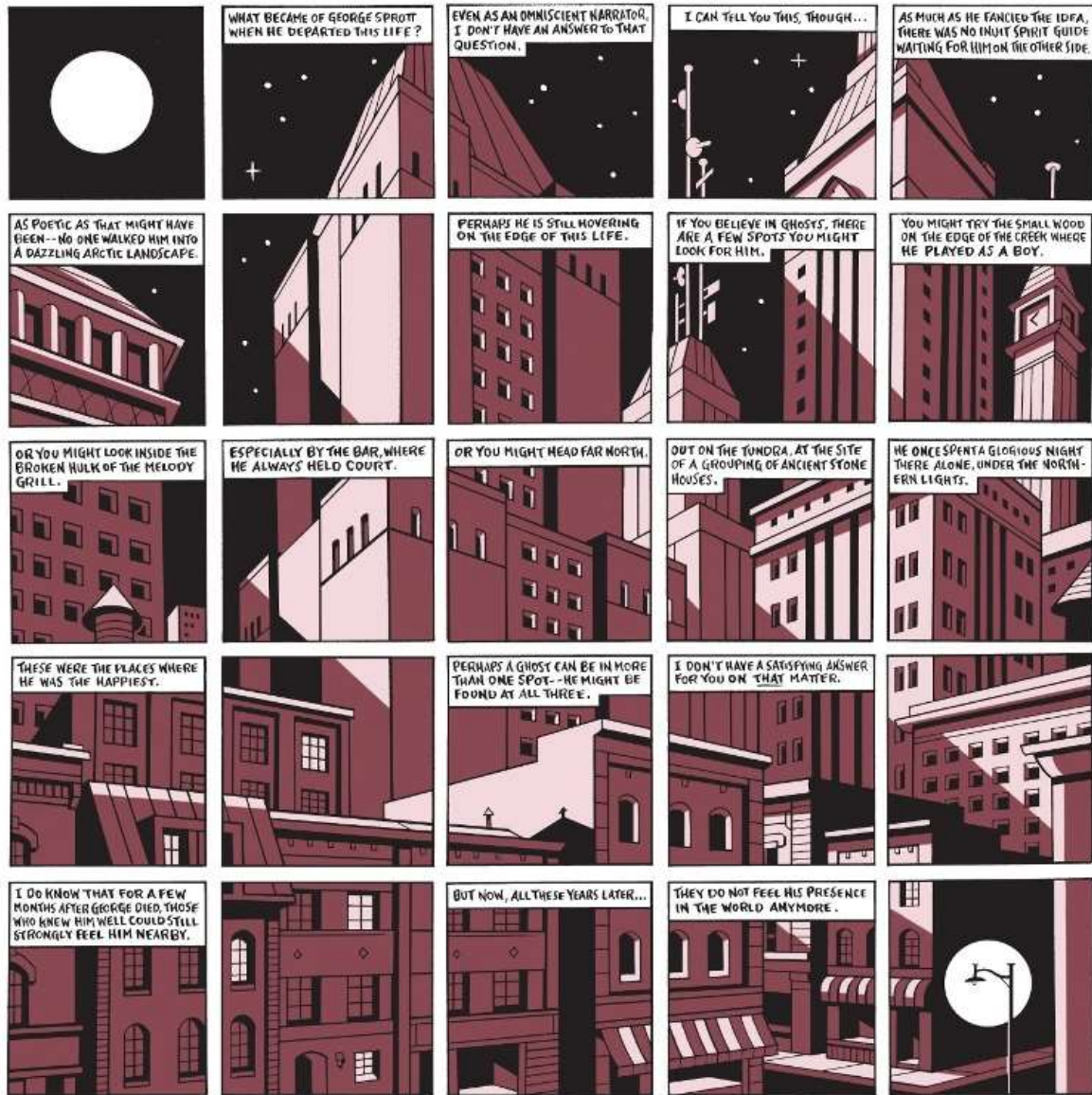


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RICHMOND ART GALLERY School Art Program



Teacher Guide

Mark Haney and Seth: *Omnis Temporalis*

April 8 to June 25, 2017

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Program Overview

Dear Teachers,

This guide contains information about the exhibition, the artists, and some classroom activities that will help you to prepare your students for their visit to the Richmond Art Gallery. Please review this package with your students to get the most out of your gallery visit. The suggested activities require a minimum of materials and are adaptable to the needs of different grade levels.

