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Fran Lebowitz in Conversation with Martin Scorsese

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Jan 19 at 7pm

Approximate running time: one hour and 30 minutes;
no intermission

Art Spiegelman and Phillip Johnston: WORDLESS!

Words / Music / Comix

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Jan 18 at 7:30pm

Approximate running time: one hour and 30 minutes;
no intermission

Picture stories by **Frans Masereel,**
H.M. Bateman, Lynd Ward, Otto Nuckel,
Milt Gross, Si Lewen, and Art Spiegelman
Music by **Phillip Johnston**

Originally commissioned by
Sydney Opera House for GRAPHIC

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Fran Lebowitz. Photo courtesy Public Speaking

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Purveyor of urban cool, witty chronicler of the "me decade," and the cultural satirist whom many call the heir to Dorothy Parker, Fran Lebowitz remains one of the foremost advocates of the Extreme Statement. She offers insights on timely issues such as gender, race, gay rights, and the media as well as her own pet peeves—including celebrity culture, tourists, and strollers.

In a recent interview in the *New York Observer*, Lebowitz held forth on former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "We don't have time for Bloomberg... there are certain things that are in the public sphere and certain things that are in the private sphere. ...What people eat? It's their own business. Bedbugs he should take care of. That's a public health issue. Did you ever hear anyone say, 'Do you like New York?' 'No, too salty.'"

Lebowitz on multiculturalism: "It's pathetic. Of course the world is diverse. And the differences always express themselves. It's much more im-

portant that you emphasize similarities... there is practically nobody willing to identify themselves as American anymore because everybody is too busy identifying themselves with the area of their lives in which they feel the most victimized." On aging: "At a certain point, the worst picture taken of you when you are 25 is better than the best picture taken of you when you're 45," and "What everyone says when you turn 60 is, 'It's better than the alternative.' If the only thing worse than being 60 is death, that's pretty bad."

That is Fran Lebowitz off the cuff... Her writing—pointed, taut, and economical—is equally forthright, irascible, and unapologetically opinionated. Fran Lebowitz's first two classic books of essays, *Metropolitan Life* and *Social Studies*, have been collected in the *Fran Lebowitz Reader*. She is also the author of the children's book *Mr. Chas and Lisa Sue Meet the Pandas*. She recently broke a 10-year writer's block and is back at work on her novel, *Exterior Signs of Wealth*. A documentary film about Fran Lebowitz, *Public Speaking*, directed by Martin Scorsese, premiered on HBO in November 2010.



MARTIN SCORSESE

Martin Scorsese is an Academy Award-winning Director and one of the most prominent and influential filmmakers working today. He directed the critically acclaimed, award-winning films *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Goodfellas*, *Gangs of New York*, *The Aviator*, *The Departed*, and the 2010 box office hit *Shutter Island*. Scorsese has also directed numerous documentaries including *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, *Elia Kazan: A Letter to Elia* (both films garnering Peabody Awards), *A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese through American Movies*, *Il Mio Viaggio in Italia*, *Public Speaking* starring writer Fran Lebowitz, and the

HBO documentary: *George Harrison: Living in the Material World*. Most recently he directed Academy Award- and Golden Globe-nominated film *Hugo*, a 3D adaptation of Brian Selznick's children's book, for which he won the Golden Globe for Best Director. Scorsese currently serves as Executive Producer on HBO's hit series *Boardwalk Empire* for which he directed the pilot episode. His latest film, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, will be released on December 25, 2013. He is the founder and chair of the Film Foundation and the World Cinema Project, both non-profit organizations dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and protection of film.

WORDLESS!



WORDS & PICTURES by
**ART
SPIEGELMAN**

MUSIC composed by
**PHILLIP
JOHNSTON**



PHILLIP JOHNSTON
soprano saxophone

JOE FIEDLER
trombone

MIKE HASHIM
baritone saxophone

NEAL KIRKWOOD
piano

DAVE HOFSTRA
bass

ROB GARCIA
drums

THE BAND!

Frans Masereel © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

In his Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, *MAUS*—a moving father-son memoir about the Holocaust drawn with cats and mice—Art Spiegelman changed the definition of comics forever. In *WORDLESS!*—a new and stimulating hybrid of slides, talk, and musical performance—he probes further into the nature and possibilities of his medium.

