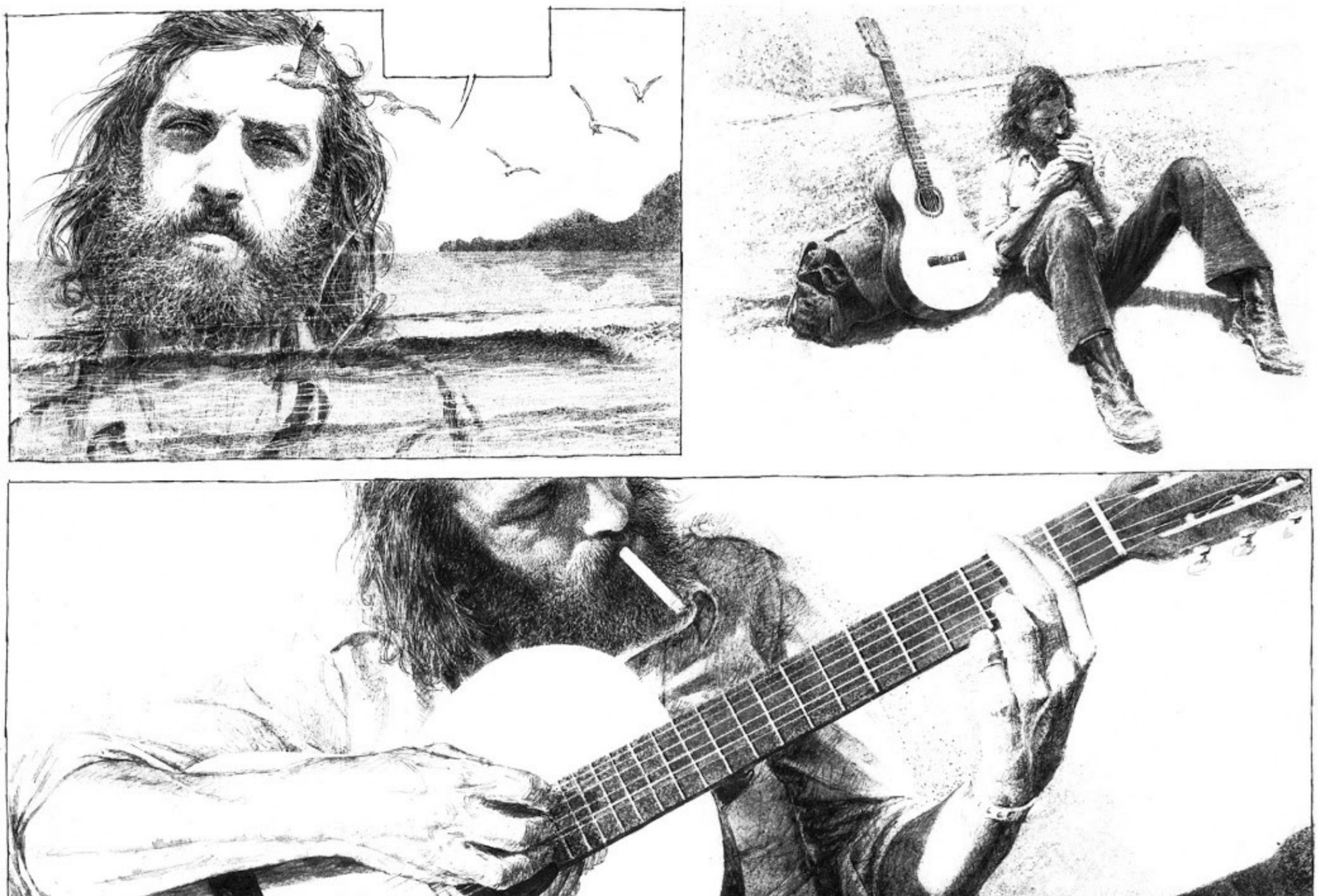

Janis. Vampirella 45 (Warren), 1975. Original artwork courtesy of Luis García Mozos.

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La Loi de La Vie. Pilote 61 (Dargaud), 1979. Original artwork courtesy of Luis García Mozos.

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VÍCTOR RAMOS NO SABÍA COMO APLICAR LA RESPUESTA AL FUTURO DE SU MISERABLE Y MONÓTONA EXISTENCIA...

50

LUIS GARCÍA-82

Nova 2. Rambla 1 (Distrinovel), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Luis García Mozos.

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Carlos Gimenez B. 1941

Dani Futuro. Journal de Tintin (Lombard), 1975. Original artwork courtesy of Manuel Auad.

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"PORTE-RITO"
PARACUELLOS DEL JARAMA 1952
GIMÉNEZ.— 11

HOGAR DE AUXILIO SOCIAL

¡"EL CACHORRO" EN ASALTO A MARACAIBO! ¡QUÉ EMOCIONANTE!

¡DÁMELO!

ANTONIO DÍEZ, "PORTERITO" ERA EL MATÓN DEL "HOGAR":

¿QUIÉN QUIERE ESTE TEBEO QUE ME HE ENCONTRADO...?

¡DÁMELO... DÁMELO...! ¡ES MIO!

¡DAME MI TEBEO...!

RAAAS...!

TOMA, TU TEBEO...

SE LO VOY A DECIR A LA SEÑORITA...

¿A QUIÉN SE LO VAS A DECIR?

¿A QUIÉN SE LO VAS A DECIR?

A NADIE... A NADIE...

... ERES UN ABUSÓN...

¡PORQUE SE PUEDE!

SÍ, REALMENTE, "PORTERITO" ERA UN ABUSÓN

¡DAME MI ZAPATILLA!

¿QUÉ ZAPATILLA?

35

Paraceullos. Muchas Gracias magazine, then collected in *Paracuellos Volume 1* (Amaika), 1977. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Paraceullos. Muchas Gracias magazine, then collected in *Paracuellos Volume 1* (Amaika), 1977. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Boyfriend 77 (City), 1960.

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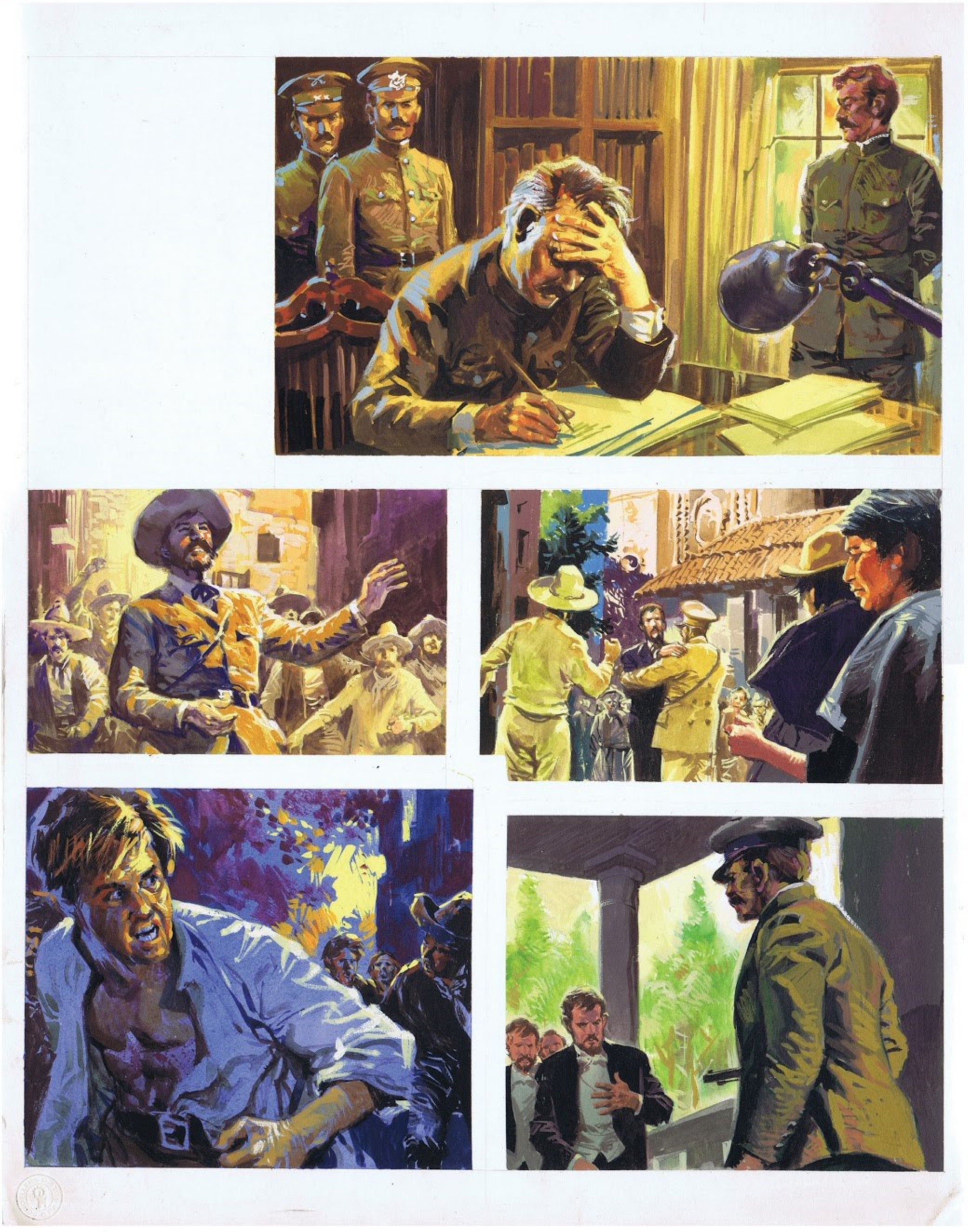
Juan Gonzalez Alacreu *b. 1937*



Original artwork (unpublished episode) from *The Story of Mexico City. Tell me Why* (N.V. Uitgeveris), 1970.

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José "Pepe" González 1939–2009

José "Pepe" González was the most mercurial of Warren's Spanish artists; regarded as a genius by his peers at S.I., he had an instinctive gift for drawing but was happiest living life to the fullest in nightclubs and bars. Among the many contradictions of his life, González was openly gay but made his name drawing the sexiest women in comics, and while he professed not to like comics, he kept coming back to Vampirella, the character that made his name. Pepe was born in Barcelona where he was to live his whole life with his mother and grandmother. A chance discovery of his artwork led to him being taken on by S.I. at the age of 17 where he was initially assigned western strips for the French market. However, when it was clear that his real talents lay in drawing beautiful girls he was moved on to romances for the local publisher Toray where he worked on *Rosas Blancas* and *Susana*.

Photograph courtesy of Manel Dominguez.

In 1959 González started a long relationship with British comics, drawing strips for City's *Boyfriend* magazine. The following year he was taken on by Editor Mike Butterworth at Fleetway's *Valentine* comic where his art quickly matured to become some of the most attractive in the industry. As his colleague José Maria Beá remembered, "At first everyone, even the best like Jordi Longarón and José María Miralles, admired Pepe. His graphic concept of women revolutionized Selecciones Ilustradas. All the artists copied Pepe's girls. For many years he was considered the best cartoonist of girls for the English market." In addition to *Valentine*, for the next 11 years González's work appeared in Fleetway titles such as *Marilyn, Roxy,* and *Serenade* along with DC Thomson's *Romeo, Jackie*, and *Diana*. Other British jobs included almost a year drawing a newspaper strip based on the *Avengers* TV show and the lighthearted fashion model *Liberty St. Dare* for *Trend* in 1966. By 1963 he was creating some of the best art in British comics but having mastered the genre, he then grew bored of romance comics. In the late '60s he diversified into fashion illustration and drew over 100 cheesecake cartoons starring the scatter-brained, but beautiful Pamela.

The artist's interest in comics was restored in 1971 when S.I. made contact with Jim Warren, who found in González the Vampirella artist he had been looking for for so long. Pepe effortlessly captured the exotic, dangerous allure of the alien vampire, imbuing her with an erotic sophistication that made the character a comic icon around the world. His earliest strips, paired with writer Archie Goodwin, quickly established the strip's milieu of jet-set glamour mixed with an oppressive atmosphere of horror; but González struggled with the length of the episodes. However, by 1974 with Mike Butterworth's scripts and shorter stories, he was once again producing art of the highest standard. At this time he also initiated a series of incredibly realistic frontis illustrations, rendered in graphite, which revealed the true extent of his ability. Altogether he created 37 of these illustrations, though some went unpublished by Warren.

But despite *Vampirella*'s international success Pepe's restless nature and dissatisfaction with his pay led to his leaving the strip on several occasions, initially in 1974 to create his own series *Herma*. On his return to the daughter of Drakulon, he rose to even greater heights, with his Vampi's from 1976 and 1977 being the best of his career; but later the following year, he left again. In 1978 Toutain published a monograph dedicated to Pepe's work, *Quando El Comic es Arte*, but by the end of the year he had left comics and S.I. to join the Norma agency and embrace a new career in illustration. His first few years at Norma were spent creating exquisitely realistic drawings of movie stars (and naked girls playing sports!) which were released

Valentine, 24th July 1965 (Fleetway).

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Cowgirl, 2000. Original artwork courtesy of Steven Morger.

as portfolios, posters, and postcards, with his many depictions of Marilyn Monroe finding a sizable world-wide audience. In 1982 he unexpectedly signed up to draw 12 new *Vampirella* episodes, declaring that he wanted to return his beloved strip to its former glories. The new episodes were among the best of his career though tragically only seven were completed before Warren went bankrupt in 1983. Returning to Norma, Pepe maintained a sporadic connection with comics throughout the '80s, drawing the series *Chantal, Mamba* (with long-time ghost assistant Victor Ramos), and *Crazy* for Cimoc, but for the next ten years his focus was on illustration.

Beginning in 1983 González established himself as one of the world's top romance illustrators, creating a succession of outstanding covers with a unique combinations of marker pens and colored pencils. His first commissions came from the US — Signet's *Rapture Romance* and Bantam's *Loveswept* — which were followed in 1984 by a decade long association with Bastiei's *Caprice* books in Germany. Also in the '80s, his work could be found in *Serie Starlet* in Sweden, *Star Love* stories and *Troubadour* books in the UK, *The Bobbsey Twins* in the US and *Skorpio* in Italy. He began the most productive association of this period in 1987 when he began drawing covers for the Spanish publisher Andina's series of *Corin Tellado* romances which ran to over 200 illustrations stretching into the mid-'90s. At the same time British publisher Robert Hale also began using Pepe's illustrations on his *Rainbow Romance* books and later the *Linford Romance* library series. However, by the mid-'90s photographs were edging out traditional cover techniques, Pepe dropped out of sight and for a while was reduced to working in the kitchen of his local bar.

Salvation came in 1996 when he renewed contact with S.I. and started working on illustrations for *Barbie* books which proved to be the most lucrative of his career. Having achieved some financial equilibrium, the turn of the century saw a newly inspired artist return to drawings of beautiful women, many of which were shown in three exhibitions at the Lluis Ribas Gallery. Subsequently a number of leading American collectors got in contact and commissioned the artist to create a series of outstanding new Vampirella drawings. Initially most of these were recreations of classic frontis drawings or key splash pages; but then increasingly later drawings were entirely new compositions, some of them gigantic pieces rendered in glorious full color. Altogether, Pepe González drew almost 30 recreations and 40 new compositions, all of which are now highly prized by collectors. Throughout his life González drew portraits of friends and celebrities, nudes, fashion illustrations, historical and religious scenes, horses and anything that took his fancy, all with an effortless skill and fluency that was unparalleled among his peers. The true extent of his output may never be understood, but already his standing as one of the great Spanish artists is assured.

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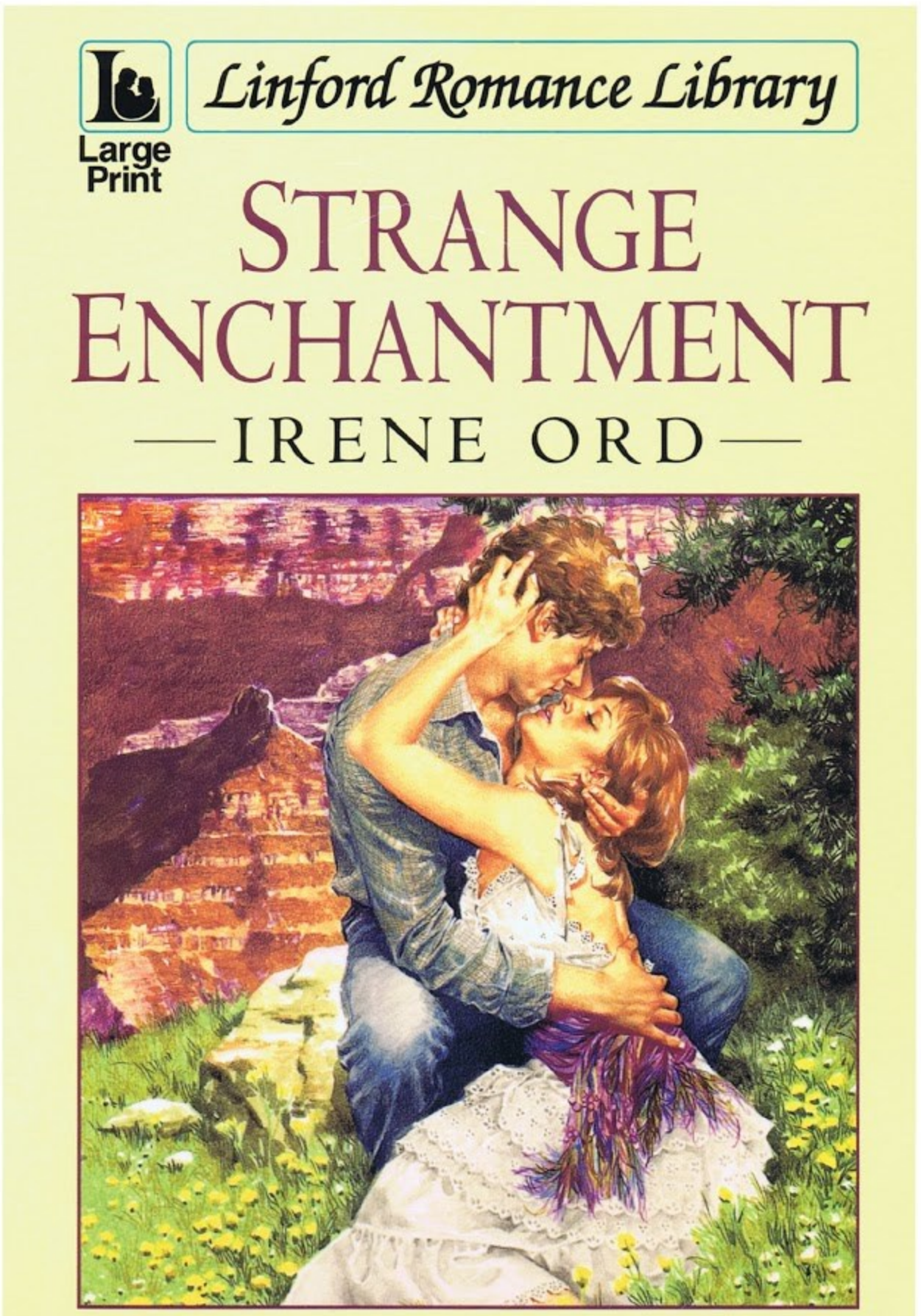

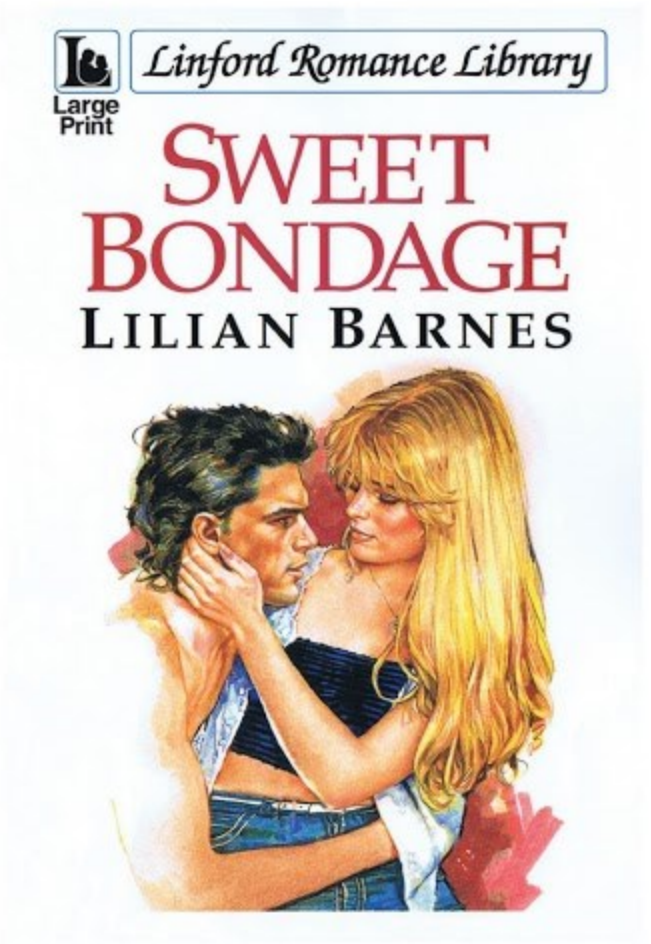

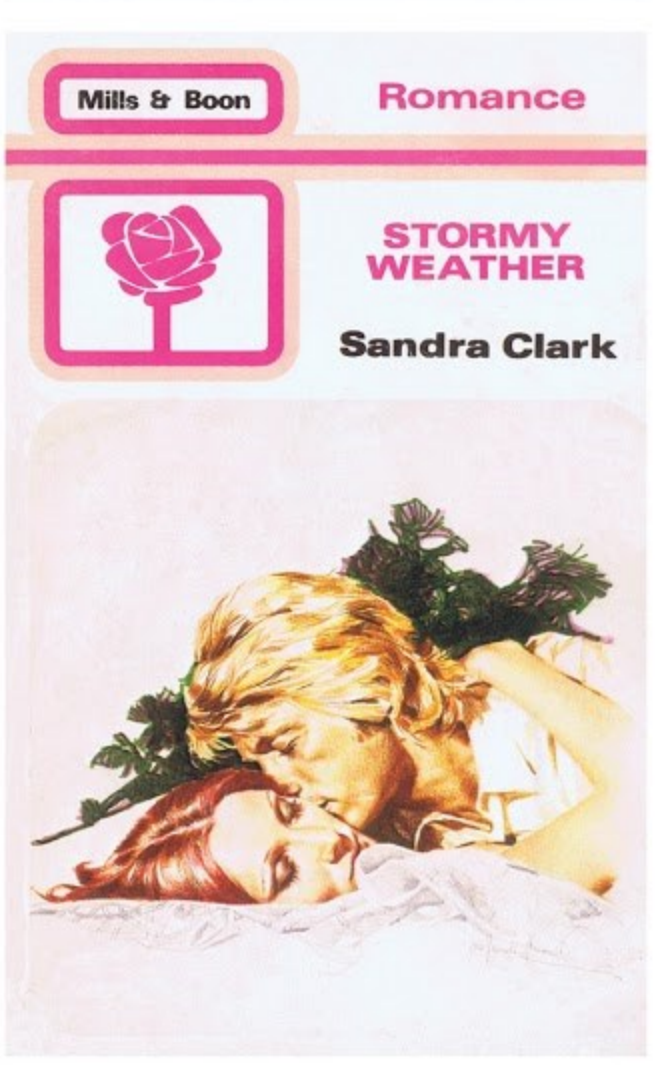

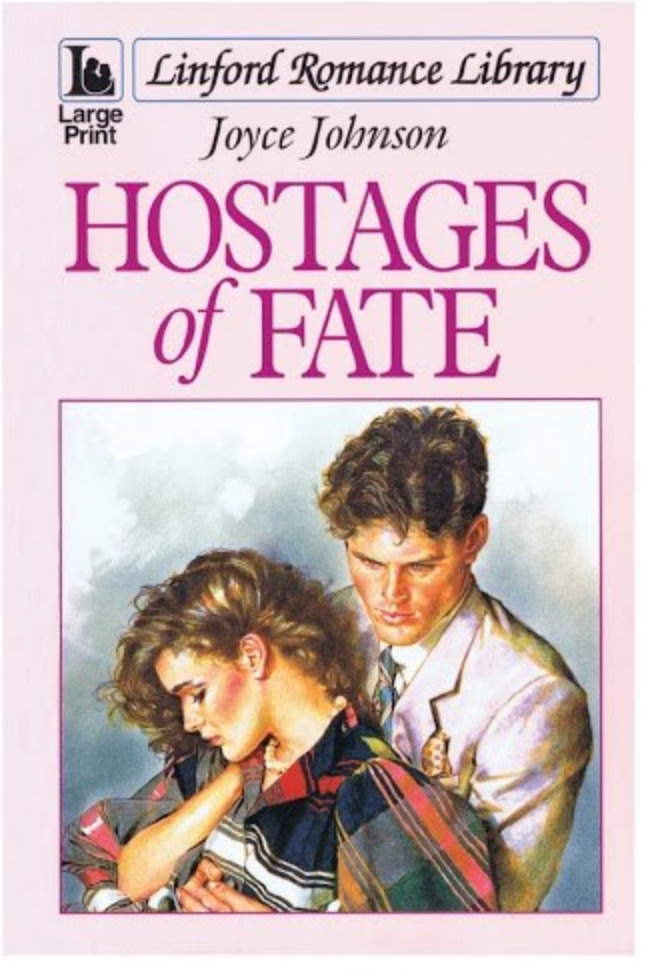

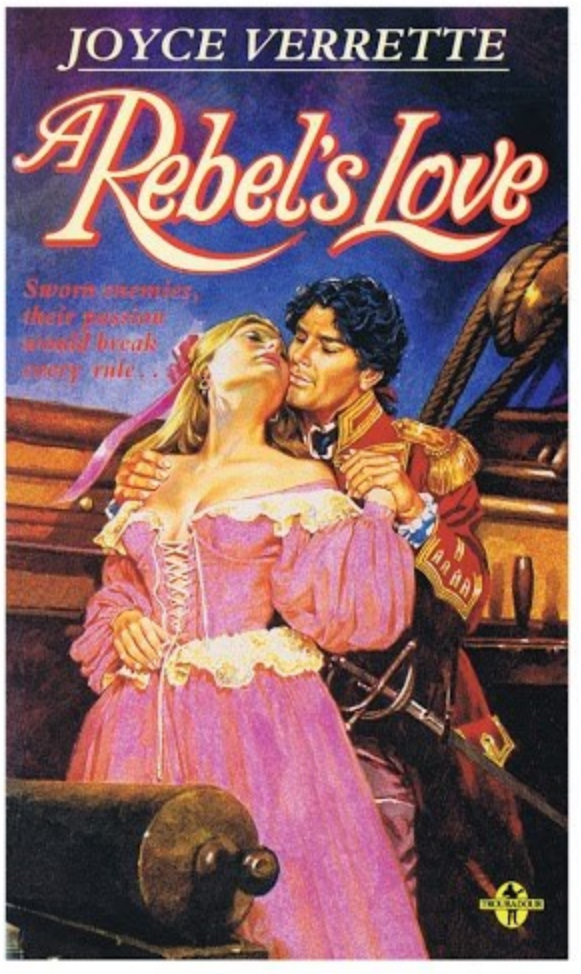

British publications (Linford, DC Thomson, Futura and Mills and Boon), 1983–2000.

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Vampirella: La Maldicion Wrathmore. Creepy 42 (Toutain), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Setya Adyaska.

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Vampirella: La Maldicion Wrathmore. Creepy 42 (Toutain), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Jaume Vaquer.

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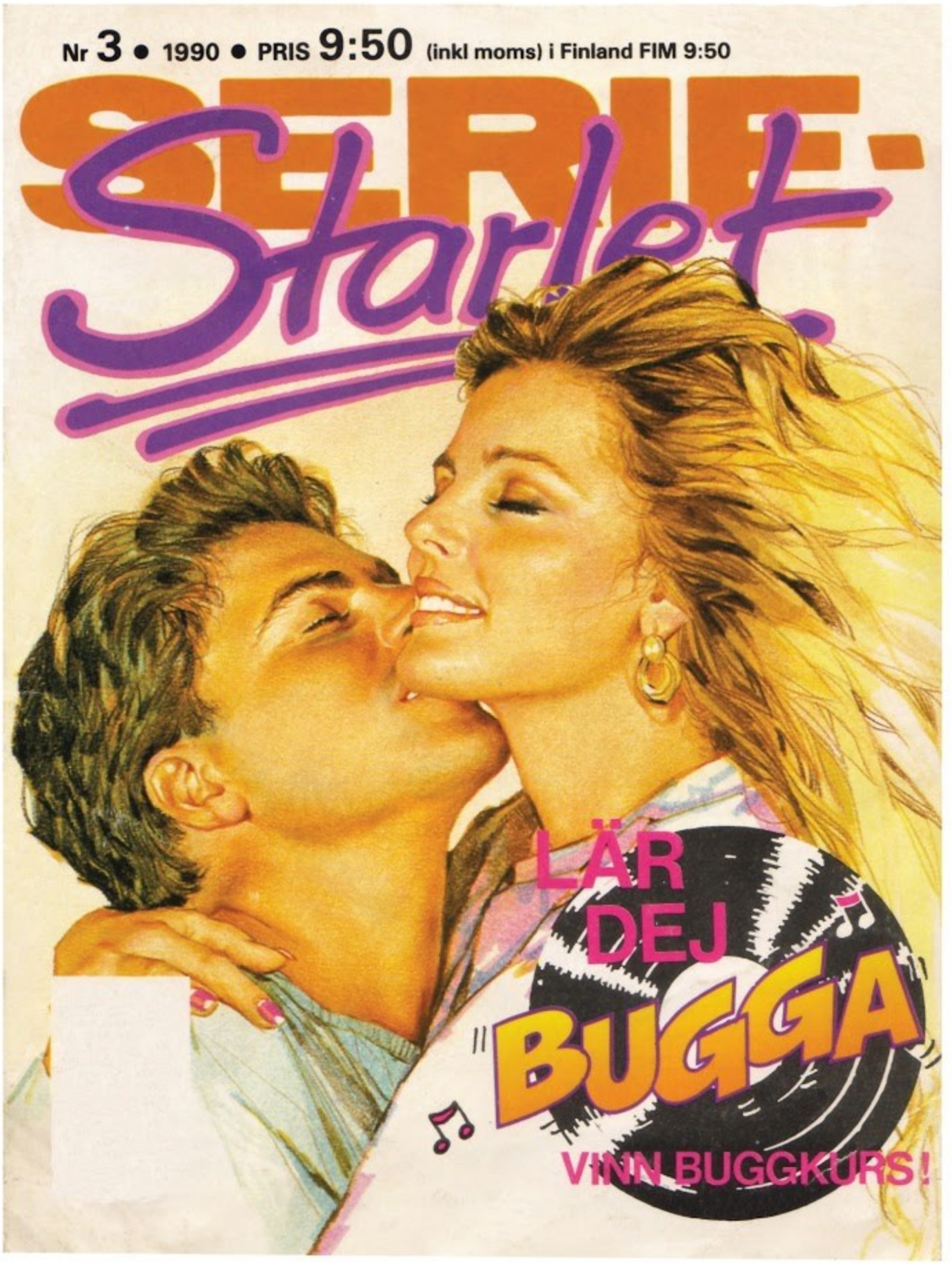

European publications
(Semic, Eura, Bastei, Andina)
1987–1993

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Santiago Hernandez 1940–1993

Original artwork from *The Protector. Girl 99* (IPC), 1983.

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Homero (Jaime Rumeu Perera) 1930–2003

My Friend Hates Horses. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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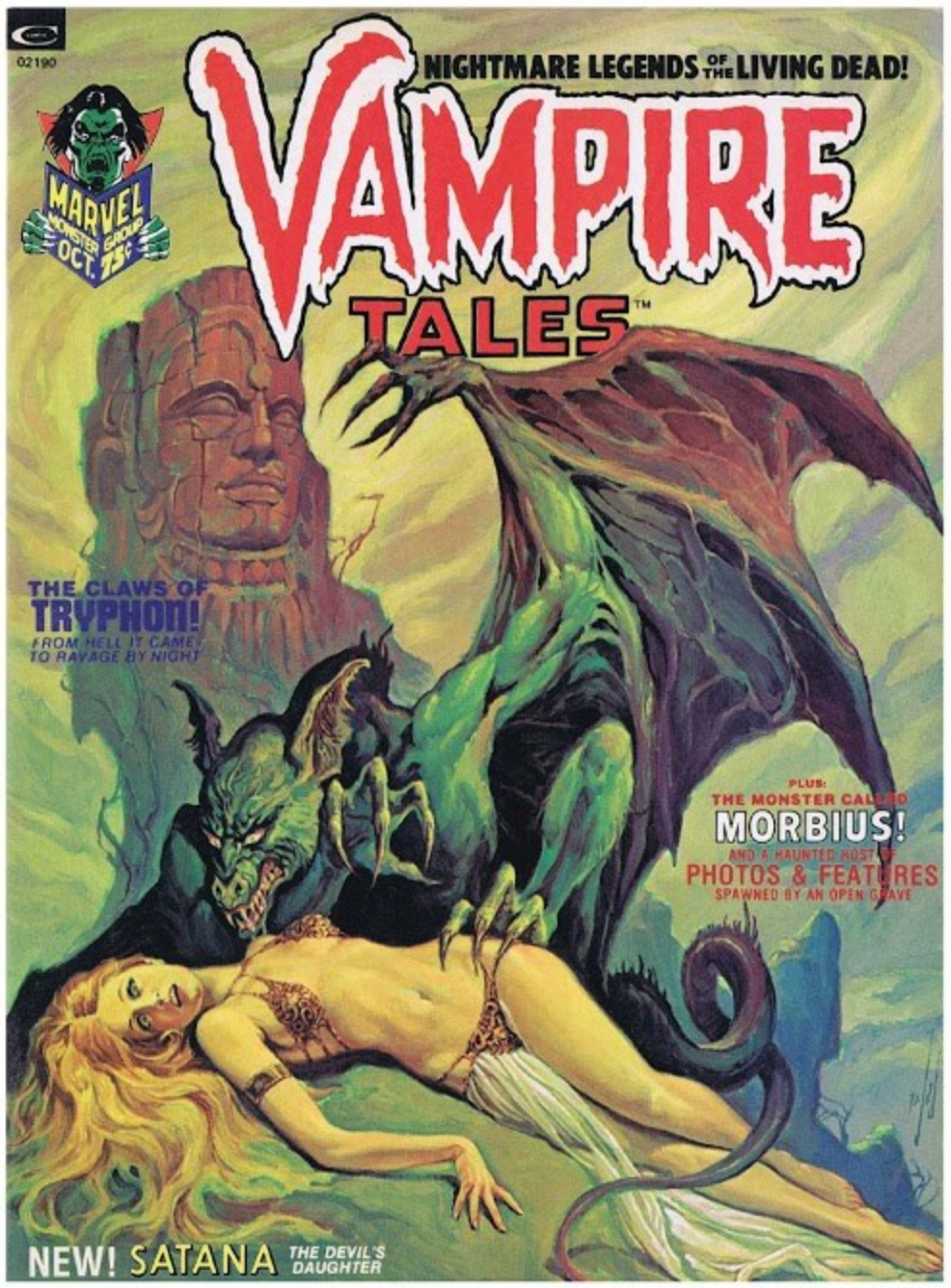
JAD (Jose Antonio Domingo Bernabeu) 1934–2014



Vampire Tales 2 (Marvel), 1973.

Vampire Tales 7 (Marvel), 1974.

Haunt of Horror 3 (Marvel), 1974.

Dossier Negro 101 (IMDE), 1977.

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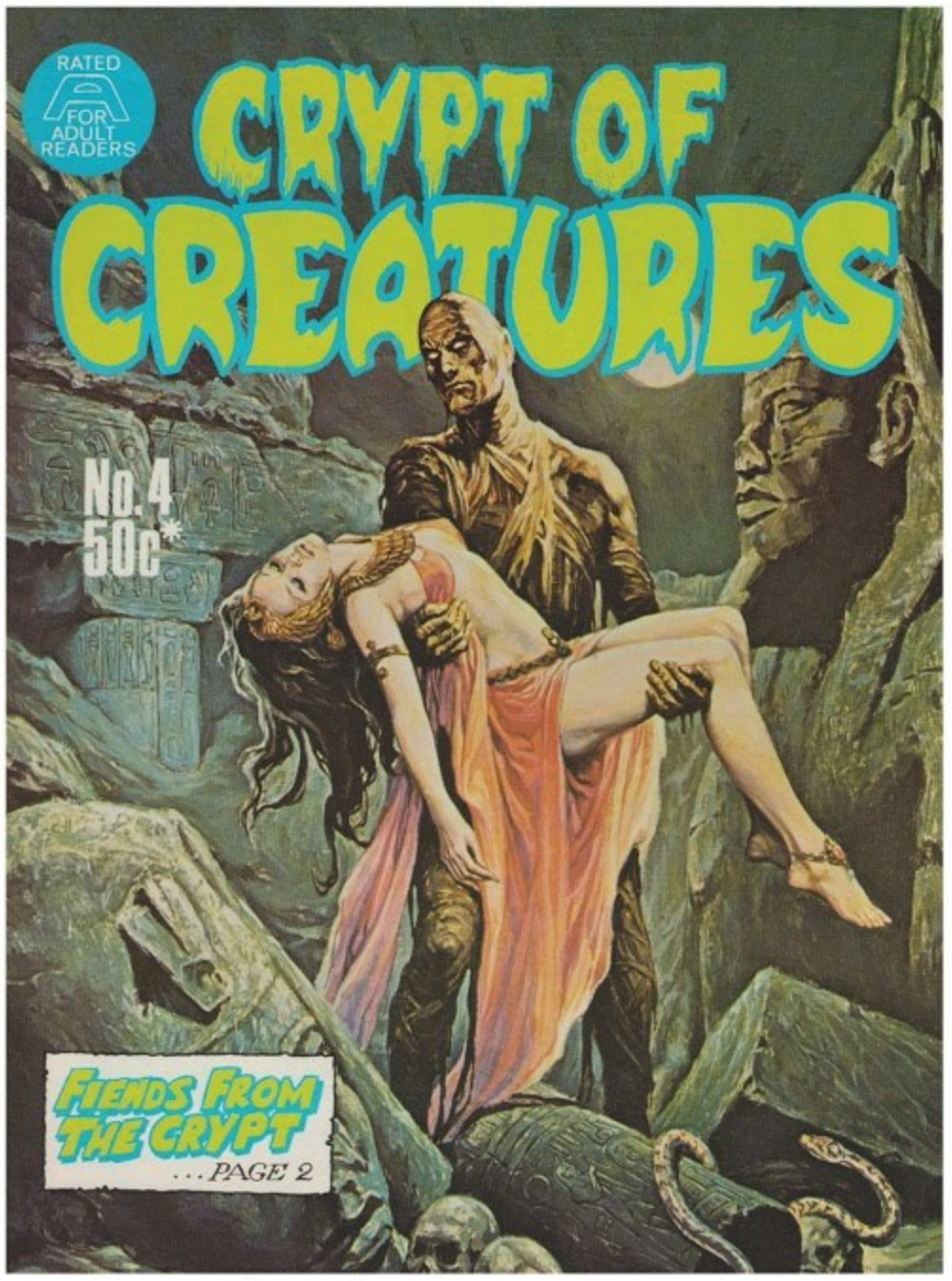
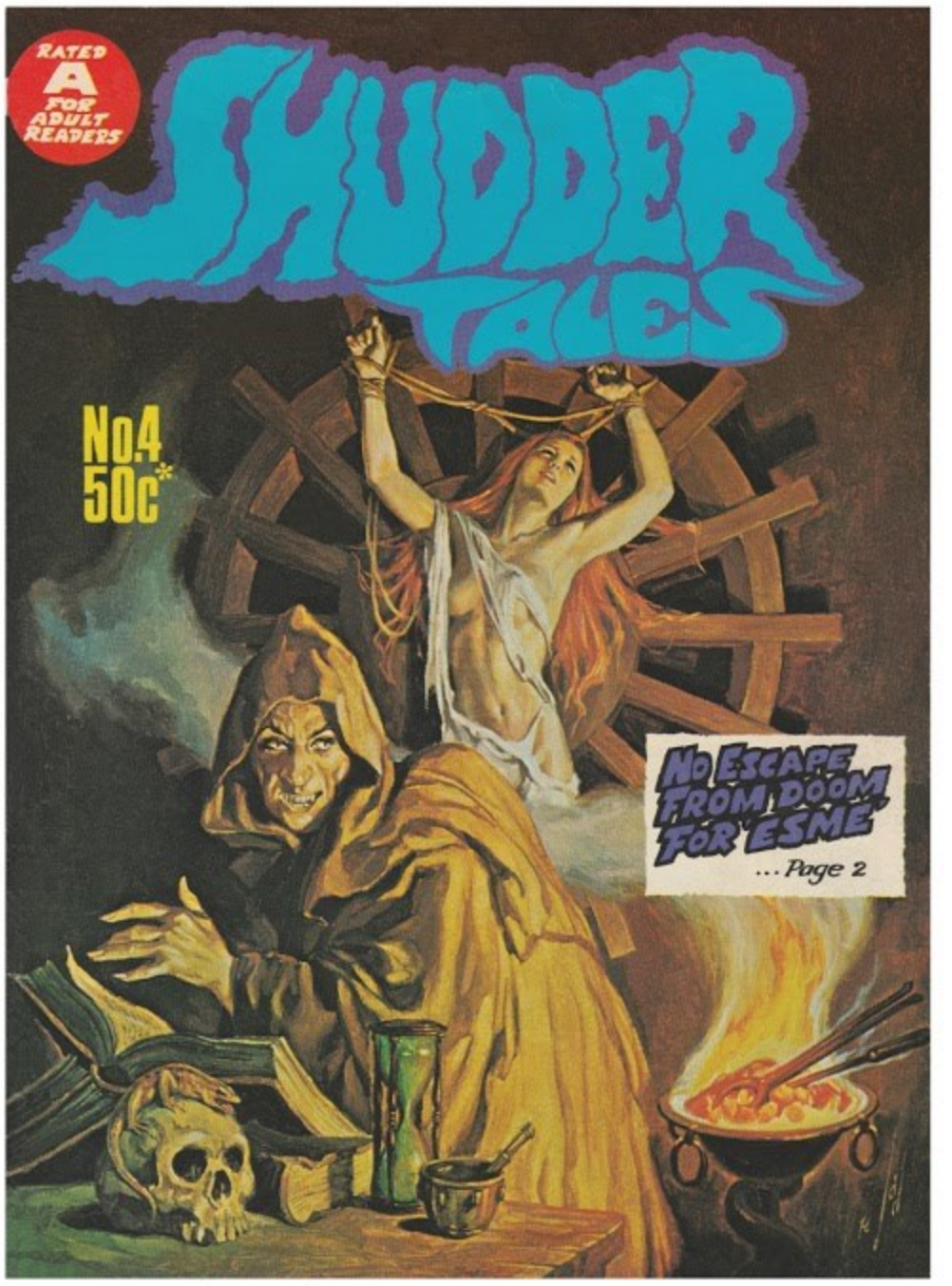
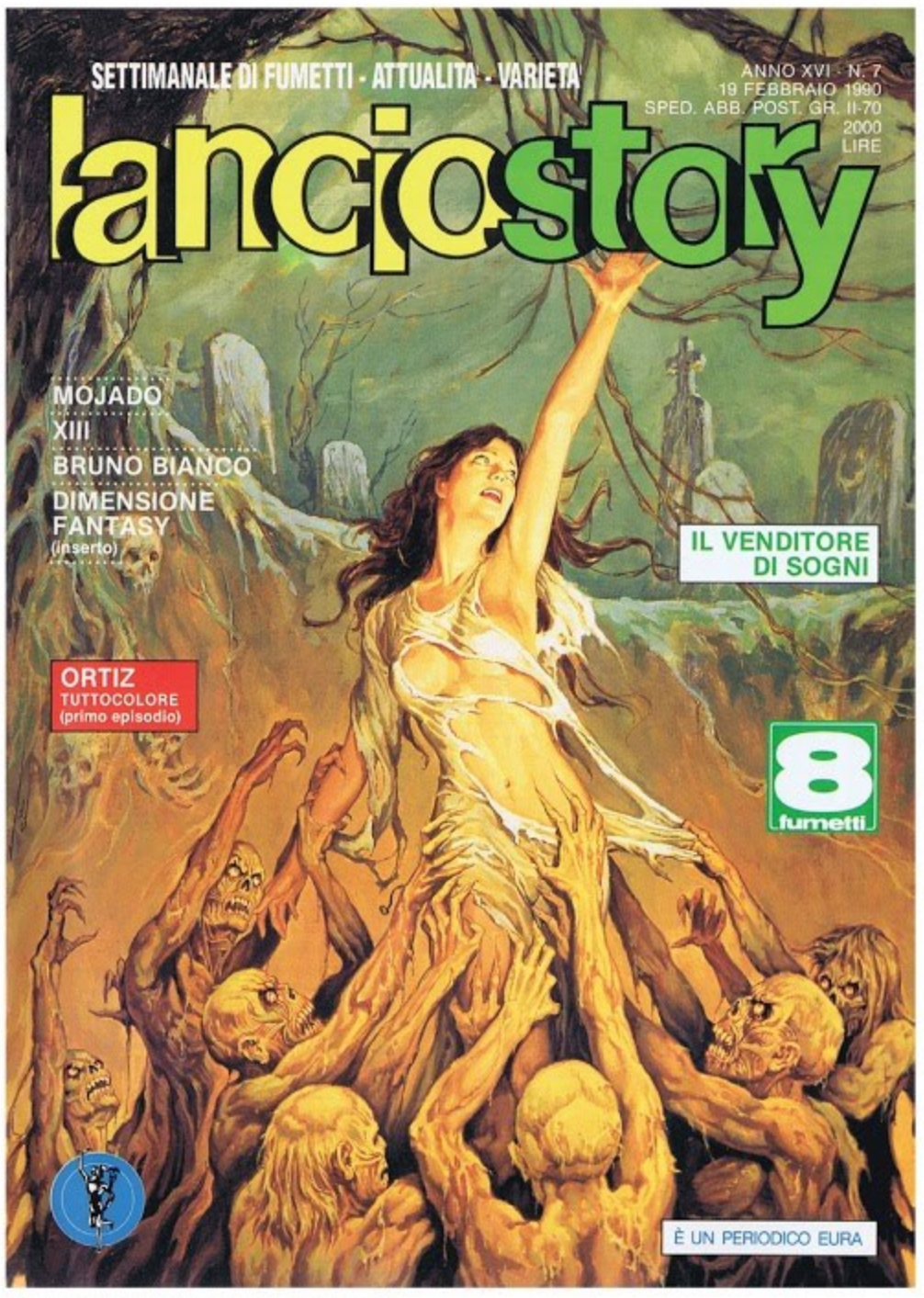


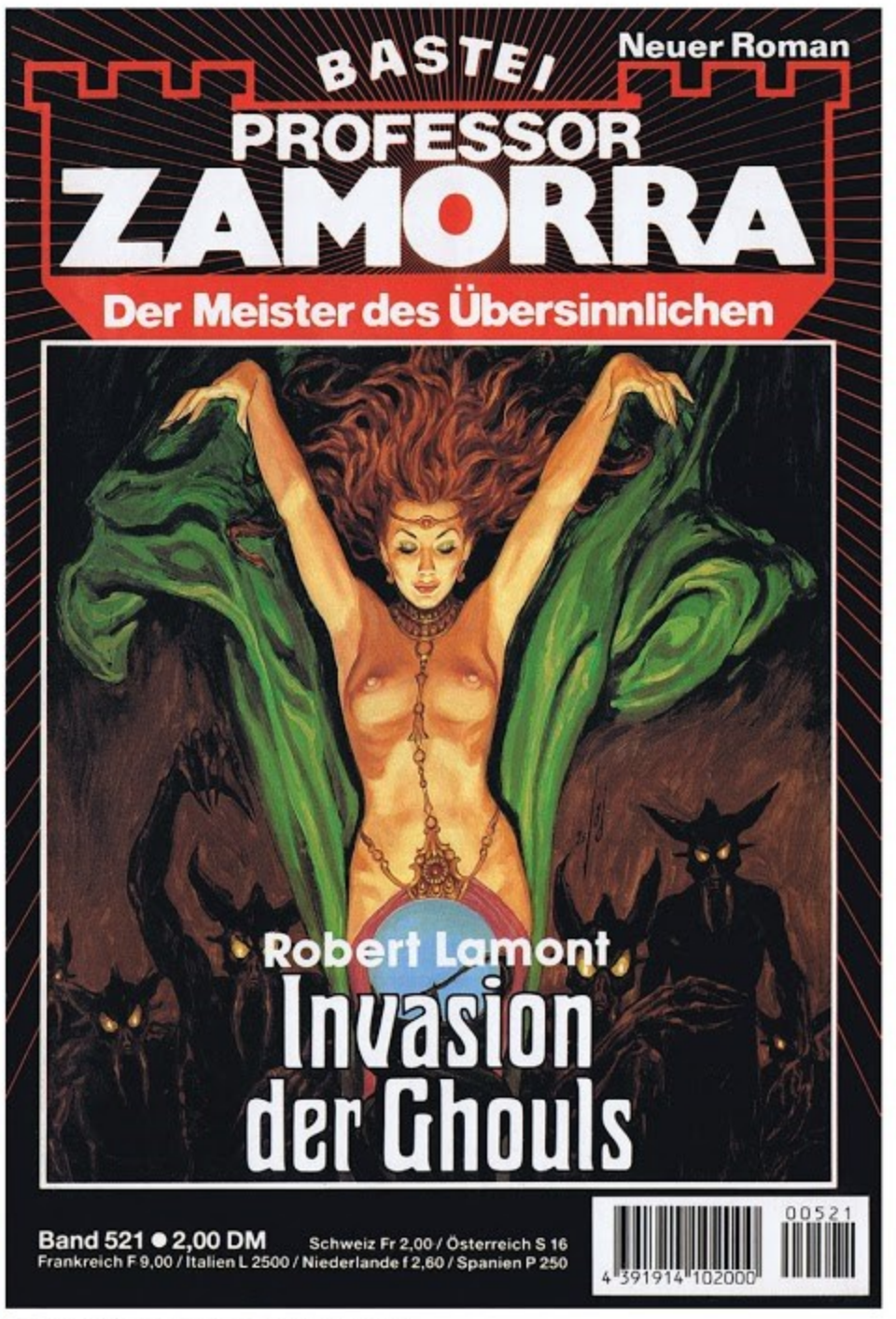
Crypt of Creatures 4 (Gredown), 1978.



Shudder Tales 4 (Gredown), 1977.



Lancio Story vol 16 /#7 (Eura), 1990.



Professor Zamorra 521 (Bastei), 1994.