Throughout the guide you will find art vocabulary words in bold that are defined in the vocabulary section, and resource links have been included for further topic explorations.

Program Goals

The goals of the gallery tour and art workshop are to encourage students to:

- Describe and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent
- Observe and share how artists use processes, materials, and techniques to express ideas
- Explore personal experience, community, and culture through art making
- Examine the relationship between art and the wider world
- Create artworks using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Big Ideas explored

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and as a community
- People connect to others and share ideas through the arts
- Exploring works of art exposes us to diverse values, knowledge, and perspectives
- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us
- Artistic expressions differ across time and place
- Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others

Before Your Visit

Discussion: The Art of Comics

The inspiration and source material for the exhibition *Omnis Temporalis* is the **graphic novel** *George Sprott: 1894-1975* by the cartoonist Seth. Selected **panels** from the graphic novel have been enlarged and mounted on the walls, and a life-size CKCK television studio has been recreated so that it feels like you are inside the pages of Seth's book. Before visiting the gallery, discuss the medium of cartoons and comics with students.

Some sample questions for class discussion:

- What is a **cartoon**? A **comic strip**? A **comic book**? A **graphic novel**?
- What kinds of cartoons/comics are there?
- What sort of comics have the students read? Who are comics for?
- What features make them a cartoon/comic?
- What makes them different from a picture or story book?
- Where can you find comics?
- Why are cartoons and comic books considered art?

Activity: Biography

Unlike most **gag cartoons** and comic strips which feature a punch line or joke, comic books and graphic novels tell a story, and in the case of *George Sprott*, that story is a **biography**, telling the life story of a fictional Canadian Radio and TV personality. Both Seth's and Mark Haney's work are biographical in nature, they focus their art on the lives of individuals. In Seth's case, he has done comics based on his own life, and on fictional characters he's created. Mark Haney has chosen Canadian heroes to create musical performances around, such as Terry Fox and Ken Carter. When students visit the art gallery, they will create a comic drawing inspiration from their own life story, and will choose an aspect from their life to illustrate in a comic. Before visiting the gallery, have students reflect on their lives, and think of a few events that they might want to draw. They can be funny, serious, scary, or fun memories, or even dreams.

Some examples of possible autobiographical events:

- Their first day of school
- Scoring a goal in soccer
- Going ice skating for the first time
- How they met/became friends with their best friend
- Building their first snow man
- Getting lost in a store
- Learning to swim
- Going to a sleepover party

At the Gallery

Your visit will start with a gallery tour of our current exhibition *Omnis Temporalis*. During the tour we will look at various artworks in depth, and discuss the overall themes of the exhibition.

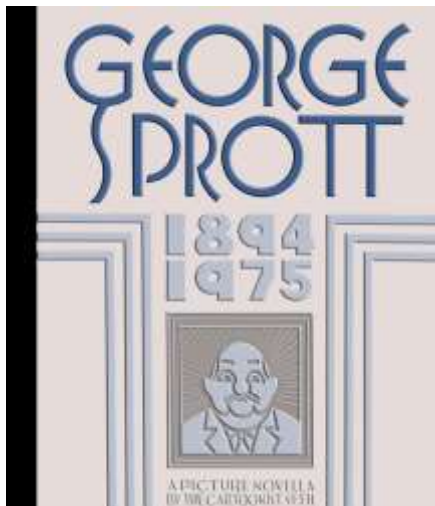
Big Ideas explored through this exhibition:

