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## **Press release**

Erlangen, 12 April 2024

### **21<sup>st</sup> International Comic Salon Erlangen - 30 May to 2 June, 2024**

**Max und Moritz Award 2024: Jury nominates 25 titles  
Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Joann Sfar  
Special Jury Award conferred to Barbara Yelin**

**On the occasion of the 21st International Comic Salon Erlangen, which will take place from 30 May to 2 June, 2024, the Max und Moritz Award – the most important award for graphic literature and comic art in the German-speaking world – will be presented for the 21st time. The jury has nominated 25 titles, and seven of the nine award winners will be announced at the Max und Moritz Gala on 31 May, 2024. Two laureates have already been determined: Joann Sfar, one of France's most versatile artists and one of the most productive contemporary comic artists, will be honoured with the Max und Moritz Lifetime Achievement Award. The Special Jury Award goes to Barbara Yelin for her profound artistic engagement with people and their experiences of persecution, war, displacement and violence, as well as her sustained commitment to combating exclusion and hatred.**

On the evening of 31 May, the winners in the categories Best German-language Comic, Best International Comic in German, Best Non-Fiction Comic, Best Comic for Children and Best German-language Comic Debut will be honoured at the Max und Moritz Gala, as will the best German-speaking Comic Artist and the Max und Moritz Audience Award. Proposals for the latter can be submitted online from 19 April, after which the most frequently nominated titles will be voted upon.

The Max und Moritz Award is presented by an independent jury of experts appointed by the City of Erlangen and has made a significant contribution to the artistic and social recognition of comics in Germany for 40 years. The award honours the work of outstanding artists, encourages commendable publishing projects, draws attention to emerging talent and promotes a qualitative engagement with graphic literature.

This year's jury for the Max und Moritz Award includes Christian Gasser (author, lecturer at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Design & Art), Andrea Heinze (journalist, Berlin), Andreas C. Knigge (journalist and publicist, Hamburg), Katinka Kornacker (Managing Director of COMIX – Comicbuchhandlung Hannover), Isabel Kreitz (comic artist, Hamburg), Christine Vogt (Director of Ludwiggalerie Schloss Oberhausen) and Bodo Birk (Director of the Erlangen International Comic Salon).

## **Max und Moritz Award 2024**

### **The 25 nominated titles**

in alphabetical order

**Aaron** by Ben Gijsemans (Translation: Rolf Erdorf). Edition Moderne  
**Boris, Babette und lauter Skelette** by Tanja Esch. Kibitz  
**Columbusstraße** by Tobi Dahmen. Carlsen  
**Der große Reset** by Ika Sperling. Reprodukt  
**Der Letzte löscht das Licht** by Tobias Aeschbacher. Helvetiq  
**Die große Leere** by Léa Murawiec (Translation: Christoph Schuler). Edition Moderne  
**Drei oder vier Bagatellen** by Franz Suess. avant-verlag  
**Fungirl** by Elizabeth Pich (Translation: Christoph Schuler). Edition Moderne  
**Fürchten lernen** by Nando von Arb. Edition Moderne  
**Genossin Kuckuck** by Anke Feuchtenberger. Reprodukt  
**Heroes** by Inio Asano. (Translation: Jan-Christoph Müller). Tokyopop  
**Hör nur, schöne Márcia** by Marcello Quintanilha. (Translation: Lea Hübner). Reprodukt  
**Juliette. Gespenster kehren im Frühling zurück** by Camille Jourdy. (Translation: Lilian Pithan).  
Reprodukt  
**Merel** by Clara Lodewick. (Translation: Christiane Bartelsen). Carlsen  
**Nika, Lotte, Mangold! Immer was los!** by Thomas Wellmann. Rotopol  
**Oblomowa** by Tina Brenneisen. Parallelallee  
**Paper Girls. Die komplette Geschichte** by Brian K. Vaughan, Cliff Chiang, Matt Wilson and Jared  
Fletcher. (Translation: Sarah Weissbeck). Cross Cult  
**Saturn Return** by Akane Torikai. (Translation: Antje Bockel). Carlsen  
**Scheiblettenkind** by Eva Müller. Suhrkamp  
**Seek You. Eine Reise in die Einsamkeit** by Kristen Radtke. (Translation: Boris Kenov). Helvetiq  
**Seid befreit** by Sandra Rummler. avant-verlag  
**Snapdragon** by Kat Leyh. (Translation: Matthias Wieland). Reprodukt  
**Tsai Kun-lin** by Pei-yun Yu, Jian-xin Zhou. (Translation: Johannes Fiederling). Baobab Books  
**United Queerdom** by Kate Charlesworth. (Translation: Hanna Reininger). Carlsen  
**Weltraumpolizistin Oma Gurke** by Patrick Wirbeleit and Stephan Lomp. Kibitz

Reading samples of the nominated titles are available at [www.comic-salon.de/en/nominations](http://www.comic-salon.de/en/nominations). Videos of the individual nominations will be available from mid-May.

