

**THE
COMICS
STUDIES
SOCIETY**

2020 Annual Report

2020 Annual Report

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2020-2021 Executive Board

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Nhora Serrano (Hamilton College)

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Elizabeth "Biz" Nijdam (University of British Columbia)

First Vice President

Brittany Tullis (St. Ambrose University)

Second Vice President

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Immediate Past President

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Graduate Caucus President

Adrienne Resha (William & Mary)

Members at Large

Zack Kruse (Michigan State University)

Katherine Tanski (Purdue University)

Kate Polak (Wittenberg University)

Lan Dong (University of Illinois Springfield)

Social Strategist

Samantha Langsdale (University of North Texas)

Journal Editor

Qiana Whitted (University of South Carolina)

Web Editor

Jared Gardner (The Ohio State University)

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Andrew Kunka (University of South Carolina Sumter)

Graduate Student Caucus

GSC President

Adrienne Resha (William & Mary)

GSC Vice President

Evan Ash (University of Maryland)

GSC Secretary/Treasurer

Zachary J. A. Rondinelli (Brock University)

GSC Members at Large

Sydney Heifler (The Ohio State University)

Joshua Roeder (Drew University)

GSC Web Editor

Jeremy Carnes (University of Wisconsin)



Report of the President

It was with a heavy heart that we canceled the third annual conference of the Comics Studies Society, “Comics & Technology.” One of the unforeseen implications of canceling our gathering was that we also lost the opportunity to conduct our annual members **business meeting**. We bring you these written reports in lieu of that face-to-face presentation.

However, we didn’t want to give up the opportunity for you to interact with us that a face-to-face meeting affords. Thus, we ask that you reach out to any of our officers directly using the contact information provided at the end of each report. If you have a comment beyond any one of the officers presenting here, please feel free to contact Dr. Andy Kunka, our ombudsperson, at ajkunka@uscsumter.edu.

The other event that we could not facilitate in quite the same way without a conference was our **awards presentation**, which is usually held as part of the opening reception of the conference. We are pleased to announce that a video presentation recognizing our award winners is available at <http://comicsociety.org/prizes/winners/>.

As new officers have transitioned into their roles earlier this summer, we have already taken several steps to carry the organization forward. We have established a regular, **monthly meeting** of the board to help us move business forward in a more predictable fashion. We are also committing to a more regular distribution of our organization’s **newsletter** to help keep you all informed of our progress.

The board has also agreed to committee assignments to move several key initiatives forward.

2020-2021 Committee Assignments

Conference	Nominating	Awards	Future Conference	Outreach
Brittany Tullis	Candida Rifkind	Biz Nijdam [Coord.]	Kate Polak	Nhora Serrano
Corey Creekmur	Nhora Serrano	[Article Coord.]	Zach Kruse	Katherine Tanski
Matthew J. Smith	Lan Dong	[Seldes Coord.]	Corey Creekmur	Jenny Robb
Nhora Serrano		[Hatfield Coord.]		Christy Blanch
Sam Langsdale		[Edited Coord.]		
Evan Ash [GSC]		Adrienne Resha [Chute]		
Lan Dong				

We have three standing committees, including our 2021 Conference Planning Committee, our Nominating Committee, and our Awards Committee. You’ll read more about the work of the **Conference Planning Committee** in the report of our First Vice President, Brittany Tullis. Our **Nominating Committee** is charged with recruiting members to run for office in our 2021 elections. Our **Awards Committee** will be coordinated for the second year by Biz Nijdam, and she’ll be seeking members to assist with coordinating and judging in the coming year.

We also have two ad hoc task committees. The **Future Conferences Committee** will be looking ahead to conference locations for 2022 and beyond. The **Outreach Committee** is considering

ways we frame the benefits of membership and suggest activities to draw the attention of unaffiliated people in the field, including scholars, students, and professionals. Jenny Robb and Christy Blanch are joining board members Nhora Serrano and Katherine Tanski in that effort. Look for reports from these task groups in the coming months.

As members like Jenny and Christy have found, there continue to be opportunities for service from across our membership. In particular, when Biz or her surrogates come asking you for help coordinating or judging awards next spring or when Candida Rifkind, Lan Dong, and Nhora invite you to run for a position on the board, we hope that you will respond favorably to the call. Doing so helps to support this great initiative we have begun, the Comics Studies Society!

