2024 BOOK DAY

BY

SOLAS NUA

NEW IRISH ARTS

AND

FANTOM COMICS

COMING UP NEXT AT SOLAS NUA



DISTILLATION

A Solas Nua, Abbey Theatre and Luke Casserly Production

Following a sold out run as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival in collaboration with the Abbey Theatre in 2023, this exciting experience traveled to the Peacock Stage in Abbey Theatre during early 2024, and now returns to Washington, D.C. where it was originally crafted as part of Solas Nua's 2023 Norman Houston Multi-disciplinary Commissioning Award.

A performative journey that takes you to the Irish bog landscape through scent.

Distillation is a response to the recent cessation of the peat harvesting industry in Ireland. Over the past year, Luke Casserly has collaborated with renowned perfume maker Joan Woods to create a unique distillation of the Midlands bog – the place where he grew up – as the starting point for an olfactory encounter which looks at our human relationship to place.

Tickets and more information available at this link: https://solas.pub/Luke

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THIS WEEK!

Belfast Poet Stephen Sexton In DC! Live Poetry Reading & Conversation with Artist

Tickets and more information available at this link:

https://solas.pub/Stephen

ABOUT SOLAS NUA

Solas Nua - 'new light' in Irish, is a leading multi-disciplinary arts organization that is dedicated exclusively to contemporary Irish arts. Based in Washington, D.C., our mission is to bring the best of contemporary Irish arts to the U.S.

Solas Nua acts as an ambassador and advocate for Irish arts in the U.S., promoting contemporary, multi-disciplinary Irish arts and culture. By offering new opportunities for artists based in both Ireland and the U.S., Solas Nua provides access and inclusion for artists and audiences to connect and participate on both sides of the Atlantic. We present, produce, and commission thought-provoking and ground-breaking work across the arts, and are recognized for making a substantive, unique contribution to the artistic and cultural richness of the city of Washington, D.C. and beyond. We present work that is cross-cultural, representing today's Ireland - a globally diverse society. Our programming reflects our conviction that Irish arts travel across borders, cultures, and socio-economic lines.

WHAT WE DO

BOOK CLUBS | FREE EVENTS | THEATRE | DANCE
MUSIC | LITERATURE | AND SO MUCH MORE
Learn more here: https://solas.pub/home

SPECIAL THANKS

Special Thanks to Dennis Houlihan and Mimi Conway, Fantom Comics, Drawn and Quarterly, and all of the participating artists.

BOOK DAY FUNDERS

Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

SOLAS NUA 2024 BOOK DAY

NEW IRISH ARTS

March 17, 2024



Dear Lovers of all things literary,

Thank you for joining us for Solas Nua's annual Book Day celebration, where we give out free Irish Literature across D.C. This year, we turn our attention to graphic novels and comic books, and you're about to experience some brilliant work coming out of Ireland.

Comics were some of the first pieces of literature I read. I started with a box of comics my mom had from when she was a kid (1960s – Casper, Richie Rich, Archie) and soon, whenever our family would go to the mall, I would always head to the back of the bookstore, find the comic section, and seek out new stories.

Now, as an adult, I still read comics and graphic novels (check out Maus by Art Spiegelman, Watchmen by Alan Moore, Fun Home by Alison Bechdel, Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi). If you aren't a regular comic reader, let me assure you… this beautiful art form is more than superheroes. We have selected a handful of touching graphic novels from Irish artists that explore themes of friendship, family, loss, adulthood, grief, self-discovery and more.

When I moved to Washington D.C. in 2023, one of the first things I did was visit bookstores across the District – Solid State Books, Kramers, Politics and Prose, Second Story Books, and many more – there's such a vibrant and literary community here. Over the last year, Fantom Comics in Dupont Circle has become one of my favorites – in addition to an amazing selection of work, their staff is working around the clock to program community events across all aspects of comics.

I hope you enjoy Luke Healy's The Con Artists! It was listed as one of The Guardian's Top Graphic Novels of 2022. Digital copies of A Hibernian in Hellas by Maeve Clancy and Midlands by Debbie Jenkinson are also included in your Book Day package. If you loved these graphic novels stay tuned–we're working to bring Luke Healy to D.C. this fall to support the launch of his new book! More details soon.

AND If you've arrived here just for the free comics… welcome to Solas Nua! We're an international arts organization that brings film, music, theater, literature, visual arts, and everything in between to Washington, D.C. Sign up for our mailing list if you haven't already – many of our events are free, and that's one of the best ways to find out what's coming up!

