I Symposium of the Chair for Comics Research and Experimentation (CREC)

May 6–7, 2027

Elisava – School of Design and Engineering of Barcelona – UVic-UCC

Research through Comics: forms of knowledge that emerge through making comics

Open call for papers and posters

We present the first edition of Research through Comics, a symposium on research methodologies through the language of comics in academic, artistic creation, and social action contexts. The symposium is held in collaboration with Comic Barcelona and Llibreria Finestres.

Research through Comics explores the possibilities that comics-making offers for producing knowledge and questions within the field of research. The premise of Research through Comics holds that the very process of making comics and using their language (from the more traditional elements such as speech bubbles, panels, or the reading order, to more experimental forms of expression) is effective for generating new processes and approaches to diverse issues such as artistic creation and others with a social action vocation.

From Elisava - School of Design and Engineering of Barcelona UCC-UVic, we approach the concept of the Symposium inspired by the notion of Research through Design, and its divergences from other approaches such as Research on Design or Research for Design. Research on Design refers to the genealogical understanding of design as an object of study, while Research for Design applies to the creation of a design as a final objective; Research through Design, on the other hand, refers to methodologies where the act of designing and prototyping is used to produce knowledge and explore research questions. In the context of this Symposium, comics are not meant to be approached from historiography, nor from their technical or constructive processes, but rather from the possibilities offered by their use in iterative research processes.

The practice of drawing and comics can be placed at the service of research in fields such as environmental, medical, pedagogical, or anthropological sciences, where the final goal is not to make a comic about the environment, medicine, pedagogy, or anthropology, but rather to go beyond mere illustration of the themes and contribute value through the image. Instead of researching first and drawing afterward, the Symposium encourages critical analysis of what emerges through the practice of

making comics. For these reasons, Research through Comics involves experimental, exploratory, practical, reflective processes that remain open to uncertainty.

The Finestres-Elisava Chair for Comics Research and Experimentation (CREC) was founded in September 2025 to address the needs of comics as both a language and a research field currently undergoing full creative and conceptual expansion. The Chair's mission is to bring comics and graphic narrative languages closer to new horizons of research. This Symposium is a natural extension of the Chair's objectives: to be a space for meeting, debate, and visibility for emerging forms of experimentation and thought within the European academic context.

The Symposium coincides in dates with the 45th edition of Comic Barcelona.

Objectives

The aim is to generate a meeting around the use of comics as a methodology for artistic and social research, sharing experiences of its use across multiple stages of a project. This will make it possible to:

- Generate a map and a meeting point for researchers and comics authors who have carried out or are currently carrying out research projects, linked to the academic framework and/or to artistic creation in comics.
- Investigate how these authors' knowledge and professional trajectories influence research-creation projects.
- Foster connections among participants and reflect collectively on how thought unfolds through the act of drawing, on creative methodologies, and on the interplay between practice and theory.
- Reaffirm the CREC Chair's framework of interest around comics as a space for research-creation and experimentation that cuts across different fields.

Thematic proposals

- Comics as a research methodology
- Drawing as a research methodology
- Experimental comics: crossovers with other artistic languages
- Architecture and comics
- Performance, performing arts, and comics
- Graphic recording
- Visual ethnography and comics
- Pedagogical processes through comics
- Comics as a methodology for social action

Audience

The call is aimed at researchers, authors, or professionals who have led or participated in projects in the field of social sciences (educational, ethnographic, activism, etc.) and who have used the language of comics in their research processes. It is also open to all audiences interested in these issues.

Locations and schedule

- Wednesday, May 5, afternoon – Welcome reception at Elisava
- Thursday, May 6, 10:00–18:00 – Sessions at Elisava
- Thursday, May 6, from 18:00 – Event at Llibreria Finestres
- Friday, May 7, 10:00–14:00 – Sessions at Comic Barcelona https://www.comic-barcelona.com/es/inicio.cfm

How can I take part?

A) Presenting a paper
Propose your paper in a 30-minute talk format.
Send your proposal (title + a text of maximum 500–800 words + CV) filling the forms https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/etmww0bdaa
Open call for papers: until September 30, 2026.
Acceptances: accepted speakers will be notified during the first half of October 2026.
Acceptance of the paper includes a payment of €250 (with the corresponding personal income tax withholding) as a contribution toward travel and accommodation.
Acceptance includes a pass to the Friday sessions at Comic Barcelona.

B) Presenting a poster
Propose your poster explaining your research through an image and an oral presentation of no more than 15 minutes. Send your proposal (title + a text of maximum 300 words + CV) filling the forms
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/etmww0bdaa
Open call for posters: until September 30, 2026.
Acceptances: accepted presenters will be notified during the first half of October 2026.
Acceptance of the poster includes a payment of €150 (with the corresponding personal income tax withholding) as a contribution toward travel and accommodation.
Acceptance includes a pass to the Friday sessions at Comic Barcelona.

C) As an attendee
You can attend all Thursday sessions at Elisava free of charge. For the Friday sessions at Comic Barcelona, attendees will need to purchase their own ticket.

Certificates and publication

Certificates of attendance and participation will be issued.

Subsequent publication of the papers is planned, in a format yet to be confirmed.