

Toulouse Créative

AUDREY SPIRY
Art on the border

GOROBEI
Good vibes and cinnamon

STÉPHANIE LEDOUX
French artist portraying the world

**PAUL CAUDET &
JÉRÔME MAFFRE**

CHRISTOPHE BEC
Paper hero

STÉPHANIE HANS
Passion and lucidity

ANTOINE MAILLARD
Observation and poetry

**MUSÉE DES ARTS
PRÉCIEUX PAUL-DUPUY**
*(Museum of Precious Arts)
The art collector*

ROMAIN PUJOL
Pop culture with a twist

LOUI
Ikigai

**URBAN
SKETCHERS**

SPECIAL FEATURE - *Urban Sketchers Toulouse*



Toulouse, UNESCO Creative City of Music

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was set up in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. They are cities that place creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at local level and cooperate actively at international level. Their creativity is recognised in one of the following creative fields: architecture, crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts and music.

In 2023, at the initiative of its mayor Jean-Luc Moudenc, Toulouse applied to join the network and obtain the 'Creative City' designation.

In 2026, the network included over 400 cities on 5 continents, committed to sharing information and best practice and organising joint cultural projects at regional and global level.

Since May 2026, Toulouse has chaired the French Network of UNESCO Creative Cities, which includes Angoulême, Caen, Cannes, Enghien-les-Bains, Limoges, Lyon, Metz, Rouen, Saint-Etienne and Évian.

You probably rub shoulders with them every day, but their names may not ring a bell. Without realising it, you might be standing behind them in the queue to buy your baguette, or doing lengths alongside them at the swimming pool. They are a source of inspiration for your partner, bring joy to your children and help your teens tackle some tough teenage issues. They are the silent superheroes of everyday life, but you're much more likely to see them sipping coffee than darting around in a flashy Lycra suit...

They are illustrators, artists, storywriters, colourists, and so on. For its second issue, Toulouse Creative decided to take an in-depth look at the world of drawing and illustration. As a UNESCO-recognised Creative City, Toulouse is just as talented when it comes to capturing the world around us in a few clever strokes. The many artists and schools you'll discover in these pages are living proof of our city's artistic talent, as are the sometimes little-known graphic art collections housed in our museums.

Drawing and illustration play a big part in all our lives, often through the medium of books. Think of all those manga that teens love to read in the safe haven of their bedrooms with music on full blast, the page-turners that keep us glued to the sofa for hours at a time, or the funny cartoons and caricatures we enjoy flicking through on a café terrace... Drawings are everywhere. Often accompanied by words – sometimes music –, they broaden our horizons, often make us laugh, and frequently prompt us to reflect.

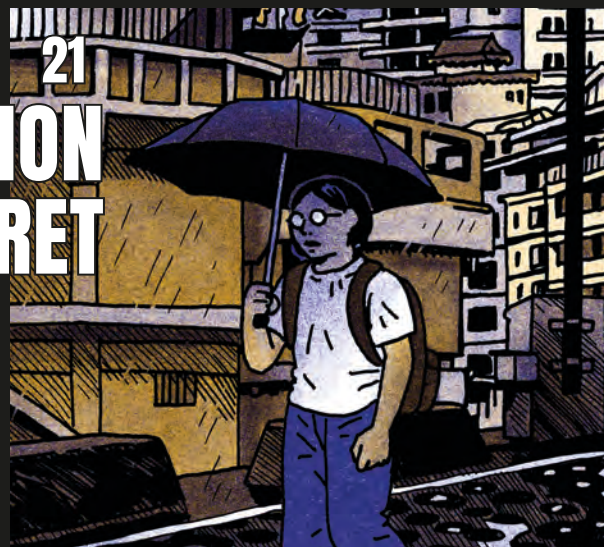
Read on and enjoy!



66
**SERGE
CARRÈRE**



58
**SALOMÉE
LUCE-ANTOINETTE**



21

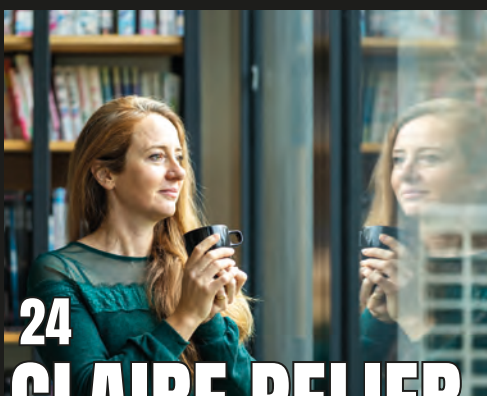
**SIMON
LAMOURET**



16
**AURÉLIE
GARNIER**



78
**DELPHINE
PANIQUE**



24
CLAIRE PELIER

SPECIAL FEATURE 40 URBAN SKETCHERS





73
**RAPHAËL
LARRE**

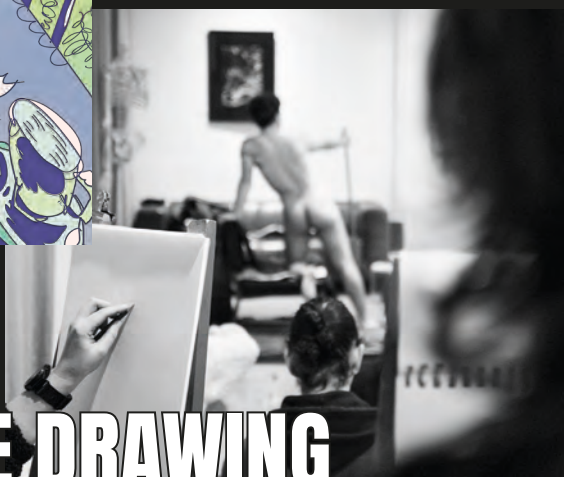


71
**MORGANE
PARISI**



74
**ZOÉ B.
SIMPSON**

26
**GHADI
GHOSN**



35
**LIFE DRAWING
IN THE EVENING**

ANTOINE MAILLARD Observation & poetry	p. 4
AUDREY SPIRY Art on the border	p.9
CHRISTOPHE BEC Paper hero	p.12
AURÉLIE GARNIER Bistrot, Giallo & American Cosmo	p.16
SIMON LAMOURET Documentary drawing	p.21
CLAIRE PELIER Storytelling is our job	p.24
GHADI GHOSN From Beirut to Toulouse	p.26
STÉPHANIE HANS Passion and lucidity	p.28
GOROBEI Good vibes and cinnamon	p.32
LIFE DRAWING IN THE EVENING	p.35
LOUI Ikigai	p.36
URBAN SKETCHERS Special feature	p.40
ROMAIN PUJOL Pop culture with a twist	p.50
PAUL CAUVET & JÉRÔME MAFFRE	p.54
SALOMÉE LUCE-ANTOINETTE Transcending reality	p.58
L'IMAGERIE Academic & contemporary	p.60
STÉPHANIE LEDOUX French artist portraying the world	p.62
SERGE CARRÈRE An ironic take on the world	p.66
MORGANE PARISI Creative echo	p.71
RAPHAËL LARRE Itinerant drawing	p.73
ZOÉ B. SIMPSON Childhood promises	p.74
LA SCOLA Sharing & passing on	p.77
DELPHINE PANIQUE Minimalist & politically engaged	p.78
FESTIVAL FIGURÉ.E Pépité !	p.81
MUSÉE DES ARTS PRÉCIEUX PAUL-DUPUY The art collector	p.82

Antoine Maillard

As a child, he would draw while watching films on VHS tapes, dreaming up sequels to the films he watched with his brother. Fast forward a few years, and he's now an *illustrator and comic book author* who works with *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Le Parisien*. We met up with *Antoine Maillard*.

What do you remember about your early drawings?

I liked drawing the things around me, as though I was creating my own personal encyclopedia, an inventory of my environment. Sadly, art wasn't a big part of the school curriculum in the early 2000s. I remember how hard our secondary school art teacher would try to get us interested in her subject, when lots of people thought it was pointless.

Can you tell us about your career to date, some highlights and the people who've influenced you?

After my baccalaureate, I did a year of art-school in Paris. After that, I got a place at EESI Fine Arts School in Angoulême, where I graduated with a Master's in comic art. I went on to do two years at the École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg, graduating with a national diploma in art and illustration. In Strasbourg, myself and some fellow students were singled out by Alexandra Zsigmond, art director of *The New York Times*, who gave us work on the newspaper. After my studies, I did an author's residency in San Francisco to complete my first comic book, *Slash Them All*.

What strikes you about the way illustrating and comic art have changed since the 2000s?

There are lots more women now. There's still some way to go, but more and more women are getting work published and winning critical acclaim. I'm also happy to see how Japanese and Asian influences are becoming an accepted part of French comic books. A growing number of authors – men and women – are overtly inspired by manga, which was still negatively perceived back when I was a student. On the downside, we're seeing too many rushed books on headline-grabbing current affairs, and too much autofiction. It sometimes gives me the impression that comic books are a sort of 'spin-off'.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

You'll often find me at Ombres Blanches, or in the small café nestled inside the bookshop. I'm a dedicated consumer of Antoine Fornara's cakes and pastries – far too tempting, because his shop is just a few metres from where I live. I like wandering through the market at Saint-Aubin on a Sunday morning, and spending time at the Musée des Augustins.



Observation and Poetry

As a child, he would draw while watching his tapes
inventing sequels to the movies he watched with his mother





Illustration by Antoine Maillard for Le Marathon des mots festival in Toulouse.



Illustration for an article in *The New Yorker*
by Antoine Maillard.



The Earth in sadness

What impact has generative artificial intelligence had on your work?

However amazing it may be from a technological point of view, I believe that generative AI is contributing to the cognitive collapse that began with TikTok and algorithms. I'm really not looking forward to seeing the damage it does in the creative sphere. I can already see the effect of screens on our imagination, through the standardised artistic creations we're seeing from younger people. And don't get me started on copyright breach, or the catastrophic environmental damage it causes, which is equally dangerous, in my opinion.

What do you think about when you're drawing?

Drawing is like meditation: you have to be fully present and focused on what you're doing. You have to avoid distractions, especially with the most demanding drawings. My mind sometimes wanders when I'm doing more repetitive tasks, like colouring in black zones, but drawing is mentally demanding, even though you sometimes get into the creative flow.

What inspires you?

I'm really inspired by TV series, especially those with a dark twist. I'm a fan of *Twin Peaks* and I really enjoyed *Severance* and *Pluribus*. As I get older, I realise that the notion of folklore is the common denominator that inspires me. I'm less into works that don't have a folklore dimension.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists?

Take a step back from your work. What you create doesn't define who you are – you'll always be able to do better! That's important, otherwise it's hard to accept criticism; artists need that fuel to drive their creation. You also need to be aware of the administrative, tax and legal aspects from the get-go: how to declare your income, negotiate your rates and contracts. It's not a stable job. You need to be organised and pragmatic – not just talented – to stick at it over time.

Works mentioned in the interview

Slash Them All (L'Entaille), Antoine Maillard, published by Cornélius, 2021
Instagram: @antoine.maillardcomics

2021

Winner of the Best New Author prize awarded by ADAGP (Association of graphic art authors), for *Slash Them All*

Winner of the Fauve Polar SNCF Voyageurs award

Winner of the *Les Inrockuptibles* award in the comic book category

CLIENTS:

The New York Times,
The New Yorker,
The Washington Post,
Télérama,
Le Parisien,
The Atlantic...

'I LIKED DRAWING THINGS, CREATING MY OWN PERSONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA.'

Who are your favourite artists?

I really like the work of Anthony Cudahy, a New York-based painter and artist. I like his colourful, figurative approach, with a mysterious, sensual twist. Lately I've been going back to Gustave Doré's illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* – those pictures had a huge influence on me when I was younger. I recently saw Ugo Bienvenu's work for his film *Arco*. I've been following his career since Gobelins visual arts school, and I'm amazed by his talent and ambition, and how incredibly disciplined he is about his work.

Audrey Spiry

Her work borders on the unclassifiable, and she draws at the border of the city. In her workshop in Borderouge, very large-scale works hang from the walls, while tiny sketches are scattered here and there, alongside paintings for her upcoming exhibition in Corsica. You'll also see lots of paintbrushes, bits of paper strewn across her desk, and pages from the future comic book she's been working on for ten years now.

How would you describe yourself?

I'm an explorer! And more specifically: a painter and artist. I have a really spontaneous approach to drawing – you might call it 'slice-of-life' drawing, because it brings me back to the present moment and the materiality of my body. My writing, painting and drawing all focus on the body in all its forms.

Tell us about your background.

I spent my teen years letting off steam through sport. Initially, I opted to study art at ENSAAMA, a traditional school of art and design in Paris. I split my time between live model drawing, paint-on-glass animation, and my love of makeshift objects. I went on to study animated films at EMCA in Angoulême, before returning to painting during my 3rd year at EESI Fine Arts School in Angoulême. A few



months later, I got my first job as assistant director on an animation series, and in the evening I would work on what became my first graphic novel. *En Silence* was published in 2012 and led to other albums (for young readers), including *Lotte* and *L'expédition*. I now paint live for several projects and live performances, and I'm also working on my second graphic novel, due to be published by Casterman in 2027.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse and why?

Anywhere where the sunshine bounces off red brick, evoking faraway places: place Saint-Serain, the Concorde, the Bonnefoy neighbourhood and Bol Bu pancake house. But what I love most about Toulouse is how close it is to Ariège and the Pyrenees, where I escape to as often as I can.



Your drawing style is sometimes very natural, raw and expressive. Is it possible to draw with the same vibrant energy as our ancestors?

Drawing by hand remains a gesture that connects people to their environment, through the filter of culture and emotions. Even though we perceive our environment differently than our ancestors did, that desire to portray it is intact, as is our need to leave a mark to show that we're alive in the midst of this great almighty chaos, to proclaim that we're part of it. Drawing represents that transcending need for connection. A line or a dot to express what moves us at the very heart of our being.

What do you think about when you're drawing?

My breath. What lies just beneath my skin. What grabs me and warms me from the inside.

Which artists have inspired you?

There are so many! The choreographer Pina Bausch for her involved stage sets, Francis Bacon, Johannes Vermeer, Paul Gauguin, Claire Tabouret for the way they combine colours, Käthe Kollwitz for her drawings, and so many others. In everyday life, I draw inspiration from Bell Hooks, Louise Bourgeois, Jan Svankmajer, Vimala Pons, the Baro d'ével troupe, Maya Angelou, Vincent Munier, to name a few.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists just starting out?

Dare to go slow! Take time to get to the heart of what matters most. The living world teaches me this every day: joy comes from doing, at your own pace, after confronting anger, judgement, doubt or even despair... and above all: dare to make mistakes! Samuel Beckett put it best when he said 'Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better'. There's so much truth in that!

Works mentioned in the interview

En Silence - Casterman

L'expédition - Thierry Magniez

Lotte, Fille pirate - Sarbacane

In Fine - Editions du Parc de la Narbonnaise

Instagram: @audreyspury

Playlist

Tim Bernardes
Cosmo Sheldrake
Bertrand Belin
Björk
Cécile
Feist



Colour panel from *Le jardin d'Eben* project



2012

Runner-up for the BD
du Point prize for
En silence

2013

Runner-up for the Grand
prix de la Critique for
En silence

2023

Sorcières Award,
'Carrément Beau
Maxi' category, for
L'Expédition, text by
Stéphane Servant

christophe bec



He works in silence on a black and white page for the *Thorgal* saga. Each stroke of his felt pen gives depth to a face that comes to life in front of our eyes. His world seems to embrace a vast expanse, stretching from the darkest abyss to the snow-capped forests of Scandinavia. The *serious author* may be a little intimidating, but it's easy to see that a *joke* is never far away: in the same office, you'll find Serge Carrère, Dabs and Akira.

How would you describe yourself?

I see myself as an author, but I can take on different roles: writer, artist, illustrator, painter. I mainly work on comic books, and I've been involved in several audiovisual projects.

What do you remember about your early drawings, or your first drawing classes?

