



DRAWN TO PURPOSE

American Women Illustrators and Cartoonists

The **Drawn To Purpose** exhibition from the Library of Congress brings to light remarkable but little-known contributions made by women to two popular art forms—illustration and cartooning. Spanning the late 1800s to the present, these works highlight the gradual broadening in both the private and public spheres, of women's roles and interests, addressing such themes as evolving ideals of feminine beauty, new opportunities emerging for women in society, changes in gender relations, and issues of human welfare.

Drawn to Purpose demonstrates that women once constrained by social conditions have gained immense new opportunities for self-expression and discovery to share with growing audiences.

Texas Region – Women's History Month 2022; presentation created by DFW Culture Club

A Pretty Girl in the West, 1889

Published in *Century Magazine*

This illustration accompanies an essay by **Mary Hallock Foote** in which she observes eastern girls coming west to attract admirers.

She creates an atmosphere of restraint in this illustrations – the young woman and man sit far apart, making little eye contact.

When Foote married a mining engineer, she left her career on the east coast, but continued illustrating.

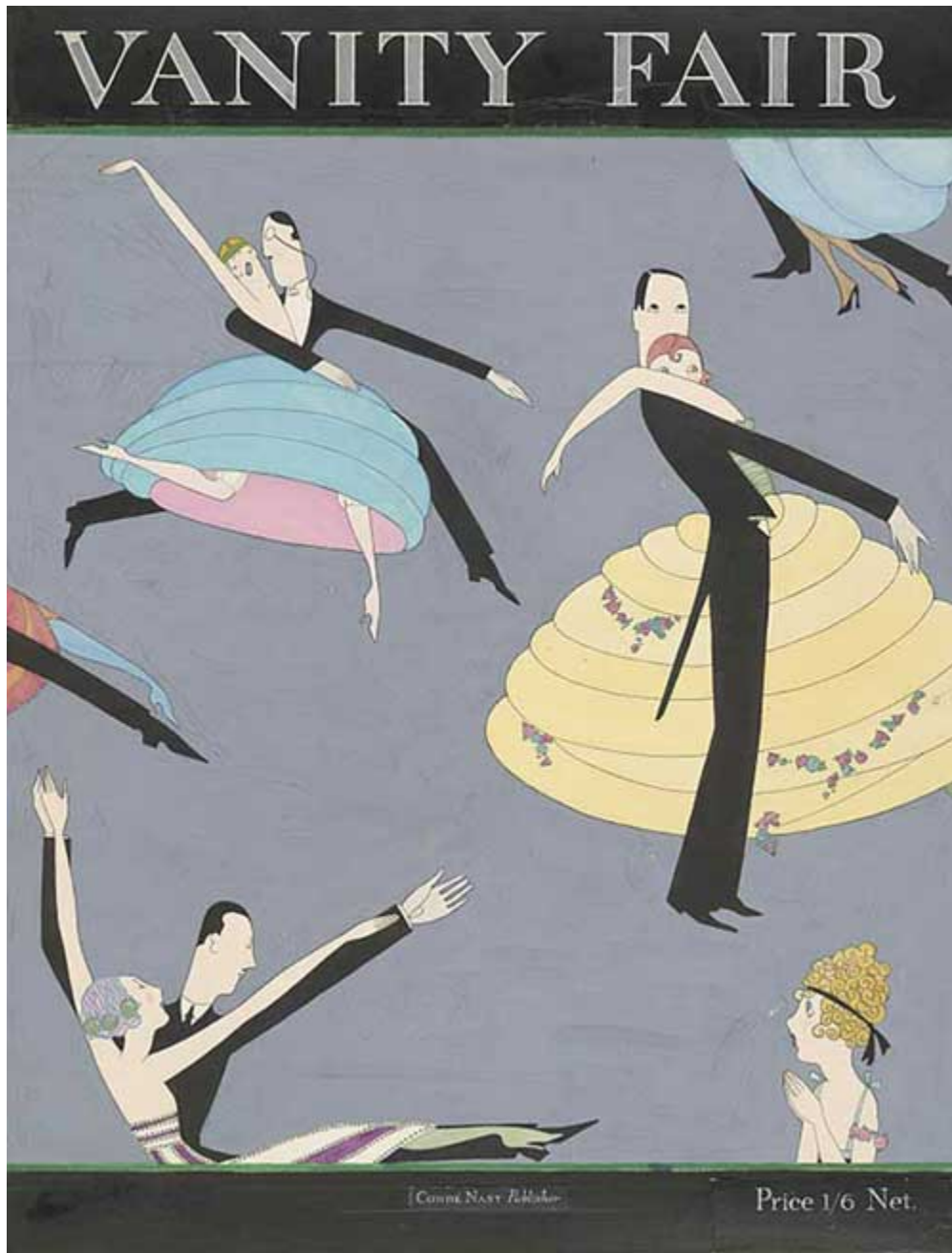


Panta=loons, 1914

Published in *Evening Star
Sunday Magazine*

With the rise of urban life in the 1910s, women began exploring new options in clothing as changing ideals of feminine beauty. Increasingly sophisticated fashion options took hold. Brooklyn-born illustrator **Jessie Gillespie's** spoof depicts figures wearing pantaloons in vignettes surrounding the central clown.





Dancing Couples, no. 1, 1920

Published as cover for *Vanity Fair*

Anne Harriet Fish's depiction of women and men dancing so close together fits a new dynamic in social relations between the sexes and invites readers to explore the magazine's contents.

