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## Review of Pioneering Cartoonists of Color

Carly Diab

*Emily Carr University of Art + Design, cdiab@ecuad.ca*

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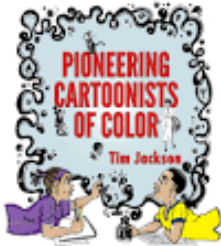
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## Review of *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color*

Carly Diab

*Emily Carr University of Art + Design*



In *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color*, Tim Jackson brings his experience as a cartoonist and illustrator to provide a thoughtful, impassioned and well-researched history of cartoons by people of color.

The book is organized chronologically, into ten chapters marking different eras of comics history to show the progression of representation of people of color in the comics community. Jackson discusses the portrayal of people of color in comics and how it relates to social and political issues related to racism in each era. The first chapter documents the adversity cartoonists of color had to overcome, which provides a framework and context for the following chapters. Jackson describes the impact of seeing comics in the 60s and 70s depicting racialized, stereotypical portrayals of black people - often with blackface semblance was very painful and assaulting to him as a young child with a great interest in reading comics.

The following chapters cover the history of comics by people of color from the early beginnings in the 19th century to today. In each era, he provides a detailed history of the time and explains how the social-political environment influenced comics created at the time. Additionally, he talks about trends in comics making in each era from early comic art and illustration, to the beginnings of comic strips with recurring characters, to full-color strips, to the entry of cartoonists of color into the mainstream, and to the comics we see today.

Jackson also speaks about the publication history of comics, which emerged in the Black press in the 19th century and turn of the century in newspapers published by African Americans like the *Chicago Weekly Defender*. The cartoons in these newspapers depicted a humanistic and sympathetic view of African American life, unlike those in mainstream American newspapers. Once the production of comics by people of color became more prevalent in the 40s, Jackson provides a more detailed analysis of the many individual comic strips being published in the decade. In the 50s, comics began to appear in color and fill the entire page of the publication. In the 60s comics by people of color could be found in mainstream media. From the 70s to today, comics by people of color are commonly found published as books, in newspapers and magazines.

Jackson discusses the content of cartoons that were common in each era and how the content related to race issues of the time. He also discusses the ways that cartoons and comics created by people of color told a different story about African Americans than the ones found in mainstream media. Images of comics under discussion are provided throughout the book, and an appendix of the pioneering cartoonists mentioned in the text is found at the end. In doing so, he illuminates the work of the many talented but overlooked African American comics artists and cartoonists.

This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the history of comics and African American history.

Jackson, Tim. *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color*. University Press of Mississippi, 2016.