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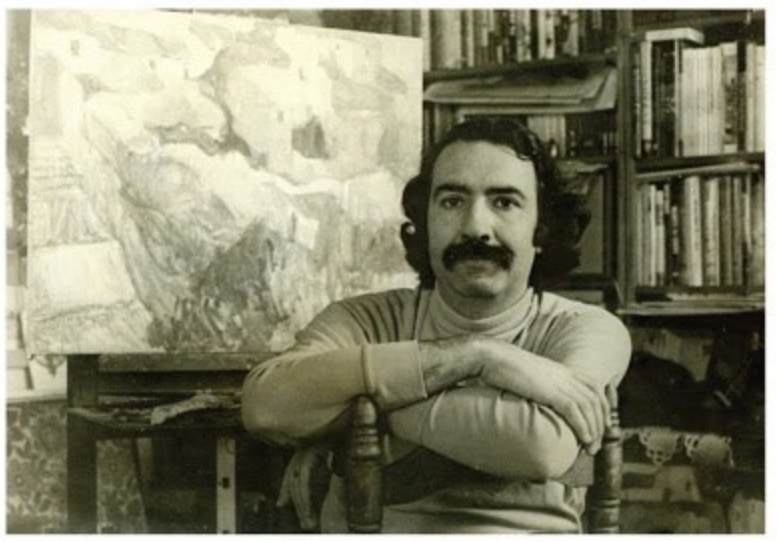
Jordi Longaron B. 1933



Jordi Longaron has had one of the most diverse careers in Spanish comics and is undoubtedly one of the most influential and cosmopolitan artists of his generation. Longaron was born in Barcelona and was inspired to draw comics by Jesús Blasco's *Cuto* and the work of Milton Caniff, Alex Raymond, and Frank Robbins. His earliest strips for local publishers Fabret and Emege were somewhat crudely drawn fairy tale features, but then again, he was only 15. In 1950 he joined the publishing house Toray and found himself in an office next to legendary artist Boixcar whose work pointed the way towards a more accomplished style. At Toray he drew *El Pequeno Mosgeuterro, El Caballero Negro,* and numerous episodes of the war comic *Hazanas Belicas Extra*, where his work first gained some attention. In the late '50s and early '60s he moved from strips to covers creating striking imagery for numerous Toray comics and books, many of them westerns such as *Oeste, Arizona, Sioux*, and *Hazanas del Oeste.*

However, in 1956 while still freelancing for Toray, Longaron also joined the emerging agency S.I. where he became the leading romance artist on their work for the UK market (though unlike almost all of his fellow S.I. artists, Longaron chose to work at home). Over the course of several years in the late '50s, together with José María Miralles, his style evolved into the archetypal Spanish new look, effectively creating the blueprint for romance strips for the next decade. Between 1957 and 1967 he drew numerous one-shot stories and serials for Fleetway's top romance comics *Valentine, Marilyn, Roxy*, and *Serenade.* But this work was often accompanied by dynamic, vibrantly painted covers for other venues, such as detective covers for Digit and war paintings for titles like *Commando, Battle,* and *War Picture Library.* While he temporarily left comic strips themselves in 1967 he continued to create covers in the UK for the rest of the decade, along with a number of striking designs for Bibliotecca Oro back home in Spain. By this point he had moved over to Bardon for whom he crafted illustrations for the Scandinavian women's market and numerous western covers for syndication.

As if all this work was not enough, in 1964 Longaron began the longest association of his career when he started work on an ongoing series of war and espionage paperbacks published in France by Gerfaut. Over the next two decades the artist would paint over 500 war covers for Gerfaut often augmenting the battle scenes with glamorous girls.

In 1969 Longaron made an unexpected return to comic strips when he was picked to draw the *Friday Foster* newspaper strip for the Chicago Tribune Syndicate. Writer Jim Lawrence had established a working relationship with Bardon who were reprinting his *James Bond* strip in Sweden, so Lawrence turned to them to suggest a possible artist for a strip idea he was developing about a young Black fashion photographer (a first for American newspapers). Longaron's samples convinced everyone that he was right for the job and he became the first Spanish artist to draw a comic strip in America. The strip itself was both ground-breaking and enormously attractive though the artist often found it hard to meet the punishing deadlines, particularly since he was still painting six covers a month for Gerfaut. At various points in the run he brought in Alfonso Font and Victor Ramos to help out, but after four years he sadly had to abandon it altogether and the feature was taken over for its final few months by Frank Springer and Gray Morrow.

Friday Foster sample illustration, 1969. Original artwork.

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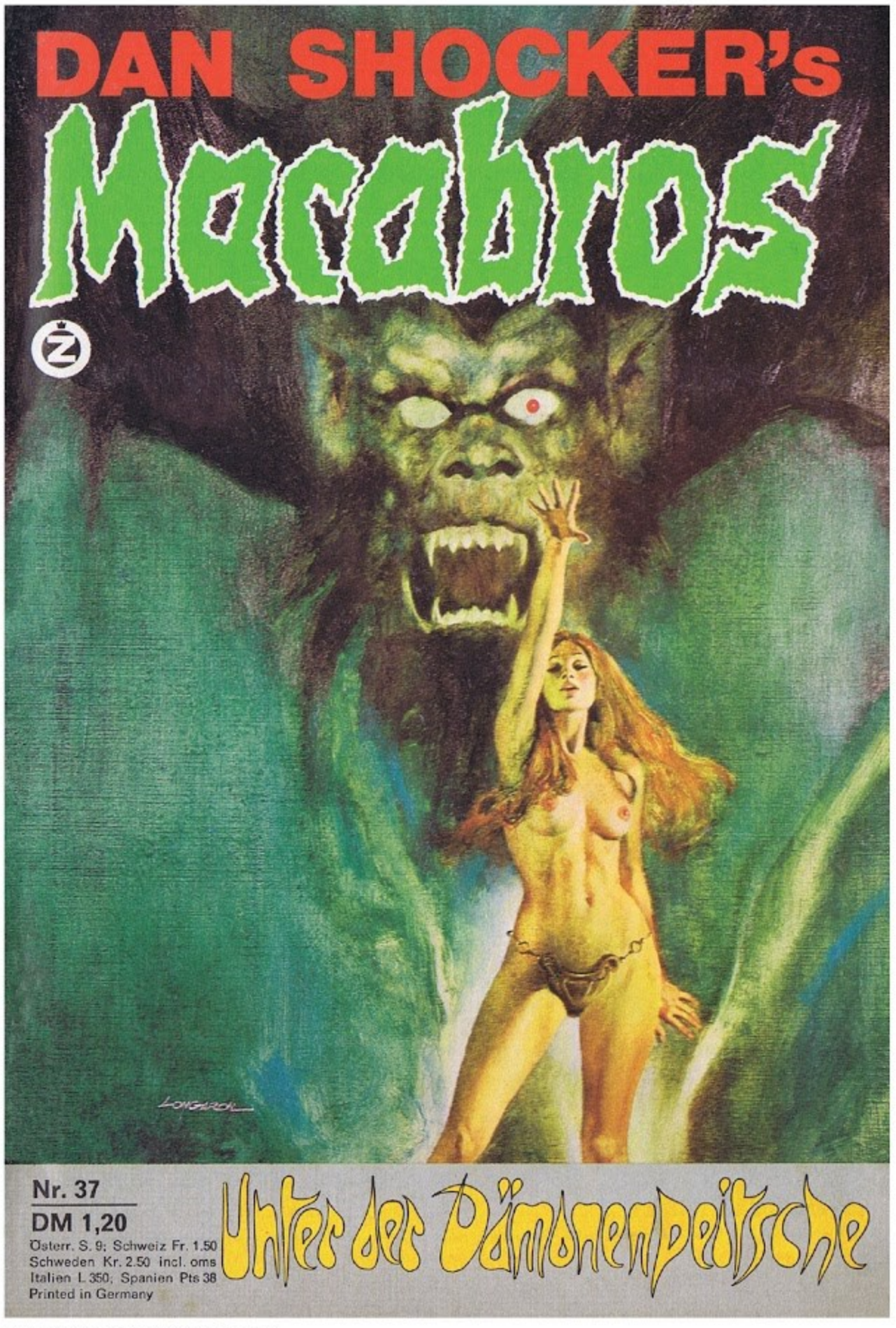
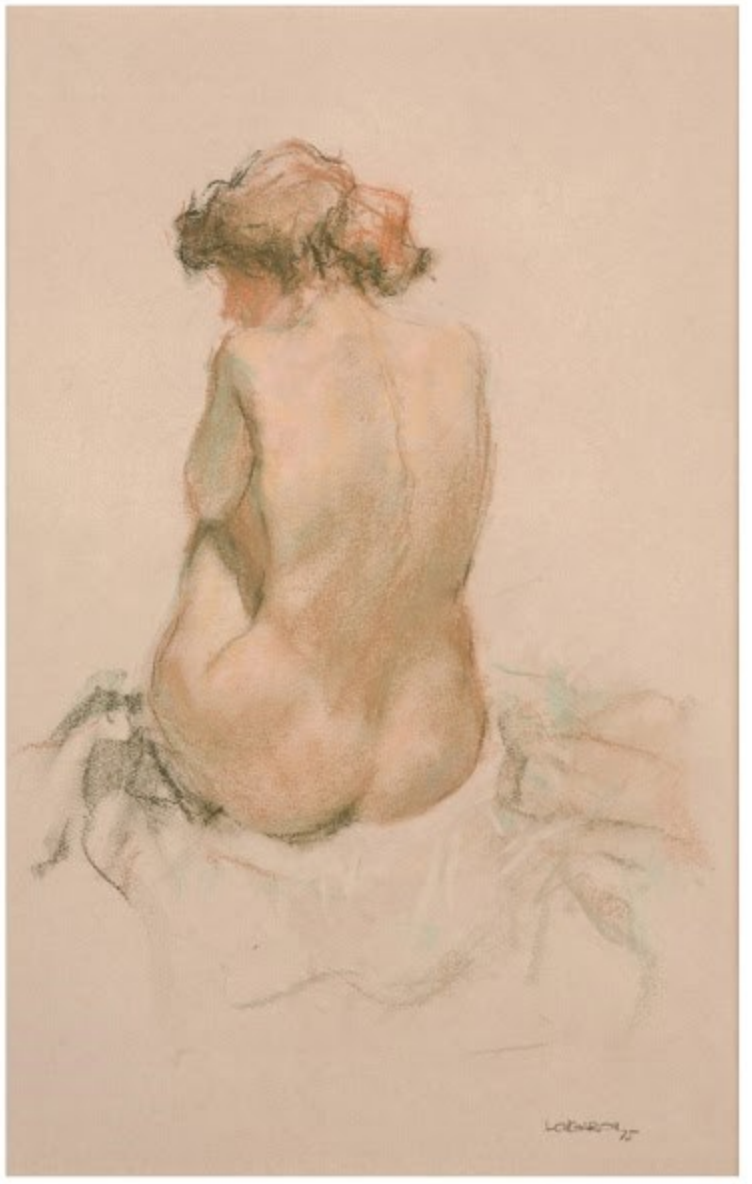
In the immediate aftermath of *Friday Foster,* Longaron painted four covers for Jim Lawrence's *Dark Angel* books, themselves highly inspired by *Friday*. Interestingly, in 1974 he also painted a stunning cover for *Vampirella* 39's "Head Hunter" story, which was inexplicably replaced by an effort by Ken Kelly. The painting was not used until 1976 when the Australian *Vampirella* comic reprinted the strip, and it finally saw print in America in 1981 on *Vampirella* 96, where to add insult to injury it was wrongly credited to Enrich. The cover was Longaron's only work for Warren and his brief connection with *Vampirella* is one of comics tantalizing what-ifs. Elsewhere, his fame from *Friday Foster* inspired the prestigious French magazine *Pilote* to commission three strips from him which were written by Victor Mora. In the late '70s he joined the newly formed Norma agency and was subsequently highly visible in the early days of the Spanish magazine explosion with covers for *Cimoc, Dossier Negro, Bluejeans, Bumerang,* and *Hunter*. Many of these were western-themed paintings and his mastery of the genre also lead to covers for Sphere books in the UK and Signet in America. In 1995 he drew one last strip, *Sherlock Holmes*, adapted by writer Sylvain Ricard and printed in France by Joker and Germany by B&L.

However, as before, the lure of a lengthy book series took Longaron away from comics, though this time the work came from Germany, Scotland, and Italy. The Italian publisher Mondadori seized on the artist's history in romance to make him the regular artist on two titles: *I Romanzi* and *Biblioteca dei Romanzi* resulting in over 200 covers from 1979-1990. Meanwhile, the Scottish publisher DC Thomson regularly published his covers on their long running *Commando* title. On top of these, Longaron was also a prolific artist for numerous German Romanheft pulps for publishers Pabel and Bastei. In Germany his versatility took him from Crime (*Kommisar-X, Franco Solo*) to horror (*Macabros, Spuk Roman,* and *Mark Hellmann*) and westerns (*Western Legenden, Colt 45, Western Hit,* and *Texas Marshall*).

His final cover for *Western Legenden* saw print in 2007 but by that point he had already largely abandoned the commercial art field to concentrate on painting for galleries. In fact, Longaron's first exhibition had taken place in Madrid soon after he left *Friday Foster*, and by 1995 he was exhibiting in America. These more personal works often represented his love of the Catalonian countryside, or the American south, but he also crafted many gorgeous nudes and gentler contemplative studies of lone figures, creating images with a variety of media including oil, watercolor, and pastels.



Macabros 37 (Zauberkreis), 1974.



Nude Study, 1975.

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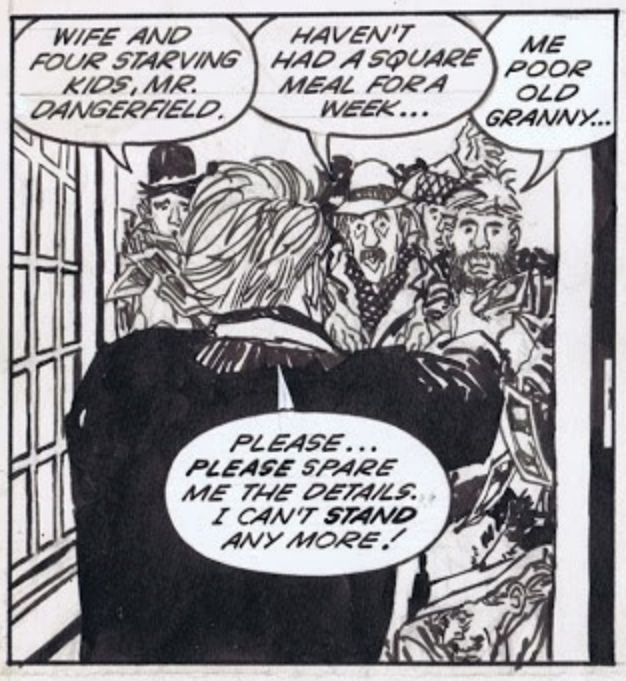

UP FRONT 4/5/8" 9579 VALENTINE 11/4/64

Original artwork from *Valentine*, 11th April, 1964 (Fleetway).

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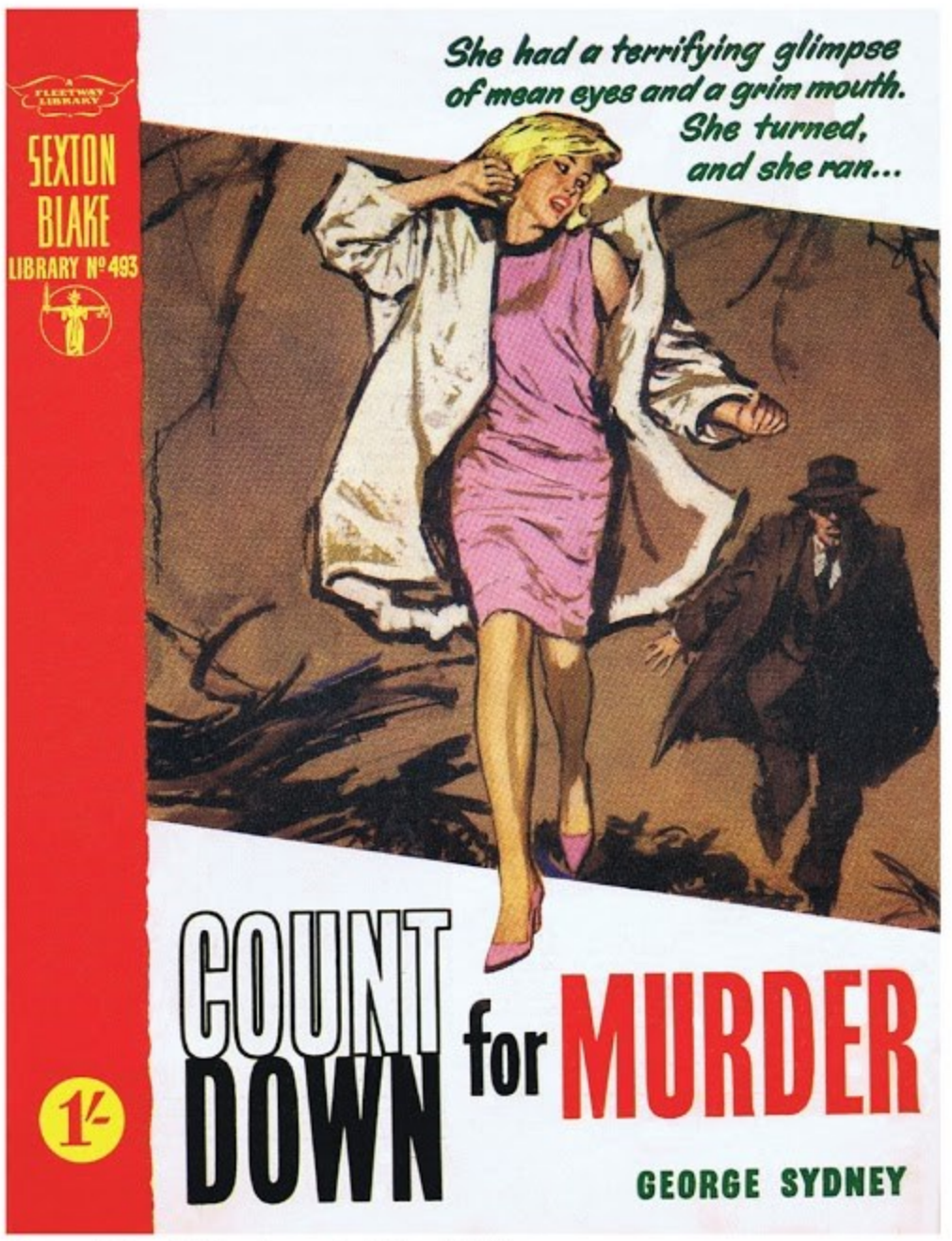
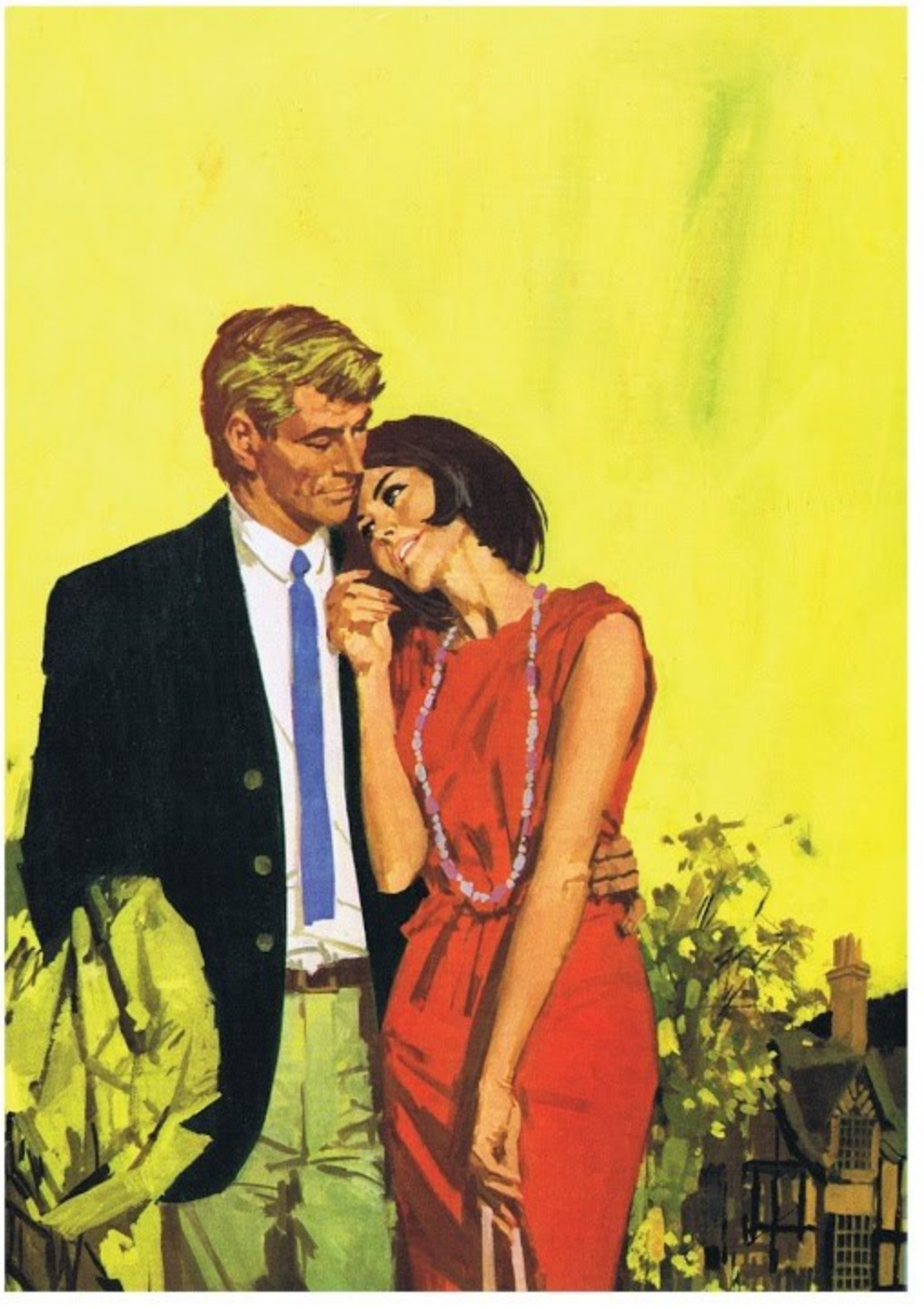


Sexton Blake 493 (Amalgamated Press), 1962.

War Picture Library 135 (Fleetway), 1962. Original cover artwork.



Syndication illustrations for Bardon, 1960s.

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Friday Foster, 15th March 1970 (Chicago Tribune). Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com.

Friday Foster Sunday page, 29th April 1973 (Chicago Tribune). Original artwork courtesy of Benton Jew..

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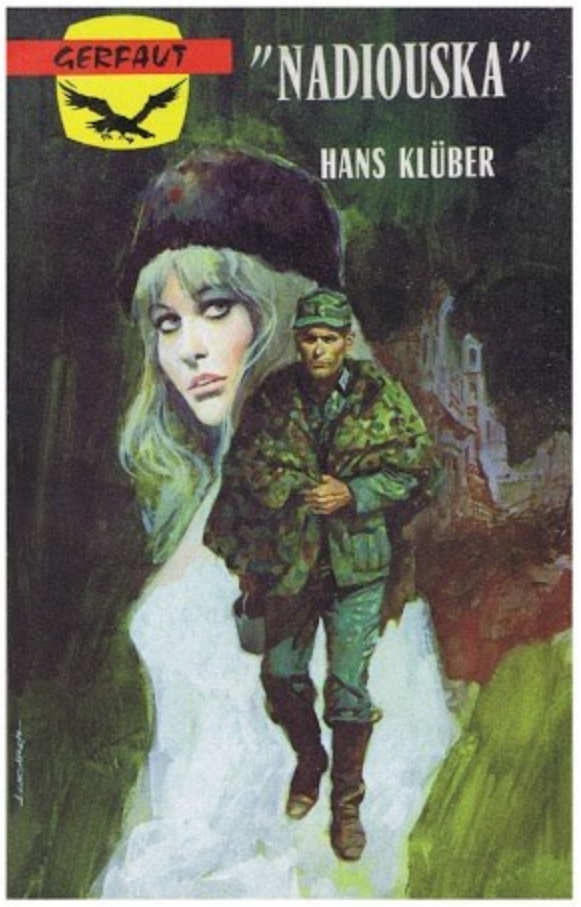

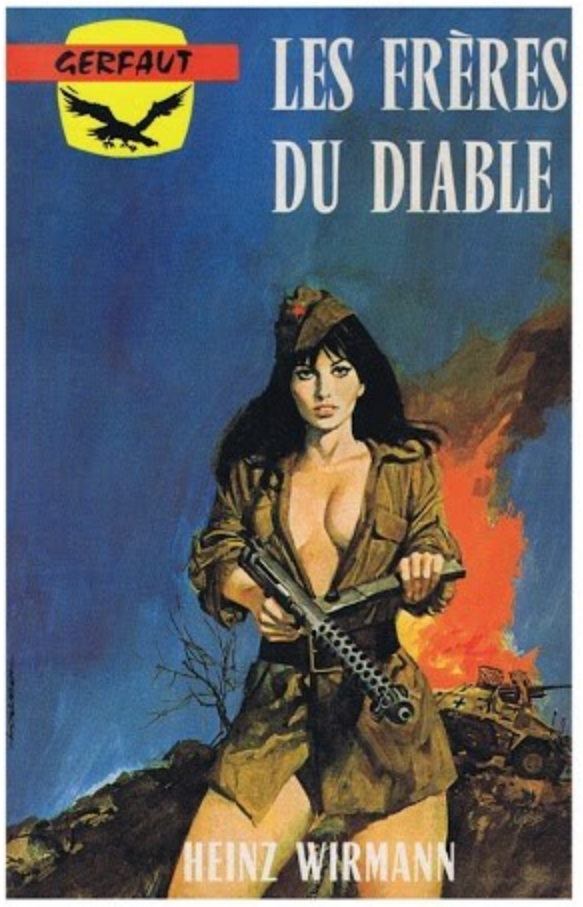

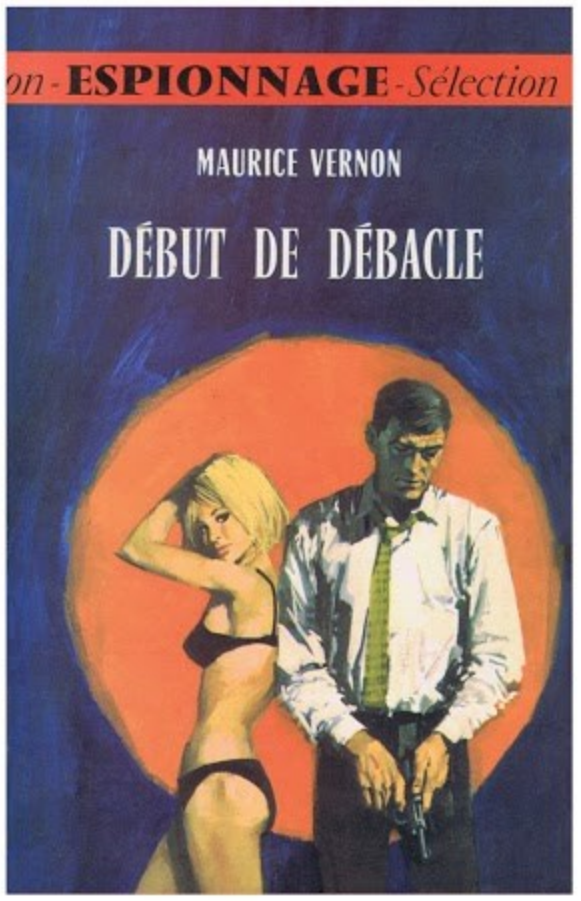

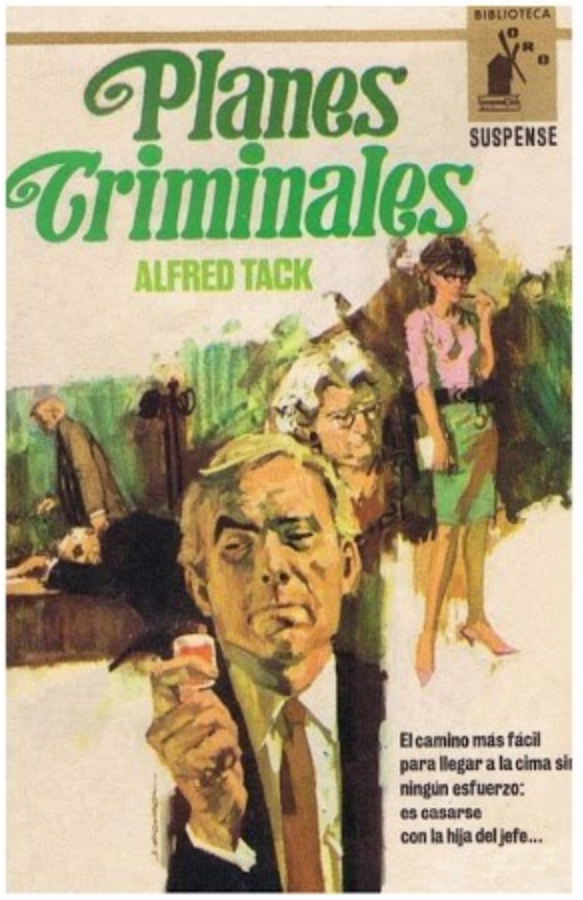

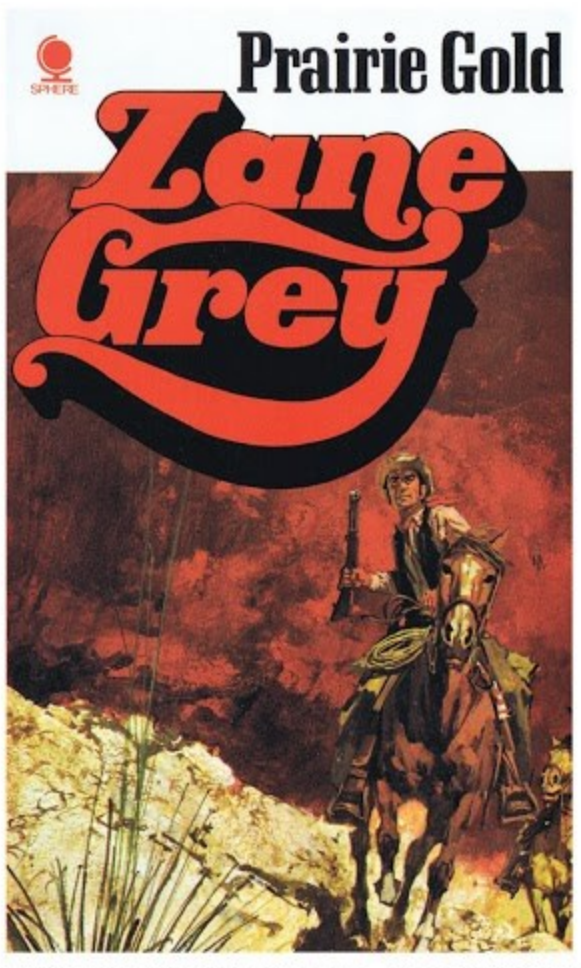

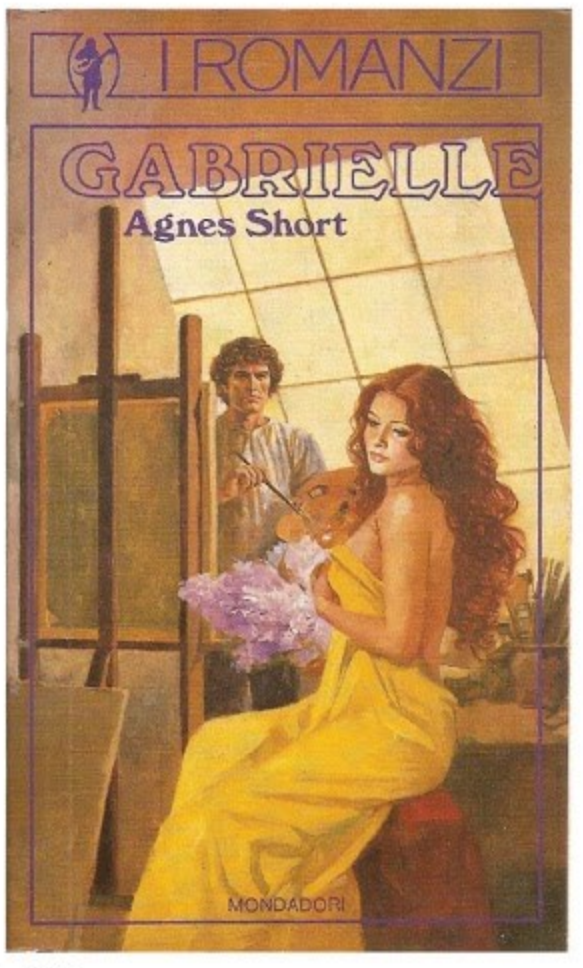

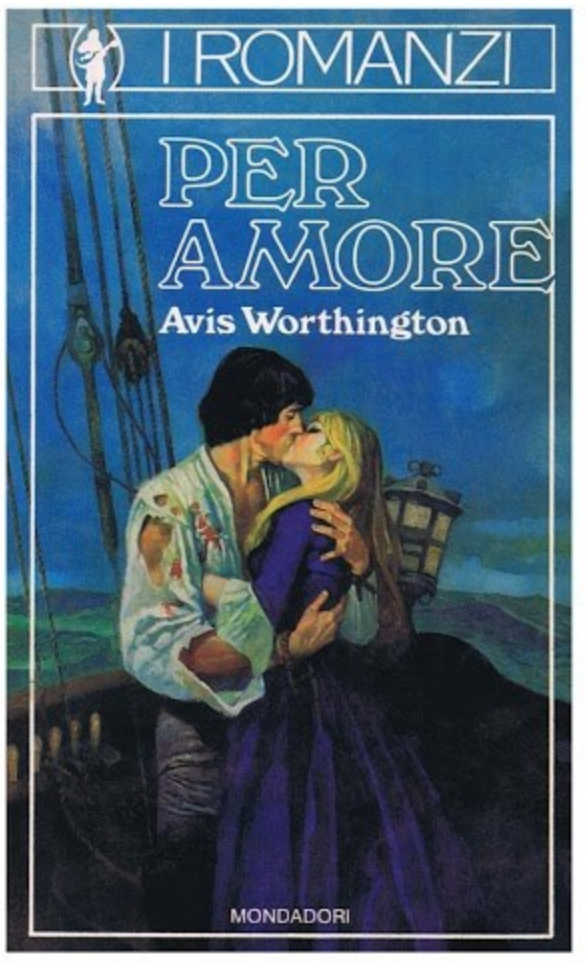

Book covers for France, Spain, UK and Italy, 1967–1982

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Marika (Maria Del Carmen Vila Migueloa) *B. 1949*

Syndication illustrations for S.I., 1970s. Original artwork courtesy of Marika.

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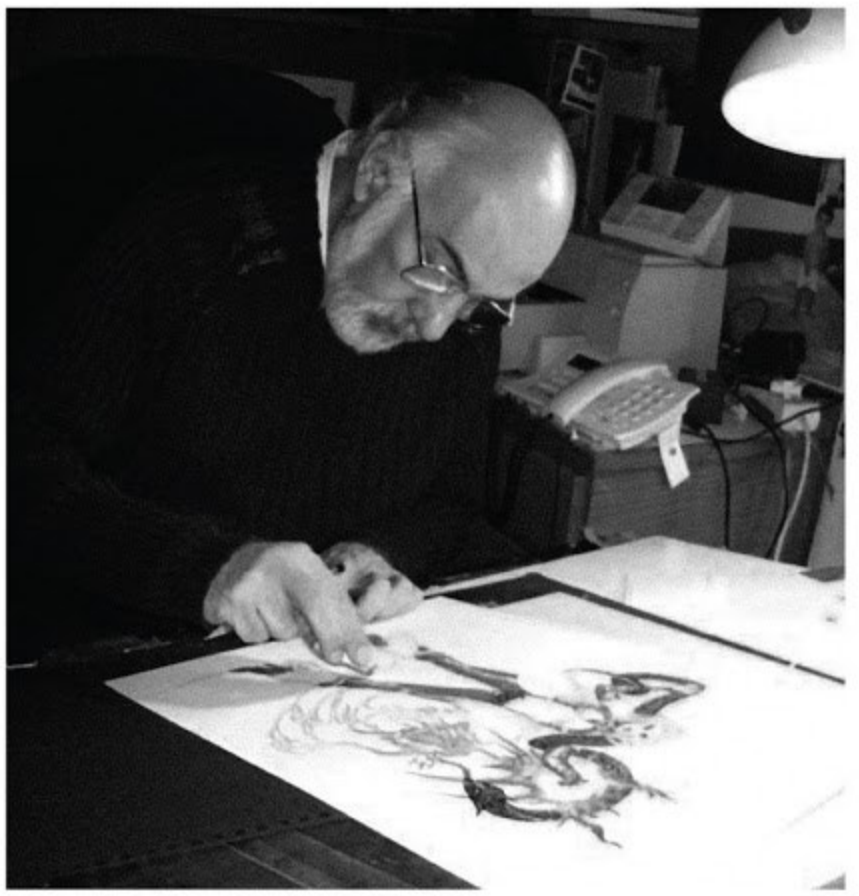
Esteban Maroto B. 1942



Esteban Maroto grew up in Madrid where, after becoming orphaned at the age of five, he sought escapism through books and his brother's *Flash Gordon* comics. He trained as an engineer but the love of drawing was too strong and he joined the studio of artist Manuel Lopez Blanco. Having served his apprenticeship, he earned his first solo assignment in 1962, resulting in 40 instalments of the medieval strip *El Principe de Rodas* for Editorial Maga. After completing his military service as a parachutist, he was approached by Josép Toutain and joined S.I. in Barcelona. Through the agency he picked up assignments from France, Scandinavia, and the UK before drawing four episodes of the western strip *Amargo*, his first creation. At this point, Maroto's career split into two distinct directions: romance comics for the UK and increasingly imaginative strips for the rest of Europe. His first British work was for *Juliette* and *Boyfriend* in 1966, then the following year he became a regular artist on Mirabelle's *See You at Sam's* strip. By 1968 he had become one of the top romance artists in the market drawing strips for *Romeo, Jackie, Valentine, Mandy, Diana, Oh Boy, Mates*, and *Blue Jeans*. He is known to have drawn at least 75 strips, several serials (including the outstanding *Private War of Nicola Brown* for *Romeo*) and numerous illustrations in a British career that stretched until 1978.

Serie Negra Mysterio 7 (editorial de Bolsillo). Image courtesy of Esteban Maroto.

By contrast, in Spain Maroto joined with a group of free thinking S.I. artists in the village of la Floresta where he oversaw a number of group projects starting with *Roy Tiger* for the German publisher Bastei. *Roy Tiger,* set in India, first appeared in the *Lasso* and *Wastl* comics and was syndicated in 1967 by Studio Ortega. The following year, Maroto and his collective (including Luis Garcia, Suso, Adolfo Usero, and Ramon Torrents) produced the extravagantly beautiful science fiction strip *5 x Infinity* which appeared in Spain in *Delta 99* issues 1-20, but was also a hit around the world. In 1971 Maroto teamed up with writer Luis Vigil for a dozen episodes of the sword and sorcery strip *Wolff* for Buru-Lan's *Dracula* magazine which set the template for much of his career to come; the strip mixed exotic fantasy with baroque, academic drawing, and glamorous women. He followed this up in 1972 with yet another fantasy strip, *Alma de Dragon*, which was serialized in *Trinca*. But by that point he had already become a star in America.

When S.I.'s artists started working for Warren Publications in 1971 Maroto was one of the first to become a fan favorite and for many readers his style came to personify Spanish art. In his first year at Warren he drew a number of exquisite fantasy strips for *Vampirella* including "Wolf Hunt" and the stunning five-part *Tomb of the Gods* (his response to French strips like *Barbarella* and *Jodelle*). Jim Warren had been so impressed by *Wolff* that he asked Maroto to create something similar for him, which resulted in the equally impressive *Manly* (rechristened *Dax* by Warren) which was initially intended for *Vampirella* but was serialized across 12 issues of *Eerie* in 1972 and 73. Over the next few years the artist's extraordinary output saw him conquer markets around the world. For Marvel he drew three of his finest strips: *Satanna* and "The Drifting Snow" (in *Vampire Tales* 3 and 4, 1973) and *Red Sonja* (In *Savage Sword of Conan* 1, 1974). In 1974, he also created two more strips for syndication; the pirate feature *Captain Terror* and the science fiction *Cosmos Crew*, both of which appeared in the German comic *Primo*.

Maroto was always adept at creating striking images so he made the transition to cover artist with ease. His powerful illustrations appeared on such Spanish comics as *Terror Graffico, Macabro, Historieta, Dossier Negro, Bumerang,* and *Cimoc*, along with *Serie Negra* paperbacks. Meanwhile, for the German market, he created book covers for Pabel, Heyne, and Moewig, along with Romanheft pulps such as *Kung Fu Western, Gespenster Krimi, Fledermaus,* and *Macabros.*

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In his decade long career at Warren, Maroto drew 101 strips including series such as *Dracula* for *Vampirella* and *Idi Amin* for *1984*, making him the company's second most prolific artist. In 1976, he was the first artist to be profiled in Toutain's *Cuando el Comic es Arte* series, reflecting his immense popularity; but after this he increasingly turned to painting, inspired by his good friend Enrich. His first American covers had appeared in the pulp *Fantastic* (in 1973 and 74) and a few years later he was regularly working for Dell, Avon, Playboy, and Del Rey. In 1978 he was one of several S.I. artists to join up with Ace for a series of illustrated books, with his pen and ink drawings appearing in eight titles over the next three years, four of them featuring Conan. Ace also made great use of his painting ability on a number of paperbacks including Edgar Rice Burroughs' Venus series. Maroto's love of fantasy and imagination made him a natural for the burgeoning portfolio and print market where he produced images for heritage, Earth-Art Graphics (*Heroes of Mythology* in 197) and SQP, along with a series of art nouveau-inspired Zodiac prints.

In the '80s he was an occasional presence in Spanish magazines such as *Creepy, Rambla*, and *Zona 84* but perhaps suffered by not being associated with any specific characters. His work was far more visible in Germany where he created a vast body of work through the Norma and Interpubli agencies. His Romanheft commissions included 12 covers for *Damona King*, 11 for Mitternacht's *Roman*, 21 for *Professor Zamorra,* and work for *Gaslicht*, John Sinclair, Lassiter,

Khaleesi. Commission drawing, 2015.
Original artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto

Mad Fear (Gredown), 1983. Image courtesy Daniel Best.

and Tony Ballard. In this period he also painted 20 covers for Egmont's *Masters of the Universe* magazine and artwork for Random House's *Thundercats* books.

Then, uniquely among Spain's Golden generation, he came back to American comics. The first of this second wave of comics work came from DC Comics: *Amethyst* (in 1986–87), *Atlantis Chronicles* (1990), and *Zatanna* (1993). That output was followed by work for Topps Comics including *Dracula: Vlad the Imapler, Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, and *Lady Rawhide*. Maroto artwork could also be found in *Heavy Metal, Verotik, Cross Gen Chronicles*, and Marvel, (*Conan, Red Sonja* and the *X-Men*). Tastes had changed but Maroto's attractive romanticism still resonated given the right strip. In 1998 he joined many of his old colleagues at the Italian publisher Bonelli, drawing 20 issues of *Brendon* and two chapters of *Dampyr*. He was also a regular guest in *Lancio Story* drawing 11 strips for them in 1999.

In the digital era Maroto has reconnected with his many fans around the world and found an audience eager to commission new illustrations. Along with the many recent drawings of Vampirella and Red Sonja are exquisite pieces featuring characters from fairy tales and *Game of Thrones*. He has had several books devoted his artwork including *Xotica* from SQP, Urania from NBM, *Wonders* from Norma, and the French *Maroto Sketchbook*. More recent projects have been a pair of beautifully crafted comic albums for the Spanish publisher Planeta: *Las Leyendas de San Jorge* in 2015 and *Cthulhu* in 2016. Famously, in 1971, he won America's ACBA foreign artist of the year award and in 2011 the friends of Spanish Comics presented him with a lifetime achievement award.

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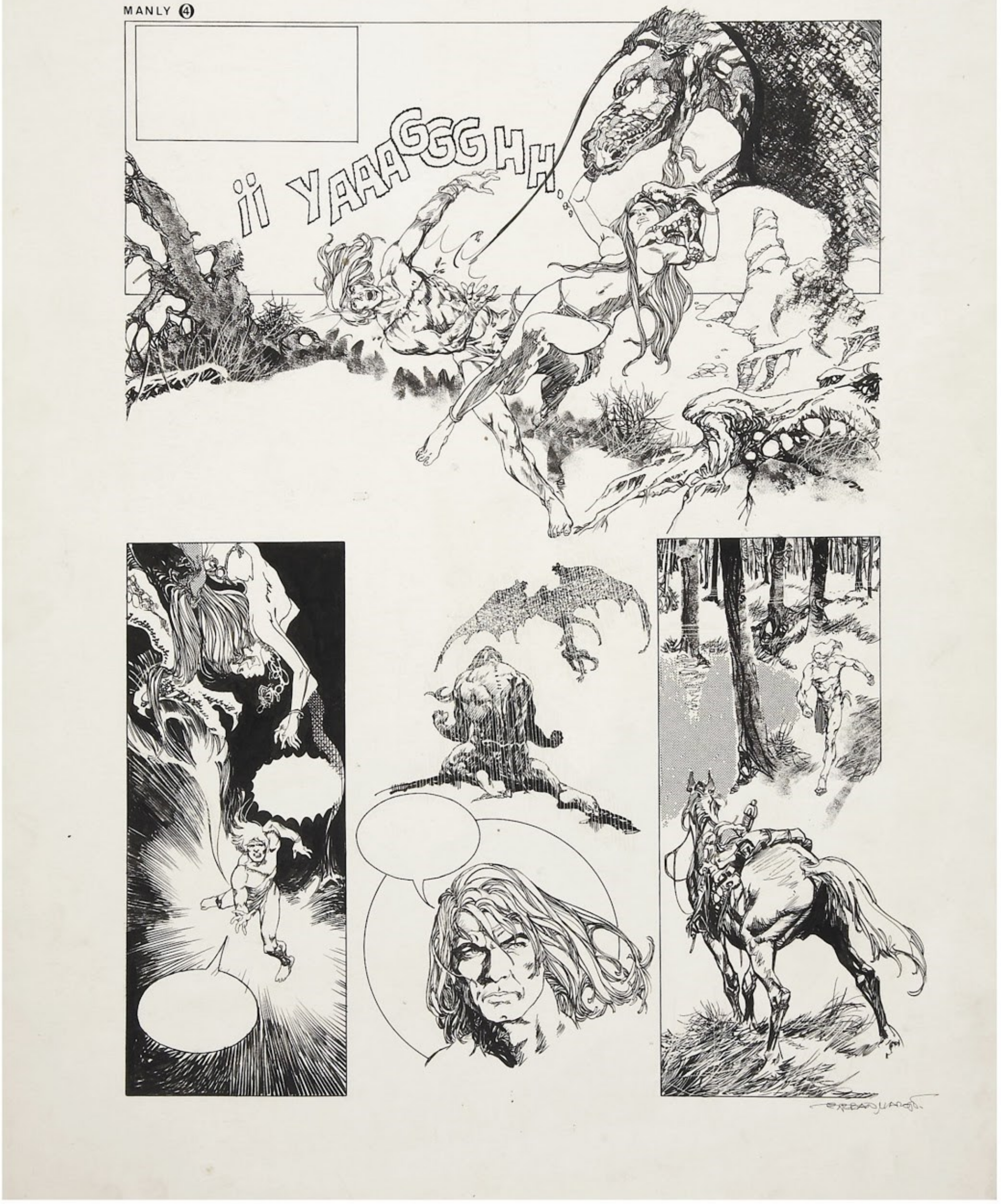

Manly/Dax episode 4. *Eerie 43* (Warren), 1972. Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com.

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FLYING SAUCERS AND BUG-EYED MONSTERS?..THE STUFF OF WHICH BAD COMIC BOOKS ARE MADE! BUT ONE YOUNG MAN REALLY GOT INTO IT ALL...UNTIL HE FOUND HIMSELF DESPERATELY SEEKING AN ESCAPE FROM ESCAPIST LITERATURE! JUST LOOK...

LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE!

WHERE AM I? FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN RUNNING THROUGH THIS MEADOW MY WHOLE LIFE! NOTHING AROUND HERE SEEMS REAL!

THE PERFECT BLUE SKY! THE SURREALISTIC SCENERY! THE VIVID COLORS! IT'S LIKE I WAS HIGH ON DRUGS!

BUT I HAVEN'T TOUCHED DRUGS FOR YEARS-- NOT SINCE I JOINED THE REVOLUTION!

JUST THEN...

WHA-? THAT LOOKS LIKE A FLYING SAUCER!

...OR RATHER, THE FLYING SAUCERS YOU SEE IN COMIC BOOKS!

COMIC BOOK! THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHAT ALL THE STUFF AROUND HERE LOOKS LIKE! THE STUFF YOU SEE IN COMIC BOOKS!

IT'S ALMOST LIKE I'VE ENDED UP TRAPPED IN A COMIC BOOK STORY OF SOME SORT!

ART BY: MORROW
STORY BY: STEVE SKEATES

EERIE #36 TITLE: Look What They've Done

67% Contents 52%

P33

PAGE No# 1

Original artwork from *Eerie 36* (Warren), 1971.

