

A COLOURFUL BUNCH



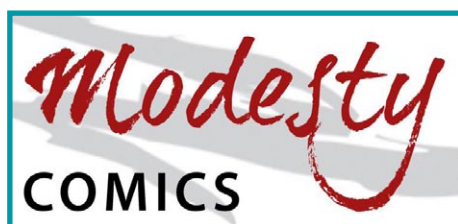
An ebook collection of comics by GAŠPER RUS



ebook

Gašper Rus

A COLOURFUL BUNCH





Gašper Rus
A Colourful Bunch

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Love at second read

I remember reading one of the editorials in a notorious international comics magazine from Slovenia a few years ago. I admit that I very rarely read the editorials back then, not to mention falling for the stereotypes about comics artists that they are, in spite of creating wonderful drawings, grammatically impaired, orthographically challenged and have a hard time handling paragraphs, punctuation and other linguistic phenomena. Truth be told: nowadays I feel that it's easier to learn how to draw than how to write in a correct, readable and enjoyable Slovenian. Of course I'm not saying drawing is a piece of cake, on the contrary: only now do I see how much effort must be made to master this skill, it says more about the level of difficulty of our native language. However, there was this editor by the name of Rus (Russian) who was jesting about some Czech artists in the magazine and their 'czechness', and I found it quite amusing (the play on words is lost in translation here). However, a second and closer reading revealed that I've been reading it superficially and therefore missed the complexity of the text. It turns out the writer of the editorial wasn't a Slavic brother from the Urals, but our man who just happens to have a misleading surname. His name was Rus, Gašper Rus. And this Rus is perhaps one of the first Slovenian comics artists that is able to write as well as he draws.

Then I realized I've been superficially reading his comics, too. I wasn't attracted to them at first, since my taste in author's comics wasn't developed yet: they were too different for my mainstream taste and not 'alternative' enough for my alternative comics taste. Again, it turns out I was misreading them and missing their actual qualities. Gašper is a comics artist that doesn't care about first impressions. His comics may be visually more conventional than other Slovenian comics, but this is not a shortcoming. Gašper is a long distance runner and, one has to admit, he boasts an admirable fitness paired with an iron will for improvement. His added value lies not in experimenting, innovating and meaningless toying with the comics form (although he made an attempt at that as well), but in the consistent compliance with the formal, visual and comics norms. Gašper is serious about comics, quite alike the German cars that are still very much valued in many places. Their advantage is not in an obvious »in-your-face« visual originality, instant likeability and 'over-designedness', which is usually



Gašper's cartoony alter ego.



at the expense of functionality, but they are elaborate and well-structured products that are going to be functional, useful and dependable for a long time. Same are his comics: they rely on delivering a consistent adherence to the requirements of the medium, an excellent grasp on the language of comics and its efficient application to tell a story as only comics stories can. Gašper understands very well that an artist needs to prove a complete mastery of the conventions and norms of the medium in the first place before he's allowed to break these same rules.

But let's leave the form aside, comics are ultimately quite a narrative genre that require interesting and meaningful stories, not just bare technical drawing skills. Gašper is one of the best students of masters of creative writing who continuously advise their apprentices to



Experiencing a creative crisis.

address the things they know best: themselves. This is why he is most expressive when he lays his life bare in front of us and honestly retells the highs and lows of his intimate past. A good reader will indeed value the author's immediacy and sincerity. There is no bluffing with Gašper, so it comes as no surprise that he was able to successfully deal with suicide, one of the most demanding and timeless issues of human existence, in his graphic novel *Gugalnica* (The Swing, with Žiga Valetič as the scriptwriter). It seems that he has developed a special affinity for personal, emotive, existential and intimate issues that other Slovenian comics artists rarely deal with, which is why I would not be surprised if he eventually managed to start a new wave of intimacy in Slovenian comics.

But this is not all. Gašper is on the right path »from zero to hero«, from a comics scene nobody to a relevant artist with a recognizable style as he has demonstrated an impressive progress in both the style and content of his comics. It is a cliché, of course, but no exaggeration when I say his comics future is bright, especially if he maintains the same rate of advancement he has shown until now. Gašper's comics collection you're reading right now is a confirmation that I'm obviously not the only one to recognize his creative potential. This is also the reason this collection doesn't need any clichéd accompanying wishes for its success – Gašper's body of work is the best reason for optimism and a firm guarantee that we'll be able to read more great comics from him in the future.

