

PANEL·PAGE·ARCHIVE

PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING COMICS HERITAGE



With the support of
Wallonie-Bruxelles International



Wallonie - Bruxelles
International.be



FÉDÉRATION
WALLONIE-BRUXELLES



WHAT IS THIS BROCHURE FOR?

This brochure is primarily aimed at comics authors and copyright holders, as well as collectors and other archive owners (publishing houses, libraries, associations, etc.), who want to prevent their heritage from being discarded or dispersed.

Backed by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, and in the context of Belgium's upcoming EU Council presidency in the first half of 2024, the Comics Heritage Archives Consortium is keen to encourage interest in the Franco-Belgian comics heritage. Our brochure builds on from a previous publication produced by our Flemish colleagues. In this way, we want to continue the work of highlighting the cultural value of comics and the importance of education. Comics are a distinctive form of our cultural legacy. Comics collectors and creators regularly ask us how to best treat or preserve their material. This brochure is intended to answer these questions and to provide a few recommendations.

WHAT EXACTLY IS COMICS HERITAGE ?

It is everything that a creator (an artist, scriptwriter, letterer, colourist, etc.) creates, collects and preserves during their lifetime, as well as all the documentation created or published by magazines, publishing houses, newspapers and literary or specialist periodicals – not to forget radio and TV shows based on comics, and organisers of

festivals and cultural events devoted to this theme. All this forms part of 'comics heritage'.

This material comprises manuscripts, digital or typewritten texts and proofs ; personal or commercial correspondence ; brochures, posters, illustrations and awards ; administrative documents ; editorial notes ; photographic material, audio and visual recordings ; personal notes ; newspapers and personal diaries ; critical reviews, school exercise books, etc.

And then there is also the comic itself, of course : the original drawings, preparatory pages, sketches, proofs, and everything leading up to the creation and production of a comic. All the related objects and printed by-products come under this too – albums, magazines, publicity and merchandising material, etc.

Comics heritage offers us a glimpse into the life and work of the creators, but also into the *Zeitgeist*, the authors' organisation of their work, editorial policies and potential connections with other types of media, such as animation, cinema, literature and the visual and performing arts.

“ *You've let yourself get carried away... You're more of a dreamer than a genuine researcher! But you see, there's no place for a poet in Archive Management, let alone a visionary.* ”

Criticism directed at Isidore Louis, the Obscure Cities Archive Keeper, in *L'Archiviste*, by François Schuiten and Benoit Peeters, 1987.

WHY SAFEGUARD THE COMICS HERITAGE ?

FOR ONESELF

In preserving comics heritage, we are also safeguarding our own memories. Certain documents capture recollections of significant people, places or moments. Others reflect specific practices, professional or administrative problems. All these issues are important and it is useful to have these archives intact and close at hand, available for consultation now, in a few months' or years' time, or for posterity.

FOR ALL OF US

Preserved and conserved, this heritage functions like a hard drive, storing our memories of comics. Without this material, the legacy risks becoming less tangible, recognisable and comprehensible. Texts and artwork (the use of colour,

page layout, etc.) can provide us with considerable insight into the authors / artists, scriptwriter and their environment. The only possible way to study the writer/s, their interaction with the rest of the world, and the organisation of artistic and cultural life is through the 'source material' available to us. What's more, it would be impossible to republish works or plan exhibitions without having access to the originals. Will future generations consider the work of a particular author to be important enough to research ? Will biographers make the effort to reconstruct the life of this or that individual comics creator ? Although all of this remains uncertain, it is impossible to carry out research without preserving and coordinating an accessible comics heritage.

“ Not so long ago, this sort of career was still regarded as a joke ; you could hope to become a doctor, you could dream of a scientific career, or, as in most cases, of becoming a bureaucrat... but making 'little drawings' really wasn't something to be taken seriously. ”

André Franquin, *Comment on devient créateur de bandes dessinées*, 1969.



HOW TO SAFEGUARD ARCHIVES ACCORDING TO TYPE OF MATERIALS

Paper can last a very long time, provided that certain precautions are taken. Recordings of images and sounds are a little more fragile. Information contained in videos, disks and cassettes deteriorate even more rapidly.

GENERAL POINTS

Recommendation 1 Keep documents in a place with a temperature range between 18°C and 21°C. It is especially important to avoid major fluctuations in temperature. If possible, avoid places such as attics, basements and garages, which tend to be damp.

