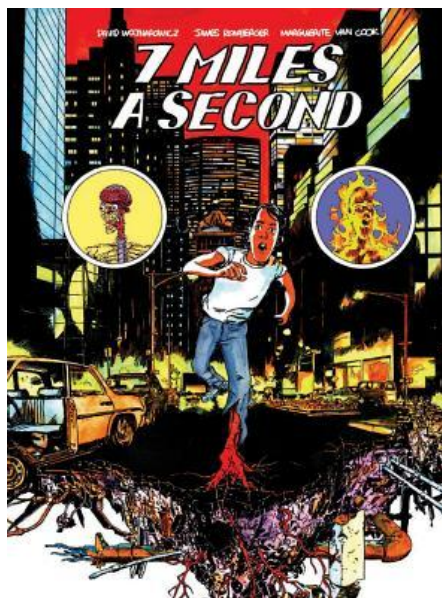




7 Miles a Second

David Wojnarowicz , James Romberger , Marguerite Van Cook

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7 Miles a Second is the story of legendary artist David Wojnarowicz, written during the last years before his AIDS-related death in 1992, and drawn by James Romberger with colors by Marguerite Van Cook. The graphic novel depicts Wojnarowicz's childhood of prostitution and drugs on the streets of Manhattan, through his adulthood living with AIDS, and his anger at the indifference of government and health agencies. Originally published as a comic book in 1996 by DC's Vertigo Comics, an imprint best-known for horror and fantasy material such as *The Sandman*, *7 Miles a Second* was an instant critical success, but struggled to find an audience amongst the typical Vertigo readership. It has become a cult classic amongst fans of literary and art comics, just as Wojnarowicz's influence and reputation have widened in the larger art world. Romberger and Van Cook's visuals give stunning life to Wojnarowicz's words, blending the gritty naturalism of Lower East Side street life with a hallucinatory, psychedelic imagination that takes perfect advantage of the comics medium. This new edition will finally present the artwork as it was intended: oversized, and with Van Cook's elegant watercolors restored. It also includes several new pages created for this edition.

7 Miles a Second Details

Date : Published February 6th 2013 by Fantagraphics (first published May 1st 1996)

ISBN : 9781606996140

Author : David Wojnarowicz , James Romberger , Marguerite Van Cook

Format : Hardcover 68 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Glbt, Queer, Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Biography, Art, Comix

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From Reader Review 7 Miles a Second for online ebook

Dimitris says

A psycho, dark, fucked up journey through sadness.

Scott Robins says

Raw, powerful and such an important book. Someone should save this book from DC Comics and reprint it.

David Schaafsma says

"Escape velocity is the speed that an object needs to be traveling to break free of a planet or moon's gravity well and leave it without further propulsion. For example, a spacecraft leaving the surface of Earth needs to be going 7 miles per second, or nearly 25,000 miles per hour to leave without falling back to the surface or falling into orbit." www.qrk.northwestern.edu

This text, which I am told is a cult classic, was released in 1996, four years after Wojnarowicz's AIDS-related death, and in 2012 was repackaged and released in large book format, drawn by his friends James Romberger and colored by Marguerite Van Cook. It is remarkable there are not more comics like this. There are interesting and sometimes amazing formal experiments that celebrate the imagination and comics possibilities. There few both personal and political comics that are like this, though, infused with a kind of rage, a howl of despair and anger. There are three parts of this short memoir, the first dealing with the author's hustling and prostitution from the age of 9 on the streets of NYC; the second, the next stage, deals also with his life on the streets, with drugs and near starvation and sleepless hallucination, and the third section deals with his delirium in AIDS-related hospitalizations and the death of and grief over the loss of many friends and his anger at health care agencies and the government for their perceived apathy. It's a kind of rough street prose poem, with wild drawings to match the sometimes surreal, nightmarish experiences.

Of course Woodring and others create as well out of their pain and madness, so maybe I am wrong to say this is an isolated phenomenon, this raw treatise, this epitaph. It does have something of Frank Miller and Edward Rizzo horror to it, as Romberger and Van Cook try to help us visualize the pain. There's a lot of people on the streets, and more, not fewer, every day, as health care continues to decline and the economy's "recovery" doesn't touch most of whom it has damaged, as corporate and CEO profits skyrocket. This is tough to read on so many levels. Not escapist comics. Testimony.