I started drawing at a very young age. I used to sell my fanzines at secondary school with my brother, who is also a comic artist. I don't recall a teacher ever encouraging me to make a career out of it!

Can you tell us about your career to date, some highlights and the people who've influenced you?

I studied at the comic art school in Angoulême. It wasn't a great experience for me, but some of the things I learned there have served me well. Some people I met, and the encouragement of certain authors, are what convinced me to keep going. One of those people - René Hausmann, who I met at the comic book festival in Marvejols - advised me to accentuate the cinematographic aspect of my illustrations. That advice really changed my approach to comic books.

What strikes you about the way drawing and comic art have changed over the last 20 years?

Digital technology has totally changed the profession, but I've stayed true to the traditional way of working. I've been considering switching to a tablet, but the fact that a gallery owner like Alain Huberty has taken me under his wing and is helping raise my profile motivates me to continue drawing on paper. AI is ushering in a new revolution, though comic books seem to be relatively unaffected for the time being.



2005

Winner of the Uderzo
Award for *Carême*

2008

Winner of the Brique d'Or
at the Toulouse Festival for
Bunker

2015

Winner of the
'La BD est dans la presse'
award at 'La BD est dans le
pré' festival for *Carthago 4*,
Les Monolithes de Koubé

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists just starting out?

Honestly, I'd tell them to choose another career. The comic book industry is in crisis - 35% of authors live below the poverty line, and 55% only earn the minimum wage. I've been in the profession for 35 years, and even at my level, after publishing not far off 200 books and selling over three million albums, I don't know whether I'll still be able to make a living out of it in five or ten years.

Black and white or colour?

I have a soft spot for black and white. The authors I'm inspired by are all really skilled in black and white: Vance, Giraud, Gillon, De la Fuente, Breccia, and so on.



Works mentioned in the interview

Thorgal Saga, *La déesse d'Ambre*, volume 6, Le Lombard, 2026

Photo credit: © Léo Itarte

Instagram: @bec_christophe





LA PLUIE
RUISSELLE
SUR LES V
DU RES
NOTEZ.
RIEN DE
QUE DE
VIN
IL Y A UN
ET IL NE

Rain trickles down the windows of the restaurant. A stone's throw from place Saint-Sernin, the artist opens her sketchbook. The backdrop fades, making way for her confident strokes and the subject she wants to capture. **Introducing *Aurélie Garnier*.**

LES
AUTRES
TAURANT
IL N'YA
PIRE
PERDRE
L'IDÉE
MOMENT
DURE PAS*

Aurélie Garnier

How would you describe yourself?

I'd say I'm halfway between illustration and drawing. I do illustrations to order, while drawing is my personal project.

such as StreetPress, I sometimes have to address sensitive current affairs. I try to find a balance between the raw truth and readers' sensitivity.

What do you think about when you're drawing?

When I'm sketching in one of my sketch-books, I observe my subject, I try to capture a single moment by paying close attention to shadows, laughter lines or some detail of clothing. I'm super focused because time is limited. I'm trying to capture a moment, you might call it photographic drawing. You get one moment, and it won't last. I have to seize the essence quickly, just before my subject disappears – it's a bonus. When I work to order, for the press for example, have to think about what matters and what doesn't, find a perspective that will add a lighter touch to hard-hitting subject matter. When I work for media



Name three artists who have inspired you.

Of the major artists, Matisse inspires me most. Another inspiration is Paul Cox, whose work I discovered as a student. He made me want to work with colour. I met him once in Toulouse at an exhibition at Lieu Commun, and we've stayed in touch. Lastly, I'd say David Hockney, as much for his paintings as for the words he uses to describe his art. The way he describes landscape and nature as a spatial experience really resonates with me.

*Rain trickles down the windows of the restaurant. Remember: there's nothing worse than losing an idea. You get one moment and it won't last.



Print on a white t-shirt

* - Studies have shown that wearing a white
t-shirt makes a man at least 30% sexier...
- I'm growing on you...



Couple life (procrastination)

* - I'll tell him tomorrow



QUI SÈME LE VIN RÉCOLTE LA POMPETTE...

**PLEIN SOLEIL SÉLECTIONNE POUR VOUS LES MEILLEURS VINS!
PLEIN SOLEIL - 5, PLACE DU PEYROU - 31000 TOULOUSE**

*Cave plein soleil presents
Wine today, tipsy tomorrow...
Plein soleil selects the best wines for you!
Plein soleil - 5, place du Peyrou - 31000 Toulouse



Aurélie Garnier at Midi Minuit restaurant - © Guillaume Ajavon

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I like hanging out at Gloria, which is practically my second home. Alain, Solène and the regulars are part of my landscape. My other bar is simply called 'Le bar' – in place Belfort. It's a place where miracles happen, there's always something going on, it's a refuge for locals. I go to concerts at Caméléon, a community bar right at the foot of Pont Saint-Pierre, in the Saint-Cyprien neighbourhood. Since La Dernière Chance is closed now, my friends and I sometimes end up at Txus, in rue Saint Charles. I'm a cinema addict who loves spending time in dark rooms – the Cinéma-thèque and American Cosmograph are sacred places for me. I also enjoy eating at Brochettes, in the Patte d'Oie neighbourhood. It's a sort of urban roadside diner where you meet a bunch of friends for a simple lunch washed down with a jug of wine. A place with character, a modest bar that teems with vibrant, ordinary life.

What inspires you?

Films, mainly. I'm a fan of Giallo, a blend of horror fiction and eroticism that was most popular between the 1960s and 1980s. I also draw inspiration from 1980s/90s teen movies like *Fatal Games* and *Valley Girl*. I try to capture that fresh atmosphere in my drawings. What inspires me most is listening to the people around me, my friends talking about their tangled love lives, snippets of phone conversations I overhear... and my own life experiences, of course.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists just starting out?

Always have a little sketchbook with you to note down your ideas and words you overhear, or to make quick sketches. There's nothing worse than losing an idea. Don't get worn down by failure. Some things won't work out, but our mistakes often lead to new ways of doing things.

* - Remember: there's nothing worse than losing an idea

Instagram: @aureliergarnierillustration

**NOTEZ. IL N'Y A
RIEN DE PIRES
QUE DE PERDRE
UNE IDÉE***

Playlist

Chris Bennett "Midnight express"
Sebastien Tellier "Love"
P. Doney "Slang like this"
Country Teasers "Golden apples"
Bella Vista "Mister Wong"

Simon Lamouret

We met up with *Simon* in a small, sun-drenched restaurant in the Minimes neighbourhood. The author defends his *naturalist* approach to writing and drawing.



Simon Lamouret at La Soupe aux Cailloux restaurant - © Léo Itarte

Tell us about your background.

I used to draw when I was little, like all children. At the Maison de la Jeunesse et de la Culture in the Papus neighbourhood, I met Violette Courtiade, an art restorer who gave art classes and taught me most drawing techniques. I remember seeing her on the news next to President Jacques Chirac, receiving a gold medal for arts and crafts – my childhood teacher! I went on to study at the École Supérieure des Arts et Industries Graphiques in Paris, followed by the Fine Arts School in Angoulême and the École des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg.

What strikes you about the way illustrating and comic art have changed over the last 20 years?

The hegemony of social media, of course. Nowadays, everyone has to publish their work on social media, which influences format as well as content. It means everyone can access comic books across the globe, and creates ties that might never have existed in the past. Through social media, I recently discovered the work of Anand Pagalkutta, a young Indian who is strongly influenced by independent American comic books but manages to keep a geographically 'rooted' edge to his work. These hybrid forms are fascinating. They create new narratives and styles.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I used to hang out at lots of music venues like Maison Blanche and Le Taquin. Now, I'm more into bookshops and independent cinemas.



Pema gazing out at Gangtok

2017

Winner of the Écureuil
Découverte award
for *Bangalore*

2021

Winner of the Révélation
ADAGP / Quai des Bulles
award for *L'Alcazar*

Which illustrators inspire you?

Chris Ware for his naturalist, concise approach: his drawings are like characters, and you read rather than look at them. Olivier

Schrauwen for his analytical side and attention to detail, in a book like *Sunday*. Taiyō Matsumoto for his immensely skilled drawings and vulnerable characters. The Chinese illustrator He Youzhi has always been an inspiration – his rendering of suspended moments and drapery are spot on.

What inspires you?

So much inspires me! To give you a few recent examples, I'd say TV series such as *Pluribus*, podcasts such as *La gêne occasionnée*, *Les Pieds sur Terre*, *La Série Documentaire*, *Le Café Rhétorique*.

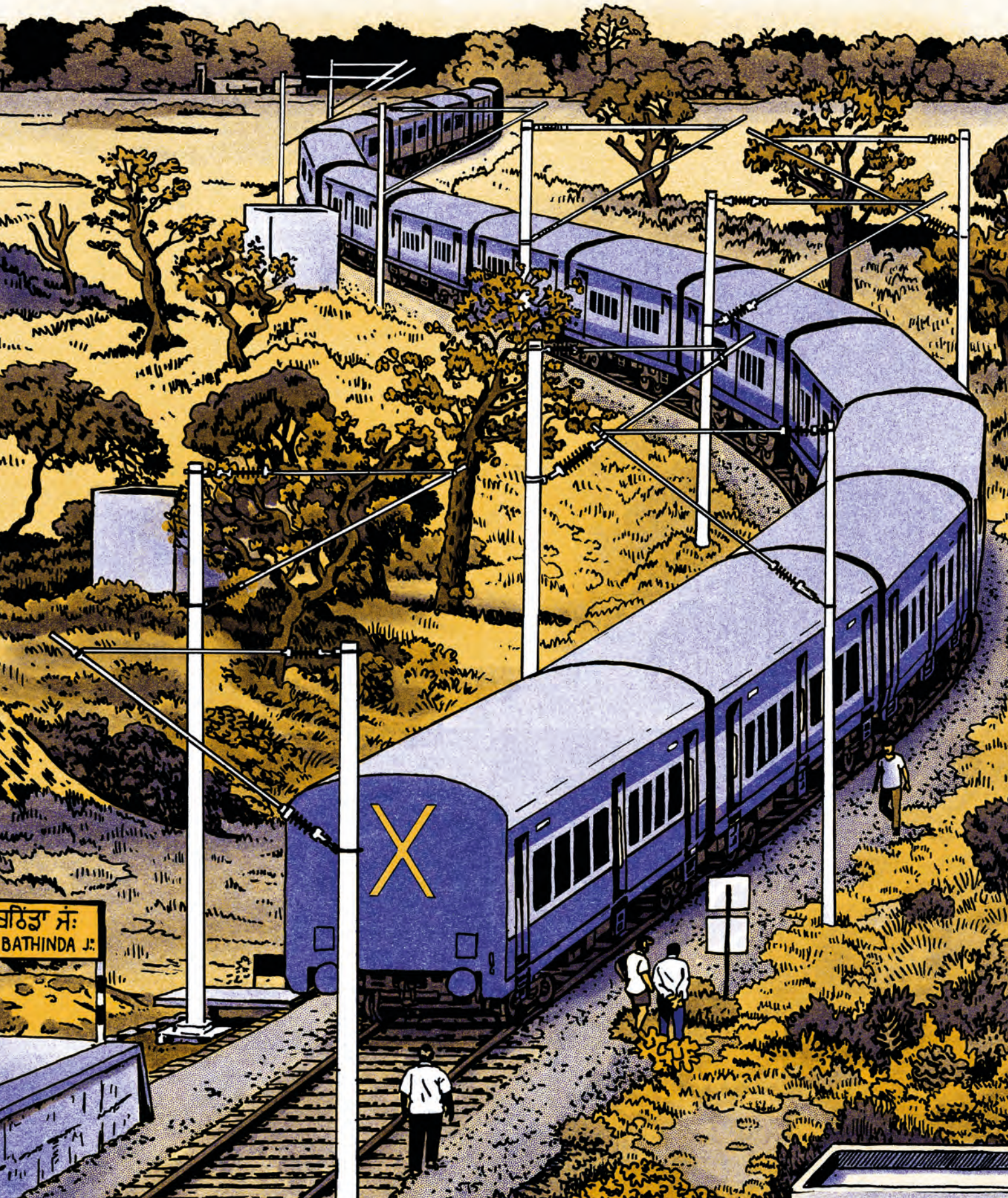
Is there a neighbourhood in Toulouse that matches your graphic style?

Les Amidonniers, Fer à Cheval and Croix de Pierre, with their small terraced houses and 'suburban' feel. And the Garonne river. I'm 'team Garonne' rather than 'team Canal' (laughs).

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists?

Finish what you start! Even if it's short and isn't perfect, give it a beginning, a climax and an end. It's important to finish your projects, to help you master the different steps.

Instagram: @simonlamouret



A portrait of Claire Pelier, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling and looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark green, long-sleeved top with a lace-like pattern on the shoulders. Her arms are crossed. The background is a blurred bookshelf filled with books.

claire Pelier

**School of Illustration,
Manga and Animation (EIMA)**

In 2012, Claire Pelier set up an arts and crafts centre called Toulouse Manga. Very quickly, her students set their sights on the higher goal of becoming professional artists. Because there was no official structure in France for learning manga art, she decided to create her own international school of manga and animation.

Instagram: @eimaschool



Inside EIMA
Photo credit: © Daniel Mini

What's the story behind EIMA?

It started out as a bit of a joke or 'far-fetched idea', but it really took shape when I began contacting authors and publishers to put the syllabus together. I received backing from Japan, mainly thanks to Nakashima Chiharu, the first Japanese teacher to teach in France at EIMA, who helped me construct the syllabus.

What professions do your students learn?

We train our students to be mangaka, webtoon authors, storyboarders, illustrators, concept artists and designers. Our courses focus on the practical and technical aspects of those professions, without overlooking the administrative side, such as accounting, copyright and business management.

Why do you think manga is so popular among teens?

A manga tells the story of a main character and takes us on an adventure alongside him or her. Because the subject is so strongly focused on one person, readers identify with the character and get a real sense of emotional release. Manga convey positive values such as striving to be your best self, friendship, perseverance, personal transformation. It allows readers to confront challenges that help them grow up alongside the character. French and Belgian comic books and comic art in general tend to adopt a different angle: they focus more on setting and plot, while manga depicts the personal story of characters who succeed, fail, learn from their mistakes and try again.

Are there several types of manga?

There are different categories of manga for each age group and readership: shōjo, shōnen, josei, seinen, and more besides. The main point being that you will find manga suitable for every age and personality. French manga aims to use the same codes as Japanese manga, but focusing on subjects more closely related to French culture.

What strikes you about the way drawing has changed since the 2010s?

The way techniques have evolved. Digital technology has changed so much in the last ten years. It was already available, but now it's become standard. On top of that, 3D is now part of the creative process: we use it to create backgrounds, volumes and perspectives and to save time without compromising on quality. There's also the way social media has become omnipresent, which is both an opportunity and a constraint: it makes it easier for publishers to spot future authors, but it makes it harder to stay visible – it's a battle to stand out from the crowd.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists?

You don't become a mangaka just by drawing. Of course, you have to be able to draw characters, backgrounds and action, but that isn't the core skill of this profession. A mangaka is a storyteller, an inventor of characters, a global architect. The first step is simple: take a pencil and a sheet of paper, write a story, then draw the entire story. The best way of learning is to start with one-shots: short stories with 8, 16, 24 or 32 pages. We make more progress by seeing a story through from start to finish — beginning, development, climax, end — than by redoing the first few pages over and over because they're never good enough. When you finish a story, you learn how to be a storyteller. And storytelling is our job.

Ghadi Ghosn

Born in Beirut, Ghadi was first a student then a teacher at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts. The illustrator and author of *alternative comic books* has been living in Toulouse since 2021.

What do you remember about your early drawings?

I started drawing when I was very young. I would draw everywhere – in my school books, in the margins and even on top of the text. It wasn't a great idea, my teachers weren't very impressed... I suppose I could have participated in class a bit more constructively!