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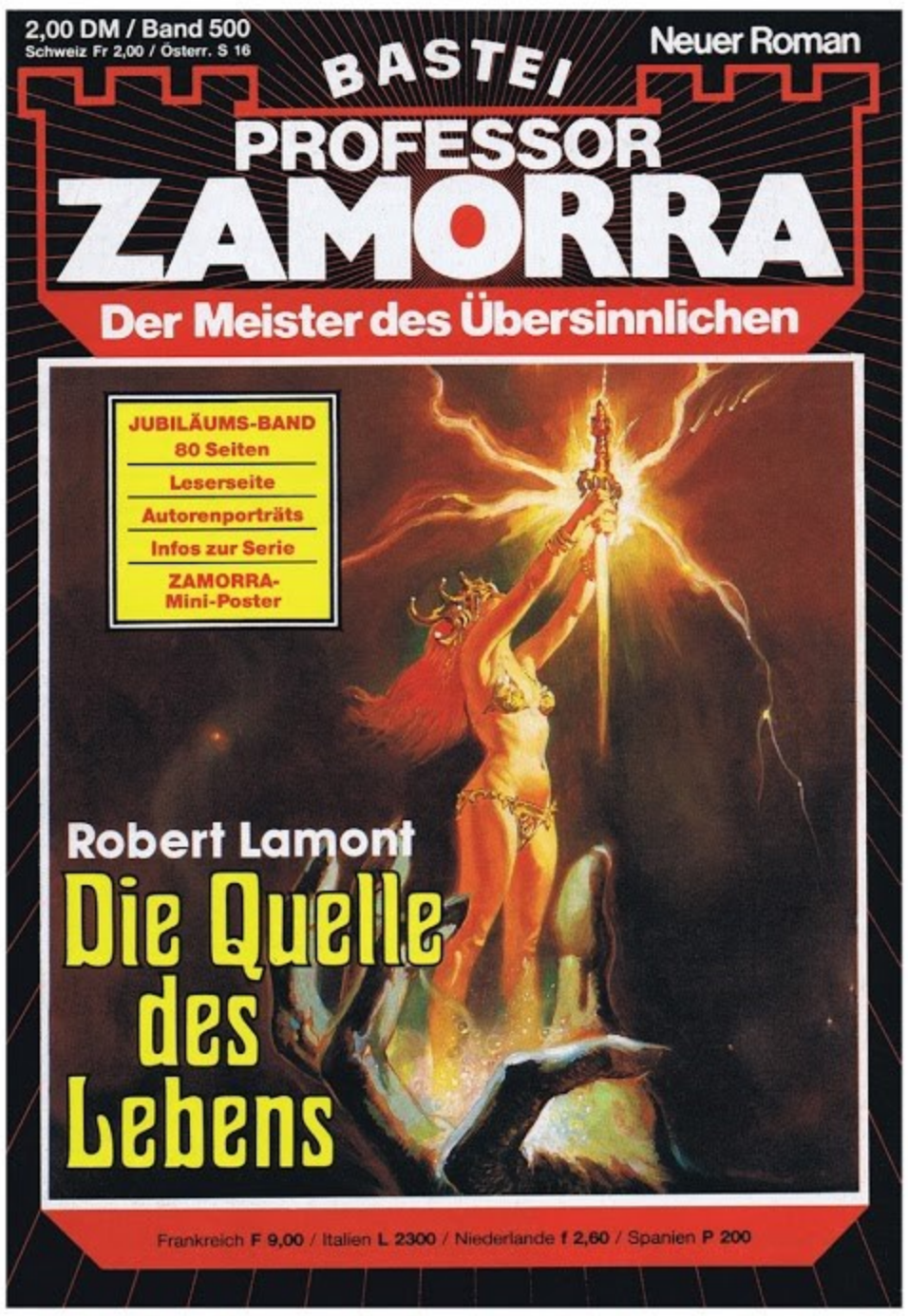
Terror Graffico 1 (Ursus), 1972.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto.

Professor Zamorra 606 (Bastei), 1998.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto

Terror Graffico 2 (Ursus), 1972.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto.



Professor Zamorra 500 (Bastei), 1993.

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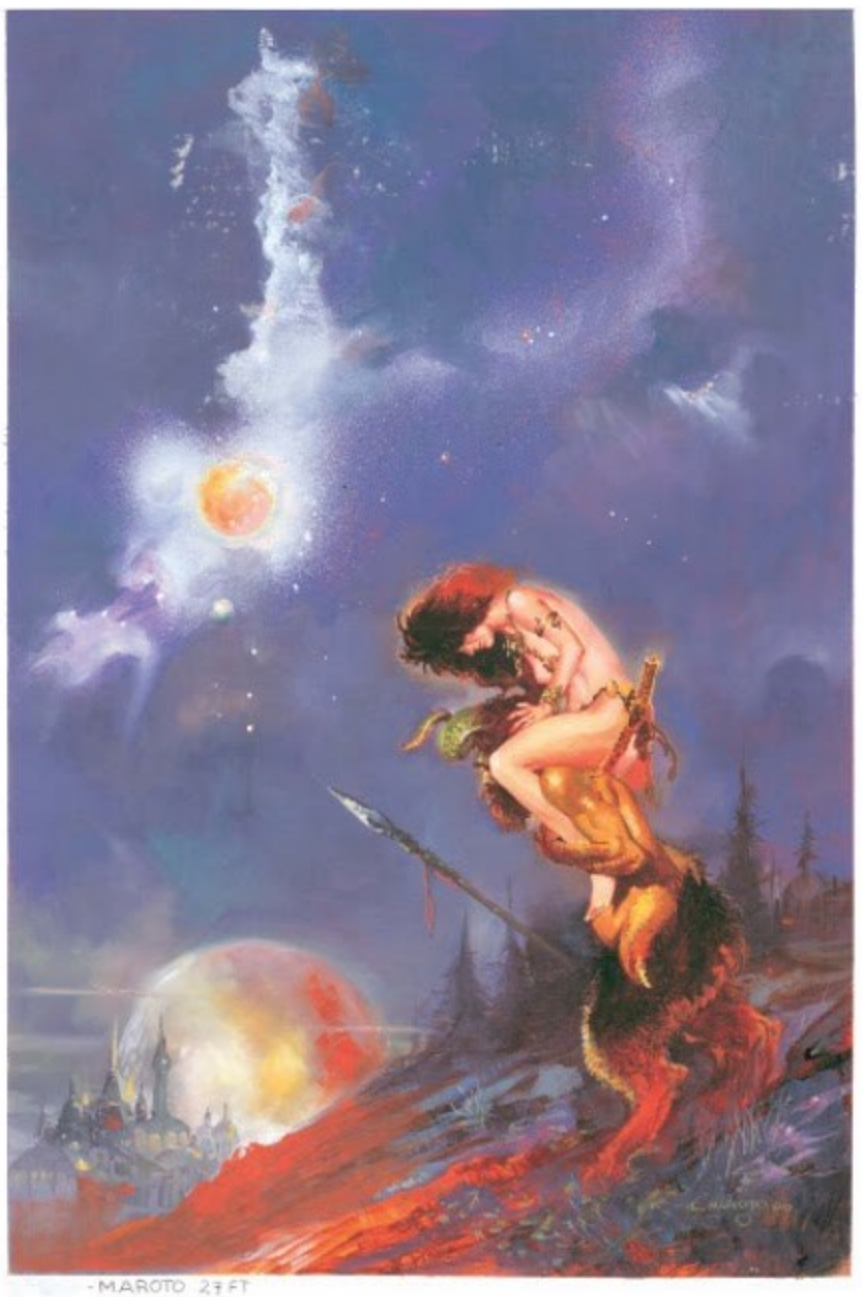
Red Sonja. Original artwork courtesy Heritage HA.com.

Professor Zamorra 612 (Bastei), 1998.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto.



Moewig Science Fiction, 3502 (Moewig), 1980.
Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

Damona King 73 (Bastei), 1982.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Esteban Maroto

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Félix Mas B. 1935

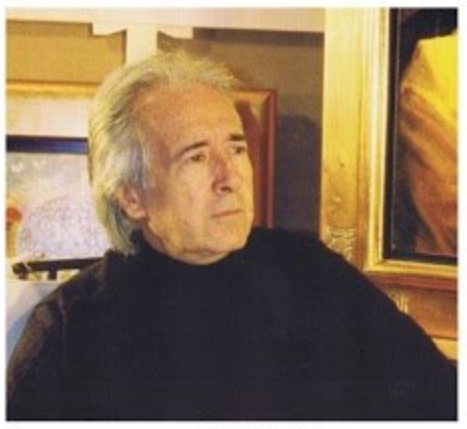


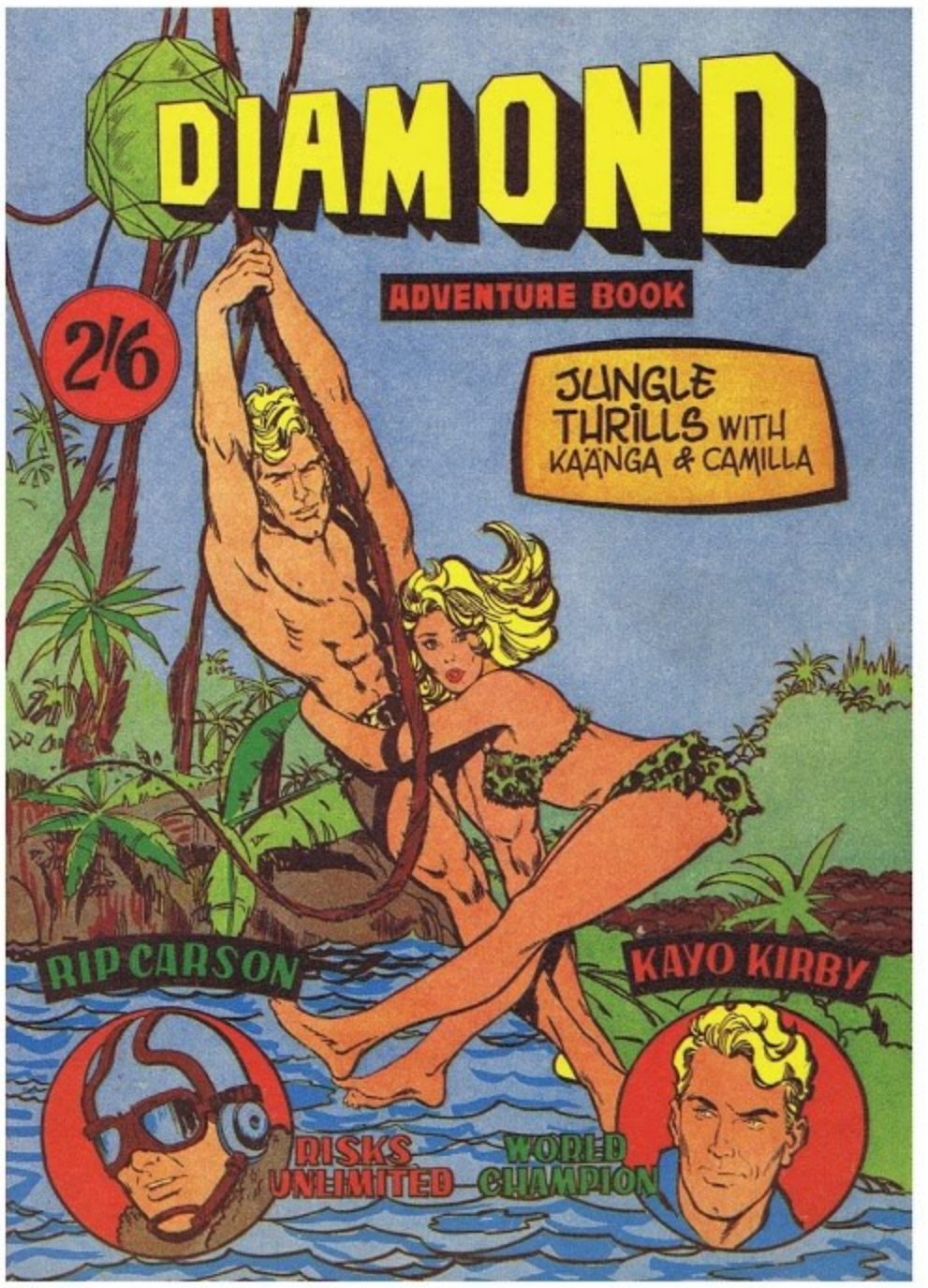
Photo courtesy of Félix Mas.

Félix Mas was born in Barcelona and trained at the Artes y Oficios and later at the Escuela Superior de San Jorge. His artistic education was further developed by extensive travel in Europe and the United States before returning to his home town to work as an illustrator and designer. After doing his military service he joined S.I. in 1957 where his earliest work was for syndication, the French market, and for Editorial Toray. In 1961 he started drawing romance strips for the UK where he would continue to work for the next 10 years. Initially most of his commissions were for the Fleetway titles *Valentine, Roxy,* and *Marilyn*, but from 1966 on he increasingly focused on strips for the DC Thomson comics *Romeo* and *Jackie*. Altogether, Mas drew over 150 individual romance strips and nine serials, along with strips for *Bunty, Love Story,* and *Diana* and covers for the British publisher Atlas. Throughout this period he also created some of his earliest paintings for womens' magazines in Scandinavia.

His works as a painter were fist exhibited in a group exhibition at the Galeria Jaimes, Barcelona. He continued to exhibit in Spain until 1974 when following a visit to Venezuela on the occasion of his first one-man show he decided to settle in Caracas where he lived for six years. Prior to this he had spent three years drawing for Warren where he crafted 17 exquisite strips for *Vampirella* and *Creepy*, a run that was cut short by his move to Venezuela. Once there, however, he took advantage of his proximity to America where he eventually became represented by several galleries, regularly exhibiting at art fairs in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. His artistic connection with the Spanish peninsula was renewed when he was invited to Exhibit in Barcelona, Valencia and Malaga as well as Lisbon in Portugal. As a result Mas now divides his time between Europe and the U.S.

Mas wrote: A Long time ago when I was young, a neighbor saw my mother in the market and they started to talk. My mother mentioned that I loved to draw comics and it turned out that my neighbor's son drew them as well, in a studio. The son was José María Miralles and he took me along to meet Josép Toutain at S.I.; the man who created the miracle of a strong comic community. When we started working for *Valentine*, the first magazine to print our work, one group of friends went to England. Miralles, Pretonius, and I also started painting covers for novels. I always loved adventure and I am transported back to that time when I think back to when I was living in England. I lived in a house called Hilingdon near the airport for two beautiful years.

I returned to Barcelona and continued working for Toutain until making another journey to Caracas to organize an exhibition of my work. There I worked in comics and painted on a journey that lasted for six years. When I was drawing comics it was the time of my life when I was most romantic. But comics started me on a path to painting. Thinking back to all the hours that I passed with paper, pen, pencil, and Chinese ink I have to say "Thanks Toutain", with love!



Diamond Adventure Book (Atlas), 1963.

Primavera, 2006. Image courtesy of Félix Mas.

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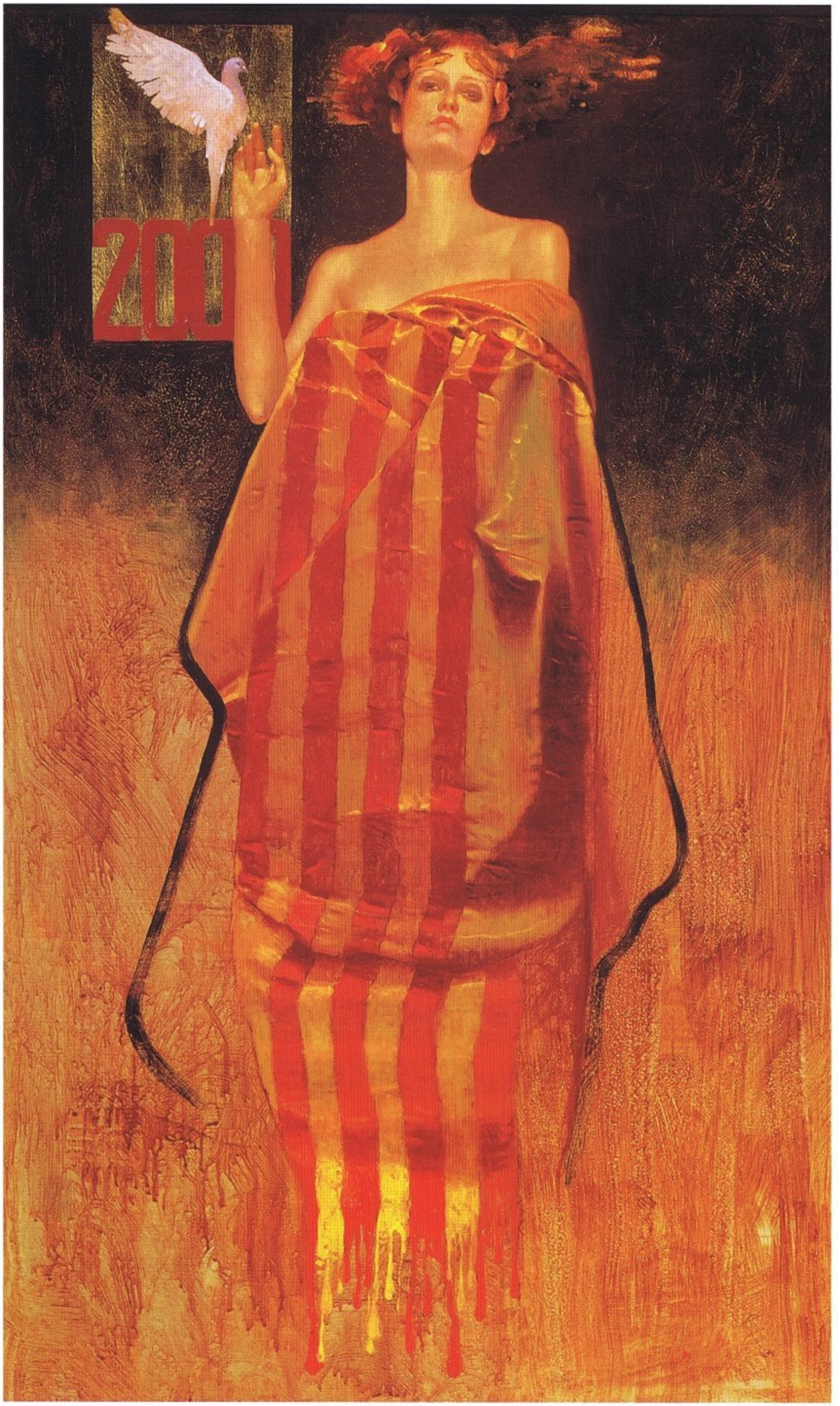

Lagrimas De Sangre, 2000. Image courtesy of Félix Mas.

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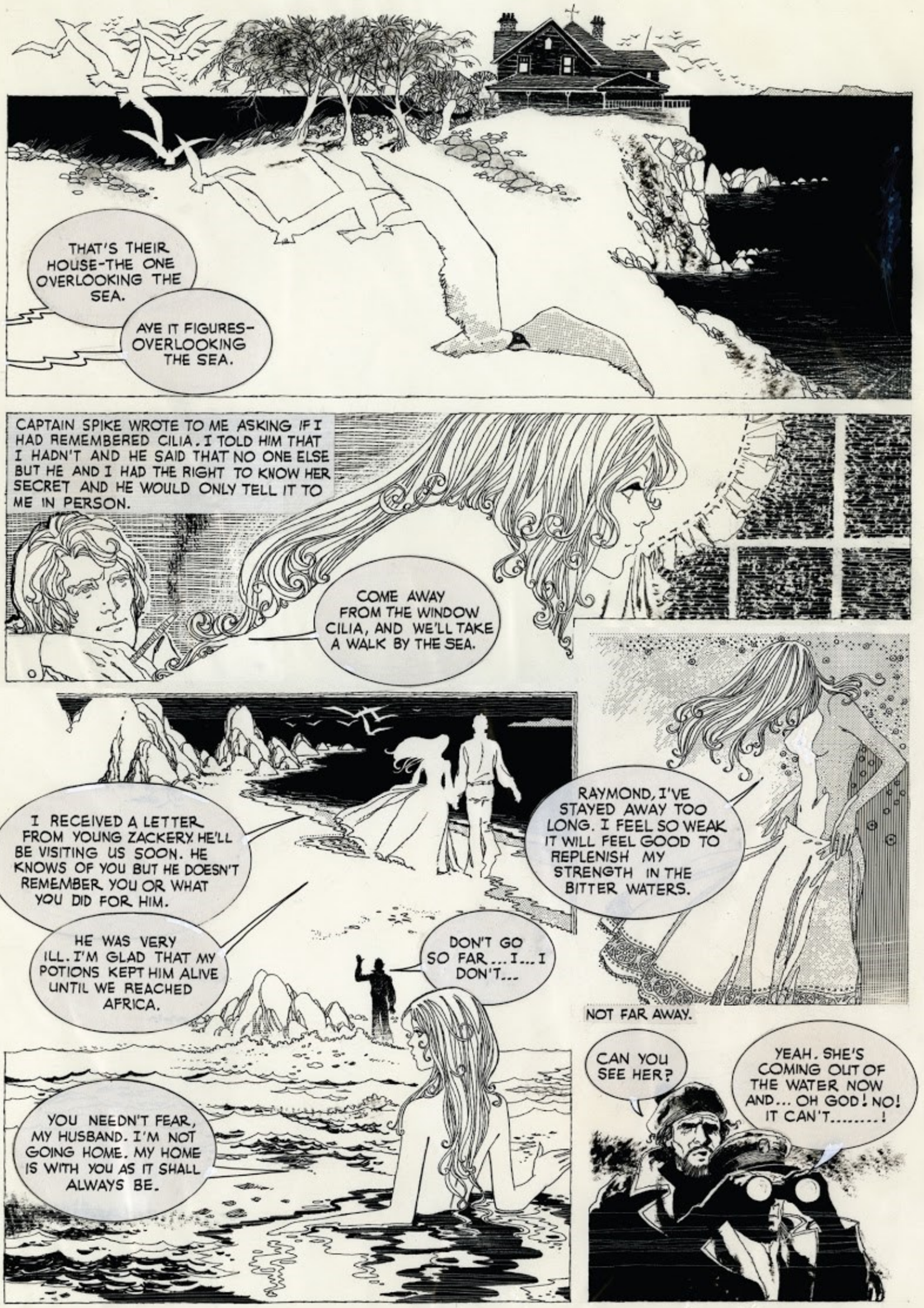
PAG 3. "CILIA"



Original artwork from *Vampirella 16* (Warren), 1972.

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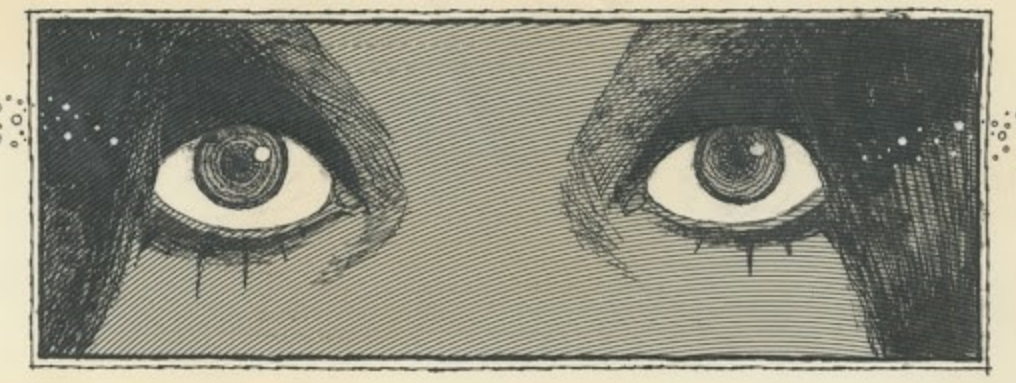
THE VAMPIRESS STALKS
THE CASTLE THIS NIGHT.
"WARREN" (VAMPIRELLA). — PAG. (4)

THERE IS ONE OTHER CREATURE STIRRING THIS NIGHT.



HER NAME IS CHRISTINA GREYSTONE.

NOW SHE AWAKENS TO ANOTHER NIGHT OF SEEKING NOCTURNAL PREY.

LITHE, SEDUCTIVE, IN THE FAINT MOONLIGHT, SHE APPEARS MUCH AS SHE DID WHEN LIFE PULSED THROUGH HER VEINS.

SHE MOVES TO ONE OF THE ANCIENT WINDOWS, BARELY REMEMBERING HER PAST, CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE PRESENT; AND THE PRESENT REVEALS TWO FRAIL DARK FORMS MOVING THROUGH THE TREES TOWARD HER DOMAIN.

Original artwork from *Vampirella 21* (Warren), 1972.

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PAG. 4 - "PURE AS SNOW"

THE BOY'S THOUGHTS ***RAMBLED!*** THE WIND OUTSIDE WAS LIKE A CHORUS OF ANGRY ***ACCUSERS!*** AND THE GIRL LAY SILENT, UNABLE TO ***DEFEND*** HIM.'

SHE SEEMED MORE ***BEAUTIFUL*** THAN BEFORE!

EXHAUSTED, HIS FOREHEAD STEAMY WITH ***FEVER,*** HE FINALLY LAY DOWN TO SLEEP.'

BUT THE SNOW SKITTERING AGAINST THE WINDOW KEPT HIM ***AWAKE!*** IN THE DWINDLING FIRELIGHT HE COULD SEE HER BODY'S GREY, FLICKERING ***SHADOW*** ON THE WALL!

SLEEP BROUGHT HIM ***NO RELEASE.'***

AT LAST HE CRAWLED ACROSS THE ROOM TO HER SIDE, DRAWN BY A MIXTURE OF ***LONELINESS, FEVER*** AND ***DESIRE!***

MY ***DARLING...***

MURDERER! GET YOUR HOT FILTHY HANDS OFF HER.'

WHEN HE AWOKE, ***ANOTHER*** NIGHTMARE BEGAN.'

MY ***GOD!***

PURE AS SNOW - 4

Original artwork from *Vampirella 35* (Warren), 1974.

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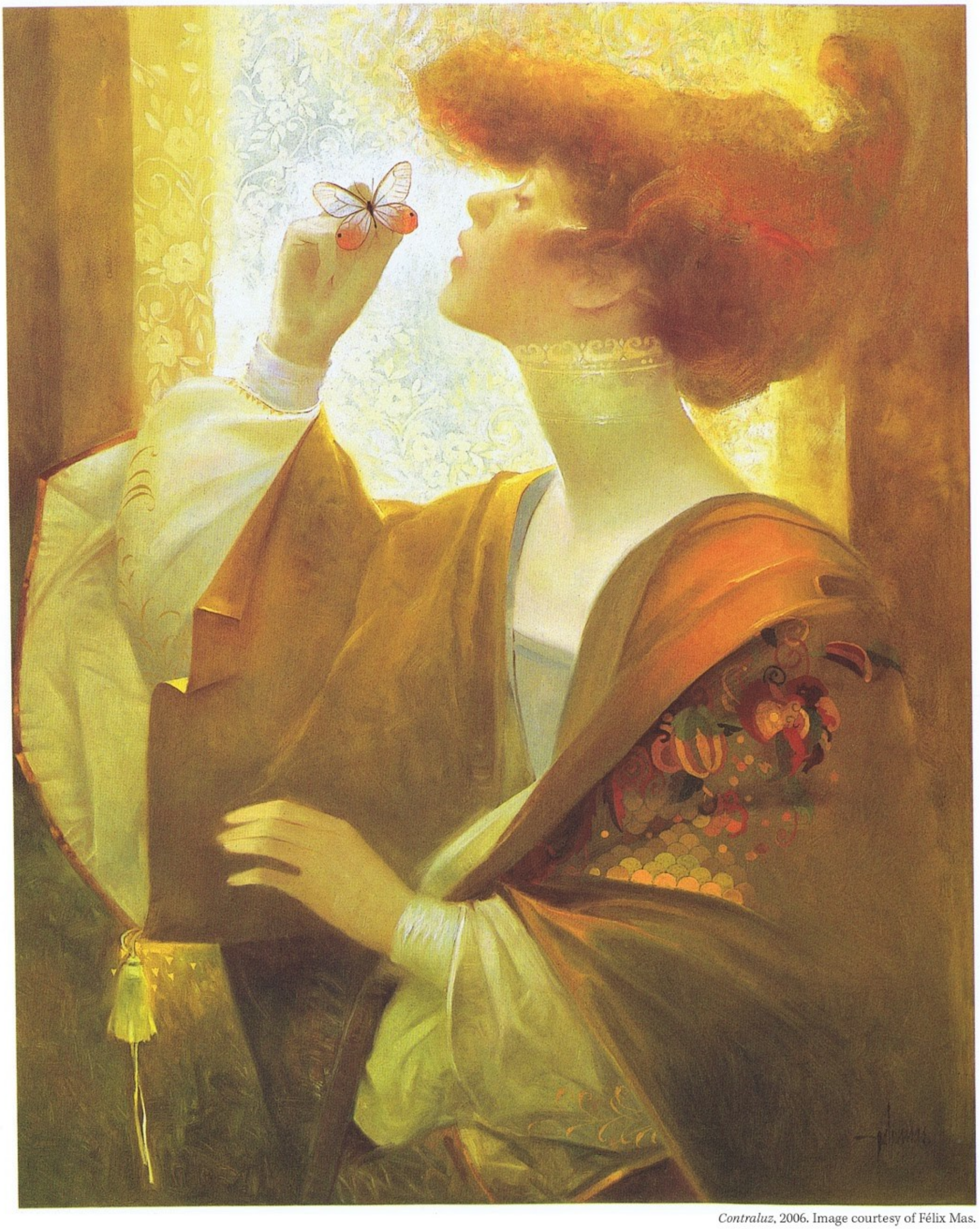

Contraluz, 2006. Image courtesy of Félix Mas.

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José María Miralles B. 1937

Photo courtesy of Marcel Miralles.

Syndication illustration for S.I., 1967.

My brother José María Miralles studied drawing, but you could say he was self-taught. I remember the Sunday visits to the San Antonio market in Barcelona where we went to buy Argentine magazines like *Patoruzu*, Sunday supplements, and the wonderful *Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, Redbook*, and *Colliers* back issues that sporadically popped up in the stalls. His idol was (like many others) Alex Raymond for his *Flash Gordon* and *Rip Kirby* strips. He was also inspired by Milton Caniff, Frank Robbins, Harold Foster, Jose Luis Salinas, etc. and in the world of illustration Bob Peak, Bernie Fuchs, Joe Bowler, Frank McCarthy, and Norman Rockwell, among others.

José Maria first met Josép Toutain in 1953, when he began to gather cartoonists to form what would later become Selecciones Illustradas. He was the third member of the studio after Lopez Espi and Francisco Cueto. His earliest works there were for France; Artima, and others, and soon after that came the big jump into the English market. Between 1957 and 1965, José Maria drew almost 150 romance strips and four series for Fleetway titles such as *Valentine, Marilyn, Roxy,* and a new magazine called *Serenade* which was notable for its color covers. In the latter half of the '60s he turned to painting, with his covers appearing on *Love Story, True Life, Pop Pic Library*, and *Star Love* and story illustrations in *Jackie* and *Boyfriend*.

José Maria was one of the first cartoonists who was also confident working in color. Toutain wanted to create (perhaps forced by circumstances) a group of illustrators capable of working in color for the book and magazine markets. Among the veterans he used were Longarón, Cortiella, Brea, Badia Camps, Lozano Olivares, and others. Noiquet appeared later as did Sundquist. Some moved away from S.I. and showing the need for new blood, José Maria stepped up along with Fernandez, Domingo, Prunés, and Petronius (known by his real name Joan Martí in the world of gallery painting). They specialized in covers for what was called Syndication. My brother worked throughout Europe: Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, France; mostly painting covers for romantic novels and serials in Scandinavian magazines. In Spain, he created a number of marvelous images for Molino's *Biblioteca Oro* paperback series and Bruguera's *Corin Tellado* romances.

José Maria was developing a very loose style, and with great sensitivity. The zenith was reached in 1970, with a collection of children's books scripted by Mariano Hispano, called *The Old Man and the Child* for Editorial Rollán. Unfortunately, the publisher was careless, the originals were lost, and the book went largely unnoticed. Later in the '70s he also painted color illustrations for a number of educational children's books for Ediciones AFHA, Including Hombrecitos (Little Men), Ciencia y Aventura (with Fernandez), Quintin Durward, and a beautiful volume about famous artists and composers. In this period he also created paintings for galleries and had several exhibitions, but combining both was difficult and he concentrated mostly on illustration.

Jovenes En Peligro (Afha), 1976.

HotComic.net

In 1971 S.I. made the leap to the United States where the favored illustrators were those with a more realistic photographic style (José Maria had always closely followed the trends in American paperbacks of the '50s and '60s). Enrich, Sanjulián, and Enrique Montserrat succeeded in the United States, so those who worked with a looser technique like José Maria, decided to evolve towards a more realistic style. It was not voluntary, but dictated by market demands, ever-changing decision. Among the highlights of his American work were three covers for Skywald's *Nightmare* and *Scream* titles and a story for *Vampirella* in 1977.

In the mid-'70s he left S.I. and was one of the first cartoonists, along with Vicente Segrelles, to work for the newly created Norma agency. There he worked a lot for the English market (including Futura, Mills and Boon, and others), numerous German Romanheft titles from Bastei, Pabel, and Kelter (such as *Fledermaus* and *Kommisar-X*), along with serials for Scandinavia (which he did until very recently). In 1979 he made a return to comics with a number of covers for Semic Espana's *Tumac* comic, which was followed by some memorable horror covers for *Dossier Negro*. The Spanish edition of *1984* printed a fully painted strip in its 50th issue and then in 1985 José Maria created his final strip for a booklet about the Spanish flag (once again in collaboration with Fernandez).

By the '80s the agencies were in decline so my brother often worked directly for publishers, as well as with S.I. and Norma. S.I. found him multiple jobs for the American youth market, including illustrating *Star Wars* and religious projects. Recently, he has successfully tried again the adventure of painting for a gallery (which had tried on occasions few years earlier). He is working through an art dealer, and has participated in group and solo exhibitions. Art, particularly painting has always been the obsession that has filled his life and is his constant companion.

MARCEL MIRALLES May 2016

Treasure Island, 1998.

Pabel book covers, 1974–1975.

HotComic.net

ALL I KNOW IS I FOUND MYSELF AGREEING TO GO OUT WITH HIM AGAIN...

ALL RIGHT, I'LL MEET YOU TOMORROW NIGHT, THOUGH I MUST BE MAD! WHAT'LL WE DO NEXT TIME? WALK ON OUR HANDS FOR FUN?

NO DOUBT I SHALL KEEP YOU AMUSED. GOODNIGHT!

AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN...

AND IN ALL THAT TIME HE'S HARDLY EVER LOOKED AT ME DIRECTLY, LET ALONE TOUCHED MY HAND!

EVEN IN THE MOST FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES...

A MOONLIT RIVER... BOTH OF US ALONE... WHAT DOES IT **TAKE** TO MAKE THIS BOY INTERESTED IN ME?

IT WASN'T AS IF HE WAS EXACTLY A **HERMIT!**

HE'S **ALWAYS** FLIRTING WITH OTHER GIRLS! HONESTLY, MAVIS, WHY DO YOU PUT UP WITH IT?

SEARCH ME! ALL I KNOW IS I **DO!**

THEN IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU ASSERTED YOURSELF, MAVIS! LET HIM SEE HE'S NOT THE **ONLY** FISH IN THE SEA!

YES, YOU SHOW HIM WHAT'S WHAT, MAVIS! IT'S THE ONLY WAY!

THAT WAS WHEN I TOOK MYSELF IN HAND...

THERE, **THIS** LITTLE LOT SHOULD IMPRESS MR. GEORGE HOWARD! THIS'LL MAKE HIM TOE THE LINE MORE!

BUT...

IT **HASN'T!** IT'S HAD JUST THE OPPOSITE EFFECT AND SENT HIM AWAY FOR GOOD! OH, WHY DID I DO IT?

THE PHOTOS HAD BEEN EXPENSIVE, TOO...

HORRID... NASTY... THINGS! I WISH I'D NEVER **THOUGHT** OF PUTTING PHOTOS OF NON-EXISTENT BOYFRIENDS UP ON MY BEDROOM WALL!

I WAS JUST DITCHING THE LOT IN THE DUSTBIN WHEN...

H-HELLO, MAVIS. UM... ER... BUSY?

WHAT IF I AM? WHAT DO **YOU** WANT?

JUST TO SAY THAT I DON'T CARE **HOW** MANY OTHER BOYFRIENDS YOU'VE GOT, I'M MAD ABOUT YOU, MAVIS.

BUT YOU'VE NEVER **SAID**... I MEAN YOU HAVEN'T ONCE **HINTED**...

I DAREN'T! I MEAN, I'M NOT FIT TO HOLD YOUR HAND. HOW COULD I POSSIBLY DARE TO LET MY TRUE FEELINGS SHOW?

WHY, YOU GREAT SILLY APE! DON'T YOU KNOW I ADORE YOU, TOO?

ALWAYS LET THEM KNOW WHERE THEY STAND, THAT'S WHAT I SAY!

AND THIS IS WHERE GEORGE IS GOING TO STAND... CLOSE TO ME... FOR EVER AND EVER!

The End

Original artwork from *Valentine*, 28th March 1964 (Fleetway).

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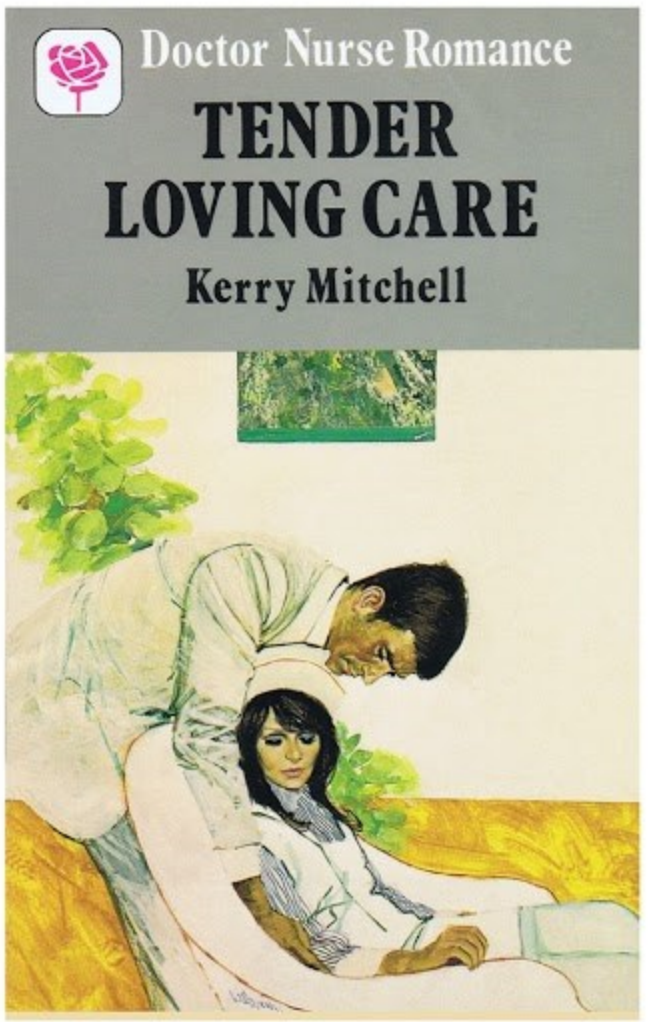
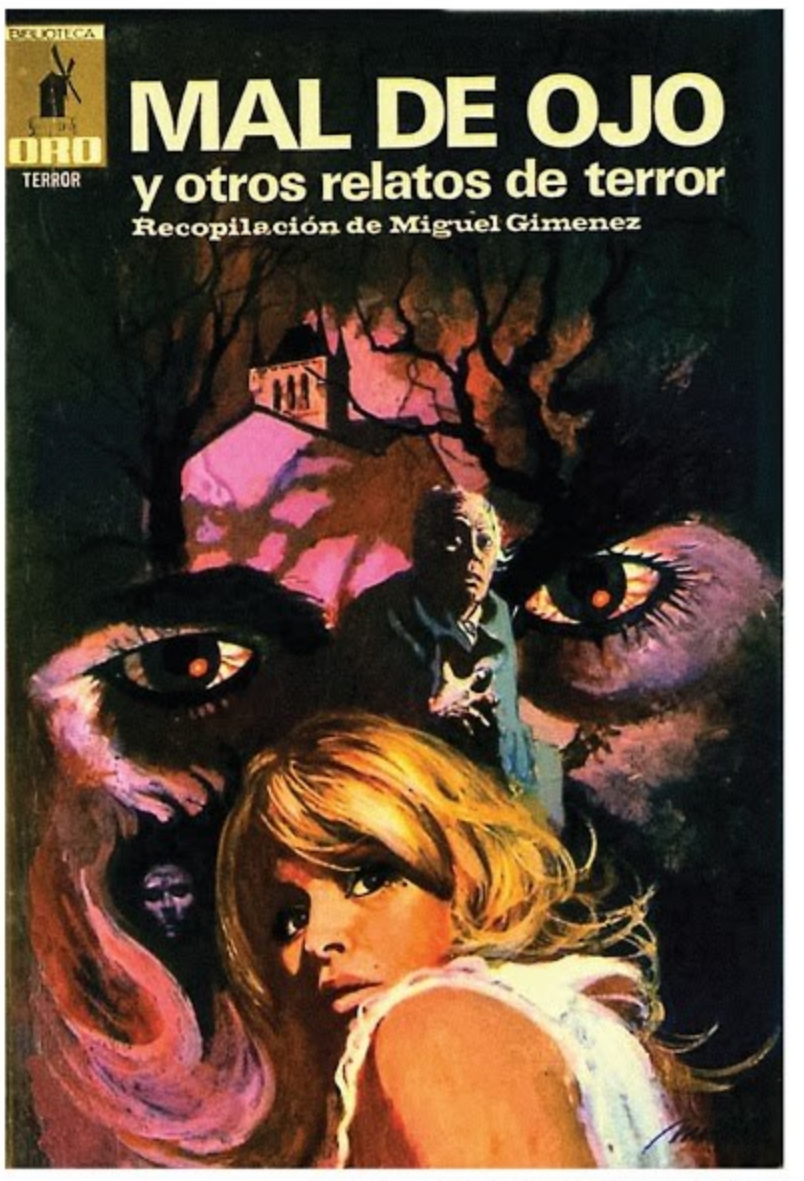
Silvia 125 (Bruguera), 1977.

Pop Pic Library 3 (Micron), 1965.



Doctor Nurse Romance (Mills and Boon), 1980.

Nightmare 21 (Skywald), 1974.



Biblioteca Oro (Editorial Molino), 1973.

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Crime covers (Pabel), 1972–76. *Diablo Smith 2* (Rollan), 1977.

HotComic.net

Illustrations. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

Syndication illustration for S.I., 1971.

HotComic.net

Isidre Mones B. 1947

Original artwork from *Vampirella 26* (Warren), 1973.

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THE DOUBLE LIFE OF DEBBIE

THIS IS THE THIRD TIME IN SIX MONTHS I'VE TAKEN ALL MY HEMLINES UP.

DUNNO WHY I BOTHER, REALLY. BEING UP-TIGHT, SWITCHED-ON AND WITH-IT HASN'T DONE ME MUCH GOOD SO FAR.

Oh, it got me noticed, all right.

ATOMIC

SEX

Sometimes it even got me a seat on the bus—

NO, MADAM. THIS YOUNG LADY WAS FIRST IN THE QUEUE. I PARTICULARLY NOTICED HER.

BUT WHAT'S THE GOOD OF GETTING NOTICED, IF IT'S ALWAYS BY THE WRONG KIND OF GUY?

Take Ritchie, the rhythm guitar. I was wild about him.

HE'S BEEN LOOKING MY WAY ALL EVENING. I'M SURE HE'S NOTICED ME!

He had! Because in the interval—

HI, DOLL. ME AND THE GROUP ARE GOING OUT FOR A BEER WANNA TAG ALONG?

OH, SURE...

Soon I was allowed to sit in on their practice sessions—

MMM...IT'S FABULOUS BEING AN AUDIENCE OF ONE... LIKE HE'S PLAYING FOR ME...

But whenever they went out to play the clubs—

I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH US, DEBBIE. A DOLL LIKE YOU IS BOUND TO BE NOTICED, AND IF THE FANS THINK I'VE GOT A GIRL, I'LL LOSE MY FOLLOWING...

SO FOUR OR FIVE NIGHTS A WEEK I HAVE TO MAKE LIKE ROOM FURNISHINGS JUST SO RITCHIE'S FANS CAN GO ON SWOONING OVER HIM...

Jackie 210 (DC Thomson), 1968. Used by kind permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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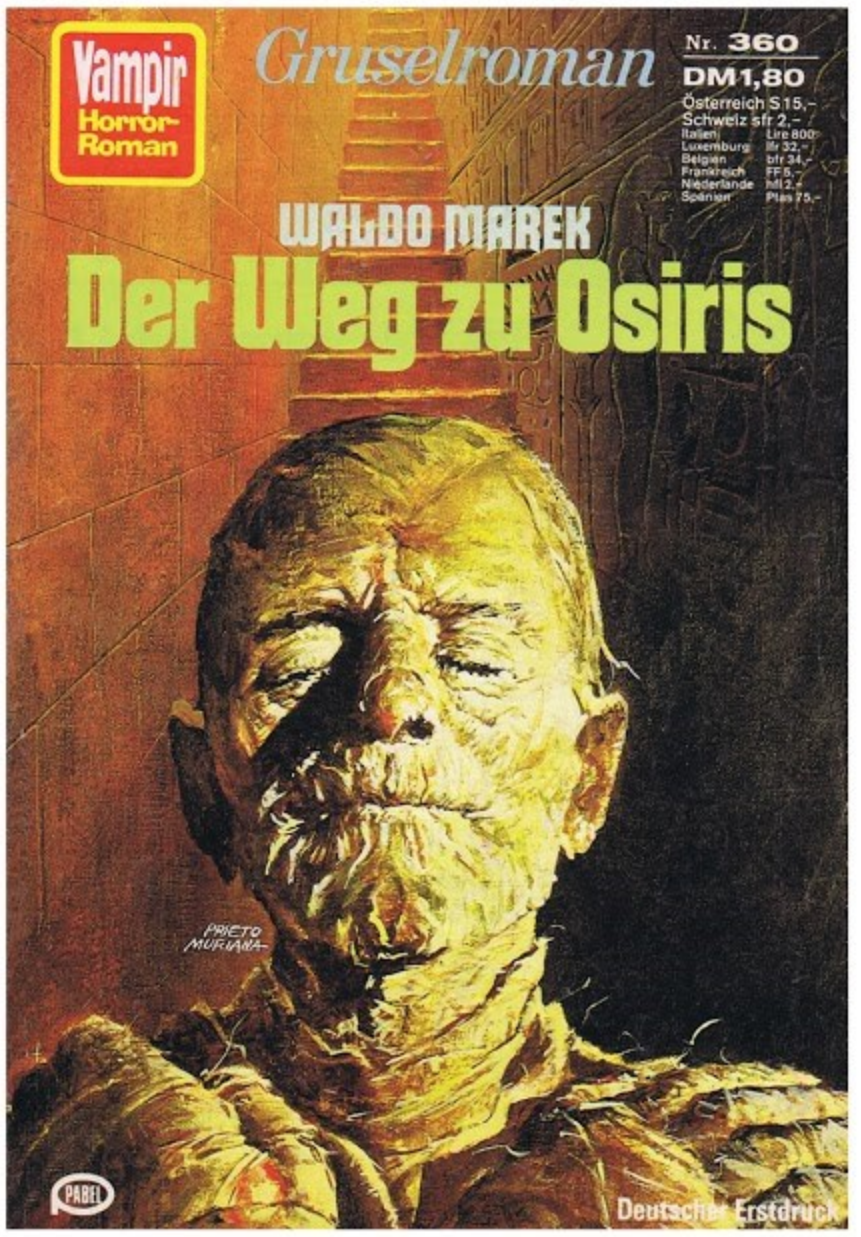
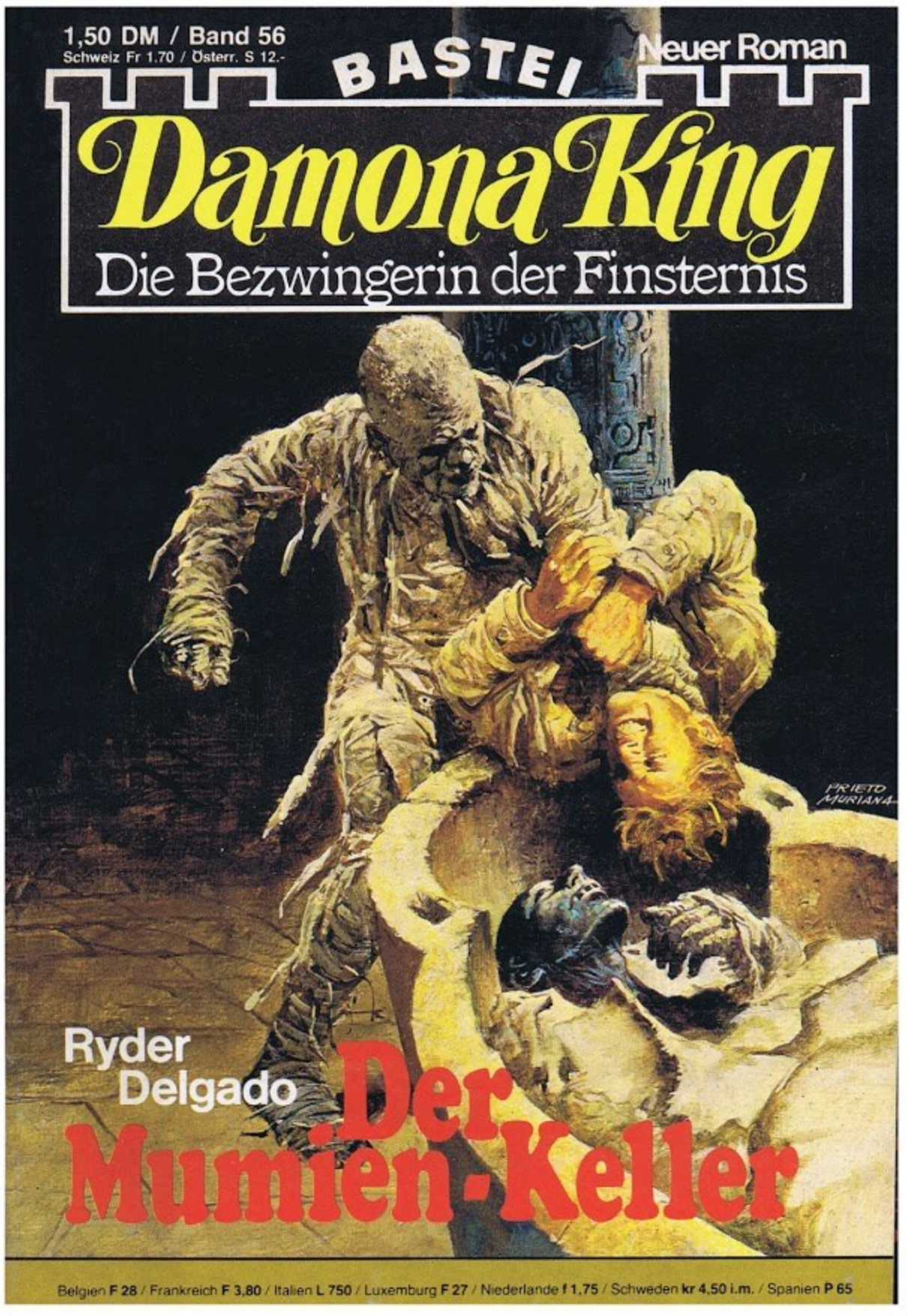
Prieto Muriana (Manuel Prieto Muriana) *B. 1931*

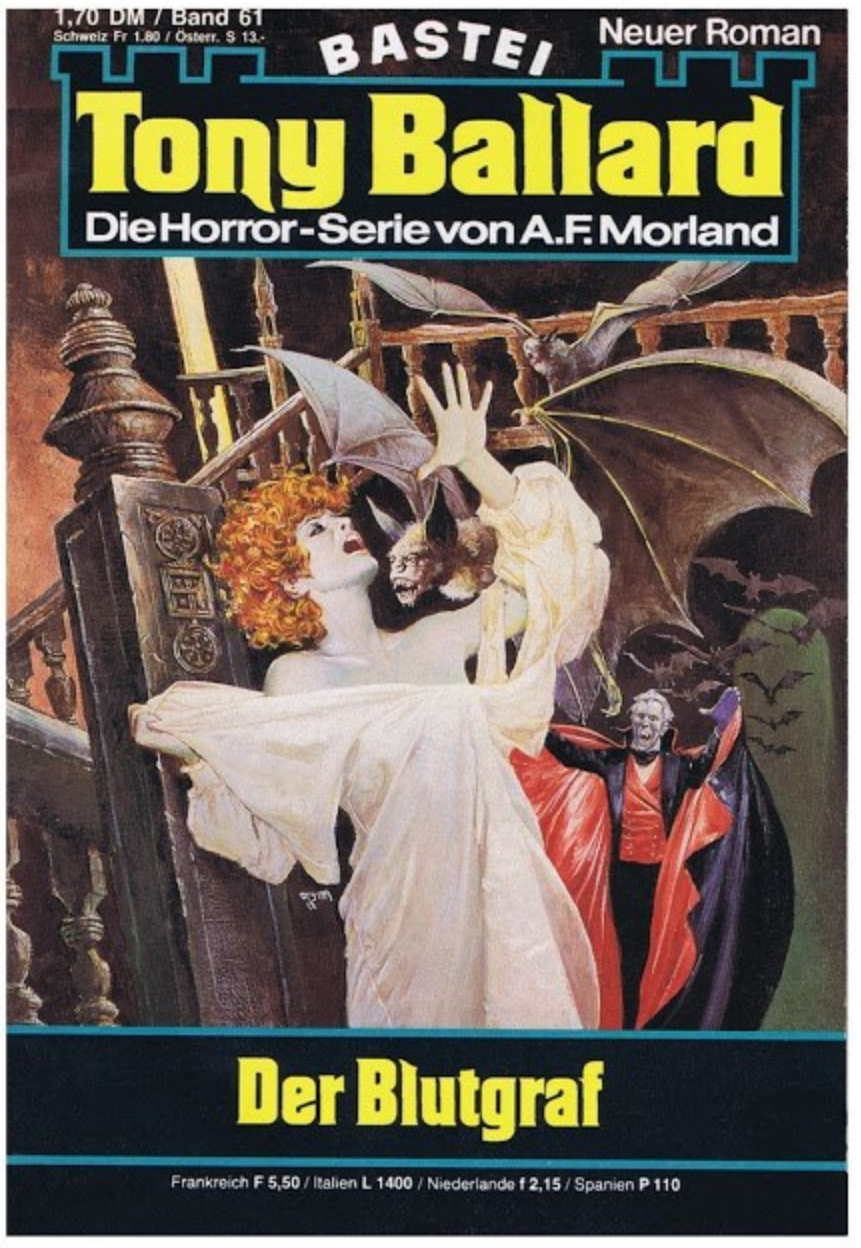
Galeria Siniestra (Rollan), 1972, 1974.