## **Max und Moritz Award 2024**

### **Audience Award**

Once again, the public is invited to present one Max und Moritz Award. From 19 April to 3 May, suggestions can be sent via the International Comic Salon's social media channels – Facebook and Instagram – or to the email address [maxmoritz.publikum@stadt.erlangen.de](mailto:maxmoritz.publikum@stadt.erlangen.de). Comics, mangas, graphic novels and web comics that have been published in German since July 2022 can be nominated for the Audience Award, regardless of whether they are German-language productions or translations from other languages. Up to three different suggestions per person are possible. The titles with the most nominations will be considered for the Audience Award. The final vote will take place from 10 to 24 May on the festival

website, and the announcement will be made on 31 May at the Max und Moritz Gala in Erlangen's Markgrafentheater.

### **Max und Moritz Gala**

Presenter: Christian Gasser

Friday, 31 May, 2024, 8:30 pm

Markgrafentheater, Theaterplatz 2, 91054 Erlangen

Advance booking from 20 April, 2024

### **Traveling exhibition "The Best German Comics"**

In 2024, the German-language Max und Moritz Award winners will go on a two-year tour for the sixth time, in a specially designed traveling exhibition entitled "The Best German Comics".

In 2024, DATEV eG is the title sponsor of the Erlangen International Comic Salon for the fifth time. An IT service provider for tax consultants, auditors and lawyers as well as their clients, including medium-sized companies and municipal administrations, the cooperative is one of the largest private employers in the Nuremberg metropolitan region and simultaneously one of the most important software houses in Europe.

**On the following pages you will find information about Lifetime Achievement Award winner Joann Sfar, the Special Jury Award to Barbara Yelin and texts by the jury on all nominated titles.**

**Royalty-free images of the Lifetime Achievement Award winner, the Special Jury Award winner and the nominated titles in printable resolution can be found on the website at [www.comic-salon.de/de/pressebilder](http://www.comic-salon.de/de/pressebilder). If you have any questions, need further information or pictures, we are at your disposal at any time.**

### **Organiser**

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**Max und Moritz Award 2024  
Lifetime Achievement Award  
Joann Sfar**

Comic author and storyteller, film director, screenwriter and novelist – with Joann Sfar, the jury of the Max und Moritz Award honours one of France's most versatile artists and one of the most productive contemporary comic artists with the award for an outstanding life's work. His books revolve around Judaism, faith and philosophy, react to political and social events and deal with questions of biography. With over 160 publications, Joann Sfar has been a major and important innovator of French comics for more than twenty years.

His best-known work in Germany is the series "Die Katze des Rabbiners", launched in 2001, which was awarded a Max und Moritz Award in 2004. The cat belonging to an Algerian Rabbi, who speaks and shares his philosophical and religious views after having consumed a parrot is one of the most ingenious character inventions in recent comic history. The series, comprising twelve albums to date, is a worldwide success. It has been translated into twenty languages and, under the author's direction, has conquered cinema screens as an animated film.

Joann Sfar was born in Nice on 28 August, 1971. Influenced by the stories and myths of his Jewish family, he began drawing his own stories at an early age. He studied philosophy in his native city and then attended the National Academy of Fine Arts in Paris. At the "Atelier des Vosges", he shared a studio with well-known colleagues including Marjane Satrapi, Émile Bravo, Riad Sattouf, Mathieu Sapin, Christoph Blain, David B. and Lewis Trondheim. In collaboration with Trondheim, Joann Sfar launched the fantasy series "Donjon" in 2007, which has now achieved cult status with over 50 volumes.

Other important series available in German include "Klezmer" (from 2007), "Professor Bell" (from 2004) and for children, "Desmodus der Vampir" (from 2006), as well as numerous stories in individual volumes. His notebooks are also published in France. These comprise thousands of closely written pages, illustrated with sketches, commentary on political or social issues and are considered an important aspect of his work. As a draughtsman, Sfar has developed an unmistakable style; his repertoire ranges from sketchy illustrations to fine ink drawings and employ elements of painting. The gaps in his stories leave room for the imagination.

Joann Sfar made his successful debut as a director in 2010 with the feature film "Gainsbourg – der Mann der die Frauen liebte" for which he was awarded the "César" in 2011. His first novel, "Der Ewige", followed in 2013. Most recently, avant-verlag published the autobiographical comic "The Synagogue", and the next part of his autobiography, titled "Der Götzendiener", will be available in time for the International Comic Salon.