Spiegelman, noted as a historian and theorist of comics as well as an artist, collaborates with Phillip Johnston, the critically acclaimed jazz composer who wrote all-new scores he will perform live with

WITH WORDLESS WORKS BY

A.B. FROST

FRANS MASEREEL

courtesy of
Artists Rights Society

H.M. BATEMAN

courtesy of Lucy Willis

LYND WARD

courtesy of
Robyn Ward Savage



OTTO NÜCKEL

MILT GROSS

courtesy of
Joan Optican Herman

SI LEWEN

courtesy of the artist

WILHELM BUSCH

+ ART SPIEGELMAN

PRESENTED FOR YOUR EDIFICATION BY
THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC



ORIGINALLY COMMISSIONED BY
THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE for GRAPHIC

Frans Masereel © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

his sextet. Johnston's music accompanies the cartoonist's personal tour of the first legitimate "graphic novels"—silent picture stories made by early 20th-century masters like Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, and Milt Gross—and their influence on him. As Spiegelman explores "the battle between Words and Pictures," he smashes at the hyphen between High and Low Art in a presentation featuring a new work drawn specifically for this project, "Shaping Thought."



Representation:
**STEVEN
BARCLAY
AGENCY**

Originating Producer:
JOANNE KEE
places + spaces

Film Editing & Animation
**LINDSAY NORDELL
ANNALISE OLSON**



**AND A TIP OF
THE HAT TO:**

**FRANÇOISE MOULY/
RAW BOOKS & GRAPHICS**

JULIA PHILLIPS

ROBBIE SAENZ DE VITERI

SARA BIXLER



PHILLIP JOHNSTON

A saxophonist and composer of both jazz and new music, Johnston has been a significant figure in the underground music scene of New York's downtown since the beginning of the 1980s. He has composed extensively for film including Paul Mazursky's *Faithful*, Philip Haas' *The Music of Chance* and *Money Man*, Dorris Dörrie's *Paradise and Geld*, *Stolen Life* by Peter Rasmussen and Jackie Turnure (which won a New York Machinima Award for Best Music Score), and *Noise* by Henry Bean. He has also written for silent film, including Tod Browning's *The Unknown*, *The George Méliès Project*, Teinosuke Kinugasa's *Page of Madness*, and F.W. Murnau's *Faust*. His theater composition credits include *Measure for Measure*, *War of the Roses*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth* for Bell Shakespeare; *Young Goodman Brown* with Richard Foreman, *Venus* with Suzan-Lori Parks, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Ruysch* and *The Falls* with Hilary Bell, and *Drawn to Death: A Three Panel Opera with Art Spiegelman*. Dance credits include Karole Armitage's *The Predators' Ball* at the BAM Next Wave Festival and Keely Garfield's *Minor Repairs Necessary*, for which he won a Bessie Award in 1999.

Throughout, he has maintained a parallel career as a saxophonist, both working with others and leading his own bands. During the 1980s he co-lead the Microscopic Septet, and in the 1990s he led Big Trouble and the Transparent Quartet. He has toured internationally with *Fast 'n' Bulbous: The Captain Beefheart Project*, featuring Gary Lucas, in duos with accordionist Guy Klucevsek and pianist Joel Forrester, with his silent film projects, and with his own bands, especially The Microscopic Septet. Johnston's recent recordings include *Not So Fast* (Strudelmedia) with The Spokes, *Live at the Hillside Club* with Joel Forrester, *Friday the 13th: The Micros Play*



Phillip Johnston. Photo courtesy the artist

Monk (Cuneiform) with the Microscopic Septet, and *Page of Madness* (Asynchronous).

He currently performs in Australia with Phillip Johnston and the Coolerators, and Tight Corners: The Phillip Johnston/Jex Saarelaht Quartet play the music of Thelonious Monk, Steve Lacy, and Herbie Nichols, and in the US and Europe with The Microscopic Septet and The Spokes. His original scores for silent film have been performed in Australia at the Sydney Opera House, the Melbourne Festival, and the Sydney and Perth Film Festivals. Other current projects include *Do Good and You Will Be Happy* with Hilary Bell, a musical based on Cole's *Funny Picture Book*; a new silent film score for Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926), and, of course, *WORDLESS!* with graphic artist Art Spiegelman. For further information: phillipjohnston.com