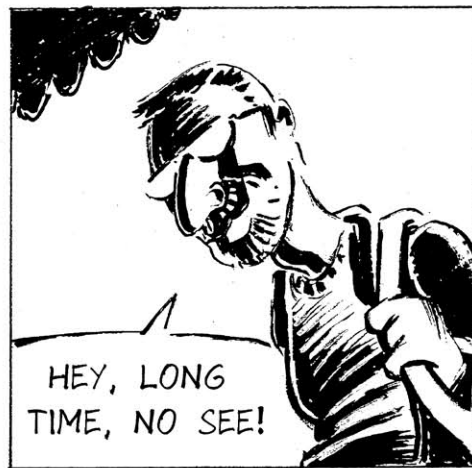
Bojan Albahari, culturologist, translator and critic

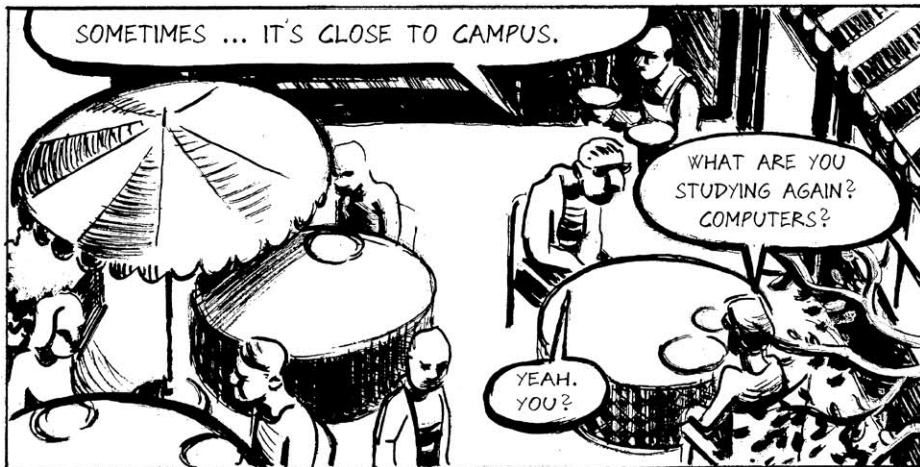
Gašper Rus

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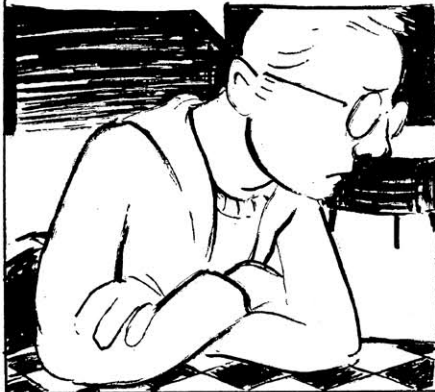




WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS ... THE COMPANY MUST BE REAL GOOD ... PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN SIMILAR THINGS AND STUFF ...



I DON'T KNOW. THEY'RE A LITTLE TOO 'BOHEMIAN' FOR ME.



"BOHEMIAN"? THAT'S A WORD I NEVER LEARNT TO KNOW THE MEANING OF ...



YOU KNOW, NO WORK, ALL PLAY ...



WELL ... WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?



WHAT? DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU TOO ...



I GUESS I GOT USED TO GOING OUT TO CLUBS IN THE WEEKEND. BECAUSE OF OUTSCORING, IF NOT FOR OTHER THINGS.



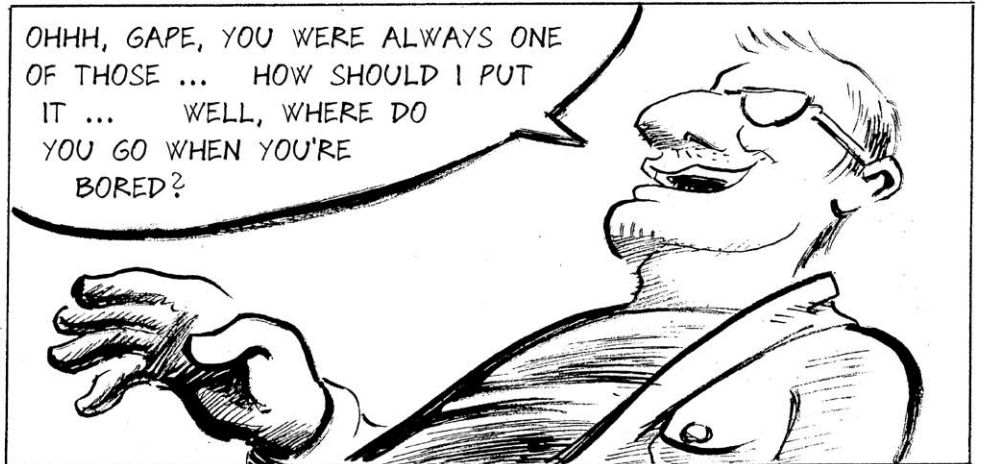
OUT-WHAT?