The Stadtmuseum Erlangen is honouring Joann Sfar on the occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Comic Salon with his first retrospective exhibition in Germany, and the jury of the Max und Moritz Award is honouring him as one of the most important living comic artists for an already outstanding life's work, which will certainly be enriched with many more ingenious stories in the years to come.

**Comics in German (selection):**

- Petrus Grumbart. Splitter, Bielefeld 1998, distributed by avant-verlag, Berlin 2004
- Donjon (with the sub-series "Parade" and "Monster"). With L. Trondheim and others, 53 volumes to date, Reprodukt, Berlin 1999-2024
- Professor Bell. 5 volumes (vol. 3-5 with H. Tanquerelle), avant-verlag, Berlin 2004-2011
- Pascin. avant-verlag, Berlin 2006
- Die kleine Welt des Golem. avant-verlag, Berlin 2006
- Desmodus der Vampir. 4 volumes. avant-verlag, Berlin 2006-2007
- Klezmer. 5 volumes. avant-verlag, Berlin 2007-2017
- Der kleine Prinz. Carlsen, Hamburg 2009
- Sokrates der Halbhund. 3 volumes, with C. Blain, Reprodukt, Berlin 2011
- Chagall in Russland. avant-verlag, Berlin 2012
- Vampir. avant-verlag, Berlin 2013
- Aspirine. avant-verlag, Berlin 2014
- Die Katze des Rabbiners. 4 anthologies. avant-verlag, Berlin 2014-2022; Volume 5: avant-verlag, Berlin,

October 2024

- Der Traum des Apachen. Eine Hommage an Leutnant Blueberry. With C. Blain, Egmont, Berlin 2020
- Die Synagoge. avant-verlag, Berlin 2023
- Der Götzendienner. avant-verlag, Berlin, June 2024

**Prices and awards (selection):**

- 1997 – Prix René Goscinny
- 1998 – Alph'Art Coup de Cœur in Angoulême
- 2002 – Yellow Kid in Lucca
- 2003 – Prix Oecuménique de la Bande Dessinée in Angoulême
- 2004 – Prix de l'album Jeunesse 7–8 ans in Angoulême
- 2004 – Max und Moritz Award for Best Scenarist for "Die Katze des Rabbiners"
- 2006 – Will Eisner Award for "Die Katze des Rabbiners"
- 2009 – Essentiel Jeunesse du festival d'Angoulême for "Der kleine Prinz"
- 2011 – "César" film Award for "Gainsbourg – Der Mann, der die Frauen liebte" (Best Debut)
- 2012 – "César" Film Award for "Die Katze des Rabbiners" (Best Animated Film)
- 2014 – Officier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres
- 2024 – Max und Moritz Lifetime Achievement Award

**Max und Moritz Award 2024**

**Special Jury Award:**

**Barbara Yelin**

The jury of the Max und Moritz Award 2024 honours Barbara Yelin's profound artistic achievement in giving people and their experiences of persecution, war, displacement and violence as voice as well as her lasting commitment against exclusion and hatred.

Her highly acclaimed current book "Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung" tells the story of a Jewish woman who survived three concentration camps as a child during the Holocaust and its traumatic consequences for her life. At the same time, it conveys an universal message of self-assertion, self-empowerment and the hope and strength of life. Once again, Barbara Yelin succeeds like hardly another in finding a language for the unspeakable with her atmospherically dense drawings and in skilfully implementing the possibilities that graphic literature offers.

Barbara Yelin is not only concerned with coming to terms with the past. In our times of global multi-crises, war, terrorism and growing right-wing extremism, it is her rather urgent concern to focus on the present, to promote dialogue and to always place people and humanity at the centre. She plays a key role in numerous interdisciplinary initiatives that combine art and research. Examples include the international project "Survivor-Centered Visual Narratives", the anthology edited by Charlotte Schallié, the exhibition "Aber ich lebe. Vier Kinder überleben den Holocaust" and the symposium "Comics in Dialog mit den Wissenschaften".

Barbara Yelin is not only one of the most outstanding comic artists of her generation, she is also tirelessly committed to networking the comic scene, furthering the development of graphic literature, communicating it to a wide audience and promoting other artists, for example through the "Comics in Bayern" initiative. In countless readings, talks, television, radio and newspaper interviews, she communicates the opportunities and possibilities of graphic literature in a clever and unpretentious way.