Vampir Horror-Roman 360 (Pabel), 1980.



Damona King 56 (Bastei), 1981.



Tony Ballard 61 (Bastei), 1985.

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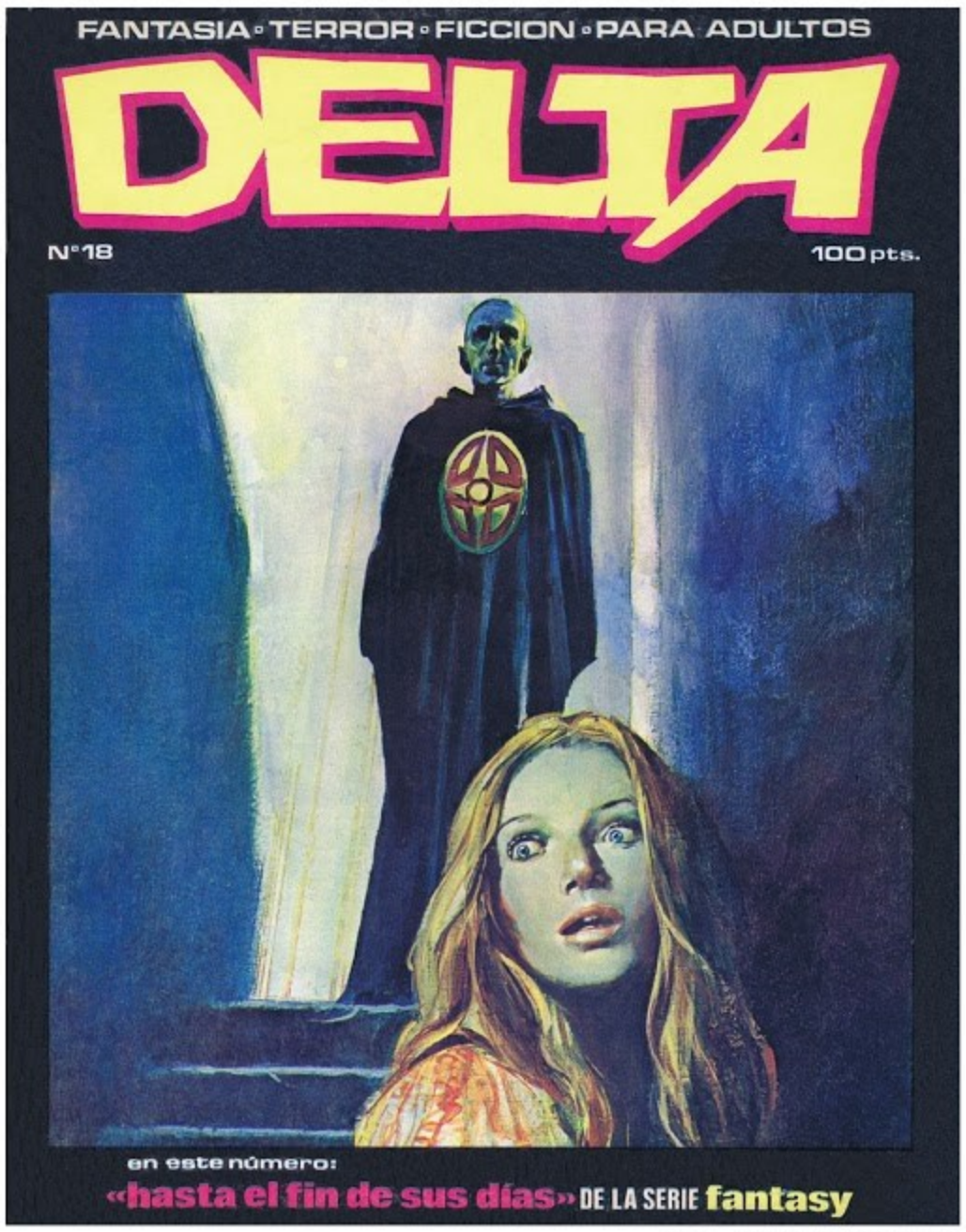
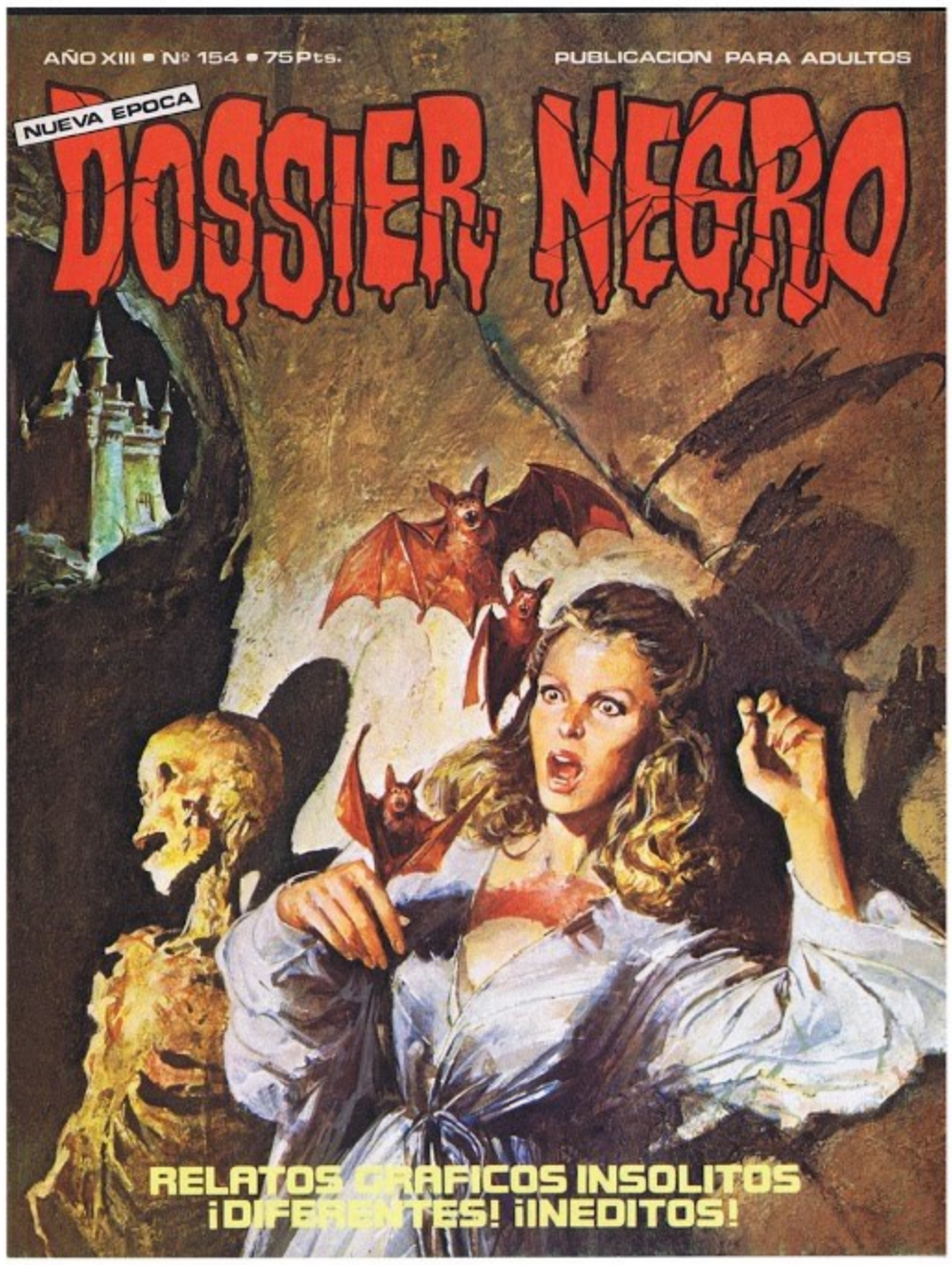
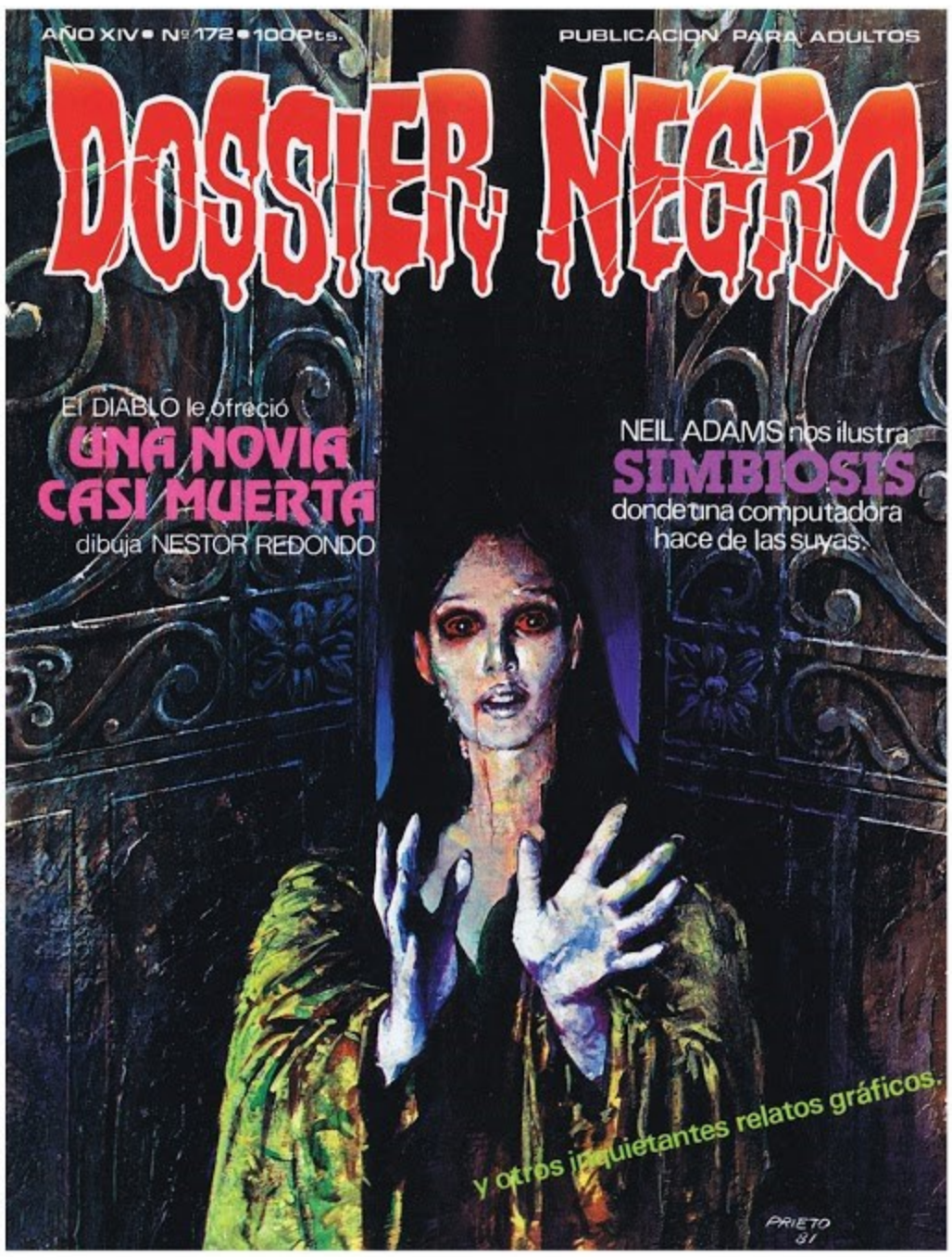
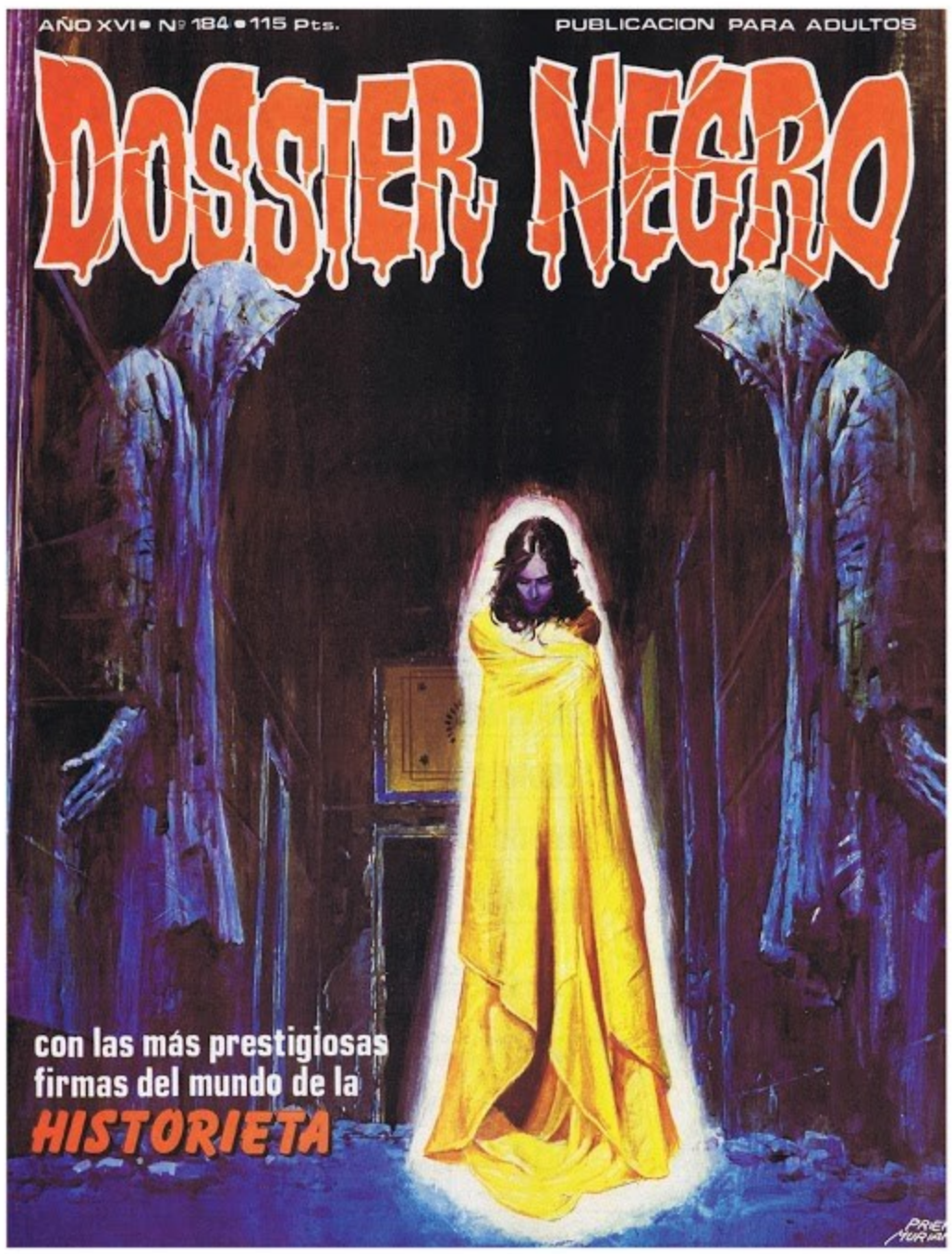


Delta 18 (Ed. Delta), 1981.







Dossier Negro (Gyesa), 1982–1985.

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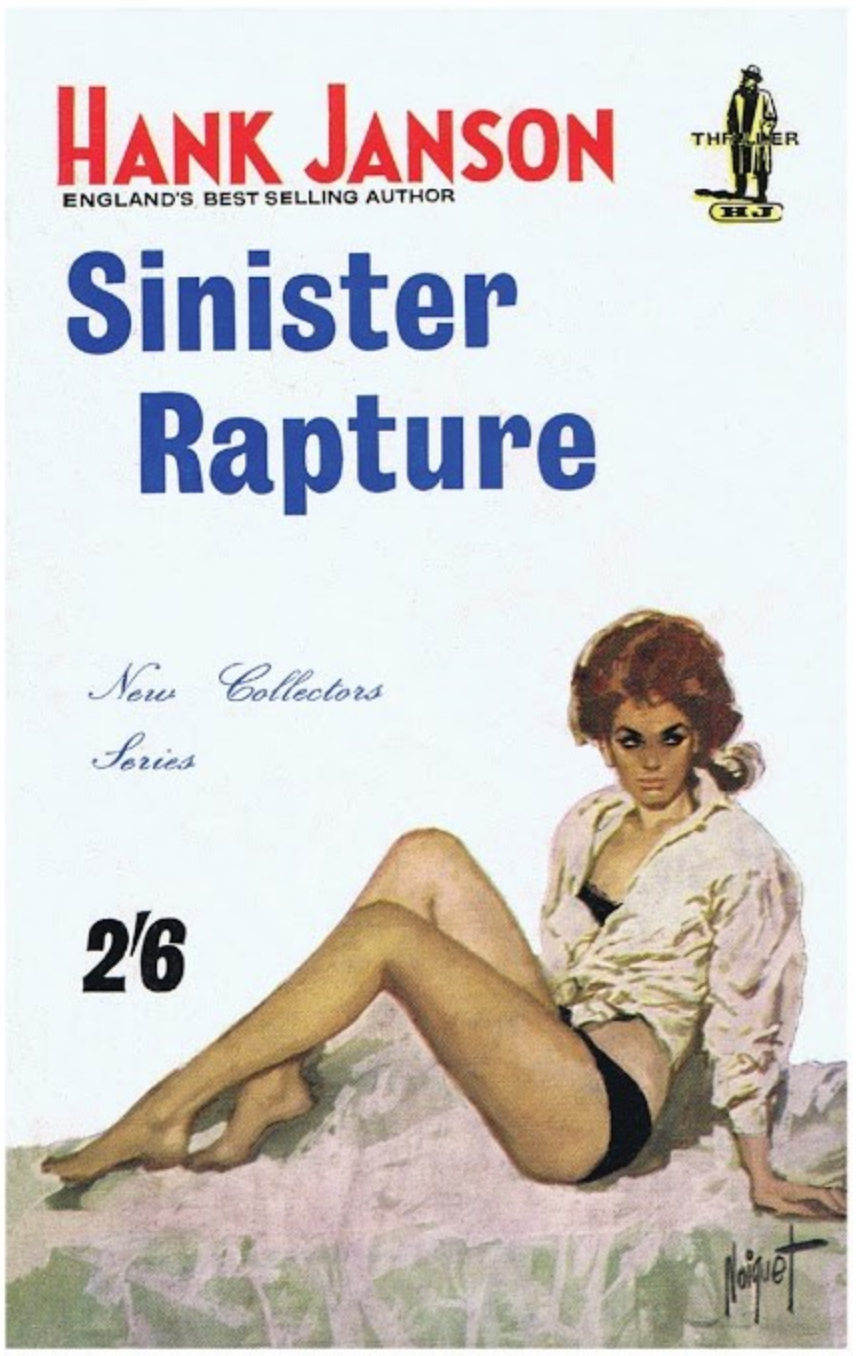
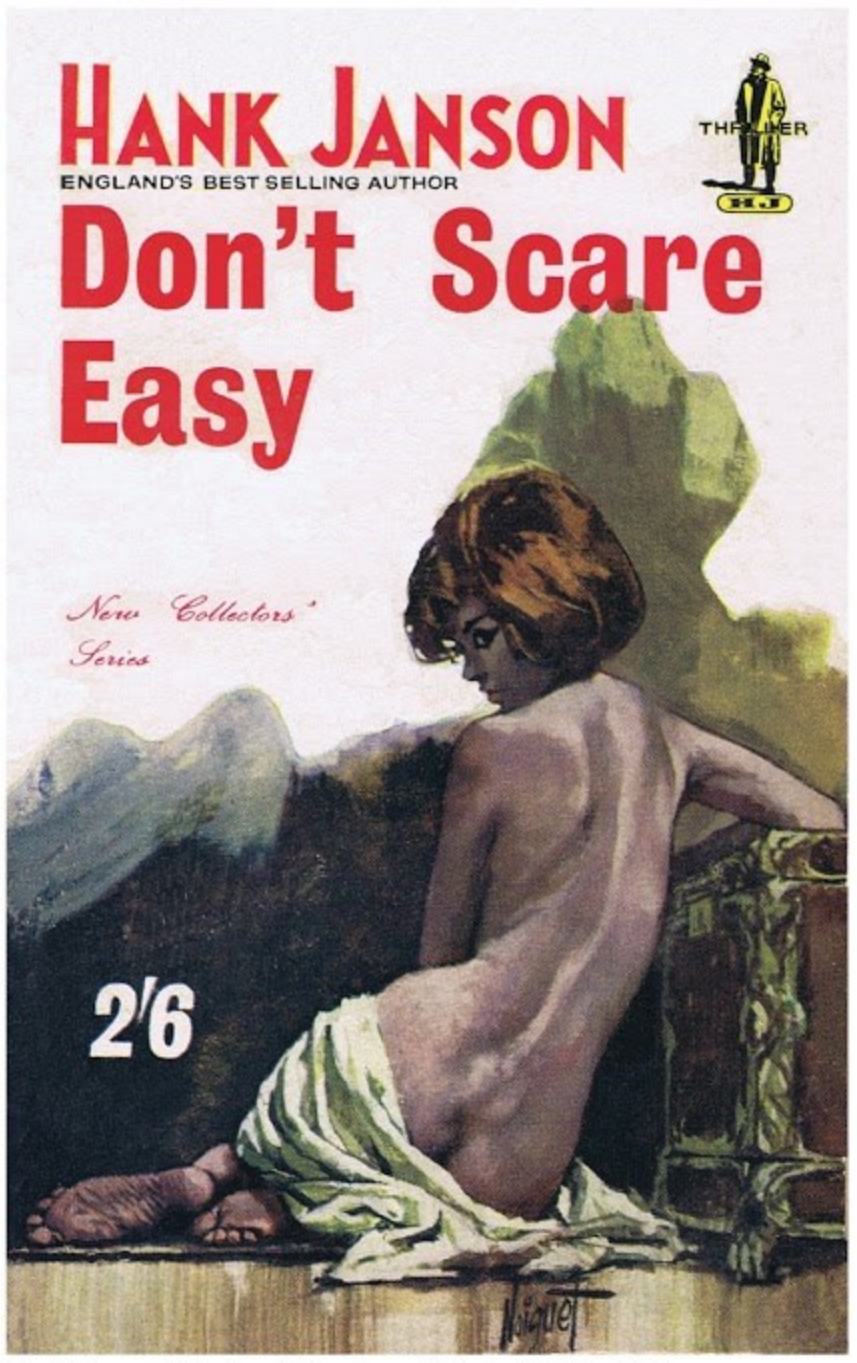
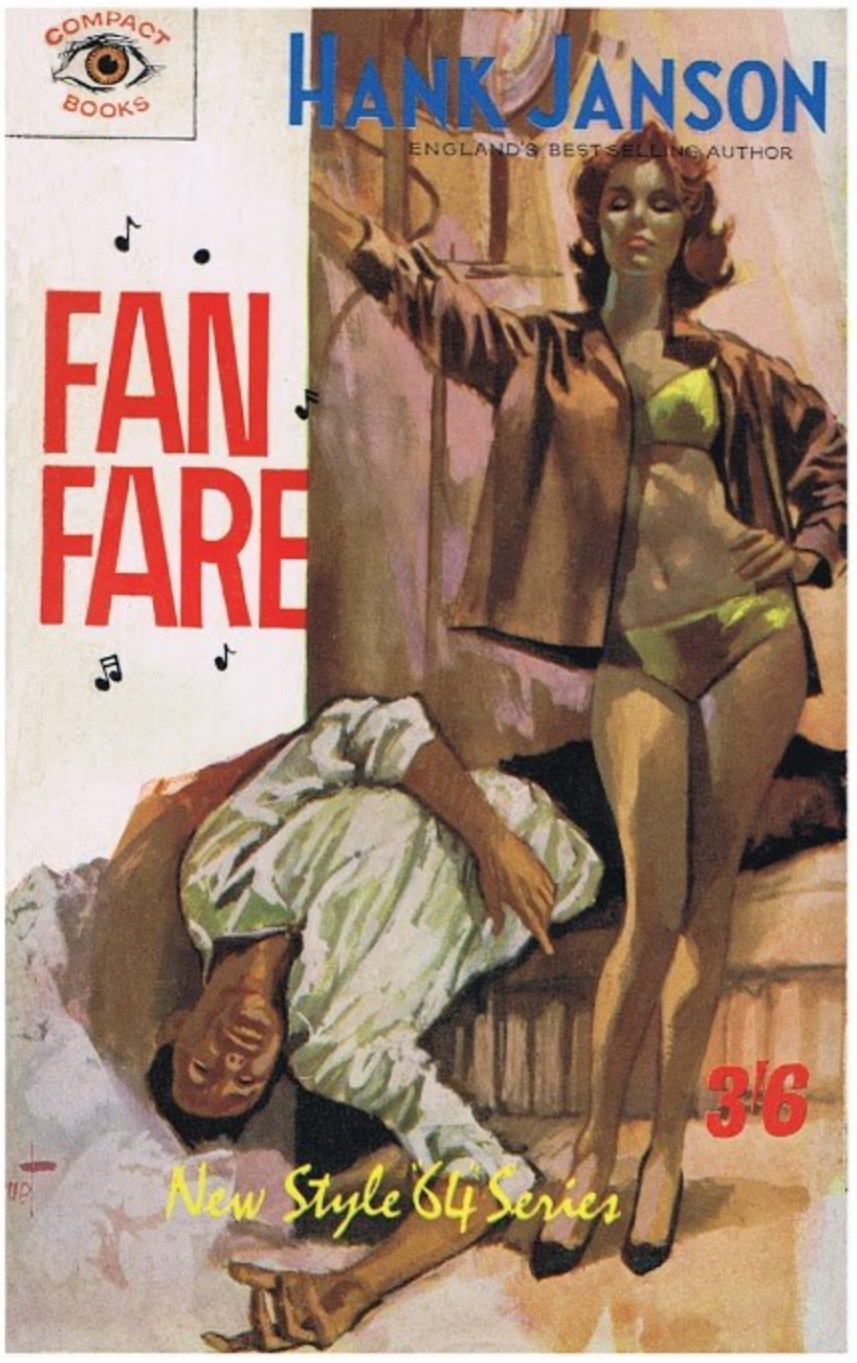
Noiquet (Joan Beltran Bofill) 1934–2009







Hank Janson (Moring, Roberts and Vinter), 1957–1964.

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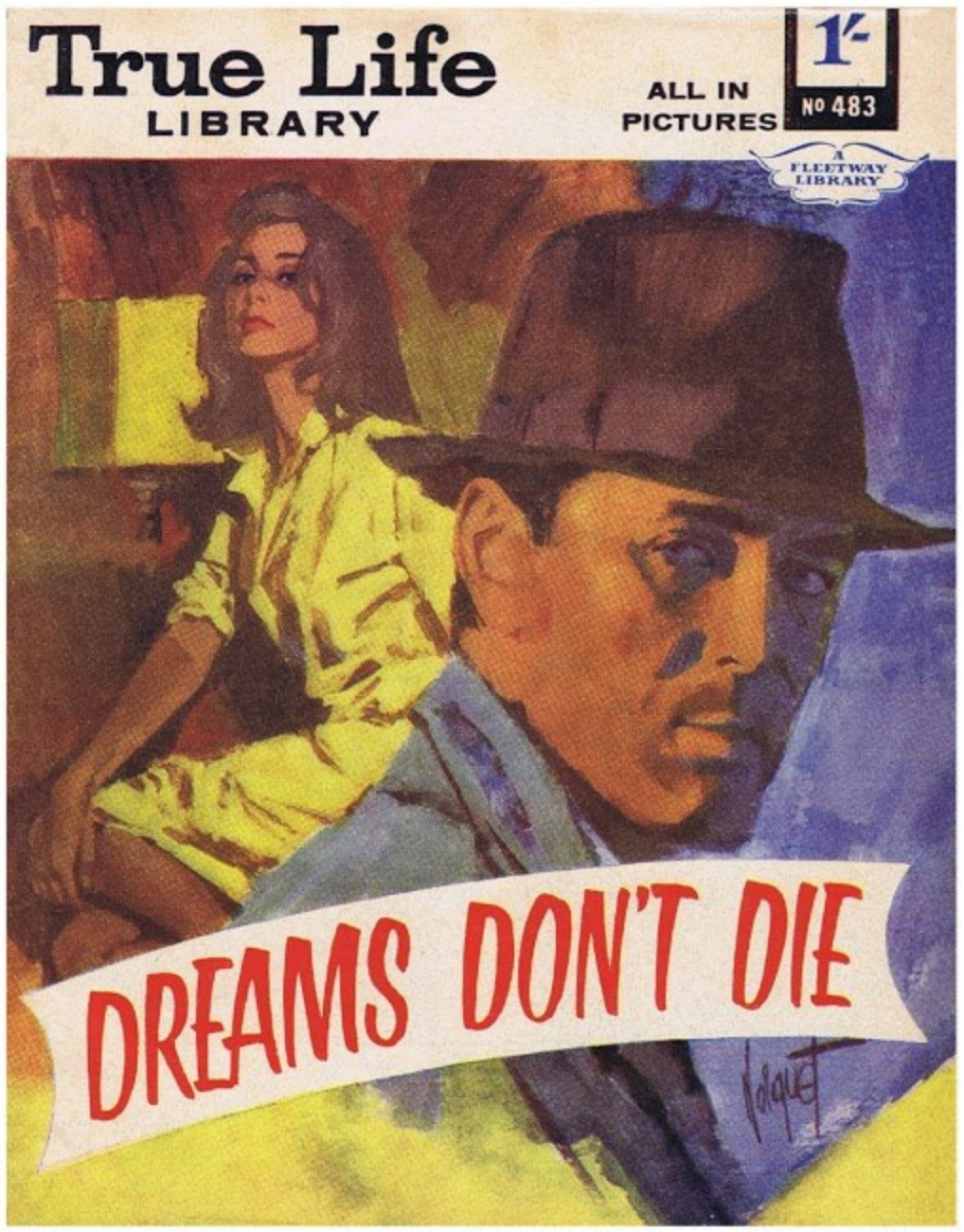
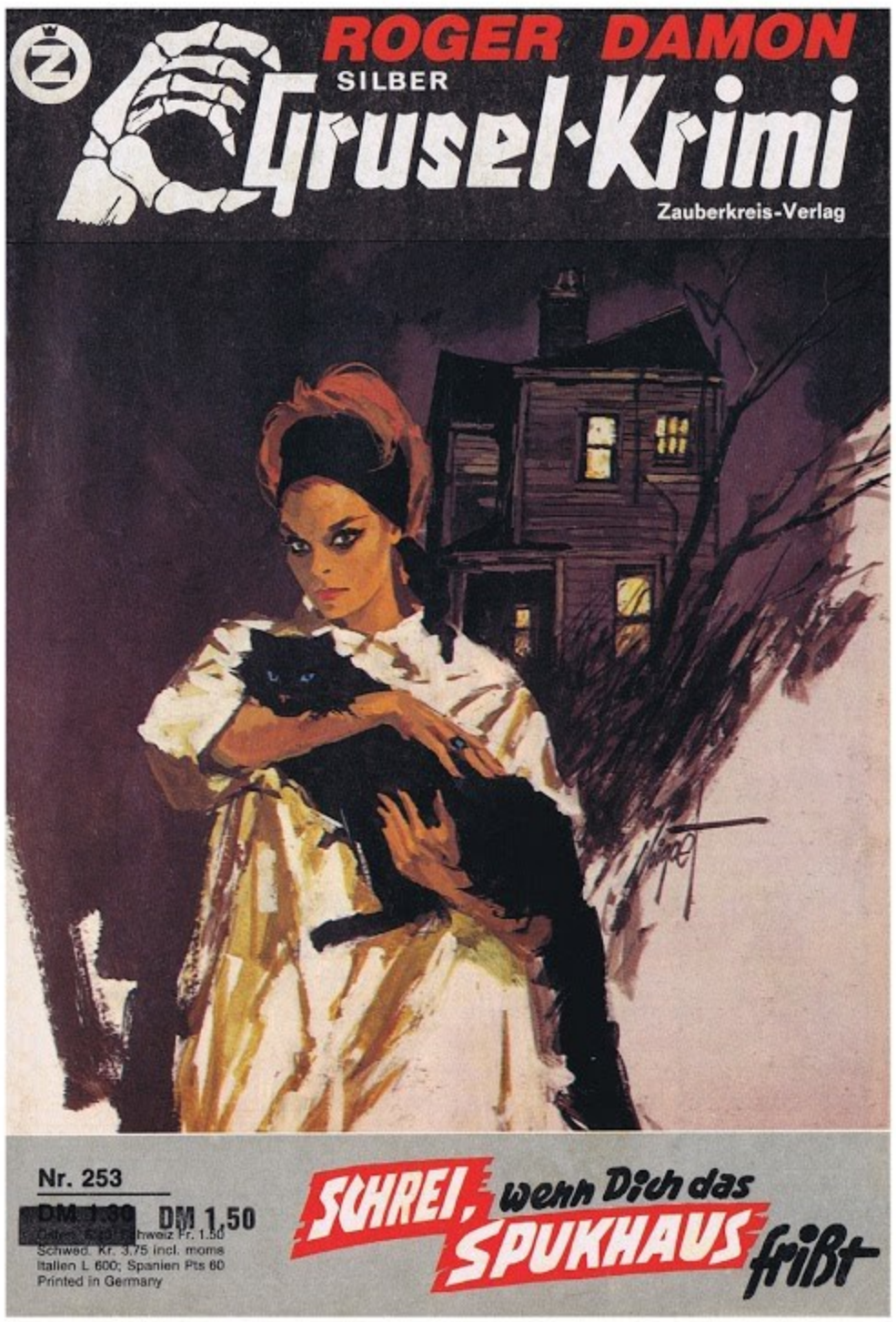
Love Story Library 474 (Fleetway), 1964.



True Life Library 483 (Fleetway), 1965.



Grusel-Krimi 253 (Zauberkreis), 1979.

Kommissar-X 466 (Pabel)1966.

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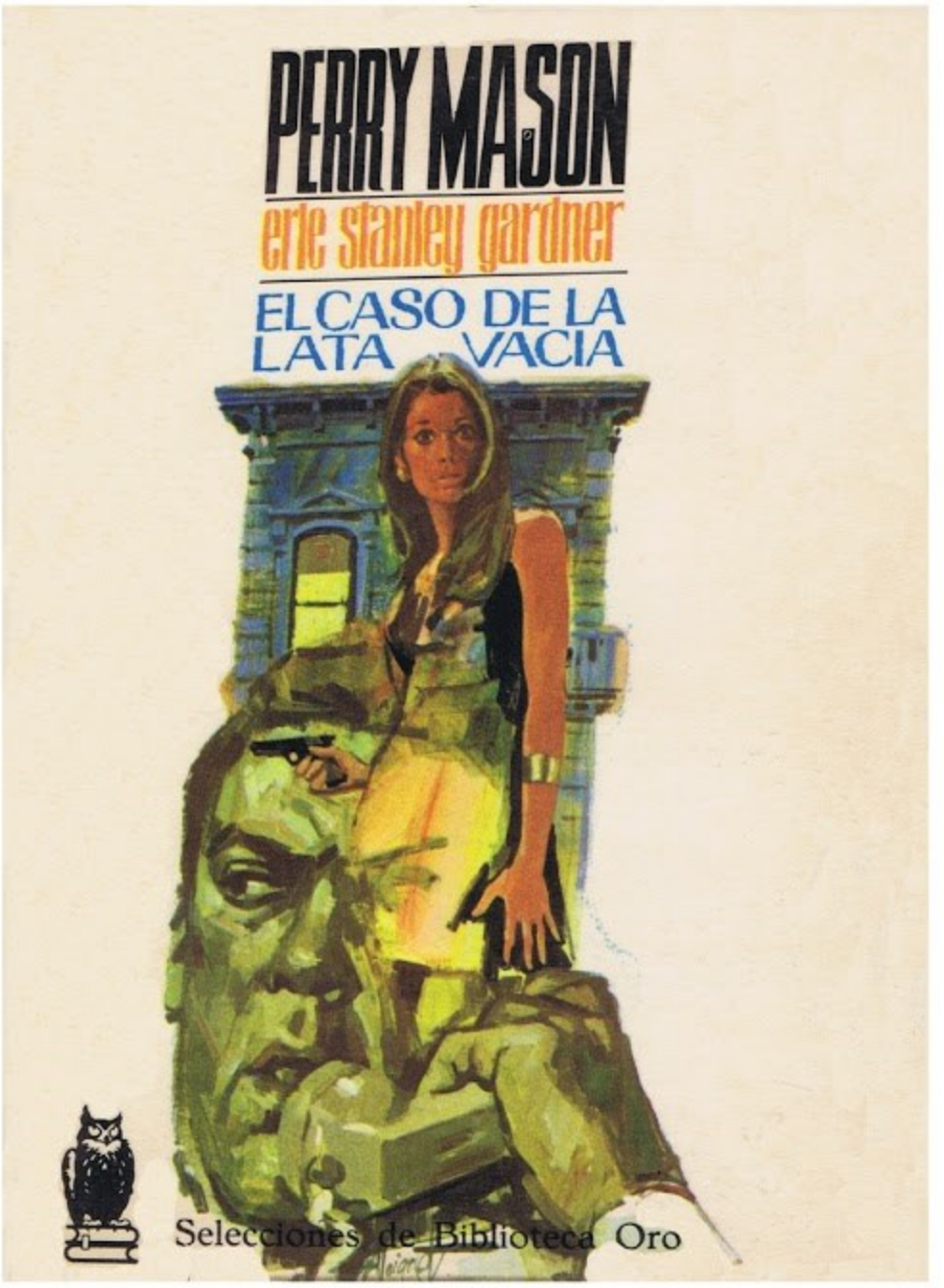

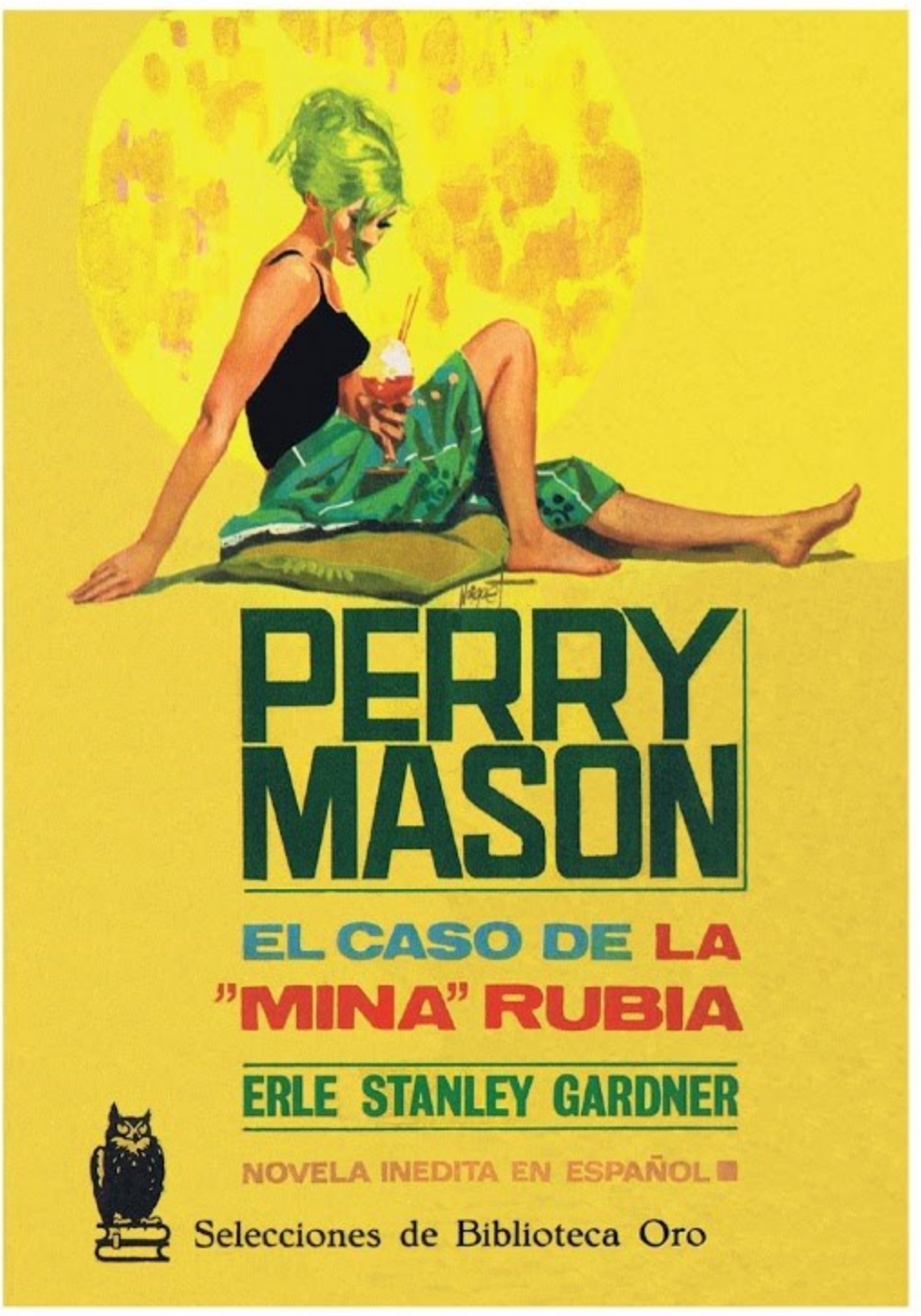

Biblioteca Oro book covers (Molino), 1967–1971.