Recommendation 2 Books and cabinets should ideally be placed against an interior wall inside the home. Exterior walls are always damper and colder. Furthermore, there is a greater likelihood of water damage if the documents are kept under pipes or gutters. If the archive storage boxes have to be kept in a cellar, they must not be placed directly on the floor ; they should be approximately 10 to 20 centimetres above the ground (on a pallet, for example).

Recommendation 3 It is better to keep documents away from sunlight or fluorescent lighting. UV rays cause paper to become yellow and more fragile.

Recommendation 4 Dust is equally harmful. An acid-free cardboard box offers the best protection against dust.

Recommendation 5 Metallic elements such as staples and paper clips become rusty. Adhesive tape and post-it notes are damaging to paper. It is advisable to remove them before storage.

Recommendation 6 Documents remain in an optimal condition when they are put in an acid-free container : cardboard boxes or protective sleeves made of polyester (Melinex). Ordinary folders and cardboard boxes also work, to a certain extent, but containers such as ring binders, ordinary plastic sleeves or paper folders are damaging for documents.

Recommendation 7 Photos are best kept in a horizontal position, ideally in a polyester sleeve. They can also be stored in paper packaging, but preferably in acid-free envelopes. Above all, don't use regular plastic, use special archival polyester.

Recommendation 8 Posters, comics pages and other large sheets of paper such as preparatory drawings and sketches, diplomas etc., are best kept flat or rolled

up. Large, acid-free archival roll storage boxes are a good solution and are relatively cheap. Avoid folding the items. Each fold is irreversible and increases the risk of tearing.

“ *Documentary heritage reflects the diversity of languages, peoples and cultures. It is the mirror of the world and its memory. But this memory is fragile. Every day, irreplaceable parts of this memory disappear forever.* ”

UNESCO Memory of the World Programme 1992.

PAPER

Acidification is a ticking time bomb for paper heritage. It causes the paper to bleach; this process begins at the edges, then spreads towards the centre. The paper becomes fragile and disintegrates. Another typical characteristic of acidification is the smell of vinegar it produces. The natural ageing process undergone by paper and the damage resulting from this are irreversible, but they can be slowed down if the documents are kept in optimal storage conditions.

Recommendation 9 If possible, get acid-free conservation material, which is sold by various institutions and shops. See the section on 'Packaging and Storage'.

Recommendation 10 Restoring paper, photos and audiovisual material requires specialists. Feel free to seek advice from institutions that have the contact details for these experts (see end of brochure).



PACKAGING AND STORAGE

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

Recommendation 11 Audio cassettes, videos and disks do not respond well to major fluctuations in temperature. They last longer if stored well away from sunlight and magnetic fields, for instance, those generated by electrical appliances and transformers.

Recommendation 12 Disks and CDs or video cassettes should preferably be stored in a vertical position, inside cardboard boxes placed on non-metallic shelves.

Recommendation 13 Audiovisual material can be converted into various, longer-lasting formats. Don't hesitate to ask a specialist company to carry out the conversion or to digitise visual material.

www.projectctracks.be (NL, EN)
(Advice on ways of preserving your visual and audio documentation)

YOU CAN OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION OR ORDER MATERIAL FROM THESE WEBSITES :

www.enssib.fr/services-et-ressources/questions-reponses/materiel-de-conservation-manuscrits-et-photos (FR)