Together with Hannah Brinkmann, Nathalie Frank, Michael Jordan, Véronique Sina, Moritz Stetter and Birgit Weyhe, she is currently initiating and curating the campaign "Wie geht es dir? Illustrators against anti-Semitism, hatred and racism", in which people who have been affected by anti-Semitism, racism or hostility towards Muslims as a result of 7 October have their say. The aim of this project is to promote empathy and dialogue where polarisation and mistrust prevail.

The Max und Moritz jury and the City of Erlangen would like to thank Barbara Yelin with this Special Award.

Current: Barbara Yelin  
Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung  
Reprodukt, 2023

**Max und Moritz Award 2024**  
**The 25 nominated titles**  
in alphabetical order

**Aaron**  
**by Ben Gijsemans (Translation: Rolf Erdorf)**  
**Edition Moderne**

As the summer days ripple by, Aaron often stands at the window. More and more often, he catches himself watching a boy playing soccer. Soon Aaron buys a ball himself and tries to persuade the boy to play soccer with him. Ben Gijsemans contemplates the inner conflict of a young man who – confused, even disturbed by what is going on inside him – discovers his paedosexual tendencies and does not know how to deal with them. The subject requires courage and dealing with it artistically, in today's context of rapid outrage, is a tightrope walk. Ben Gijsemans masters this brilliantly. "Aaron" is told in an emphatically undramatic way. The page layout is strict, the images are often repeated with slight variations that express Aaron's gestures of hesitation, his facial expressions of doubt, his growing despair. "Aaron" is not a rousing spectacle; we have to interpret for ourselves what is going on in the protagonist's mind. It is impressive how Ben Gijsemans conveys the awakening of paedosexuality in "Aaron" without moralising or condemning. This makes "Aaron" an uncomfortable but powerful read.

**Boris, Babette und lauter Skelette**  
**by Tanja Esch**  
**Kibitz**

In this entertaining book, Tanja Esch approaches the subject of the search for identity and "otherness" in an amusing and natural way. Boris receives his neighbour Lynette's pet "hamster", which she bought at a pet shop a long time ago. But Babette isn't a hamster, and other attempts to assign her to an animal species fail too. Babette is yellow, can talk and is drawn to creepiness and skeletons. Boris's request for a pet is rejected by his parents - his mother works all the time, is affectionate but distracted, his father is always cleaning and is excessively tidy. So Boris goes to his grandfather, who lives with lots of stuffed animals. He helps Boris carve "bones" out of branches and build Babette's first skeleton. Babette eventually moves in with the grandfather, who tells her about the "otherness" that he experienced as a dark-skinned immigrant in the 1970s.

**Columbusstraße**  
**by Tobi Dahmen**  
**Carlsen**

"Columbusstraße", subtitled "Eine Familiengeschichte, 1933-1945", is exactly 500 pages long. It was a bundle of letters that Tobi Dahmen found in 2015 after the death of his father and which allowed him to delve into the past. The result is a contemporary document from the front row. It begins in Düsseldorf's Columbusstraße, in the birthplace of Tobi Dahmen's father Karl-Leo, who as a child witnessed Hitler's war drums, the escalating anti-Semitism on the streets, the first bombing raids and how the war took hold of his older brothers. One was sent to the Western Front, the other to Stalingrad, and then finally it was his father's turn. Karl-Leo is "the little one" and goes to school in the increasingly war-torn Düsseldorf. Tobi Dahmen depicts these dark years from the perspectives of each of those involved, creating an excellently documented, intense and dense portrait of those who allowed themselves to be blindly swept along.

**Der große Reset**  
**by Ika Sperling**  
**Reprodukt**

"First corona, then the war, now inflation. Everything has turned out as I said it would ..." A terrible situation, but often a reality: a family member drifts away. In her first graphic novel, Ika Sperling relentlessly yet sensitively tells the story of how a father immerses himself in conspiracy theories and distances himself from his family. You don't even recognise him anymore – even in the drawing he becomes an amoeba-like ghost. With delicate strokes and impressionistically dabbed graphics, "Der große Reset" deals with the influence of fake news, social media and opinion bubbles on the internet, with social division and the disintegration of families. You never get the feeling that someone is being denounced, on the contrary: when the father refuses to put on his mask in front of his daughter in the waiting room of the doctor's office, you suffer for her and feel ashamed of him. The first part of Ika Sperling's comic was created as a bachelor's thesis with Anke Feuchtenberger and became a book thanks to funding from the Berthold Leibinger Stiftung. "Der große Reset" is a thoroughly humorous comic about a very relevant problem.

