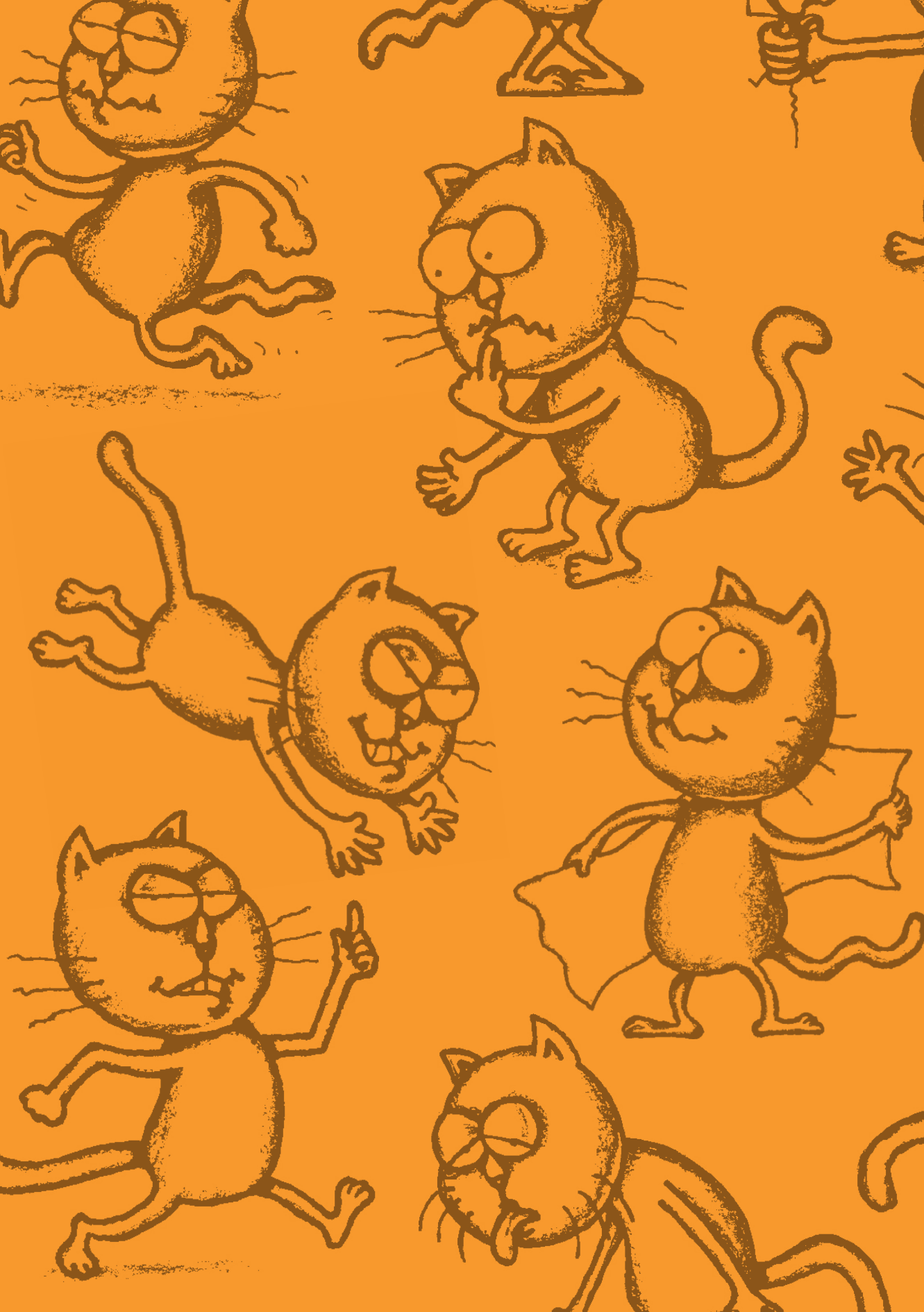


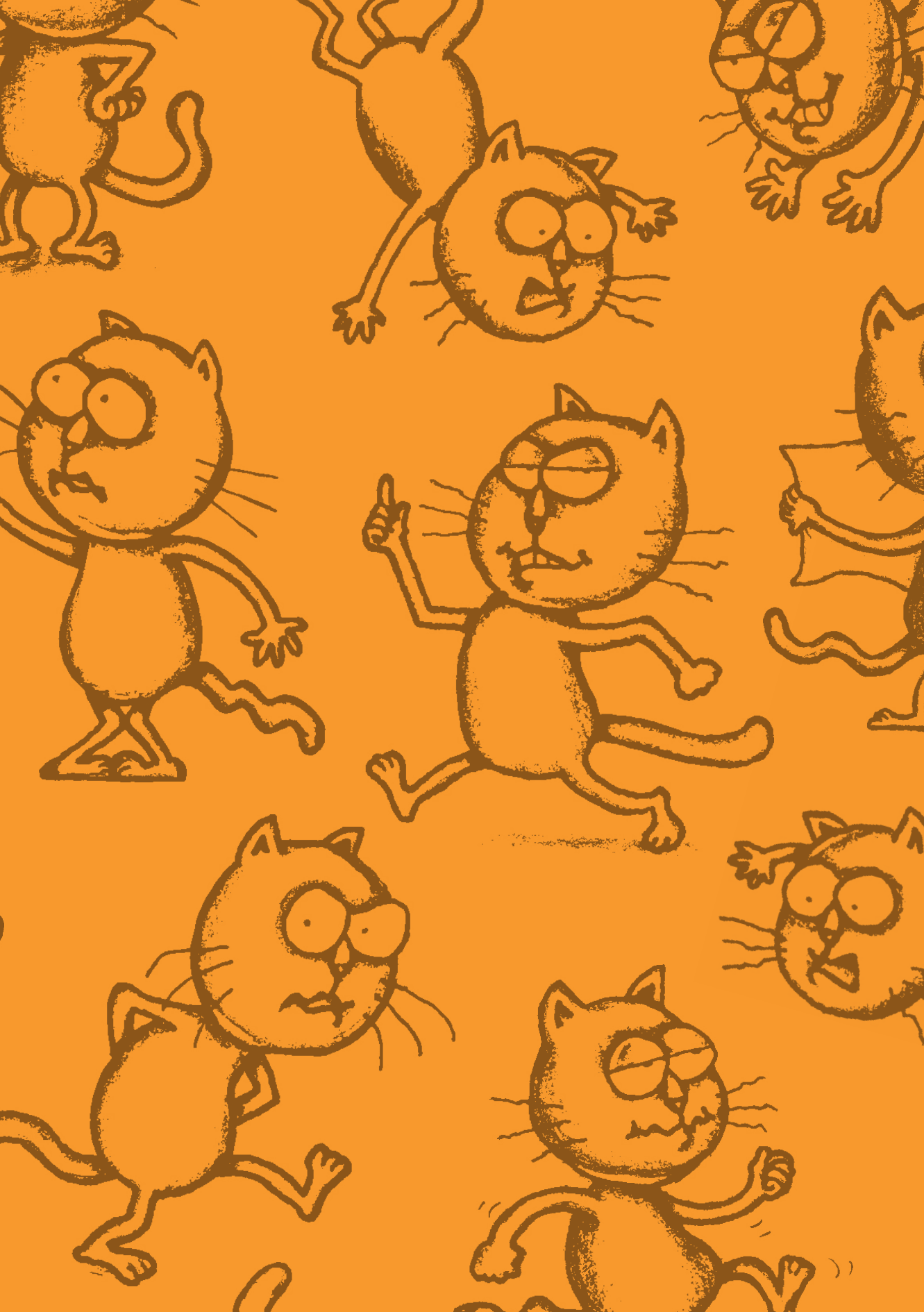
VLADAN NIKOLIĆ

ebook

IGOR THE CAT









Vladan Nikolić Igor the Cat

