

Ascot Smith
Published on: Examiner.com
Date: Jul 16, 2009

Wednesday Comics

For readers unfamiliar with the daily exercise of washing newspaper ink off their fingers, *Wednesday Comics* should feel like a childhood daydream. Printed on newsprint at a tabloid size this weekly summer-long series (just 12 issues) evokes the classic funny paper of days gone by.

There is a simple joy in unfolding each single-page story filled with detailed panels and vibrant dotted colors to an immersive size. *Wednesday Comics*, even more so, exists like a silver-age time portal, when each of DC's familiar heroes existed in a simpler form without the burdensome weight of years of continuity. Batman combats crime, Superman fights invading aliens, and so on, but these tales are envisioned by the medium's contemporary auteurs' who are eager to flaunt their 'old-school' influences. Guided by the art direction of Mark Chiarello, the series includes Neil Gaiman, Brian Azzarello, Paul Pope, Kyle Baker, and Dave Gibbons to mention a few.

It's too soon to judge the 15 single page stories, but Paul Pope's *Strange Adventures* is currently my favorite. Pope's unique style, a composite of European and Manga influences, gives the story's alien landscape a moody and modern edge. *Batman* by Azzarello and Eduardo Risso is clever and dark. Other exciting tales include, Ben Caldwell's re-imagining of Wonder Woman as a young girl who dreams of thwarting mythical beasts, and the misadventures of Supergirl by Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti. Many of these stories could seem unremarkable within the confines of a normal comic size, but each artist utilizes the over-sized format filling it with lush and vivid detail. My only single complaint, (this could be premature, only future issues will tell) is too few tales are self-contained within the single page and end abruptly- to be continued. Admittedly this mimics the nature of daily newspaper strips and most stories end climatically, ever heightening anticipation for next week's cliffhanger.

Wednesday Comics is an unlikely concoction- something so old-fashioned that it's new-fangled. This comic book exists in an isolated bubble of time. By printing each story on a single page of foldout newsprint the series simultaneously becomes relevant and a dust-covered artifact. It's not difficult to confuse the series' nostalgia with lament for when the medium was still a popular art form. The first issue is a blast, but I can't help but feel it is an enthusiastic fun-filled requiem for the aging print industry. This bitter-sweetness is an incidental quality found in any perfectly executed homage and *Wednesday Comics* is no different. Filled with admiration for an era less complicated this series imbues a sense of wonderment and awe every reader felt when opening their first comic book.