


June 2018

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Recommended Citation

Diab, Carly (2018) "Review of Chris Ware: Conversations," *SANE journal: Sequential Art Narrative in Education*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sane/vol2/iss3/4>

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Review of *Chris Ware: Conversations*

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Chris Ware: Conversations is a collection of interviews that provide an intimate look into the life and work of comics artist, Chris Ware. The volume is part of the *Conversations with Comics Artists* series and edited by Jean Braithwaite, an English literature scholar and writer who brings a wealth of knowledge about graphic novels to her thoughtful introduction to the succeeding interviews. The interviewers come from a variety of backgrounds bringing unique perspectives to Ware's work. They include comics artists and graphic novelists, literary scholars, designers, radio show hosts, and friends and family of Chris Ware. The content of the interviews provide details into Ware's artistic process, work habits and routines, and personal life to show what informs his work and how it is so carefully and meticulously produced.

Similar to Ware's comics, the interviews provide glimpses into the life of a character, which work to build a more complete story. The interviewers, coming from a range of experiences ask thoughtful and well researched questions to show Ware's vulnerabilities and modesty, as well as his deep connection to his work. The interviews are collected from magazines, journals, radio and podcast interviews, live interviews from comics festivals, and correspondence with the editor. They are arranged in chronological order to show how Ware's career developed over time. The book begins with a chronology of Ware's life to provide context to the interviews.

The interviews connect Ware's personal life to his work. The reader quickly learns that the interviewers have a great appreciation and enthusiasm for the artist and his work, and are thrilled to be in conversation with him. Ware, in turn is a great interview subject - a willing participant in the conversation and appreciative of the time and interest of the interviewers. He is deeply self-conscious, self-deprecating and not afraid to be vulnerable as he reveals his love for the characters and worlds he creates - which is already so evident in his work.

Throughout the book are black and white, and full-color reproductions of Ware's work, which are placed thoughtfully in relation to the context of the corresponding interviews. Most of the images are of his comics, but there are also photographs of his kinetic wood sculptures. The center of the book contains eight leaves of plates with high quality, full-color prints from Ware's seminal works, including *Jimmy Corrigan* and *Building Stories*, which are talked about at length in the interviews. The images of his work reflect his creative processes and work ethic, which are described by him and his wife, Marnie Ware. His process is highly regimented, focused, obsessive and "angst-filled," resulting in highly intricate, meticulously laid out comics (89).

This book is a must read for anyone who wants to know more about how Chris Ware's work is informed and created. It would also be of interest to anyone with a curiosity about comics/graphic novels, or artists wanting to gain insight into another artists' creative process.

Braithwaite, Jean, ed. *Chris Ware: Conversations*. University Press of Mississippi, 2017.