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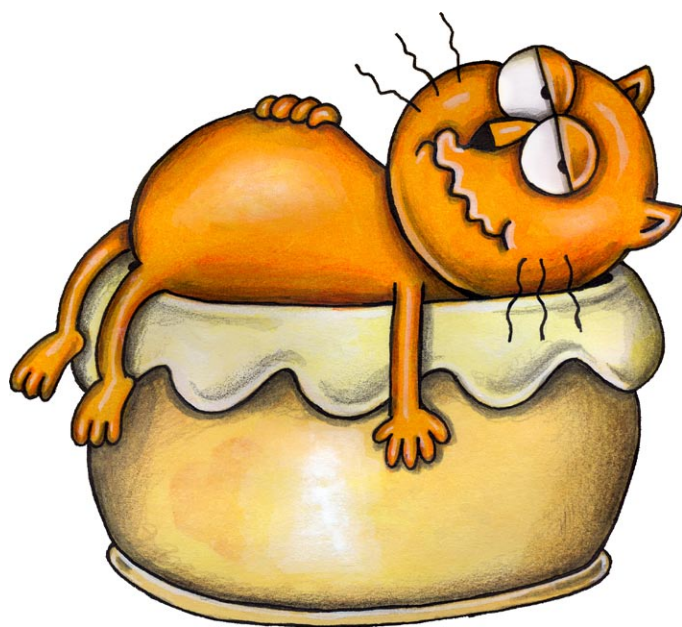
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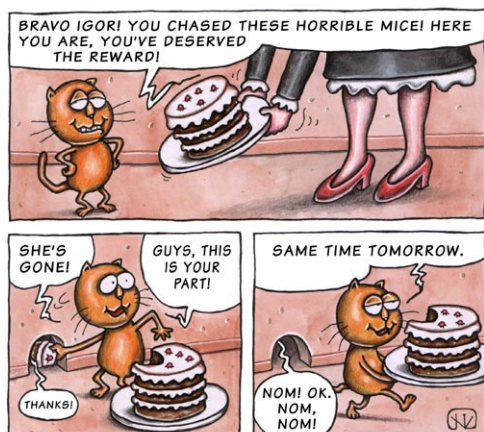
Modesty
COMICS





