

... and THE OSCAR for the comics goes to ...

**Komikaze got ALTERNATIVE COMICS AWARD (PRIX BD ALTERNATIVE) at Angouleme Comics Festival, France. - 2020**

/ Komikaze project since 2002 / Komikaze association since 2009 / Editor-in-chief: Ivana Armanini

/ <https://komikaze.hr/comics-award-angouleme/>

/ <https://komikaze.hr/reviews-interviews/>

**It is a perfect time to start a new addiction: get hooked on KOMIKAZE, the disturbed yet hysterical Croatia-based comics network, featuring comics artists from the Balkans as well as artists from all around the world who are brought together by the same urge to explore morbid, non-conformist, brutal, absurd, and subconscious territories. Komikaze is moving in independent, non-profit circles far away from globalised and institutionalised art. Started as a slap in the face to the sleepy Croatian comics scene, Komikaze has spread contagiously all around Europe and beyond using different techniques of dissemination, namely web presentations, exhibitions, comic-workshops/ social-bonding-rituals, zine and magazine distribution, street art, and performances./ Floating Word Comic, Portland, USA - 2010**

**Komikaze is one of the most graphically interesting fanzine of recent years. <https://komikaze.hr> / Bernard Holtrop – Willem, Charlie Hebdo, France - 2015**

**“the bold black & white pages of ivana armanini don’t resemble anything that goes under the the name ‘comics’. they are a slap in the face of the decent profession of the ‘graphic novel’. too strange, too strong, too beautiful. the lady must be mad.” / Bernard Holtrop – Willem, Charlie Hebdo, France - 2016**

**Ivana Armanini is a comic strip author and illustrator from Zagreb whose work is inseparable from activism and social context. It was formed under the influence of underground artist Mary Fleener, zine maker Emil Jurcan, Stripburger magazine and obsessive surfing on the web. Her work, creative and publishing, is based on socially sensitive themes, punk rhythm and uncompromising attitude. It brings together Komikaze, a colorful network of cartoonists who make up a proud island of independent author (aka an alternative) comic book.**

*She is a member of the Croatian Association of independent artists. She graduated from the school of applied Arts and Design and the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (Mag. Art, rector's prize). It has 7 independent comic editions (albums, fancies, art-books): Ambassador Gloria Scott, 2005 (based on the stories by MimaSimić); Catalogue, 2016; FMCX, 2017; Mangelos, 2017 (scenario: MarkoGolub); Blue Concertina, 2018; She must be mad, 2018 and Nini Zine, 2019. Since 2002 he has been running and running KOMIKAZE, a network for the production, promotion and distribution of comic books with a focus on the independent scene in which he publishes (18 comic book anthologies Komikaze, 52 wezine, 30 fanzins, Femicomix map, etc.) and exhibits at 235 events (exhibitions, workshops, fairs and festivals) both locally and internationally (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Italy, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, Portugal, Ncountry, Romania, Portugal, Portugal, Portugal). More on: <https://ivanaarmanini.net>*

**When I started dealing with the comic book, which was my first comic book, when I knew I would do it, what are my models?**

I started working on comics at the beginning of this century, 6 years after graduation, and the first comic book I drew was published by Antun Bauer in the satirical magazine Kerempuh. It was an interview between two dogs, one of whom refuses to go to school. After that (comics Revolution, according to Mrozer's story and episodes "Gloria Scott") I was published in journals by Libra Libera and various Stripburger editions. I compressed several authors: Daniel Harms, Charles Bukovski, Karl Marx, Mima Simic, Zoran Lazic... They all had a lot of influence on my visual expression, especially Mima Simic and Harms' world of absurdity and grotesque character. The comic strip is not only a visual sensation, but also interacts with the contents, States, topics and stories that I live every day. I'm interested in interacting with living content, research approach, myself and the world around me. I'm trying to avoid matrices and manicure. I compose the scripts through the association game, search for color and music through abstract comics, where the literary thread is minimally present and is often only suggested in the title of the work, so the comic language is bare. I cannot precisely define my style because it changes a lot, according to the subject and mood. The resulting expression is a cocktail of Russian alternative and European contemporary literature, festival experiences of animated and experimental film, childhood surrounded by African sculptures and Japanese woodcuttings; dadaist collages, punk/noise music and street graffiti. I am attracted to a macabre atmosphere, rhythmic distortion, absurdism and grotesque. These bizarre stylistic phenomena are realism that we still live today. For example, I was attracted to the radical approach in which consistency and absolute creative freedom were always the first, although he paid his head for it.