Designing more than 30 cover designs for *Vanity Fair*, Fish also created elegant cartoon, caricature, and illustration drawings that were published in other magazines including *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

“Exercise is Making a New Girl Out of Me, Molly...” 1928

Published in *Molly the Manicure Girl* comic strip

Virginia Huget created one of the few comics that identified flappers as job holders. In this beach scene, the brunette friend Gertie plays the foil to the blonde manicurist Molly, the shrewder, smarter character. The strip captures the breezy humor typical of the 1920s.



Wife dressed for work kisses sleeping husband good-bye, 1943

Published in *The New Yorker*

Roberta MacDonald created this cartoon during the World War II era when thousands of women entered the work force. Unlike many cartoonists at that time, she depicted women in the military and other jobs.

With witty humor, she poked fun at her own gender's preoccupation with appearance, gender relations, and high-handed personalities, publishing more than one hundred cartoons in the *New Yorker* from 1940–1952.



“Evenin’, Torchy” and “Torchy Togs,” 1951

Published in comic strip, *Torchy in Heartbeats* in
Pittsburgh Courier

Jackie Ormes eased the way for Black
cartoonist successors following in her footsteps.
She created engaging, career-oriented African
American female characters in her comic strip,
Torchy in Heartbeats.

Like many peers, Ormes also produced
character paper dolls to accompany her comic.

To see larger versions of her illustrations, visit
JackieOrmes.com.

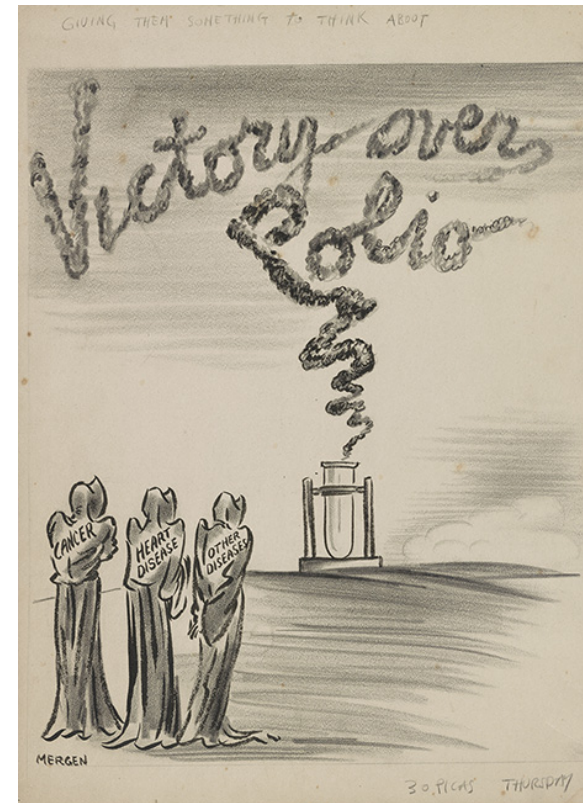


Watch Your Language. I'm Not on Your Board of Directors, 1954

Published in *Esquire*

Dorothy McKay drew on her experience working in advertising agencies in creating this and other scenes of women in business settings.

McKay's lively, deftly executed cartoons featured witty captions and sophisticated humor.