**Der Letzte löscht das Licht**  
**by Tobias Aeschbacher**  
**Helvetiq**

Three crooks break into an inconspicuous apartment building. They are looking for a bag – but find a cat, a cannabis plantation, all kinds of weapons, the ashes of a deceased man, other gangsters ... and death. Because everything that can go wrong does go wrong. What begins as a lively crook comedy about a trio of low-level petty criminals develops into a crazy, cleverly told tragicomedy about a dozen more or, especially less cool and confident crooks who all bite the dust in a curious way, just like in Shakespeare, or in Tarantino. The young Swiss director Tobias Aeschbacher openly acknowledges his influence. However, there's no need for a Tarantino film adaptation: his debut "Der Letzte löscht das Licht" works wonderfully as a comic thanks to the great characters, the intricate plot, the Oscar-worthy dialogue, running gags and snappy drawings.

**Die große Leere**  
**by Léa Murawiec (Translation: Christoph Schuler)**  
**Edition Moderne**

He who is forgotten dies. The law that governs the metropolis in which Manel Naher lives is that simple and relentless. Idealistic Manel refuses to play along and is content with the minimally vital "presence" of her name. However, she has a problem: a popular pop singer is also called Manel Naher, and she monopolises all the attention for the name they have in common. And so the protagonist becomes weaker and weaker. "Die große Leere" gets to the heart of a contemporary issue with satirical bite and black humour: the life-threatening attention economy is an original metaphor for social media and our addiction to clicks and likes. Léa Murawiec tells Manel Naher's drama with verve and pace in drawings that exploit the anatomy of her characters and the perspectives of street canyons. The colour palette of blue, dark blue and red lends the madness of the story a melancholy undertone. "Die große Leere" is the impressive debut of a great talent.

**Drei oder vier Bagatellen**  
**by Franz Suess**  
**avant-verlag**

The posture of the teenager, who has to spend a few days with his senile, stingy and reviled grandfather reveals everything: the discomfort in his own body, anger and insecurity, which he covers up with aggression. And then he realises that he has forgotten his charging cable and spare underpants. Everything goes wrong, the weekend becomes a long, agonising, lonely nightmare. In other stories from "Drei oder vier Bagatellen", Austrian author Franz Suess delves deep into the soulless abysses of online dating. He dissects expectations and disappointments, lies, hypocrisies, exploitation and ultimately the feeling of disgust, emptiness and loneliness. Franz Suess' milieu studies captivate the reader with their unsparing look at people on the margins of society; losers, outsiders, the failed and the marginalised. He tells their bleak dramas in expressive, grey-grounded drawings, unembellished and yet empathetic: he never parades his characters. The humour is sharp and black, but you don't want to laugh. Franz Suess is the chronicler of a world that rarely finds its way into comics.

**Fungirl**  
**by Elizabeth Pich (Translation: Christoph Schuler)**  
**Edition Moderne**

You definitely don't want to have this Fungirl for a girlfriend! She brings a homeless guy from the park to a candlelight dinner with another couple to ruin the evening. And when her roommate is having sex, she bursts in and comments on their preferences. Elizabeth Pich draws her striking, short strips about a young woman in a shared flat with a sense of humor that makes you feel uncomfortable and laugh out loud at the same time. What makes it special: Elizabeth Pich quotes comic history (and art history) – for example, American Sunday newspaper strips with their wit and bright colors, or the "Peanuts". At the same time, "Fungirl" is drawn in the very contemporary style of the young comic avant-garde. The themes are also contemporary: Fungirl and her friend's despair that they are not performing well enough in their job, or that their male colleague is promoted again after all. Fungirl is strong because she is completely herself, has a lot of fun and couldn't care less about what others think of her – simply a terrible, great woman.

**Fürchten lernen**  
**by Nando von Arb**  
**Edition Moderne**

In "Fürchten lernen", Nando von Arb deals with the fears, anxiety disorders and panic attacks that have shaped his life since childhood. Fear of the dark, fear of nightmares, fear of illness and death, but also the fear of others, of social pressures, of failure. Von Arb portrays these fears and his efforts to tame them in a personal, honest and touching way. In terms of illustrations, "Fürchten lernen" is simply spectacular. Most pages consist of a single drawing, elsewhere two or three panels flow together into a masterfully designed image. The drawings are dense and colourful, stylised and expressive, abstract and sensual – Nando von Arb makes his fears visible and tangible. "Fürchten lernen" is a dizzying, haunted house ride through a maze of fears. And yet "Fürchten lernen" has a cheerful and whimsical side. Perhaps this is proof that von Arb has overcome one or two fears. We hope so.