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I like places that are lively, multi-cultural and down to earth – community bars and cultural centres like Le Belfort, La Chapelle and La Forêt Électrique, to name a few.

What are your sources of inspiration?

Pablo Picasso (incredible sensitivity and mastery of graphic strokes), Edvard Munch (striking, unsettling expressionism) and Francis Bacon (powerfully expressive style). I'd also mention some comic book authors, such as Julie Doucet (a fantastically liberating, easy narrative style), Daniel Clowes (for his intelligence, multi-layered characters) and Blutch (narrative deconstructions and characters hovering between libidinal and archetypal) or Yūichi Yokoyama. Podcasts and films (Bruno Dumont and Yasujiro Ozu) are also powerful influences.

What strikes you about the way drawing and comic art have changed over the last 10 years?

France has a very diverse, rich comic book culture. But the withdrawal of government subsidies for small publishers is undermining the ecosystem. Lots of publishers such as L'Association, Cornelius and The Hootchie Cootchie are under threat. If nothing changes, the sector is likely to be less vibrant.

Is there a neighbourhood in Toulouse that matches your graphic style?

I don't like areas that are too perfect. I'm from Beirut, so I feel more at home in Saint-Cyprien or the Minimes, neighbourhoods that are less picture-perfect, more of a mix between working class and 'boho'.

Instagram: @ghadighosn

Scene from Toulouse



Playlist

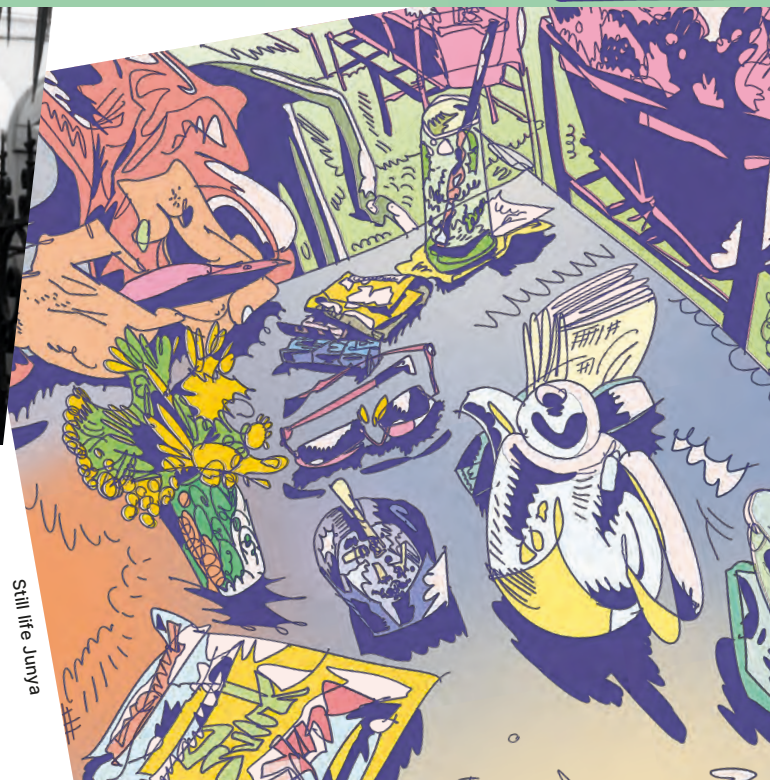
Odezenne "Bleu fuschia"
 John Cale "Dying on the vine"
 David Bowie "Dollar days"
 New Order "Bizarre love triangle"
 Alan Vega "Je t'adore"

2019

Contributed to an issue of *Samandal comics* that won the Fauve d'Or for experimental comic books at the Angoulême Comics Festival

2021

Winner of the NAFAS programme – Residencies for Lebanese artists in France (official selection with support from the Institut Français)



Stéphanie Hans



As a teenager, her teachers didn't hold out much hope for her drawings, and she herself planned on becoming a photographer. Despite the odds, she made a name for herself as an illustrator in the 2010s, and went on to win a string of awards.

Stéphanie Hans **now divides her time between Toulouse, Asia and the USA, guided by commissions and convention engagements - an original career path that she looks back on with *lucidity* and *passion*.**



Magik - Amazing X-Men #2 - Marvel - Published by IDW

How would you describe yourself?

Artist, Interior & Cover Artist, author... and tired!

Quel est votre parcours ?

I studied graphic art at the Art University, followed by the École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg. I was passionate about drawing and photography, but I couldn't seem to thrive in an academic setting. I think they just let me graduate so I'd stop sleeping on the sofas at university! (laughs) I published two comic albums with them. That led to proposals from other publishers to illustrate covers for children's books.

For those orders, I managed to tell a story, create characters and atmospheres and target a specific group of readers: that's when I realised my talent for composition. At the same time, I started to put together a portfolio of artwork through my community activities via Conceptart.org.

What happened next?

In 2007, I showed my portfolio to C.B. Cebulski, a recruiter for Marvel Comics, at the Angoulême Comics Festival. Two years later, he got in touch and offered me my first cover. It got a warm welcome, so I started doing covers every month, and I've been doing so for 15 years now.



DIE/loaded. Kieron Gillen, Stephanie Hans
Published by Image Comics

Doing covers for comics?

That's right. With comics, the illustrator of the story doesn't usually do the cover - they tend to bring in a specialist, known as a cover artist! And you also have cover variants, which are covers produced by another cover artist, for special editions, for example. See what I mean?

Yes! What's it like working with the USA? Who are your clients?

It's straightforward - there are no taboos about pay, rights or deadlines, and relationships are totally transparent. At the moment, I work for DC, Marvel, Boom, Image, Magic and, occasionally Netflix (which has given me access to a couple of film shoots).

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

Saint-Cyprien because that's where my workshop is! Ginette café in the Minimes neighbourhood, Dips Tea, the Frog and Rosbif, the Concorde. And my gym, because if you don't do some kind of sport, this profession will break you, both mentally and physically!

What strikes you about the way drawing and comic art have changed over the last 10 years?

The digital revolution in the 2010s, and the simultaneous comeback of paper. I'd also mention the importance of Asian authors and illustrators at Marvel Comics and in the world of illustration: lots of talented new artists from Korea (InHyuk Lee), Malaysia (Justine Frany) and Japan (Peach Momoko). I've also noticed an emerging solidarity between female artists, embodied by Kelly Sue DeConnick and her *Visible Women* initiative.

What are the ingredients of a successful career as an illustrator?

50% rage, 30% ambition, 10% luck and 10% talent ! (laughs)

What do you think about when you're drawing?

When you're in the creative process, drawing your first lines and fine-tuning the concept, you have to be 100% focused, there's no room for anything else. After that, I can watch a TV series, listen to a podcast or music.

Musical tastes?

Taylor Swift - I love Father Figure, which includes the line 'I can make deals with the devil because my dick's bigger'. It's a bit unsettling, I agree, but I like the fact she's taking a feminist stance. My playlist also includes Black Pink, Baby Metal, Hoo- verphonics and the Pixies.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists?

Do it for yourself. Study the market and don't be afraid of talking about money. Girls, don't be scared to go for it! Humility often works against women.

Instagram: @stephaniehansart

**'50% RAGE,
30% AMBITION,
10% LUCK,
10% TALENT!'**



The Exorcism At 1600 Penn
Hannah Rose May - Vanessa Del Rey Bellaire-Otsmane-Elhaou

2005

Winner of the Ville de Creil Award for volume 1 of the *Galathéa* trilogy by Emmanuel Proust (*Fantasteria*)

2020

Runner-up for the Hugo Award for 'Best graphic story/ comic book' for *Die, Volume 1: Fantasy Heartbreaker*

2021

Winner of the British Fantasy Award for 'Best Comic/Graphic Novel' for *DIE*

2021

Runner-up for the Hugo Award for 'Best graphic story/ comic book' for *DIE, Volume 2: Split the Party*

2022

Runner-up for the Hugo Award for 'Best graphic story/ comic book' for *DIE, Volume 4: Bleed*

2023

Winner of the Origins Award for 'Best product for role-playing games' for *DIE: The Roleplaying Game*

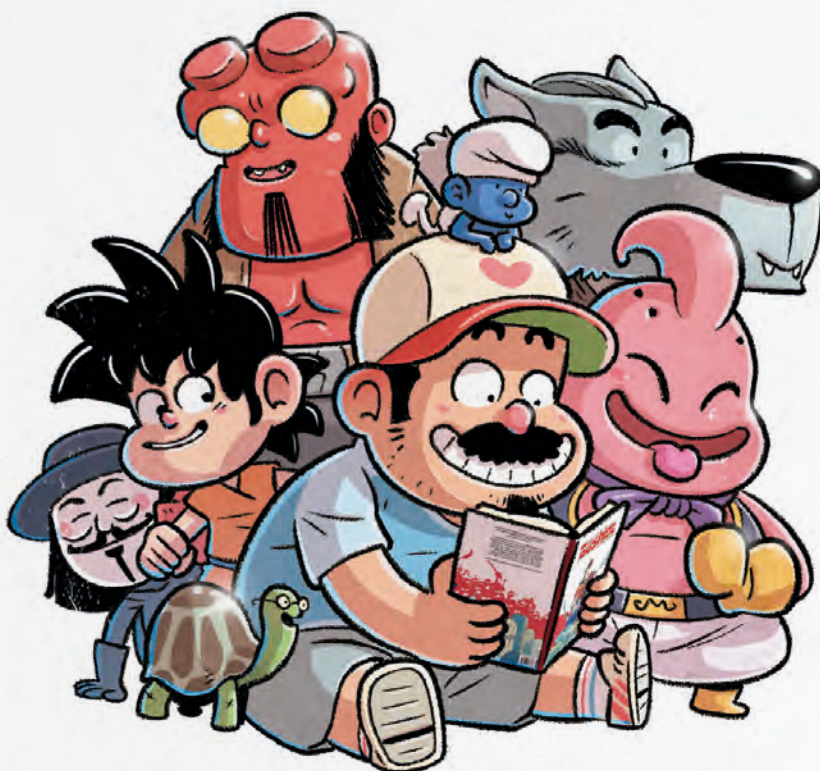
2025

Runner-up for the Hugo Award for 'Best graphic story/comic book' for *We Called Them Giant*

Gorobei



Emmanuel Martin began his career as an illustrator in his last year of primary school, when his first published works – a set of caricatures – won him critical acclaim... and some enemies, depending on your point of view. He talks to us about everything else (his sources of inspiration, his playlist and profession) over a delicious cinnamon role in a café in Place du Salin.



Self-portrait and inspirations (2024, visual for *Spirou* magazine)

We know about your primary school caricatures. Do you plead guilty?

You did your homework then (*laughs*). That's right, my first drawings were a set of caricatures I did at primary school. They were pretty bad, but that was the starting point. In secondary school (in Saint Cyr/Loire near Tours), with two mates and the art teacher, we took part in a competition for the Angoulême Comics Festival. We finished in the top 3 for our age group. That's what convinced me I'd make a career out of drawing. I didn't study in Toulouse, I arrived here in 2007, after a year at Pivaut school in Nantes.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

There are so many great places! Cafés are the best, because I can work there: Kopi, Café Cerise and Les Infiltrés, for example. I also like going to café Euclide at the Quai des Savoirs, which is perfect in summer evenings. Toulouse is a wonderful city for hanging out: I recommend looping from Saint-Aubin to Saint-Sernin, Saint-Cyprien, les Carmes and Saint-Étienne.

Who are your three favourite artists?

First up, Akira Toriyama, who represents my childhood: I grew up copying his characters. Take either Aralé or *Son Goku*, both are blank pages that grow up alongside their readers. Next, Mike Mignola, for his minimalistic lines and the research he puts into his work, especially *Hellboy* and *B.P.R.D.* I also admire Juanjo Guarnido and Enrique Fernández, for their skill and incredible compositions that make you feel as though you're reading a cartoon.

What do you think about when you're drawing?

It depends what stage I'm at. When I'm sketching, doing research or making the storyboard, I think about the reading pace, how the scenes will be split and the overall composition. Inking and colouring are more 'automatic' and require less thought, so that's when I can work in a café, listen to music or a podcast... After a while, I also start thinking about eating or having a coffee.

Other artists inspire us to try new things

How do story writers meet their dream comic artist? On Tinder?

Haha! It's all about human relations for me, and the people I work with often become friends. Sometimes it's the publisher who puts the writer in contact with the illustrator. And writers also look at social media to find the style that suits them.

What inspires you?

Just about everything. I never stop observing. Politics influences me. Other artists inspire us to try out new things. And generally speaking, anything that sparks emotion, be it music, films, TV series, etc. They all plant a seed in my mind.

How do you know when a drawing is finished?

Good question. When I'm satisfied and I don't feel the need to make changes. It's a feeling really.

What aspects of Toulouse stimulate your imagination?

The light, shades and colours. Toulouse is a warm, welcoming city with a laid-back pace of life. And the people are a source of inspiration; it's like a microcosm of street theatre every day!



Any anecdotes to share?

I always tell the same story, because it still makes me laugh, and I'm still alive. A kid of about 11 or 12 came up to me at a signing and told me he wanted to become an illustrator. I replied that I was looking forward to seeing him at the Comics festival. He answered coolly that that was highly unlikely... since I'd probably already be dead by then. I was 29 at the time...

If Toulouse was a comic book character, how would you portray it?

I've never thought about it, but now you mention it, I realise that the city already has lots of iconic figures and features: Nougaro, BigFlo et Oli, Zebda, Ovalion, Airbus, cassoulet, red bricks, and more. You'd have to mix all that together, which seems like a pretty tough challenge to me.

Illustration from *LeChuck* (2024, fanart of the gaming pirate character from the Monkey Island saga, as part of the Inktober challenge)
Instagram: @manu_gorobei



Mina (2026, panel from a future comic strip)

Life drawing in the evening

The 'Nocturne du Modèle Vivant' (a life drawing evening class) was created by Axelle Picard, a drawing teacher, and Florence Boué, a model. Their aim was to glorify anatomy and art, while making life drawing more accessible. They created an event that is consistently sold out. 4 questions to Axelle Picard.



Life drawing class - © Léo Itarte

What's the profile of the people who sign up for the Nocturnes, and where are they held?

The evening class is for students, amateur and professional artists. The Toulouse Natural History Museum has been hosting the event since 2022. In 2025, we organised two sessions plus workshops for children and teenagers, and a conference with Charlène Letenneur. Over 800 people took part. For Nocturnes events, I select models from those who regularly pose for my workshops. It's essential that I know them and am able to trust them – they are professional live models. There are nine models at every session, with a variety of morphologies and styles, so participants are treated to a visually and artistically rich experience.

Has this practice evolved over time, depending on the period or society's perception of the human body?

Life drawing is a timeless practice. The tools we use and creative freedom have changed, but the basics remain: observation of the human anatomy, perspective, shade, light and colour.

How long does it take to learn how to draw the human body?

It depends on the individual, on our ability to observe, and how frequently you practice. When you know how to draw figures, you can draw anything, because it's the most technically complete discipline. Time is an essential constraint, because models pose for a set amount of time. You have to study anatomy in order to understand the body.

What advice would you give beginners?

My number one piece of advice is to sign up for a class! It doesn't really matter which medium you use – pencils, charcoal, paint or a drawing tablet. What matters is learning to observe. Drawing depends on our ability to look at the things in front of us: look, look, and look again...

Instagram: @nocturne.du.modele.vivant

Just Loui

How would you describe yourself?

Illustrator and narrator. You need a variety of skills to be a mangaka: staging, composition, authoring, illustration, character design, to name a few. But storytelling is my true passion.

What do you remember about your early drawings?

As a kid, I was crazy about epic poems and mythology, anything from *The Odyssey* to *The Lord of the Rings*. I used to draw maps of imaginary worlds. For me, drawing always went hand in hand with storytelling, it wasn't just about drawing for fun: my pictures were meant to illustrate my stories.

Tell us about your background.

