Comic-Con exploded around the world in the “now” age of social media. It became the show everyone wanted to go to as it expanded into other sites, including hotels and the new San Diego Central Library, creating a downtown campus.
Comic-Con entered the second decade of the new millennium with still more expansion to the nearby hotels. It added a second day of programming to the Indigo Ballroom in the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, which hosted the Eisner Awards for the very first time. Events such as the COI-PF, the fan groups meeting room, and the anime rooms moved offsite to the Marriott Marquis Hotel and Marina next door. The CBLDF programmed “Master Sessions” with comic artists Rob Liefeld, Terry Moore, Paul Pope, and Jill Thompson. Hollywood programming included Red, The Expendables, a discussion between J. J. Abrams and Joss Whedon, and a first look at the cast of Marvel’s Avengers, two years before the film debuted (see page 30 for a cast photo). On the TV side, attendees saw presentations on Dexter, The Big Bang Theory (its third time at the event), and Supernatural among others. Entertainment Weekly introduced its “Women Who Kick Ass” panel for the first time with female stars from movie and TV, including Anna Torv, Chloe Grace Moretz, and Mary Elizabeth Winstead. And a new show called The Walking Dead made its first of many Comic-Con appearances. Ray Bradbury was the Icon Award recipient.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW LEFT: Jill Thompson sure was pleased to get an Eisner Award.
RIGHT: Manga great Moto Hagio had one request of Comic-Con: Could she please meet Ray Bradbury?
SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Former DC Comics publisher Jenette Kahn was an Inkpot Award recipient; artist Jillian Tamaki, Darkord schemed.
THIRD ROW, LEFT: J. J. Abrams and Joss Whedon had a meeting of the minds in Hall H.
RIGHT: Comic book writer Brian Michael Bendis with his Inkpot Award.
BOTTOM: The cast of The Big Bang Theory backstage in Hall H.
THIS PAGE, TOP AND RIGHT: DC Comics celebrated their 75th anniversary and Comic-Con helped with this cover and official T-shirt by Ivan Reis, Oclair Albert, and Alex Sinclair.
BELOW: End of the line, Bub.
One of the big programming themes for 2011 was the 50th anniversary of Comics Fandom, with panels and a gala party saluting the event. Comic-Con brought together some of fandom’s founders for this momentous occasion. The Events Guide’s color section split off into a separate publication, the Quick Guide, featuring maps plus the program schedule grids in a full-color magazine format. Comic-Con began to program special kids-oriented panels all four days of the event, not just on Sundays. Morgan Spurlock’s documentary about the event, Comic-Con: Episode IV: A Fan’s Hope, was released. Directors Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson appeared together on the Hall H stage to present The Adventures of Tintin, their animation collaboration, and Spielberg was an Inkpot Award recipient. TV shows were added to Hall H on Sunday, including Doctor Who with cast members Matt Smith and Karen Gillan. Two new shows debuted at Comic-Con: Arrow, with Stephen Amell and Katie Cassidy, and Game of Thrones, with Peter Dinklage, Emilia Clarke, Kit Harington, Jason Momoa, and Lena Headey alongside creator George R.R. Martin. Voice actor June Foray won the Icon Award.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW: The Comics Fandom 50th Anniversary party included longtime fans and pros instrumental in starting fandom (see the list of special guests on the lower right).

SECOND ROW LEFT: Directors Peter Jackson and Steven Spielberg.

RIGHT: Vivid colors at the Masquerade Party.

THIRD ROW LEFT: Flash, Aquaman, and Green Lantern cosplay.

RIGHT: Los Bros Hernandez, Gilbert, Jaime, and Mario

BOTTOM: Cast members from a new HBO series called Game of Thrones, alongside author George R.R. Martin (far right).

THIS PAGE, TOP AND RIGHT: Jim Lee’s New 52 Justice League cover and T-shirt art, with inked by Scott Williams and colored by Alex Sinclair.

BELOW: Comic Creator Connection, which brings together writers and artists looking for creative partners, made its first appearance at Comic-Con.