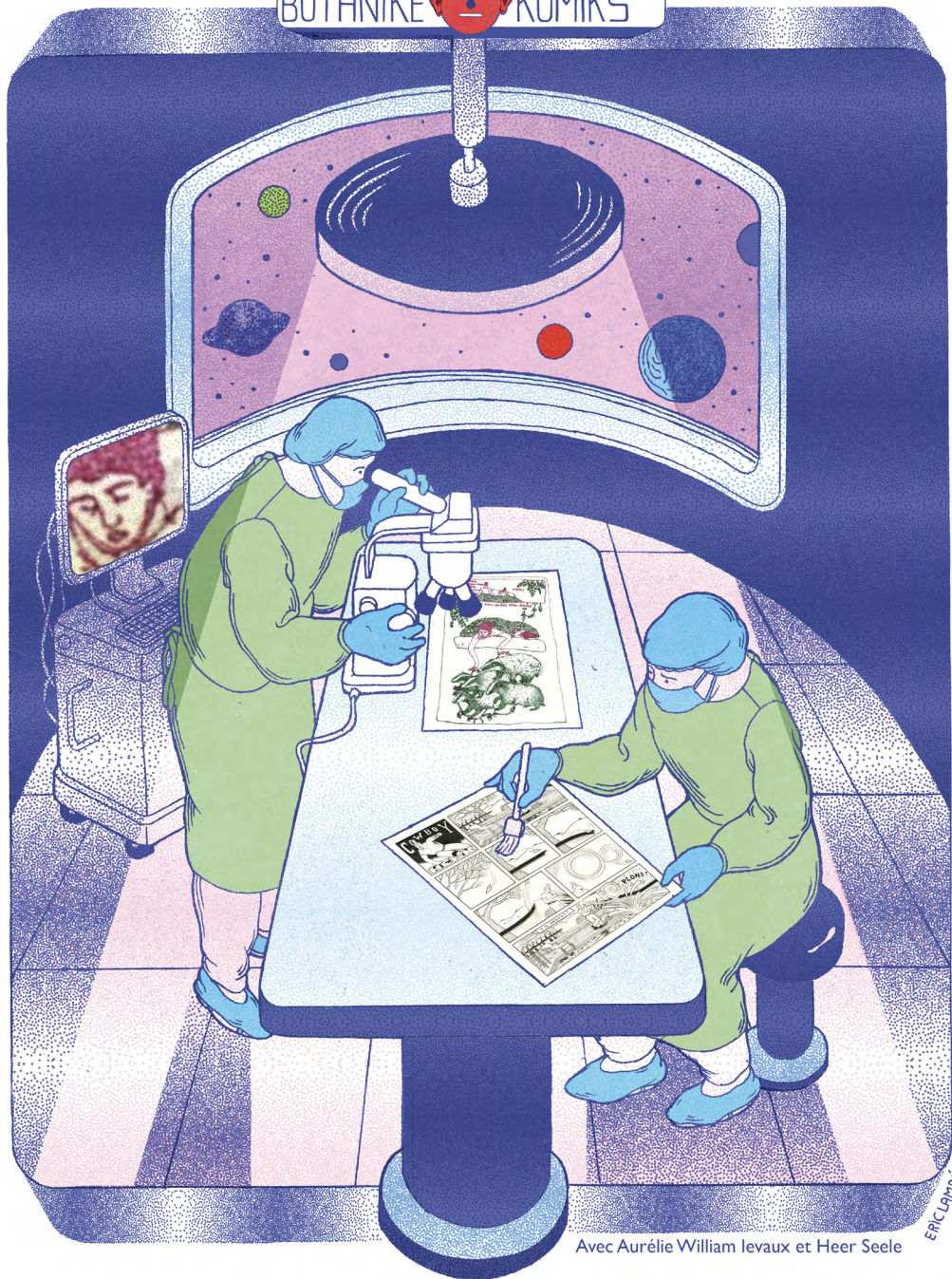
www.si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care/care_painting.html (EN) (Advice from the Smithsonian American Art Museum on how to handle artworks and other items)

www.faro.be/verzekerde-bewaring (NL)
(Particularly, "Books and Binding")

www.laroutedupapier.com (BE)
Alexander Vander Stichele
info@laroutedupapier.com

www.cxd-france.com (FR)

www.atlantis-france.com/fr (FR)
contact@atlantis-france.com



Avec Aurélie William levaux et Heer Seele

ERIC LAMBE

DIGITAL AND WEB FORMATS

What is the best format for saving my files ? Should I print out my e-mails ? What is the life expectancy of my hard disk, CDs and DVDs ? With digital technology, risks have to be managed to optimise protection. Unfortunately, digital documents don't last for decades. The file formats used for storing these documents can only be viewed with the right material and software, which are evolving at great speed.

Recommendation 14 Back up your files regularly, ideally in different formats. Diversifying risk is important in order to ensure long-term conservation ; in this way, you will avoid being dependent on specific manufacturers, material components and software versions. There are automatic backup systems that copy files to an external hard drive at regular intervals. The larger files can also be stored on other hardware, such as good quality CDs, DVDs and USB memory sticks.