After my baccalaureate, I attended several manga schools, but didn't really find what I was looking for. That prompted me to head to Japan to meet mangakas and understand the narrative and graphic codes of manga. At the same time, some French artists gave me valuable advice. I also taught myself techniques by reading theoretical works such as *The Anatomy of Story* by John Truby and *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell.

What strikes you about the way drawing and comic art have changed over the last 10 years?

The mix of graphic and narrative codes between French and Belgian comic books, American comics and Japanese manga. The influence of manga is obvious among young French authors, but it works both

Don't ask him what inspires him – the list would be far too long. This young self-taught mangaka grew up in Ghana, did a stint in theatre and worked for a time in the humanitarian sector. He enjoys slam, Japanese haikus, politics and films. He cuts a well-toned figure as he steps through the doors of a popular café in the Minimes neighbourhood. Join us for a chat with *Loui*.

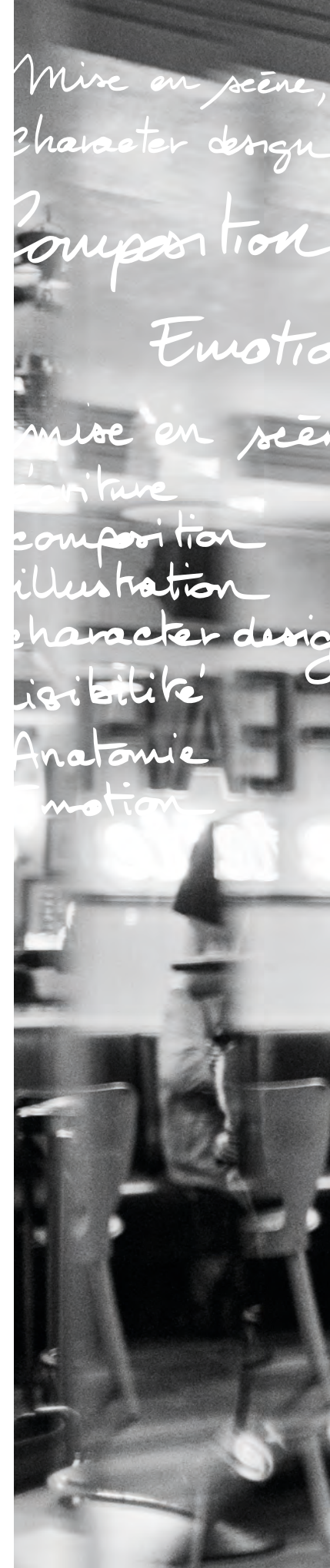
ways, because manga is also influenced by Western codes. That mix leads to hybrid works. The boundaries are more porous, and that diversity makes the visual and narrative language richer, opening up fresh creative potential.

'STORYTELLING IS MY TRUE PASSION.'

Who are your three favourite artists?

Rubens, for the power of his Baroque paintings, such as *The Lion and Leopard Hunt*. Next, I'd say Boichi, the author of *Sun Ken Rock* and *Origin*, for the intensity of his action scenes and the skilled way he depicts human forms. Lastly, Hiroaki Samura, author of *Blade of the Immortal*. I admire the sensuality of his lines and the organic brutality of his katana fights.

Instagram: @justlouart



composition, écriture, illustration

LOUI | 37

Ne jamais surcharger la page

lisibilité Mouvement dynamique Anatomie

Ne penser à rien d'autre que ce que je

ne

je



Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I love the banks of the Garonne and strolling by the river, especially on balmy summer evenings. I like the way the light bounces off the water, the quietness that descends. Toulouse is a laid-back city that makes me feel profoundly at peace. It's a big, dynamic, thriving city that still manages not to feel oppressive. The vibe is a mix of partying, music and Southern culture. The weather also plays a big part: the sunshine, the heat and being able to live outdoors affect my mood and my ability to work.

What advice would you give to young illustrators or artists just starting out?

Illustrators really have to master anatomy and be able to portray the world in a few simple strokes. I'd tell young people interested in authoring as a career to be curious about everything around them and to try and find their own voice – what they have to say, what sets them apart, what deserves to be passed on through their work.

Any anecdotes?

Some of the funniest moments of my career are when I've felt totally transparent at book signing sessions. One time, I was sitting next to Kim Jung Gi: everyone had come to see him, and I was invisible for the entire weekend. Another time, I was in between Julien Neel and the authors of *Warrior Shepherdesse*, two superstars of the French and Belgian comic book scene. It's funny, at the time, to feel totally invisible when you're just starting out and you're not famous like them. But it's also a valuable experience, to be able to observe experienced authors in action.

Black and white or colour?

Black and white, obviously! That's what really attracted me to manga: the simple, elegant lines, the contrast between black and white. I've always struggled with colour, and I prefer to work without it, focusing instead on producing a powerful drawing and composition.

2024

Winner of the 'Au Cœur Des Bulles' manga award for *Red Flower T1*

Winner of the rail workers' Social and Historical Comic Book Award



Photography: © Léo Itarte



URBAN SKETCHERS

In 2026, Toulouse is hosting the *Urban Sketchers Symposium*, where urban sketchers from all over the world meet, learn, share and sketch together. We chatted to Olivia Marcus, Vincent Desplanche and Luc Périllat, the Toulouse-based event curators, to find out more about a practice shared by a global community of artists.

WHO ARE URBAN SKETCHERS?

Vincent: Urban Sketchers draw from life, often in a sketchbook, wherever they are, in their everyday life or when they're travelling.

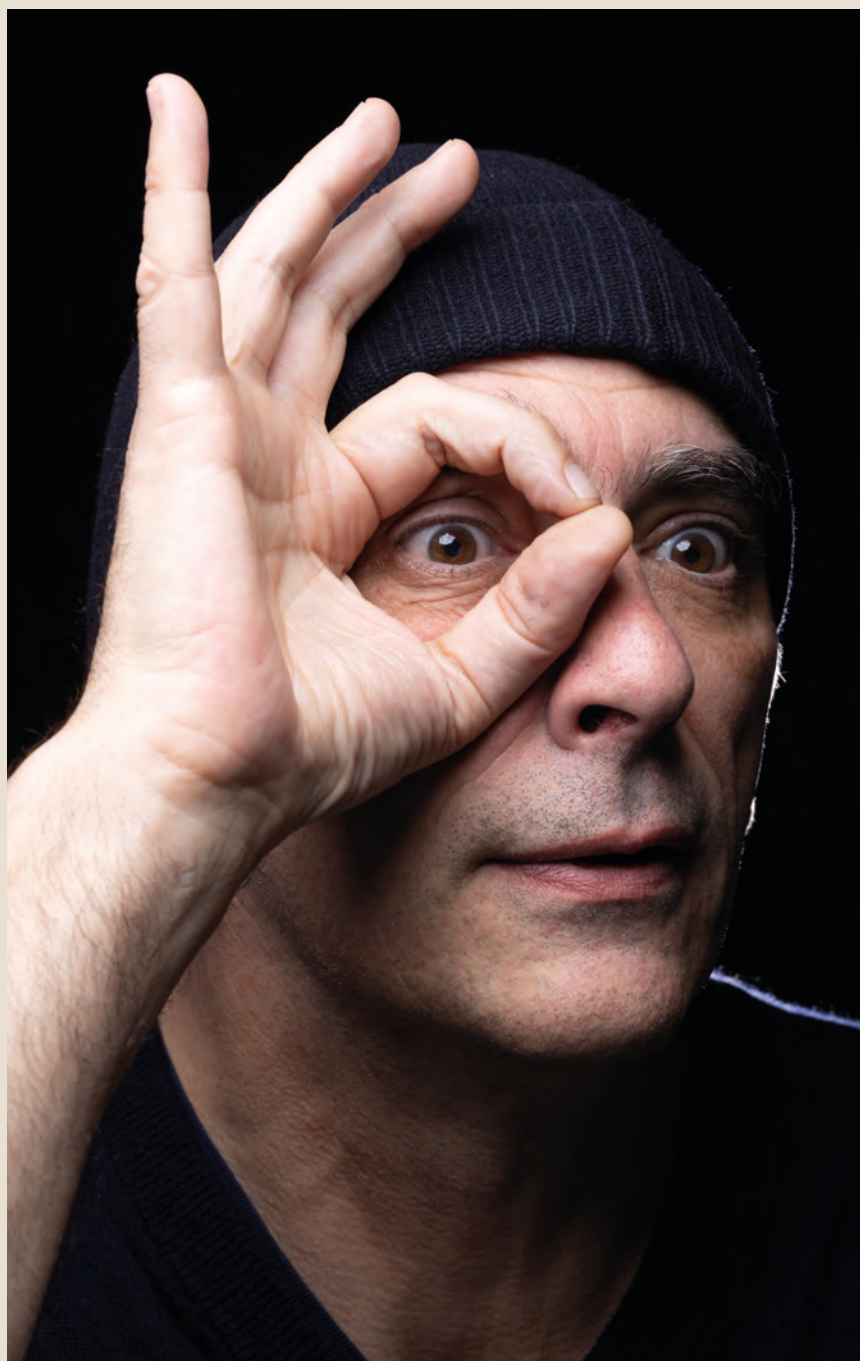
Given that millions of images are published and shared every second across the globe, is taking time to create a picture a form of resistance?

Olivia: On-location drawing forces you to pause, truly observe, and embrace a slower pace, imperfection and doubt. Phones and AI produce instant, often standardised images, while a drawing conserves a more fragile, intimate trace. It's not an image designed to impress; it's a true experience.

Luc: In a way, social media has helped on-location drawing – especially urban sketching – to develop – by allowing participants to share their sketches locally then on a wider scale. That made it really popular, and raised its profile, too!

Instagram: @om_lapom, @vincentdesplanche, @drawmyevent

Opposite: Luc Périllat, eager eye - © Guillaume Ajavon - Lumières: © Thibault Rakotofiringa Left: Olivia Marcus and Vincent Desplanche, on-location sketchers Photo credit: © Léo Itarte Lumières: © Thibault Rakotofiringa





Sète by Olivia Marcus

LEARNING TO DRAW IN THE STREET

Does it require a specific technique or equipment?

Vincent: Lots of sketchers use black fineliner pens and watercolour, but all techniques are welcome: colouring pencils, felt-tips, graphite pencils, pastels, etc. We prefer media that are easy to transport and set up.

Do you have to take a class to learn how to become an Urban Sketcher?

Olivia: A drawing can still be beautiful even if it's not academically perfect, even if the colours are invented or exaggerated or the lines deformed. The way you interpret, express and observe the subject are more important than technical accuracy..

Vincent: As soon as you pick up a pencil, you become a sketcher. A sketch should tell a story, reflect our observations and the moment spent drawing. Form matters less than content.

How do you get started?**How do you choose your subject?**

Vincent: Open spaces like parks tend to be easier for beginners. They offer lots of different subjects, isolated objects such as fountains and streetlights, trees, buildings and people. The perspectives are often less marked than in street scenes.

Olivia: No subject is really more straightforward than another. However, when you're starting out, you tend to shy away from anything that brings the drawing to life: characters, movement, and anything we think is 'not nice to look at': bins, electric cables, cones, cars, mess. And yet, those are the features that really bring the sketch to life. Even if they are imperfectly depicted, they often allow you to transcend a vision of the city that is otherwise too 'academic' or static. On-location drawing is not about making things pretty; it's about paying attention to what is actually in front of you.

**'IT'S A BIT LIKE
A STATIC JOURNEY,
EVERY SKETCH
IS AN ADVENTURE.'**

Luc: Everyone has their own strategy for choosing their subject. And those strategies change over time, with practice and experience, and depending on your objectives. A sketcher

who lives in Toulouse might want to sketch places that are in the process of changing, because building work on the new metro line, for example, has temporarily modified the look of the city.

Do you need some knowledge of architecture and history in order to sketch?

Luc: You don't have to understand what you're drawing in order to draw it! That said, over time, you'll want and need to have some references and you'll start looking into art history (artistic practice, artists, their works and techniques, colour, pigments, etc).

Vincent: The outline of Toulouse's iconic monuments such as Pont Neuf, the bell tower of Saint-Sernin and the Dome of Saint-Joseph de la Grave Church are very characteristic. We might not necessarily know their history, but we're familiar with them, which makes them easier to draw.

What's the ideal format to get started, large or small?

Luc: On-location drawing is usually an outdoor activity and you may not be in the most comfortable position. Large formats are not very practical, especially when you're starting out.

Olivia: Ideally, you should always have a little sketchbook with you. Don't go for anything too precious or expensive, because you'll be scared of spoiling it, and it should be small enough to carry around with you.



Olivia Marcus
8 March
International Women's Day

ON-LOCATION DRAWING IN PRACTICE

What do you think about when you're drawing a portrait?

Do you talk to your subjects?

Olivia: You'll often find me chatting with my friends, listening to a conversation, laughing and drawing all at the same time. In that case, the portrait is part of a shared moment, almost a background activity. I sometimes talk to the people I'm drawing, sometimes not. Drawing is part of everyday life, not separate from it.

Luc: I find it really hard to draw people. It's a subject I'd chosen to avoid. Then one day I decided I had to find a solution. And the solution was to find a place where people don't move too much. That's how I started sketching people in bars – why not combine business with pleasure! I'm a dedicated customer of the Nabuchodonosor, a café where I go to draw after work. I pick a spot at the bar and sketch the customers. The lighting is low, which I like.

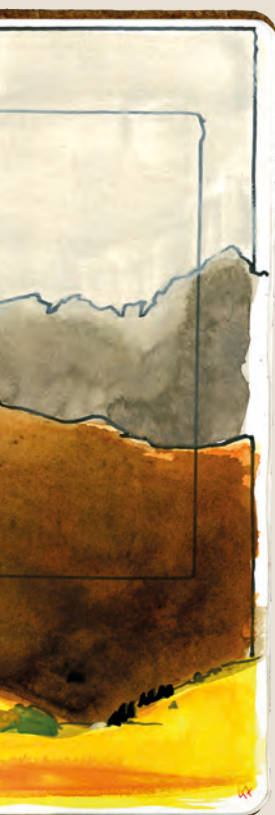
The subjects we're drawing often do notice us, and we may end up chatting to them. Very often, we talk about how 'lucky' we are to be good at drawing.

If you had to pick three colours to represent Toulouse, what would they be?

Vincent: Looking at my wax pencils, I'd say: 052 SAFFRON (dark red terracotta) 042 DESERT ROSE (light terracotta, pink sand) 661 LIGHT COBALT (a pale blue shade with hints of purple).

Olivia: Yellow ochre, cobalt turquoise, coral pink.







Paris, Chez Jeannette café terrace, June 2025, Luc Perillat

'DESSINER SUR LE VIF' ASSOCIATION

Are all three of you members of the Toulouse-based association 'Dessiner sur le vif'?

Luc: Yes, we get together to carry out initiatives, plan events and create situations to promote drawing. The aim of the association is to 'encourage on-location drawing'.

We split into teams as and when required to create events such as the Persorama! workshops, get-togethers such as Carnets d'Alpage (in the Alps with Pierre Amoudry and the village of Le Grand-Bornand), urban sketching workshops such as Dessiner Toulouse (with the Toulouse city council heritage department), plus events such as Carnets de Cerdanya (with the Musée de Cerdagne in Sainte-Léocadie and the local museum in Llívia), a concept workshop for drawing in museums – called MuséoGRafIK – and initiatives such as Bain de Foule with exhibitions and a gazette, and the upcoming publication of a collection of drawings, called 'L-O-V Toulouse!'

Is there an international Urban Sketchers association?

Vincent: Yes, the international organisation is simply called Urban Sketchers. It has 550 local 'sections' in 70 countries around the world. We're growing the Urban Sketchers Toulouse section (USk Toulouse) through the Dessiner sur le Vif association.

Olivia: We're all members of the Toulouse section. We organised the 10th edition of the French Urban Sketchers Conference in 2023, attended by over a thousand sketchers. We pushed for the 14th International Urban Sketchers Symposium to be held in July 2026 in Toulouse, a huge challenge, but also an exceptional human and artistic adventure.

Do you have any tips for young artists?

