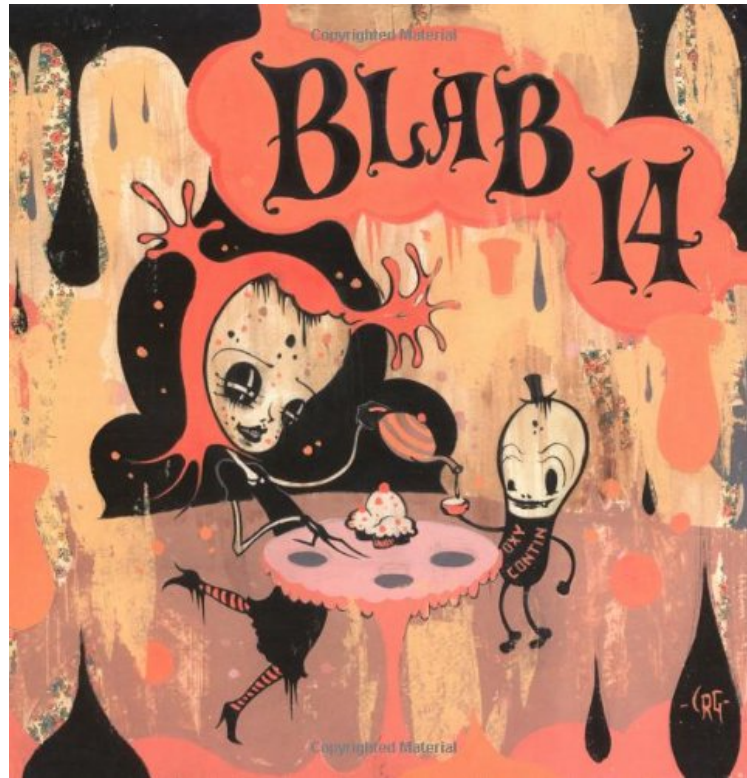


Blab! Vol. 14

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From Fantagraphics Books : Blab! Vol. 14 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blab! Vol. 14:

Inside Blab! #6's super-hip cover by Richard Sala, you'll find a showcase for cutting-edge cartoonists. Skip Williamson introduces us to his drunken cartoon libertine "Necropolis Keester." Doug Allen's lovable character Steven makes another Blab! appearance in "Steven--in the Showdown." Frank Stack and Joe Coleman have illustrated character "portrait" prose pieces. Party-girl Mary Fleener has a two-page strip on the inside-front and inside-back covers called "As American as Mom, Apple Pie and Martinis." In his skewed style Richard Sala presents his comics story "Where Is Christine Brooder?," featuring a washed-up detective, a mysterious "pillow killer," and a reference to Gogol's Bird Museum. And finally, balancing out the humor of Gary Lieb's "Pets That Drink" and Justin Green's "Great Moments in Alcoholism," is a sobering look at real-life alcoholic cartoonists (a profile by Monte Beauchamp, John Petrie, and Dan Clowes).

From BooklistEach new number of editor Beauchamp's cutting-edge comics anthology series looks more like an art book, less like a comic book. Number 14 has more full-page and two-page pieces sans text or narrative than ever before, and many seeming stories are just situations, incidents, or sequences. Camille Rose Garcia's

"Pharmaceuticools" conveys a message about antidepressants, but it's ambiguous, unless her loopy figures against a blotted and dripped, linoleum-like backdrop imply skepticism. Walter Minus and Sylvia Despretz's "Lower Broadway Stash"--full-page cheesecakey depictions of a young lovely in dishabile--hints at a crime story, but all the action is elided. Mark Landman's Day-Glo-ing "Fetal Elvis" tale isn't as much fun as the one in New Used Blab! [BKL N 15 03], but Matti Hagelberg's black-and-white Elvis adventure, "Hard-Boiled Kekkonen," weirdly--very weirdly--makes up for it. Peter Kuper's autobiographical "Dead Sea" and Doug Allen's "A Series of Small Fires" are the most conventional stories at hand. Everything, including Beauchamp's portfolio of enormously blown-up matchbook-cover art, does, however, look marvelous. Ray Olson

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With superior printing, an overwide magazine size, a perfect-bound spine, and eclectic content, BLAB! pushes the limits of the form. -- PrintWork that crosses both boundaries into a new kind of pictorial art form. -- Graphis

About the AuthorMonte Beauchamp edited The Life Times of R. Crumb from St. Martin's Press, and the popular Blab! series. His work has appeared in Print, Communication Arts, American Illustration, and the New York Festival's Annual of Advertising. He lives in Chicago, IL.