2011
COMIC-CON 42

JULY 21–24
San Diego Convention Center

Attendance: 130,000

One of the big programming themes for 2011 was the 50th anniversary of Comics Fandom, with panels and a gala party saluting the event. Comic-Con brought together some of fandom’s founders for this momentous occasion. The Events Guide’s color section split off into a separate publication, the Quick Guide, featuring maps plus the program schedule grids in a full-color magazine format. Comic-Con began to program special kids-oriented panels all four days of the event, not just on Sundays. Morgan Spurlock’s documentary about the event, Comic-Con: Episode IV: A Fan’s Hope, was released. Directors Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson appeared together on the Hall H stage to present The Adventures of Tintin, their animation collaboration, and Spielberg was an Inkpot Award recipient. TV shows were added to Hall H on Sunday, including Doctor Who with cast members Matt Smith and Karen Gillan. Two new shows debuted at Comic-Con: Arrow, with Stephen Amell and Katie Cassidy, and Game of Thrones, with Peter Dinklage, Emilia Clarke, Kit Harington, Jason Momoa, and Lena Headey alongside creator George R.R. Martin. Voice actor June Foray won the Icon Award.
Comic-Con brought together most of the Image Comics founders to celebrate the company’s 20th anniversary, including Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri, and Jim Valentino. The Gays in Comics panel celebrated its 25th anniversary at Comic-Con, moderated once again by founder Andy Mangels. Twilight made its final appearance at the show with Breaking Dawn, Part 2.

For Iron Man 3, Robert Downey Jr. made a grand entrance from the back of Hall H, dancing through the cheering crowd to the stage. More TV series made the jump to Hall H on Friday, with The Big Bang Theory, The Walking Dead, and Game of Thrones moving to the bigger venue. Matt Groening was the Icon Award recipient. Comic-Con relaunched its website on 12/12/12 with a whole new look and the return of Rick Geary’s Toucan as the namesake of the official blog. Bloggers included Maggie Thompson, Steve Lieber, Marc Bernardin, and Katie Cook, who provided new weekly content, along with all the latest information on the company’s three shows at the time: WonderCon, the Alternative Press Expo (APE), and Comic-Con. Co-founder Richard Alf passed away.
Comic-Con added the Lyceum Theatre in Horton Plaza on Friday and Saturday. Billed as a “small, intimate, theatre-like atmosphere,” the Lyceum hosted ticketed panels on topics such as the popular Nerdit website and the 20th anniversary of Pinky and the Brain. Meanwhile, back at the Convention Center, Loki (Tom Hiddleston) took control of Hall H with a sneer: “Humanity. Look how far you’ve fallen, lining up in the sweltering heat for hours, cowering in darkness.” The audience ate it up, along with Karen Gillan’s bald-head reveal as Nebula in Guardians of the Galaxy.

Marvel and Joss Whedon introduced the new show Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. The creators of March—Rep. John Lewis, co-author Andrew Aydin, and artist Nate Powell—talked about their new graphic novel. Superman’s 75th anniversary was celebrated with classic and new writers and artists, TV’s Jimmy Olsen, Jack Larson, and Man of Steel movie star Henry Cavill. Jennifer Lawrence made her first Comic-Con appearance for The Hunger Games, and Breaking Bad joined the Sunday Hall H schedule.