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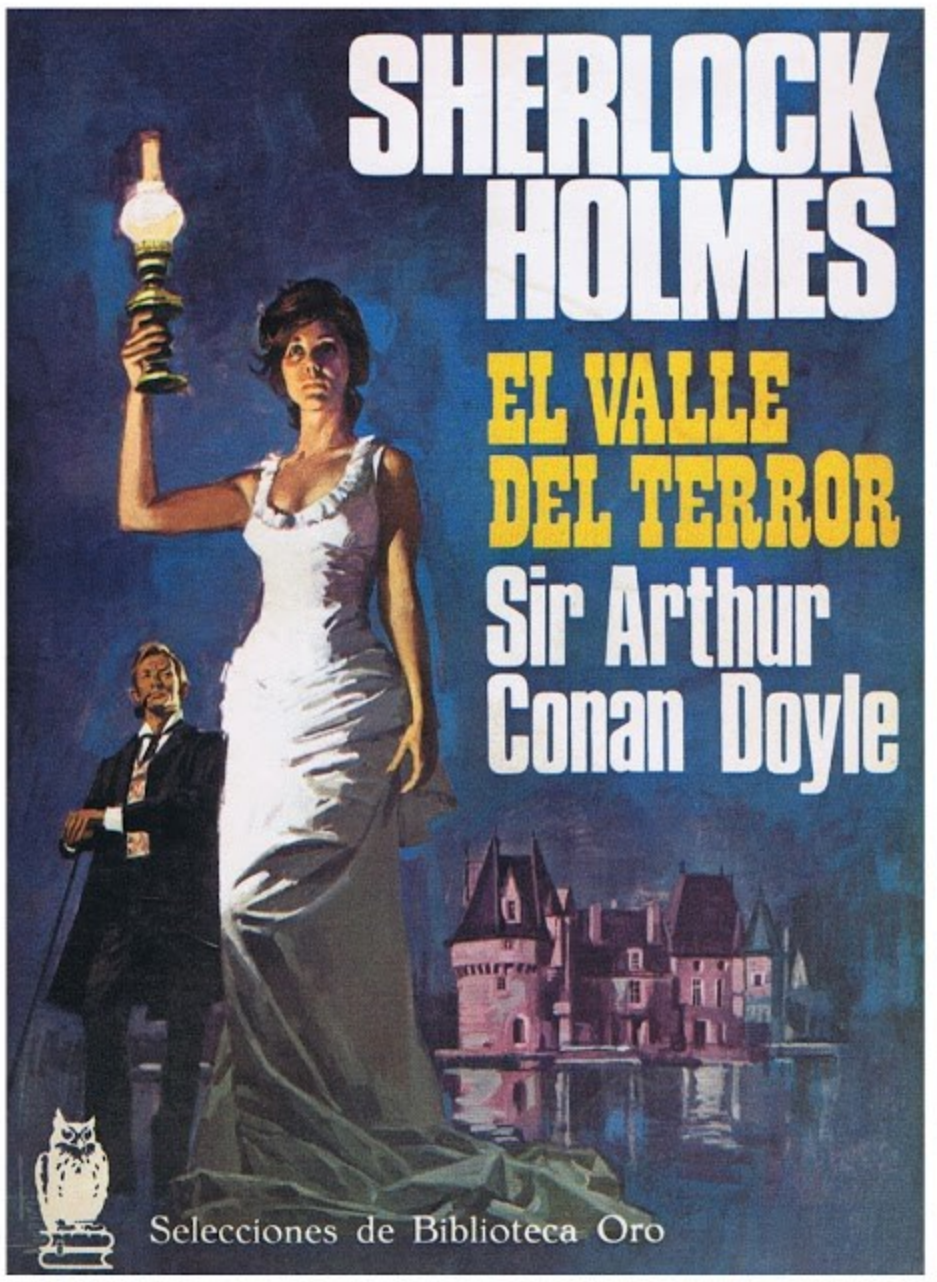
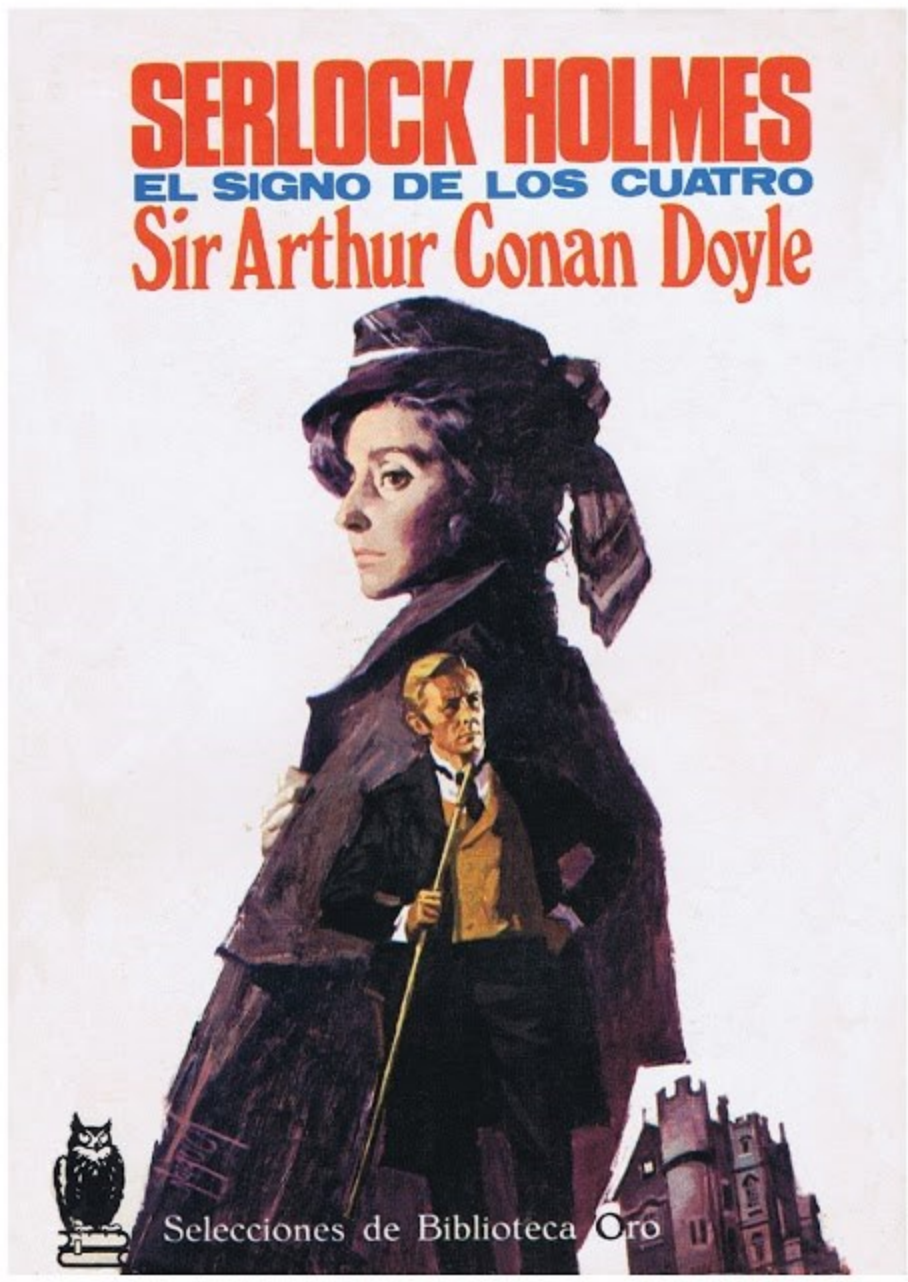
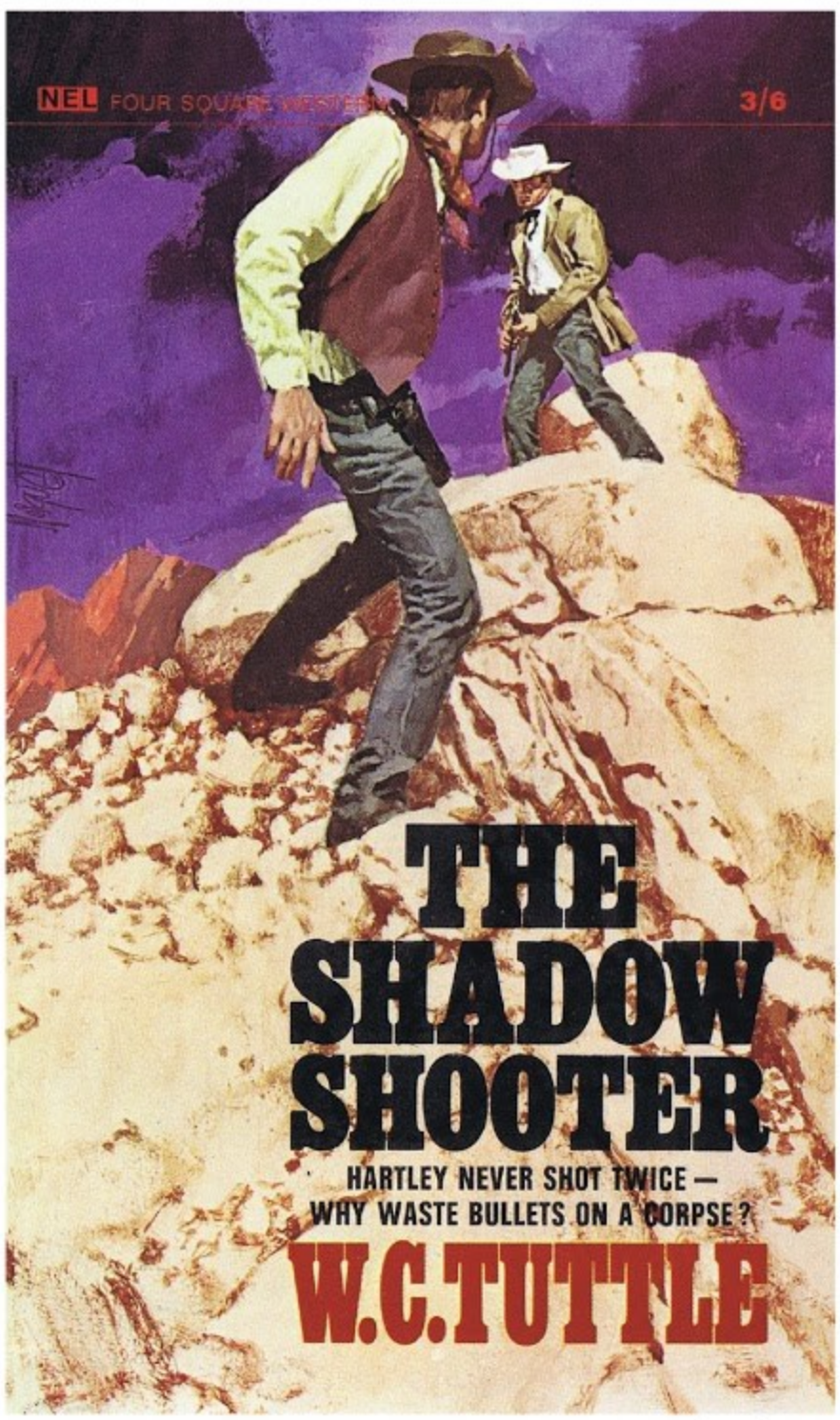
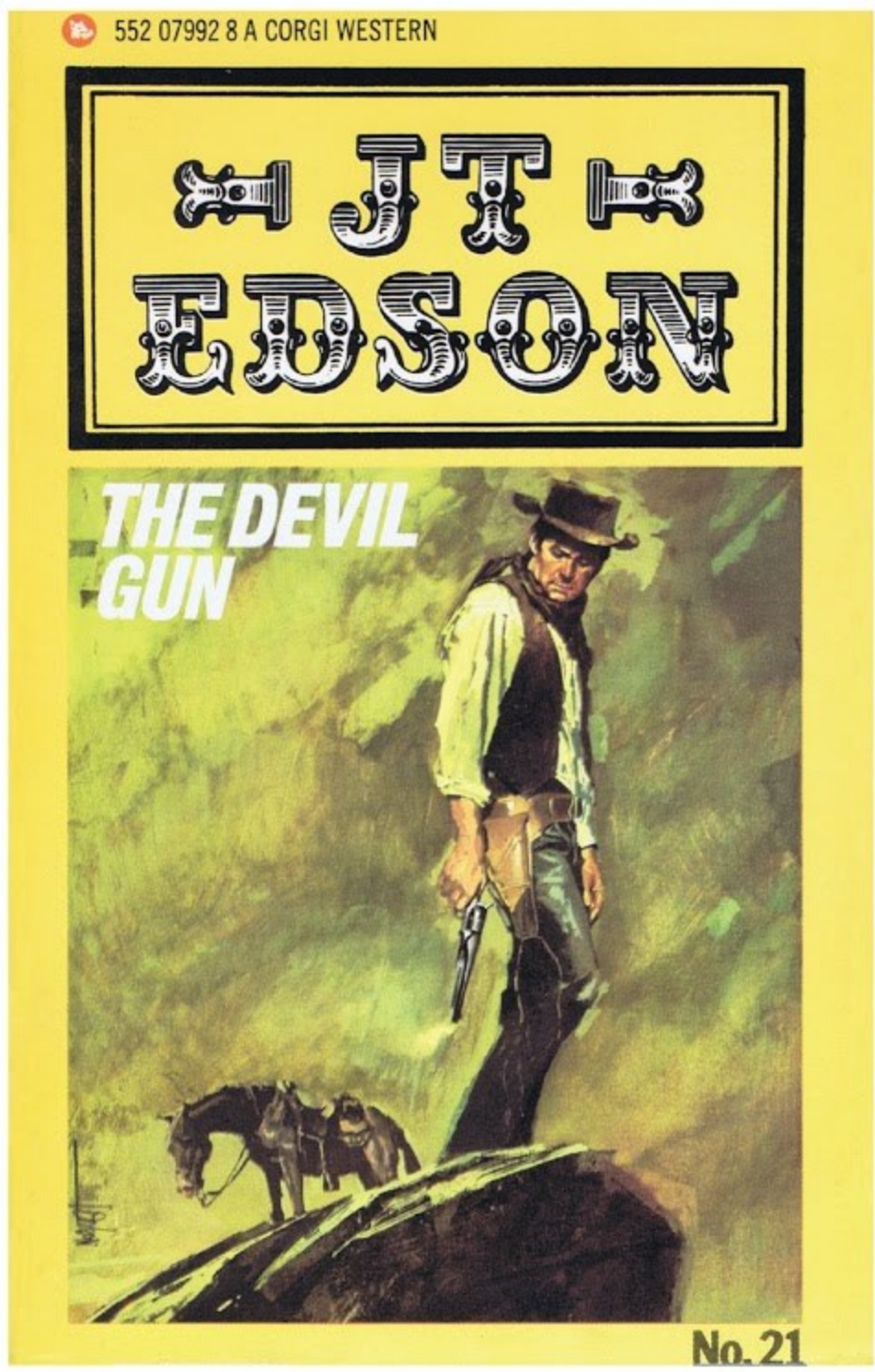




Sherlock Holmes. Biblioteca Oro (Molino), 1972.



Four Square Western (NEL), 1968.



J T Edson (Corgi), 1974.

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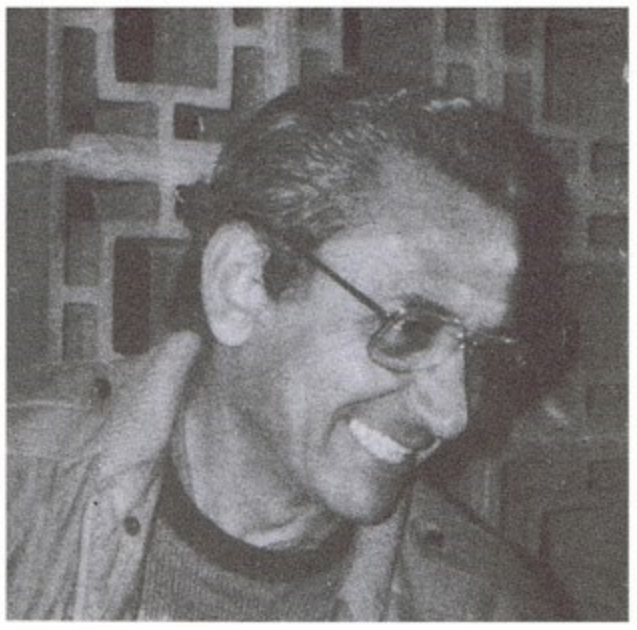
José Ortiz 1932–2013

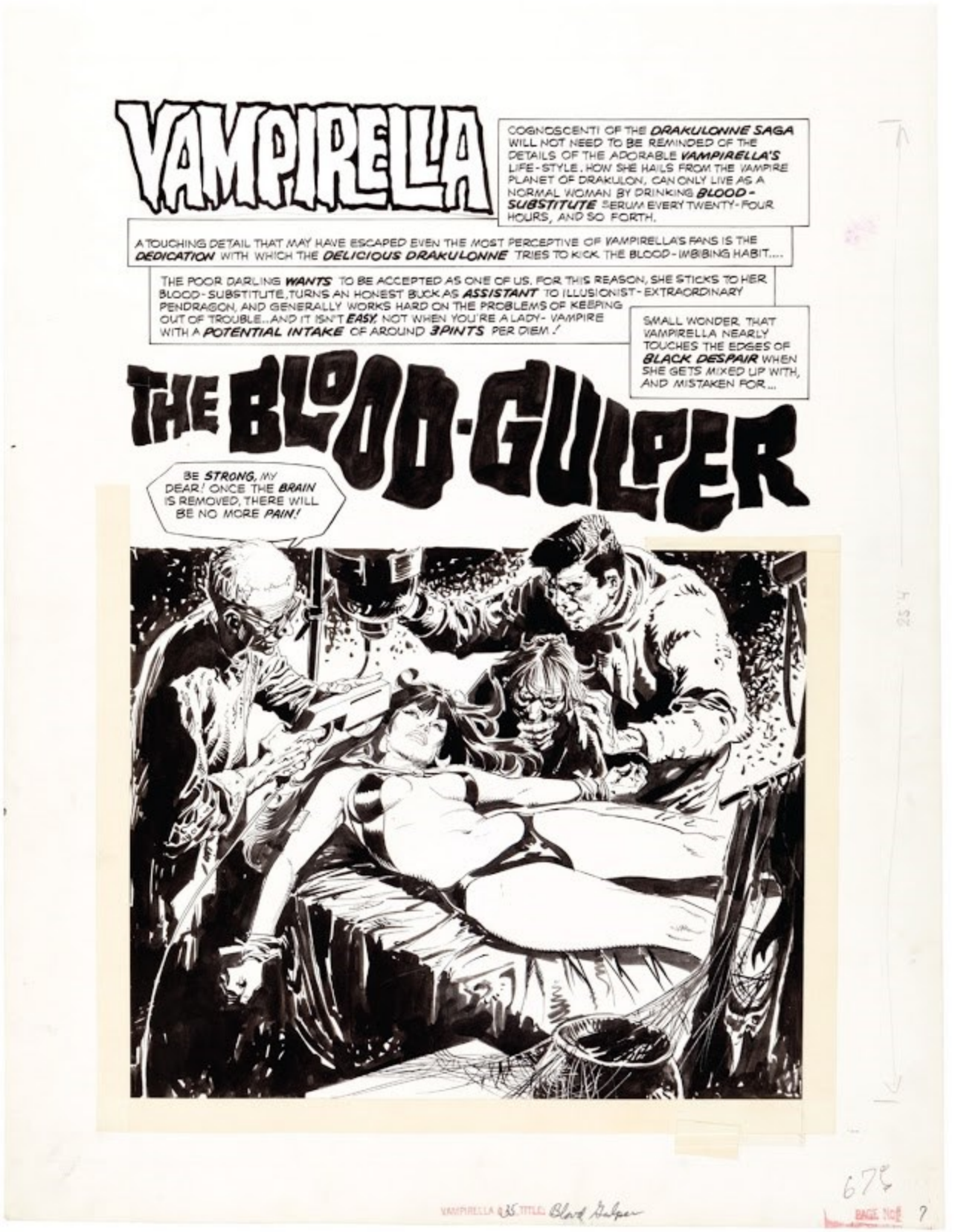


José Ortiz was born into an artistic family in Cartagena, Murcia and first gained exposure as an artist by winning a competition in the popular *Chicos* comic at the age of 16. His first professional work appeared in Editorial Maga's *El Espia* in 1951 and soon after that he moved to Valencia setting up a studio with his brother Leopoldo, Luis Bermejo, and Miguel Quesada. Throughout the '50s Ortiz was a mainstay of Maga's line drawing such strips as *Pantera Negra, Juan Bravo, Dan Barry, El Principe Pablo,* and *Los Tres Bill.* However his most famous strip of the era was *Sigur El Wikingo* (Sigur the Viking) for Toray which showcased his powerfully dynamic, gritty artwork. He first worked for the UK through A.L.I. in 1957 drawing for *Thriller* and *Love and Life Libraries*, but in 1959 he was among the many talented Valencia artists to sign up with the Bardon agency and over the next 15 years he became one of the UK's most prolific and sought after artists.

Like many of the Valencian artists, much of Ortiz's British work appeared in war comics such as *War Picture Library, Battle,* and *Air Ace* but he was soon noticed by the editors of Fleetway's prestigious boys weekly comics. For *Lion* he drew *Trelawney of the Guards* and the *Phantom Viking,* For the *Eagle* he worked on *Smokeman, UFO Agent,* and the *Sky Buccaneers.* He also appeared in *Boys World* and *TV 21.* By the late '60s Ortiz had become an incredibly versatile artist and the last few years of his British period were the most varied of his career. He had already shown he could draw for a female audience with the 1962 *Caroline Baker* daily strip for the *Daily Express* and from 1968 on he increasingly concentrated on romance strips for *Romeo, Jackie,* and *Valentine.* In the early '70s he worked on an impressively diverse array of British strips, from painted fairy tales in *Once Upon a Time* and *Esmeralda* to girls adventure stories in *Diana*, war strips in *Warlord*, an adaptation of the Persuaders in *T.V. Action*, numerous annuals and yet more romances. He was an artist at the peak of his powers, blessed with astonishing productivity and complete mastery of his craft. His next step was to conquer America.

In 1974 a number of the Valencia artists defected to S.I. in order to work for Jim Warren and Ortiz embarked on the greatest year of his career. For *Eerie* his first three series were horror classics: *Coffin, Night of the Jackass,* and the astonishing *Apocalypse,* widely regarded as the finest work of his career. At the same time he became the first artist to fill in for Pepe González on *Vampirella* in issues 35 and 36, and the gorgeous *Wickford Witches* in issue 41 became the first of many back-up strips for the comic. Ortiz's style at this point was typified by his energetic pen and brush strokes and mastery of shadows. Like a painter he used his expressive lines to create a palpable sense of depth and place in his artwork. In his nine years at the company he became Warren's most prolific artist drawing 120 strips and while, at times, his sheer productivity worked against him with later strips lacking the depth and polish of his peak years his consummate draughtsmanship was always evident.

Incredibly however, despite the workload from Warren, Ortiz somehow found the time and energy to take on extra work. In 1976 he became one of the regular artists on S.I.'s syndicated *Kung Fu* comic, drawing 41 episodes of *El Cuervo* over the next three years. This was followed by western strips for *Blue Jeans* magazine in Spain and a



Vampirella 35 (Warren), 1974. Original Artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com.

HotComic.net

three year spell working on Tarzan stories for European syndication from 1979-1981. By 1981 Ortiz had also drawn his final strips for Warren (11 episodes of *Pantha* in *Vampirella*) and sensing that the company's days were numbered, returned to the two markets he knew the best, Spain and Britain. During his time away from the UK *Eagle* had been cancelled and subsequently revived; and from 1982 to 1988 he became one of the new title's most important artists. His strips such as the *Tower King, House of Daemon*, and the *13th Floor* became firm favorites for a new generation of British fans and his artwork also graced the pages of *2000 AD* (drawing *Rogue Trooper*), *Scream*, and *Wildcat*.

At the same time in Spain Ortiz's stylistic versatility was ideally placed to take advantage of the burgeoning magazine explosion, starting with his 1981 *Jack the Ripper* serial for Toutain's *Creepy*. In 1979 the artist had teamed up with writer Antonio Segura to create a strip called *Hombre* for the still-born *Kraken* magazine. Two years later they finally placed the strip with Norma's newly created *Cimoc* title. The grizzled, indefatigable Hombre was a survivor in a nightmarish future world whose violent, dystopian adventures (many gloriously painted) made him one of the key strips in Spanish comic's history. Between 1981 and 1992 His adventures spanned 37 issues of *Cimoc*, seven albums and were reprinted in France, Italy, Germany and America (in *Heavy Metal*). Several episodes were also drawn for *KO*, one of a number of titles published by the artist's collective known as Metropol. For the group's flagship title (also called *Metropol*) Ortiz and Segura crafted a number of crime strips, including a series called *Ives*. When Metropol's comic line was cancelled, the pair reconfigured

Cimoc 9 (Norma), 1981. Original cover artwork courtesy of Ricardo Guillamon.

Cimoc 68 (Norma), 1986.

Ives as the prison-based strip *Morgan* which ran for 24 episodes from 1986-1992 in *Cimoc*.

As if all that productivity was not enough, Ortiz somehow also found time to draw his final work for America when he took over Eclipse Comics' *Sabre* comic in 1984, written by Don McGregor, and renewed his relationship with Toutain in 1987 with *Burton and Cyb* (yet again written by Segura). The first episode of the quirky sci-fi romp *Burton and Cyb* appeared in *Zona 84* in 1987 where it ran for three years, showcasing the artist's imagination and gift for humor. However, it proved to be the last of his great creations and as the last of the magazines, *Cimoc* slowly declined he turned for one last time to yet another new market: Italy.

The Italian magazine *L'Eternauta* had already reprinted *Hombe* and *Morgan* when it commissioned Ortiz and Segura to create a new series, *Orzono* in 1991. Following this, the artist drew the epic *Tex Albo Speciale* 6 for Italian giant Bonelli, which led to a long association with the legendary western star. Ortiz would devote the rest of his career, and life, to drawing for Bonelli, producing 23 issues of the regular *Tex* title, six editions of *Maxi Tex* and one *Almanacco*. He also found time to draw several issues of the western comics *Magico Vento* and *Ken Parker* and in 2012 a last venture into the world of Horror with *Dylan Dog Colorfest* 8. Towards the end of his life, Ortiz was rightly celebrated as one of the comics medium's true greats, winning the Lifetime achievement award at Expocomic 2010 and two years later being awarded the Gran Premio Del Salon at the Barcelona Comic Convention. Throughout his career his productivity had been remarkable so fittingly his final work saw print in *Maxi Tex* 19, two years after his death in 2013.

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Smokeman. Eagle vol 16 #30 (Odhams), 1965. Original artwork courtesy of Ron Tiner.

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Vampirella 35 (Warren), 1974. Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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Coffin. Eerie 61 (Warren), 1974. Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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Original artwork from *Rogue Trooper. 2000AD Sci Fi Special* (IPC), 1986.

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Antonio Hernandez Palacios 1921–2000

Mac Coy (Dargaud), 1974. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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Ruben Pellejero B. 1952

Las Aventuras de Dieter Lumpen. Cimoc Extra Color 59 (Norma), 1989. Cover Image courtesy of Ruben Pellejero.

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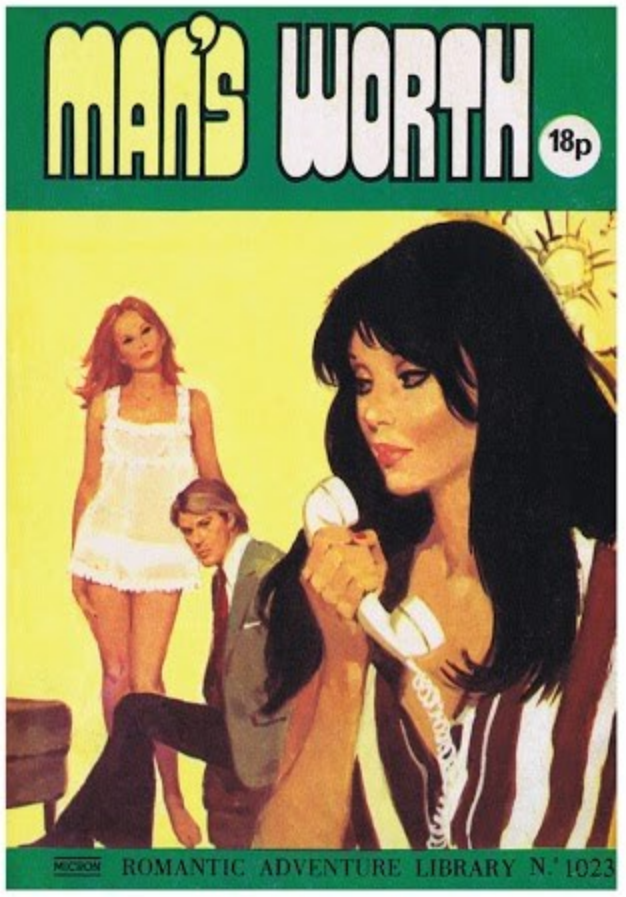
Antonio Bosch Penalva *B. 1925*

Love Story Picture Library 582 (Fleetway), 1966.

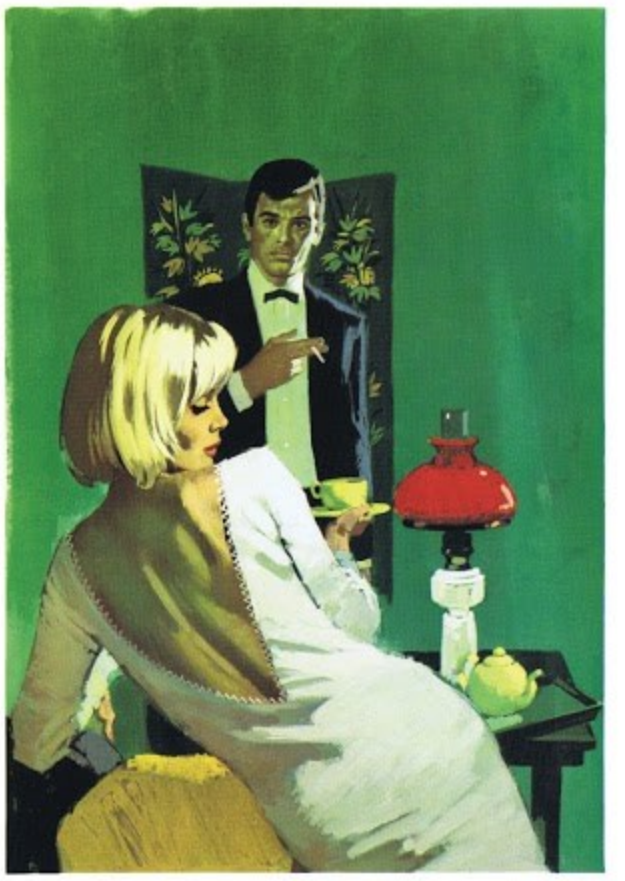
June and Schoolfriend Book of Heroines Annual, 1970 (IPC).

Romantic Adventure Library 1044 (Micron), 1983.



Romantic Adventure Library 1023 (Micron), 1982.

Mirabelle, 13th March, 1965 (Pearson).



Syndication illustration for Bardon, 1966.

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Original cover artwork from *June and Schoolfriend Picture Library 442* (Fleetway), 1968.

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Original cover artwork from *June and Schoolfriend picture Library 510* (Fleetway), 1969.

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Original cover artwork from *June and Schoolfriend Picture Library 513* (Fleetway), 1969.

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Original cover artwork from *June and Schoolfriend Picture library 514* (Fleetway), 1969.

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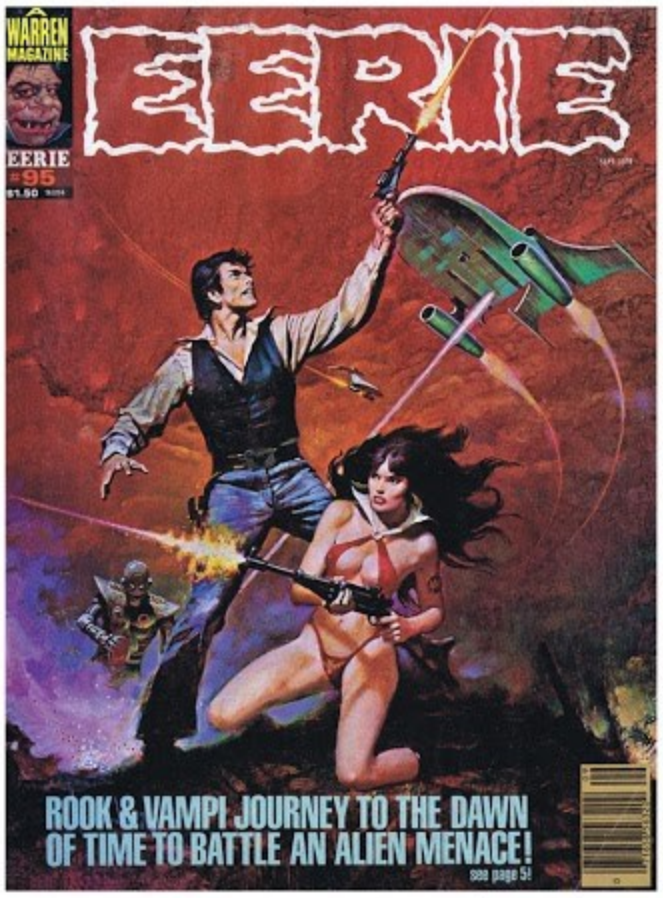
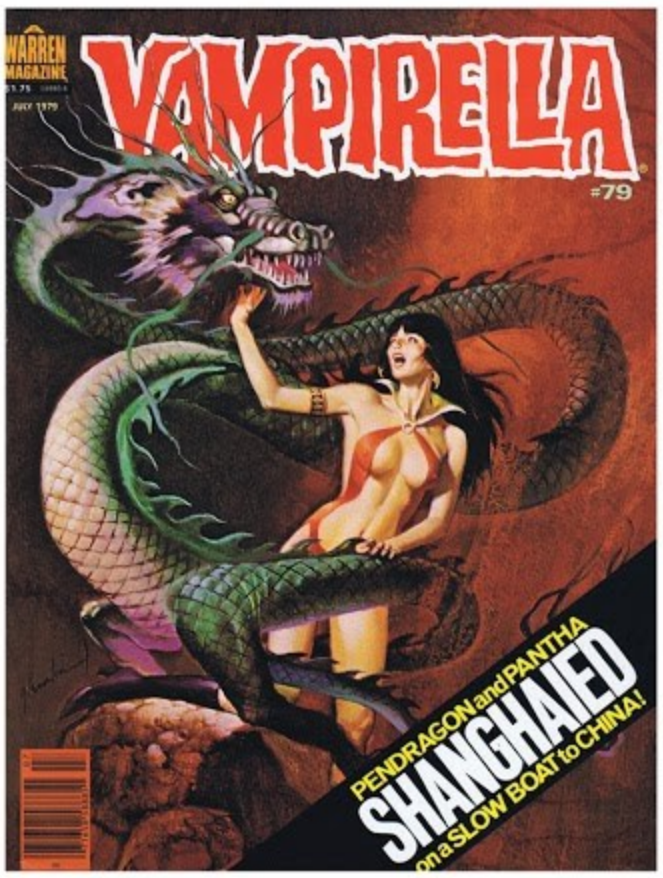
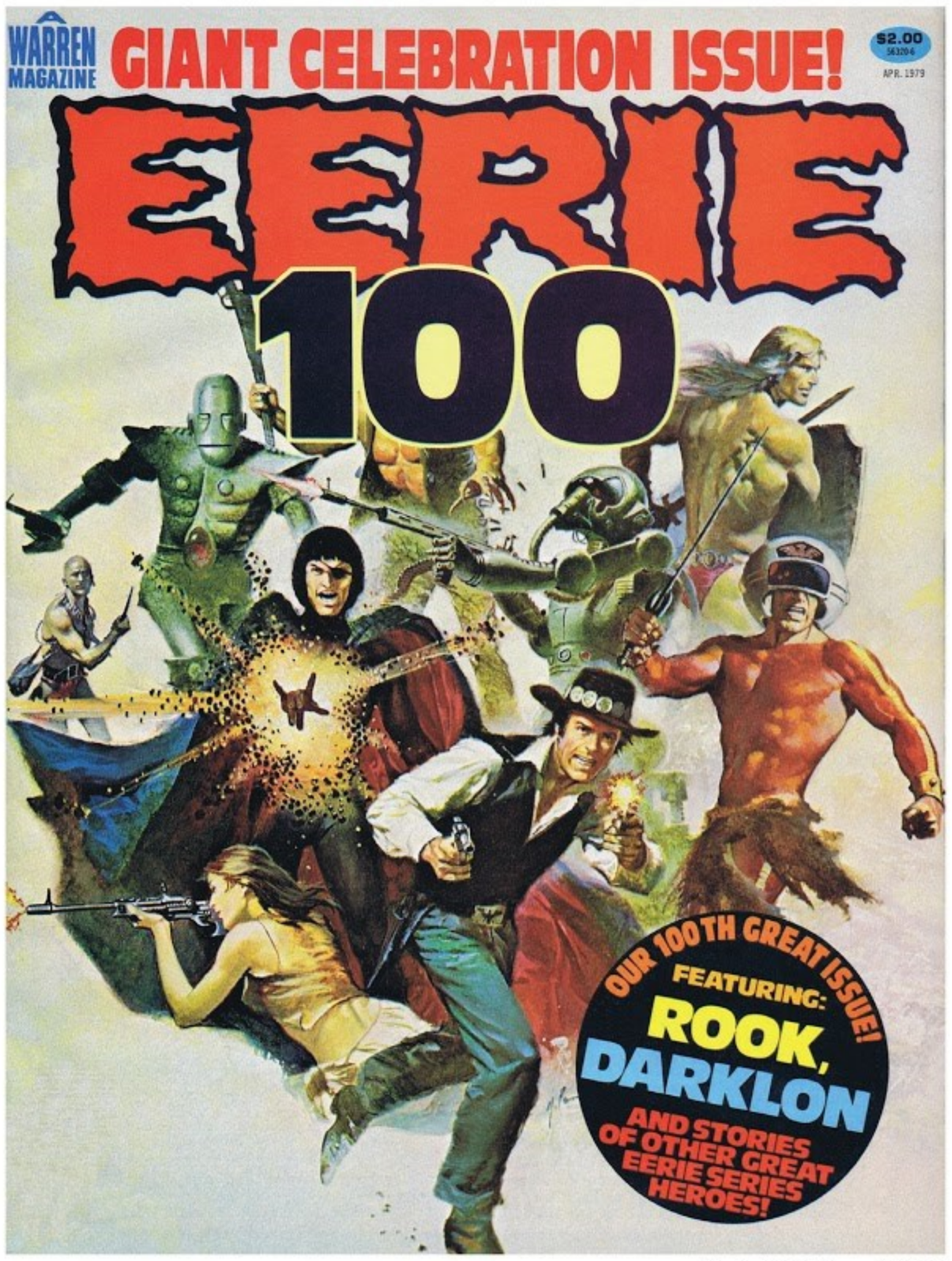


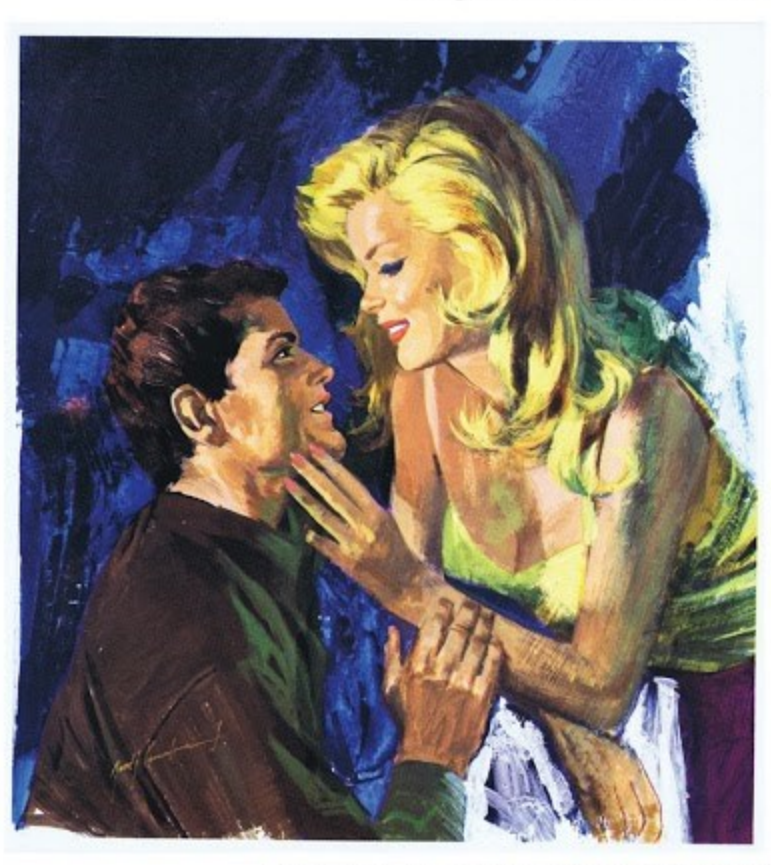
Eerie 95 (Warren), 1978.



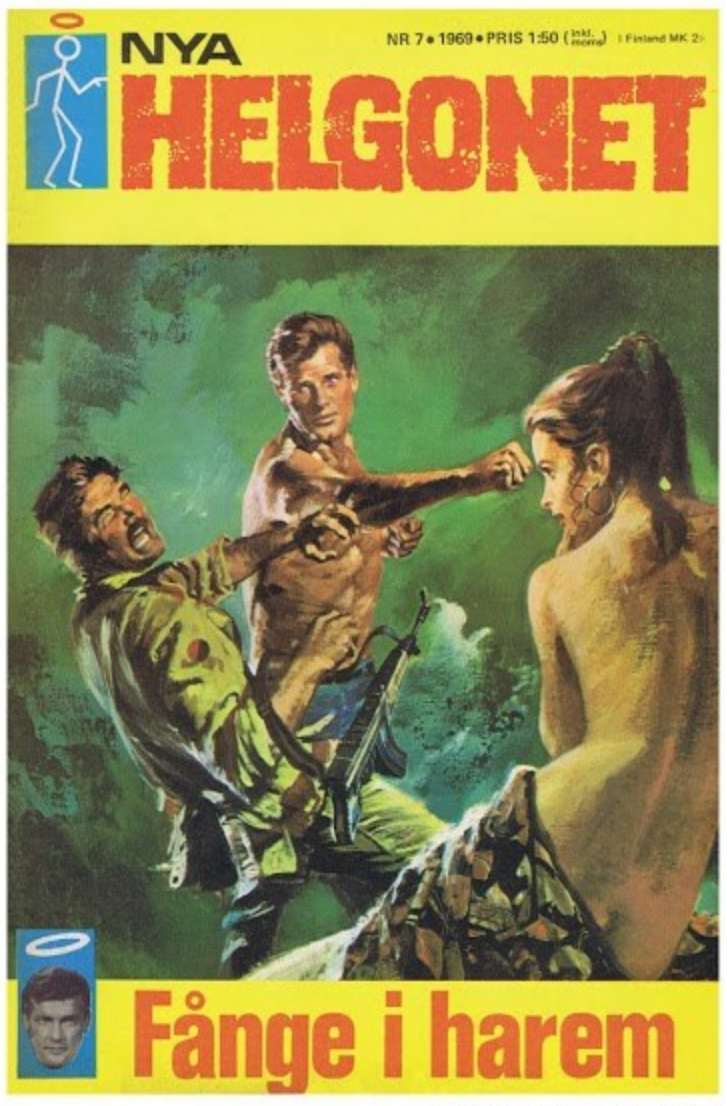
Vampirella 79 (Warren), 1979.



Eerie 100 (Warren), 1979.



Eve 14 (Semic), 1967. Bardon cover Proof.



Helgonet 7 (Semic), 1969.

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Original cover artwork from *Lone Rider Picture Library 13* (Fleetway), 1962.

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Original cover artwork from *Battle Picture Library 135* (Fleetway), 1963.

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Original cover artwork from *Battle Picture Library 204* (Fletway), 1965.

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Original cover artwork from *Battle Picture Library 217* (Fleetway), 1965.

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Original cover artwork from *War Picture Library 493* (Fleetway), 1969.

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Gabriel Picart B. 1962

Icarus, 2004.

The Abduction of Europe, 2013. Images courtesy of Gabriel Picart.

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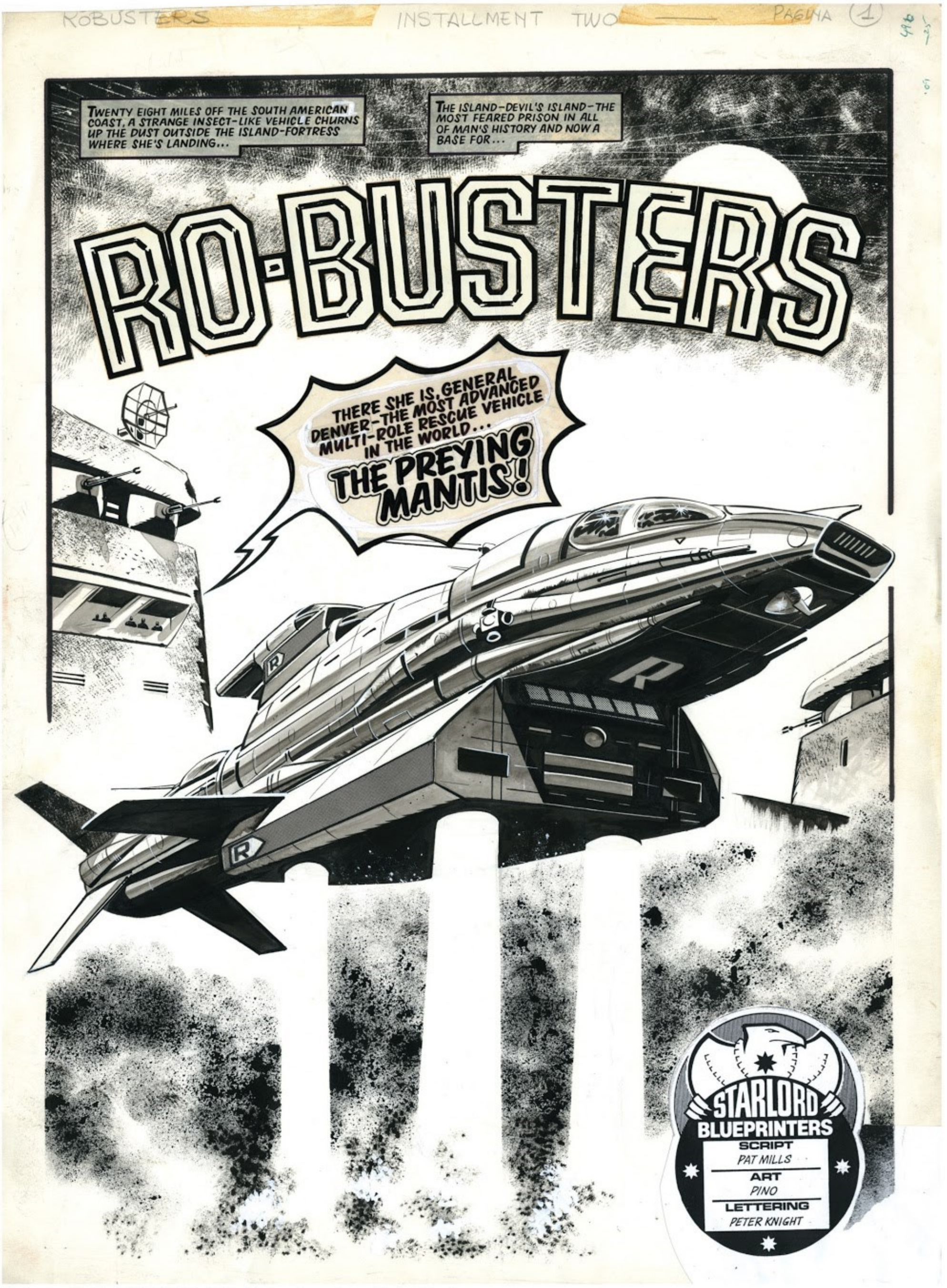
Carlos Pino B. 1940



Ro-Busters; Starlord 2 (IPC), 1978. Original artwork courtesy of Rufus Dayglo.
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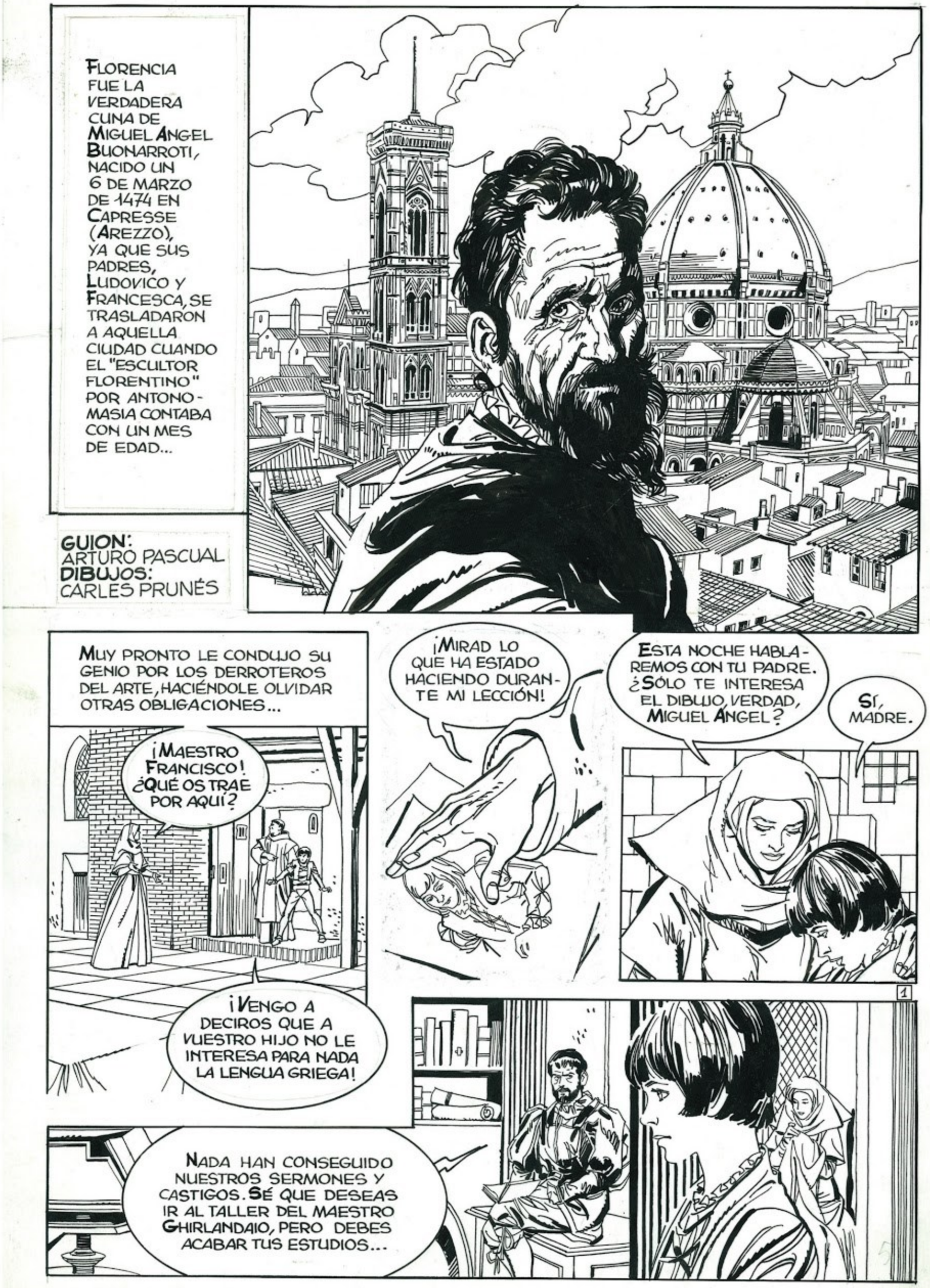

Comic Biografias 2; Miguel Angel (Bruguera), 1983. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal..

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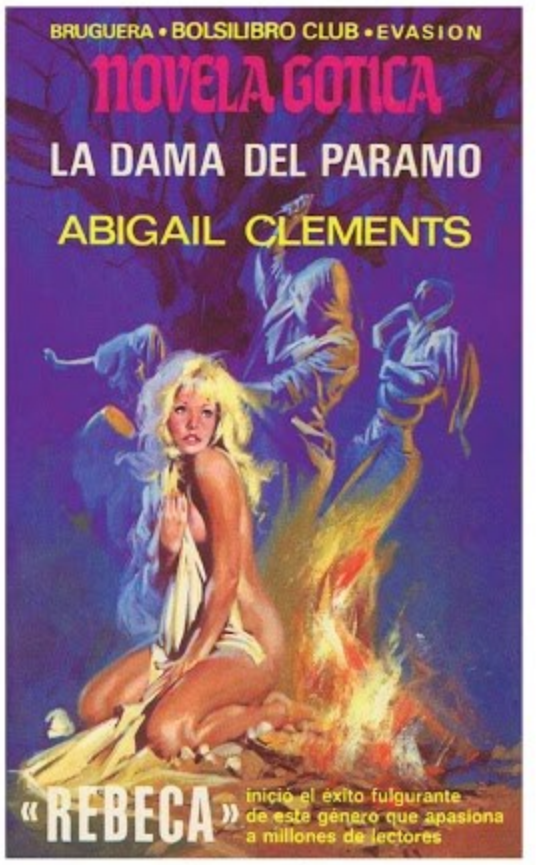
Pujolar (Albert Pujolar Soler) *B. 1938*

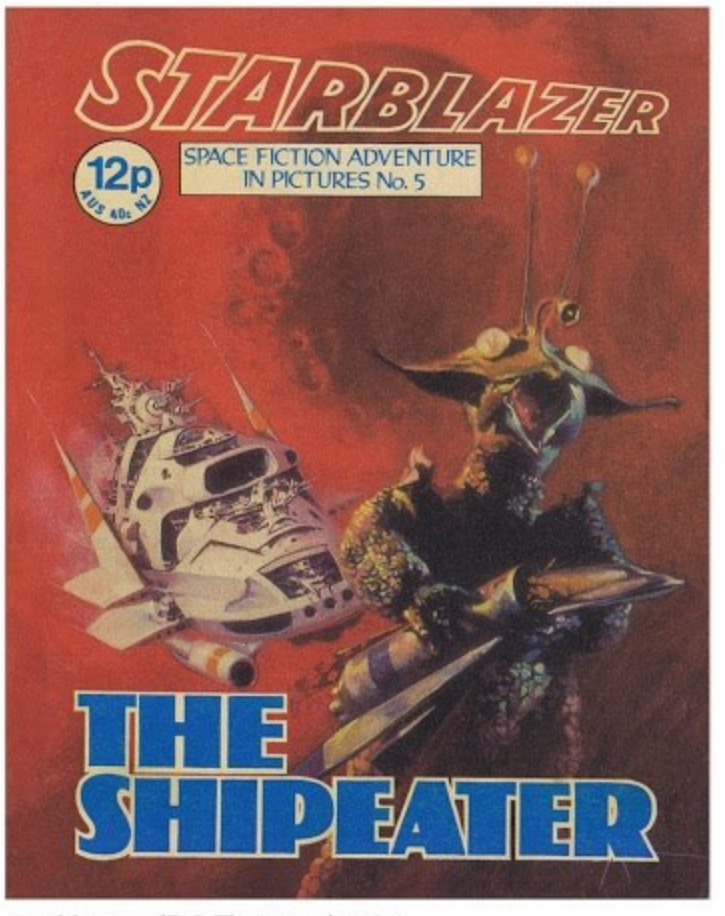
Devilina 1 (Atlas), 1975, also used as *Vampirella 111* (Warren), 1983. Original cover art



Novela Gotica (Bruguera), 1976.

Mistress of Melyn (Fontana), 1978.

Syndication illustration for Bardon, 1970s



Starblazer 5 (DC Thomson), 1979.