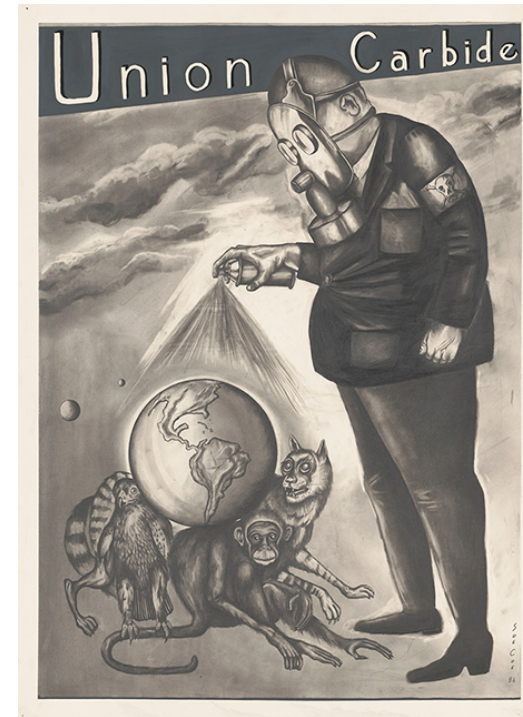
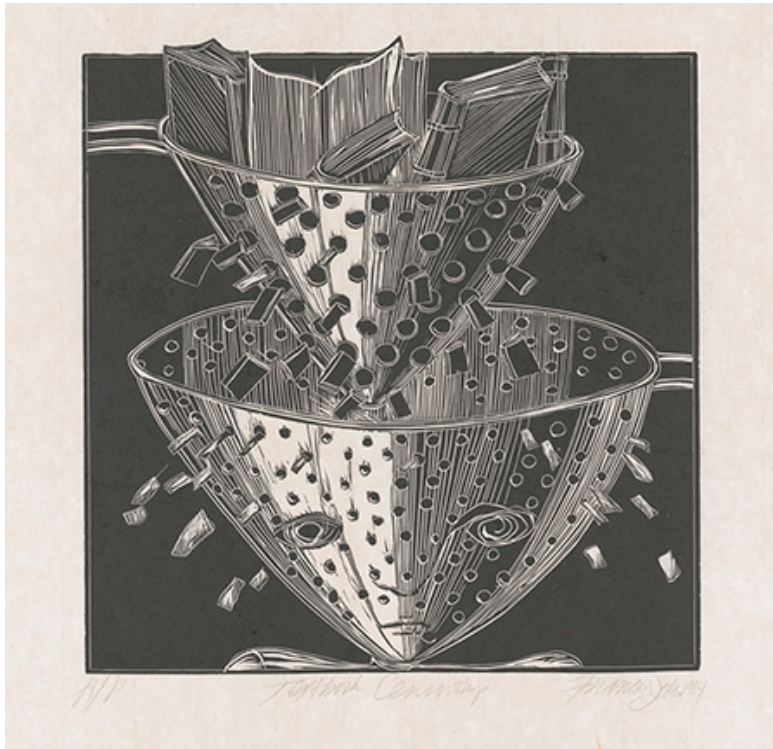
Giving Them Something to Talk About, 1954

Published in *The Miami Daily News*

When a polio vaccine was developed in the 1950s, **Anne Mergen** hailed this medical milestone in this cartoon. She strongly advocated in her work for research to find a cure and felt that she had contributed in some small way to victory over the disease.

Textbook Censorship, 1984

Frances Jetter uses kitchen strainers as a shockingly effective metaphor for censorship. In a tiered image, she visually tracks this disturbing process inflicted on textbooks, forcibly reduced to drastically miniaturized forms, and finally to pitiful slips of paper, symbolic of simplified, fragmentary thoughts.



Union Carbide, 1986

Sue Coe's deep concern for both human and animal welfare comes through in her graphic response to the infamous leak of chemicals from the Union Carbide Corporation in India, in 1984.

