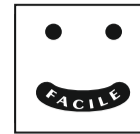# GULP! GOAL! CIAK!
Cinema and comics

Welcome to this exhibition on movies and comics!
Start your journey at the Café Torino area. You can read a brief explanation on the exhibition.
Then move to the area on Animation. Lastly walk along the staircase and the ramp, up to the end.

Introduction (Caffè Torino room)

Cinemas and comics are two very different languages; almost one the opposite of the other.
They both use images and words. Cinema involves audiences though the strength of its moving images and sounds. Cinema marks the time of the narration.
Comics is still on paper. The reader creates the emotion, the reader determines the time and generates sounds. Sounds are suggested by the words in the captions and the balloons, as well as the onomatopoeia ('gulp' is the sound of someone swallowing after a surprise).

Comics and cinema were born at the end of the Nineteenth century. Cinema was for all. Comics were mainly for migrants who were often illiterate. Migrants could find comic strips in daily press. The comic Yellow Kid tells the story of a young boy who lived in a poor neighbourhood of New York. Comics were often considered an easy language and, until not so long ago, educators and people of culture opposed to them.

The white space divides one cartoon from the other. It is up to the reader to connect the various segments/cartoons and create a narration. In the Fifties, many comics used captions to facilitate reading. In the Nineteen Sixties and Seventies some major authors limited the use of captions. The languages of comics and of movies become more similar.
Comics and cinema have chased each other over time. Initially the frames were fixed, for both languages, they represent the whole scene, as at a theatre show. Then, slowly comics and cinema find unexpected and daring solutions. Cinema changes thanks to the introduction of camera movements and the film editing. Comics changes the shape of the strips and of the cartoons.

The exhibition investigates the relationship between film-making and comics, especially from the Nineteen Sixties onwards. We try to understand how the readers' subjective participation can become "objective" in movies. The exhibition shows movie clips directly related to comic strips. We are also presenting other interactions between the two languages, and a final experiment.
Enjoy reading! Enjoy watching!

Animation (Animation room)

"Cells" (short for celluloid) is the name of the transparent sheets used for animation. Before computers, characters were drawn and coloured on these "cells". After the cells were superimposed against the relevant background and photographed.
In 1914, in the U.S. cells made animation industry possible and were first used in the US. Many comic strip characters became cinema stars, like the Peanuts and Lupin III. Other characters developed for movies were then put on paper: Mickey Mouse for instance and Bruno Bozzetto's Vip, the character created in 1968 for the movie VIP, My Brother Superman.

Little Nemo

Winsor McCay was one of the first and foremost comic and animation artists. Little Nemo was his best known character. In 1905, Little Nemo first appeared in the New York Herald. Its surprising and extraordinary adventures always ended with him suddenly waking up, revealing it was all but a beautiful dream. In 1911 Winsor McCay made a short animation movie, and drew thousands and thousands of frames, as the live shooting shows. With Nemo, there where Flip Flap the clown Flip, African Little Imp and Pricess Slumberland, as also the City of Dreams.

Movies from the 1960s (ramp 1)

In the Nineteen- Sixties the world of comics saw the rise of strips for an adult readers and of the monthly "Linus" with Valentina, Barbarella and Dick Tracy. Our journey starts here.

Before digital effects you could see the wrinkles on superheroes' suits, and many of the interpretations were   funny and inconsistent with the drawing's creation. Even great U.S. directors such as Altman and Losey failed to reinvent the worlds described by comics. The best results were Barbarella (1968) and the Strumtruppen cabaret-like improvisations, or in the 1990 wonderful colours by Vittorio Storaro in Warren Beatty's Dick Tracy.

Animated cartoons (ramp 2)

At one point in time animated cartoons meant movies for the children. Animation was much more expensive for producers. The idea of making a movie inspired to successful comics sounded like a good solution.

Just a few decades ago a cartoon at the cinema was an event in itself. This was true for the first Asterix in 1967, A Boy Named Charlie Brown with Charles M. Schulz's famous kids in 1969 and Fritz the Cat in 1972, the first cartoon ever "for adults only". Robert Crumb, the author, hated the film so much he made a drawing in a later strip, where Fritz was killed by one of his mistresses.
France has always been a strong believer in animation. Asterix was the most successful screen character and in 50 years went from paper to digital. Also the animated film Corto Maltese was French. Persepolis and Wrinkles are films drawn from Iranian born Marjane Satrapi's graphic novels. Persepolis is her autobiography; Wrinkles is the story of an elderly patient affected by Alzheimer. Paco Rita, who was the author of the strips, was also one of the script writers.

Mangas and anime (ramp 3)

US and European cartoons are for children and play down life's problems. Japanese cartoons have changed the point of view: their characters, even as teenagers, experience violent emotions and have to save a world in danger.