Let me know what you think of the books. You can reach me at andrew@solasnua.org.

Much love,

Andrew - Executive Director - Solas Nua

SOLAS NUA 2024 BOOK DAY

NEW IRISH ARTS

Hi all,



Welcome to Fantom Comics, a comic shop for everybody. Whether you're dropping in for the latest *Batman* issue or you want to find a niche graphic memoir, we hope to carry the greatest comics collection in D.C. We aim to lift up our local art community by hosting all sorts of events—book clubs, art workshops, gaming nights, and more.

Over the next month we've got a horror manga book club, a launch event for local artist Nika's mystery comic *Signals*, a figure drawing session with a live model, a bookbinding workshop, a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, and a board gaming afternoon with the actual board game designer in attendance, just to name a few.

We often get comic creators involved directly, whether it's in-person or virtual, like when Josh Trujillo video calls in for our Queer Book Club to discuss his Baron von Steuben biography *Washington's Gay General*. We hope that no matter where your interests lie, we have an event coming up you might be interested in.

Community is the lifeblood of Fantom. In an increasingly isolated, online world, it's more important than ever to create third spaces for people—outside their home and their work—where folks want to come together and share ideas.

If you like what you've read from Book Day, come on back and we can make a recommendation for your next read. For example, if you want another Irish read, there is another fantastic graphic novel called *Bog Bodies* by Declan Shalvey – a gritty thriller that follows an Irish gangster lost in the Dublin Mountains – we can order it for you. Or if you liked the introspective qualities of *Midlands* or *The Con Artists*, you should check out *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel. Our staff can guide you.

Thanks to Solas Nua for partnering with us on Book Day, and we look forward to seeing you back at Fantom in the fall to meet Luke Healy.

Jacob

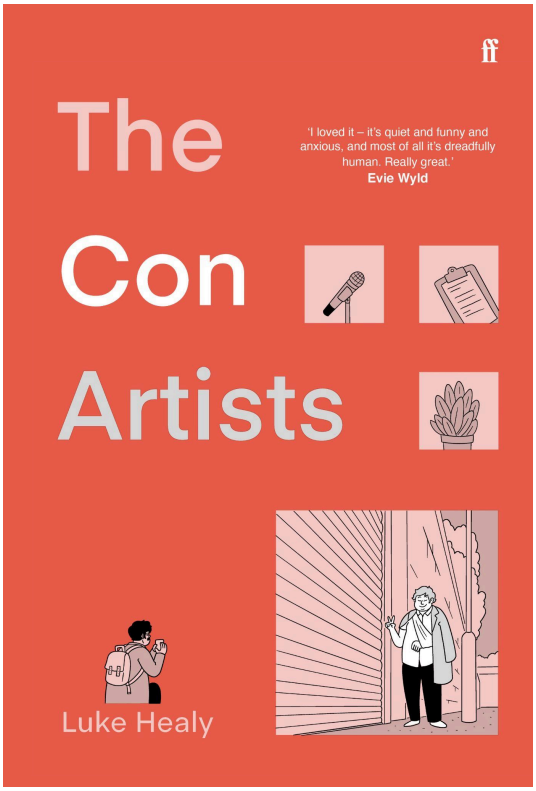
Jacob Shapiro
Manager and Co-Owner
Fantom Comics

FANTOM DC COMICS

YOUR FREE PRINT BOOK FOR BOOK DAY

[Editors note: physical copies of this book were handed out at Fantom Comics on March 17, 2024]

THE CON ARTISTS by LUKE HEALY



A quintessentially millennial tale about friendship and the quest for self-actualization.

This is going to be Frank's year. He's going to do it all: find love, become a famous comedian, and responsibly parent his plants. But then, Giorgio gets hit by a bus.

Self-assured and utterly entitled, Giorgio has always seemed like "Frank, but better." Moving in with and caring for his estranged childhood friend quickly starts to chip away at Frank's sense of self, as well as Giogio's carefully curated online persona. Is Giorgio's penchant for overindulgence truly aspirational? Or is it ultimately a red flag? The further Frank is pulled into Giorgio's orbit, the quicker his existential dread blooms. Expectation and reality soon collide in a singular tale about trust and confidence.