The comic book media has maintained, in its underground perspective, the position of resistance which has so-called high art lost, even though they use the same means; the audience accompanying it and the authors who work it in our conditions have given up luxury and glory in advance and the expression is more spontaneous and simple.

On the other hand, it is a medium that has great potential for development because in the past they used mostly for cheap propaganda and locked up in "boys clubs". I sought new space for publishing, redefining the media, building a new network and audience, so in 2002 I started the Comikaze.

**How much does the recognition of such a renowned festival mean to you, what is the Angouleme Festival in the comic book world?**

The award is the world's top award for an alternative comic book album in Mecca comic book – French Angouleme at one of the largest comic book events that gathers more than 200,000 visitors each year. 37 publications from around the world participated in the race for this recognition. Next year Komikaze is the official guest of the festival and will receive 1,000 euros in awards from the Syndicat des éditeurs Alternatifs (SEA). This will be 3. Komikaze is a guest appearance at the festival in terms of presentation through the stall. This is for us, small publishers such as Komikaze, expensive stand, path and accommodation, but it is also the heart of the European comic strip scene. I have met many authors and publishers there and I certainly hope that next year the guest will result in new co-operation.

Also, Angouleme is la Cité internationale de la bande dessinée – the International City of comics – which unites the festival, museum, library and residence programmes in the city with the University Centre and the Academy of Arts since the 17th century. The director of this international world comic book center, Pierre Lungheretti, I had the honour to meet in Ljubljana two years ago, and we are on a relationship and are meeting for a few months on the cooperation plans at the Balkan comic book Center in Angouleme.

**The alternative comic book Award is given from 1982 and this year, which the French Ministry of Culture proclaimed the year of the comic book. Do they have any names?**

who has received the prize so far and impersonate you?

Komikaze has been competing for the award for the past 14 years, which means that 10-piece packages for the Commission have traveled every year. The perception was encouraging because, according to the initiator of the award, Philippe Morina, the Komikaze were always among the top 5. Fanzinoteka is also a member of the Commission, so all editions have been archived in Europe's largest Fanzinoteka in Poatier.

This award usually goes to French editions, which, in comparison to the scene we come from, have far more. In 47 years it has now been granted only for the third time to publishers from the former Eastern Europe. Before us, from the small publishers of the author's comic book we hang out with at festivals, it was received by Slovenes and Lithuanians. These three publishers (Stripburger, Kus! and Komikaze) are synonymous with an independent comic book, each in its own village and internationally. The differences are in shades, and the Komikaze are certainly the most digitally oriented, and with 5000 archived comics and illustrations on the <https://komikaze.hr> they represent a rich virtual museum and social sculpture.

Last year's award went to the Lebanese project Samandal Comics, and I certainly hope that the festival will continue to support small publishers from environments where comic strip does not have the same status in culture as it does in France, Belgium, Italy and Germany.

**Among the magazines that praised you during your existence was the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, who wrote that he was one of the richest graphics in recent years. How important is this weekly in the comic book world?**

The tragic event in Paris, which led the world to declare itself "J' suis Charlie", has set up a satire cherished through political caricature and comic strip in Spotlight.

Charlie Hedbo is important because he supports the freedom of speech presumed by the author's comic book.