Finally, I want to acknowledge the contributions of those who, having served on the board, have completed their terms of service this past year. Our gratitude goes out to Members-at-Large Leah Misemer and Jenny Blenk, Immediate Past President Carol Tilley, and Secretary Susan Kirtley for their stewardship of the board.

And to my predecessor and our current Immediate Past President Candida Rifkind, I want to express my personal gratitude and that of the board for her continuing leadership in the Society. We are fortunate to have a host of professional colleagues whose dedication to service is only surpassed by their passion for comics.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew J. Smith
President
msmith455@radford.edu
(540) 831-6817



Report of the First Vice President

Planning for next year's conference, which is the primary task of the 1st Vice President, has gotten a slow start this year given the current circumstances.

A conference committee has been formed, however, where I am joined by President Matthew Smith, 2nd Vice President Corey Creekmur, Treasurer Nhora Serrano, Social Strategist Samantha Langsdale, Member at Large Lan Dong, and Graduate Student Caucus Vice President Evan Ash.

We are currently exploring options for the 2021 conference. It will likely take shape as a hybrid format: in-person events for those who choose to participate in that way, and virtual events for those who prefer not to travel for that year's conference.

We are exploring possible options for the in-person event and hope to have news about that soon, along with a call for papers for the 2021 conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Brittany Tullis
First Vice President
tullisbrittanyn@sau.edu



Report of the Treasurer

From a “**Subscription perspective,**” membership continues to grow and thrive in spite of the global pandemic. Without an annual conference this year (unfortunately it was cancelled due to COVID-19), we did not see the usual marked spike in membership in the spring '20 as we have in the past two springs. i.e. there was a slight decrease in membership. Nonetheless, our membership total remains very healthy and quite stable across our diverse constituency.

222 Members Total (July 2020)

12	Institutional Members
132	Tenure-Line Faculty/Administrators/Librarians/Curators
44	Students
34	Independent Scholars/Contingent Faculty/ Cartoonists & Comics Professionals/Emeritus Faculty

From a “Financial perspective,” our financial situation is as ever robust. The expenses and revenue are as follow:

2020 Expenses:

Conf. 2020: \$2330.41 total * logo, prizes, and plaques

Other expenses: Renewal of state of Ohio non-profit certificate of continued existence; taxes

2020 Revenue:

OSUP Journal \$3,486.50

Spreadshirt \$7.98

Amazon Smile \$66.21

Donations \$300 (Prizes/ Grad Travel)

The **Goals for the 2020-2021** year:

- Development of more Member Premiums – (*i.e. listserv*)
- Promotion of Amazon Smile, Spreadshirt, etc.
- Donations (travel, prizes, general)
- Meeting regularly with *Inks* editor and OSU Press to discuss subscription/membership rates and drives
- Promotion/Sale of #WomenOnPanels T-Shirts
- Easy transition to new Treasurer

Updated Info: One-Year CSS Membership/Subscriber Benefits and Rates:

An annual Membership to CSS is also an annual subscription to *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*. During the calendar-year membership/subscription, CSS members will receive:

- Three issues of *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*
- Newsletters from CSS
- Access to the Annual CSS conference
- An invitation to join a members-only CSS Google group
- Vote for members of its Executive Committee and any changes to bylaws

CSS is pleased to offer one-year membership/subscriptions rates (**online prices = leap year):

- **Students:** \$42 print/\$41.89 online (*leap year*)
- **Independent scholars, contingent faculty, cartoonists/comics professionals, emeritus faculty:** \$52 print/\$51.86 online
- **Tenure-line faculty, administrators, librarians, or curators:** \$84 print/\$83.77 online
- **Library/Institutional:** \$208 print

If you wish to provide additional support to CSS (including prizes and travel grants), please consider the optional Benefactor (\$50) or Contributor (\$75) levels in your registration.

Check the status of your membership/subscription by logging into your John Hopkins University Press account through JHUP Customer Service, jnncirc@press.jhu.edu.

You are also welcome to contact the Publisher Emily Taylor (taylor.2070@osu.edu) with any questions about the status of your membership/subscription.

Please read the privacy policy for CSS at http://comicsociety.org/documents/CSS_PrivacyStatement.pdf

Final Thoughts

Special thanks to Matt Smith & Randy Duncan for all their hard work in planning for the Henderson “Comics & Technology” conference!