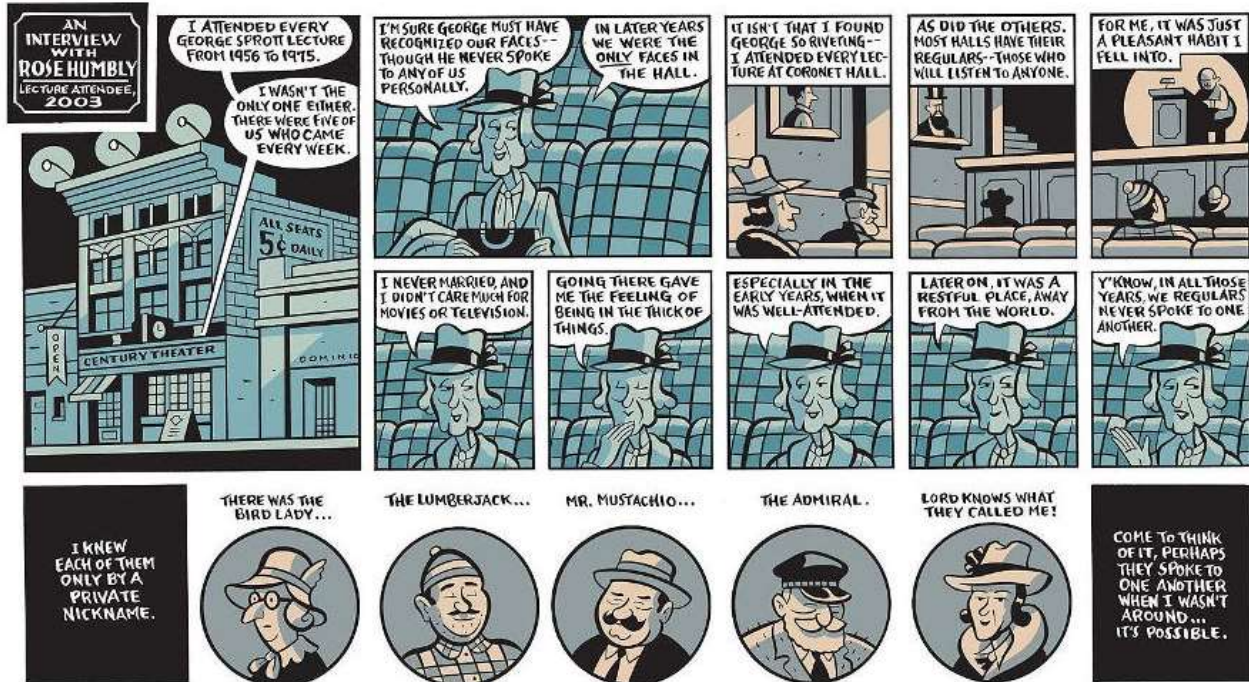
- Continuity and Change
- Visual Storytelling
- Personal Values and Choices
- Comics and Contemporary Classical Musical Performance as art forms

After the tour, we will go into the gallery classroom and students will be introduced to the components that make up comic strips, and will be shown some introductory cartooning techniques. Students will be asked to reflect on their lives so far and the experiences they have had that are significant to them. Students will then choose an event to illustrate in a cartoon, either a simple single panel comic for younger students, to a multi-panel comic with text for older students.

About The Exhibition

This exhibition is the result of collaboration between renowned Canadian cartoonist Seth and composer and musician Mark Haney. The exhibition is based on Seth's picture novella, *George Sprott: 1894-1975*, which recounts the life of a fictional local radio and television personality living in Ontario in the early to mid-twentieth century. Selected pages from the novella have been enlarged and displayed, and the TV studio where George worked has been recreated in a full-size installation in the gallery, so that it feels as though the pages of the book have come to life. During the exhibition, the TV studio set will serve as a theatrical backdrop to a series of performances conceived of by Mark Haney that dramatize the story of George Sprott as recounted in Seth's book. These performances include original music composed by Haney, and dramatic recreations of select moments in George's life. The combination of the cartoon visuals, the art installation and the performance allow visitors to experience Seth's original story in a completely new way.





The picture novella *George Sprott: 1894-1975* does not feature an adventure story like many graphic novels or comic books, or a story with a traditional beginning, middle, and end. Instead “Seth’s signature drawings chronicle the long and contested life of fictional George Sprott, resident of Dominion City and host of the weekly TV show, *Northern Hi-Lights*. It is a pensive character study rhythmically pieced together from a variety of biographic sources that cumulatively span George’s 81 years.” (Nan Capogna, Richmond Art Gallery curator). George Sprott is not a real person, and Dominion is not a real city, but Seth has created George and the other citizens of Dominion to explore his personal fascination with this era in Canadian history.