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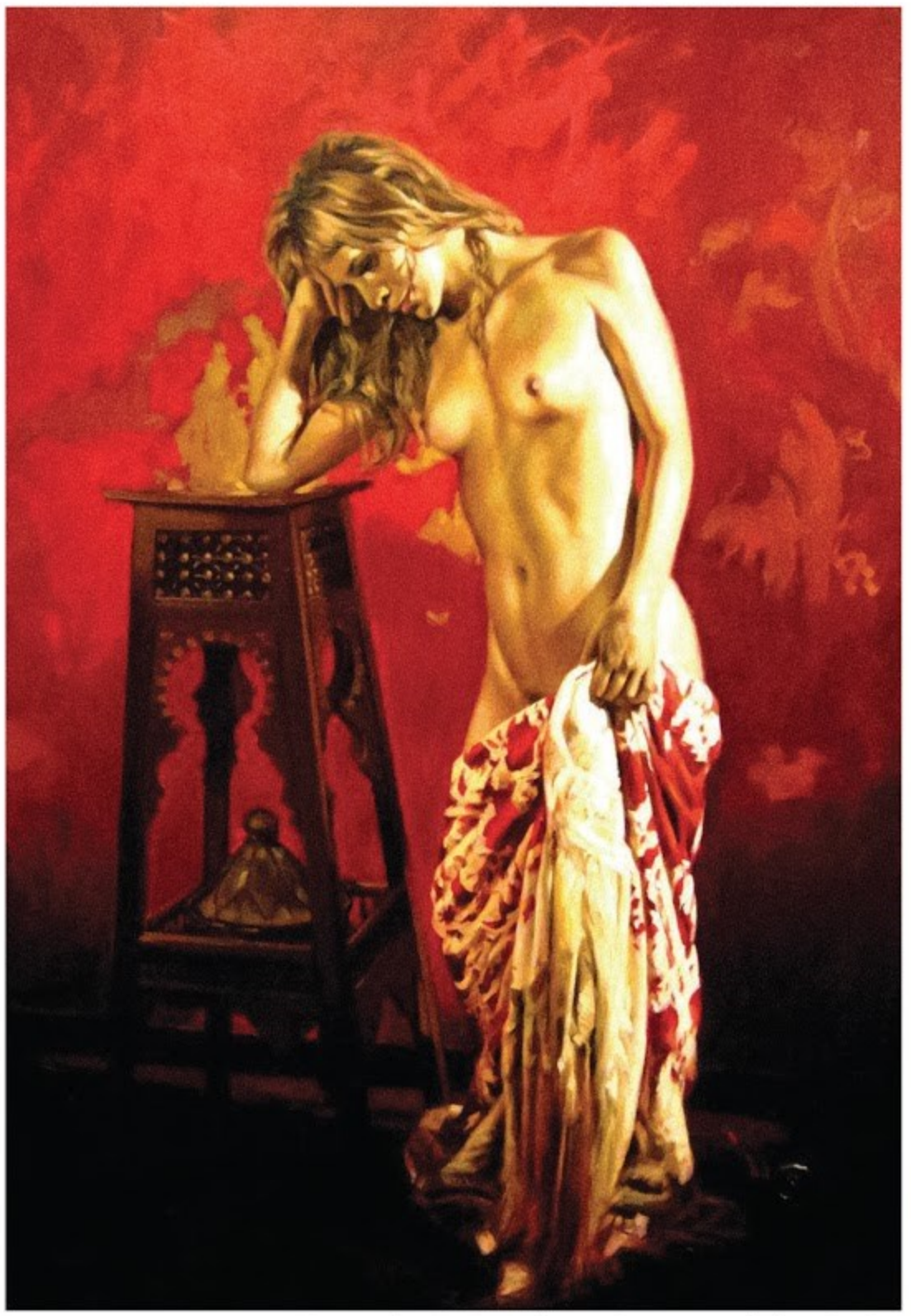
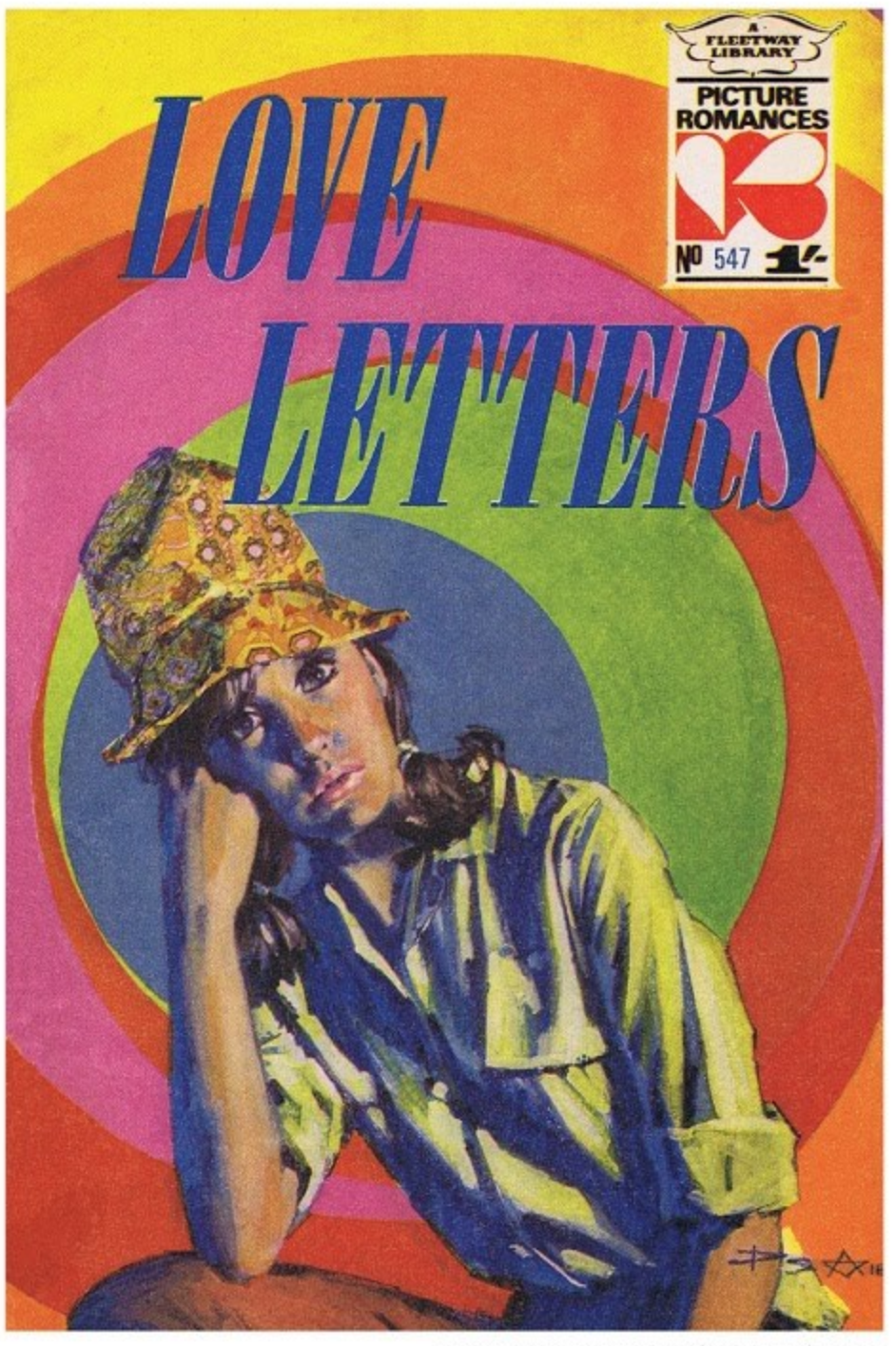


Personal work. Original artwork courtesy of Albert Pujolar.

Syndicated illustration for S.I. Used on *Star Love 836* (DC Thomson), 1980. Original cover artwork courtesy of Albert Pujolar

Syndicated illustration for S.I. Used on *True Life Holiday Special* (IPC), 1975. Original cover artwork courtesy of Albert Pujolar



Picture Romances 547 (Fleetway), 1969

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Miguel Quesada *B. 1933*

Sanson (Agustin Riera Editor), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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LOVE LETTER

. . . so precious to JANE, but when the police stepped in . . . !

Roxy, 2nd February 1963, (Fleetway).

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Jesus Redondo B. 1934

Original artwork from *Mind Wars. Starlord* (IPC), 1978.

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Dracurella volume 1 (Dargaud), 1976.
Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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LE... AKOUB-AKOUB... LABYRINTHE AUX TROIS... AKOUB-AKOUB... MONARQUES!?! AKOUBAKOUB-AKOUBAKOUB...

QU'EST-CE QU'IL LUI PREND, À CETTE ESPÈCE DE VIEUX MAL FOUTU? VOILÀ QU'IL BAFOUILLE, MAINTENANT! PFFFRRT!

CHEZ LUI, C'EST LE SIGNE D'UNE GRANDE ÉMOTION. ET SI TU NE TIENS PAS TON CLAPOIR FERMÉ, TOI, JE T'ASSOMME!

LES TROIS MONARQUES N'AIMENT GUÈRE QU'ON LES DÉRANGE, AKOUB... IL FAUT BEAUCOUP DE COURAGE OU D'INCONSCIENCE, POUR LES AFFRONTER... AKOUB... QUE SAIS-TU DU LABYRINTHE?

RIEN. OU PRESQUE. JE SAIS SEULEMENT QU'ON PEUT PARFOIS Y TROUVER LES RÉPONSES AUX QUESTIONS QUI VOUS OBSÈDENT...

TIENS! C'EST RIGOLO, ÇA! DANS LES MACHINS, LE TRUC LIQUIDE QUI ÉCLAIRE, IL EST TOUT FROID, DIS!

JE CHERCHE UNE FEMME ENTREVUE EN RÊVE... MAIS JE NE GOUVERNE PAS MES RÊVES, ET JE N'AI JAMAIS RÉUSSI À DÉTERMINER LE LIEU OÙ ELLE SE TROUVE!... GRAND CHAMAN, SOUVIENS-TOI! DU TEMPS QUE J'ÉTAIS LE CONCILIATEUR DE LA GUILDE, J'AI OBTENU POUR TA PLANÈTE UN STATUT DE NON-ALLÉGEANCE... **AUTORISE-MOI À EXPLORER LE LABYRINTHE!**

CE MAL QUI TE RONGE... QUEL EST-IL?

ALORS LÀ, ÇA A BEAU N'ÊTRE QU'UN NON-HU, IL VA TE RIRE AU NEZ!

REGARDE-LE, IL HÉSITE! TU SAIS CE QU'IL VA TE DIRE? QUE TU ES MARTEAU ET QUE TU FERAIS MIEUX DE SURVEILLER TON ALIMENTATION. ÇA T'ÉVITERAIT DE FAIRE DES CAUCHEMARS!

VIENS!

Le Vagabond des Limbes volume 4 (Dargaud), 1978. Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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Josep Marti Ripol 1916–2011 ?

Vampirella 22 (Warren), 1973. Original cover artwork courtesy of Piers Casimir.

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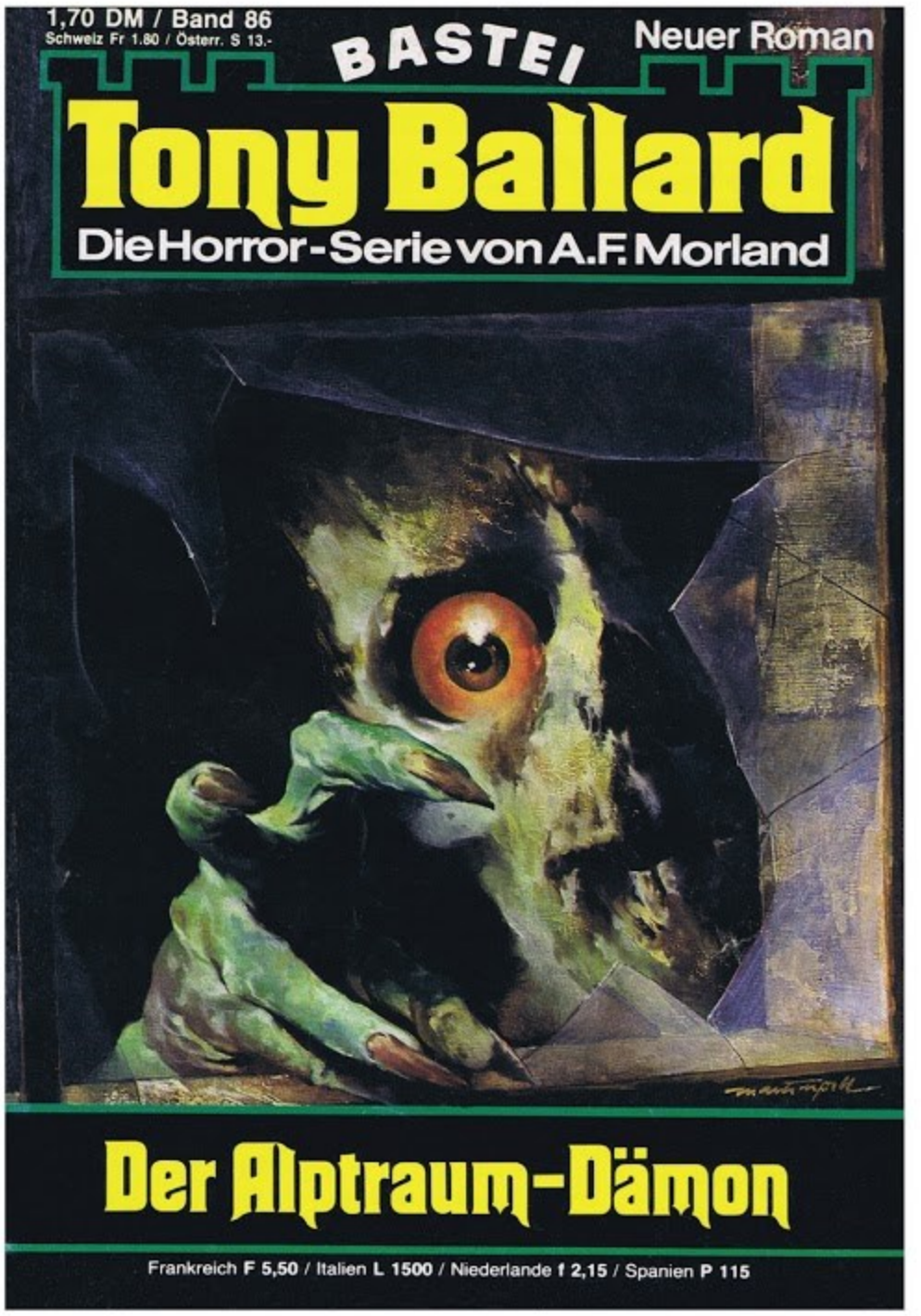
Kommissar-X 738 (Pabel).



Tony Ballard 86 (Bastei), 1984.

Vampire Tales 9 (Marvel), 1975.

Dread Of The Dead (Gredown), 1980.

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5

REDUCE TO 10"

ART BY: L. M. ROCA
STORY BY: LARRY HERNDON

VAMPIRELLA #11 TITLE: THE ESCAPE

p 24

PAGE No. 5

Original artwork from *Vampirella 11* (Warren), 1971.

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Enrique Badia Romero *B. 1930*

Original artwork from *The Protectors. TV Action 104* (Polystyle), 1973.

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Axa Epilogue (Ominiky), 2012. Original artwork courtesy of Dominique Leonard.

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Vicente Roso 1920–1996

Original artwork from *Mireille* (editions Mireille), 1958.

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Original artwork from *Philip and his Friends. Robin vol. 13 6* (Odhams), 1965.

Mireille (Editions Mireille), 1957.

Babette (Toray), 1966.

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Martin Salvador (Santiago Martin Salvador) *B. 1935*

Original artwork from *Wildcat Wayne. Look and Learn* 31st May 1969, (Fleetway).

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SHE HARDLY MOVED FROM THE WINDOW. LIKE A BUCKINGHAM PALACE SENTRY, SHE STARED STEADFASTLY, UNWAVERINGLY AHEAD, WITH DREADFUL-JOYFUL ANTICIPATION THAT COULD TURN FROM ONE TO THE OTHER, MOMENTARILY.

MOMMA, I WANT A GLASS OF **WATER!** I WANT IT **NOW!**

ALRIGHT, MARK!

YUCH... THIS WATER TASTES **FUNNY.**

POP PUSHED OPEN THE SCREEN DOOR SLUGGISHLY; HE FELT LEADEN, ABNORMALLY HEAVY. HE'D NOT YET LEARNED OF MATTY'S DEATH--IT'D BE HOURS BEFORE THE POLICE FOUND THE BOY'S BROKEN BODY AMONG THE ROCKS AND RAPIDS AT THE BASE OF THE WATER-FALL--BUT HE ENTERTAINED LITTLE HOPE.

THE HOUSE WAS **QUIET;** NO ONE CAME RUSHING TO MEET HIM. HIS HEART TIGHTENED, AND HE BLANCHED COLORLESS WITH AN INTUITION TOO STRONG TO BE ANYTHING BUT FACT.

CHOKE!

IN OTHER HOUSES, ON OTHER FARMS, OTHER CHILDREN WERE DRAWING AND **DRINKING WATER.** IT'D BE DAYS BEFORE THE CONTAMINATION COULD BE TRACED TO THE RESERVOIR AND EVEN THEN, NO ONE WOULD REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD **CAUSED** IT.

IN THE DISTANCE, POP HEARD THE FIRST OF MANY STRANGE NOISES IN THE NIGHT. IN HIS HOUSE, HE SHED THE FIRST OF MANY TEARS.

EERIE # 94 Water 48

Eerie 94 (Warren), 1978. Original artwork courtesy of Mario Girard.

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Leopoldo Sanchez (Leopoldo Sanchez Ortiz) *B. 1948*

Vampirella 39 (Warren), 1975. Original artwork courtesy of Steven Morger.

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Original artwork from *Vampirella 51* (Warren), 1976.

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Sanjulián (Manuel Perez-Sanjulián Clemente) *B. 1941*

When Sanjulián burst into the public's consciousness in July 1971 with his iconic cover for *Vampirella* 12 he was almost completely unknown both in America and Spain; but it was clear that he was already a major talent. He was born in Barcelona and in 1959, after abandoning plans for a life at sea, began a three year spell painting movie posters for the Spanish branches of Fox, Warner Brothers, and other studios. Sanjulián joined S.I. in 1961 where he moved from movie star covers for *Coleccion Idilio*, to pin ups for the Dutch publisher Kerko and illustrations for Bruguera. For the first five years of his tenure with S.I. he was also attending the Bellas Artes de Sant Jordi art school, refining his skills as a painter. The agency used him as a strip artist on comics such as *War Action* and romance strips for the foreign market, but Sanjulián admired the great American illustrators and had his heart set on painting. By the late '60s, covers for Fleetway's *Battle Picture Library* and the Spanish publisher Ferma revealed a painter of immense ability and invention, waiting for the right venue to finally express himself. That came at Warren.

Photo courtesy of Sanjulián.

Sanjulián's Warren covers appeared over the course of 12 years, but his main body of work was completed between 1971 and 1976. There is a power and richness to his use of oils and a gift for dramatic composition that marked him out as the natural successor to Frank Frazetta and many of these paintings have since become regarded as classics of fantasy art. Forty-nine of his covers for *Creepy, Eerie, Famous Monsters,* and *Vampirella* were created in this early period with another six appearing in the company's last few years, including a stunning wraparound Ghita cover for *1984* 14 in 1980. Warren also used reprints of earlier illustrations and seven recycled book covers from Ace, Avon, and Dell. Altogether he painted 59 images for the company, including a pair of glorious Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie posters, 62 if you include unpublished work for *The Spirit* and the abandoned *Yesterday, Today... Tomorrow* comic. As a further sign of his standing at the company, the first Warren calendar in 1976 was devoted to Sanjulián's work.

Throughout the '70s Sanjulián was also a prolific paperback cover artist for many of the top American and European publishers. But while Warren could not compete financially, the artist relished the freedom they gave him and felt these covers were the best advertisements for his talents. Dell, Berkley, Avon, Bantam, Playboy, Fawcett, Random House, Signet, and Popular were all keen to feature his imagery on their covers. He was particularly in demand for historical and gothic romances, including such notable commissions as his four covers to Avon's *Satanic Gothic* series in 1973 and at least 24 paintings to Dell's series of Frank Yerby books. S.I. was assiduous in promoting their artists internationally and in 1976 Sanjulián painted a number of covers for the British publisher Fontana, paired with the writers

El Cid. Cover recreation of *Eerie 66,* 1990s. Original artwork courtesy of Tom Fleming.

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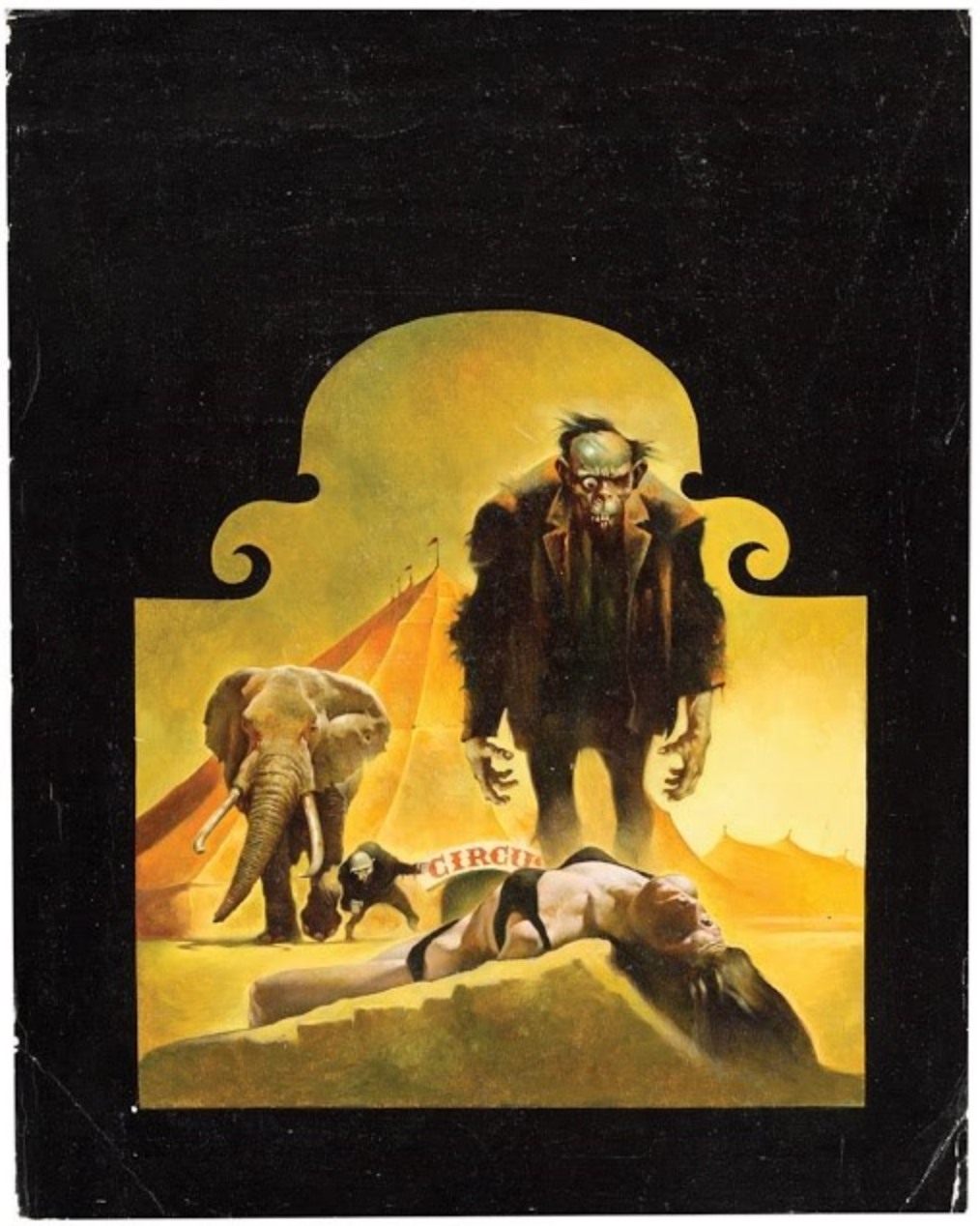
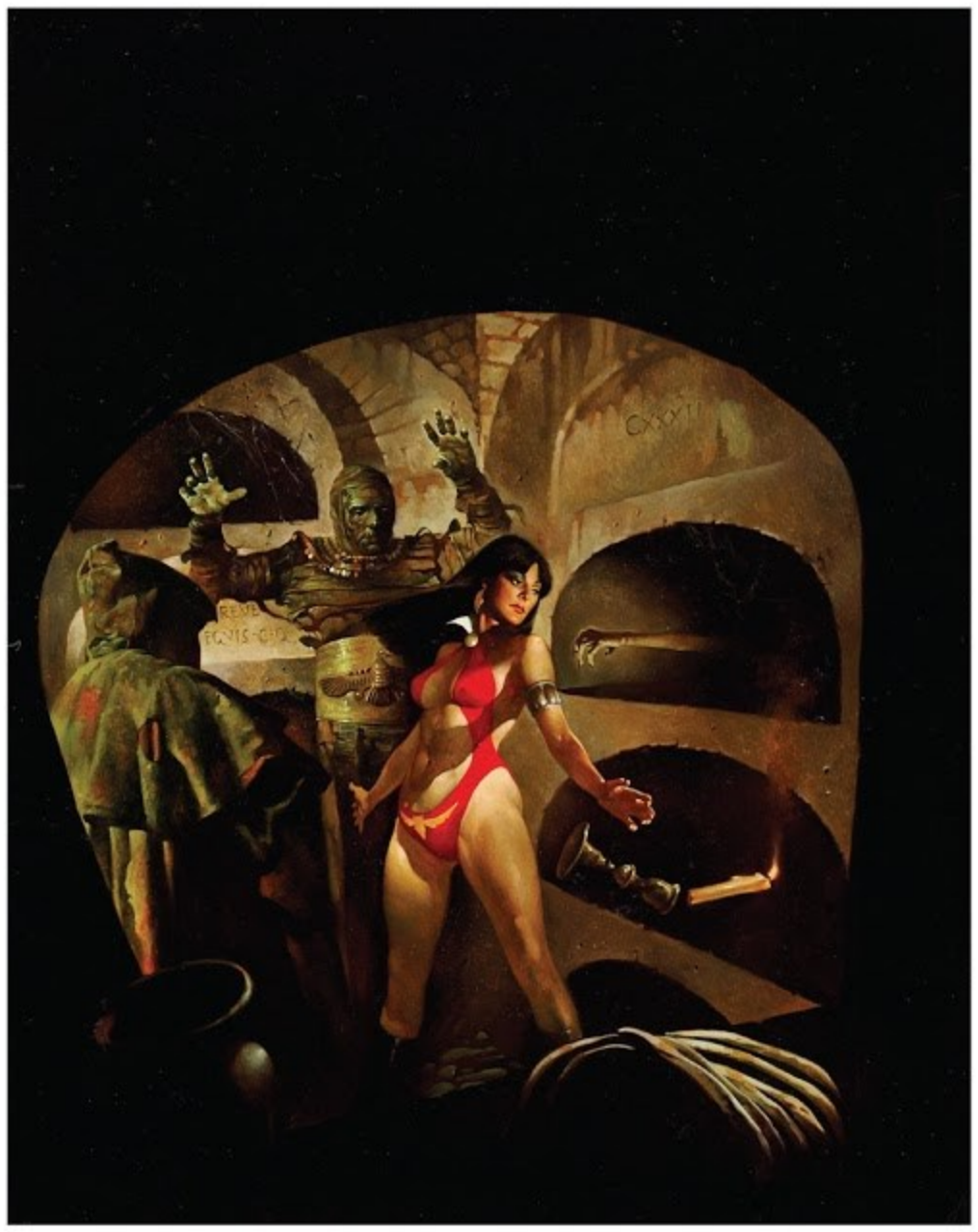


Eerie 62 (Warren)
Original cover artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com



Vampirella 38 (Warren), 1974.
Original cover artwork courtesy Heritage HA.com

Anne Mayberry and Philippa Carr. Back in America, his reputation as a major fantasy artist was cemented when he fronted a new series of Conan and Robert E Howard reissues for Ace in 1978, producing 10 in all along with other covers for Andre Norton and Jack Vance.

New Sanjulián art was rarely seen back home in the '70s, making only the occasional appearance in such comics as *Kung Fu, Vampus, Dossier Negro, 1984,* and in the '80s two last comic strips for *Comix International* and *Rumbo Sur*. In 1984 he joined the Norma agency who celebrated by publishing a hardcover career retrospective, while the artist produced five new covers for *Cimoc*. However, for Sanjulián the '80s was dominated by countless American paperback covers for a wide range of publishers and genres. Key series include Chelsea Quinn Yarbro horror covers for Bantam and Tor, six covers for the romantic *Rosalynde Chronicles* (from Playboy Press), nine historical romance paintings for Peter Danielson's *Children of the Lion* (Bantam) and eight gorgeous covers for Playboy's Stephanie Blake romances. He was a regular artist for Harlequin's romance books, while also creating fantasy covers for DAW (Tanith Lee), Ace (Edgar Rice Burroughs), Bantam, and Scholastic (Candice Ransom). More highbrow assignments included books from the Bronte sisters, Edna Ferber, and Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose* (from Warner Books in 1983) along with jobs for Readers Digest, Grove Press, and Harper Collins. Painted covers gradually fell from favor in the '90s but SF and fantasy held out long enough to include work for Michael Gear (Daw books), nine books for L J Smith's *Night Worlds* series, five covers for Christopher Stasheff (for the British publisher Pan) and assignments from DelRey, Ace, Scholastic, ROC, Wizards of the Coast, and Bantam. But as opportunities fell away in America, another market was crying out for painters: Germany.

Sanjulián's artwork was appearing in Germany as early as 1975 with covers for Pabel's *Terra* fantasy paperbacks and *Franco Solo* and *Kommisar-X* pulps. In the '80s he began a long association with Bastei by painting 17 covers for their Caprice series of romances, but the '90s and '00s were dominated by western and horror commissions. Bastei's *John Sinclair Romanheft* pulps launched an entire industry of horror detectives; and Sanjulián became one of the key illustrators of the genre. Altogether he painted 40 *John Sinclair* covers, another 40 for *Mark Hellmann* and also appeared on issues of *Jason Dark, Geister Stunde*, and *Professor Zamorra*. German readers have a particular affection for westerns and his paintings graced the covers of such Bastei titles as *Cassidy, Sundance, Western-Legenden,* and *Texas Western*. In recent years, the uniquely German sub-genre of the sexy western has proved to be enormously popular with covers invariably mixing grizzled gunslingers with naked women. For over a decade Sanjulián was one of the key contributors to Bastei's market- leading *Lassiter* title, appearing regularly up until 2007 and was also a key contributor to *Jack Slade* and *Redlight Ranch*.

In recent years Sanjulián has reconnected with comics fandom and returned to the genres that first made his name. Among his many private commissions he has painted memorable new Conan and Vampirella compositions along with scenes from John Carter of Mars, Red Sonja, *Game of Thrones,* classic horror movies and *Star Wars*. He returned to comics in 1990 with new covers for Toutain's Spanish *Creepy* and *Comix International* comics. More recently he has worked on the revived *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine, *The Creeps, King Conan, Broken Moon*, and Dark Horse's *Creepy* title, revealing an artist still at the peak of his powers.

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Vampirella 13 (Warren), 1971. Original artwork courtesy of Heritage HA.com

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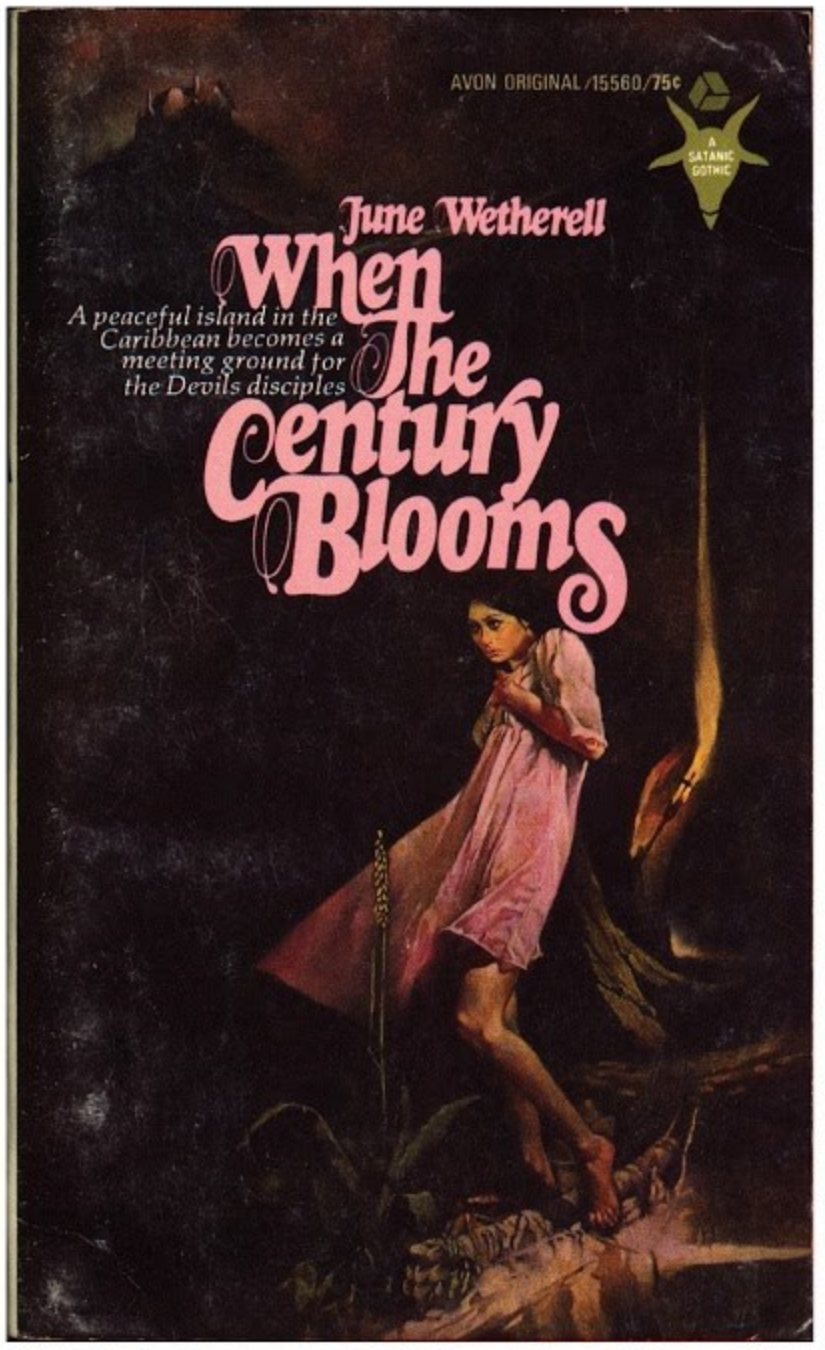

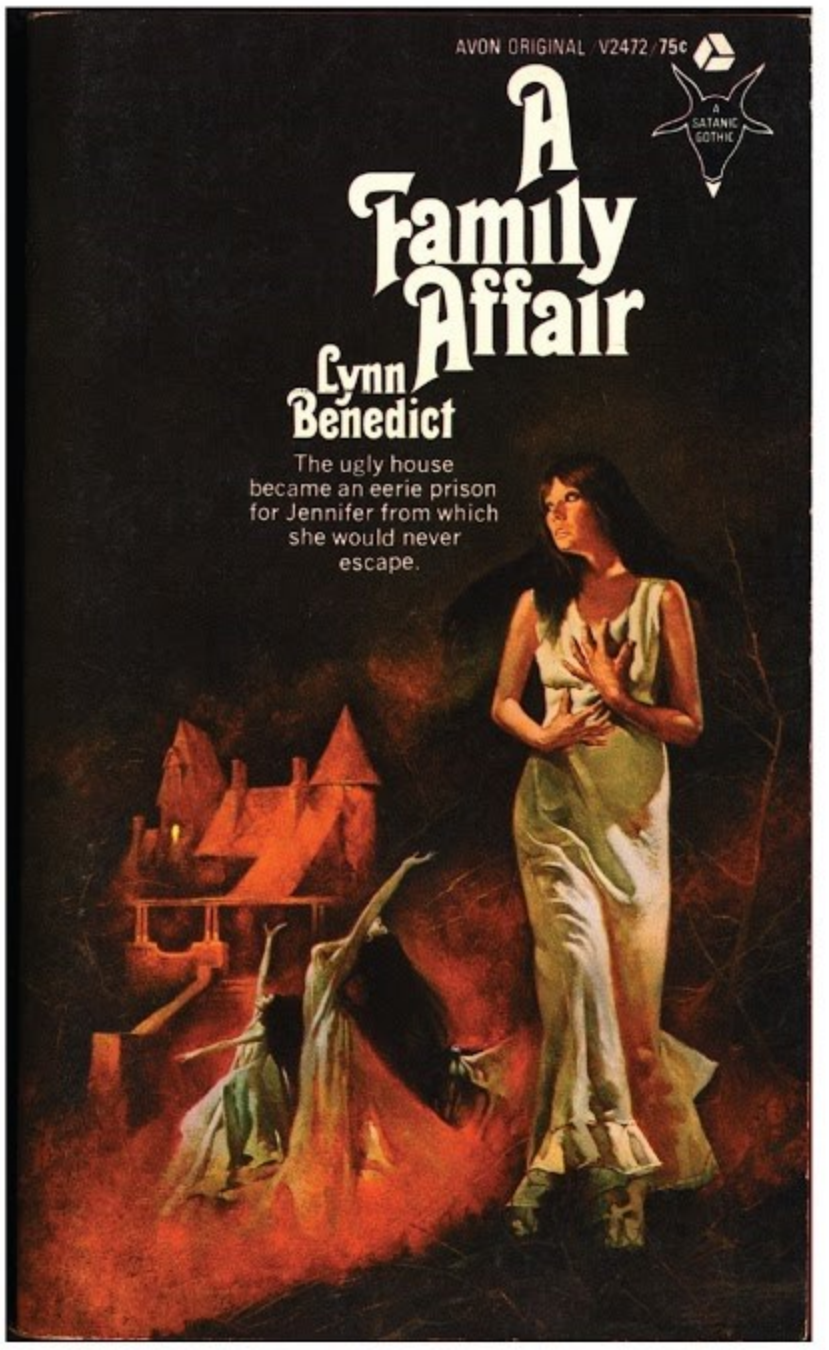

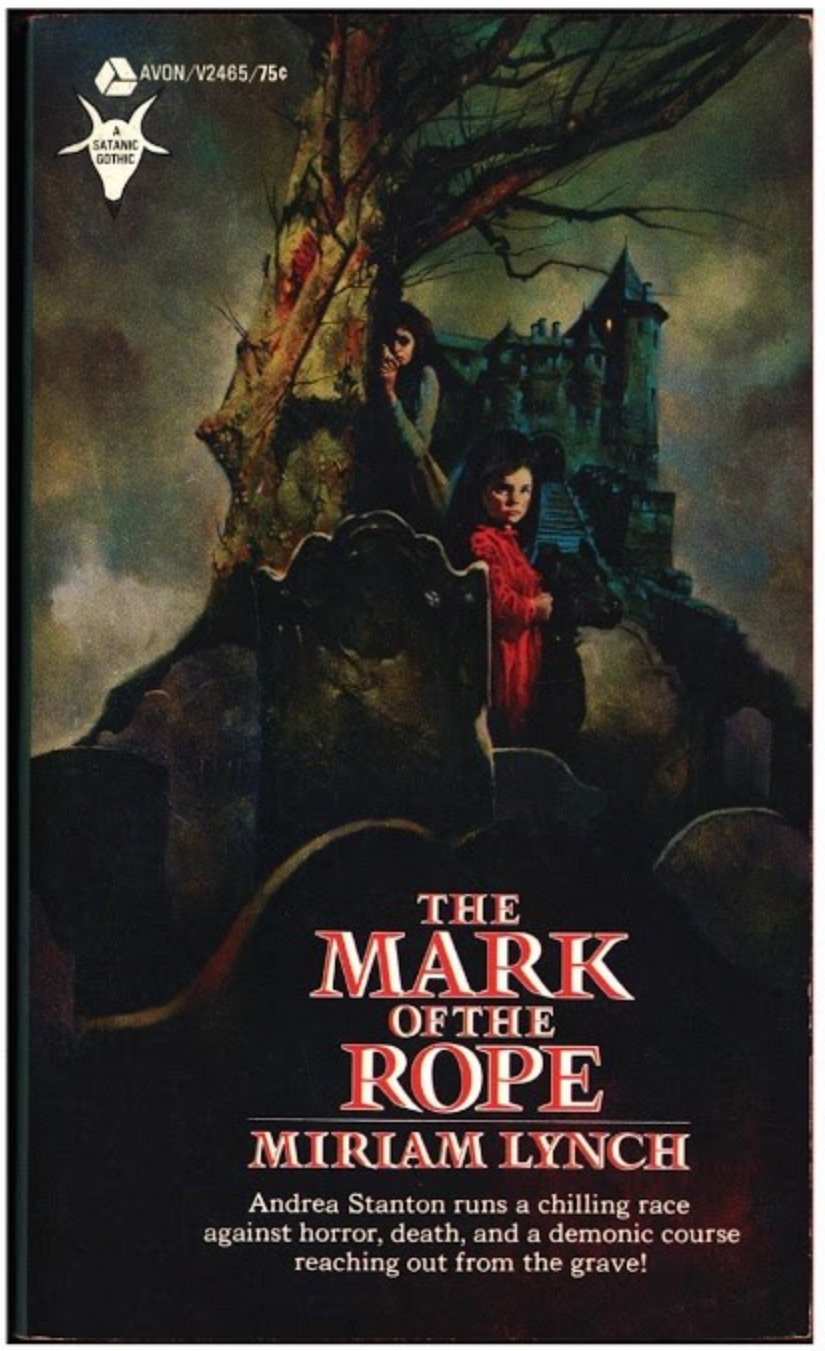

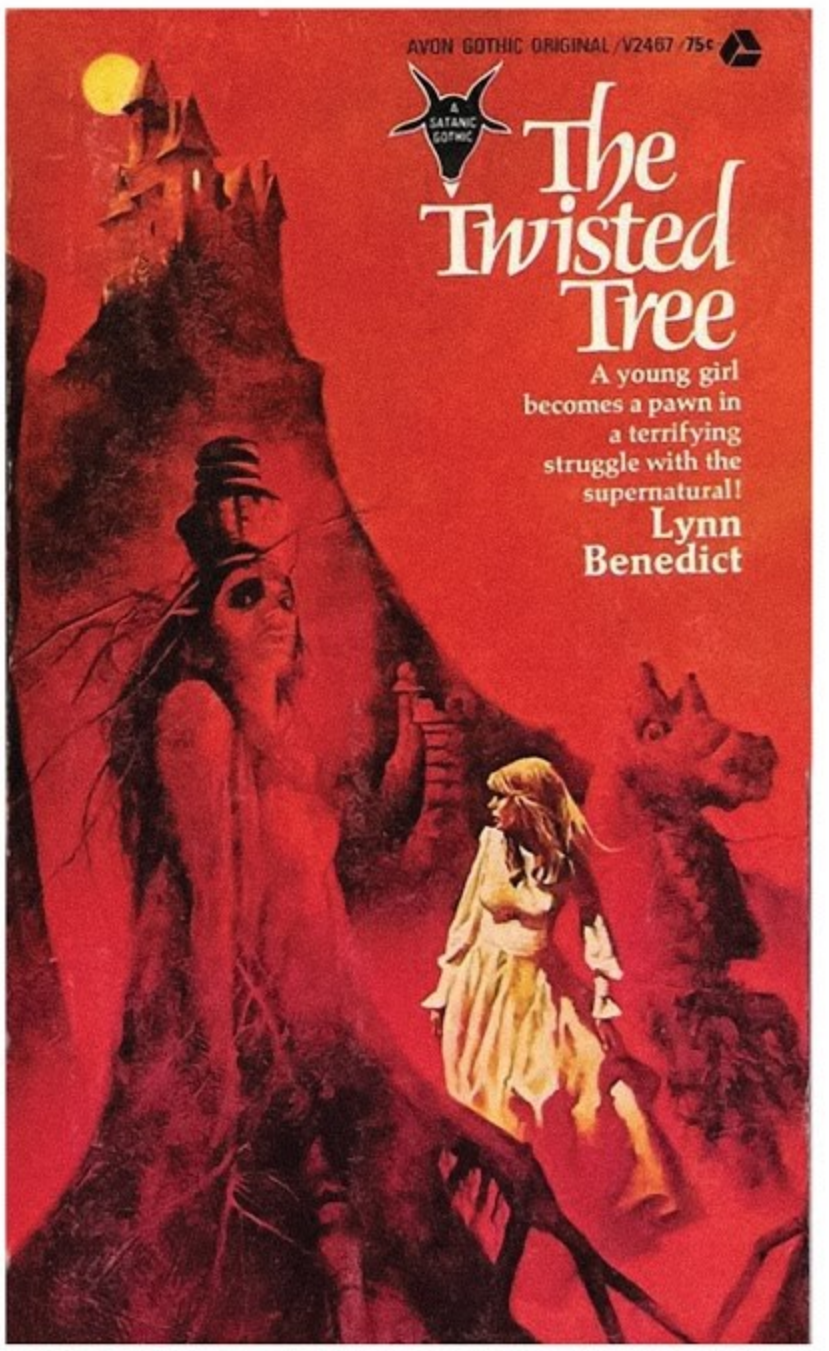

Satanic Gothic paperbacks (Avon), 1973. Images courtesy of PaperbackArt.com.

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Vampirella 36 cover recreation, 1990s. Original artwork courtesy of Tom Fleming.

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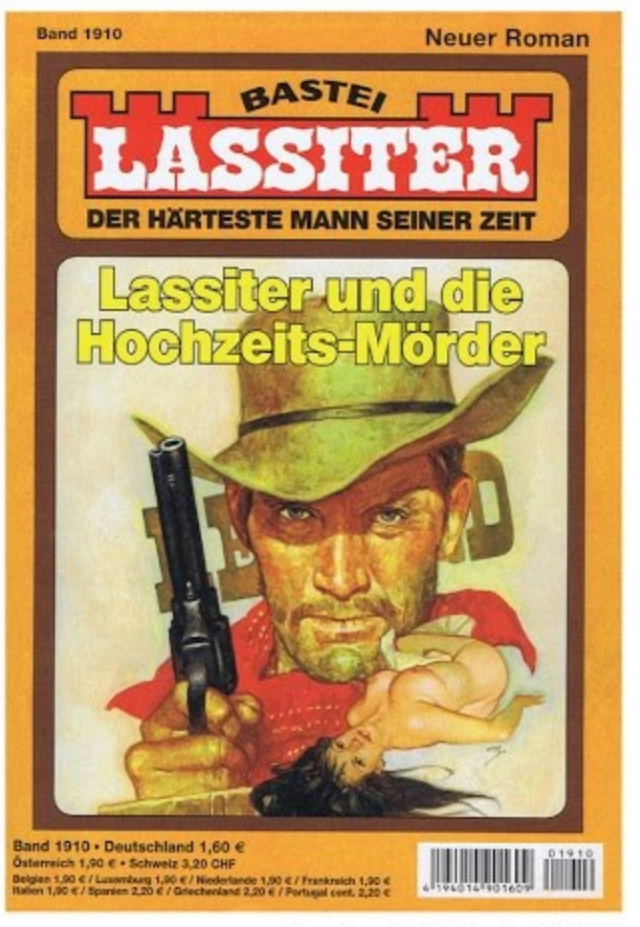
Professor Zamorra 724 (Bastei), 2002. Original cover artwork courtesy of Sanjulián

John Sinclair 1214 (Bastei), 2001. Original cover art courtesy of Sanjulián.

Franco Solo 6 (Pabel), 1976.

Kommissar-X 877 (Pabel), 1975.



Lassiter 1910 (Bastei), 2009.

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VICENTE SEGRELLES *B. 1940*

Cimoc 4 (Norma), 1981. Original cover art courtesy of Vicente Segrelles.

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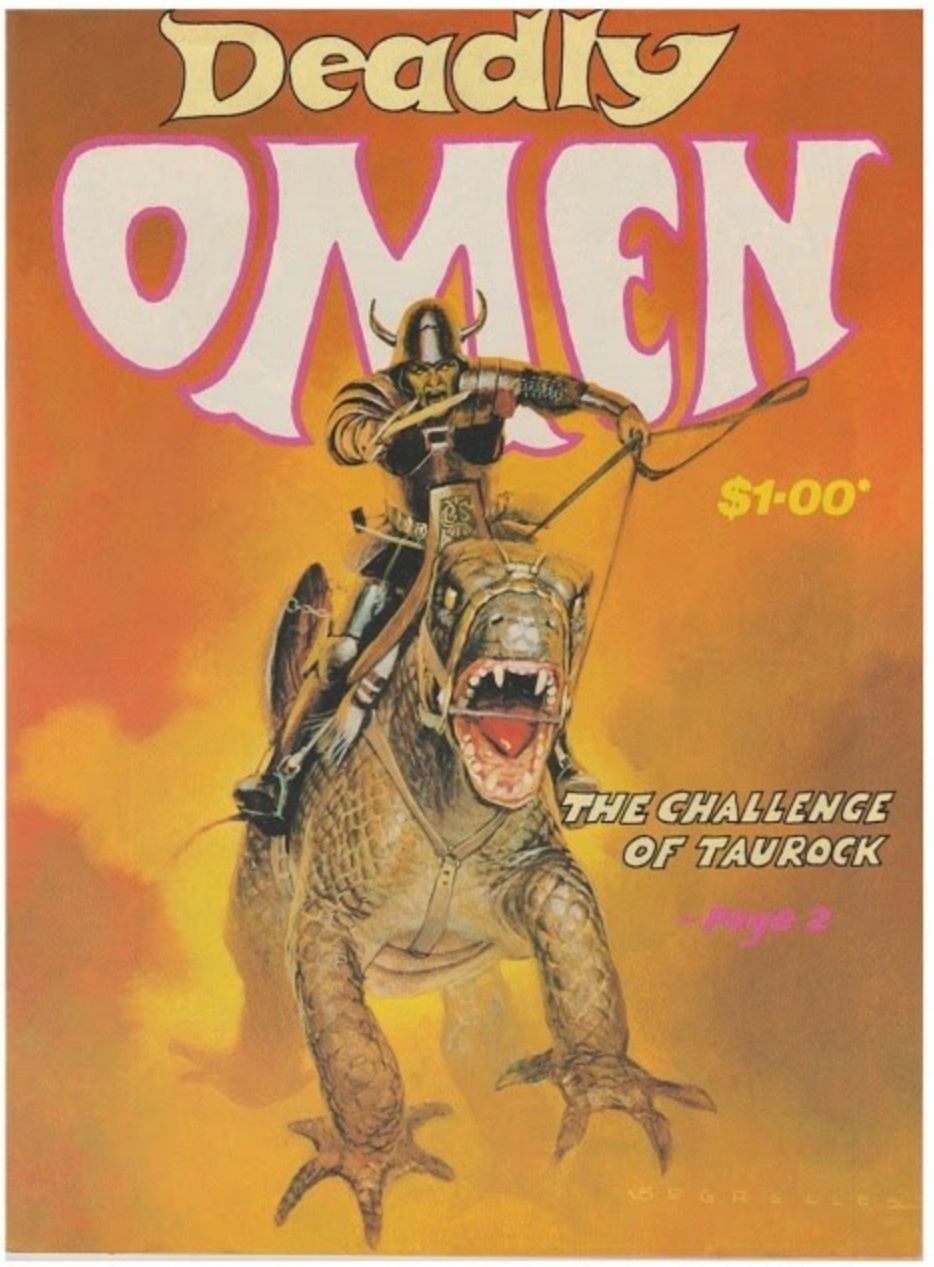
Terror, 1974. Original artwork courtesy of Vicente Segrelles

The World's Desire (Norma). Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.