Olivia: Social media is both a limitless source of inspiration and a trap to be aware of. You might be inspired to draw by looking at other people's work, but you'll stifle your creativity if you constantly compare yourself to others. It's important to keep things in perspective, take regular social media breaks and go out instead, observe your surroundings and draw often. You won't find your style on a screen: you build it up gradually through practice, by finding your own way of doing things, your tools, your favourite subjects, your own pace.

Unlike spelling, grammar or maths, drawing is not considered to be a major academic subject in France. Should we be taught to draw like we're taught how to do sums?

Luc: We ask kids to draw at school and at home from a very young age, but we don't teach them how to do it. Then we teach them how to write, and in Western countries, that means using a fine-tipped pen like a ballpoint.



Le Pont-Neuf, 12 May 2017, Crue de printemps, (Swelling of the river in spring) Vincent Desplanche

It's a long, tricky process, involving a lot of repetition of the same sophisticated movements, and you also have to learn the alphabet. Drawing starts to get overlooked. We don't teach it, it's pointless, it has no purpose. Children who carry on drawing despite the odds probably really need to.

Olivia: Drawing is essentially a practice and often a need, a way of making sense of and looking at the world. It is passed on by doing (when we share our drawings, for example), rather than through a strict set of rules.

Vincent: Sketching has become my lifeblood. If I don't sketch, something is missing from my day. I can't imagine travelling without my sketchbook either. A sketch contains a record of what we see and how we see it. Even a quick sketch takes time. And that's the key – it's about our relationship with time. When we draw, we capture a moment, characters, shadows and light. On-location sketching is an attempt to stop time, stretch it out a bit, offering us a brief illusion of eternity.

SKETCHOMATON

SKETCHOMATON.FR

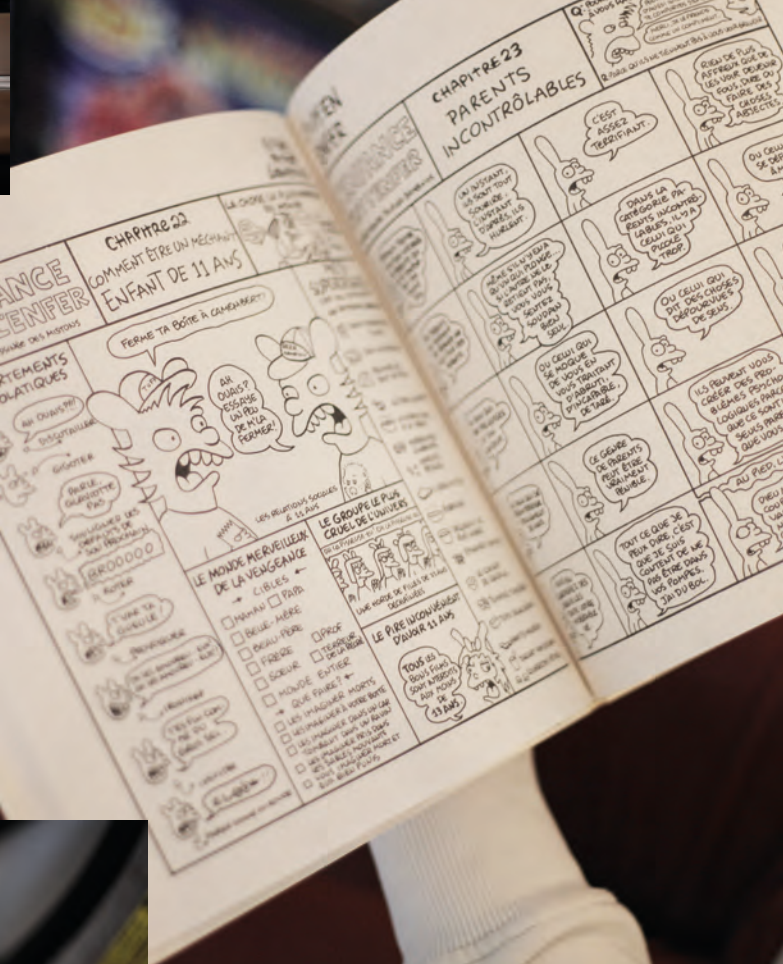
Olivia Marcus invented the Sketchomaton at the opening of one of her exhibitions. Olivia encouraged some of her artist friends to do some quick, off-the-cuff portraits for €1 per minute of drawing time! Later, Olivia Marcus and Vincent Desplanche developed the concept by arranging sketchomaton sessions in bars that were interested in taking part, along with some other venues. They were followed by professional sketchomatons for companies (Airbus, Van Cleef & Arpels, Le Medef, L'Envol des Pionniers, CNES, Parle avec Elles, and more).

Olivia is thrilled with the result: 'You get 3 minutes to sketch a portrait, and it creates a great, friendly atmosphere between artists and subjects. Some people may be a little nervous or intimidated, and it's also our job to talk to them, break the ice and encourage them to enjoy it. We've been known to sketch portraits non-stop for 5 hours, hundreds of them in one evening, and we love it! The combination of tiredness, the fast pace and energy create a kind of frenzy – as though you're in a trance. And that's exactly what we love about this experience.'





Delving into the sketchbooks of Olivia Marcus, Luc Perillat and Vincent Desplanche



2006

Winner of the 2nd prize
in the 'Teenagers' category
of the Colomiers Comic Book
Awards (Pré en BuLLeS)

Romain Pujol

If you're doing a pop culture quiz, make sure you get him on your team! Club Dorothee, Pokemon, Back to the Future, Super Mario, Harry Potter and Pirates of the Caribbean – he knows them all. A stone's throw from Place du Capitole, Romain Pujol, storyteller and illustrator, creator of Avni and Apocaline, welcomes us into his workshop, surrounded by the characters who have forged his imagination.

Can you share a memory of your early days?

At secondary school and sixth form college, drawing helped me become more sociable and get over my shyness. It has the power to attract attention. I remember one time, I'd done caricatures of my teachers, and they realised it. Rather than punishing me, they used my drawings for the school fête, in a 'knock them over' game where pupils had to aim for their faces. It was a great way of raising money!

Can you tell us about the main steps in your career, and the people who influenced you?

I was lucky, because my parents supported me even when I was in sixth form college. They understood my need to be creative, even though it wasn't a stable career. My grandpa played a key role too, by offering me my first drawing tablet, which got me started. After the bac, I studied for an art degree at the University in Toulouse, but comic art wasn't well regarded. One teacher actually told me I'd never make it. That comment was like a trigger: less than a year later, I published my first comic book, with a print run of 80,000.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

It's easy to put on weight when you're an author or illustrator, so I go running a lot and I have my favourite route: I set off from place du Capitole, heading towards place Saint-Pierre and the banks of the Garonne, Raymond VI gardens, quick break at the Prairie des Filtres, before looping back via the Daurade and Pont Saint-Michel. I sometimes reward myself with a treat from Cacao'T tea shop on rue de Rémusat, a cake or hot chocolate, for example.

What strikes you about how drawing has changed since the 2000s?

Drawing and comic art have changed because of Internet and new technologies. I grew up with drawing tablets, which totally changed the way we create, and I made a name for myself thanks to comic book blogs in the 2010s – a medium that hardly exists anymore. Artificial intelligence is ushering in a whole new era. It's an exciting change that also raises questions: what does art mean today? Is it a human practice, or a dialogue with a machine? That debate is essential to the future of creation.

LA VÉNUS DE
MILOU





Who are your three favourite artists?

Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons* and the comic book *Life in Hell*. I admire his naive drawing, a mix of satire, dark humour and observation of American society. Akira Toriyama, a mangaka with a really technical style. Even though he claims to be 'lazy', he created *Dr. Slump* and *Dragon Ball*, universes packed with imagination that have had a huge impact on pop culture... and me. Tebo, a French author, for his schoolboy humour and expressive drawing style. He was one of my first comic book crazes, thanks to *Tchô !* magazine and the world of *Titeuf*.

**'AS A TEENAGER,
DRAWING HELPED
ME GET OVER MY
SHYNESS.'**

What inspires you?

I love films, video games and TV series, and I always listen to music when I'm writing. To stimulate my creativity, I surround myself with objects that evoke my artistic universe, such as figurines, statues and drawings. I sometimes need to cut myself off in order to create, and I go looking for inspiration in nature, such as the parks and gardens of Toulouse or Gruissan beach, as though I was starting from scratch.

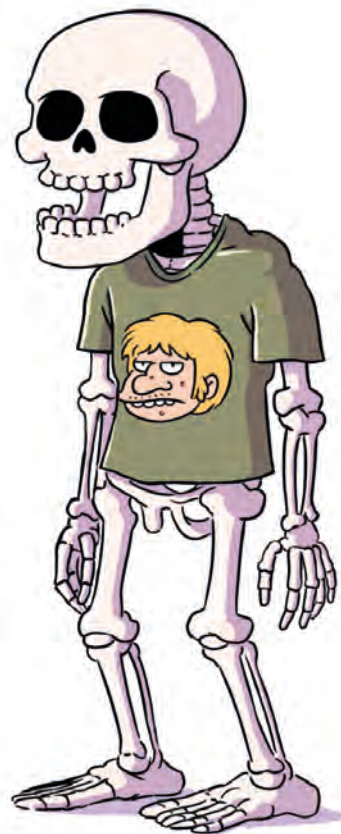
Would you say that being a comic book author is a low-profile profession?

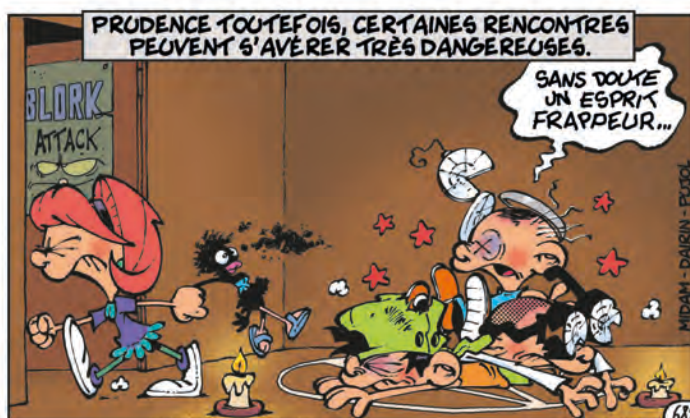
Yes. When I'm hanging out at a bookshop or a comic book fair and I see kids or adults enthralled by one of my books, I feel incredibly moved. I hardly ever see people reading my stories: I write in my workshop. Seeing them totally captivated by the world I've invented is a really emotional experience. It reminds me why I do this job: to share emotions and bring the stories in my head to life.

Playlist

Galt MacDermot "Coffee cold"
Sia, Diplo, Labrinth, LSD "Thunderclouds"
Jain "Night Heights"
Michael Jackson "Rockin' Robin"

Instagram: @romain_pujol







© Léo Itarte

Paul Cauuet & Jérôme Maffre

When you close the door on Rue Pargaminières, you are struck by the quietness that reigns in this courtyard in the heart of Toulouse. Bursts of laughter drift down from their workshop located on the top floor, just under the roof. Ten or so illustrators, authors, colourists and storywriters occupy the building's top floors. A stone's throw from the Garonne, stories take shape at La Mine workshop, where we met Paul Cauuet and Jérôme Maffre.

How would you describe yourself?

Paul: Comic book author, storyteller.

Jérôme: Colourist and artist.

What strikes you about the way illustrating and comic art have changed over the last 30 years? Have your professions evolved?

Paul & Jérôme: In French and Belgian comic book authoring in the 1990s, drawing technique was the dominant feature, influencing the storyline. Comic books were essentially aimed at fanatics who would spend 45 minutes reading a 46-page album, totally absorbed by the drawings. The offer included various genres (sci-fi, crime, humour, fantasy, spy). In the 2010s, the storyline became more important, formats diversified, genres were not so clear-cut, and the readership changed! The market was inundated with autofiction, as well as manga and graphic novels. Comic books started addressing more general subjects affecting society, the environment, science and feminism,

and drawing was no longer the focus. Look at the work of Marion Moutagne for example: she has a minimalist, to-the-point drawing style, a powerful, funny narrative, and a smaller format, with over 250 pages. It's nothing like traditional 1990s comic books!

Jérôme: As for the profession of colourist, even though fashions come and go, I try to stay personal, simple and impactful. My technique hasn't changed much since my early days. I don't use many special effects, and my technique is based on volume and value contrasts. Colour shouldn't overshadow the drawing, it needs to serve the drawing, which itself serves the story.

If you had to pick three colours to represent Toulouse, what would they be?

Jérôme: red, black and pink!
What a question!



Illustration from *Vieux Fourneaux*, published by Dargaud

Who are your three favourite illustrators and why?

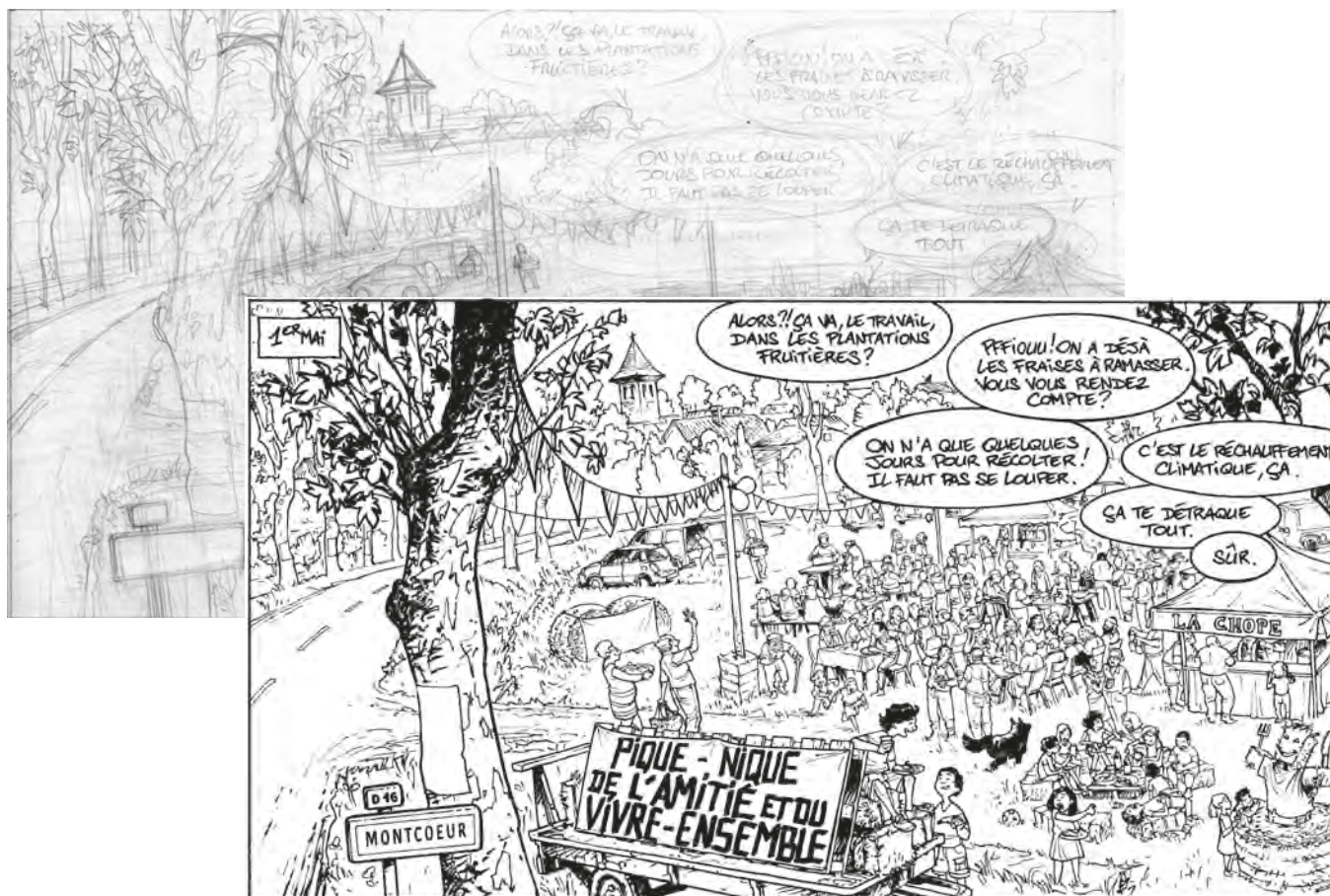
Jérôme: Sergio Toppi, Benjamin Flao, Virginie Augustin.

