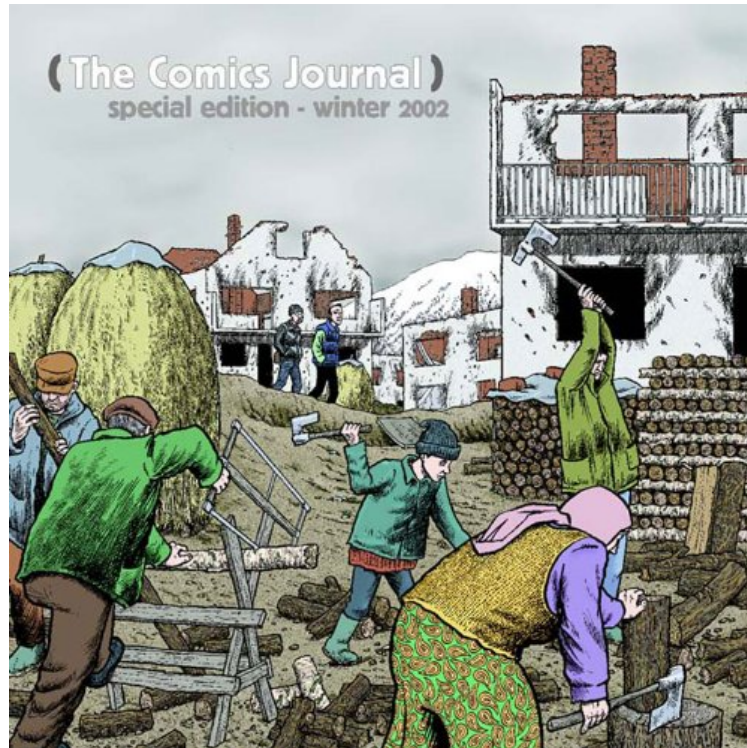


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2001 marks the 25th anniversary of The Comics Journal, a monthly magazine of journalism, criticism, and scholarship. The magazine is celebrated as the most outspoken forum for evaluative criticism and debate in the history of the medium and equally renowned for its long, career-spanning interviews with the most highly regarded cartoonists of the 20th century—the cartoonist's equivalent of The Paris Review interviews. Twice a year, the Journal publishes a special "coffee table" theme edition with longer and more extensive critical and historical essays, a section devoted to a specific aspect of cartooning or a particularly noteworthy cartoonist (who contributes a new strip and is interviewed). The special edition also features a variety of new comic strips done especially for the magazine by today's best cartoonists. Our Winter edition happens to focus on the theme of comics journalism and spotlights Joe Sacco, whose *Safe Area Gorazde* garnered more favorable press in the political and literary press than any graphic novel since *Maus*, with a new cover, a long interview, and a never-before-published strip done especially for this issue.

From BooklistFor 25 years, the Comics Journal has been the foremost—frankly, the only—regular source of serious criticism of the medium. In commemoration, the journal launches a series of oversize editions, aimed at "the

intellectually curious passerby" as well as hardcore comics fans and set to emerge twice yearly, with this compilation of a dozen thoughtful essays, critiques, and interviews and a portfolio of comic strips. Among the former are a lengthy interview with comics journalist Joe Sacco (Safe Area Gorazde, 2000); critical evaluations of early-twentieth-century cartoonist T. S. Sullivant and the classic newspaper strip "Smoky Stover"; and assessments of the current state of mainstream and alternative comics. The strips, many of them in full color and all on the theme "Cartoonists and Cartooning," are even more impressive. Contributors include 40 leading alternative-comics artists, such as R. Crumb, Charles Burns, Art Spiegelman, Gary Panter, Jessica Abel, Peter Bagge, Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez, and Bill Griffith. This may be the year's best collection of and on comics--unless its successor surpasses it some six months hence. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A lengthy interview with Joe Sacco...provides more insight into the Bosnian war than most "serious" magazines...[Grade:] A. -- Entertainment Weekly, Ken Tucker, 8 February 2002 This may be the years best collection of and on comics unless its successor surpasses it. -- Booklist, Gordon Flagg, 1 March 2002 [S]martly designed....The centerpiece of the book, an interview with Joe Sacco, should not be missed. -- Time.com, Andrew D. Arnold, 12 February 2002 About the Author KRISTY VALENTI is a staff editor Fantagraphics Books and is a longtime assistant editor of The Comics Journal. She lives in Seattle, WA. Gary Groth is the founder of The Comics Journal and also the co-founder and co-publisher of Fantagraphics Books. He lives in Seattle.