Recommendation 15 After a while, information stored on hard disks, CDs and DVDs begins to show signs of deterioration. It is therefore important to check the condition of these storage formats on a regular basis. And it is also useful to check developments in optical storage media every 5 to 10 years, in order to get the latest formats.

Recommendation 16 Convert your large text and image files to PDF, TIFF and JPEG file formats. The PDF source code, for example, is freely accessible and the format is accepted all over the world. Digital audio is best archived in the form of WAVE files, and videos in the form of MXF, MP4 and MOV files.

Recommendation 17 Avoid the use of data compression and passwords. In this way, the files will remain accessible for longer.

Recommendation 18 Store your emails in a classification system on a hard drive. Most messaging systems have a function enabling messages to be exported to a hard drive and stored there, or on a CD. The messages can be stored in .eml, .msg or .txt format, depending on the messaging software. Converting emails to .xml format is a good way of ensuring long-term conservation.

Recommendation 19 Create a clear folder structure, with clear names for files. Name the photos, videos and text files, so that you can locate them easily later on. Include the version number in the file name, for example v_1.0 or v_DEF.

Recommendation 20 Naming a document is a good start, but the more information you add to it, the easier it will be to locate and identify it. You could add the place, date and a brief description to an image file, for instance, as in : 20240128_Brussels_ComicFestival_seminar.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.patrimoineculturel.cfwb.be

The section on transmitting
& protecting heritage

www.francearchives.gouv.fr/file/9c2af-48c1e112ed745711eb7c7e15e6d70b8c0f9/static_4923.pdf

Do you have a cassette, a reel, a video tape or a disk but you don't know what type it is, or how to view it ? www.kenjedrager.be (NL, EN) will know what to do!

www.archivistes.be

Website for the Association of Francophone Archivists of Belgium

www.objectifplumes.be
Belgian literature portal

You will also find a whole series of initiatives and publications dealing with questions related to digitization on www.faro.be. *Have and Keep* is a very easy-to-read general brochure : www.faro.be/publicaties/hebben-houden-tips-om-je-erfgoed-gezond-te-houden-tante-kaart



AMISS EL HAMOURI



Romain Penard

INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING TO COMICS HERITAGE

GET IN TOUCH !

Practices related to comics heritage are continually evolving. We haven't been able to deal with all of the relevant topics in this brochure, such as legal questions (authors' and successors' rights) or tax issues. Do you have a question concerning your possessions ? Not sure whom to approach ? Feel free to contact us.

“ This donation has allowed me to introduce comics into the collections held by a fine arts museum, which breaks from the convention. ”

François Boucq, 2021, on the 400 drawings he donated to the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille (sic. les-plats-pays.com)

BE (FR) : The Brussels Royal Library of Belgium
www.kbr.be/fr/dons-et-legs

The Heritage Collections of the City of Liège
fonds.patrimoniaux@liege.be

The Belgian Comic Strip Center (CBBB)
conservation@cbbd.be

The King Baudouin Foundation
www.patrimoine-frb.be/collection

FR : The International City of Comics and Images (CIBDI)
www.citebd.org

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DONATION AND A DEPOSIT

A DONATION refers to an item that is irrevocably gifted. This may be carried out through a manual donation with a written agreement, or a notarial deed, or it may take the form of a bequest. Each of these methods involves a contract between the donor and the recipient, setting out the conditions for the donation. The recipient is obliged to respect their contractual commitments regarding the gift. Costs vary, depending on the chosen method.

In the case of a DEPOSIT, the owner chooses to make an item available to an institution, or to a physical or legal person, for a certain period of time. The item in question remains the property of the owner. Both the owner and the recipient sign a loan agreement. This document also enables certain conditions to be stipulated. Once the agreed loan period is over, the deposited item is returned to the owner. When you make a deposit to an institution, your archives will reveal your life, work and environment from a personal angle, preserved for posterity. Combined with the recollections of your contemporaries, your predecessors and successors, those archives will provide a personal and historical overview of a bygone era.

