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Dare to Know

Documentary Comics

Comics that document reality, such as cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, and economic issues, to inform or create a historical record.

A genre in which significant historical incidents or social questions are recognized and examined. Visual documentation of the past can be used to make sense of events of long ago and distinguishes the documentary comics from other works of nonfiction. This genre can provide readers with a richer, more complex depiction of the relevant historical or social context. While texts can convey an objective point of view, the visual component may present a measure of subjectivity through their representations. In some instances, one might dispense with the text altogether and use the images to identify the protagonists and antagonists by the manner in which they are drawn. Typically, as the particular event becomes more distant in the past, objectivity in these graphic novels tend to rise.

Common Elements

Social commentary
Medicine and health
Science

Civil rights
War

Graphic Novel Examples

<i>Footnotes in Gaza</i> (2009) by Joe Sacco
<i>The Golem's Mighty Swing</i> (2003) by James Sturm
<i>The Mueller Report</i> (2020) by Steve Duin and Shannon Wheeler
<i>Tetris: The Games People Play</i> (2016) by Box Brown

<i>Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb</i> (2012) by Jonathan Fetter-Vorn
<i>Virus Tropical</i> (2014) by Power Paola
<i>What Remains: Personal and Political Histories of Colombia</i> (2022) by Camilo Aguirre