Michael Beblowski says

Photographer, filmmaker, writer and activist David Wojnarowicz suffered through the AIDS crisis, was targeted by Reverend Jesse Helms's campaign to cut the National Endowment for the Arts' funding for racial and sexual minorities who allegedly created "pornography" with tax funding, escaped an abusive father by becoming a teenage hustler in a pre-gentrified Times Square and watched all his friends and former lovers die while a hostile political machine vilified and exploited the victims. His "Close to the Knives: A Memoir

of Disintegration" is one of the most beautifully written books I have ever read. 7 Miles a Second uses excerpts from Wojnarowicz's memoirs and compelling illustrations, many that are directly inspired by his collages, to tell a brief and fragmented account of the artist's life. I would honestly recommend reading "Close to the Knives" before investigating "7 Miles a Second" but the artists responsible for rendering these excerpts in the graphic novel format should be celebrated. For a period of time the art books offering reproductions of his work were woefully out of print as the AIDS crisis became a distant memory displaced by the political battle for marriage equality and assimilation. When a short film at the Smithsonian inspired the outrage of Catholics almost twenty years after his death, a biography was published, 7 Miles a Second was printed, most of his writing was re-published and eventually his Brush Fires in the Social Landscape was re-printed. Ironically conservative outrage reignited interest in the work of a poet hustler who photographed an era that was rapidly being erased in a culture with no memory.

Khepre says

A dark graphic novel that gives readers an idea of what was going on with the author before he died of AIDS virus. Great read

Ma'Belle says

This had been on my to-read shelf for awhile and was on the Denver Public Library's LGBTQ comics list. After a few pages, I wished it had come with a trigger warning (due to graphic depictions of the author's experiences as an underage prostitute, including a violent assault). By the time I figured out who the author was, that he's already well-known and died of AIDS-related causes in '92, the text and accompanying images had taken on a much more purposeful and brilliantly painful scope in my mind. There's some powerful poetry of rage in these pages, and the illustrations and colours capture a hallucinogenic fury perfectly juxtaposed with frightfully real stories from Wojnarowicz's life from childhood til his deathbed.

Elisa says

Both real-life scenarios and speed-fueled hallucinations or dreams are presented chronologically, without any other order. The work is effectively plotless. Violent & squalid moments are cherry-picked for depiction, one disturbing event upon another. The only truly meaningful moment is when David visits a dying friend in hospital, so much else is just random grotesquery. The effect is disturbing without many redeeming artistic qualities. Not worth reading.

TJ says

Wojnarowicz is just one of my favorite writers period, so the mediocre rating isn't because of the text -- it's because I'm not sure if repackaging and decontextualizing his work in this way is necessary. Found it more distracting than anything.

Kevin says

One of the blurbs described this book as a "primal scream." Seems about right. It doesn't feel to me like it qualifies as a graphic "novel" only because it is so brief and loosely structured. The narrative seems to hang on 3 scenes or moments from Wojnarowicz's life - one of hustling as a youth, another living hand-to-mouth on the street, and then as a young adult living in an AIDS-induced fever dream. The art is extremely visceral and unnerving. Sections of it reminded me of Frank Miller's grittier stuff, or of the anime movie Akira, the way the art blends bodies with images of decay, pestilence, and machinery. Movement through the panels is unsettling, too, in the way they appear fragmented and jagged. I found the middle section to be the most compelling. The poetics in the language at the end didn't have enough specifics for me to get a hold of. By that point, Wojnarowicz is basically at war with his own body and mind, and the words feel like they are tumbling out with little in the way of framing devices or filters. Anyway, as short a piece as this is, it is incredibly powerful.

Kori ? says

The nitty gritty life of a young prostitute with the aids virus. I loved the glimpse into his mind but the text at time was very rant like. The artwork was perfect for the content but the long rants almost made me want to throw in the towel half way through.

Robert says

Ferocious.

Sooraya Evans says

Hard to follow.

Richard says

I always feel guilty criticizing work as personal as Wojnarowicz's. Especially since his voice, while personal, has come to represent so many without voices.

Still.

The best things here, in my opinion, are the art and the watercolors, which to my eye are gorgeous.

Andrea says

A raw, blistering piece of art. Should be part of everyone's library.

Katya Kazbek says

I have been reading more comics/graphic novels recently, and was starting to doubt my objectivity in judging them because I normally come from a fictional background. However, reading this, a graphic novel written by my favorite fiction/nonfiction author/artist and posthumously published, I am reassured that there is nothing wrong with my taste. It's just that it takes a true artist to make a comic or graphic novel that is splendid and not vapid. Great illustrations, I was so happy to see David brought back to life through them. And, of course, his words made me mad, sad and mesmerized with beauty.