Deadly Omen (Gredown), 1980. Image courtesy of Daniel Best

Wicked Witchs' Tales (Gredown), 1978. Image courtesy of Daniel Best

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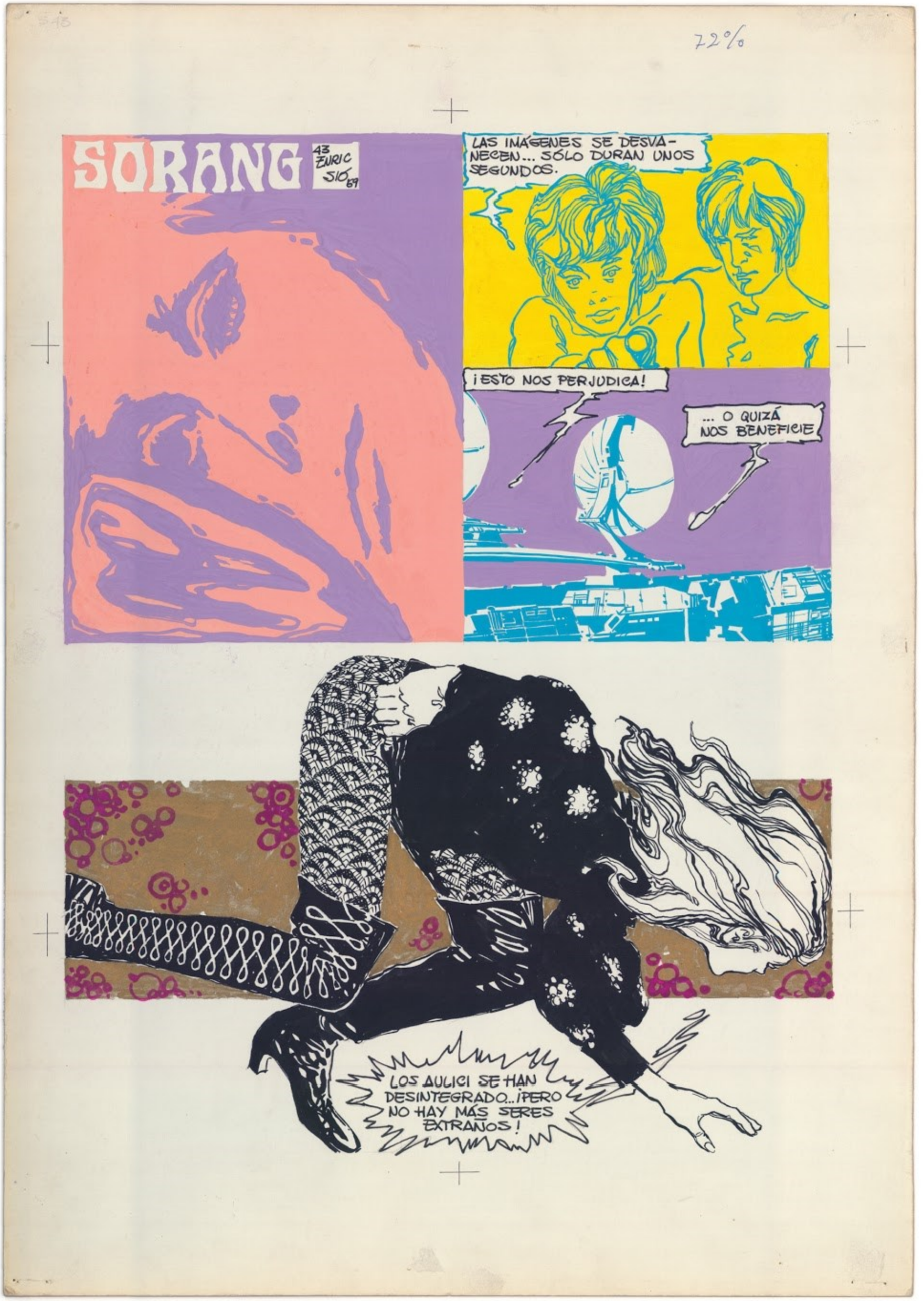
Enric Sió 1942–1998



Sorang. Vector 2 (Salvat), 1969. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura

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Aghardi. Linus (Milano LIbri), 1969. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura

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Mis Miedos. Dracula 2 (Buru Lan), 1972. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura.

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Mara. Linus (Milano Libri), 1973. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura.

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Rambla 8 (García & Beá), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura.

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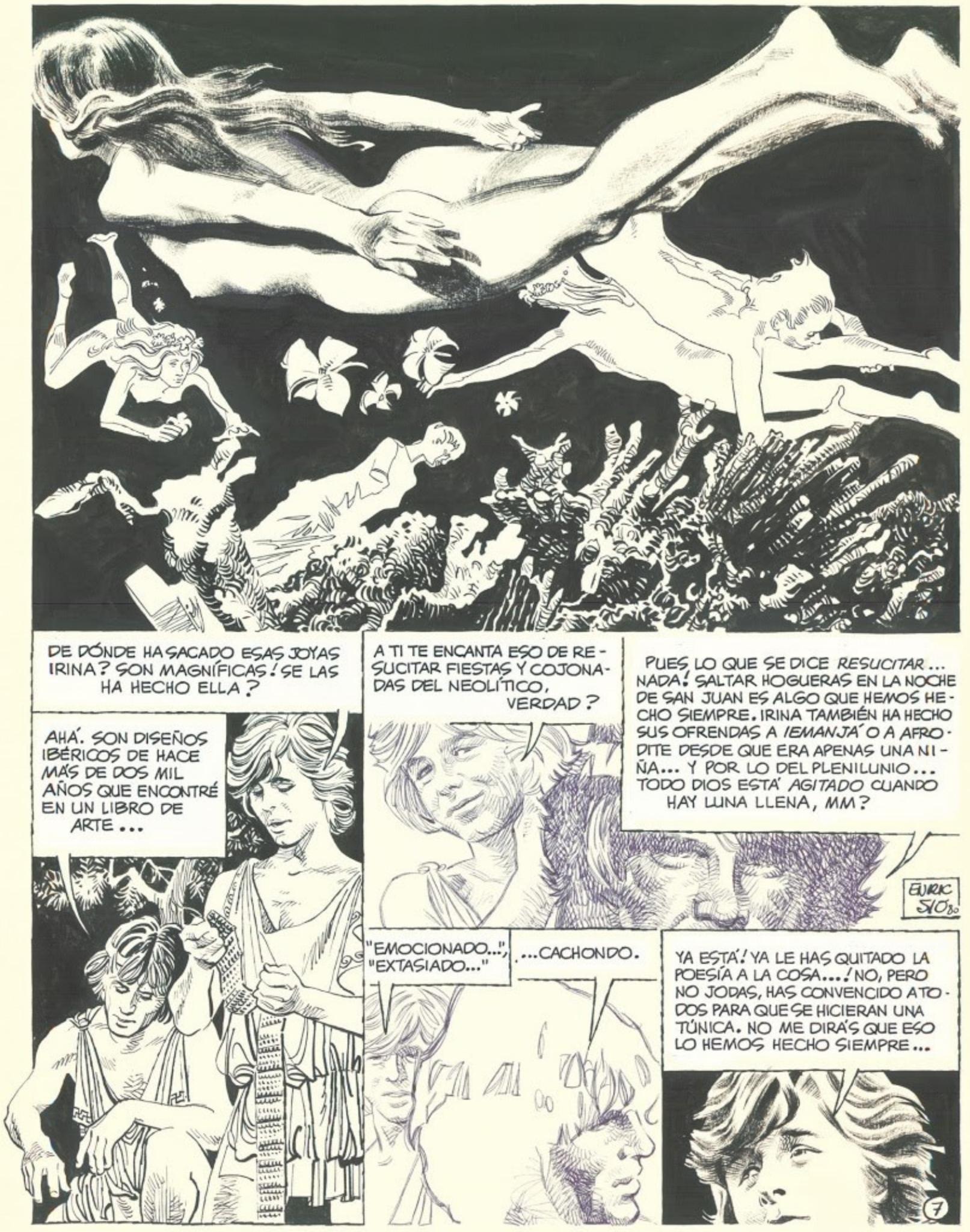

Rambla 21 (García & Beá), 1984. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura.

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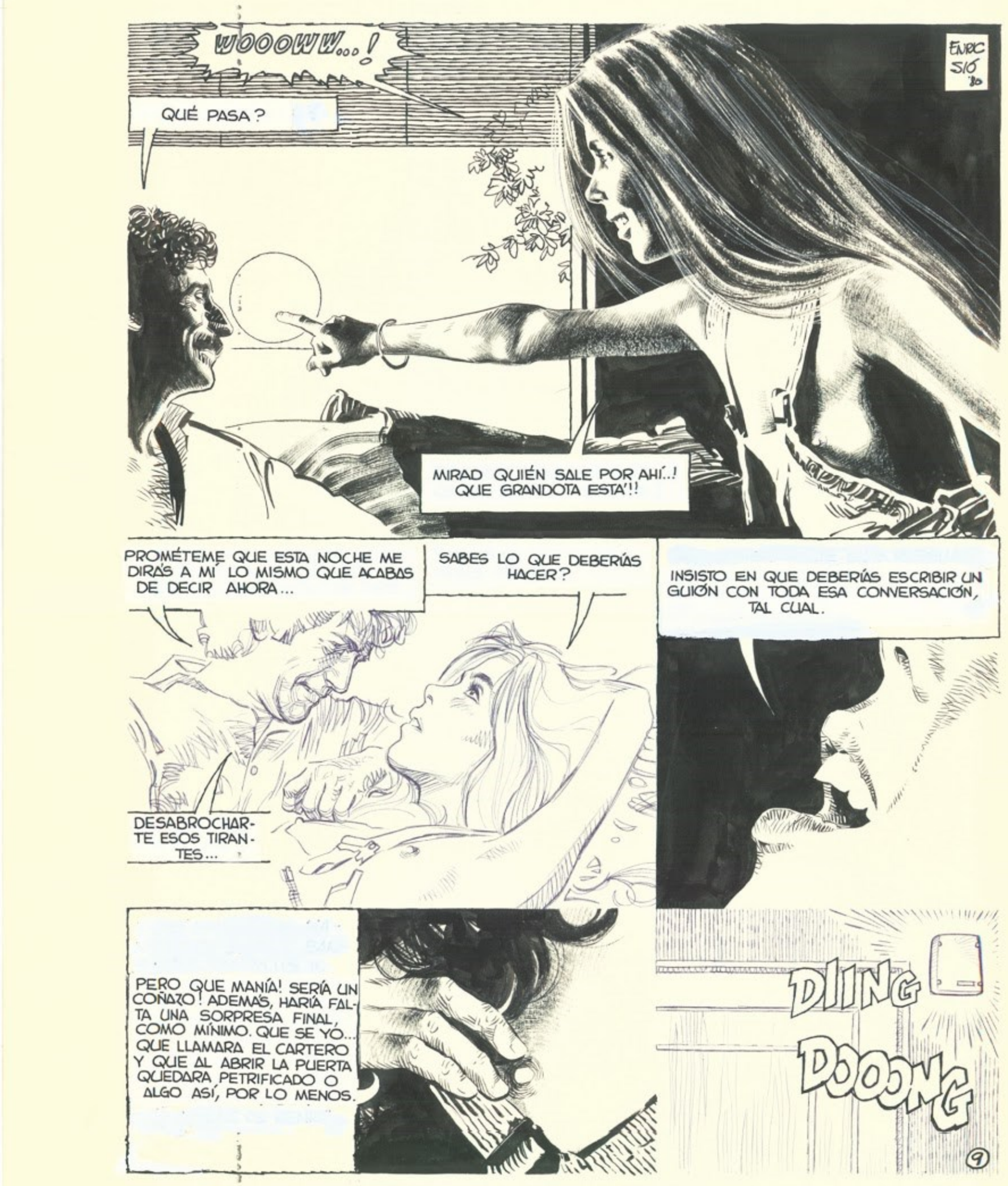

Rambla 23 (Garcia &Beá), 1984. Original artwork courtesy of Carmen Amorós Valldaura.

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Flesh. 2000AD 5 (IPC), 1977. Original artwork courtesy of Rufus Dayglo.

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Juan Sole Puyal B. 1936

Original artwork from *Valentine*, 22nd February 1964 (Fleetway).

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Original artwork from *School in The Sun. Tina 23* (Fleetway), 1967.

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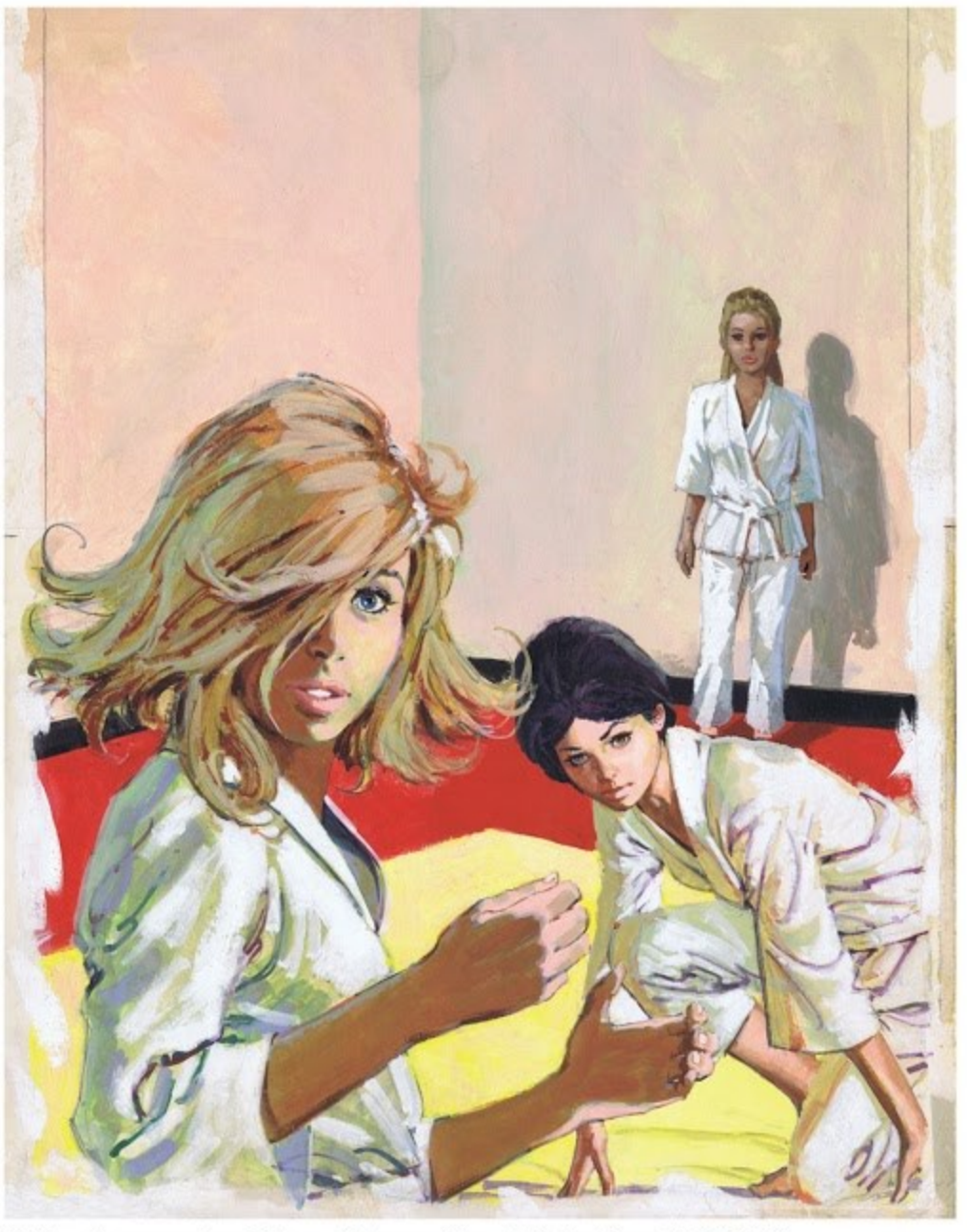
Manfred Sommer 1933– 2007

Manfred Sommer was an artist with a Renaissance talent; an illustrator, painter, novelist, scriptwriter, and cartoonist. His creative and artistic legacy is tremendously fertile and of the highest quality, all this as a consequence of his great personality. A wise and sensitive man, he described himself as: "Born in San Sebastian (in the Basque Country) and raised in Barcelona, the son of a devoted protestant and a fervent catholic".

He wrote:

I was born in the embers of a useless world war; I attended a civil war during my tender years and immediately after I had the honor of attending another useless and denigrating world war. Afterwards, since this planet is everything but boring, my generation was gifted with a huge selection of more or less cold wars: Indochina, Korea, Israel, Berlín, Budapest, Prague, Vietnam, Biafra, Pakistan, and so on... Summarizing: I became a sceptic and I just decided not to believe anything but to feel everything. There are no homelands to me, only landscapes: there are no groups, just human beings. That's why pleasure is one of the things that I still could use: I don't believe in it, but I'm able to feel it.

Manfred started his artistic/professional path in the late '40s, at only 14 years old. Every day after school, he illustrated a series of tales entitled *Cuentos Marujita* for Editorial Molino. In the following years, along with illustrations, he drew detective and adventure comics for different publishers including *Conspiración Sangrienta*, an adventure by Carlos Martín for the 1957 *El Cachorro Almanaque*. He also created Tigre for Geniés Publishing. He was deeply influenced by his favorite creators Milton Caniff, Frank Robbins, and Will Eisner.



Original cover artwork from *Princess Tina*, 17th October 1970 (IPC).

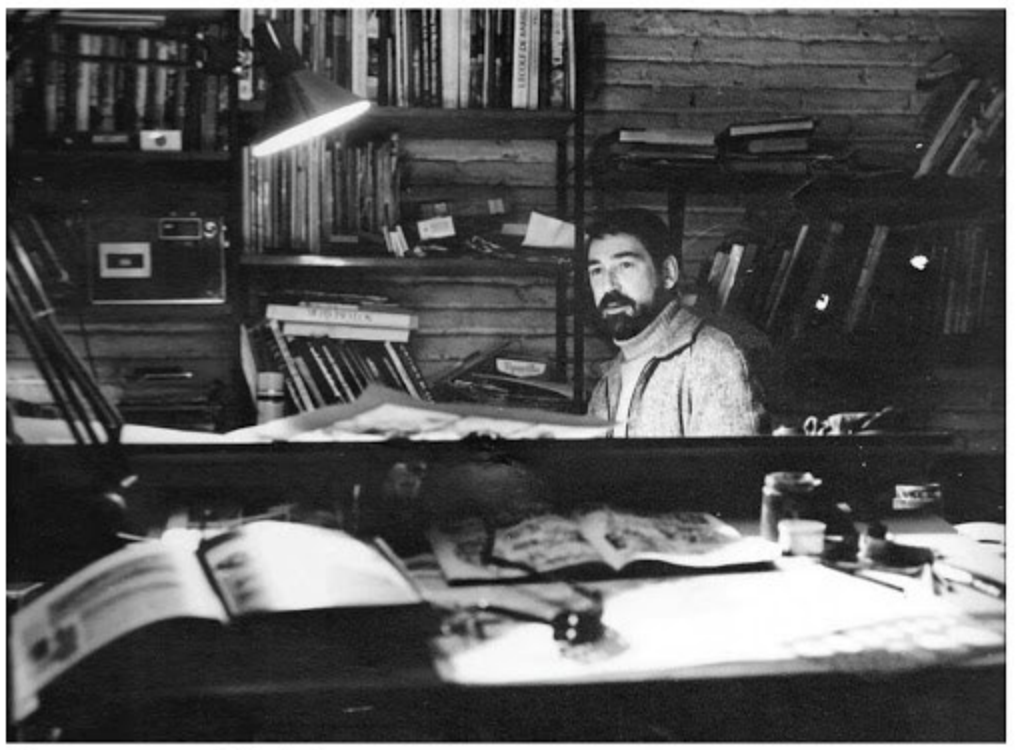


Photo courtesy of Maria Sommer.

During the late '50s he moved to Brussels and Paris where he stayed with Julio Ribera and started working for international agencies such as A.L.I. on a wide variety of commissions. Among the jobs he worked on were illustrations for magazine serials, comic strips in newspapers using gouache techniques, and war and romance comic books for England. In this new period, he felt forced to follow the graphic trends that were popular in Europe at that time, led by Alex Raymond with *Rip Kirby* and Stan Drake with *Juliet Jones*. He was also highly influenced by American illustrators such as Lynn Buckham, Mike Ludlow, Joe Demers, Al Muenchen, Joe Bowler, Bernie Fuchs, and Austin Briggs.

Throughout the '60s he continued to work for agencies, but now back in his native Spain. Sporadic British jobs included strips for *Romeo, Star Love,* and *Serenade* and a brief tenure in 1970 as the cover artist for *Princess Tina*. He also started working for advertising agencies creating illustrations and billboards and was in charge of a team that created animated ads. In the mid-'60s he returned to illustration for publishers such as Molino, Bruguera, Editorial Noguer, and Dell in America, along with Syndicated work for S.I. This was a very fertile period with Manfred, creating covers for romance, gothic, historical, crime, western, and horror paperbacks along with German Romanheft pulps. The techniques he used were varied, from black and white gouache to tempera and oil.

In 1971 he drew "The Maiden and the Monster!" written by Stan Lee, for Marvel's *Monsters on the Prowl* 12. On that same trip to America he also found a very well-paying job drawing sadomasochistic strips with Eric Stanton, using the pen-name Fred Winter. Most of these, such as *Bonnie and Clara*, were fully painted in color with just one in black and white. With these commissions (apparently financed by Howard Hughes) he made enough money to take the leap into the world of painting, exhibiting in galleries until the end of the '70s when he re-entered commercial illustration for a brief period and made a triumphant return to Spanish comics.

The five years Manfred devoted to comic strips in the early '80s made him one of the stars of the great magazine explosion. As both writer and artist he created *El Lobo Solitario* for *Hunter, Polux* for *Metropol*, strips for *Rambla, Comix Internacional,* and *L'Eternauta*

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and most signficantly his most famous work, the war correspondent Frank Cappa for *Cimoc*. Altogether he drew 17 episodes of Frank Cappa for *Cimoc*, and another four for *K.O.* which have been collected in several albums over the years since they first appeared. *K.O.* and *Metropol* were published by the short lived artists' collective Editorial Metropol of which Manfred was a founding member.

With the collapse of the magazine boom Manfred turned once again to gallery painting with a variety of subjects including Ballerina's and boats. He also wrote and illustrated a series of seven children's books for Editorial Everest including *Naga el pequeño Sabio*. In 2001 his friend Carlos Gimenez suggested he should approach the Italian publisher Sergio Bonelli Editore which resulted in a series of lengthy strips starring the legendary western hero Tex. The first of these was in the prestigious *Albo Speciale* (17 *Mercante di Schiavi* in 2003), followed by *Tex* 546 and 547 in 2006. In 2007 Manfred died, leaving behind an incomplete *Tex* episode which was finished by the Italian artist Leomacs (*Almanaco del West* 2009; *Capitán Blanco*)

Looking back we remember that as children we often used to visit our fathers studio, and Alfredo used to spend all day there. Alfredo is an artist too (Genies is his artistic name) and they've spent all their lives together there drawing, listening to Frank Sinatra and cracking jokes. Maria also liked to spend there some time, reading all the old books about Hollywood stars and exotic countries that her father had, and playing with the plastic guns and cowboy hats he used as props.

ALFREDO SOMMER and MARIA SOMMER June 2016

K.O. Comics 2 (Metropol), 1984.

Syndication illustration for S.I., 1970s. Original art courtesy of Maria Sommer.

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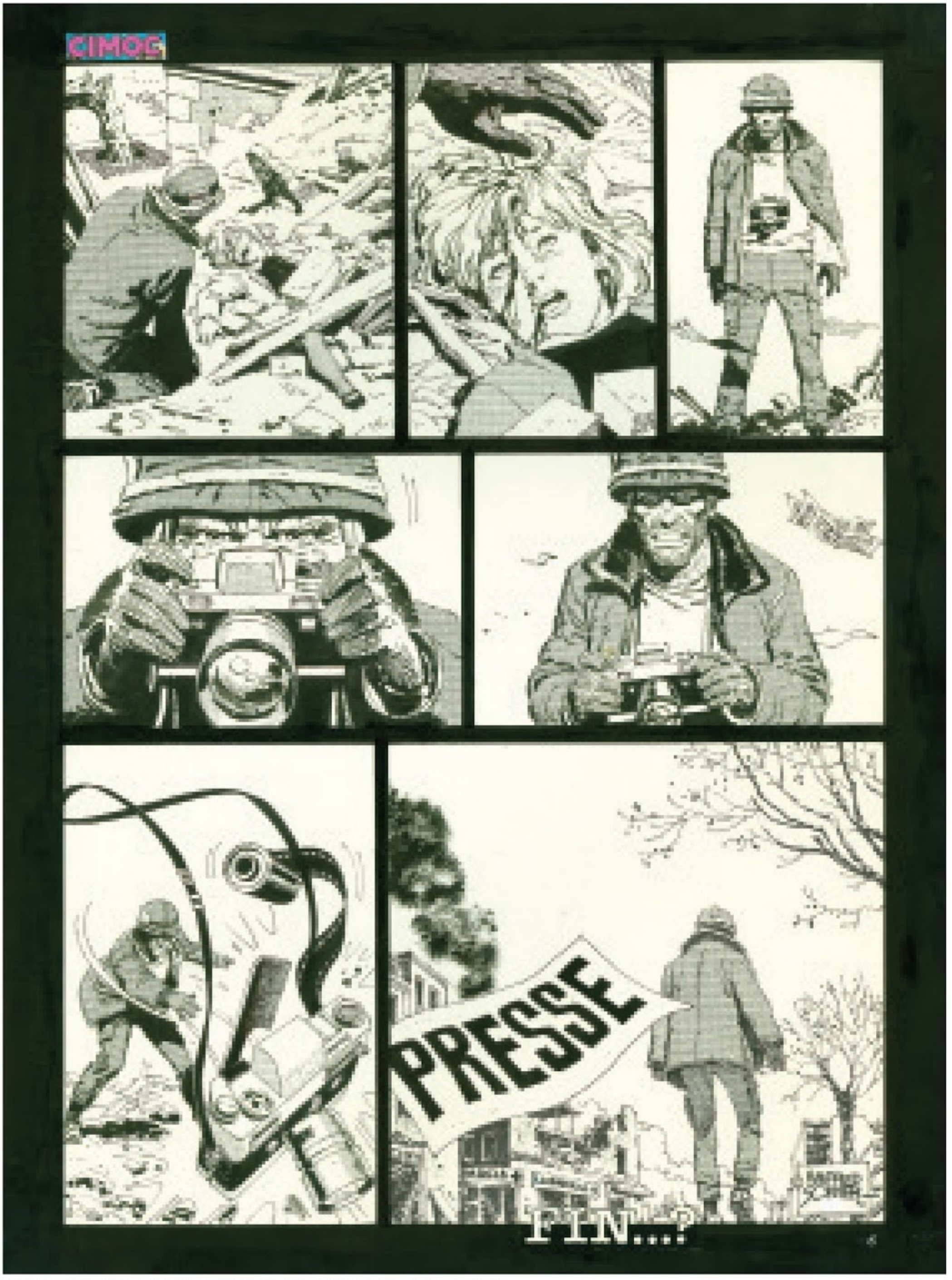

Frank Cappa. Cimoc Especial 3a (Norma), 1982. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

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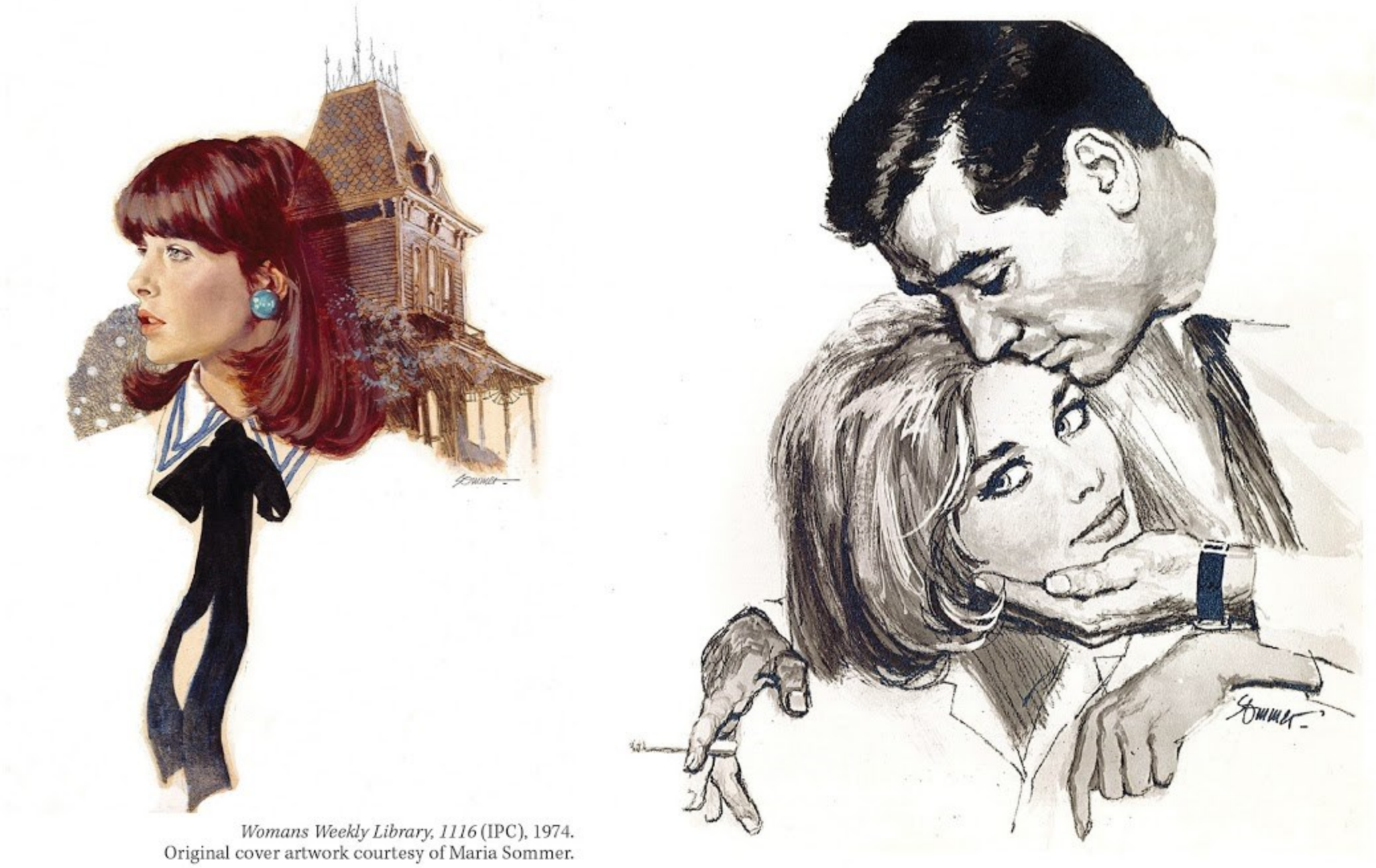

Womans Weekly Library, 1116 (IPC), 1974.
Original cover artwork courtesy of Maria Sommer.

Syndication Illustrations for S.I., 1960s. Original artwork courtesy of Maria Sommer.

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Syndication Illustrations for S.I., 1960s and 70s.
Original artwork courtesy of Maria Sommer.

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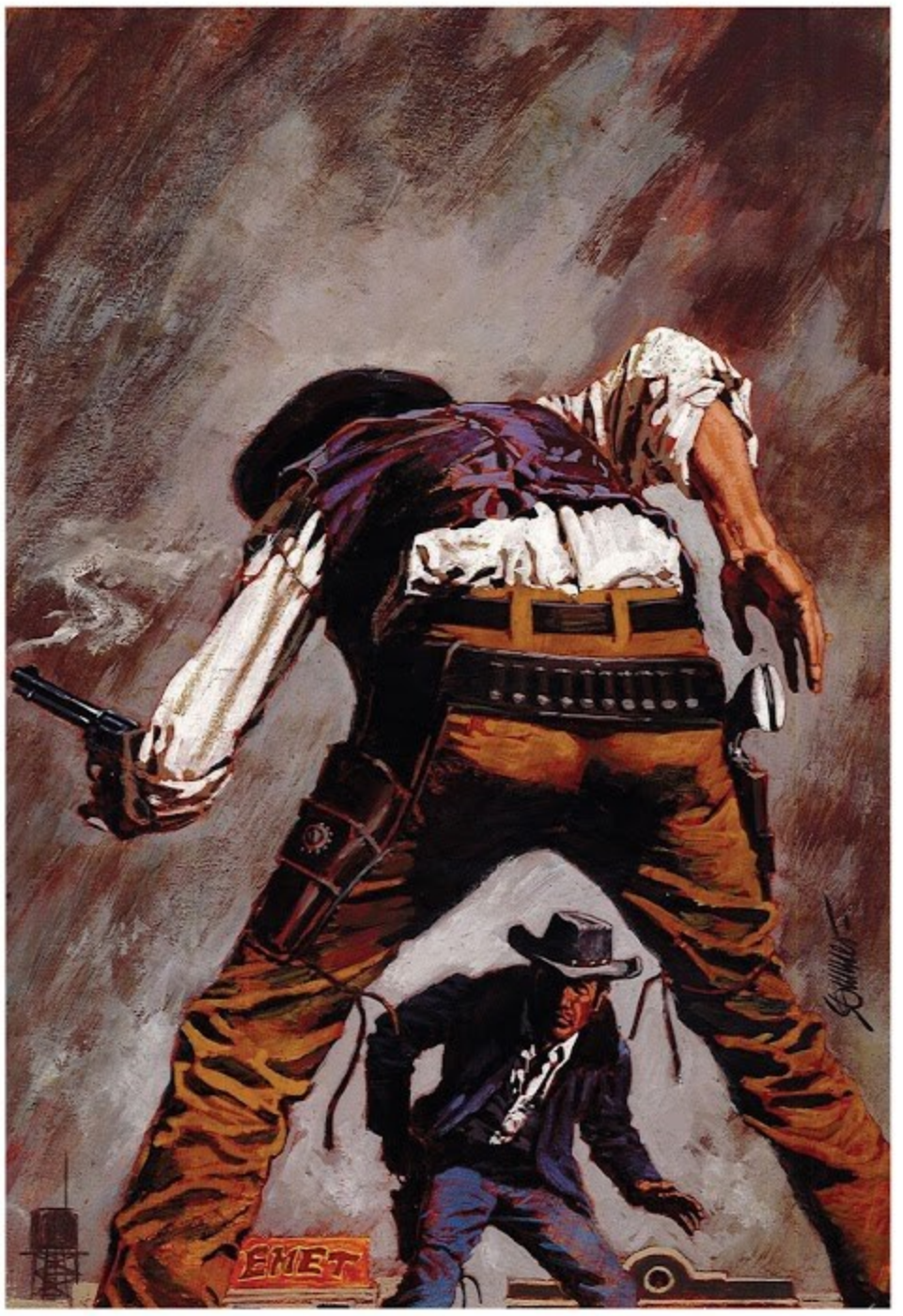

Syndication Illustrations for S.I., 1960s and 70s. Original artwork courtesy of Maria Sommer.

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Trini Tinturé B. 1938

Emma es Encantadora. Lily 1045 (Bruguera), 1981. Original artwork courtesy of Trini Tinture

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Fleur. Vampirella 35 (Warren), 1974. Original artwork courtesy of Steven Morger.

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AND SO HE ***WALKED***. HIS SHOES SCUFFED HOLLOWLY AGAINST SMOULDERING ASPHALT AND HIS BREATH WAS HARSH AND RAGGED IN HIS EARS...

...AND WALKING, HE REMEMBERED THAT ALL HE COULD ***REMEMBER*** WAS ***WALKING***.

TIME, AND THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS ***CITY***, PASSED SLOWLY. HE ACHED... HIS MIND A SWIRLING MAELSTROM OF UNANSWERED, AND UNANSWERABLE, QUESTIONS.

A JOKE. A GODDAMMED ***COSMIC JOKE***. IT HAD TO BE. AND ***HE*** WAS THE ***FALL GUY***...

HE PAUSED, LOOKING AT THE UNFAMILIAR SUNBURNT ***REFLECTION*** OF HIS FACE IN THE SHINING SURFACE OF A STORE FRONT WINDOW.

WHO WAS HE? HE TRIED TO THINK, BUT HIS FACE WAS THE UNRECOGNIZABLE FACE OF A STRANGER. MOTHER IN HEAVEN...WHAT WAS ***HAPPENING*** TO HIM?

...AND STILL HE WAS ***ALONE***...

...***EXCEPT***...

...FOR THE ***TELEPHONE***...!

BBBBRRRRIIIINNGGGGGG

ONE WAY

TOW AWAY ZONE

TELEPHONE

34

Original artwork from *Vampirella 53* (Warren), 1976.

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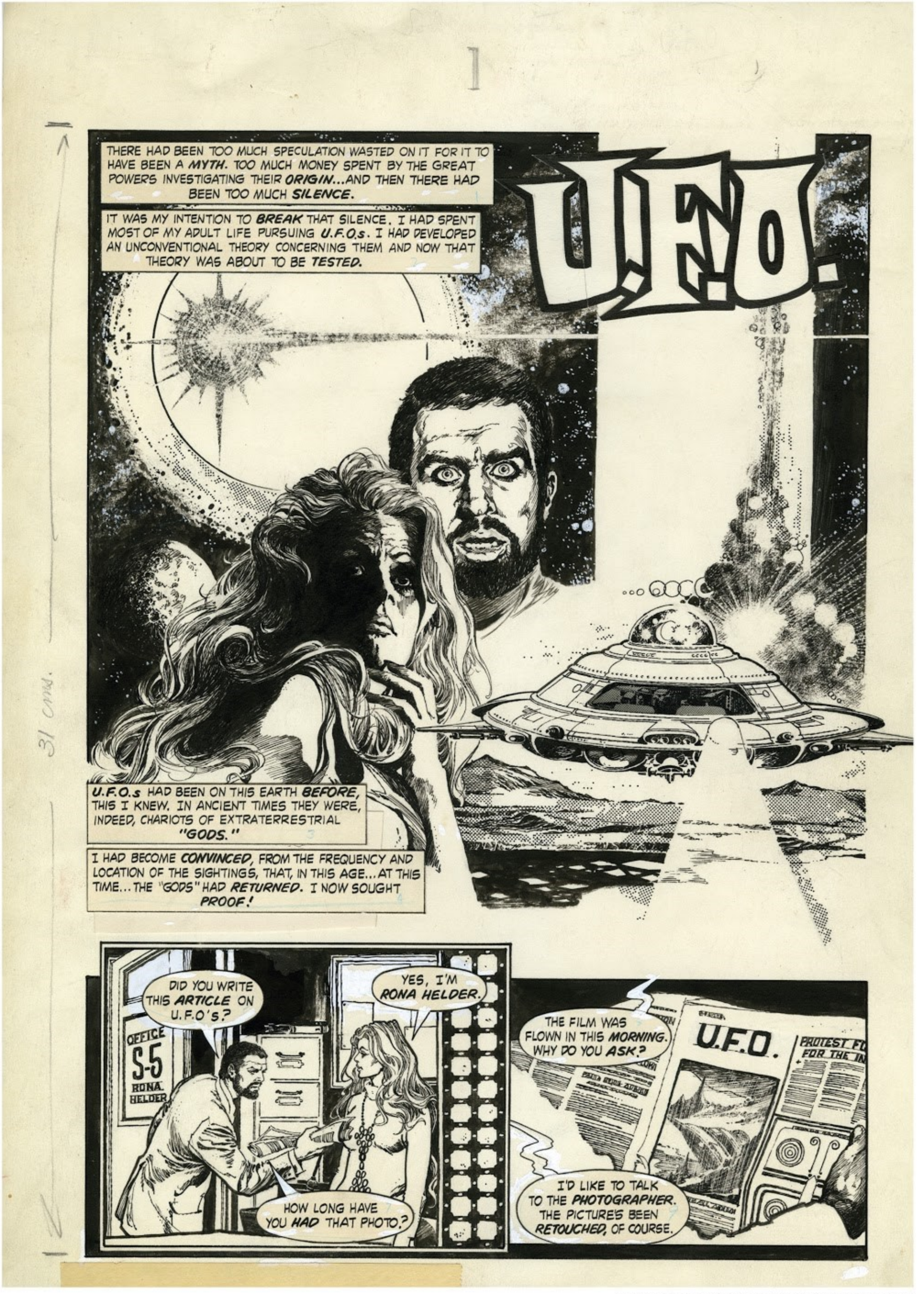

Original artwork from *Vampirella 62* (Warren), 1977.

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Original artwork from *Vampirella 70* (Warren), 1978.

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Adolfo Usero Abellan B. 1941

Concept illustration for Bardon, 1972. Original artwork.

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REMOLCADAS HASTA SEVILLA PARA SER APAREJADAS...

¡SOLTAD LAS VELAS! ¡ADELANTE!

ERA EL 10 DE AGOSTO DE 1519

¡BUEN VIAJE!

¿VOLVERÁN...?

JUAN SEBASTIÁN ELCANO IBA CON ELLOS.

IBA A SER UNA LARGA Y ARRIESGADA NAVEGACIÓN DE AÑOS.

9

Nueva Carpeta. Original artwork courtesy of Gruas Vidal.

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PA 29 27

THEY HAD HARDLY COVERED A MILE WHEN THE SOUND OF GERMAN VOICES CAUSED THEM TO CLIMB THE CLIFF AND PEER OVER THE TOP.

OUR LUCK'S IN! THERE'S YOUR TAXI, BEN, AND HERE'S A CHANCE TO KICK ROMMEL IN THE PANTS.

THEY HAD STUMBLED UPON A GERMAN UNIT LOADING THEIR TRUCK FROM A MUNITION DUMP.

HAVING COMPLETED THEIR TASK, THE GERMANS SAT DOWN IN THE SHADOW OF THE LORRY TO HAVE A SMOKE AND A BITE OF FOOD BEFORE STARTING BACK TO BASE. THEIR MEAL WAS RUDELY INTERRUPTED.

KEEP IT QUIET. WE DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE OTHER JERRIES NEARBY.

AAAAH!

Commando 258 (DC Thomson), 1965. Original artwork courtesy of and used by kind permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

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Zesar (Cesar Alvarez Canete) *B. 1938*

Vampirella illustration, 1970s. Original artwork courtesy of Zesar.

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CHAPTER 12

A NEW GENERATION

Rubén Pellejero, *Dieter Lumpen* (Norma) 1985. Original artwork courtesy of Javier Murillo.

WHILE ART STYLES EVOLVE and tastes change from generation to generation there is usually a sense of continuity within a nation's particular visual tradition. There may be the occasional mavericks forging their own paths, but within the mainstream there is typically a clear succession from one particular movement to another; divergent directions but sharing common roots. This is not the case in Spain. The magazine explosion marked the moment when one artistic tradition was handed over to a new and entirely different one with little in common with what had come before. It is quite striking that the established artists who found the greatest success in the '80s — Alfonso Font, Jordi Bernet, and Carlos Giménez— had not worked extensively in the UK or for Warren Publishing and by that point shared few of the distinctive visual flourishes of the Golden Generation. Of the previous decades' most prominent creators only Jose Ortiz maintained a leading position in Spanish comics throughout the decade, while for a variety of reasons the rest had fallen away. By the mid-'80s most of his fellow stars had moved on to other areas; some such as Jordi Longarón and José González established themselves as illustrators, while many (and this is something unique to Spanish comics artists) including Luis García Mozos, Leopoldo Sanchez, and Fernando Fernández became fine artists, exhibiting in galleries. But as the openings appeared for new creators to take their places, what emerged was an entirely new direction, or rather several divergent directions.

NEW STARS OF THE MAGAZINE EXPLOSION

Nobody embodies the break with tradition better than Rubén Pellejero who straddled the two eras and is perhaps the outstanding artist of this new generation. Pellejero had a typical apprenticeship of working in an artist's studio, in his case with Joan Boix, and worked for the UK where he drew *Flesh* for *2000 AD*. But by the time he broke into the public's consciousness in 1982 with *FM* in the pages of *Cimoc*, his work was strikingly different from his predecessors. Pellejero worked in line. The previous Spanish tradition had usually worked with shadows, textures, and tones and delighted in ornamentation. Even the romance artists with their pared down, stylish artwork came from a realist tradition. Pellejero could draw masterfully, and could tell a story with real verve and excitement, but his characters were simplified, with an almost cartoonish quality, at least compared to realists like García and González. In 1985 Pellejero and writer Jorge Zenter created *Dieter Lumpen*, an inter-war adventurer in the tradition of *Corto Malt*ese and the first star of the new generation was born.

Dieter Lumpen initially appeared in Norma's *Cairo* magazine which epitomized the new approach to Spanish comics. It brought together young Spanish creators such as Pellejero, Mariscal, Miguelanxo Prado, Ceesepe, and Daniel Torres along with the cream of the crop of Franco-Belgian talent: Moebius, Jaques Tardi, Edgar P. Jacobs, Franquin, Floc'H, and Yves Chaland. Daniel Torres soon emerged as *Cairo*'s break-out creator with a flood of memorable series: *Opium, Triton,* and *Saxxon*, which were translated around the world. But there was little distinctively Spanish about his artwork, which shared the pure line, the "Ligne Claire" so typical of French comics and it was evident that these new artists were happy to take their inspiration from wherever they could find it. Miguelanxo Prado started out working in a very controlled realistic style before loosening up, adopting softer, more ethereal techniques and choosing expressionism over realism, to award winning effect.

For aspiring artists growing up in the '70s, the Spanish comics scene allowed them access to a wide variety of influences. The best home-grown artists were almost all working abroad so their work would only have been available through reprints, with little thematically that was specifically Spanish. In that sense there would perhaps have been nothing compelling an aspiring artist to choose, say, a *Vampirella* reprint over Frontera's, *Metal Hurlant*

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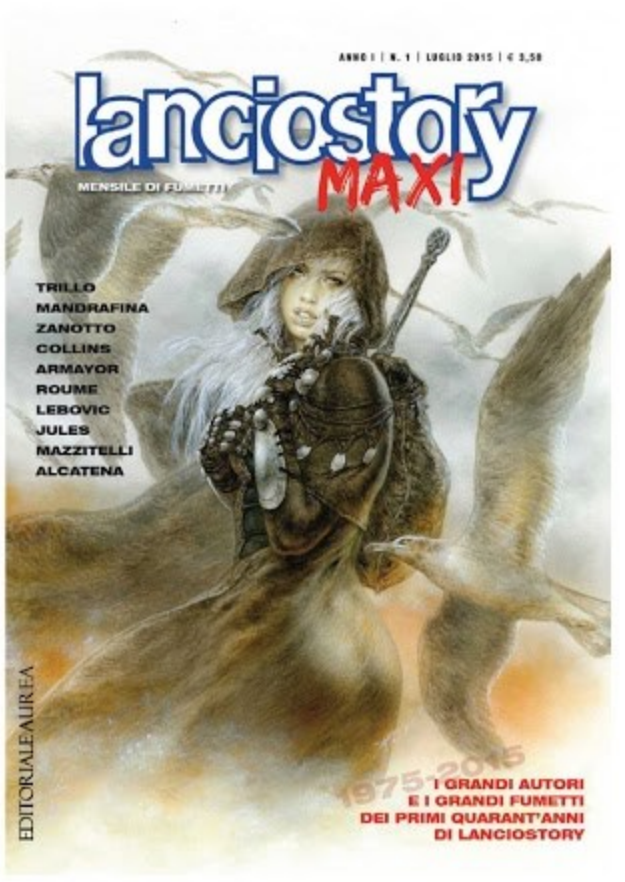
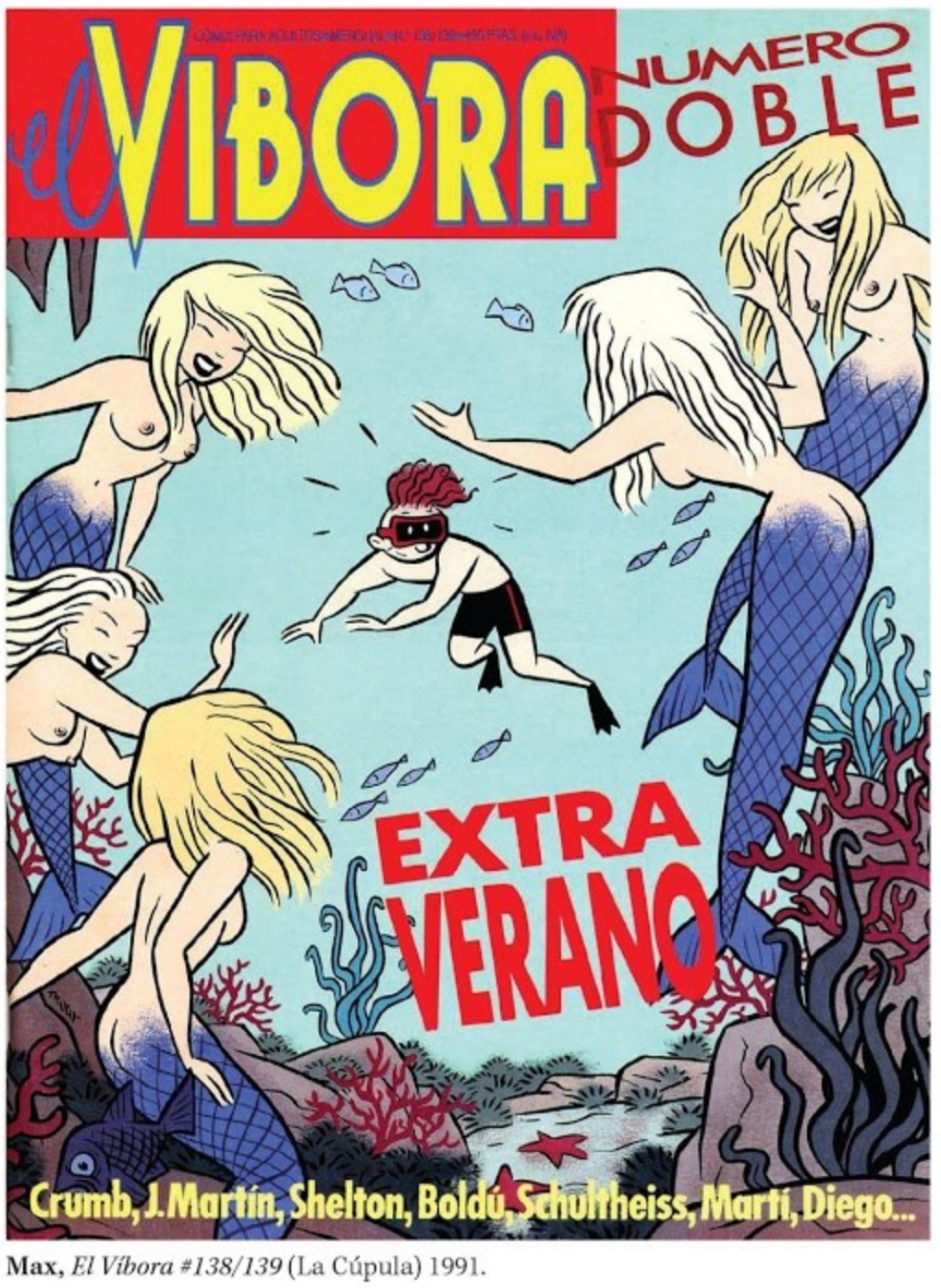
Daniel Torres, *Cairo #41* (Norma) 1986.