Luke Healy's playful, hilarious third graphic novel uses crisp lines and physical comedy to portray an uneasy friendship between two young men on the cusp of adulting. Snippets from Frank's middling stand-up routines are punctuated by the subtle farce of Healy's mise-en-scène and the lively, at times scathingly pointed, banter of old friends. *The Con Artists* is a stylish character study that asks the question of who fools who once everyone is off-camera.

PRAISE FOR *THE CON ARTISTS:*

"Healy's bittersweet portrayal of a troubled friendship is full of finely observed detail and deadpan humour, but it's also a deeply felt exploration of happiness, trust and the lies we tell our friends and ourselves." **—*Guardian* Best Graphic Novels of 2022**

"Smart, funny, restrained and beautifully drawn." **—*The Irish Times***

"A beautifully observed masterpiece... The Con Artists by Luke Healy is my favourite graphic novel of the year so far, and to be honest, it might just be among my favourite comics ever." **—Rachel Cooke, *The Guardian***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Luke Healy was born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, where he also received a BA in Journalism. He has an MFA from the Centre for Cartoon Studies in Vermont, USA. He has published three graphic novels: *Americana (And the Act of Getting Over It)*, *How to Survive in the North*, and *Permanent Press*. Healy's work has been exhibited in the Museum of Comics and Cartoon Art in Manhattan and his clients include *The New Yorker*, *BBC*, *Vice*, and *Narratively*.

BRIEF HISTORY OF DRAWN AND QUARTERLY

We're able to offer this fantastic book because of the generous support of Drawn and Quarterly.

Over the past thirty years, Drawn & Quarterly has grown from a single-issue magazine to an internationally renowned publisher of the world's best cartoonists. D+Q has published many North American luminaries of the medium including Adrian Tomine, Lynda Barry, Nick Drnaso, Kate Beaton, Chester Brown, Aminder Dhaliwal, Ebony Flowers, and Seth, as well as international authors including Tove Jansson (Finland); Guy Delisle (France); Tom Gauld (UK); Astrid Lindgren (Sweden); Yoshiharu Tsuge (Japan); Rutu Modan (Israel); Shigeru Mizuki (Japan); Keum Suk Gendry-Kim (Korea); Zuo Ma (China); and many more cartoonists from across the globe. The company's dedication to high production values, editorial integrity, and artistic autonomy has led to it being described by *Time* as "the most elegant comics publisher in North America." D+Q books have been nominated for the Man Booker Prize, Governor General's Literary Awards, Giller Prize, NAACP Image Award, Lambda Literary Award, the Story Prize, and many Eisner, Harvey, and Ignatz Awards.

SAVE THE DATE

Solas Nua is working with Drawn and Quarterly and FANTOM to bring Luke Healy to Washington D.C. in September 2024! Luke will be in town for a signing at Fantom Comics, a public reading of his work, and a discussion about graphic novels today.

SOLAS NUA 2024 BOOK DAY
NEW IRISH ARTS

A HIBERNIAN IN HELLAS by MAEVE CLANCY

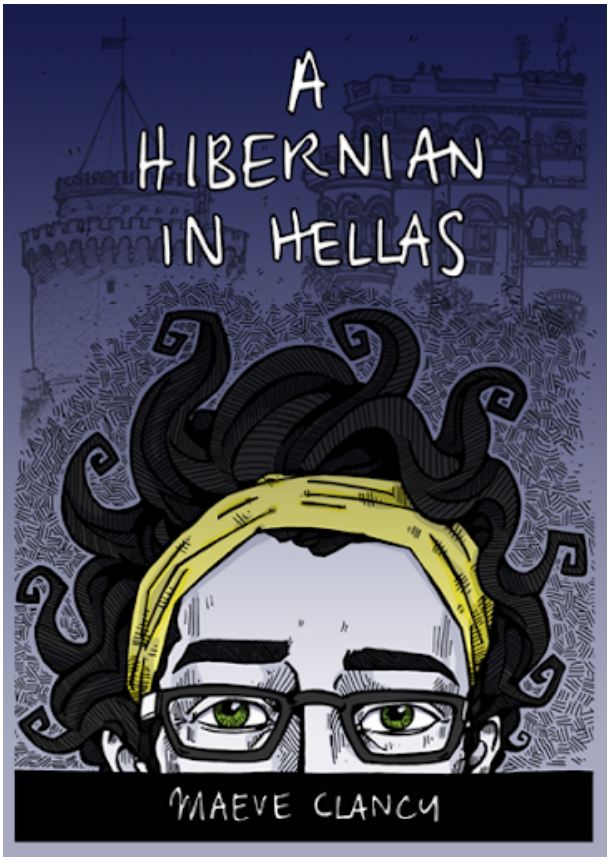
Free Graphic Novel Alert!

