

# The Comics Journal Special Edition: Manga



<b>Goodreads Rating:</b>	3.75
<b>ISBN13:</b>	9781560976240
<b>Series</b>	The Comics Journal
<b>Published:</b>	April 17th 2005 by Fantagraphics
<b>ISBN10:</b>	1560976241
<b>Pages:</b>	180
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<b>Genre:</b>	Sequential Art
<b>Language</b>	English

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For the first time, TCJ devotes a volume to the most popular comics in the world: manga. The Comics Journal Special Edition focuses this time on the phenomenal manga (Japanese comics) invasion. In 2003, North American bookstore sales of manga surged to an unprecedented \$100 million—or 75% of the entire sales of comics! Which means it's time for The Comics Journal, the foremost magazine of iconoclastic criticism, to take a hard look at Japanese cartoonists and translated manga, and separate the wheat from the chaff. Our cover feature is manga superstar Hideshi Hino, whose 30-year career and inimitable style have put him at the forefront of Japan's horror genre.

2004 promises to be the year of Hino here in the States with the publication of English translations of all his major books starting in March with *The Red Snake* and *Bug Boy*. Hino will discuss his life and work in an exclusive interview and he will provide the original front cover artwork. Our manga section will also include our fearsome critiques of the best and worst of the genre, as well as essential interviews with or profiles of the most notable manga artists, including Yoshiharu Tsuge, Kan Takahama, and the undisputed king of manga, the creator of *Astro Boy*, *Adolf* and *Buddha* amongst so many others, author Osamu Tezuka! Meanwhile, Vaughn Bode, the legendary and enduring underground cartoonist (and current inspiration of graffiti artists everywhere) is given the full treatment with an illuminating profile by Bob Levin (*The Pirates the Mouse*), a critical essay by Donald Phelps (*Reading the Funnies*), a rare interview, and exclusive excerpts from his private diaries. From the archives, we've unearthed a 40,000-word biographical essay of Thomas Rowlandson, the great 18th/19th century illustrator, caricaturist, and cartoonist, written by Art Young in 1938! Also: Bill Blackbeard profiles the madcap cartoonist Milt Gross, considered by some to be the first graphic novelist (this essay is amply illustrated with samples form strips such as *Count Screwloose* of *Tooloose* and *Otto bad*

Blotto).

Tom Spurgeon profiles Rowland Emmett, the brilliant Punch artist (and editor), whose whimsical cartoons graced the magazine for over half a century and who is perhaps best known as for designing the 'inventions' of Caractacus Potts from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Finally, there's our renowned comics section whose theme this issue is "Seduction," and that will include an international array of some of the most accomplished and innovative artists in the world.