When a manga, a Japanese cartoon, is a major success, first it becomes a television series and then an animated cartoon: anime. Osamu Tezuka is 'the god of manga'. After WW2 he had a great success with his adventurous and fantastic characters. In the Nineteen-Sixties his Astro Boy became the first to be successfully serialised on television. Many other famous Japanese animators followed Tezuka's work.

Japanese animation started on television. Its powerful stories then exploded on cinema screens: Akira and Ghost in the Shell in particular conveyed the visionary strength of the country's great authors, as they often depicted world on the brink of a precipice. Tekkonkrikket is the first Anime made by a US film director. There were also adaptations for movies. Shaolin Soccer is clearly a comedy inspired from the Capitan Tsubasa (Holly e Benji) manga.

Big names (ramp 4)

Cinema used to have important stars rather than directors; Comics used to have important characters rather than the authors. With graphic novels things start to change and comic strip writers ca become stars.

Four major names of four very different authors:
Alan Moore, from the UK, transformed comics into a philosophical adventure, disowning all the movies developed from his work.
Frank Miller's work appears to deny any glimpse of an alternative solution is a society doomed to self-destruction: in Sin City he worked with Robert Rodriguez, by himself in The Spirit, from a Will Eisner classic comic.
Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki worked together for a long time producing some of the longest running TV series in Japan, such as Heidi Girl of the Alps and Future Boy Conan. In 1985 Takahata and Miyazaki established the Studio Ghibli, producing feature length films of great beauty. Miyazaki often drew inspiration from his comics even though they were short stories or drafts, except for Nausicaä. Takahata did not draw comics, but produced a couple films out of manga that he reworked and enriched, as you can see in the example My Neighbours the Yamadas.

Marvel's superheroes (ramp 5)

In the Nineteen-Sixties Stan Lee, with Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, invented the Fantastic Four, Spider-man, the X-Men, Daredevil, Iron Man and a range of other super-heroes that share the fact they all live in new York.

Sam Raimi's Spider-Man movie was released in 2002 with amazing special effects where the hero hopped from building to building in New York. The story had originally been only a television series. The film was a great success and the Marvel characters invaded the screen with a balance between adventure, humour dialogue and action. Other two Spiderman films, by Marc Webb and the last by Jon Watts (in live action)maintained the character's atmosphere and nature, although the plot was more and more distant from the original comic strips.

Marvel Comics, thanks to their innovations and revolutionary narrative, have become like a big lake where anyone can freely fish for movie plots. Film and comics meet when the hero becomes a super hero, and then diverge. In May 2008, Marvel Cinematic Universe was established. All the movies are connected to each other by the same characters and some shared parts of the plot: when superheroes act in a team- at times in conflict – then they go under the name of the Avengers.

Other heroes (ramp 6)

In time comics' heroes have changed: before the war they had been distant figures, far from everyday life with exotic or fantastic adventures. Present day characters share our daily lives displaying feelings and thoughts as well as actions.

Tintin, by the Belgian Hergé, is the most successful French speaking comic in the world. The director Steven Spielberg made an animated film of it, using motion capture animation (actors move the characters). Scott Pilgrim is an innovative Canadian comic of a youngster who would do anything for love. Kick-Ass by the Scottish comic book writer Mark Miller, is obsessed by superheroes, he wants to be one of them with a somewhat disastrous outcomes.
Even if it does not seem, some films are taken from comics.   Road to Perdition by Sam Mendes and A History of Violence by David Cronenberg are both taken from US graphic novels. Their protagonists have in common the impossibility of escaping the violence of society. In order to survive, they are thus forced to brutal murders.
While the passion of love between the two protagonists is at the center of Blue Is the Warmest Colour, the award-winning film by Abdellatif Kechiche, based on a comic book by the French Julie Maroh. The adaptations are free and very often the films explain what the comics suggest.

D.C. Comics superheroes (ramp 7)

Superman was the first hero in tights in 1938. The year after arrived Batman, who had no super-powers but made up for it with money and shrewdness. Both were under the D.C. Comics brand name, the same that later developed Cat-woman, Wonder Woman and the Justice League.

Tim Burton was the first director to cloak a superhero, Batman, in film magic in his two movies made in 1989 and 1992, before the arrival of digital effects. Previously Batman and Robin had been a bit comical and even ridiculous. Thereafter, everything became a little darker, specially with the film version by C. Nolan, that draws on the original Fran Miller's series, where Batman displays a total distrust in humans turning into an unrestrained drive for pure revenge.
Superman was the first super hero in comics, and the first to enjoy a major success in the world of movies (in the late Seventies). It was followed by two major flops. The DC superhero movies also distance themselves from the comics and at times the paper version appear on the screen with other dialogues and heroes.