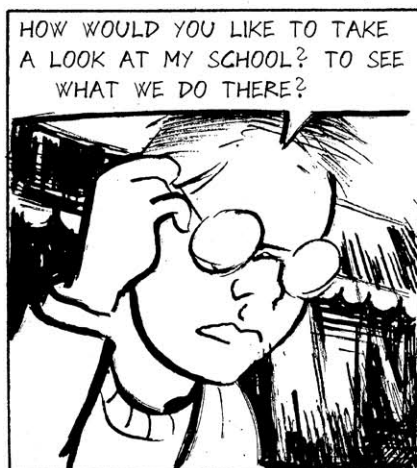
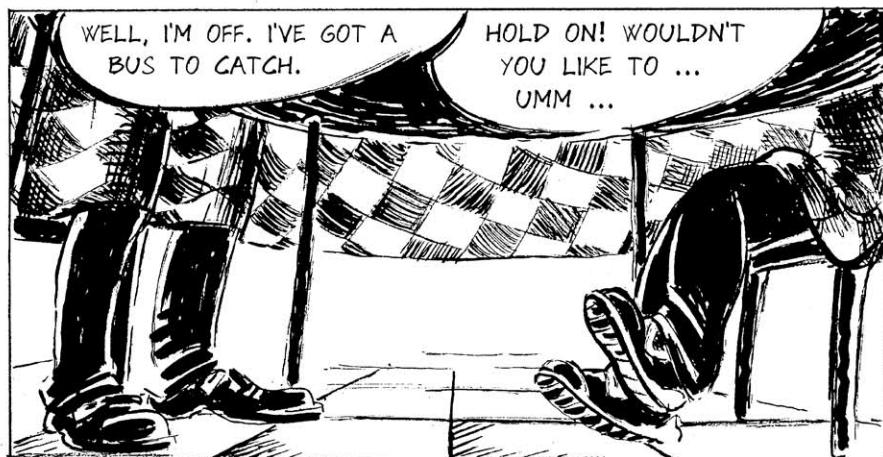
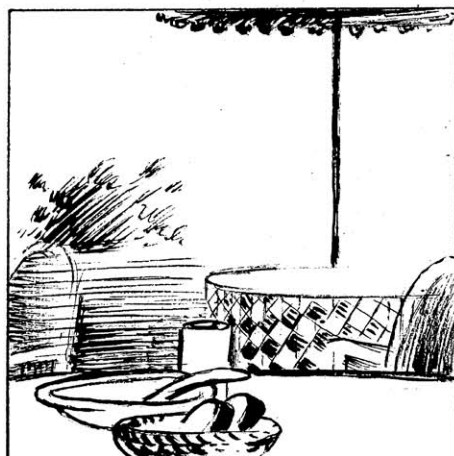
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS, OUR SCHOOL LACKS GIRLS, HEH.



SHIT, ARE YOU THE SAME LENTIC I USED TO KNOW?

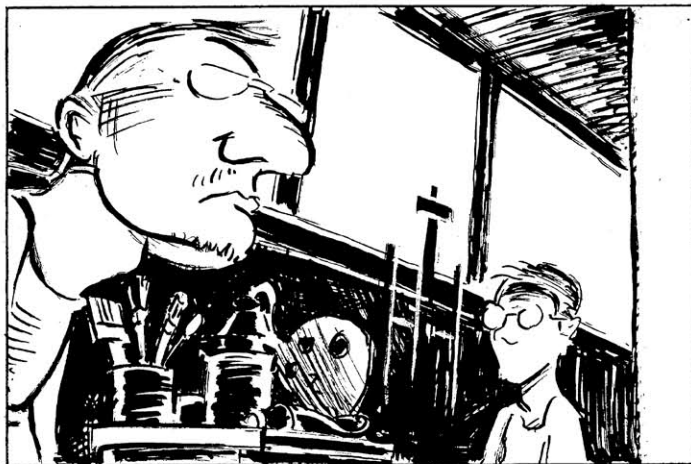
OHOO, GAPE, YOU WERE ALWAYS ONE OF THOSE ... HOW SHOULD I PUT IT ... WELL, WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN YOU'RE BORED?







*METELKOVA: LJUBLJANA'S ALTERNATIVE CULTURE CENTRE.





THE END