



INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
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NEWS RELEASE

R. CRUMB'S UNDERGROUND

SEPTEMBER 5–DECEMBER 7, 2008

OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 6-8PM
EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH WITH COLLECTOR ERIC SACK AND ASSOCIATE
CURATOR JENELLE PORTER: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 5PM,
ICA MEMBERS ONLY



top: Robert Crumb, *Self-Portrait With Third Eye*, 2004, ink on paper, 17 3/8" x 14 5/8" x 1 1/4". Courtesy of Paul Morris Gallery, New York

bottom: Robert Crumb, *Complete Crumb Comics #10* (cover), 1991, ink on paper, 18 7/8" x 16 15/16" x 1 1/8". Courtesy of Denis Kitchen Art Agency

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PHILADELPHIA, PA

In 1967, a young Philadelphia cartoonist named Robert Crumb arrived in San Francisco and quickly established himself as a master of the burgeoning "comix" movement. No one had ever seen anything like Crumb's skewed adult satire, a brilliant combination of classical storytelling and crass commercialism, expressed in a vibrant symbolic language harking back to "old time" cartooning. First featured in Philadelphia's *Yarrowstalks* and in his own *Zap Comix*, Crumb's tales of funny animals and misguided souls seeking enlightenment (including Fritz the Cat, Mr. Natural, Devil Girl, and his most enduring character, R. Crumb) vibrate with libidinal obsessions, feminist empowerment, racial tension, counterculture paranoia, government repression, and big-business commodification—the hustles and bustles hidden beneath the American dream.

This career-spanning survey, on view September 5-December 7, 2008, is organized around specific themes and ideologies critical to his work. These include social satire, sex, blues and jazz music, mind-altering substances, autobiography, and biography. The show spotlights collaborations from his early San Francisco days in the 1960s and 1970s, to recent work with his wife, cartoonist Aline Kominsky-Crumb. Extending far beyond comics, this exhibit of over 100 works—including early comics, greeting cards, collaborations, and sketchbooks, as well as drawings and sculptures—is the most substantial portrait of Crumb to date in the United States.

Robert Crumb (born 1943 Philadelphia; lives Sauve, France) began drawing comics as a young boy in the 1950s. Universally acknowledged as the founder of the underground comics scene (often called "comix" to denote adult-themed comic books), Robert Crumb gained cult popularity for his pioneering *Zap Comix*, and stardom with the 1994 Terry Zwigoff documentary *Crumb*. He has published in countless comics, books, and magazines over the years, and has recently been recognized by the larger art world with numerous exhibitions, including a retrospective in 2004 at the Ludwig Museum, Cologne, and a focus in the 2004 Carnegie International, Pittsburgh.

Other collaborators included in the exhibition: Erna Burger, Charles Crumb, Sophie Crumb, Clay Geerdes, Rick Griffin, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Jay Lynch, Victor Moscoso, Harvey Pekar, Gilbert Shelton, Spain Rodriguez, Robert Williams, Skip Williamson, and S. Clay Wilson.

*checklist and images available upon request.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ICA is located at:
118 South 36th Street at the
University of Pennsylvania

ICA is open to the public, except during
installation, from 12pm to 8pm on
Wednesday through Friday and from
11am to 5pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is FREE everyday.
*Free admission to the Institute of
Contemporary Art at the University of
Pennsylvania for the public is sponsored
by Glenn R. Fuhrman (W87/WG88) Fund.*

For more information,
call 215-898-7108/5911, or visit
www.icaphila.org.

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Founded in 1963, the Institute of
Contemporary Art at the University of
Pennsylvania is a leader in the
presentation and documentation of
contemporary art. Through exhibitions,
commissions, educational programs,
and publications, ICA invites the public to
share in the experience, interpretation
and understanding of the work of
established and emerging artists.

“R. Crumb’s Underground” has been organized by Yerba Buena Center for the
Arts, San Francisco and curated by Todd Hignite. The show traveled to the
Frye Art Museum in Seattle, and is coordinated at the ICA by Associate
Curator Jenelle Porter.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Whenever Wednesday, September 17, 7pm
Lecture: Patrick Rosenkranz
A Spiegel Fund Event

Monday, October 27, time tbd
Lecture: Charles Burns
*Presented in collaboration with the Penn Fine Arts Department and
the Kelly Writers House.*

Whenever Wednesday, November 12, 7pm
Performance: Minicomic Pile Up

*ICA is grateful for support from the following: The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation;
the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; The Dietrich Foundation, Inc.;
the Overseers Board for the Institute of Contemporary Art; Eric Sack; friends and
members of ICA; and the University of Pennsylvania.*

ALL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE VISIT THE ICA WEBSITE,
WWW.ICAPHILA.ORG, FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS IN CONJUNCTION
WITH “R. CRUMB’S UNDERGROUND.”