(Digital Copy available until April 30, 2024)

https://solas.pub/CLANCY

Originally a travel webcomic in 2011, printed in 2014. Now out of print, but available to Solas Nua readers online! A special thanks to Maeve for making this possible.

A Hibernian in Hellas is an autobiographical webcomic about author Maeve Clancy's travels in Greece during the financial crisis. Simultaneously a documentation of her trip and a meditation on cultures overlapping, stories in landscape, and solo travel, the piece carefully tracks the small observations and moments that lend meaning to the trip. Readers get to notice the history and humanity lodged within the Greek landscape, as well as the current customs and social environment, alongside Clancy through her artwork. We are left with a thread of personal emotional ties, cross-cultural connections, and a sense of what can be learned and what is limited during individual exploration of a new place. Clancy's position as an Irish traveler, a woman, and an artist shine through as important lenses with which she views the world.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Multi-disciplinary artist Maeve Clancy creates work for children and adults using cut paper, pop up, story, and drawings. Aside from creating mounted solo exhibitions, she has worked as a set designer for film and TV, taught workshops at the 24 Hour Comics Day in Dublin, and worked on music videos for Irish singer-songwriter Lisa Hannigan. Clancy also writes fictional, documentary, and historical comics. She is the author and illustrator of the financial crisis travelogue *A Hibernian in Hellas* (Cardboard Press) and the web comic *Flatmates*.

Past commissions include a large-scale installation at a National Trust property in Somerset, UK; a solo exhibition at Corte Eremo, Mantova, Italy; artwork for Tall Ships Dublin; and more. Recent commissions include a graphic novel about Michael Davitt, a series of animations for Cruinniú na nÓg 2020 shown on RTÉ and a cut paper installation for An Táin Arts Centre. She has also started Dooagh Press, the home of original graphic novels made and printed in Ireland: https://dooaghpress.com/.

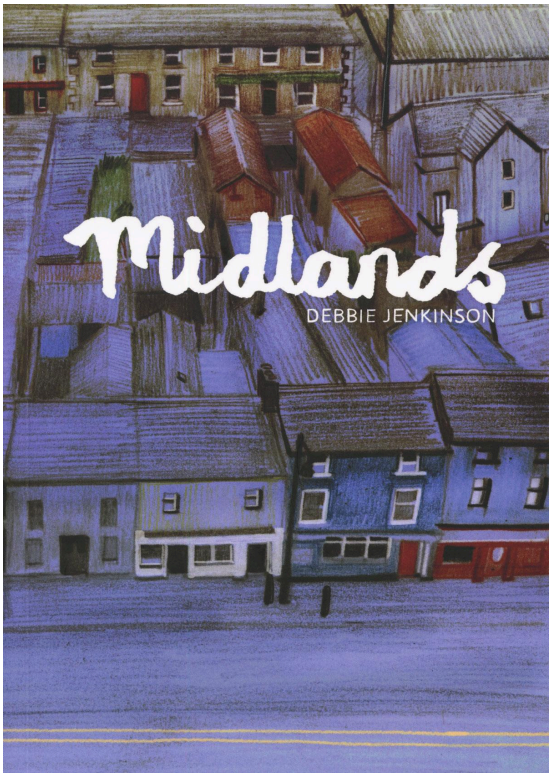
SOLAS NUA 2024 BOOK DAY
NEW IRISH ARTS

MIDLANDS by DEBBIE JENKINSON

Free Graphic Novel Alert!
(Digital Copy available until April 30, 2024)
https://solas.pub/Jenkinson

Published in April 2023, *Midlands* is a fictional graphic novel which follows a pharmacist named Ronnie Fox from Dublin who somehow ends up living in exile in a small town in the Irish midlands. Stunning full-color illustrations guide the reader through Ronnie's journey of grief and self-discovery as she grapples with the loss of her mother and a subsequent deep dive into her familial ancestry and history. This is a story of finding and redefining home, family, and belonging–all while opening up perspectives and checking the biases that often come along with living in siloed, sheltered communities. Ironic and witty, Jenkinson also employs humor throughout the novel's narration to highlight moments of absurdity and hope within Ronnie's process of grief and growth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Debbie Jenkinson is an illustrator/author from Dublin. She is the Promotions Officer at Illustrators Ireland, and a committee member at DCAF, a non-profit comic book festival that happens four times a year in Dublin. She is also the co-founder of The Comics Lab, (as part of DCAF) which explores story-telling in sequential formats. They initiated Ireland's first Graphic Short Prize run with *The Irish Times* April 2019 and made an anthology of the 10 shortlisted entries.