The Quick Guide added the popular “Restaurant Guide” section, featuring listings for over 150 downtown eating and drinking establishments.
Comic-Con started a series of Graphic Novel Book clubs early in 2014, at the Downtown and Mission Valley libraries. The 75th anniversary of Batman was a programming highlight, along with a posthumous Inkpot Award for Bill Finger, widely regarded as the character’s co-creator. Warner Bros. continued their Preview Night pilot screenings with looks at The Flash, Constantine, and iZombie, all based on DC Comics series. The Horton Grand Theatre became the newest offsite programming venue, with panels featuring Outlander and Weird Al Yankovic. Just about the entire Game of Thrones cast filled the Hall H stage. Zack Snyder announced Batman v Superman and introduced the world to Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman. The menace of Thanos was given a new face—actor Josh Brolin, complete with Infinity Gauntlet—at the Marvel Studios panel, which also included the cast of Avengers: Age of Ultron. Samuel L. Jackson said this about Comic-Con: “Seems like every year I come here and it validates the fact that I belong and I get all this energy and love from everybody ... it makes me feel like going out and making movies for the rest of the year.” ‘Nuff said, Nick!
Comic-Con continued to grow in 2015, as the event added more off-site venues. The Manchester Grand Hyatt became the home for the CCI-IFF and the Blood Drive, and introduced the Her Universe Fashion Show on Thursday night. The big addition was the beautiful new San Diego Central Library, a state-of-the-art facility that offered educational programs along with comics and fandom podcast and web series programs. The addition of the library was a major commitment on the part of Comic-Con to provide educational programming for teachers and librarians. Also at the library: the first-ever “Art of Comic-Con” gallery show, featuring original art, sketches, and more from the 46-year history of the event. Lucasfilm returned with a Hall H panel devoted to *The Force Awakens*, featuring Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver, and ending with a gala march to the Embarcadero stage behind the Center for a full Star Wars concert! The new Doctor, Peter Capaldi, made his first Comic-Con appearance, alongside co-star Jenna Coleman at the *Doctor Who* panel. Writer-producer-director Reginald Hudlin was the Icon Award recipient.
Actor John Barrowman hosted the Eisner Awards and went full cosplay, with three costume changes. The educational panels at the San Diego Central Library, now officially called the “Comic Conference for Educators and Librarians,” grew to three complete days and were open to people without badges. Hall H attendees got free wands to wield in Warner Bros. Fantastic Beasts panel. WB also presented Justice League with stars Henry Cavill, Ben Affleck, and Gal Gadot, plus Chris Pine joined Gal for Wonder Woman, and the cast of Suicide Squad, including Will Smith and Margot Robbie, appeared. Marvel Studios announced Black Panther and Doctor Strange (both with cast members), and introduced Brie Larson as Captain Marvel, making Comic-Con once again THE place to be for Marvel movie news and stars. Sherlock with Benedict Cumberbatch made its Hall H debut, and the Arrowverse dominated Ballroom 20 on Saturday, with Arrow, The Flash, Supergirl, and Legends of Tomorrow all taking the stage. Comic-Con introduced its first-ever official app, sponsored by NBC, which enabled attendees to have the complete, updated schedule in their pockets at all times.

NOTABLE GUESTS

ROBERTO AGUIRRE-SACASA
Comic book writer, TV producer, Riverdale

LISA HANAWALT
Cartoonist, writer-producer, BoJack Horseman

KEITH KNIGHT
Cartoonist, The K Chronicles

ED McGUINNESS
Comic book artist, Superman/Batman, Hulk

PATRICK ROTHFUSS
Fantasy author, Kingkiller Chronicle series

BABS TARR
Comic book artist, Batgirl

G. WILLOW WILSON
Author, comic book writer, Alif the Unseen, Ms. Marvel
Comic-Con saluted both Jack Kirby and Will Eisner on their 100th birthdays. Both artists were part of the Comic-Con family for many years. The celebration included lengthy tributes in the Souvenir Book and panels with both Kirby and Eisner family members in attendance. Kirby was awarded a posthumous Icon Award. The Marriott Marquis Hotel opened a new facility, which Comic-Con took over with an expanded Anime suite of four rooms. The CCI-IFF moved there, along with the popular Fan Culture room and a new Pinball Lounge was opened. At the Library, the educational program schedule expanded to Wednesday through Sunday, once again allowing anyone to attend. Hall H programs on Friday were taken over by TV programs, with Preacher and Marvel’s Defenders joining Big Bang Theory, Game of Thrones, and both Walking Dead series. Warner Bros. presented Justice League, Blade Runner 2049 and Ready Player One, while Marvel Studios offered Thor: Ragnarok and Avengers: Infinity War. On Sunday, fans said goodbye to Peter Capaldi as The Doctor. Marvel Comics great Marie Severin was the recipient of the Comic-Con Icon Award.

Above: The official T-shirt celebrated Batgirl’s 50th anniversary with art by Rafael Albuquerque; a Comic-Con logo T-shirt used “Kirby Crackle” to salute Jack’s 100th; this design also appeared on a tote bag.

SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Supergirl star Melissa Benoist, artist Dave Gibbons and British talk show host Jonathan Ross at the Eisner Awards; Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige received an Inkpot Award in Hall H.
THIRD ROW, LEFT: Davos and Sansa (Liam Cunningham and Sophie Turner) together again at the Game of Thrones panel.
RIGHT: Marvel Comics great Marie Severin was the recipient of the Comic-Con Icon Award.
BOTTOM: Cast members from Thor: Ragnarok leave the stage in Hall H. Left to right: Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston, Mark Ruffalo, and Cate Blanchett.