Paul: Hermann for the way he splits the drawing and Loisel for narration. I met Loisel at the Colomiers Comic Book Festival. As a self-taught artist, I made up for years of classes in half an hour – a true turning point in my career! Goscinny, Uderzo and Hergé are obviously essential influences for anyone who works in comic art.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

Jérôme: The esplanade of Raymond VI gardens overlooking the Garonne, where you can sometimes dance in the evening at sunset, the Jardin des Plantes for its calm atmosphere, and the 4 Monkeys pub to relax and unwind after work!

Paul: Pech David hilltop, the Pouvoirville neighbourhood, the Canal du Midi where it crosses the Rangueil campus, a city within the city...



Steps involved in producing a panel for *Les Vieux Fourneaux*: rough sketch, inking, colouring



Illustration from *Les Vieux Fourneaux*, published by Dargaud**Can you describe your work routine?**

Paul: It takes me about two days to complete one page, which equates to 8 to 10 hours of work. I rarely draw outside the workshop – all the drawing I do is for my albums.

Jérôme: I work between 5 and 7 hours a day, at different times of day, depending on the project. Regardless of whether you work on paper or with a tablet, it's a sedentary job requiring intense concentration, so it's essential to be active outside the workshop: I need dancing, percussion and sport to really feel alive.

'THESE ARE TENSE TIMES, LIGHTNESS INSPIRES US.'

What inspires you?

Paul: I'm more inspired by everyday life than major events. These are tense times, lightness inspires me. I often pay more attention to a group of retired folk at a village market than a big global event!

Jérôme: I let my feelings come through as much as I can, without influencing them, but films and TV series are a goldmine when it comes to aesthetics, thanks to colour grading. When I'm colouring, the end result is shaped by the narrative and emotions.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists just starting out?

Paul, Jérôme: Drawing, writing and colouring are passions but artists who do it for a living don't have a stable job. You need to be well aware of the constraints and ups and downs of these professions before diving in. You obviously need financial help and support when you start out, either from your family or through your savings or a 'day job' to put food on the table. Your first success might come years after you finish studying!

Playlist

"Mi Musica" Alexander Abreu
 "Old Man" Black Pumas
 "Bloom" Alex Polinsky

Instagram: @jerome.maffre

Playlist

The Weeknd "Timeless"
Ludwig Göransson "Smokestack Twins"
Depeche Mode "Strangelove"
Vult-face "Fo' w'rouvini"
Syd Matters "Obstacles"

953

Salomé Luce-Antoinette

Salomé Luce-Antoinette at Tommy's City Diner, Toulouse
© Léo Itarte

Zingy neon lights, a checkered floor and a long black coffee. Here we are in a diner with *Salomé Luce-Antoinette*. Snug in a booth, the comic book illustrator talked to us about her background, inspirations and love of films.

What do you remember about your first drawing?

I must have been about four, I was doing finger painting on t-shirts and watching *Art Attack* on the Disney Channel at the same time.



Terry McGinnis, a DC Comics character

Can you tell us about your career to date, some highlights and the people who've influenced you?

I started drawing when I was really young. One day I came across an X-Men comic by Brian Wood, Olivier Coipel and David Lopez at the bookshop, and I decided that's what I wanted to do as a job. After my baccalaureate, I enrolled on a psychology course, but it didn't work out, so I went back to drawing and studied for a Bachelor's in illustration/animation/comic books. At the same time, I took

on commercial projects, mainly in the US, making fanart and album covers. After graduating, I carried on working on the US market, which is where my main customers are, even now.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse and why?

One of my favourite places is Le Comptoir du Rêve, a shop that specialises in American comics and manga. It's an important place in terms of my work, and I love discovering new publications. I also like the Pathé cinema in place Wilson, because I get a lot of inspiration from films. And Tommy's City Diner, of course, where I come for lunch and sometimes to draw.

Who are your three favourite illustrators?

Olivier Coipel, who inspired me when I decided to work in the world of comics. Nikolas Draper-Ivey and John Paul Leon are two other big influences.

What inspires you?

Films are my main source of inspiration, along with TV series and music. I always listen to music while I work, it helps me visualise what I want to draw. I'm inspired by cinematographic techniques, for framing, lighting and the layout of my pages.

What do you love or hate about superheroes?

I like it when they are a source of inspiration and encourage us to take control of our lives! I hate it when they impose their own moral values, justify their bad behaviour and act like they're always busy. A true superhero has problems to sort out,

but he needs to be prepared to do the small stuff too, even when he gets home from work!



Duke Thomas, a DC Comics character

Black and white or colour?

Black and white.

Any anecdotes to share?

A few years ago, I tried to show my work to French publishers at various book fairs. Most of them just laughed in my face, and one of the few people who actually looked at my work told me it wasn't good enough to be published. That was back in the early days of my career, and I'd already published work in the USA.

L'imagerie

In Toulouse, L'Imagerie is a community space spanning 560 square metres that includes an *art school, gallery and workshop*, occupying a former garage with an industrial feel. Founded by *Jean-Philippe Escafre*, it is dedicated to drawing and painting techniques focusing on figuration. The artist, gallery owner and teacher talked us through the background of this space and his vision of artistic transmission.

What's the story behind L'Imagerie?

I'd just finished my art thesis at Jean-Jaurès University and it was blindingly obvious to me that despite everything I'd been taught, I lacked training. My studies hadn't given me the skills I needed. For me, drawing and painting are demanding disciplines in terms of know-how, like music and dance. Before you can portray feeling and excel at personal expression, you need to master the codes. I wanted to try out a different teaching approach – a mix of academic and contemporary techniques. That's how L'Imagerie came about.

What's it like working in the Bonnefoy neighbourhood?

Bonnefoy was an obvious choice for me: a neighbourhood that used to be full of factories and garages. Lieu Commun, IPN, TA and BBB are all based there. In the 2000s, you could still find buildings big enough for this kind of activity. I renovated this garage, which used to belong to Renault. Although the area is changing, the people who live here remain attached to it, and Minifundi, Le Poinçonneur and Mère Grand are really great places. The new book shop, Paysages humains, is a must.

What do you remember about your early drawings or drawing classes?

The French education system treats drawing as a childhood activity that stops when we get to high school. And yet, it's essential for some of us. Drawing for me was about escapism, a way of inventing new realities. When we draw, we tell a story, give form to our imagination. As a high school student, drawing helped me make friends. If you draw well, you can make people laugh and suggest a new way of looking at the world...



Instagram: @galerieimagerie

Top: Jean-Philippe Escafre, work in progress
Bottom: the drawing school

What strikes you about the way drawing has changed over the last 10 years?

In terms of teaching, you have to combine technical skills and the need to encourage expression and exploration. The two notions have different time scales. Learning art is a long, demanding process, which doesn't sit well with impatience. In contemporary circles, the perception of technique has changed: academic drawing no longer means the same thing. Students are not just asked to reproduce reality. Formal representation has become more diverse, and there are so many more graphic tools... Everything is possible, any kind of poetic expression. Drawing is richer and more respected than it was in the past.

**'IF YOU DRAW WELL,
YOU CAN SUGGEST
A NEW WAY
OF LOOKING
AT THE WORLD.'**

Black and white or colour?

Both. The many shades of grey are real colours. Black and white is powerful in comic art: Hugo Pratt, Breccia, Bill Watterson, Sempé. Outlines are standardised yet poetic.

The love of drawing is linked to the early pleasure of reading illustrated journals, comic strips and so on. Mastering ink, lines, hatching and shading spark our first emotions when we're learning to draw. Later, Dave McKean, Lorenzo Mattotti, Carlos Nine, Dave Cooper showed that lines and colours go together. Drawing is a technical as well as a sensitive, experimental act. At the same time, contemporary artists such as Jenny Saville, Ann Gale and Julie Mehretu

create bridges between drawing and painting, lines and coloured volumes. Above all, there's no need to choose!

Which Toulouse-based artists would you recommend?

Jin Bo - Ronald Curchod - Gonzalo Correa - Jean-Louis Engels - Audrey Spiry.

Playlist

Tool "the 7st"
Deftones "Passengers"
Wileo "Impossible Germany"
Massive Attack "Angel"



Jean-Philippe Escafre in his workshop Photo credit: © Léo Itarte
Lumières : © Thibault Rakotofiringa

Apo Whang Od
Philippines



Stéphanie Ledoux

In her workshop by the banks of the Garonne, surrounded by sketchbooks and portraits that evoke faraway places, the French artist portraying the world, a biology graduate, showed us her first sculptures, drawings of insects and seeds, feathers and shells, souvenirs of forests, deserts and beaches across the globe. We talked to Stéphanie Ledoux.

What do you remember about your early drawings or drawing classes?

Even in primary school, I was the best drawer in the class, the one whose drawings ended up on the classroom wall, the one other kids would ask to do drawings for them. I suppose that endorsement encouraged me to continue! A few years later, my secondary school art teacher, Mr. Buisson, came incognito to my first exhibition and bought a painting!

Tell us about your background and some key moments.

The first time I travelled with my family – to Martinique – was such an eye-opener. So many new sources of stimulation – the plants, wildlife, climate and culture. Everything was so different and amazing to me. My curious nature

made me want to travel the world. I was lucky enough to travel once a year with my parents. I was in charge of the 'travel diary', which I used to write conscientiously every evening, adding collages and sketches. When I was a student, in the 2000s, I got interested in travel journalling, which was popular back then. I found out that some artists made a living out of it, which really got me dreaming. Because of the type of family I came from, I ended up doing a 'real' scientific degree... but I carried on drawing in the summer. After four years in a steady job, I couldn't resist any longer and I gave everything up to be a travelling artist. The travelling artists I once admired became my colleagues, and some have even become friends.



2019

Winner of
the Michelin Company
Foundation Grand Prix
for *Trait pour Trait*

2020

Winner of the
Paul-Émile Victor Literary
Award, in the 'de l'Aventure,
du Coeur et d'Ailleurs'
category for *Trait pour Trait*

Playlist

Ballaké Sissoko & Pers Focchini "Kakidja"
Nick Drake "Road"
Portishead "The Rip"
Sigur Rós "Svefn-g-englar"
Agnes Obel "Just so"



Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

- Hayuco Coffee Copola, a café that overlooks the dome of La Grave.
- Raymond VI gardens, near where I live.
- The banks of the Garonne, for strolls and a breath of fresh air.
- Le Bikini for concerts!
- Saint-Cyprien for its village feel and brick facades.

Who are your three favourite artists?

I really admire the travel journals of the Italian artist Stefano Faravelli. Their naturalist style and careful attention to detail makes them 'old-style' journals and they really make you dream. In a different style, the dreamlike portraits of the painter and colourist Inès Longevial. And I love the drawings and paintings of Christophe Pons-Capitaine, for their wild, masterful, politically engaged dimension.

What advice would you give to young illustrators and artists just starting out?

As with any discipline, it takes hard work and commitment to succeed. You need to be patient (you might say relentlessly dedicated) because it can take years for your style and identity to emerge. Maybe try not to aim for instant validation on social media. It's true that social media can be a springboard for artists, but it forces you to compare yourself all the time, and that can undermine your confidence when you're still looking for your identity and style...

Which event in Toulouse inspires you most?

The Rio Loco Festival is a mix of everything I love: joy, music, diversity and openness to other cultures. And it takes place in a setting I love, the Prairie des Filtres, near where I grew up. I was so proud to be asked to illustrate the poster for the 2019 edition 'La Voix des Femmes'!

What do you think about when you're drawing?

If I'm worried about something, I might turn it over and over in my mind while working on a certain part of the drawing, even though I might never be able to look at it again without having those same thoughts! But usually, after a while, I become a bit more contemplative, and if I'm lucky, I'll even get into a flow where nothing else matters and I don't even notice the time.

What inspires you?

Photography, documentaries, travel. I listen to podcasts (Folie douce, Invisibili, Passages, and more) that explore psychology, mental health, our perception of the world and how we relate to others – all important subjects for artists.

Instagram: @steph.ledoux



Serge Carrère

What do you remember about your early drawings?

Drawing is linked to pleasure for me. My earliest memories are of being ill and staying home from school. I'd spend the day drawing.

Tell us about your career to date, some highlights and your influences.

I was influenced by the books I read as a child. *Astérix*, *Spirou* (QRN sur Bretzelburg!) but especially *Gil Jourdan* by Maurice Tillieux. All the comics I used to read. A key moment was when we created the comic club at Bellevue secondary school, and when, still only a youngster, I met Alain Oriol. He was a university professor and he lent me his collection of comic books, inviting me along to get-togethers with other fans. I found myself surrounded by adults. He became one of the founders of Milan publishing house, and I was able to work with him. Certain booksellers also had a powerful effect on me. I signed my first contracts in bookshops!

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I have a workshop on rue du Taur, with other comic book authors, and we meet up on Tuesday lunchtime at Victor Hugo market to have a drink and eat pizza. Otherwise, I really like 'Le Bon Vivre', a restaurant in place Wilson which I included in album 7 of my Léo Loden saga.

What strikes you about how drawing and comic art have changed since the 1990s?

Although the profession has suffered for a number of reasons – including over-production (over 7,000 new publications every year), the drop in the average rate for comic book pages, the lack of space devoted to cartoons in the press –, comic art is still creative and manages to reinvent itself.

'I WAS INFLUENCED BY THE BOOKS I READ AS A CHILD.'

Who are your three favourite illustrators?

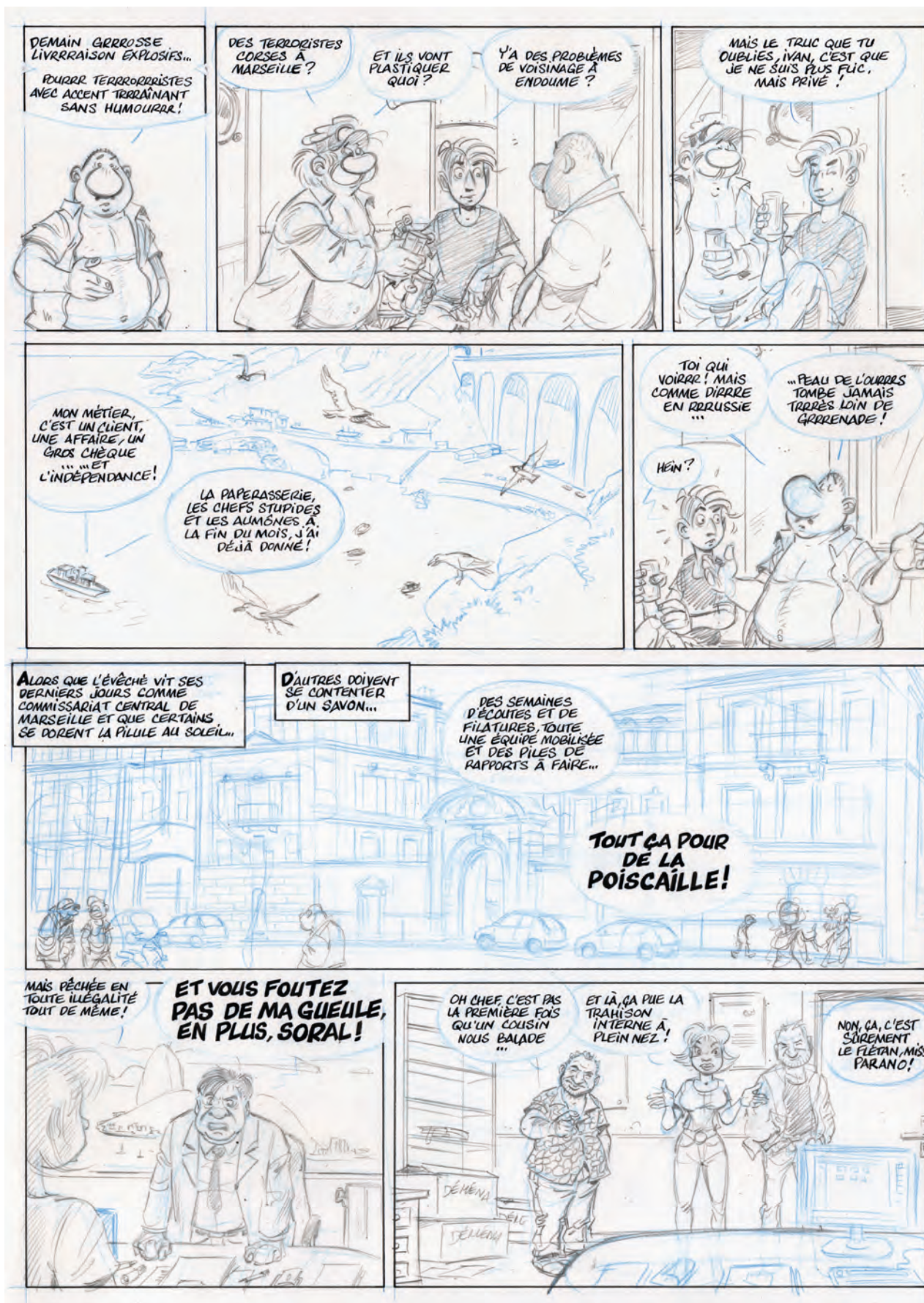
Albert Uderzo because he's easy to read: the reader never gets confused, the characters are credible, the story flows well. André Franquin for the fast pace, perfectly controlled lines, and his ability to reinvent himself. Maurice Tillieux for his cinematographic skill at recreating 1950s urban atmospheres, drawing cars, making the story read like a crime novel, his humour.