The book captures the look and feel of small Ontario cities and their institutions, such as local radio and television broadcasters and small independent theatres, and the distinctive personalities that populated them. Through George’s life story, Seth explores how people and places change over time and the sense of loss resultant to this. George is not a perfect man, and Seth takes care to paint a picture of a life full of striving and laudable accomplishments balanced by all too human failings and weakness, exploring the full gamut of the human experience. Through George we can reflect on the values held by Canadians over the last century, and how these have changed for better or worse.

Using biography to explore Canadian themes is also a hallmark of Mark Haney’s artistic practice. He has previously created music inspired by Canadian heroes and personalities such as Terry Fox and daredevil Ken Carter. A fan of Seth’s work, Haney reached out to the cartoonist to propose a creative partnership that would take the world of Seth’s cartoons and translate them



into music and performance. Out of Seth's many publications, *George Sprott: 1894-1975* was chosen because of the many colourful characters within its pages through whose testimony we learn about the titular character. Haney was intrigued by the prospect of having a diversity of voices through which to tell a story. Over the course of several years, Haney composed music based on the novel, and condensed the story of George's life for an hour-long performance featuring actors playing George and the rest of the characters accompanied by a musical trio consisting of Haney on double bass, Marina Hasselberg on cello, and Mark Takeshi McGregor on alto & bass flute. The costumes the actors wear were designed by Diane Park and feature artwork from Seth's novel, further creating the illusion of the comic book springing to life. There will be a series of these performances throughout the exhibition, and in between performances, a recording will play in the CKCK TV studio set with the costumes on display for gallery visitors.



The title for the exhibition, *Omnis Temporalis*, comes from the latin motto featured on the Dominion coat of arms meaning "everything changes". Both the performances and the picture novella explore these changes, and the tendency to idealize the past as we age. Seth has a great love for the art and design of early 20th century Canada, and has created the fictional city of Dominion to explore this nostalgia for times and places long gone. Identity, memory, loss, and longing are themes that weave through the comic panels and the performance, and our experience of these themes is amplified through the unique juxtaposition of sound and visuals.

About The Artists

Mark Haney has been playing stand-up bass for over two decades. By integrating his work with other arts in form and presentation, Haney has succeeded in reaching new communities while expanding his artistic exploration by partnering with artists in music and other genres. His critically acclaimed CD *Aim for the Roses* was made into a feature film by filmmaker John Bolton. He has composed for live performance, recordings, film and art exhibitions, and has performed regularly with symphony orchestras (the VSO, Kamloops, Vancouver Island), new music ensembles (Redshift Music, Aventa), musical theatre (Bard on the Beach, the PuSH Festival) and popular music (The Beige, Anne Murray, Leahy, Rodney DeCroo). He is the Artistic Director of The Little Chamber Music Series That Could.

Mark Haney's website: <https://markhaneyblog.wordpress.com/>

Seth is the cartoonist behind the comic book series PALOOKAVILLE, which started as a pamphlet comic book in 1991 and is now a semi-annual hardcover. His comics have appeared in *New York Times Magazine*, *Best American Comics* and *McSweeneys Quarterly*. His illustrations have appeared in numerous publications including on the cover of the *New Yorker*, the *Walrus*, and *Canadian Notes & Queries*. He was Lemony Snicket's partner for the Young Readers series, *All the Wrong Questions*, and has illustrated and designed a new, deluxe edition of Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a little Town*. He is the designer for several classic comics reprint series, notably collections of work by Charles Schulz, John Stanley, and Doug Wright. He was the winner, in 2011, of the Harbourfront Festival Prize.

The cartoonist has exhibited throughout the world in a variety of group and solo shows. He was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which showcased the first public display of his model city Dominion, which is now part of the Gallery's permanent collection. Dominion City subsequently toured galleries from coast to coast including stops in Charlottetown, London, Lethbridge, Regina and Coquitlam. He is the subject of the award-winning National Film Board documentary entitled "Seth's Dominion". Seth lives in Guelph, Ontario with his wife Tania, and their two cats in an old house named "Inkwell's End".