**Genossin Kuckuck**  
**by Anke Feuchtenberger**  
**Reprodukt**

"Genossin Kuckuck" is full of images that leave an indelible impression. The giant slugs that crawl over the pages again and again, for example, are not only visible, they can be felt. Anke Feuchtenberger spent 13 years working on her magnum opus, in which she comes to terms with her upbringing in the GDR. Through the wide, sad eyes of her protagonist Kerstin, she conjures up memories and images of her own East German youth. However, "Genossin Kuckuck" is not a typical GDR reappraisal literature. Feuchtenberger works metaphorically and associatively; she conjures up moods rather than concrete events; she does not illustrate everyday life, but brings to light what has been repressed and makes tangible the psychological consequences of what has been experienced. In this way, Anke Feuchtenberger vividly conveys the oppressive atmosphere in the East German provinces and how it affected adolescents. At the same time, "Genossin Kuckuck" is a universal novel about life in restrictive circumstances.

**Heroes**  
**by Inio Asano (Translation: Jan-Christoph Müller)**  
**Tokyopop**

"Heroes" is Inio Asano's most bizarre and most personal manga. The content is quickly outlined: A group of strange heroes sets out to defeat the darkness, banish chaos and bring back peace. So far, this sounds like a typical manga fantasy epic, but after the first chapter, "Heroes" takes an unexpected turn: instead of pushing forward, the plot goes around in circles, events repeat themselves in each chapter, heroes die, new heroines join the small troupe. Asano cleverly plays with set pieces from manga, fantasy and games, but brings them together in a surprising and witty way. Ultimately, "Heroes" is about the power of darkness, dealing with depression, questions of good and evil, trust and disappointment, openness and hypocrisy, failure and success. In this short story, Asano achieves this in a bitterly funny way. The contrast between the gloomy plot and the pretty and sweet drawings adds to the fun.



**Hör nur, schöne Márcia**  
**by Marcello Quintanilha (Translation: Lea Hübner)**  
**Reprodukt**

"Hör nur, schöne Márcia" has everything you need for a captivating story: The intense conflict between a mother and a daughter. A favela in Rio de Janeiro as an explosive setting. A drug war for the action. At first glance, the tensions between mother and daughter are surprising, because Márcia and Jaqueline look alike on the outside: Both are overweight, quick-tempered and very loud. And yet they are very different: the nurse Márcia sacrifices herself for the others. Jaqueline is the mistress of a small-time drug lord. It is breathtaking how skilfully the Brazilian Marcello Quintanilha combines the mother-daughter drama with the social thriller, providing a gripping insight into the darker side of today's Brazil. Quintanilha's drawings are always in motion and the colours are expressive. His Rio is bathed in unrealistically bright colours and the characters' skin glows purple. These colours intensify the fever pitch of the story until we reach an ending that is as harsh as it is conciliatory.

**Juliette. Gespenster kehren im Frühling zurück**  
**by Camille Jourdy (Translation: Lilian Pithan)**  
**Reprodukt**

Juliette in Camille Jourdy's graphic novel of the same name is going through a midlife crisis and suffers from panic attacks. So, she decides to take some time out and escapes to her divorced parents in a small town. Here, time seems to have stood still, and yet nothing is as it once was; Juliette encounters complete chaos. Her father, with whom she moves in, is now demented and forgets and misplaces everything. Her mother, on the other hand, exhibits pictures with titles such as "Menstruation", while her many lovers come and go. Juliette's sister, stressed by her children, is guarding a secret. She meets Georges who becomes nicer by the day, but who finds it hard to tear himself away from the local bar where people go to gossip. Camille Jourdy has created a fascinating portrait of everyday life in the French provinces and spun an illustrious web of bizarre entanglements with a light touch, making her depiction a great pleasure to read.

**Merel**  
**by Clara Lodewick (Translation: Christiane Bartelsen)**  
**Carlsen**

The story begins in an unusual place: Merel is at a poultry show with a friend. She lives alone on the outskirts of a village, content with her animals, her job as a reporter, her love affair and her surroundings. Until one day, a neighbour starts spreading rumours about her. And the whole village – including the bored youth – jumps on the bandwagon. Merel is bullied and ostracised as a result. Clara Lodewick uses clear images, often zooming in on details, to tell the story of the main character's ever-increasing isolation: the cruelty of the individual villagers, who at first badmouth Merel covertly, but then increasingly openly until they finally take action. The protagonist's growing desperation becomes more and more palpable.

**Nika, Lotte, Mangold! Immer was los!**  
**by Thomas Wellmann**  
**Rotopol**

Gummy bears and frozen pizzas, shopping for clothes, adventures on the beach and snowball fights, traumatising school lectures, pop music, scary films and the necessary digital detox every now and then. And also feelings; like fear (of worms), loneliness and friendship. This is everyday life for Nika, Lotte and Mangold: Unspectacular, real, truthful. In "Nika, Lotte, Mangold! Immer was los!" Thomas Wellmann tells funny stories in dynamic and brightly coloured drawings. They are clearly set in the present – and yet so timeless as to even remind parents of their youth. "Har Har! Nothing is better than hide and seek and scare the bejesus", is presumably one of the most popular games since the Bronze Age ... Thomas Wellmann is on the same wavelength as his characters as well as his readers. That's his great quality, and it's what makes "Nika, Lotte, Mangold!" so much fun.