Playlist

Rolling Stones, 22 top, Bob Dylan
Creedence Clearwater Revival,
Neil Young, Moriaity, Pink Floyd,
Grieg, Mozart, Debussy



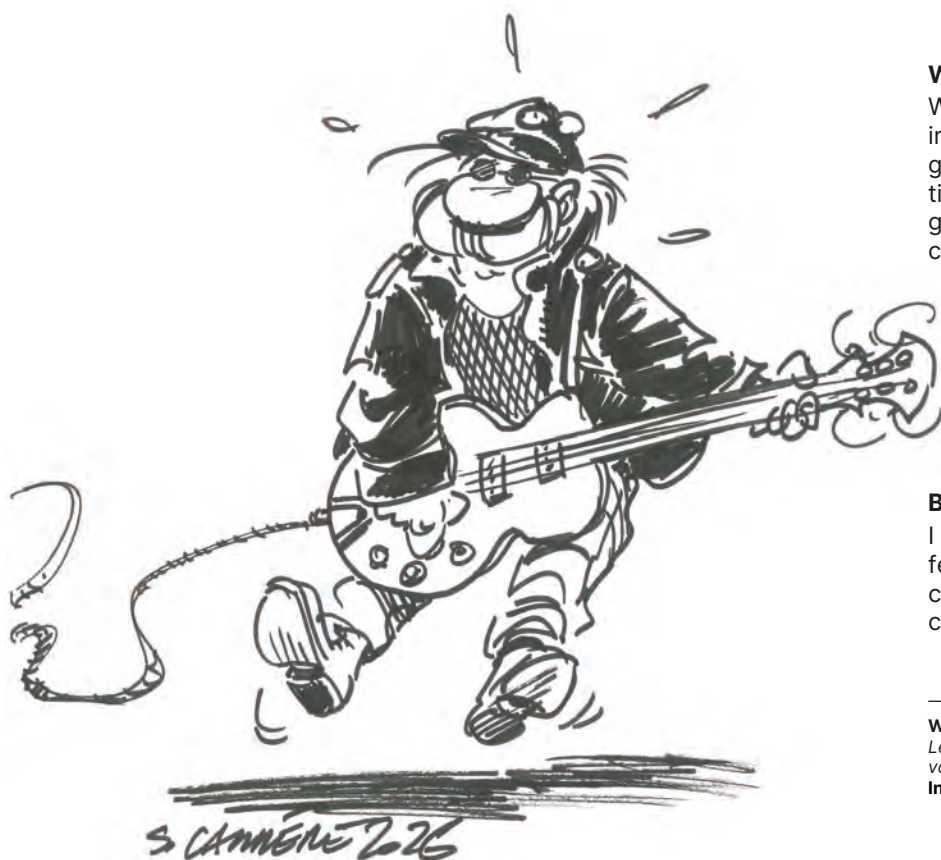
Comic book author and occasional guitarist, *Serge Carrère* has an ironic take on the future. When we asked him whether the current state of the world inspired him to write new stories, he burst out laughing: 'Yes... but we might not live long enough to write them!' Fiercely attached to *Toulouse* and with limitless imagination, he continues to interweave humour, society and fiction. We talked to Serge Carrère.







© Léo Itarte



What inspires you?

When I'm working on a storyline, I'll be inspired by current affairs - spying geopolitics, drug trafficking, investigations into pesticides, political and religious extremists. My inspirations also come from films, videos and photos.

If you had to pick three colours to represent Toulouse, what would they be ?

Red and black, of course, with a touch of blue for the sky.

Black and white or colour?

I mainly work in black and white. I prefer to let my colourist friends add the colours to my albums. They're really creative, and better at it than I am!

Works mentioned in the interview

Léo Loden, *Serge Carrère*, published by Soleil, 27 volumes

Instagram: @carrere_serge

2001

Winner of the DB'Essonne Festival Prize for *Private Ghost* vol. 1: *Red Label Voodoo*

2006

Winner of the Humour Prize at the Solliès-Ville Festival for Léo Loden vol. 17: *Hélico pesto*

2012

Winner of the Humour Prize at the Nîmes European Comic Book Fair for *Les Scientiflics*

Morgane Parisi

But what is *Morgane Parisi* doing here? Author, graphic artist and illustrator, she lives in Angoulême, another French creative city. For this issue of Toulouse Creative devoted to drawing and illustration, we invited her to talk to us about her work and her city, and to discover our own local artists. Sounds like a fair deal!



© Alain François

Playlist
Sigur Ros
Beirut
Cocoon
Mumford and Sons
Of Monsters and Men

How would you describe yourself?

I'm somewhere between illustration, graphic art and comics, so I call myself an 'author' to keep it simple. I produce images to illustrate popular science works.

What do you remember about your early drawings?

I was always drawing in class, but I had good grades, and once my teachers saw that drawing helped me stay focused, they encouraged me! I was in a difficult secondary school. I remember avoiding a fight once because a guy said 'no, don't hit her, she's really good at drawing'. That made me realise how important drawing was!

Tell us about your background.

I studied art and social anthropology and I spent a year at the Fine Arts School in Athens, learning drawing style and typography. Now I weave all of that into my work!

Where do you like to hang out in Angoulême?

I love the Angoulême plateau, at the top of the hill, with its paved pedestrian streets, bars and restaurants. You often run into authors there, you can walk along the battlements looking out over the river and the landscape. It's small and easy to get to know everyone.

What strikes you about how drawing and comic art have changed over the last few years?

The fact that comic books now address social and human sciences, reporting, illustrated investigations, the emergence of books and journals that use comic book language to talk about precise subjects! I find that mix really interesting. Unfortunately, the other change is how hard it's becoming to make a living – publishers pay less yet ask us to do more...

Who are your favourite illustrators?

Tom Gauld, who mixes science and minimalist drawing with a touch of very British humour which I love! Liv Strömquist, who popularises complex social concepts in a seemingly lighthearted way, yet still manages to condemn inequalities, with cutting humour and a sharp, unapologetic graphic style.

What do you think about when you're drawing?

I often draw for scientists, and my drawing is a way of solving a problem visually. Until I hit on how to explain complex mechanisms through a simple drawing, I keep mulling it over in my head. I ask myself tons of questions, I search for information, and if I'm stuck, I usually get a brainwave that helps me put all the pieces of the puzzle together...

Is there a neighbourhood in Angoulême that matches your graphic style?

Again, the plateau and its frescos! Some of them are painted on huge walls, others are more discreet. You can identify different graphic 'movements', generations of collages, some no longer visible... Recently, I've noticed more feminist and queer political messages. It reflects what I enjoy: observing the world and trying to interpret it.

What advice would you give to young artists or illustrators?

Find your niche, the one that really touches people... It's a hard job, hard to make a living out of it, the publishing world can be toxic and you live with constant uncertainty. But creating images is an incredible activity. Our ancestors used to draw deep inside caves where bears hibernated: there's a powerful inner force that drives us to depict the world, tell stories...

How do you feel about the use of generative artificial intelligence in drawing and illustration?

Awful. It's like using a robot to do things that represent the very essence of human life: finding solutions to my problems, laughing, hanging out with friends, making love...

If you had to pick three colours to represent Angoulême, what would they be?

Off-white stone, a springlike green shade, and a pinky-orange colour like a gentle sunset. The light is wonderful in Angoulême, and the upper part of the town is a great place for gazing at the sky, especially in spring and early summer. I think it's a lovely little town.

'A POWERFUL INNER FORCE DRIVES US TO DEPICT THE WORLD...'

Black and white or colour?

I often draw in black and white, and I always struggle a bit with colour! But I'm starting to improve, and over the last few years, I've managed to find my language in colour. It's been a long process with plenty of false starts, but I'm getting there.

Instagram: @morganeparisi



Raphaël Larre

A portrait of Raphaël Larre, a man with curly brown hair and a light beard, wearing a white shirt. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery and a window.

Originally from the Basque Country, *Raphaël Larre* studied at the Fine Arts School in Paris, trained with Jean-Michel Alberola, and was an artist-in-residence at the Casa de Velasquez in Madrid. He now splits his time between *artistic projects* in his workshop in Bayonne and teaching activities as a professor of '*itinerant drawing*' at the Toulouse School of Art and Design (isdaT).

What do you remember about your early drawing classes?

Except for a couple of subjects, I didn't enjoy school. Drawing and art lessons were like a breath of fresh air, because I found school difficult. They changed my way of seeing the world. My parents were receptive and let me go to Bordeaux when I was a teenager to study art and literature. At an evening drawing class, I met Jan Vuijk and it made a huge impact on me, made me totally sure of my decision. In France, culture and the arts are seen as less important than maths, science and economics. I think it's a questionable point of view, and the Scandinavian countries have proven otherwise: drawing lets you formulate your thoughts and look at the world differently, perhaps with a more sensitive, balanced approach.

How can we structure art as a subject?

My teaching approach is based on movement. My students are amateurs and they've come to learn how to depict what they see. I start by explaining the rules handed down by Praxiteles or the teachings of past centuries – the basics to understand how our world is constructed: proportions, how the body moves, perspectives, light and shadow. At the same time, I try to give my students a feeling for the contemporary side of art and drawing, going beyond simply depicting what we see. For students keen to try out different things, I try to adapt to each person's uncertain attempts – my role is to preserve the poetry of their pencil strokes. It's a fragile balance, because you have to identify and explain the more questionable details that don't fit with standard techniques. It's about giving students confidence without altering their initial poetry.

What strikes you about how drawing has changed since the 1990s?

Drawing has been around forever, free-living, adapting to social media and the internet – I don't know yet whether the same will be true of artificial intelligence. I've noticed that some techniques considered 'outdated' in the 1980s, like charcoal, are coming back into fashion. I'm thinking of artists like Jérôme Zonder and William Kentridge. There is also more porosity between disciplines, hybrid styles, forms and professions. Art and crafts are coming together (William Morris, Matisse, Raoul Dufy) and drawing is combined with ceramics and installations, it moves in animated films, newspapers and fanzines. Drawing is no longer a minor art form, it is more highly regarded and more popular at the same time.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

I've got to know Toulouse through my drawing workshops at IsdaT, where we regularly move outdoors. By exploring the places we go to draw, I've rediscovered the beauty of this city. For example, the Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts with its wonderful collections, and, with the team, the local markets and the Canal de Brienne, which are real green lungs of the city. Some other places I love are the Abattoirs museum and the Garonne theatre, both of which celebrate contemporary art... Looking at the city through the eyes of an artist transforms it and lets you observe the unique poetry of every spot.

Instagram: @rlarre

Photography: © Emmy Martens

Zoé B. Simpson

With incisive pencil strokes and an imagination nourished by nature and mythology, Zoé B. Simpson is carving out her own path in the world of comic art and animation. As an illustrator and colourist, she is in the process of creating a sensitive universe influenced by manga, films and narrative drawing. We talked to a young artist for whom drawing is a childhood promise-turned profession.

my parents
have always
encouraged
me to
be creative

How would you describe yourself?

I'm an illustrator, colourist and artist-author working in comic art. I'd like to become a character designer for animation.

What do you remember about your first drawing?

I remember one time, in pre-school, I had a clear image in my head of what I wanted to draw (a woman mountain climber), and because the result wasn't how I'd imagined it, I was ashamed and I promised myself I'd never again feel powerless to put my ideas on paper! I'm still learning to keep that promise.

Can you tell us about your career to date, some highlights and the people who've influenced you?

My parents have always encouraged me to create. I held a pencil before I could walk. I knew that drawing would be my job. As a child addicted to TV, I grew up with films and animation series and my love of narrative drawing started early. I studied 2D animation at Pivaut school in Nantes, then I worked for three years as a storyboarder. My teen years spent reading manga and comic books gave me a taste for telling beautifully illustrated stories, and the desire to work with books. In 2023, the author Geoffroy Monde offered

me an opportunity to work together on our comic book in two volumes, *Le Pêcheur et la Salamandre*, which we've now completed. I'm mulling over new comic book ideas.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

At the Musée des Augustins, where I used to go when I skipped class in sixth form, and where I plan to spend more time now that it's open again. I also love the view of Toulouse from my roof, my safe place to let off steam. And I'll sometimes go to Café des Artistes for the view.

every day to be

I've never put down my pencils!

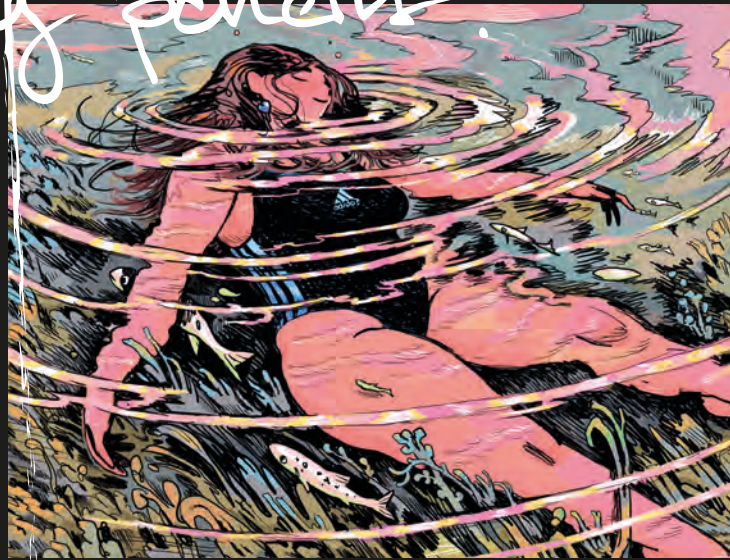
Feel Good



© Léo Itarte

Playlist

Black Sea Dahu "Ruth"
 Strawberry Gny "F Song"
 Pierre Kwendars "Woods of solitude"
 Hermanos Gutiérrez "Low Sun"
 Frank Ocean & Andre 3000 "Pink Matter"



Page from Le Pêcheur et la Salamandre

What strikes you about how comic art has changed over the last 10 years?

What strikes me most is how comic art has taken on board other influences such as manga, cinema and animation, leading to a very broad range of graphic styles, very different from traditional French and Belgian comic books. I think it's great that there's a style for everyone.