Graphic novels (ramp 8)

Comic writers' styles represents their vision of the world: Altan's drawings suggest grotesque ambiences for ambivalent characters. Unlike Pratt's elegant line or Zerocalcare's lively and introspective approach. What is possibly gained and lost by turning graphic novels into movies?

Ada dans la jungle was a film produced in France and never shown in Italy although it was made from an Altan comic (he was also the one of the screenwriters). The film is enjoyable but a simplification of the comic. The same is true of Jesuit Joe, a film where the designer Hugo Pratt added sequences to his original strips.

The film Death of Stalin highlights the grotesque nature of comics that describe the fight for succession of a very powerful man. In the film Paz!, Andrea Pazienza's magical strips can be experienced. Gipi freely draws inspiration from Giacomo Monti's interesting comic to find his identity as a director. The Mexican Guillermo Del Toro twice used the devil Hellboy created by Mike Mignola to release his fantastic worlds. Daniel Clowes describes the lack of communication in his comic stories; in the movies which he contributed to as a screen player he appears to be more open to dialogue. Yet another example of how to be faithful in the translating from comic to feature film, you have to betray.

Hugo

Hugo is really neither a comic, nor is it an illustrated book and drawings only appear a few pages into the text. In the book by Brian Selznick many pages are just drawings creating silent sequences of narration. In 2011, three years after the book came out, Martin Scorsese shot the movie Hugo that was awarded 5 Oscar Prizes including best Art Direction to Dante Ferretti and Francesca Lo Schiavo. Here you can enjoy some of Ferretti's and Federico Constantini's sketches.

Last 6 rooms — Level +25

Comic writers' performance (1)

At times comic writers enjoy standing in front of the movie cameras: in some cases there are popular cameos – like Stan Lee's and Gianni Bonelli's (Tex's creator). In other cases they were actual parts such as Hugo Pratt's (directed by Leos Carax), Pino Zac directed by Monicelli, Bonvi by Samperi and Sergio Staino. Georges Wolinski, the great Charlie Hebdo author was also directed by Staino while Gipi directed himself and Guido Buzzelli was in a few shots of Elio Petri's Oscar winning movie.

Comic writers behind the camera (2)

What happens when comic writers stand behind the camera? Mostly they don't wish to turn their comic strips into movies. There are a few exceptions: Marjane Satrapi with Persepolis and Chicken with Plums; Gerard Lauzier, Enki Bilal and Katsuhiro Otomo, have often worked as directors but only once representing their comic strips. Frank Miller only once worked as a director alone and interpreted Will Eisner very freely, and both Gipi and Staino prefer to not use their own strips.

Comics from movies never to be (3)

Three movies that were never shot by three famous Italian directors, masters in their field, drawn by great master cartoonists: Massimo Bonifatti illustrates Capelli lunghi, the story of two rebels in the economic boom, written by Mario Monicelli in the late Nineteen-Sixties. Milo Manara tells the story Il viaggio di G. Mastorna detto, written by Federico Fellini. The film is full of mystery: after a trip by plane Mastorna, a cello player, learns the news of an air crash: his own plane crash.

Ivo Milazzo drew the cartoon of Un drago a forma di nuvola, written by Ettore Scola with Giacomo Scarpelli and Silvia Scola: it is the story of Pierre, a bookseller from Paris overwhelmed by an unusual love story that could undermine his frail relationship with his daughter.

On the screens

On one side the characters drawn, on the other side short sequences with their different film interpretations (and exceptionally also the TV ones) over the years (and, in some cases, decades). It's another long journey …

Mickey Mouse /Topolino (4)

A drawing that takes life: cinema and comics are born together thanks to Walt Disney, who in 1928 successfully inaugurated this pair. A collaboration between the two arts that effectively continued on the pages of Topolino, the most long-running comics weekly magazine in Italy, through the creation of exciting film parodies. Mouses and ducks reinterpret the great masterpieces of the seventh art: stories like Casablanca, La Strada, Novecento, Metropolis were born, which found a second life thanks to important Italian comic authors.

Movies that become comic strips (5)

Sometimes it's the turn of movies to become comics. Before "home theatres" comics and sound tracks were the best way to relive emotions given by the big screen. Comics make also possible to appreciate the film on a more intimate manner. Both the movie scripts and the comic Waltz with Bashir and The Art of Happiness were written by the same person: as the narrative styles are completely different in spite of being true to the situations described.

Onomatopea (6)

We worked on a movie making it as close to a comic strip as possible. We have eliminated all sounds and added balloons, captions and onomatopoeia (words that sound like the noises they indicate). Clearly you still have to follow the movie's "time", while reading novels or essays takes you as long as you want to. This is what it looks like!