**Oblomowa**  
**by Tina Brenneisen**  
**Parallelallee**

Oblomowa is a pain in the neck: she lies in bed all day, complaining about the misery of the world. The many visitors she receives are bursting with energy and activism. There's Irina, who fights against sexism at work and at home and speaks about nothing else. And then there are the twins Svenjuschka and Miesowitsch, who stand up for animal welfare and want to save the climate and the whole world in general. Oblomowa, for her part, always receives her visitors in bed and won't let anyone persuade her to do anything. Tina Brenneisen's pictures are the reason why lying in bed and talking to guests forever doesn't get boring. The characters are drawn with sharp lines, concise and expressive. And the pictures look like the stage of a chamber play in which metaphors make an appearance. With her "Oblomov" variations, Tina Brenneisen has created a parody of a society in which it is more important to take big political stances than to implement tangible changes in one's own life. Despite all the misery, the pictures appear beautiful and animated – and they revolve around themselves again and again.

**Paper Girls. Die komplette Geschichte**  
**by Brian K. Vaughan, Cliff Chiang, Matt Wilson and Jared Fletcher (Translation: Sarah Weissbeck)**  
**Cross Cult**

Time travel, intergalactic invasion and the end of the world. Friendship, hope and God in a Public Enemy T-shirt - this is the epic work by Brian K. Vaughan, Cliff Chiang, Matt Wilson and Jared Fletcher, which takes us into a small-town scenario of the 1980s. Four "Paper Girls" meet the past and come to terms with their future selves at breakneck speed. An apocalyptic war descends on their small town, Stony Stream, near Cleveland, on Halloween of all days. Readers are repeatedly steered in different directions, only to find that things are quite different from what they seem. Vaughan creates a bizarre and surreal world, back when walkie-talkies were cool, in which he brings each individual character to life with great affection. The bonds between the Paper Girls on their fast bikes makes you wish you were one of them. Finally, girls can meet aliens!

**Saturn Return**  
**by Akane Torikai (Translation: Antje Bockel)**  
**Carlsen**

Author Ritsuko Kaji despairs over her writer's block, and while her young editor is supposed to present the successful author's new work, his job is on the line, and he resigns. Together they then embark on a search for ways to build on her success and for the secrets of Ritsuko's friend from the past, who's partly responsible for her success. Or is there no sequel at all, since the story is over? Akane Torikai tells us about the life of a young woman caught in the norms of society, who has desires from the past and future and a one and only bestseller. Freeing herself from a toxic relationship and the simple desire for happiness is merely part of her struggle. "Saturn Return" gives us insight into everyday life in Japan with fascinating drawings of rainy Tokyo, where the working world and the pressure to be a perfect family are unrelenting.

**Scheiblettenkind**  
**by Eva Müller**  
**Suhrkamp**

An unusual but important social topic, executed in very direct pencil drawings, is the subject of Eva Müller's work "Scheiblettenkind". It's the shame and self-doubt that results from having grown up in an uneducated family. The author begins by bearing her heart and mind to the reader. She tells the story of her life with numerous quotations. The village and simple circumstances she grew up in, always earning her own way – sometimes through hard work – and gradually finding her path to becoming an illustrator and artist. However, self-doubt – depicted in the form of the snake – remains at her side, sometimes creeping along the sidelines, sometimes consuming her completely. A great narrative with which those who strive for educational advancement can identify and see that they are not alone with their inner resistance. Also featured: Witty commentary from Karl Marx at the end of each chapter.

**Seek You. Eine Reise in die Einsamkeit**  
**by Kristen Radtke (Translation: Boris Kenov)**  
**Helvetiq**

CQ! The radio signal with which amateur radio operators seek contact via Morse code. In the English-speaking world, CQ becomes 'Seek You.' The father of American author and illustrator Kristen Radtke was an amateur radio operator, and the book is dedicated to him. In her graphic novel, she tries to understand her own loneliness. She marvels at the glamour with which society celebrates the cowboy's loneliness as freedom and explains social psychologists Roy Baumeister and Jean Twenge's proof that social exclusion can make people more aggressive, drawing a line all the way to the phenomenon of Donald Trump. "What chases modern people so easily into the totalitarian movement and prepares them so well for totalitarian rule is the increasing abandonment everywhere," Hannah Arendt wrote as early as 1951. Between her excursions into science, Kristen Radtke repeatedly lets her personal trauma shine through – and thus invites us to reflect on our own experiences.