A FEW INSTITUTIONS DEDICATED TO PRESERVING COMICS HERITAGE

KBR

As a national research library, KBR collects all Belgian publications. This institution preserves, manages and studies an immense cultural and historical legacy comprising over 8 million documents. It also offers the public access to this information, facilitates research and provides original cultural experiences. These vast cultural heritage archives include significant comics collections that date back to the nineteenth century and encompass a wide variety of supports, from illustrated periodicals to prints. The library's digital collections are accessible on the Belgica, BelgicaPress and BelgicaPeriodicals platforms.

Comics are included in KBR's acquisition policies and form part of its missions. As the responsible institution for legal deposit, KBR is committed to preserving all works published on Belgian national territory, as well as those published abroad and written by Belgian authors. To deposit your publications, go to : www.depotlegal.be.

KBR accepts donations and legacies, free of charge, from physical or legal persons. However, documents and heritage items (e.g., albums, periodicals, manuscripts, posters, drawings, etc.) must be in compliance with the institution's acquisition policy, particularly with regard to the prioritization of publications and objects connected with Belgium, which are collectively known as Belgicana. In addition, documents given on an unconditional basis must be well-conserved. When the decision to incorporate the gift or legacy into the collections has been taken, it is catalogued, conserved in the heritage collections and made accessible to readers. For further information, visit www.kbr.be/fr/dons-et-legs.

KBR supports various academic research programmes. Initiated in partnership with ULB (the Free University of Brussels), the FED-tWIN BeComicsLab project is intended to enhance the visibility and accessibility of comics collections, and to ensure that this heritage is studied and promoted. Comics are also part of the PopHeritage project, which focuses on mass-market printed material and popular and media cultures.


www.kbr.be

THE MUSEUMS OF THE CITY OF LIÈGE

The Museums of the City of Liège have a long historical interest in comics. The municipal collections are continually enriched by acquisitions, gifts and deposits through the Fine Arts Museum and heritage collections.

The comics archival collection included in the holdings of the Fine Arts Museum was classified as a 'Treasure of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation' in 2019. Original pages acquired by the Museum covering the golden age of Belgian comic strips, from the postwar period to the late 1970s, are conserved in these archives.

Inaugurated in 2023 as part of the Heritage Collections, the Comics Archives department collects and conserves all printed, written and illustrated documents that offer a historical and educational perspective on comics, making these accessible to the general public. In developing an archive of original works, the museum has also built up a collection of preparatory documents (such as notebooks, sketches and storyboards). It forms the basis of a unique acquisitions policy designed to explore the potential of this medium and



Pardon, elle a l'air sympa,
cette expo de votre collection,
mais j'avoue que j'y vois que dalle.

C'est normal, c'est pour une meilleure
conservation des documents, mais
nous avons ici notre assistant visuel
Fluffy pour vous éclairer.

Oui, tout à fait. Alors,
dans la première case de
cette planche, on peut observer un
mec avec un gros nez, dessiné
au trait noir d'épaisseur régulière,
qui glisse sur une peau de banane.



105810

to link the foundation of a heritage collection with a celebration of contemporary creative activity.

www.liege.be/fr/decouvrir/culture/musees/les-fonds-patrimoniaux

CIBDI

In France, the International City of Comics and Images (La Cité Internationale de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image or CIBDI) is spread over three sites, two of which – the Comics Museum and the Mœbius Vessel – are accessible to the general public. The third site, the Authors' House, is an artists' residence. For over 40 years, Angoulême has hosted numerous events promoting comics and images ; the most publicised of which is the International Comics Festival, held every year for four days at the end of January.

The City contains a museum, exhibition spaces, a heritage library, a documentation centre, a specialised public library, an international artists' residence (the Authors' House), a reference bookshop and a two-room arthouse cinema. The museum has been classified as a 'Musée de France', while the heritage library is associated with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and is a partner of its digital library, Gallica. In total, the City's heritage collection comprises over 18,000 pages and original drawings, 100,000 monographs featuring comics or devoted to the topic, and 150,000 periodical issues, in addition to several authors' and comics specialists' archival collections. The collection is regularly enriched by acquisitions and gifts.

www.citebd.org

CBBD

The Belgian Comic Strip Centre (Le Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée or CBBD) is dedicated to conserving and promoting comics, and to safeguarding and showcasing the architectural masterpiece that houses its collections. The Centre organises numerous activities designed to help conserve, celebrate and publicise the Ninth Art. As well as holding temporary exhibitions, where visitors can see several hundred original pages displayed over more than 4000 m² of museum space, the Centre collaborates in various national and international projects devoted to

promoting comics. The CBBD's collection currently comprises over 10,000 pages and original drawings, in addition to items from several authors' personal archives, acquired in the form of donations or deposits. The CBBD also holds a collection of around 60,000 albums, reviews and reference works.

www.cbbd.be

FRB

The aim of the King Baudouin Foundation is to contribute to building a better society in Belgium, Europe and elsewhere in the world. It plays an active part in bringing about change and innovation, serving public interest and improving social cohesion. The Foundation was created in 1976, to mark the 25th year of King Baudouin's reign.