Bernard Holtrop – Willem, a Dutch comic strip author who has lived in France since 1968, is important to us for the world of comics. Willem is a member of Charlie Hebdo and Liberation editorial board and a longtime member of the Angouleme Commission where he is also the winner of the Grand Prix Angouleme award for his special contribution to the development of comic books (along with Moebius, Crumba, Spiegelman and other comic book greats). He avoided death because he doesn't like redaction meetings. He praised the Komikaze project in Charlie Hebdo as "one of the graphically most interesting pheasants in recent years" and in Liberation 6 magazine. The Komikaze edition. We met at the Komikaze stand of the same festival, and in his preface to my independent edition of Catalog, he wrote, "Ivana Armanini's coarse black and white pages do not resemble anything that is otherwise considered "comic book". They are a slap to the honorable profession of graphic novels. Too strange, too strong, beautiful. The lady must be crazy. "

Charlie Hebdo is more important at the symbolic level even though he follows and supports the international comic strip scene.

**The award-winning number includes Miro Zupa, Stipan Tadic, Smelly feet dog. What key do you choose your associates from?**

Komikaze is published quarterly on the web ([komikaze.hr](http://komikaze.hr)), while a part of the selection is printed in an album, bilingual international comic book anthology that has been continuously published since 2002. Komikaze albums are the only profiled magazine for comic strip in Croatia that collaborates with authors, collections, festivals and other creative individuals from around the world.

The award-winning edition of the album contains 120 pages, 80 of which are in colour. Comic books by 23 authors from 11 countries: Miro Zupa, Ivan Marusic, Damir Stojnic, Smelly feet dog, Hrvoje Sebic-Gaz, Stipan Tadic, Agata Lucic, Luka Cacic, ena Jurov and ja from Croatia, and: Francisco Sousa Lobo (Portugal), Robert Zant (USA), Štěpánka Jislová (Czechoslovakia), Dlatko Kristevski (MACEDONIA) The key is the quality of work and not the national line, technique or style. The focus is on experiment and progressive view of comic strip media and questioning its boundaries.

There is room and audience for everyone, and the scene of the author's comic book is permanently under construction. Each author has his/her own definition of comic book and the author's comic book blooms in the area. The assumption is the process of searching, not necessarily finding, to answer the question of what comic strip is. The scene is somewhat drawn by DIY, "do it yourself" principles that we advocate from the beginning, and the internet that enables the availability of so-called small authors on international comic maps, who in reality do not have any real possibilities to be competitive in terms of capital, marketing and organised systems of presentations and distribution to readers. Virtual reality seems to have outplayed physical reality with its versatile accessibility. I believe that every comic strip, if honest, has its own audience, it just needs patience to find it.

### **How did you start with Komikaze and how did you get the first idea, first associate, first money subsidy...**

The author's comic book happened to me 6 years after the Academy ended with the discovery of a DO-IT-YOUR-SELF scene through friends and surfing Virtual dorms. The media won me because it brings together everything I love -- cartoons, literature, experimental graphics, DIY aesthetics. Through my work, as well as through the Comikaze, I continue to try to keep the door open between comics, Street-Art, experiments, abstraction and action. These syntheses create a new comic language and launch protocomics. I started stripping writers but my script is just one of the methods I like to combine. Sometimes I start with an association stain that jumps me out of the environment, sometimes from a strong emotion that leads me into an unpredictable directions. Comics from the book "adventure of Gloria Scott" were created for 5 years (publisher: AGM) for which I received 500 euros. Then I started thinking more seriously about the comic strip association and organized action on a programmatic basis, applying to donors. I started a <https://komikaze.hr> in 2002 with my friends, the Cvek brothers. First issue includes: Emil Jurcan, Miro Zupa, Mance, Nadan Rojnic, Igor Hofbauer-Hof, Dunja Jankovic, Sasa Rakezic-Zograf, Irena Jukic-Pranjic, Vinko Baric, Damir Steinfl, Vanco Restrip, Ivan Kuharic, Septic, Wostok, Lars Sunnesson, Nebojsa Milic, Clarence The first issue of Komikaze was new years and by 2008, when the Komikaze association was registered. Support was sought through Autonomous factory of Culture association.