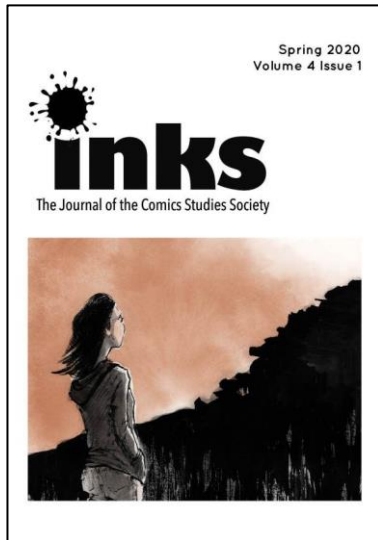
Lastly, as this will be my final Treasurer Report to the Membership, it has been my sincere pleasure and honor to have served on the CSS board. I wish you all good health and safety, and “see you in the funny papers!”

Respectfully submitted,

Nhora Lucía Serrano
CSS Treasurer
nserrano@hamilton.edu



Report of the Journal Editor



Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society is in its fourth year of publication and the rate and quality of the submissions remains strong. The most recent issue features essays and reviews from professors of every rank, librarians, graduate students, and independent scholars, including academics who presented early versions of their research at past CSS conferences. View the latest table of contents here: <http://inks.comicssociety.org/contents/>

Inks was also nominated this year for a 2020 Will Eisner Comics Industry Award for Best Comics-Related Periodical/Journalism.

We encourage all CSS members to consider submitting their scholarly essays to the society's journal and we also welcome proposals for our two special features: "**From the Archives**" spotlights rare holdings and unique collections from around the world, while "**From the Field**" focuses on interviews and commentary from comics scholars and professionals. We are especially interested in more pitches for illustrated essays and visual annotations that reflect new approaches to the work of comics studies.

- *Inks* publishes tri-annually in the Spring, Summer, and Fall.
- The acceptance rate for peer-reviewed essays is 48%.
- The average time from submission to print is 12-16 months.
- Submissions can be uploaded via Scholastica (<https://inks.scholasticahq.com/for-authors>) and for questions, please email: inks@comicssociety.org.

Many thanks to our incredible team of associate editors, Susan Kirtley, Frank Bramlett, Brian Cremins, Andrew Kunka, Jenny Rob, Caitlin McGurk, and Jared Gardner; our assistant editor, Alissa Winn; and with OSU Press, Emily Taylor, Tony Sanfilippo, John Jacobs, and Molly Durst.

Respectfully submitted,

Qiana Whitted
Editor

inks@comicssociety.org

Report of the Graduate Student Caucus President

A year ago, I was most concerned with studying for my comprehensive exams and heading back into a new, but not all that different, semester. Now, it's hard to say what tomorrow will look like, let alone the end of summer. For the last two years, the annual conference has marked, for me, the end of an academic year: I finished my first year in Urbana-Champaign and my second in Toronto. I was, like many of you, looking forward to Arkadelphia. Now, I'm looking forward to a time when it's safe to see each other in person again. Between now and then, and in my third year on the Graduate Student Caucus Board, there's still a lot I want to get done, and I am privileged to be working alongside members of the GSC in doing so.

Before I welcome the new Executive, I want to thank the 2019-2020 GSC Board. Biz Nijdam, Hanah Stiverson, Alex Lampp Berglund, and Safiyya Hosein: on behalf of the graduate student membership of CSS, thank you for your service.

I am very proud to welcome Vice President Evan Ash, Members-at-Large Sydney Heifler and Joshua Roeder, and Secretary-Treasurer Zachary Rondinelli to the 2020-2021 GSC Executive Board. I am also proud to continue to work with Web Editor Jeremy Carnes. This Board has met several times this summer and is already hard at work.

In the next few months, Josh and I will be reworking the Hillary Chute Award. In a good year, attendance at conferences is a marker of privilege, much less one in which many conferences -- in, around, and outside of comics studies -- have been cancelled. The Chute Award will, as it has this year, continue to recognize excellence in graduate student research and writing. It will just look a little different going forward.

