

# Superheroes

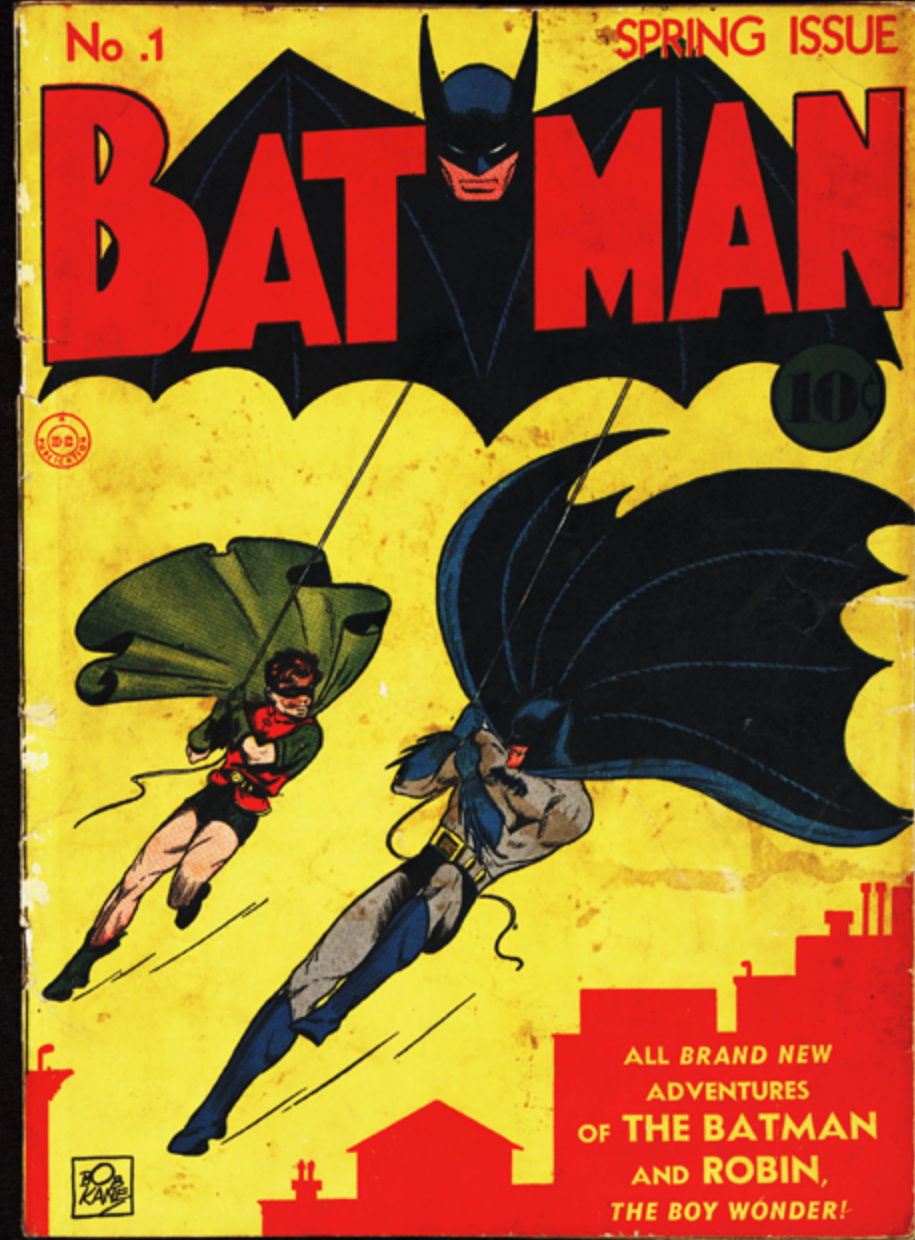
## In Gotham



**By James D. Balestrieri**

**NEW YORK CITY** – Disclosure: I still have my comic book collection, books from the early 1970s for the most part, from what is referred to as the Silver Age of Comics, silver calling to mind the silver bullets that plagued the *Werewolf By Night*, calling to mind the *Silver Surfer*, that most cerebral and cosmic of the superheroes, calling to mind the *Fantastic Four* and the silver temples of their leader, Reed Richards (mine are silver, too, though my ability to stretch, as opposed to his, seems to be on the wane). My children marvel at my Marvel Comics and Classics Illustrated – now bagged and boarded in acid-free Mylar.

**Batman (No.1, Spring 1940), Bob Kane and Bill Finger. Published by Detective Comics, Inc, New York. Serial and Government Publications Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**





GLORIA STEINEM  
ON HOW  
WOMEN VOTE  
MONEY FOR  
HOUSEWORK

# Ms.

NEW FEMINIST:  
SIMONE  
DE BEAUVOIR  
BODY HAIR: THE  
LAST FRONTIER

## WONDER WOMAN FOR PRESIDENT

JULY 1972

\$1.00



Full disclosure: you may well see, somewhere in this essay, a photo of attendees at the 2012 Comic Con in New York. I was there, with my family, and was in a kind of makeshift getup as the Shadow, that 1930s pulp hero – “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men...” – who was the inspiration for Batman.

Deep disclosure: the brief bio that closes my writing in *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* alludes to the plays, screenplays and stories I write. It doesn't mention the graphic novel I've been composing for the past three years.

So I come at “Superheroes in Gotham,” the exhibition of comic book New York... Gotham City... Metropolis... at the New-York

**Ms. Magazine (No. 1, 1972). New-York Historical Society.**

**©Ms. Magazine**



Historical Society, with little of the art historian's scholarly detachment. I'm more of a celebrant and aspirant, which doesn't mean I don't think deeply about sequential art and its place in contemporary culture. "Nuff said," as the letters to and from the creators and editors used to end at the back of Silver Age Marvel comics like *Killraven* and *Kull*.

Sequential art dominates modern visual culture across the globe. A bold statement? Consider this. In film, and increasingly in television, superheroes, the original creatures of sequential art – the comic strip, comic book, graphic novel – not only conquer, but proliferate. In open-ended sequels and prequels, in standalone movies and spin-offs, larger-than-life heroes make and keep the world safe – and set

**Amazing Fantasy (No. 15, August 1962). Published by Atlas Magazines, Inc. Serial and Government Publications Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**



No. 1

JUNE, 1938

# ACTION COMICS

10¢



box office records. Disney, Marvel, *Star Wars*, these are the real Avengers. DC tastes the rare air they breathe, while Dark Horse, Valiant, IDW, Fantagraphics, First Second and other publishers work the edges and depths of pulp, politics, history and the vicissitudes of growing up and growing old into the form. Critics and scholars devote careers to the meaning and function of sequential art...

(Continued on page 6C inside the E-Edition)

**Read Full Article  
on Desktop**

**Read Full Article  
on Mobile**

**Action Comics (No. 1, June 1938), Jerry Siegel (writer) and Joe Shuster (artist). Published by Detective Comics, Inc, New York. Courtesy of Metropoliscomics.com.**



# Browse More



**Chasing The  
Weather Away  
At The Winter  
Antiques Show**



**Americana Week  
Auction Highlights**



**Flagler Surveys  
Beauty's Legacy In  
'Gilded Age Portraits  
Of America'**