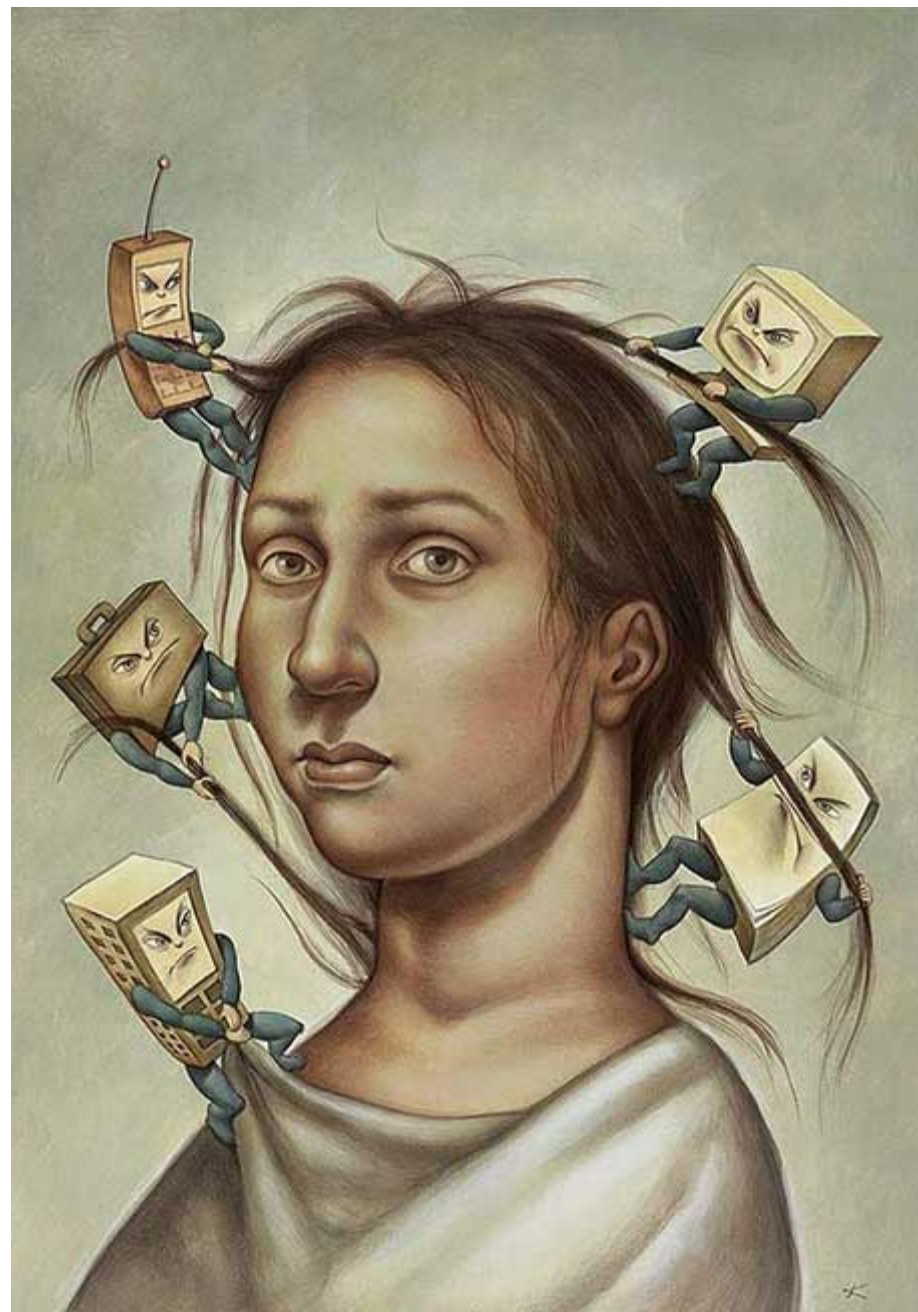
Employing her drawing style described as "caricatured realism," Coe responds with anger over the impact of human desire for power and control over other living creatures.

Tugged, 2001

Published in *Working Woman*

Pulled in competing directions by career, marriage, and motherhood, **Anita Kunz's** everywoman struggles to remain outwardly calm while beset by multiple demands, expectations, and desires.

Commissioned in 2001, this image captures the tug-of-war that many women continue to experience.



STYLE



Style, 2009

Published in *The New Yorker*

Roz Chast uses comic strip format to depict a girl who never wanted to look out-of-place but felt she did, resulting in anxiety over fashion choices that lingered into adulthood.

Chast uses common insecurities shared by many, especially women, in her cartoons.

One of the leading cartoonists for the *New Yorker*, since 1978 she has published more than one thousand cartoons in the magazine.

Click [HERE](#) to explore the exhibit online and learn more about the [Library of Congress](#) in Washington, D.C.

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