In this context, it is especially active in the domain of heritage and culture. The Foundation helps to ensure the preservation of significant elements of our heritage, so that they are accessible to all and can be passed on to future generations. The Foundation remains the owner of its collection, which gives it a certain flexibility. It also works in close collaboration with public collections and those that are accessible to the public. These partnerships play a significant role in showcasing its collection, which includes the 9th Art. The Foundation itself also actively contributes to promoting its holdings, by organising exhibitions, lending works for temporary exhibitions, producing publications and displaying works on its website and on Instagram, for example.

In addition to these activities, the Foundation also encourages philanthropic work in this area, supporting patrons and enabling them to develop their philanthropic projects. In this way, it worked with François Schuiten and with Didier Comès's descendants to ensure the sustainability and visibility of their collections. The Foundation can be contacted to act as a facilitator in complex situations. This was the case, for instance, with E.P. Jacobs's collection, when all parties involved could rely on the Foundation to play an active yet discreet role during the delicate period of transition. The Foundation is also engaged in broader reflections on preserving the

legacy of the 9th Art, and on considering its place in our public collection.

www.patrimoine-frb.be

BNF

In France, the mission of France's national library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), is to collect, catalogue, conserve, enrich and share the nation's documentary heritage. The BnF provides widespread physical and virtual access to its collections and builds collaborative relationships at both national and international levels.

www.bnf.fr

FWB

The Service Général des Lettres et du Livre (SGLL) is a department responsible for literature and books within the Ministry of Culture, which forms part of the Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Its missions entail promoting the key actors in the book industry – authors, illustrators, publishers, bookshop owners and librarians – as well as promoting reading, the French language and regional languages.

The SGLL's missions with regard to comics are as follows :

1. To award grants to authors, artists and/or scriptwriters who are established in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and who submit original, creative projects. The aim is therefore to prioritise support for innovative work in the medium of comics ;
2. To provide assistance to publishers in producing groundbreaking, ambitious and original comics, in procuring translations of significant and important Belgian comics written in French, and in republishing works that form part of the heritage of comics ;

3. To encourage school visits by comics authors ;

4. To assist organizers in producing festivals designed to promote the study or creation of comics.

www.culture.be

The General Heritage Department works to ensure that items representing cultural heritage are identified and protected. It is also launching digitization initiatives. On 25th May 2023, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation implemented a decree concerning the conservation and promotion of archives of interest in terms of cultural heritage.

www.patrimoineculturel.cfwb.be

This brochure's text transposes, with adaptations and additions, the brochure *De Schitterende Schat. Over het wat, waarom en hoe van het stripvergoed*. This information guide was written in Dutch by Lies Galle, Isabelle van Ongeval, Jan Robert and Jan Stuyck.

The quickest way to contact them or obtain documentation is as follows :

FARO : info@faro.be
Stripgids : info@stripgids.org
www.stripgids.org

NB : The Arts and Philosophy Faculty Library at the Ghent University holds the Alain Van Passen collection.

This complete and carefully preserved collection comprises French-language periodicals and comics published from 1934 to 2017. The Belgian collector, Alain Van Passen, joined comics clubs when they were first launched in the 1960s. A rich resource reflecting the memories of a reader and the activities of Belgian and European fandom, the collection was acquired through the COMICS project (grant n° 758502), financed by the European Research Council.

www.lib.ugent.be/en/catalog?q=A-lain+Van+Passen&type=periodical

Since the Alain Van Passen collection, the library has received several donations connected to the world of comics. These include the Laga family's gift of Doctor Emil Laga's collection of American newspaper comic strips, and Georges Dumbruch's donation of his comics digests, which are rarely preserved in libraries and archives. The library also holds the artist René Follet's movie files.

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