This page, Top: Comic-Con saluted the 100th birthday of Jack Kirby with this Souvenir Book cover by Bruce Timm, which united DC and Marvel Comics characters co-created by the King.
Below: Cartoonist Daniel Clowes signs at the Fantagraphics booth.

Comic-Con saluted both Jack Kirby and Will Eisner on their 100th birthdays. Both artists were part of the Comic-Con family for many years. The celebration included lengthy tributes in the Souvenir Book and panels with both Kirby and Eisner family members in attendance. Kirby was awarded a posthumous Icon Award. The Marriott Marquis Hotel opened a new facility, which Comic-Con took over with an expanded Anime suite of four rooms. The CCI-IFF moved there, along with the popular Fan Culture room and a new Pinball Lounge was opened. At the Library, the educational program schedule expanded to Wednesday through Sunday, once again allowing anyone to attend. Hall H programs on Friday were taken over by TV programs, with Preacher and Marvel’s Defenders joining Big Bang Theory, Game of Thrones, and both Walking Dead series. Warner Bros. presented Justice League, Blade Runner 2049 and Ready Player One, while Marvel Studios offered Thor: Ragnarok and Avengers: Infinity War. On Sunday, fans said goodbye to Peter Capaldi as The Doctor. Marvel Comics great Marie Severin was the recipient of the Comic-Con Icon Award.

Above: The official T-shirt celebrated Batgirl’s 50th anniversary with art by Rafael Albuquerque; a Comic-Con logo T-shirt used “Kirby Crackle” to salute Jack’s 100th; this design also appeared on a tote bag.
Comic-Con partnered with Mondo to produce this year’s Souvenir Book cover by British illustrator Matt Taylor, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The cover art was also offered as a limited-edition silk-screen print to Comic-Con attendees. The Eisner Awards celebrated their 30th anniversary. For the first time, Comic-Con and the city of San Diego shut down Harbor Drive, allowing only badged members on Convention Center property. This reduced crowding and helped augment show security. First announced in 2017, the Comic-Con Museum had its first-ever booth in the Exhibit Hall, offering charter memberships, and also held its first panel. (For more on the Museum, see page 174.) Programming grew to 28 separate rooms scattered between the Convention Center, nearby hotels, Horton Grand Theatre, and the Downtown Library, with more than 850 programs. Fans got their first look at the new Doctor, Jodie Whittaker, in her Hall H debut. Sadly, 2018 ended with the death of Comic-Con president John Rogers, whose visionary leadership propelled the show’s rising success from the mid-1980s through the 2010s. It was the end of an era.
2019 dawned with the first new president of Comic-Con in over three decades. Long-time volunteer and VP of Events, Robin Donlan, took over as president. Fae Desmond, in charge of the corporation’s day-to-day business, continued in her role as executive director. Comic-Con added four more Graphic Novel Book Clubs: an additional one at the Escondido Public Library, and new ones at the Comic-Con Museum in Balboa Park, the Chula Vista Public library, and a special club for educators at the San Diego Office of Education. This brought the total number of Book Clubs up to 11, scattered around San Diego County and all meeting monthly (for more info on the Book Clubs and to see what they’re reading in 2019, turn to page 236).

This is the 50th consecutive San Diego Comic-Con, and we’re marking the occasion with a special “Comic-Con 50” celebration. This special edition of the Souvenir Book is just a part of that, with panels, parties, and special merchandise commemorating the event. As we close another decade and hurtle toward the once-seemingly far-in-the-future world of 2020, Comic-Con remains committed to bringing you, our attendees, the best possible show we can produce. We sincerely hope you enjoy—or enjoyed—Comic-Con 2019!

Obviously we have no photos from Comic-Con 2019 (the DeLorean is in the shop AGAIN), so please enjoy this look at Rick Geary’s special 50th anniversary Toucan from sketch to final art, and turn the page to see “Cover Story,” the story behind Jim Lee’s amazing cover for this year’s Souvenir Book!