It is interesting that 3 years ago the Ministry of Culture once again revoked funds for the journal, so that the award-winning edition came out thanks to the support of the City of Zagreb of 15,000 kuna, although this is the only profiled magazine for an author's comic book in Croatia that has since become an adult. From this point of view, this award is extremely important to us because it comes from a scene in which comic strip culture is enormous and comic strip itself is the most important medium, both commercially and artistically (at least in relation to the Croatian scene, because their authors complain about poor living conditions).

### **What are the Comikaze?**

Komikaze is a network for production, production and promotion of comic strip activities and distribution of comic book. Komikaze creative incubator stimulates the development of domestic comic book through numerous actions of web and paper editions, infoportal, workshops, exhibitions, photojournalism and social networks. The actions are diverse: ori-

entation towards research thinking of the media, communication and interpretation of the local scene in international frameworks, contextualization and theoretical reflection of development in relation to global trends.

The Komikaze virus has officially attacked the Internet and the Hara since 25.5.2002. The network brings together over 300 authors, about one hundred of whom come from Croatia and 40 other countries, permanently archived at the <https://komikaze.hr> address

In the context of a collective action to organise (unarmed) resistance against progressive globalisation of tastes and an increase in institutionalized artistic production, the project represents the free and altruistic activity of artists from various fields, which links an independent and uncompromising position, called alternative to the existing artistic practice that dominates.

One of the projects is Femicomix, also an international project, a publishing line and a travelling exhibition dedicated to marginalized female comics and creativity. At the same time, Komikaze has been working from the beginning to make the potential of women's creativity more visible and accessible to the general public. Femicomix is a project directed against the stereotypes of the perception of comics as the dominant male media and it gathers 34 authors (a selection of 80 in the Komikaze Archive), who has visited 12 countries in the form of exhibitions and workshops so far. The project considers the idea of comic strip of women's creativity as the future of the form, that is, the media, in a literal and metaphorical sense. In this context, "women" refers to both gender and intimate approach to comics primarily focused on experimental and intuitive approach to forms.

### **How many publications have you published so far?**

52 webzines, 18 printed albums of the same name, several author albums/fanzins, CDs, group workshops and photocopied fanzins have been published. More than 5,000 pages of comics have been published and co-operation has been achieved with 130 associations, civil initiatives, festivals and art organisations. 235 exhibitions were installed and numerous workshops were held in 15 countries, most of them in Croatia. For more - peek into strips: <https://komikaze.hr/stripotekalibrary/>

### **What and how to proceed?**

By closing Europa cinema, the only Komikaze point of sale in Zagreb is a small bookstore and antique shop in Gundulićeva Street - "What are you reading?". Magazines and bookstores are systematically abolished in Croatia, threatening artists with new restrictive laws tailored according to market principles. We can no longer apply for the Angouleme Awards because of the conditions of the festival according to which the publisher loses the right to apply for the alternative comic book Award after the award.

We can compete eventually with independent editions in French. I will work on my comics that go out on the <https://ivanaarmanini.net> website and on Instagram. A new Komikaze Web Edition is being prepared for which the invitation is open until 1.4.2020. This is followed by a May presentation of Mangelos comic albums published by the Komikaze in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. I drew the comic book at the invitation of the museum, engaging Mark the pigeon for the script, and it will present itself, after being exhibited in the museum for two years, at 19. The Biennale of Art in Pancevo. Over the year Komikaze will hold workshops and exhibitions throughout Croatia and abroad, discover and present new works by old and new authors. Draw and send comics and order albums at [komikaze5001@gmail.com](mailto:komikaze5001@gmail.com).