Who are your favourite three artists and why?

Heinrich Kley, a 19th and 20th century editorial illustrator and cartoonist, whose style and ideas are fun and political as well as being beautiful to look at. His work prompted me to explore realistic drawing combined with fantasy and mythology. Magali Cazo, for her infinitely poetic, contemplative illustrations and choice of colours. More recently, I fell in love with the work of Jade Khoo, whose drawings are meticulous, sensitive and packed with graphic ideas, as well as her palpable love of nature.

What inspires you?

Nature and its treasures (shells, pebbles, animals), stories folklore, music, the arts, friends, travel.

Is there a neighbourhood in Toulouse that matches your graphic style?

The Carmes neighbourhood and its narrow streets. And anywhere with a view.

What impact do you think generative artificial intelligence is having on drawing and illustration?

I think it dulls the mind and inspiration, and doesn't train the eye to really focus on what makes a piece of artwork special. It steals the work of too many artists. And let's not even get started on the impact on nature.

What event in Toulouse (festival, exhibition, concert) inspires you most?

Rio Loco, Clutchorama, the Cave Poésie and the Colomiers Comic Book Festival!

Instagram: @zoe.b.simpson





Sharing & passing on

LA SCOLA

La Scola is a young drawing and painting school founded in 2010 at the initiative of *Olivier Gaudron*, an art teacher, and *Ombre Portée*, an association founded by former students of the Toulouse Academy of Drawing (l'Académie de Dessin de Toulouse).

Nestled in the heart of Toulouse's old town, in the street known as the Descente de la Halle aux Poissons in the Esquirol neighbourhood, La Scola has been celebrating drawing and painting since 2010. Founded by Olivier Gaudron and Ombre Portée – successor to the Luc Peltriaux Toulouse Academy of Drawing – the school defends a certain idea of transmission, which is both demanding and generous. In a workshop tucked away on the ground floor of an old building, children, teenagers and adults come to learn how to watch, observe and understand different forms. Drawing, painting, illustration, comic books, manga,

modelling: different disciplines interact, in the hands of a team of seven teachers. Students and pensioners, as well as people in employment, all share the same desire to progress. In this studios setting, we are reminded that it only takes a few simple tools to get started: a pencil, a sketchbook, and the patience to put pencil to paper... day after day. Come and visit La Scola at 20, descente de la Halle aux Poissons, a stone's throw from the Garonne!

Instagram: @lascolatolosa

Delphine Panique

Delphine, who has been a comic book author since 2013, is an artist with a distinctly minimalist, poetic, humorous and politically engaged style. She invited us to join her for a hot chocolate and a chat at an open-air bar by the Bassin des Filtres. She chose this spot because she enjoys walking here and *watching the birds*. It's here that she got the inspiration for her comic book *Grand Cormoran*. We got to know Delphine Panique a little better.

Strip from the comic book *Vieille*, published by Misma, 2025

Tell us about some of your early influences.

I was interested in Reiser from a very young age, even though I didn't understand everything. His drawings consist of a couple of quick, expressive pencil strokes. I realised that a powerful drawing doesn't have to be complicated.

What are the highlights of your career so far?

Studying for an Arts degree made me want to write and tell stories. I'd always enjoyed drawing, and I loved comic books. After an internship with Editions du Seuil publishing house, I worked for them as a freelance graphic artist for years, and I drew a lot during that period. I wrote a few short stories, as well as a blog where I talked about my life in Paris.

Where do you like to hang out in Toulouse?

The Bassin des Filtres. I come here whenever I'm finding it hard to focus in my workshop. I've spent a lot of time here. My new passion is the Japanese garden at Compans Cafarelli. Since my trip to Japan (an artists residency at Villa Kujoyama, in Kyoto), I enjoy going there because I recognise the trees and typically Japanese style.

What strikes you about the way comic art has changed over the last 20 years?

Women have the power! There are so many more of us now. The most original, revolutionary comic books published today are by female authors. Just look at Florence Dupré la Tour, Nine Antico, Anne Simon, and in the younger generation, Juliette Mancini, Pauline Lecerf, Nina Lechar- tier. As for the profession, lots of artists have switched to drawing tablets, but I still draw by hand. I only use digital media for colouring.

Who are your four favourite comic book authors?

Nicole Claveloux, who worked on *Métal Hurlant* before leaving the world of comic art because it was too male-dominated, and turning to children's books instead. Her drawings are sensational, she's so talented! Her style is super feminist and so funny – she's my idol! I also like Yoshiharu Tsuge, the author of *The Man Without Talent*, published by Atrabile, it's my favourite book. And lastly, Julie Doucet and Anouk Ricard, of course!

What advice would you give to young authors just starting out?

It's a tough job. You have to put in a lot of work for low pay, and it takes a long time to make a name for yourself. You have to keep your feet on the ground and not expect too much. Always stay humble.

What event in Toulouse inspires you most?

Faites de l'Image. They change location every year, to attract new visitors. It's an ethically grounded, philosophical festival and it's totally free. And I love the Colomiers Comic Book Festival, of course!

Works mentioned in the interview

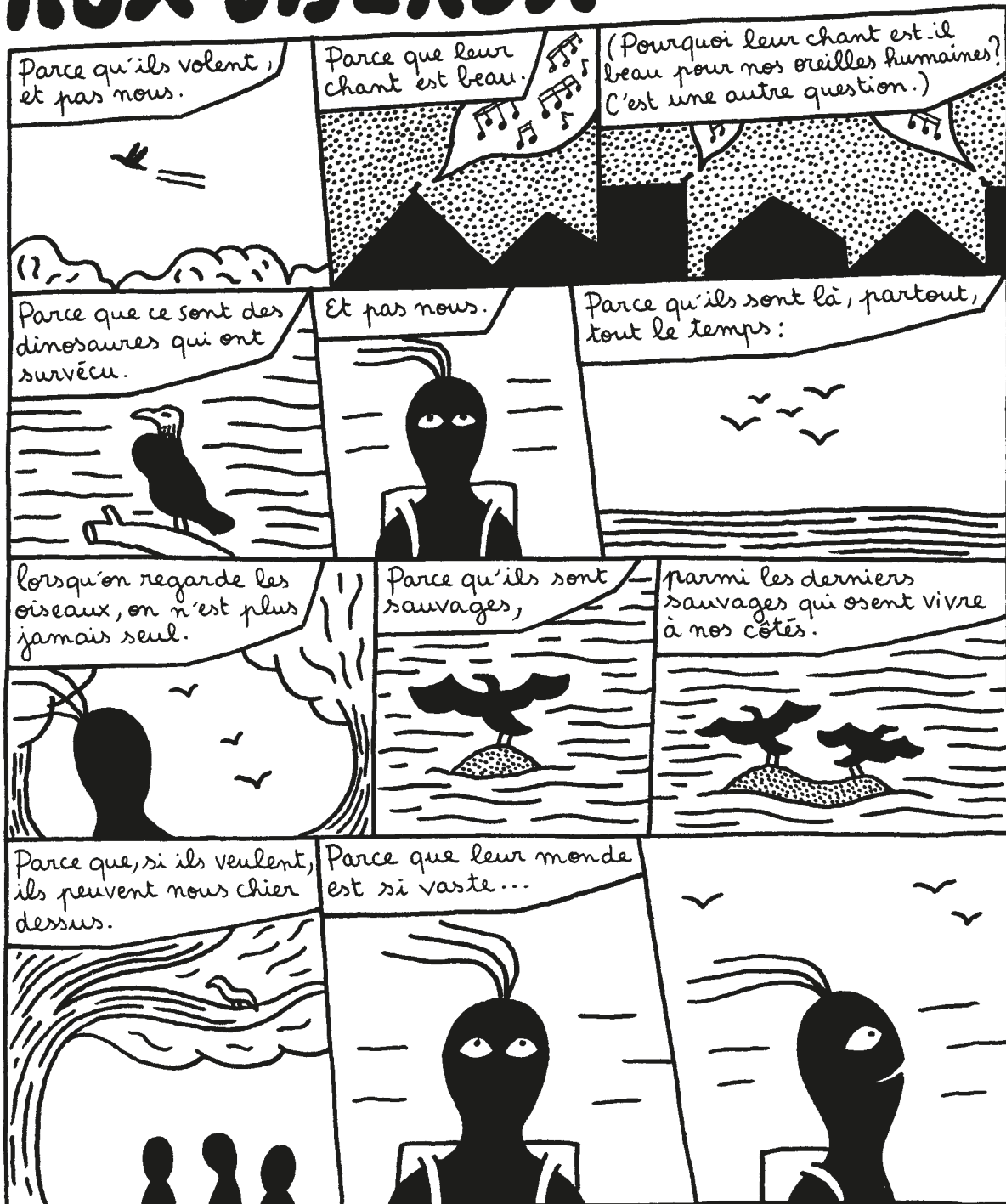
Orlando, Delphine Panique, MISMA, 2013
Grand Cormoran, Delphine Panique, Cornélius, 2025

Instagram: @delphinepanique

2023

Winner of the 'Bulles d'humanité' award for *Creuser Voguer* and the Gribouillis Festival award

POURQUOI TOUT LE MONDE S'INTÉRESSE AUX OISEAUX



Festival Figuré.e

Festival Figuré.e is held every year in Toulouse, a celebration of graphic style in all its forms. 3 questions to the organisers.



What is Festival Figuré.e?

Festival Figuré.e began in Toulouse in 2017, at the initiative of Pépité design studio. The aim was to create an event that would bring together anyone interested in graphic design, illustration, typography and publishing – a mix of workshops, exhibitions, conferences and micro-publishing. The artists are selected by the curators for the richness of their artistic practices, how they relate to the overall line-up, and the enthusiasm generated by their work. We try to make sure a broad range of approaches and backgrounds are represented. Everyone is welcome at Festival Figuré.e: it's free, open to professionals and amateurs, regardless of their level of experience, it aims to raise the profile of graphic design, illustration, typography and publishing through workshops, exhibitions and sharing of ideas. It takes place in Toulouse, at several cultural venues in the Bonnefoy neighbourhood, including José Cabanis media library, the Bonnefoy cultural centre, Lieu-Commun and l'Imagerie, so it unfolds like a cultural journey through the city.

Does drawing still have a place in the public sphere?

Yes! Drawing and illustration are re-emerging in the public sphere. In a world dominated by photography and standardised typography, they represent sensitivity, a human-focus and storytelling. Here in Toulouse, we see proof of that in cultural commissions, urban art initiatives backed by the city council, and the illustrated visual identity of festivals and cultural installations, for example, where drawing play a role in defining the urban visual landscape.

Is generative artificial intelligence a resource or a threat for artists?

For us, generative AI is a resource, just like a camera, a software application or printing press. It doesn't replace observation, visual culture or the artist's choices. Skill, intention and training make the difference, as they always have. If we look at the history of creation, we realise that every new resource broadens the possibilities without ever replacing authors. What matters is being able to formulate clear intentions, editing, filtering, rejecting and taking a critical look at the result.

Musée des Arts Précieux Paul-Dupuy*

*The Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts

In Toulouse, Le Musée des Arts précieux Paul-Dupuy Arts (the Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts) houses a discreet treasure: a little-known yet abundant collection of graphic arts.

Founded by the Toulouse-based art collector and scholar Paul Dupuy, the museum is housed in a former mansion acquired in 1905. An art and book lover, Paul Dupuy spent his life collecting 15th to 20th century objects and artworks, and bequeathed his entire collection to the City of Toulouse in 1944.

Paris Bordon,
(Treviso, 1500 – Venice, 1571)

Study of a nude man

Black chalk with white chalk highlighting
on blue laid paper, after 1530

Inv. 005.10.4 - Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious
Arts, Image R. Carreras

Right:

Hortense (de) Beauharnais
(Paris, 1773 – Brenenberg, 1837)

(View from the pont d'Espagne, near Caunterets,
Black chalk, graphite on laid paper, 1807

Inv.000.5.2 - Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious
Arts, Image R. Carreras



vue du pont d'Espagne près de Cantéret





Antoine Rivalz

(Toulouse, 1667 – Toulouse, 1735)

The Defeat of Henry II Plantagenet under the Walls of Toulouse

Black chalk, black ink wash drawing with white gouache highlighting on laid paper, between 1715 and 1728 Inv. 99.3.1 – Photo credit: Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts, Image R. Carreras

This painting celebrates the reign of the newly crowned Louis XV, by glorifying a famous victory in which one of his ancestors – king Louis VII – played a role. Although he is not shown here, Louis VII (king of France from 1137 to 1180) is evoked through the portrait of a count, whose power was equal to that of a king. This sketch was produced for the oil-on-canvas painting produced by Antoine Rivalz in 1723, which used to hang in the City Hall painting gallery. Entrusted to the 'Toulouse Museum' during the Revolution, and once housed at the Musée des Augustins (inv. Ro 228), the painting has now been destroyed.

Uncovering hidden treasure

Although the museum is known for its decorative art objects and outstanding collection of clocks and watches, its graphic art collection is another highlight. With nearly 100,000 artworks, including drawings, etchings, posters and photographs, it bears witness to the diversity of drawing in all its forms. The drawing cabinet alone contains some 7,600 sketches by artists from Toulouse as well as French and Italian old masters, exploring a variety of techniques: graphite, ink, wash drawing, charcoal, red chalk, watercolour and gouache.

These artworks are too fragile to be exhibited all year round. They are shown to the public at temporary exhibitions, which the museum organises on a regular basis.

The rest of the time, they are kept in the storeroom, protected from light in suitable conditions. However, researchers and specialists can view them by appointment.

To promote this exceptional heritage, the museum plans to create a special area where a selection of graphic artworks will be shown in rotation – a way of keeping the incredible vitality of drawing alive over time.

A team of professionals, including directors of collections, mediators, registrars and agents, work hard behind the scenes to make sure this unique collection is protected, studied and passed down.



Frédérique Vallet-Bisson, (Asnières-sur-Seine, 1862 – Orgeval, 1948)
 Le télégramme. Grand journal régional quotidien (major regional daily newspaper)
 Colour lithography on machine-made paper, 1895 – Sirven printers. Toulouse
 Inv. 9764 bis – Photo credit: Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts, Image R. Carreras



Jacques Gamelin, (Carcassonne, 1738 – Carcassonne, 1803)
 Fire at the Temple of Vesta
 Quill ink and blue and grey ink wash drawing on laid paper, 1787
 Inv. 55.13.1 – Photo credit: Paul- Dupuy Museum of Precious
 Arts, Image R. Carreras

Right page
Gustave Doré (Strasbourg, 1832 – Paris, 1883)
Gavarnie Falls,
 Watercolour on paper, around 1882
 Inv. 023.4.1 – Photo credit:
 Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious Arts, Image R. Carreras

Gustave Doré produced this watercolour during his last stay in the Pyrenees in 1882. While the composition, with the mountain that appears to crush the onlooker, is characteristic of the artist's dramatic style, the free-flowing, spontaneous approach is reminiscent of early plein-air drawings of the Pyrenees. Gustave Doré tries to capture a particular atmosphere rather than delivering a faithful representation of a place, and the waterfall evoked in the title remains hidden behind the mist. Gustave Doré discovered the Pyrenees in 1855, when he came to make a series of pretty sketches for the 65 vignettes ordered for the first edition of Hippolyte Taine's work 'A Tour Through the Pyrenees'. (Claire Dalzin)





Leonetto CAPPIELLO
(Livourne, 1875 – Cannes, 1942)
Devambez printers, Paris
Cachou Lajaunie
Colour lithography on machine-made paper, 1922 Inv.
78.9.3 – Photo credit: Paul-Dupuy Museum of Precious
Arts, Image B. Estol-Cabrera

Against a dark background, a red-haired woman holding a small box of Cachou Lajaunie strikes an expressive pose. Her flamboyant dress, decorated with red and yellow lozenges, is a direct reference to the famous sweets and embodies the bold style of Cappiello, a master of poster art and sometimes referred to as the father of modern advertising.



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