

# LAWEEKLY

## ART/BOOKS

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### KID STUFF

BY DOUG HARVEY

Wednesday, December 13, 2006 - 12:00 pm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Brian Chippendale's *Ninja* (Picturebox, Inc.)

That's all changed here. Hardbound and beautifully printed on 128 pages of crisp white 11-by-17 stock with more than 20 in full color, *Ninja* is the most revelatory graphic novel since Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan*. Following — sort of — the adventures of Mr. Gold the Ninja, Patrick the Monster and a host of others across the crumbling landscape of Grain City, *Ninja* interlaces its peripatetic storyline with Chippendale's video-game minimalist sixth-grade ninja comics and blown-up pages of contemporary horror-vacuum sketchbooks. The result is a dazzling and virtuosic display of experimental visual storytelling, teeming with inventive, deceptively scraggy psychedelic doodles and claustrophobic waves of highly rendered textures. While clearly and openly indebted to Gary Panter's *Jimbo* and *Dal Tokyo* strips, *Ninja* — alongside his contribution to the *Wunderground* poster exhibit and catalog — positions Chippendale at the forefront of a new generation of graphic artists.

It's hard to imagine a denser collection of imagery, but the **Marc Bell**-edited *Nog a Dod: Prehistoric Canadian Psychoodolia* (PictureBox/Conundrum Press, 224 pages, \$25) packs about three books' worth of trippy self-published comix into one tight book. Sometimes collecting a dozen sketchbook pages and zine covers in postage-stamp-size reproductions on a single page, *Nog a Dod* is a sprawling, decadent visual feast laid out by a gang of DIY fringe dwellers who imagine there's been some mistake and they're never going to get a chance like this again. Bell's clean-lined überstoner work — familiar to readers of *VICE*'s comic page — anchors an invigorating compilation of freewheeling (and often collaborative or — ahem — "thanksgiving amoeban") drawing, painting, collage and text with influences ranging far beyond the normal comix pantheon to embrace such worthy visionaries as Saul Steinberg, Karl Wirsum and Kenneth Patchen. It's like what you always hoped the *Zap Comix* jams would be if the artists hadn't always been saving the good stuff for their solo stories.

TOP VIEWED TOP COMMENTED ART+BOOKS

#### TOP 10 DISHES OF 2007

BY JONATHAN GOLD

Hummus replaced foie gras, Southern Thai was hot and cheese shredded

#### AMERICAN CINEMA: OUR BEST DIPLOMAT IN 2007?

BY SCOTT FOUNDAS

Annus mirabilis

#### THERE WILL BE BLOOD IS ANDERSON'S CITIZEN KANE

BY SCOTT FOUNDAS

Oil Welles

#### BLOG THIS: 2007'S BEST FILMS

BY ELLA TAYLOR

No argument about this list

#### NEW LAWS 2008: ARNOLD'S ORDERLY GUIDE TO LIVING

BY SOPHIA KERCHER

No more driving while holding a cell, and other unpleasantness

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FIRST FRIDAYS  
January 4th  
discuss 2008  
dr. antonio damasio  
5:30 - 10 pm

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
nhm.org/firstfridays

#### BLOGS

##### LURKER

CBS YARD, MELROSE, PART 2

Wed, Jan 2, 8:57 am

##### DEADLINE HOLLYWOOD DAILY

WGA PICKETERS TARGET NBC TONIGHT SHOW

Wed, Jan 2, 6:18 am

##### CATCH OF THE DAY

MUST BE 21 TO GET FUCKED UP

Mon, Dec 31, 2007, 5:09 pm

##### PLAY

GERMS, ADOLESCENTS, KEY CLUB, 12/28

Mon, Dec 31, 2007, 3:18 pm

##### LA DAILY

PHOTOS: CHRISTMAS DAY IN SANTA MONICA

Tue, Dec 25, 2007, 10:54 pm

#### SLIDESHOWS



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imprint also responsible for *Kramer's Ergot 6*, Ron Rege's *Yeast Hoist* and Johnny Ryan's scabrous, gut-busting *Comic Book Holocaust*. Alongside articles on the small ad art of the S.S. Adams Prank and Magic Company and the history of the speech balloon, **Comic Art 8** (Buenaventura Press, 180 pages, \$20) offers a too-brief sampling of Wilson's pencilled juvenilia. Rediscovered in a box at the artist's mother's house and acquired by maverick collector Glenn Bray, the Wilson "Dead Sea Scrolls" are remarkably precocious documents that stand up to much of the artist's more self-conscious later work, and a lot of what passes for adult graphic narrative today. Their publication sets a precedent for the unearthing of similar mother lodes from the likes of Rory Hayes and the Brothers Crumb — innocent and awe-inspiring.

Finally, the best (so far) overview of many of the artists and movements that have made up the Lowbrow universe has just been published in the form of a *catalogue raisonné* of the Copro/Nason Gallery's first 15 years, beginning with limited-edition reproductions of work by Robert Williams and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth, and gradually expanding through Tiki, Neo-Big Eye and other Juxtapoz-friendly genres. Most of the standards are here — Shag, Mark Ryden, Von Dutch — but there are plenty of surprises, including unexpected appearances by artists like Paul Loffoley and Russell Crotty. With essays by artists Shag, Williams, and Sandow Birk, curator Meg Linton and publisher Adam Parfrey, **Copro/Nason Fine Art** (Last Gasp, 267 pages, \$40) is a substantial document of the explosion of the Lowbrow underground through the perspective of a small but influential enterprise.

For more holiday gift ideas, read Holly Myers' [Big and Bigger](#): Cool toppers for the coffee table.

PAGE 2 OF 2 • [PREV](#) 12

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