



BARCELONA, CAPITAL OF THE COMIC STRIP

DURING THE SIXTIES, BARCELONA AND VALENCIA ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS BOTH IN THE FIELD OF HUMOUR AND IN ADVENTURE COMICS. TODAY THE TWO CITIES STILL HAVE AN ENORMOUS CREATIVE STOCKPILE FROM WHICH NEW ARTISTS ARE STILL EMERGING, INFLUENCED BY A PAST WHICH IS FAMILIAR TO SOME AND INTUITIVELY ASSIMILATED BY OTHERS.

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The comic industry in this country flourished between the post-war period and the end of the sixties. These were years in which great legends were created, years of popular culture, of long print-runs, low prices and, apart from the odd exception, of greater efficiency and higher quality. For this long period of time, Barcelona and Valencia were constantly competing for control of the market, achieving successes both in the field of humour and in adventure comics. Such well known comics as *TBO*, *Pulgarcito*, *Tío Vivo*, *El Capitán Trueno* or *Hazañas Bélicas* were produced by Barcelona publishers, while others, *Roberto Alcázar* y *Pedrin*, *El Guerrero del antifaz*, *Jaimito* and *Pumby*, originated in Valencia. During the sixties, all these publications started to go downhill, and the majority disappeared during the early seventies. Along with the comics, a whole way of

understanding this sort of publication disappeared from the market and the publishing houses eventually gave up comics or closed.

In Barcelona, though, new publishers emerged who created new products, to the extent of concentrating 90% of all the country's publications. One of the reasons for this was the creation in the mid-fifties of illustrators' agencies who supplied our artists' work to all the international markets. In many cases, these agencies became the embryos of new comic publishers who during the eighties channelled most of the initiatives and publications in what was known as the "adult comic". This term arose as a way of differentiating the new publications from the more traditional comics, which were generally for children, and because the traditional publishers never managed to adapt their products to the new situation created by the emergence

of the adult comic. It was a way of underlining the changes in style and subject matter and in the industry itself.

The eighties present a picture in which parallel worlds, with little or no relation to one another, lived side by side:

- Continuity in the traditional comic, with children's figures such as *Mortadelo* and *Filemón* or *Zipi* and *Zape*.

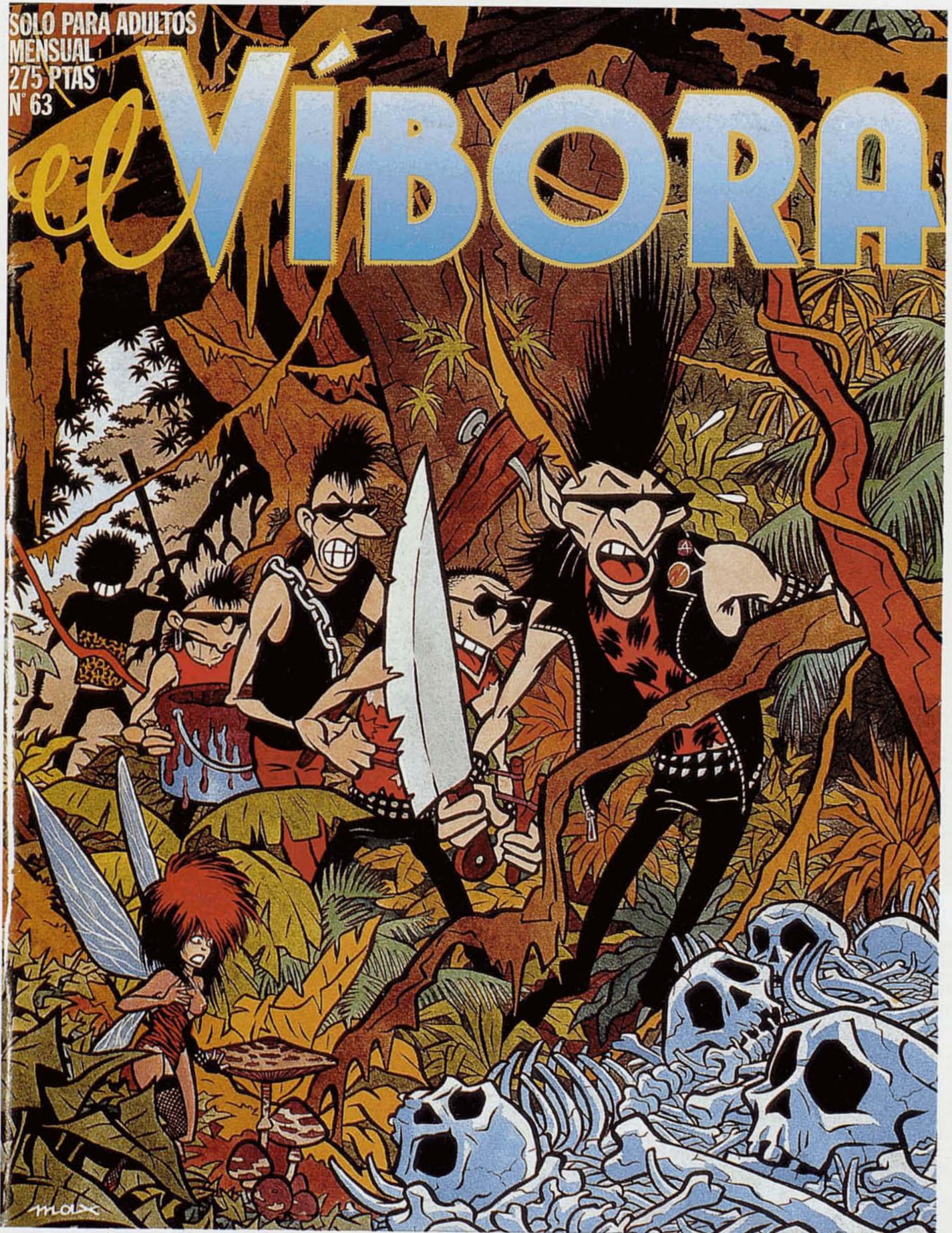
- The adult comic, with a range of movements going from the "marginal" story to avant-garde graphics.

- The "commissioned" work for agencies, almost always anonymous, for Italy, England, Germany or the United States.

- The humorous cartoon for adults, usually published in weeklies or periodicals.

In general terms, the situation today is much the same as it was then.

Barcelona and Valencia today still have an enormous creative stockpile from



MAX. PETER PANK. EL VÍBORA. ED. LA CÚPULA. BARCELONA, 1985