The Canadian Encyclopedia: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/seth/>

An Interview with Seth: CBC Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5D9kGmxlk>

MacLeans Magazine: <http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/a-preacher-of-cartoons-delivers-his-sermons/>

After Your Visit

Activity: Community Miniatures

Seth has been creating a fictional Canadian town called Dominion based on his memories and experiences living in smaller towns and cities in Ontario such as Strathroy. He models these towns out of cardboard, bringing his cartoon community to life.

Materials:

Cardboard
Scissors
Hot glue & tape
Paint, or Construction Paper and markers

- Tell students that they will be creating a miniature community out of cardboard like the models seen in the Richmond Art Gallery.
- Brainstorm with students what sort of buildings a community needs
- Before students work on the cardboard houses/buildings they can do rough drafts on paper, or research by sketching/photographing the buildings in their community.
- Students may work in pairs of 2-3 to create their building. The buildings should include local community structures.
- Once students have the go ahead from the teacher, they can then work on the cardboard miniatures. Teachers may need to help with some of the cutting or using a xacto knife.
- Colours and textures like brick or stone can be added to the building facades with paint or construction paper and markers
- Once done students can put together the community and create roads and streets.



Resources:

“A Special Place” <https://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/a-special-place-lesson-plan>

“My Home Our Community” <http://crayolateachers.ca/lesson/my-home-our-community-form-colour-proportion>

Resources

Books

Adventures in Cartooning by James Sturm, Andrew Arnold, and Alexis Frederick-Frost

CARTOONING: The only cartooning book you'll ever need to be the artist you've always wanted to be by Art Roche

So, You Want To Be A Comic Book Artist? By Philip Amara

Draw Me a Story: An Illustrated Exploration of Drawing as Language by Bob Steele

Red: A Haida Manga by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

Online

Comic Book Design

<http://www.incredibleart.org/lessons/middle/Jennie-cartoon.htm>

Using graphic novels in the classroom

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/guide-using-graphic-novels-children-and-teens/>

Cause And Effect Through Comic Strips

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/engaging-with-cause-effect-30678.html?tab=4#tabs>

Understanding Comic Genre

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/comics-classroom-introduction-genre-188.html>

Expanding Meaning Potential Through Media

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/color-world-expanding-meaning-30559.html?tab=4#tabs>

Online Comic Strips

<http://www.gocomics.com>

Comic Strip Templates – download and print your own blank templates

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/art/comic-strip-templates>

Glossary

Balloon	A shape that contains text to show what a character is saying or thinking. Word Balloons can have different shapes to show different expressions or emphasis, while Thought Balloons have a cloud shape. Balloons have stems that point to the character who is speaking or thinking.
Biography	The story of a person's life, written by another person
Cartoon	A drawing showing the features of its subjects in a simplified way, often exaggerated to create humour or dramatic effects.
Comic Book	A multi-page series of cartoon panels that tells a longer visual story, bound in book form.
Comic Strip	A series of cartoon panels (usually 3-4) that tells a visual story
Contemporary Art	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas
Gag Cartoon	A single cartoon picture with text under the picture to complete the joke (called a caption)
Graphic Novel	A continuous story that is illustrated in stylized drawings using the conventions of comic book storytelling and published in book form.
Gutter	The space between panels
Nostalgia	A desire to think about or go back to an earlier time or place that has personal positive associations.
Panel	The shape containing the drawings – usually rectangular but can be any shape or size. A single panel represents a single moment in time.
Stereotype	A fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

Image Credits

Cover, Page 5,6: Seth, detail from the graphic novel, *George Sprott: 1894-1975*

Page 7: Stills from *Omnis Temporalis* opening performance, Richard Neuman as George Sprott, Dorothea Hayley as Daisy Sprott, and koralee as the narrator. Photo Credit Elliot Jung.

School Program Supporters and Partners



The Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program is one of many gallery programs made possible by the Richmond Art Gallery Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to extending the reach of our gallery exhibitions through community programming.



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