Art Spiegelman. Photo: Enno Kapitza, Agentur Focus

ART SPIEGELMAN

Art Spiegelman has almost single-handedly brought comic books out of the toy closet and onto the literature shelves. In 1992, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his masterful Holocaust narrative *Maus*—which portrayed Jews as mice and Nazis as cats. *Maus II* continued the remarkable story of his parents' survival of the Nazi regime and their lives later in America. His comics are best known for their shifting graphic styles, their formal complexity, and controversial content. In his lecture, “What the %&*! Happened to Comics?,” Spiegelman takes his audience on a chronological tour of the evolution of comics, all the while explaining the value of this medium and why it should not be ignored. He believes that in our post-literate culture the importance of the comic is on the rise, for “comics echo the way the brain works. People think in iconographic images, not in holograms, and people think in bursts of language, not in paragraphs.”

Having rejected his parents' aspirations for him to become a dentist, Art Spiegelman studied cartooning in high school and began drawing professionally at age 16. He went on to study art and philosophy at Harpur College before becoming part of the underground comix subculture of the 60s and 70s. As creative consultant for Topps Bubble Gum Co. from 1965—87, Spiegelman created Wacky Packages, Garbage Pail Kids, and other novelty items, and taught history and aesthetics of comics at the School for Visual Arts in New York from 1979—86. In 2007 he was a Heyman Fellow of the Humanities at Columbia University where he taught a Masters of the Comics seminar. In 1980, Spiegelman founded *RAW*, the acclaimed avant-garde comics magazine, with his wife, Françoise Mouly—*Maus* was originally serialized in the pages of *RAW* before being published by Pantheon, which has published many

of his subsequent works including an illustrated version of the 1928 lost classic, *The Wild Party*, by Joseph Moncure March.

He and Mouly more recently co-edited *Little Lit*, a series of three comics anthologies for children published by HarperCollins (“Comics—They’re Not Just for Grown-ups Anymore”) and *Big Fat Little Lit*, collecting the three comics into one volume. Currently, he and his wife publish a series of early readers called Toon Books—picture books in comics format. They have co-edited *A Toon Treasury of Classic Children’s Comics* (Fall 2009). His work has been published in many periodicals, including *The New Yorker*, where he was a staff artist and writer from 1993—2003.

In 2004 he completed a two-year cycle of broadsheet-sized color comics pages, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, first published in a number of European newspapers and magazines including *Die Zeit* and *The London Review of Books*. A book version of these highly political works was published by Pantheon in the US, appeared on many national bestseller lists, and was selected by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the 100 Notable Books of 2004.

Spiegelman’s work also includes a new edition of his 1978 anthology, *Breakdowns* (Fall 2008); it includes an autobiographical comix-format introduction almost as long as the book itself, entitled *Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!*, as well as a children’s book (published with Toon Books), called *Jack and the Box*. In 2009 *Maus* was chosen by the Young Adult Library Association as one of its recommended titles for all students (the list is revised every five years and used by educators and librarians across the country). McSweeney’s has published a

collection of three of his sketchbooks entitled *Be a Nose*. A major exhibition of his work was arranged by Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, as part of the *15 Masters of 20th Century Comics* exhibit (November 2005). In 2005, Art Spiegelman was named one of *Time* magazine’s 100 Most Influential People and in 2006 he was named to the Art Director’s Club Hall of Fame. He was made a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France in 2005 and—the American equivalent—played himself on an episode of *The Simpsons* in 2008. In fall 2011, Pantheon published *Meta Maus*, a companion to *The Complete Maus*; it is the story of why he wrote *Maus*, why he chose mice, cats, frogs, and pigs, and how he got his father to open up (the new book includes a DVD of the transcripts of Spiegelman’s interviews with his father; it is not a graphic novel, but it is populated with illustrations, photos, and other images). *MetaMaus* has been awarded the 2011 National Jewish Book Award in the Biography, Autobiography, and Memoir category.

In 2011, Art Spiegelman won the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival, marking only the third time an American has received the honor (the other two were Will Eisner and Robert Crumb). The honor also included a retrospective exhibition of his artwork, shown at the Pompidou Center and which traveled to the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and in November 2013 to the Jewish Museum in New York, accompanied by his book, *CO-MIX: A Retrospective of Comics, Graphics, and Scraps*, published by Drawn & Quarterly (September 2013).