In 2020 she published *Ghosting*, (the Irish Comic News Awards' OVERALL BEST IRISH COMIC 2020 and *The Irish Times*' Best Graphic Novel of 2021 list). Her followup literary graphic novel *Midlands* was released in 2023 to critical acclaim.

Want to Read more of Debbie's Work?
Free digital copy of REMORSE
https://solas.pub/remorse

Purchase the Award-winning GHOSTING here in print, PDF, or on Kindle. https://solas.pub/ghosting

SOLAS NUA
NEW IRISH ARTS
2024 BOOK DAY

Free COMICS Alert!
Over 50 comics available from IrishComics.ie
https://solas.pub/comics

IRISH COMICS DOT IE

IrishComics.ie was founded to help a bunch of Irish comic creators share their work and potentially their audiences. The four founding members – Aaron Fever, Clare Foley, Hugh Madden and Paul Carroll – took the approach of old-school blogs to turn the usual methods of sharing comics on their heads. Algorithms be damned.

This site features a simple process: every weekday, a comic page is published.

Over time, short stories, graphic novellas and cherished web comics will be shared across IrishComics.ie.

WHAT TO READ AT IRISHCOMICS.IE

Beloved and ***Don't Wake Daddy Patrick*** are deliciously horror-inflected stories by Kat Foyle.
https://solas.pub/Beloved https://solas.pub/Patrick

The Dead Zoo by Eoin Stephens is set in a trippy, post-apocalyptic Dublin.
https://solas.pub/zoo

The Selkies Call by Anne Toole and Rosa Devine is about the mythical Irish creatures, selkies, and is set in Dun Laoghaire Harbour. https://solas.pub/call

The Joyce Society by Nate Donnell and Mike Lynch created a Joyce-themed adventure romp.
https://solas.pub/joyce

A Hopeful Voice is a delicate tale of a South Korean visiting Dublin by Niall Ruddy and Min the Elephant.
https://solas.pub/voice

The Widow Gamble is a modern retelling of a traditional piece of folklore by Eoin Barclay and Mark Kielty.
https://solas.pub/widow

SOLAS NUA
NEW IRISH ARTS
2024 BOOK DAY

MORE SOURCES FOR GREAT GRAPHIC NOVELS FROM IRELAND

Dooagh Press
https://dooaghpress.com/

Dooagh Press is a small publisher producing original books created and printed in Ireland, based in the village of Dooagh on Achill Island in County Mayo, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Their graphic novels are mostly non-fiction ranging from travelogue to historical and biographical stories.

They have published some fantastic graphic novels on key figures and moments such as:

> ***Kathleen Lynn: Rebel, Activist, Doctor* by Maeve Clancy**: About one of the first female medical doctors to qualify in Ireland. In her roles as activist, politician, doctor and rebel she worked throughout her life to improve the lot of the poorest and least-heard Irish citizens.
>
> ***The Irish Civil War* by Maeve Clancy**: A beautiful Graphic Novel detailing the run-up and events of the Irish Civil War of 1922/1923.