(I'm) Perfectly Mischievous

Cats can be considered the honourable heroes of comic-strips; of course, other animals were and are heroes of comic books, but cats are, by their eternal enemies, the dogs, often grateful actors of comic adventure in which they can play all kinds of roles, from the refined to the dishevelled, from urchins to sages. This cat-like comic book character



Be practical - negotiate useful agreement.

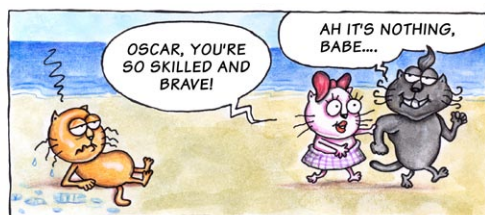
were established and treatment of cats in comics, which were insisting on the principle of so-called corporate entertaining art, strictly followed by directors of large publishers. Authors who enter into such systems of work were required to follow a more or less rigid rules, which generally stifled inventiveness but not all, because some authors managed to "break away" - that is (at least moderately and in the beginning) the case with contemporary "Garfield" and the brightest example of ingenious art within the corporate embrace, George Herriman's masterpiece "Krazy Kat". On a completely different, alternative, unruly side is Robert Crumb's "Fritz the Cat", lost in anthropomorphic world, as evidence that rampant



Troubles of misunderstood artist.

and work were certainly inspired, in addition to fables and overall artistic literature, by Disney's animated feature films (which were preceded and followed with comic books), and cats' adventures in the classic cartoons of 7 minutes, popular from the 1930s to the end of 1960s. In all these works, coordinates of behaviour

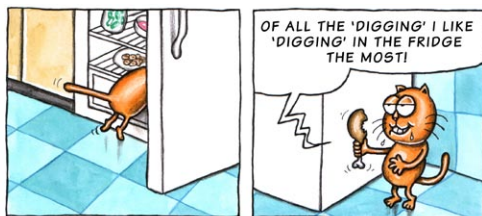




Igor the clumsy suitor.

parody can be an inspirational work which doesn't stop on only playing with rules.

In the colourful world of cats, there is a special place for male cats - individuals prone to all the vices and mischief, freed from the obligation of peaceful and orderly life with all the benefits and disadvantages which such behaviour carries. From hedonists and conformist Garfield, through infantile clumsy Krazy (who is, admittedly, not exactly known whether male or female) to lazy (if that term is synonymous with the hedonist?), vain and promiscuous Fritz, tomcats strut and offer rich, seductive aura of their role to creators and readers. This call Vladan Nikolić could not resist and - here is Igor the Cat. It can be quickly learned from comic episodes mainly long-short one to two pages, that Igor is a house version of tomcat (and not stray punk), which has its



Difficult dilemmas and easy answers.



Who is resourceful can find just the right thing.

own habits, small (but big for him) desires, favourite funs, friends and enemies, a love crush and a competitor ... In short, a cat in place, reputable, good, fair, strong character, and all the like. But as Igor is a (only) live (but drawn) character, he is not perfect, which means that he likes to slack, to “catch curve” and to enjoy when it is not deserved. He is not avoiding petty pranks (if their result is in his favour), friendship and enmity are not too sacred to him, and he knows to “change sides” and made a temporary truce to mutual satisfaction. He does not suffer from modesty,

whether true or false, he likes to “show off” and to lament over his own destiny. But it is precisely because of these flaws that Igor is a “real mate” and his friends love him and help him (when they don’t hamper him).

