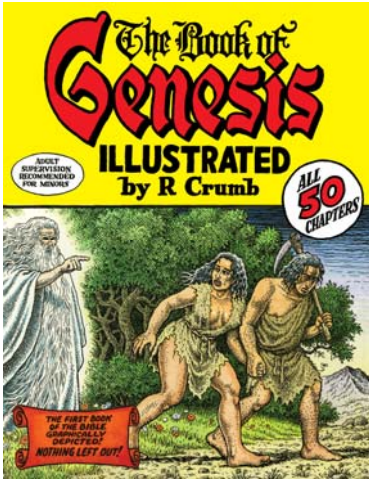


For Immediate Release: June 22, 2009

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The Hammer Museum Presents *The Bible Illuminated: R. Crumb's Book of Genesis*

On View October 24, 2009 – February 7, 2010



Los Angeles – This October the Hammer Museum presents seminal comic artist R. Crumb's adaptation of the first book of the Old Testament, the Book of Genesis. Crumb has spent the last five years on this incredibly ambitious endeavor. The exhibition features 207 individual, black-and-white drawings incorporating every word from all fifty chapters, as well as a cover, title page, introduction and back cover. Each drawing contains six to eight comic panels illustrating the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, and more. Using his signature bawdy style, Crumb's version of the Book of Genesis puts an entirely new twist on the Bible. This highly anticipated project has been building momentum over the last few years and it has established a huge fan base among comic and art lovers around the world.

For nearly fifty years R. Crumb has contributed a plethora of zany, outrageous, and riotous figures to the world of comics. His impact on the underground comic world is immeasurable and his drawings have been highly influential to countless artists working in the contemporary art field and commercially. Drawing from everyday events and characters, he tells stories of pathetic men (often modeled after himself), randy old men chasing exceptionally voluptuous women, and other odd characters including gurus, seers and talking animals. His stories illustrate the most basic human qualities: fragility, hubris, weakness, cruelty, paranoia, neuroses, fear, and shallowness. He is unabashed in his depictions of the lowest depths of misery and the dark sides of humanity, yet always maintains a sense of humor. Often criticized for being overtly sexual, violent, racist and misanthropic, he is steadfast in his convictions to share his perspective. Like a modern day Daumier, he keenly observes the hypocrisies and idiosyncrasies of human behavior with the sharp wit and cutting eye of a staunch critic.

Born in Philadelphia in 1943, Crumb began drawing comics as a young boy, influenced by his older brother Charles. In the early 1960s he drew cards for the American Greetings Corporation and in the late 1960s he traveled to New York, Chicago, and Detroit and created many of his rambunctious and unforgettable characters including Mr. Natural, Mr. Snoid and Angelfood McSpade. In 1967, he moved to San Francisco and later that year he drew "Zap #1" and "Zap #0" and sold them on the street, which

marked the beginning of his role as one of the founding fathers of the underground comic movement.

In the last months of 1969, Crumb received a \$10,000 advance from Ballantine Books for a "Fritz the Cat" book, but he later killed the character, dissatisfied for its portrayal on film. Crumb's "Mr. Natural" strip ran in *The Village Voice* for about a year (later compiled as "Mr. Natural #3"), and in 1981, he produced and edited a new comic magazine called "Weirdo" which included the work of other artists. By the end of the 1980s, Crumb and his wife, Aline, relocated to the south of France, where they live and work today.

R. Crumb's exhibition at the Hammer Museum is preceded by solo exhibitions at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; David Zwirner, New York; and Paul Morris Gallery, New York. He has also been included in numerous group exhibitions and has been published widely. A selection of books and catalogues featuring Crumb's work includes *Cult Fiction* (2007) published by Hayward Gallery, London; *The Best American Comics*, 2006 (Houghton Mifflin, Boston); *An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons and True Stories*, 2006 (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT); *R. Crumb's Heroes of Blues, Jazz & Country*, 2006 (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York); *Masters of American Comics*, 2005 (Hammer Museum and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles); and *Yeah, But is it Art? R. Crumb Drawing and Comics*, 2004 (Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany). Books by the artist include *The Sweeter Side of R. Crumb*, 2006 (MQ Publications, London); *The R. Crumb Handbook*, 2005 (MQ Publications, London); *R. Crumb's Kafka*, 2004 (Ibooks Graphic Novel, New York); *Crumb Family Comics*, 2003 (Last Gasp, San Francisco); and *The R. Crumb Coffee Table Art Book*, 1997 (Little, Brown and Company, London).

Catalogue and Programs

The Book of Genesis Illustrated by R. Crumb, with a handwritten introduction by the artist, and edited by Robert Weil, is published by W.W. Norton. The hardcover catalogue is 224 pages and will be released in late October 2009.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a full range of free public programs at the Hammer Museum including panels, lectures, and more.

This exhibition is organized by the Hammer Museum and curated by Ali Subotnick, Curator.

The exhibition will be traveling to other institutions in the U.S., to be confirmed shortly.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum, a public arts unit of the University of California, Los Angeles, is dedicated to exploring the diversity of artistic expression through the ages. Its collections, exhibitions, and programs span the classic to the cutting-edge in art, architecture, and design, recognizing that artists play a crucial role in all aspects of culture and society.

Founded by Dr. Armand Hammer in 1990, the museum houses the Armand Hammer Collection of Old Master, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist paintings and the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection. Associated UCLA collections include the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present; and the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden on the UCLA campus. The Hammer's newest collection, the Hammer Contemporary Collection, is led by works on paper, particularly drawings and photographs from 1960 to the present.

The Hammer presents major single-artist and thematic exhibitions of historical and contemporary art. It also presents approximately ten Hammer Projects exhibitions each year, providing international and local artists with a laboratory-like environment to create new work or to present existing work in a new context.

As a cultural center, the Hammer offers a diverse range of free public programs throughout the year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances. The Hammer's Billy Wilder Theater houses these widely acclaimed public programs and is the new home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's renowned cinematheque.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

For current program and exhibition information call **310-443-7000** or visit **www.hammer.ucla.edu**.

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 11am – 7pm; Thursday, 11am – 9 pm; Sunday, 11am – 5 pm; closed Mondays, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors (65+) and UCLA Alumni Association members; free for Museum members, students with identification, UCLA faculty/staff, and visitors 17 and under. The Museum is free for everyone on Thursdays.

Location/Parking: The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard, at Westwood Boulevard. Parking is available under the Museum. Rate is \$3 for three hours with Museum validation.

Hammer Museum Tours: For group tour reservations and information, call 310-443-7041.