**Seid befreit**  
**by Sandra Rummler**  
**avant-verlag**

The first sentence sounds like the prelude to Melville's Moby Dick: "I am Mo." But there is no one to be seen, just dark streets in the pale glow of a lonely lantern, deserted. "I was born in the winter of '76. Our house stood right next to the wall." Mo enters only after turning the page. A stage of gloomy, washed-out brown tones, with the anti-fascist protective wall, restricted area and Mo's home in the background. She is the only splash of colour in the midst of this dreariness – blonde hair, blue shirt, and in contrast to the backdrop more of a caricature. It is this contrast that makes Sandra Rummler's debut so refreshing and appealing. She tells of growing up in East Berlin and the sudden disappearance of her world: now the backgrounds become colourful, but remain blurred, as it were. A true feast for the eyes, as artistically splendid as unique. This debut reads like a dream that touches on a fleeting moment in our history.

**Snapdragon**  
**by Kat Leyh (Translation: Matthias Wieland)**  
**Reprodukt**

Black hat, black coat, eye patch – is how the old woman from the house on the edge of the forest wanders through the neighbourhood. She's a witch - obviously. A witch who looks after helpless animals. Snap befriends her because she too has a heart for animals. And the girl gets to know the woman from a completely different angle: At home she wears a colourful T-shirt, flowered shorts and crocs. So, not a witch after all? But then why all the jars with animal skeletons lining the shelves? Kat Leyh has drawn a magical coming-of-age story in "Snapdragon". It's about true friendship, stubborn people and their stubborn expectations. And it's about families that don't fit the regular mold at all and yet seem happy. Rarely have queer worlds been portrayed as lovingly as Kat Leyh has presented them in "Snapdragon".

**Tsai Kun-lin**  
**by Pei-yun Yu and Jian-xin Zhou (Translation: Johannes Fiederling)**  
**Baobab Books**

In 1945, when Tsai Kun-lin was 15 years old, he was recruited by the Japanese army; at 19, he was sentenced to ten years in prison for political reasons. After his release, he became an important cultural and social voice in Taiwan. The life of the writer Tsai Kun-lin (1930-2023) is closely interwoven with Taiwan's eventful history: Japanese foreign rule, the war, Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship, democratisation from 1987 and now the threat from mainland China – he experienced and helped shape it all. Author Pei-yun Yu skilfully links Tsai Kun-lin's biography with the history of his homeland. Jian-xin Zhou's drawings add additional layers to the content: the basic colour and style change from volume to volume. The childhood is conveyed in light, clear, pale pink drawings; the years in the prison camp in woodcut-like, black and grey images. In this way, personal and collective fate are vividly combined

**United Queerdom**  
**by Kate Charlesworth (Translation: Hanna Reininger)**  
**Carlsen**

"United Queerdom" is headstrong, colourful and personal – Kate Charlesworth draws a panorama of the pioneers of a self-determined queer life and also tells her own lesbian coming-out story. When she was born in 1950, love between men was a punishable offense, and the word "homosexuality" had never once been uttered on the BBC airwaves. Not exactly the best conditions for developing a healthy lesbian identity. Kate Charlesworth has managed to do just that. She combines her queer role models with her own life story and the history of the fight for equal rights to create a firework display of 20th century pop culture. One of the most touching and funniest scenes is when she visits a lesbian club for the first time with her best friend Kate. Charlesworth draws the different narrative strands in different styles so that you don't lose track of this multi-layered empowerment comic. In addition to glamour and humour, it's also about political struggles for equality, such as when the queer community staged mass protests against a law passed by Margaret Thatcher banning people from talking about homosexuality in schools – a unity that has become important again today.

**Weltraumpolizistin Oma Gurke**  
**by Patrick Wirbeleit and Stephan Lomp**  
**Kibitz**

Knitting is freedom! But it is outlawed on the intergalactic trading post Helga Centauri; only the underground movement still knows the intricate patterns with which they used to knit stories. It meets secretly in the "Fat Needle". The rest of the colourful population of this outpost somewhere in the universe is mercilessly kept in check by police robots. At the same time back on Earth, Oma Gurke lingers in an old people's home and longs for a little excitement. Thanks to the entanglement of an underground fighter, that excitement arrives faster than she can drop her needles, and suddenly she is a space policewoman. Patrick Wirbeleit and Stephan Lomp show how turbulent and brilliant children's entertainment can be. On a wild hoverboard ride, we learn how nice it is to simply do what you've always wanted to do. For example, knitting.

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