Luis Royo, *Lanciostory Maxi #*1 (Eura Editorial) 2015

reprints, or Ibero's Marvel reprints, all of which suggested exciting directions to explore. Nueva Frontera was created in 1977 and its line of mostly reprint titles including *Totem, Blue Jeans Bumerang, Metal Hurlant,* and *Vertigo* (no relation to the DC Comics imprint) opened up the world for its young readers. Nueva Frontera's stellar line of artists such as Moebius, Guido Crepax, Sergio Toppi, Milo Manara, Hugo Pratt, Alberto Breccia, and Enki Bilal presented new ways of drawing, and new types of stories, freed from the straight-jacket of genre conventions.



Max, *El Víbora #138/139* (La Cúpula) 1991.

When *Rambla* emerged in 1982 it soon established its identity as a venue for self-expression and encouraged the development of new Spanish creators. Among *Rambla*'s discoveries were such diverse voices as Luis Royo, Antonio Navarro, Ana Miralles, Herikberto, Joan Mundet, and Pascual Ferry. Luis Royo soon abandoned strips to become one of the stars of fantasy illustration and his polished covers for *Heavy Metal, Cimoc,* and *Skorpio* became some of the defining images of that era. Herikberto, by contrast, produced nightmarish, avant-garde strips seemingly inspired by Francis Bacon. Ana Miralles' early strips were delicate, quirkily ethereal stories which gave little indication of the accomplished artist she would become. Her erotically charged work on *Djinn* would go on to bring her great success in France, while similarly Pascual Ferry found his true calling as a superhero artist for Marvel and DC in America. All were Spanish artists, working in Spain, but none bore any resemblance to what had gone before.

Perhaps another reason for this artistic schism is the dramatic change in tastes that took place in the '80s. In Spain, as in America and Britain, the traditional genres that had nurtured the old guard — horror, romance, war and westerns — had fallen dramatically out of favor. New, more diverse audiences were looking elsewhere; towards a new kind of ultra-slick superhero artwork (as personified by John Byrne), or the more mature, imaginative science fiction of Moebius, or even the emerging alternative comics scene with figureheads like Jaime Hernandez and José Muñoz. In this diverse new world the old techniques of the Warren years simply did not make sense anymore. In some respects the Spanish comics industry has never recovered from the comics magazine crash of the mid-'80s, yet despite the precarious market at home the past few decades have produced a wide variety of greatly talented creators working around the world, particularly in America and France. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that in recent years there has been a second Spanish invasion, though few readers seem to be aware of it. Today, there are three distinct strands of Spanish comic art: superhero art by such popular names as Carlos Pacheco, David Aja, Daniel Acuña, and Salvador Larroca; accomplished international stars like Pellejero, Prado, Miralles, and Juanjo Guarnido working primarily in France; and, what could broadly be called an Art Comics national scene featuring more avant-garde talents like Paco Roca, Raúl, Gabi Beltran, and Javier Olivares.

Art Comics

In both Spain and America the Independent, or Art Comics, movement grew out of the Underground comix scene of the '60s and '70s. In Spain, by the mid-'70s the sense of a generation in revolt against the establishment manifested itself in outrageous satirical titles such as *El Papus* and *El Jueves* but it also spawned a home-grown equivalent of America's Underground comix. The First Spanish Underground title was *El Rrollo Enmascardo* in late 1973 which very much mirrored American psychedelic strips and contained somewhat primitive work by Max, Mariscal, Roger, and Nazario. The following year, Producciones Editoriales, a minor "straight" publisher, brought together many of the *Rrollo* artists for *Star* which mixed Spanish art with America's Robert Crumb and France's Phillipe Druillet. *Star* survived the changing currents of the counterculture by embracing rock music and the emerging

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punk movement and was joined on the newsstands by *Butifarra!* and, in 1979, *El Víbora*. S.I. publisher Josép Toutain gave money to Josép Maria Berenguer to set up a humor magazine and publishing house, Ediciones La Cúpula, and he created *El Víbora* in the village of La Floresta (once the home to many of S.I's more free thinking artists). The magazine combined local artists like Max, Nazario, Martí, Ceesepe, Montesol, Iron, Jaime Martín, and Pons with International stars such as the Hernandez Brothers, Daniel Clowes, Gaetano Liberatore, Robert Crumb, Jacques de Loustal, and Charles Burns. *El Víbora* ran for 277 issues until 2004 and in the process established a market for alternative comics in Spain. In its early years the magazine was edgier and more avant-garde, typified by experimental work of Ceesepe; but it became increasingly more polished and prurient, typified by the ever present naked girls on its later covers. But creators like Max, Iron, and Marti developed a beautifully accomplished, expressive linear style that was both new and distinctively Spanish. La Cúpula published vast numbers of album collections as well as the erotic comics *Kiss* and *French Kiss* and was a successful company until 2016.

In *El Víbora*'s wake other similarly edgy titles emerged like *Bésame Mucho* and *Makoki*, but the most interesting work of this time appeared in *Madriz*. While *El Víbora* and *Makoki* were the main representatives of the "linea chunga" comic art current (the Spanish version of Underground comix), and *El Cairo* of the "linea clara" *Tintin*-influenced movement, *Madriz* emerged as a third artistic trend. By and large these artists were not influenced by the American Underground or the French/Belgian styles and aimed to find an "art for art sake", individualistic approach to comics.

Madriz (the title is phonetic spelling of the way many *Madrileños* mispronounce the name of their own city) was a comics anthology published from 1984 to 1987. Writer Felipe Hernández Cava was in charge of the editorial oversight and El Cubri of its art direction. The magazine was partially sponsored by Madrid's local government, which eventually led to its demise. A right wing party councilman, who later went on to become mayor, objected to a published satire of Franco and other dictators by Ceesepe. It is important to understand that in Spain, unlike Germany, the glorification of the former fascist dictatorship is not only legal, but vehemently endorsed by the largest right wing party (Popular Party). This makes political satire a particularly vulnerable topic to this day.

But *Madriz* was not primarily a political publication. It was a space for narrative experimentation that yielded outstanding early works by young Spanish illustrators and comics artists. Its oversize full color format allowed the artists to try out non-linear narratives, various art-making techniques, styles and approaches, and in general, non-traditional content for comics. Among the many outstanding artists that were published in the magazine are Javier de Juan (whose style is emblematic of the Spanish '80s), Javier Olivares, Andres Rabago García (OPS and El Roto), El Cubri, Juan Jiménez, Carlos Giménez, Ceseepe, Ana Juan, Ana Miralles, Rafa Negrete, Raúl, Fernado Vicente, and Das Pastoras.

Madriz was canceled in 1987 due to political opposition and declining sales. One year later, a new anthology, *Medios Revueltos*, appeared, also co-directed by Felipe Hernández Cava. Without institutional support, the oversized square bound magazine lasted a mere five issues, but those almost 500 pages stand as the finest examples of art comics produced by Spanish artists of the '80s. Most of its artists exemplified the essence of *la Movida*, the mythical art movement that emerged in Spain, and particularly in Madrid, after the death of Francisco Franco. Much has been written about the effect that the lifting of censorship had on the younger generation who had been raised

Javier de Juan, *Madriz #23* (Concejalía de la Juventud, Ayuntamiento de Madrid) 1985.

Raúl, *Gnossiennes, Madriz#10* (Concejalía de la Juventud, Ayuntamiento de Madrid) 1984. Original artwork courtesy of the artist.

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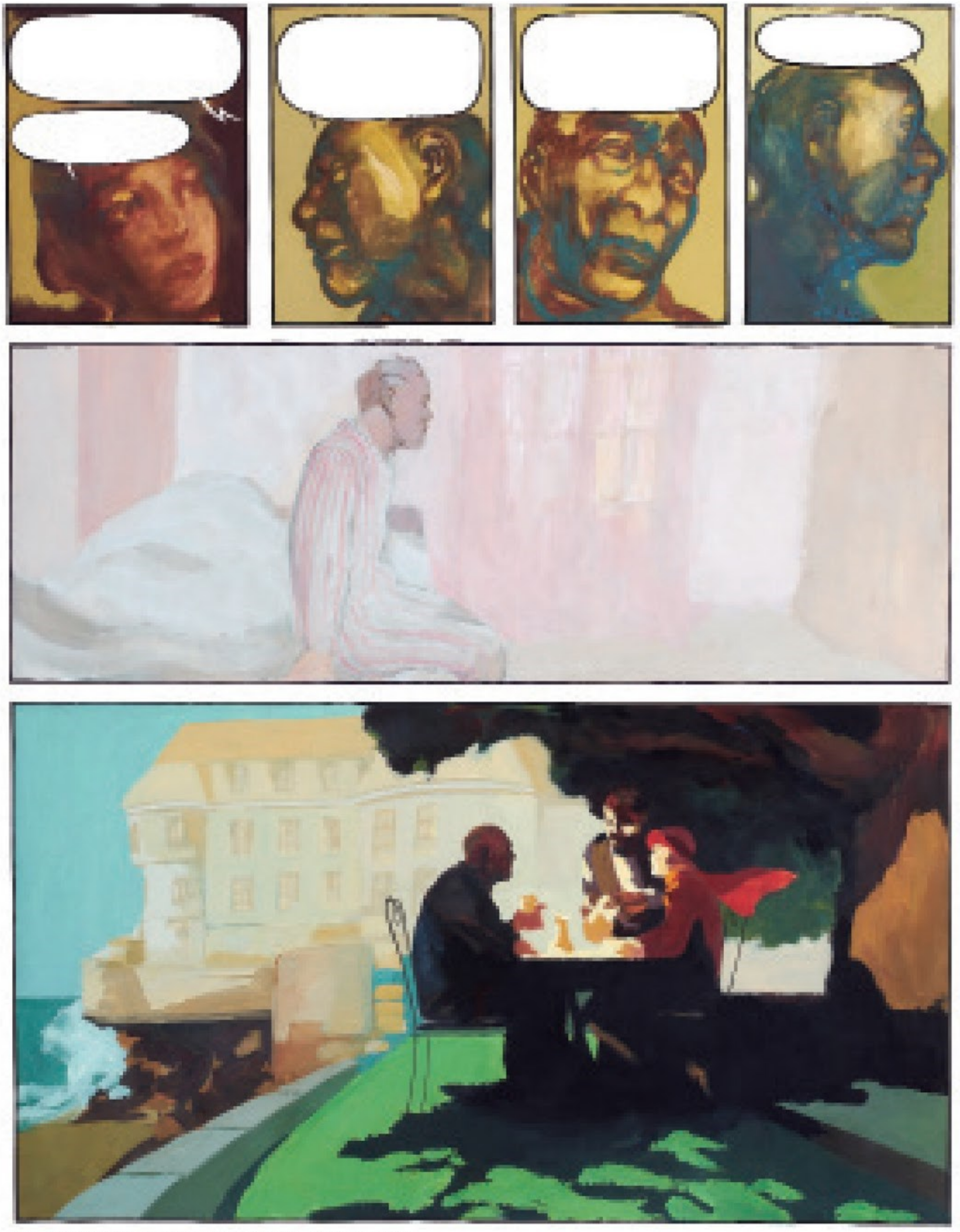

Raúl, *Berlín 1931* (Casset), 1991. Original artwork courtesy of the artist.

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Paco Roca El Invierno Del Dibujante (Astiberri) 2010 image courtesy of Paco Roca

under the grey years of the dictatorship. Raúl, Federico del Barrio and Ana Juan, among many others, flourished and advanced the medium in ways that had not been seen before and rarely since. One of these few instances was *El Ojo Clínico*, also led by Felipe Hernández Cava and featuring the work, again, of several *Madriz* alumni. It was published in 1996, and unfortunately lasted only two issues.

Of the many *Cairo/Madriz/Medios Revueltos* artists none is more visually gifted and artistically daring than Raúl Fernández Calleja, a.k.a. Raúl. His sequential masterpieces are two graphic novels written by Felipe Hernández Cava: *Berlin 1931* (published by Casset in 1991) and *Windows to the West (Ventanas a Occidente*, from Luca Editoral, 1994). Raúl's artwork for *Berlin 1931*, which dealt with the rise of fascism in Germany, is a breathtaking graphic experiment, influenced by the German Expressionist painters. *Windows to the West*, a poetic meditation on the break up of the Soviet Union, is a symphony in black and white with violent stylistic contrasts supporting the narrative. His many short stories for multiple publishers were collected in *Raúl: Fé de Erratas* (Casset, 1992), a gorgeous hardcover with stories written by HernándezCava and himself. In it, one can see the bold evolution of his style, and major contributions to the field of sequential art.

By the end of the 1980's the Spanish national publishing market almost completely collapsed. Brugera, the biggest children comics publisher, had already closed and this was followed by the disappearance of other smaller children publishers as well. The adult comic market also suffered enormous losses as *Cairo, Creepy, Cimoc,* and *Zona '84*, ceased publishing in the early 1990's. But after almost a decade, at the turn of the century, a new generation of prestigious independent publishers, following more or less the along the lines of alternative comics publishers like Fantagraphics and Drawn and Quarterly, appeared in Spain. To a large degree they were instrumental is changing the artistic panorama for the medium. These newer companies include Edicions de Ponent, Sinsentido, Astiberri, Dolmen, Dibbuks, and Diábolo Ediciones. Instead of comic books, anthologies or magazines, they publish mostly original graphic novels.

Another huge event occurred in 2007 with the establishment of the Spanish National Comic Award. It is an annual award granted by Spain's Ministry of Culture and part of the Cultural National Awards (Fine Arts, Film, Literature, Performing Arts, etc.) By recognizing comics as a serious medium this award has influenced the perception of what creators are doing, the type of stories that comics can tell and the format in which they are presented.

The first National Comic Award was deservedly given to Francesc Capdevila Gisbert, a.k.a. Max for *Bardin the Superealist*, but the following year's award created a seismic shift in the Spanish comic landscape. *Arrugas (Wrinkles*), a graphic novel by cartoonist Paco Roca about Alzheimer's disease, won the prize and became a bestseller. It was translated into French and English and in 2011 was adapted to an animated feature film that, as had happened with Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, reached a wide audience and enjoyed notable critical success. Every year from then on, graphic novels became bestsellers thanks to the recognition of this award, including *Blacksad* by Juan Díaz Canales and Juanjo Guarnido, *The Art of Flying* by Antonio Altarriba and Kim, *Ardalén* by Miguelanxo Prado, *Las Meninas* by Santiago García and Javier Olivares and an adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*

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Javier Olivares, *Las Meninas* (Astiberri) 2014.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Javier Olivares, *unpublished Las Meninas illustration, Wife of Diego*, 2014. Original artwork courtesy of the artist.

by Pablo Auladell. Other recipients include Alfonso Zapico, Santiago Valenzuela, Felipe Hernández Cava, and Bartolomé Segú.

The most celebrated of all Spanish underground and alternative artists is Max who has published internationally and won multiple awards for his comics. He was one of the original contributors to *El Víbora*, and worked for *Métal Hurlant* and *L'Écho des Savanes*. He created the graphic novels *Como Perros*, *El Canto del Gallo*, *The Extended Dream of Mr. D*, *Bardin the Superealist* and *Vapor*. Through constant evolution, experimentation, and a highly developed aesthetic, Max is generally considered the "father" of Spanish alternative comics. His work has incorporated elements of American underground comix, "linea clara" and a host of Fine Art influences, including Surrealism and Impressionism. He is still actively producing work and continues to surprise in his explorations of the medium.

Wrinkles' author, Paco Roca, is one of the most important voices in Spanish comics. A true heir of the "linea clara" he has continued to produce graphic novels, usually with historical or autobiographical subjects including *El Invierno de un Dibujante* which starred four early Spanish comics pioneers. Last year he published *La Casa (The House)*, which is described by it's publisher as a daily life drama with autobiographical elements.

Miguelanxo Prado began his professional career in the late 1980's, drawing short stories for *Creepy*, *Comix Internacional*, *Zona '84*, *El Jueves*, *Cairo*, and *Cimoc*. After the collapse of the Spanish comics market, he began to publish graphic novels in France with Les Humanoïdes Associés. He has since gone on to produce over a dozen graphic novels in his distinctive style: a lyrical combination of traditional drawing and expressive caricature, always colored impeccably in often glowing pastels, watercolor, gouache or other analog mixed media. He created a special comic for the novel *The Law of Love* by Laura Esquivel, author of the bestseller *Like Water for Chocolate* and was a contributor to Neil Gaiman's Sandman graphic novel *Endless Nights*. Other albums include *Daily Delirium*, *Tangents*, *Streak of Chalk*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and the multiple award winner *Ardalén*.

Javier Olivares' career spans over thirty years. He has worked as an editorial illustrator, book illustrator and animator. His first graphic novel, in collaboration with author Santiago García, was an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. García and Olivares published *Las Meninas (The Ladies in Waiting)* in 2015, a graphic novel about Spain's most popular painting by its most admired master. It was a tall order to tackle a topic like this in Spain, where national identity is very closely linked to the universal achievements of painters like Goya, Velázquez, and El Greco and authors like Cervantes. But García and Olivares created a masterpiece that not only tells the story of the painting, but addresses its influence throughout history in an artistic and compelling narrative. His work is unlike any other comic artist, informed by Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism and graphic design.

Years earlier the team of García and Olivares were planning an adaptation of *Beowulf*, the epic poem in Old English. It never came to be then, but it was later revived by a new collaborator, David Rubín.

David Rubín, *Beowulf* (Astiberri) 2013

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Pablo Auladell, *Paradise Lost* (Sexto Piso) 2015.
Original artwork courtesy of the artist.

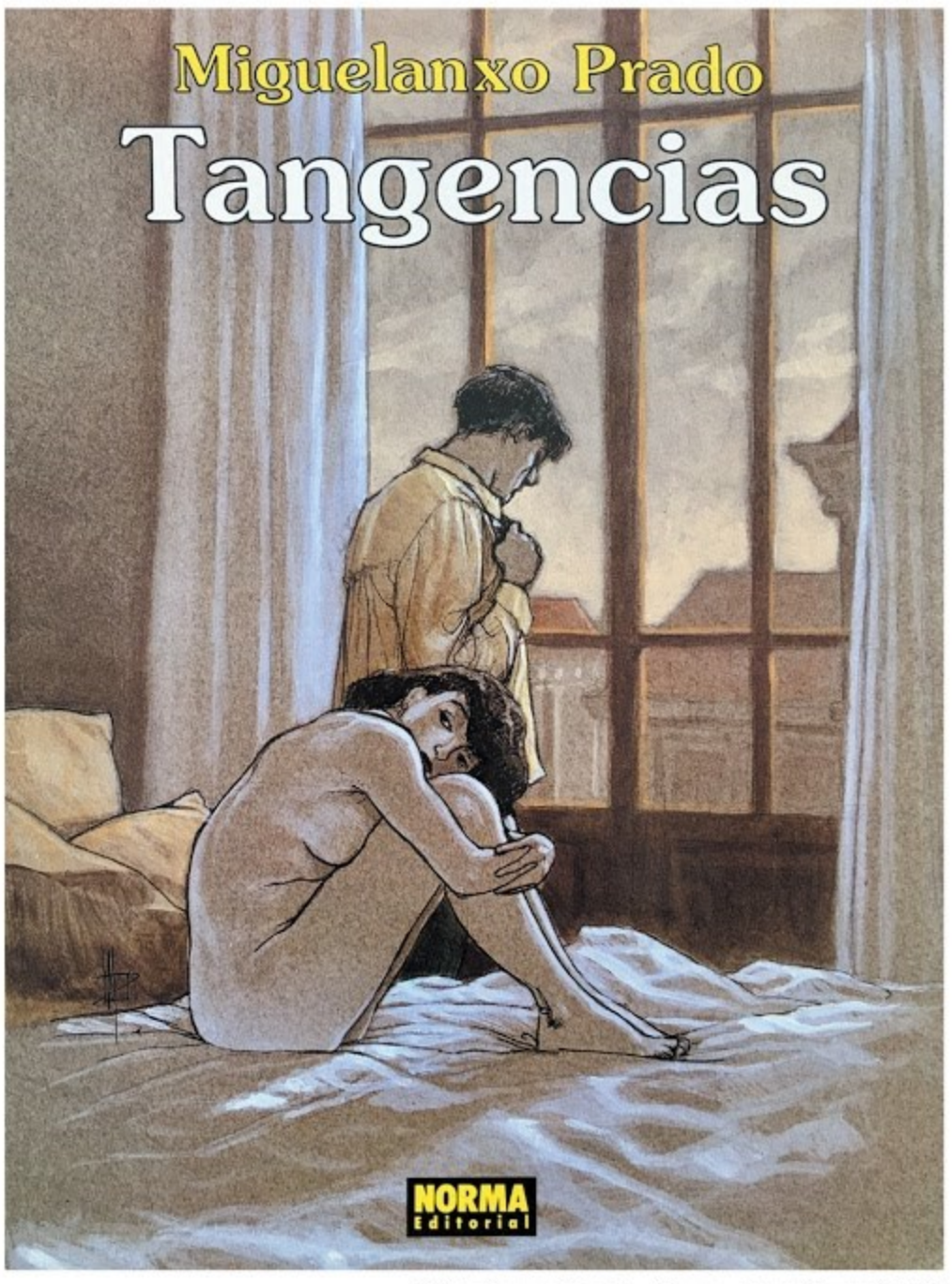
With Olivares' blessing, Rubín redrew the first pages and completed the story. It was published in a spectacular over-sized color hardcover that has been translated to French and English (for Image comics). Rubín had already made a splash with his Science Fiction adaptation of the 12 labors of Hercules, *The Hero*. The original story holds a special place for Spanish comics reader. Master illustrator and beloved comics artist Miguel Calatayud had faithfully adapted it for *Trinca* magazine and was reprinted in 2010 by Edicions de Ponent. Rubín gave it a new futuristic twist and made it his own. His style is a combination of American mainstream comics, alternative comics and French BD *(bandes dessinees)*. After *Beowulf*, Rubín has gone on to work for the US market, collaborating with Paul Pope and Matt Kindt.

Another outstanding comic illustrator currently working mainly for the Spanish market is Pablo Auladell. His career took off a decade ago when he won the National Children's Book Illustration Award in 2005 and the Best New Talented Author Award in the Saló del Cómic de Barcelona in 2006 for the graphic novel *The White Tower* (published in France by Actes Sud, L'An2). Since then he has worked both in comics and illustration, including the graphic novels *Soy mi Sueño (I am my Deam*), written by *Madriz*'s Felipe Hernández Cava and published by Edicions de Ponent in 2008, and his masterpiece to date, an adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Published in 2015, this graphic novel reimagines the classic epic poem in sequential form. Auladell is a singular voice whose style owes more to the drawings of the Italian Renaissance Masters, early Picasso and the Symbolist painters than it does to traditional comic strip artists.

International Graphic Novelists

France was the first country to welcome Spanish artists in the early '50s and the connection continues to be strong to this day. Artists such as Jesus Blasco, Jordi Bernet, and José Bielsa found work in the country's comic books but others went on to greater success with the nations burgeoning album format. Carlos Giménez had become known in France through his *Dani Futuro* series and when *Fluide Glacial* translated the autobiographical *Paracuellos* into two albums it cemented his reputation as a significant talent. Many of Giménez's most important works were subsequently reprinted in France (usually by *Fluide Glacial*) culminating in the epic five volume *Pepe*, (published by Charlie Hebdo). Giménez straddled the divide between mainstream and Art comics, and while some *historietistas* such as Paco Roca have had their work reprinted, typically it has been the more traditional artists who have flourished in France. Several important Spanish artists enjoyed long careers in the country including Antonio Hernández Palacios who released the last of 22 *Mac Coy* albums in 1999 and Julio Ribera whose 31st *Vagabonds Des Limbes* book came out in 2003. Alfonso Font was the last of the Golden Generation to create new material for the French market, drawing three volumes of *Heloise De Montford* for Glenat from 2010 to 2012.

Rubén Pellejero heralded the arrival of a new generation of Spanish stars when *Dieter Lumpen* and *FM* collections were published by Magic Strip in 1986. *Dieter Lumpen* made Pellejero's name across Europe with the artist later finding work with the French magazine *A Suivre*. He has since concentrated on a succession of graphic novels such as *Aromm, Tabou,, Secrets*, the award winning *Le Silence De Malka* and since 2015 has become the new artist on Hugo Pratt's legendary *Corto*



Miguelanxo Prado, *Tangencias* (Norma) 1995

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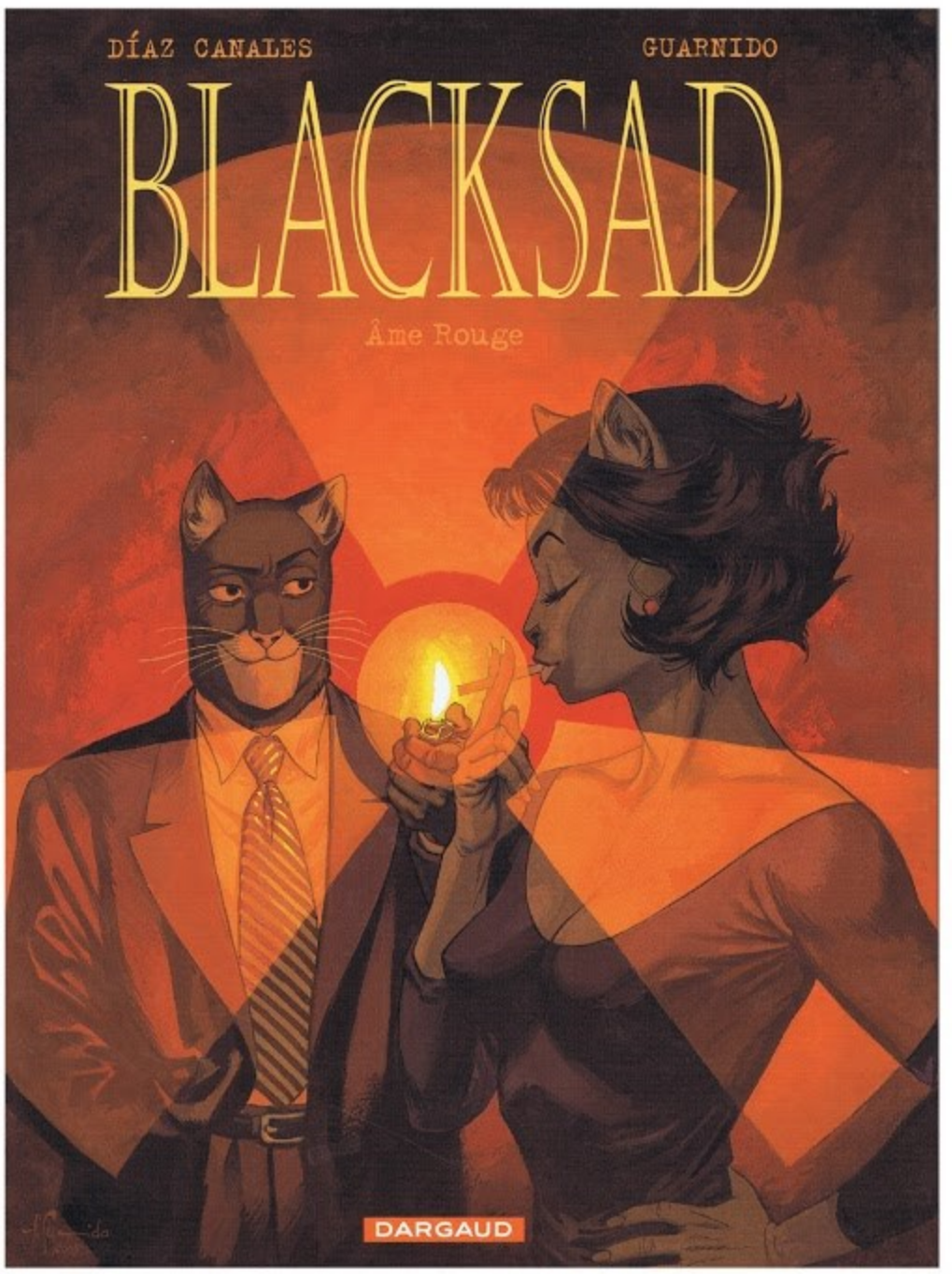
Maltese series. Ana Miralles is a contemporary of Pellejero's but had to wait until the 1991 series *Eva Medusa*, her first work to be translated into French, to make a commercial breakthrough. This was followed by the medieval series *La Recherche De La Licone* and in 2001 *Djinn*, written by Jean Dufaux and published by Dargaud, which has run to 12 albums to date. By the time she came to work on *Djinn* Miralles had developed into a seductively accomplished artist of Eastern-flavored erotica, creating elaborately detailed water-colored artwork. In 2009 she became the first woman to win the *Gran Premio del Salon* from the Barcelona Comics festival. Both Pellejero and Miralles are major stars in France but few creators have made quite the impact of Juanjo Guarnido with *Blacksad*.

Guarnido was born in Granada in 1967 but was initially unable to find significant comic work so moved to Madrid to work in TV. Subsequently, he relocated to France where he spent a decade working for Disney before joining up with writer Juan Diaz Canales, an old friend from Madrid, to create *Blacksad* for Dargaud in 2000. To date the pair have created five volumes of the series which transposes anthropomorphic animals into the milieu of hardboiled detective tales set in 1950s America. Guarnido's style reflects his years working for Disney with artwork that juxtaposes vibrantly lively drawings of his various animal characters with acutely observed period settings, rendered in pen and ink and beautifully rich watercolours. The series has garnered its creators numerous awards including several prizes from Angouleme, an Eisner Award in 2011, the Ignatz Award, Spanish National Comic Award, and twice won the best work by a Spanish author at the Barcelona Comic Fair. It has been translated into 20 different languages and is quite possibly the most popular series by Spanish creators being published today.



Juan Guarnido, *Blacksad, Ame Rouge* (Dargaud), 2005.

Ana Miralles, *unpublished Djinn illustration*, 2014.
Original artwork courtesy of Sotheby's.

Blacksad's writer Juan Diaz Canales had a similar career to Guarnido, co-forming the Tridente animation studio before returning to his first love; comics. Tridente brought together several Spanish creators who subsequently moved onto French comics including Gabor who drew five volumes of *Isabelle* for Lombard as well as two books of *Les Patriciens* with Diaz for Glenat. Montse Martin and Teresa Valero were also Tridente alumni who collaborated on the beautifully drawn historical strip *Curiosity Shop* (three volumes for Glenat). Separately, Martin has drawn three volumes of Glenat's *Talisman* while Valera drew *We are Family*, and wrote three books of the humorous *Sorcelleries* for Juanjo Guarnido. Working in animation has been an important stepping stone into comics for numerous contemporary Spanish BD artists with the Filmax studio producing Oriol Hernández, Javi Montes, and Enrique Fernández. One of the most technically accomplished artists of his generation, Fernández has an inspired gift for fantasy. Among his most important strips are *Magicien D'Oz* for Delcourt, *Les Contes De L'Ere du Cobra* for Glenat, and two volumes of *Brigada* for Ame which have been released in America as *Brigade*. José Luis Munuera never worked in animation himself but has collaborated with Juan Díaz Canales for three volumes of *Fraternity* for Glenat, and drew the BD adaptation of DreamWorks' *The Road to El Dorado*. Like many of the animation graduates Munuera has produced very little work directly for Spain, but a life-long love of French comics enabled him to move effortlessly into BD. Among his many popular series are *Merlin, Navis, Sortileges*, revivals of the Classic Franco-Belgian strips *Spirou* and *Boule et Bill* and the delicately poignant story *Le Signe De La Lune* whose translation won him the Spanish National Comic Award in 2009.

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Das Pastoras, *Castaka Vol. 1* (Les Humanoïdes Associés,) 2007, Original artwork courtesy of José Villarrubia.

HotComic.net

This new generation of Spanish BD artists has become increasingly prominent in France; in a 2012 survey it was revealed that 47 Spaniards released albums in various genres. Historical series have long been among the most popular subjects in France and several Spanish creators have made their mark here including Jaime Calderón, Raquel Alzate, and Carlos Puerta. Working in an ultra-realistic style Puerta has drawn three volumes about the explorer Henry Adamson for Delcourt, three volumes about the World War I Flying ace The Red Baron (for Zephyr) and a book devoted to Jules Verne, all meticulously researched. By contrast the Spanish infatuation with Manga has influenced other groups of BD artists including Mateo Guerrero, Kenny Ruiz, Marcial Toledano, Studio Kosen, and the Xian Nu Studio.

Science fiction and fantasy have also been notable mainstays of French comics, particularly since the creation of *Metal Hurlant* and the popularity of artists Phillipe Druillet and Moebius in the 1970s. Here, too, Spanish artists have made their mark. Das Pastoras (Julio Martínez Pérez) has enjoyed an incredibly varied career, spanning work for *El Víbora, El Jueves, Zona 84,* illustrated fantasy books (many featuring Elric and other creations of Michael Moorcock), Marvel Comics stories for character like Wolverine, Thor, Deadpool, and the Punisher; and covers for Valiant Comics. In 2002, together with writer Carlos Portela, he painted the first of two *Les Hérésiarques* (*Deicide*) volumes for Les Humanoïdes Associés. This in turn led to a collaboration with legendary writer Alejandro Jodorowsky on two new albums in his *Metabarons* cycle, *Castaka* the prequel to the saga (released in 2007 and 2012). Das Pastoras is widely considered an "artist's artist" by his fellow Spanish creators. Like Moebius, Richard Corben, and Liberatore, he combines caricature and realism flawlessly. His designs seem like ethnological records from lost civilizations, fully developed and coherent. Recognition for his work has gone beyond Spain's borders and creators as different as Guillermo de Toro, Richard Corben, Paul Gravett, Terada Katsuya, and Jason Aaron have all written of their great admiration for his oeuvre.

Like Das Pastoras, Enrique Corominas started out in Spanish comics (specializing in horror strips for *Zona 84, Creepy, Cimoc,* and *Eye Gray*) before moving into book covers and illustration; most notably a long association with George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* series. His masterpiece is a comic adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian Gray*, created over several years for the French art dealer and publisher Daniel Maghen which was released in 2011. Painting with watercolors on a colossal scale, Corminas' art summons up a hallucinatory, erotic, hyper-detailed recreation of Victorian London and the bacchanalian life of the damned Gray in what is one of the greatest achievements for a Spanish artist in recent years. But as popular as the Spanish have become in France, this is dwarfed by their impact on contemporary American comics.

The Superhero Artists

The Facebook page *Dibujantes Españoles en los USA* features images by 96 Spanish comic creators who have worked in America, with only eight dating from the Warren era. To take a month at random, say, December 2015 for instance, fully 15 of Marvel's regular monthly comics were drawn by Spanish artists. These indicate the scale of the Spanish involvement in American comics in what is undeniably a second Spanish Invasion. Creators such as David Aja, Daniel Acuña, Javier Pullido, Carlos Pacheco, Salvador Larroca, Emma Rios, Marcos Martín, Mikel Janin, David Lopez, Pepe Larraz, Guillem March, Raúl Allen, Pasqual Ferry, Javier Fernández, Jorge Jiménez, Victor Ibañez, Rafa Sandoval, Jesús Saiz, and David Rubín are some of the most accomplished and interesting artists working in superhero comics today. The first artists of this generation to draw superheroes professionally were Carlos Pacheco and Salvador Larroca whose success opened the floodgates for so many of their fellow countrymen. Pacheco's earliest work was cover and poster art for Planeta's Spanish line of Marvel reprints. These were spotted by Marvel UK resulting in work for *Motormouth* and *Dark Guard* in 1993, both inked by Oscar Jiménez. Salvador Larroca was working as an architect when he started drawing for Marvel UK, only a month after Pacheco, on *Dark Angel* and *Death's Head 2*. Larocca then took the bold step of travelling to America where he picked up work on *Flash* and the *Hulk*, going on to shine in such comics as *Ghost Rider, The X-Men, Iron Man* (winning an Eisner award), and *Darth Vader.*

In interviews Pacheco has expressed his admiration for Jean Giraud's *Lieutenant Blueberry* series, While Larroca feels the Argentinian science fiction artist Juan Giménez is his biggest inspiration. However, both artists' styles were clearly molded by the impact of American superhero artists, from Silver Age masters like Neal Adams and John Buscema to the polished drawings of John Byrne in the 1970s and 1980s. By the turn of the new millennium, when the first wave of Spanish superhero artists began to find success, American superhero art had gone through several phases, from the slickly rendered surface sheen of Byrne and Michael Golden, to the ultra dynamic and detailed Image style of Jim Lee, the lively realism of Adam Hughes, and the luxuriously elaborate inking style of Kevin Nowlan. Artists like Pacheco, Larroca,

Enrique Corominas, *Dorian Grey* (Daniel Maghen) 2011.

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Guillem March, *Monica Vol. 2* (Dupuis) 2015. Original artwork courtesy of the artist.

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Ferry and Janin match the current style so perfectly that it is sometimes easy to forget that they are not in fact American. But the contemporary superhero scene is wide enough to embrace a number of different approaches including Javier Pullido and Marcos Martín's more minimalist, light-touched design-oriented approach, Emma Rios' decorative Art Nouveau stylings, David Rubín's visually rich, quirky, indie take on superheroes and Daniel Acuña's brightly elegant realism.

Guillem March is one of the most talented artists of the current generation, with a career that straddles both the superhero world and the European graphic novel scene. He first came to the public's attention drawing *Gotham City Sirens* (DC Comics) in an effervescent, kinetic style, with an unusually expressive line that set him apart from most of his peers. Talking about his formative years and thoughts about the current marketplace he illustrates some of the influences on Spanish artist working in mainstream comics today;

"I was born in 1979 so I was too young when all the magazines were on the street. I remember buying a copy of *Cimoc* when I was an early teenager, just because of its cover. I found the stuff very weird, maybe because it was an adult magazine. I wasn't used to that kind of comic and I didn't like it much. In my childhood I read mainly Spanish comics like *Mortadelo y Filemón* by Francisco Ibáñez and *Zipi y Zape*, these are very popular in Spain, and it seems everybody reads them as a kid. After that I jumped right onto the manga wave that hit very hard when I was teenager and I started drawing in a manga-esque style. After many years of just manga I started reading almost everything, including American comic-books and BD.

Daniel Acuña, *Avengers Anniversary poster* (Marvel Comics) 2015. Image courtesy of the artist.

Daniel Acuña, *variant cover for Fantastic Four #1* (Marvel Comics) 2010. Image courtesy of the artist.

"When I was a manga reader, Carlos Pacheco was one of those artists that worked as a bridge to me, so I could jump from manga to American comics. The storytelling was completely different from manga, but those artists had some of the same elements that reminded me of the Japanese style. Joe Madureira and J. Scott Campbell had that as well. I started reading superhero comics that way, but very soon I was reading almost everything and falling in love with creators like Frank Miller, Mike Mignola, and many indie artists. Along with French BD, of course.

"With no magazines and very few comics being published in Spain you had to try selling your stuff abroad if you wanted to make a living, but that's not easy when you're not an established professional. I was studying a degree in Economics, and before finishing it I had started working as a tax advisor. Every year there were meetings with American editors at the Barcelona Con and I went to many of them. One editor, Mike Marts, liked my work and we kept in touch by email. Some months later I was offered a *Poison Ivy* special for DC, and a year after that I was offered an exclusive contract. No agent was involved in the process, I like to handle my career myself.

"I wouldn't say I'm exactly at home with superhero comics. I try to fit into the market, and also give the editor what I think he's looking for. I change my style and my way of working a bit (or a lot!) depending on my current project. And while I do think I can draw superheroes and feel quite comfortable, there's something in how the industry works that I don't like that much, particularly because it's very uncommon to work on a personal project as a complete creator and keep some kind of ownership. That's why lately I've been working

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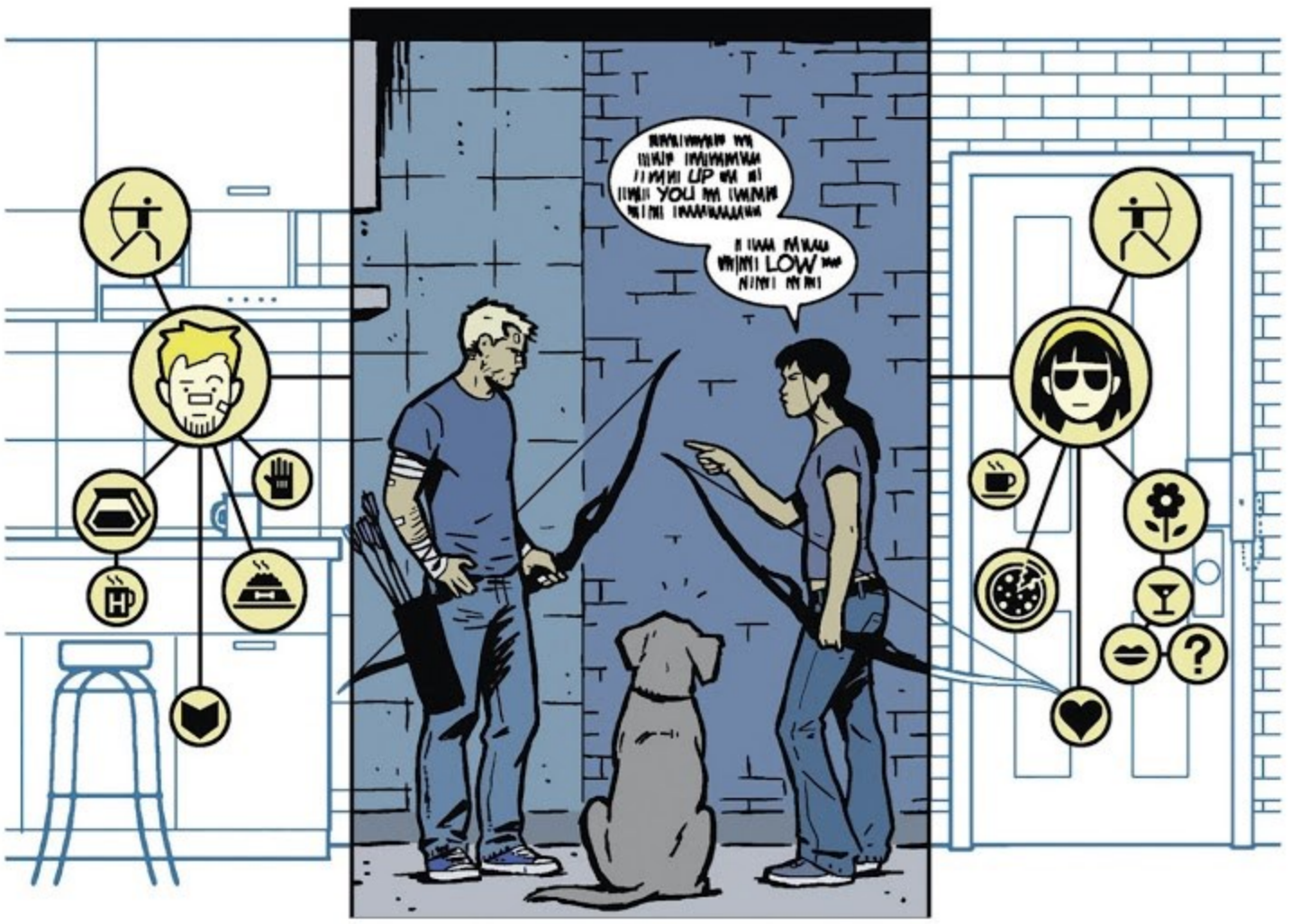
more for French publishers like Dupuis. I guess I've been forced to try working in various foreign markets after many years of working on small collaborations for very different kind of publications. The ability to change my style is a matter of survival."

While March has established a career on two continents without the help of an agent, many other Spanish artists are currently working with representatives to help find them work. David Macho is one of the leading agents in comics today representing around 25 pencillers, inkers, and colorists including Ramon Bachs and Jesus Saiz. Macho fell into the profession almost by accident when he volunteered to take over the portfolios of Bachs and Saiz on a trip to the San Diego Comic Con and instantly found work for them with Dark Horse. In interviews he has suggested that he was the first agent to work in America, though of course he is following in the long tradition of S.I., Bardon, and Norma. Other contemporary agencies representing creators in America include Eduardo Alpuente's Infinitoons and Pepe Caldenas' Nutopia with around 20 artists such as Ardian Syaf, Rafa Sandoval and Mikel Janin. Joaquin García's Radebu agency represents artists such as Nico Leon and Oscar Jimenez in America, but also has links with Soleil and Les Humanoïdes Associés in France.

Superhero comics today are broad enough in their scope to accommodate both accessible, mainstream styles and more individualistic talents. Definitely among the more unique artists working today are Daniel Acuña, David Aja, and Emma Rios whose imaginative approaches to superheroes have all found an appreciative audience. Acuña studied fine art in Spain, but always had a love of American comic book artists, particularly Richard Corben. His first series *Claus and Simon* appeared in Spain and France from 1998 to 2004 after which he started working for Marvel and DC Comics in the United States. After a number of covers for *JLA* and *The Outsiders*, his first published American strip was *Uncle Sam and the Freedom Fighters* where his strong draughtsmanship, bold line work and astonishing understanding of light and depth grabbed the public's attention. In 2007 Acuña joined Marvel Comics and he has subsequently worked on many of their top titles, including *The Eternals, Black Widow, Avengers, Captain America* and *The X-Men*. Acuna's unique gift is to marry the dynamism and simplicity of traditional superhero illustration with the realistic rendering of contemporary illustration. He can (and often does) create sprawling vistas of characters in the most detailed settings but they never lose their focus and clarity, creating images that are exciting, iconic and richly beautiful.

David Aja's work is similarly striking though his approach is quite different from Acuna's. After studying Fine Art at the University of Salamanca he stayed on as tutor until striking out on his own as an illustrator and lecturer in 2000. The next five years included illustration work for such diverse venues as the newspaper *El Pais, Rolling Stone, Men's Health,* and publishers Planeta and Edicciones B. In 2005 he started a long association with Marvel drawing such titles as *Daredevil, Wolverine, the X-Men,* and *Iron Fist*. It was Aja's gritty, kinetic artwork on *Iron Fist* that first made an impact with comic readers, but it was his collaboration on *Hawkeye* with writer Matt Fraction that made him a star. On *Hawkeye* the artist's artwork was subtly understated, almost minimalist, with



David Aja, *Hawkeye#11* (Marvel Comics) 2013. Image courtesy of the artist.

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Emma Rios, *Pretty Deadly #2* (Image Comics) 2013. Image courtesy of the artist.

an acutely observed depiction of body language and emotion. Most impressively the strip was also a showcase for the artist's masterful, and endlessly inventive, sense of design and storytelling using symbols, multiple panels and creative page layouts. With issues told from the viewpoint of a pizza-loving dog, or told in sign language the series caught the public and critics imagination and has rightly won several Eisner awards. Aja currently concentrates on his thrillingly creative cover illustrations which again emphasize his mastery of design.

Aja and Acuña are both creative talents working for some of America's biggest publishers but for Emma Rios the divide between mainstream and indie is almost irrelevant as she moves between both markets without compromising her individuality. Rios trained as an architect and for many years self-published her own comics in Spain in her spare time. Her first American work was Boom!'s *Hexed* miniseries in 2008 which led to a back-up in Marvel's *Runaways* and then, in turn, to the comic that first alerted fans to her talents: *Doctor Strange* in 2010. The money from Marvel allowed her to concentrate on comics full time and over the next few years she established herself as one of the company's most unique voices, drawing such titles *as Cloak and Dagger, Spider-Man, Osborn,* and *Ms. Marvel.* The last two titles were written by Kelly Sue DeConnick who paired up with Rios again for the beautifully crafted apocalyptic fantasy series *Pretty Deadly*, first published by Image in 2013. In recent years, Rios has switched between drawing strips, editing the experimental anthology magazine *Islands,* and writing the *Mirror* series for artist Hwei Lim. One constant throughout these various venues is Rios' artwork: a dense, multi-layered swirl of Art Nouveau whiplashes and overlapping images, her pages vibrating with life and movement.

With its artists playing an increasingly visible and influential role in America and France, and a growing audience for more personal and challenging projects at home, Spanish comic art is clearly enjoying a second renaissance. It is striking how the structures and markets of the '60s and '70s, such as the re-emergence of agents and the lure of prestigious work abroad, have gradually re-appeared, though in this case seemingly more through chance and osmosis than any grand plan. One significant break with the past is this post-Millennial generations' stylistic diversity, unlike the more pronounced visual identity shared by their predecessors. So while this means that their emergence has gone largely unnoticed, their sheer diversity should ensure an enthusiastic demand for their artwork for many years to come. This is not a story with an ending yet, far from it. The history of Spanish comic book art is constantly evolving, and growing with many more chapters yet to be written.

David Roach and José Vilarrubia

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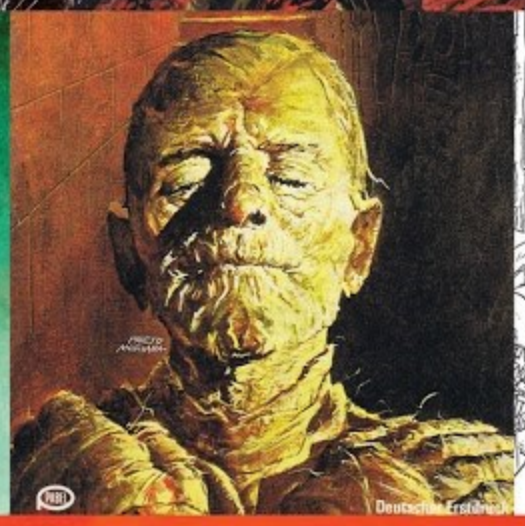

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MASTERS OF SPANISH COMIC BOOK ART is a celebration of the great artists who revolutionized American horror comics in the 1970s with their work on Warren's *Vampirella*, *Creepy*, and *Eerie* magazines. This first-ever comprehensive history of Spanish comic books and the artists who brought them to life reveals their extraordinary success -- not just in Spain and America, but around the world. Their global influence has been little known until this celebration of their contributions. Containing artwork from over 80 artists, this in-depth retrospective includes 18 artist profiles with 500 illustrations, over half scanned directly from the original artwork, ***Masters Of Spanish Comic Book Art*** honors the "Golden Generation" whose artwork inspired the imagination of comic book lovers everywhere.

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