Igor’s adventures are happening every day in all sorts of places, at home and in nature, summer and winter, the sun and the rain. In many stories he draws the short end

but some wins also happen. He knows how to be satisfied and happy just like he knows how to grieve. From all that is happening, he is not very inclined to come to great conclusions and truth, just as he doesn’t learn from his mistakes, but – that is a cat’s life, both large and small, funny and sad, trivial and important. “Igor the Cat” is a grotesque, humorous-serious comic for everyone young (regardless of age), who are willing to guileless, without calculations and open-heartedly play and have fun.



*Igor cannot sleep before
having dinner.*

Ilija Bakić, writer and comics critic





Three Meows and Purring

First meow: the cult of small predators

Comics art from its beginnings cultivated a special cult. The cult of cats. This cult is instated at the centre of East European comics - Serbian and Yugoslavian comics - simultaneously with their Western counterparts, in the mid-19th century, at the time of the Serbian poet, physician and cartoonists Jovan Jovanović Zmaj.

Thus today, Igor the Cat, by Vladan Nikolić, practically a kitten, is the youngest member to join the pantheon of Balkan comic book cats. Obviously, we cannot get enough of our little, cuddly, predators.

Second meow: man from Comicstown

Igor's creator, Vladan Nikolić, comes from Zrenjanin, a city in Serbia, known for having centuries of cultural tradition, but also an unusually high population of good comics creators. They cover a vast stylistic range, from working for USA Marvel, to Italian Bonelli, to completely independent approaches.

Those better acquainted with contemporary Balkans art know how much Nikolić is special and averse to being a slave to trends. He is a versatile creator - awarded and published in several European countries and the United States - he shines as a cartoonist, illustrator, painter, animator and graphic designer.



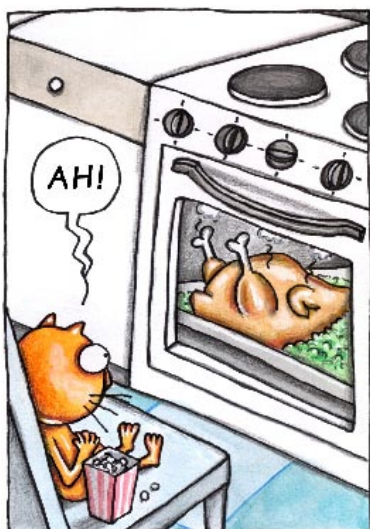
A children's comic strip as a sociological and anthropological mirror: Igor the Cat as a body guard for an elephant.

His work is characterized by a refined style, slightly dark and strange, but complemented by witty narrative, whether in terms of the noted collaboration with screenwriter Aleksandar Pavković or in solo works.

However, the public in Serbia and Europe don't know that in one whole country and in one whole generation Nikolić is undoubtedly a superstar.

Third meow: new cat in the neighbourhood

Igor the Cat is an important factor in the lives of children aged 6 to 8 years in Slovenia, due to the publication of the magazine "Ciciban" from Ljubljana.



The highlight of hedonism of a civilization: gastronomy as a cultural and meditative experience

The comic strip is so popular that the Ministry of Education in Slovenia has included it in the curriculum of language, arts and culture, nature and society, as well as in good manners and other social skills. Igor grew into a hero for all needs! This even has an international note: wherever in the world there are Slovenian schools, there is our cat - a daily friend.

The artist of this comics did not fall into the trap of a generic, Disneyesque style. The result is autonomous, and somewhat reminiscent of the platinum age of comics from the first decade of the 20th century, when every cartoonist was working from his soul, unburdened with anybody's opinions or expectations.

Igor lives in a world that is close to its target audience. There exist an urban environment, home comforts, char-





acters that are aloof or spoilt, tolerance of the inhabitants' diversity and pop-cultural archetypes animals.

Unmistakably we feel that the author has built the characters of a certain age – children's age. They strive to be 'adults', but preserve their identity and innocence.

The inevitable clumsiness, naiveté and rowdiness of the characters leads to humorous scenarios, which is for young readers immediately clear and funny. The children know of such situations from experience, but in the comic book form, they are, for them, exhilarating, funny, non-traumatic, educational and energy boosting.

Purring

Igor the Cat has obtained his 'place' among hundreds of comic cats. He is an example that the language of comics easily communicates with all cultures and generations.

Our cat also shows that one small comic strip, within a national educational system, can build massive infrastructure – whose objective is not only to teach children to read, but also to develop other skills that will prepare them for life.

That's a clear sociological model that Will Eisner prophesied seven decades ago! That's a model useable across the globe, regardless of the level of development.

In addition, Igor the Cat is proof that even in the most self-conscious authors, there is a power and imperative to spread their gifts to the masses. After all, the younger the reader is, the bigger and longer lasting the impact is. And so - meow and purr.

Zoran Stefanović, writer and comics critic

VLADAN NIKOLIĆ

IGOR THE CAT