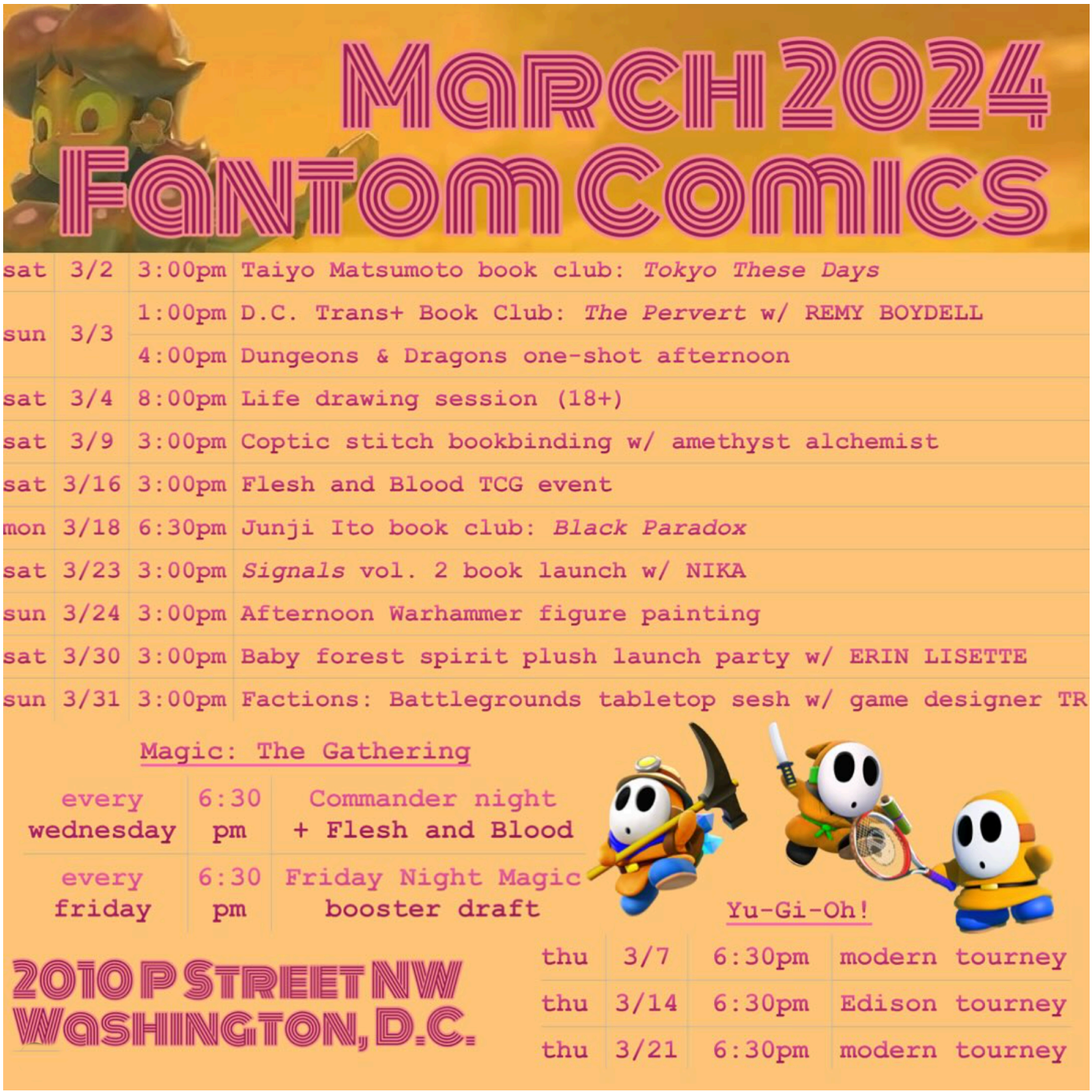
Little Deer Comics
https://littledeercomics.ie/

Little Deer Comics is an independent comic book shop specializing in small press comics and creator-owned comics. Their shop is located in the former Maureen's Grocery on Manor Place in Stoneybatter, beside Slice Cafe.

Limit Break
http://limitbreakcomics.com/

Limit Break Comics is a comic collective that planted its roots in Dublin. Its members include: Paul Carroll, Gareth Luby, Gary Moloney and Seamus Kavanagh. The group specialises in genre fiction comics.

As a collective, Limit Break engages in programming at events, crowdfunding campaigns, and the publishing of comics. It was awarded Best Publisher in the 2021 ICN Awards, and nominated as Best Publisher in the European Science Fiction Society Hall of Fame Awards in 2023.



ABOUT FANTOM COMICS

Fantom Comics was established in 2005 with twin goals. One: To offer a wide selection of comic books and graphic novels to comic book fans. Two: To introduce this under-appreciated (yet quintessentially American) art form to the public at large.

FANTOM COMICS

https://stores.comichub.com/fantom_comics

2010 P St NW, Washington, DC 20036

Closing Note:

Thank you all for attending Solas Nua's
Annual St. Patrick's Day Tradition of
Handing out free Irish literature to people
Across Washington D.C. This PDF was
Printed in book form and handed out with
copies of Luke Healy's *The Con Artists*.

On March 17, over 300 copies of *The Con Artists*
And this booklet were given out.