Over the next twelve months, Evan will be representing the Caucus on the CSS Conference Organizing Committee. As Josh and I form the GSC's Award Committee, Evan is joined by Zach on the GSC's Conference Committee. Having previously served on the Conference Organizing Committee, I know just how much work goes into planning a conference, and I am absolutely sure that Evan and Zach are up to doing their part for it. They will be supported in doing so by the rest of the GSC Board.

You can learn more about the new officers of that Board on our website, <http://gradcaucus.comicssociety.org>, where we've been running "Meet the Board" posts. Our website and social media accounts ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)) fall under the purview of our Website Committee, Jeremy and Sydney. Of everything we've talked about at our first few meetings, I am most excited by the ideas that these two have put forward. Speaking on behalf of the entire Board: we're going to do some good work this year.

And speaking for myself: I am privileged to be in my third year of service on the GSC Board. I have served after or alongside many graduate students and early career scholars who I am lucky to count not just as colleagues but also as friends, and some of them graduated this spring under less than ideal circumstances. My sincerest congratulations go out to them and especially to our own Dr. Jeremy Carnes. Just as much as I am looking forward to being able to see each other in person again, I am looking forward to celebrating this cohort of scholars. Until then, know that I'm rooting for all of you.

To those of you who are dissertating now, like me, I want you to know that you're not alone. To those of you studying now for your comprehensive exams, I wish you the best of luck. And to those of you just beginning your graduate programs, I want you to know that you have a place here, in this community, whether or not you ever run for a spot on the Board or get to present at the annual conference.

And to those of you who have graduated, whether this spring or long before, I want to remind you that you were once a student and that you likely would not be where you are today without the support of more senior scholars. Soon enough, the GSC will be launching a Mentorship Program, and I ask that you offer your time and experience when called on to do so.

Finally, from [the GSC Constitution](#), which I helped rewrite with Joshua Kopin and Bryan Bove during my first year on the Board, "The purpose of the Graduate Student Caucus is to assess the needs and represent the interests of graduate students and early career scholars within the Comics Studies Society and to provide fellowship, support, and advocacy for such individuals as they pursue their work in comics studies." Further, "The GSC strives to be an inclusive organization and to build solidarity among all graduate students. It will actively seek out to promote the participation and engagement of marginalized groups and underrepresented persons." For this term, as President, I am committed to our purpose and especially, as a woman of color, to advocacy for other graduate students of color and marginalized genders, both in my service on the GSC Board and on the CSS Executive Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne Resha
GSC President
aresha@email.wm.edu



2019 Comic Studies Society Prizes

Hillary Chute Award for Best Graduate Student Conference Presentation:

Haniyeh Barahouie, University of Virginia, for “Mapping the War in Zeina Abirached’s *A Game for Swallows: To Die, To Leave, To Return*”

Honorable mention: Monica Geraffo, Fashion Institute of Technology, for “S & M: Sex and Marvel – The Use of Fetish Gear in *The Uncanny X-Men*”

Gilbert Seldes Prize for Public Scholarship:

Zoe D. Smith, University of Chicago, for “4 Colorism, or, the Ashiness of it All” and “4 Colorism, or, White Paper/Brown Pixels” on *Women Write About Comics*

CSS Article Prize:

Dan Mazur for “Ibrahim Njoya: a Comics Artist in Colonial-Era Cameroon”

Prize for Edited Book Collections:

Tahneer Oksman, Marymount Manhattan College, and Seamus O'Malley, Yeshiva University, for *The Comics of Julie Doucet and Gabrielle Bell: A Place Inside Yourself*

Charles Hatfield Book Prize:

Jorge Santos, College of the Holy Cross, for *Graphic Memories of the Civil Rights Movement: Reframing History in Comics*

Honorable mentions: Monalesia Earle for *Writing Queer Women of Color: Representation and Misdirection in Contemporary Fiction and Graphic Narratives* and Dominic Davies, City, University of London, for *Urban Comics: Infrastructure and the Global City in Contemporary Graphic Narratives*

A special thanks to the many members of the 2020 CSS Prizes’ awards subcommittees: The CSS is especially grateful for your work and collaboration during this particularly difficult moment in global history.

We will be accepting submissions for the 2021 CSS Prizes in spring of 2021. Please visit our website for the Call for Nominations and more information on the various prizes: <http://comicsociety.org/prizes/> If you are interested in adjudicating the 2021 CSS Prizes or have any questions about the process, please email awards@comicsociety.org.