

ICON10 THE ILLUSTRATION CONFERENCE ABSTRACT & PRESENTER BIO

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Speaker bio:

Martha Newbigging is a multi-disciplinary artist with practices in illustration, comics and animation. They have illustrated over a dozen children's books and their animations have been screened internationally. They teach illustration in the School of Creative Arts and Animation at Seneca College, Toronto. They hold a BFA from OCAD University, and a Bachelor of Education and Masters of Environmental Studies from York University. Their practice-based research focuses on sexuality and gender in childhood and on the implications of autobiographical drawing for critical pedagogy.

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Session title:

What do comics want? Drawing life experience for critical reflection

Brief description:

This paper presents a reflection on drawing self-narrative comics as a method of engagement with identity and lived experience, and the potential implications of such an approach for illustration education. I will present my research-creation project that used a practice of drawing autobiographical comics to make sense of queer ways of being in childhood – ways of being that may have been discounted, ignored, or suppressed within a dominant heteronormative culture. Hilary Chute describes the unique quality of comics as “an innovative genre of life writing”, “the force and value of graphic narrative’s intervention... attaches to how it pushes on the conceptions of the unrepresentable”¹. How might a pedagogy of making self-narrative comics reorient our conceptions of self to make visible space for the unrepresented, subaltern parts of ourselves? How might we use such a practice to engage our illustration students to rethink issues of power and representation and expand their awareness across difference?

Link to full text article: coming out in print soon

Journal of Illustration

Intellect Books, UK

<https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk>

<https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal.id=233/>

¹ Hilary Chute, (2010) *Graphic women: Life narratives and contemporary comics*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 2.