

## Rodolphe Topffer and the Word/Image Problem (New York, 8 Mar 08)

Patricia Mainardi

Rodolphe Töpffer and the word/image problem.

A celebration of the first English-language translation of Töpffer's complete picture-story work by David Kunzle and a symposium on the word/image problem.

Rodolphe Töpffer, (1799-1846) draftsman, writer and educator of Geneva is recognized as the inventor of the modern comic-strip or picture-story. Initially, Töpffer feared that the publication of these picture-stories would damage his reputation as an educator. The mixing of words and images was seen as a frivolous endeavor – a violation of the purity and purpose of each domain of expression. The books were eventually published, translated, pirated and widely distributed, thus triggering the European and American culture of the comic-strip. In 1845, a pirated edition of Töpffer's "Histoire de M. Vieux Bois" was the first comic-strip book published in America. A hundred and sixty years later, the separation of word and image continues to exist in the academy. The symposium will examine the traditions of the picture-story, picture-recitations, concrete vs. mental images, the materiality of symbols, illustration and non-verbal communication.

Saturday March 8, 3-8 pm:

Speakers include:

- Peter Blegvad
- Anne-Marie Bouché
- Noah Isenberg
- Ben Katchor
- David Kunzle
- Victor H. Mair
- Jim Miller,
- Patricia Mainardi
- Aimée Brown Price

Presented by the Parsons Illustration Department and the Department of Liberal Studies, The New School for Social Research.

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Theresa Lang Student Center  
55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor, New York City  
Saturday, March 8, 2008 3 - 8 pm,

Free and open to the public

Reference:

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(accessed Dec 19, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/30185>>.