

Encyclopedia of Black Comics

Sheena C. Howard

Christopher Priest, Contributor

Henry Louis Gates Jr., Contributor

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Sheena C. Howard provides a handy guide to a long list of black comic creators in *Encyclopedia of Black Comics*.

Howard, who also authored *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation*, writes in her introduction that *Encyclopedia of Black Comics* focuses “on people of African descent ... who have published significant works in the United States.” Intended to fill a gap she discovered while completing her PhD dissertation, she profiles major figures of comics history, and of the modern era, in one hundred separate entries.

Howard describes this book as a “starting point” that she hopes others will build on.

She does an admirable job of supplying background info, describing how the various creators became interested in comics, and what their contributions were/are. It’s a little jarring to see legends like George Herriman, creator of Krazy Kat, listed alongside lesser-known creators who are just getting started in their careers—but then, that’s the point of this volume: to introduce a wide swath of black creators.

A foreword by prominent academic Henry Louis Gates and an afterword by Christopher Priest, a longtime comics veteran and the first full-time African-American writer in the comics industry, round out the book. Aside from filling a need as a reference book, *Encyclopedia of Black Comics* serves as a treasure map, and interested readers can follow the trails put forward by Howard to seek out African-American work—past, present, and future.

PETER DABBENE (July/August 2017)

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