

EXHIBIT NN

A Jack Kirby Celebration

The following were originally written for Jack Kirby's 1987 birthday surprise party:

16 years ago, DC Comics asked me to write the editorial pages for the first issues of Jack Kirby's *New Gods*, *Forever People*, and *Mister Miracle*. In it, I waxed poetic (okay, back then the best I could muster was waxing deep purple, bordering on the

ultra-violet) on Jack's incredible creativity, constant, never-ending imagination, and the brilliance of his art. At the end of this little love poem to the man who was unquestioningly the greatest superhero comics creator of all time, I said that one day, when Man traveled to the stars, they would undoubtedly find Jack Kirby's signature in the lower right-hand corner (or maybe it was lower

left-hand corner, but you know what I mean).

These passing years have done nothing to lessen my opinion. Jack Kirby remains the greatest superhero creator of them all. Nobody has or probably will come close to equaling not only the sheer power of his work, but the scope of his imagination and his uncanny ability to create brilliant icon characters after characters.

Think of it this way. Jack Kirby — and *only* Jack Kirby — was a major and guiding force in comics for every decade superhero comics have existed. Nobody else can come close to making that statement. In the '40s, he drew a story in the very first issue of *Captain Marvel*. He co-created *Captain America*, *Newsboy Legion*, *The Guardian*, *Manhunter*, *Sandman* and many others. In the '50s, he co-created the love comics genre, *Boy's Ranch* (my favorite of all Kirby comics), *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Fighting American*, and many more. In the '60s, he was responsible for the style and creation of almost every Marvel character. In the '70s, he created *The New Gods*, *The Forever People*, *Mr. Miracle*, *Kamandi*, *The Eternals* and more. And in the '80s, he made legitimate the idea of independent comics with his work on *Captain Victory* and more.

Put it this way: *Marvel's Handbook* and DC's *Who's Who* would be issues shorter by far without Jack Kirby's brilliant creations.

I am very happy to be included here in praising one of the very few men in comics for whom I can honestly say that without him I would not be where I am today.

— Marv Wolfman

A fair number of people have set the relatively round-heeled world of comic books back on its instep once. Siegel and Shuster did it with *Superman*. Bob Kane and Bill Finger did it, to a lesser extent, with *Batman*. Will Eisner did it, in a related field, with his *Spirit* comics sections. C.C. Beck and the boys at Fawcett did it with *Captain Marvel*.

Almost never, however, does anyone have that kind of effect on the field twice, let alone even more often, with literally decades separating the landmark events. But then, there's never really been anyone quite like Jack Kirby in the comic book field, has there? Of course there hasn't.

Jack has knocked the field on its ear several times. Once with *Captain America* in the early 1940s.



My Memories of Jack Kirby

I met Jack Kirby in 1962, when I began work at Ruby Spears Prods Inc. Jack was their star designer; his job was to work at home during the week on large drawings of characters, hardware and environments to be used to pitch Saturday morning cartoon shows to the networks during the pre-production season. Every Monday he would saunter in with a thick stack of crescent board under his arm; all the in-house cartoonists would gather to look at them one by one, and pore over them. Jack was treated with great respect because he was an elder and a legend, but the awed admiration we all demonstrated for his work was not just polite deference. His drawings were inspirational to all of us young practitioners. He was like a wild spraying geyser of the substance we struggled pitifully to evoke in dribblets. Even those among us who had never read superhero comics and saw Jack without his aura, so to speak, stood in awe of him. He was more than a master, he was the comic book impulse incarnate.

We loved to draw him out in conversation because he was completely unpredictable; his mind was nimble and unfettered by convention. I never heard him tell an anecdote that was not heavily spiced with benign absurdity. As with his drawing, there was something preciously fragile about his sledgehammer approach to storytelling. One sensed that a hard life had made Jack tough, but that the great child's heart of which he was the custodian had been sheltered and saved at all costs, and that this heart was the force that drove him.

It was obvious that Roz was the proverbial woman behind the great man. It was heartwarming to see the two of them, always together, shepherding Jack's monumental talent through the narrow channels of comic books and children's cartoons. I always felt that she was the catalytic blessing that enabled him to work with the kind of support and security his peculiar talent required to blossom into the sprawling monster of his art.

— JIM WOODRING

When I think of how I feel about Jack Kirby's work, the image I see is of myself as a child riding in the back seat of a station wagon on a hot summer Saturday afternoon and reading old issues of *Fantastic Four*. Somehow the feel of the hot sunlight radiating through the car windows is bound up with the powerful, blockish imagery printed in the comics.

When I think of Jack Kirby himself, I think of my visit to his home in Thousand Oaks one Sunday afternoon in late summer 1983, nine months before I entered comics professionally. I don't particularly remember what he said about my portfolio, though he was politely encouraging. Two things I remember well. In talking about creating comics, he came up with, seemingly on the spot, an intriguing story beginning. This struck me as a wonderful thing. The second thing I remember is that he seemed far more interested in his collages than in his comics. This struck me as a sad thing, because he will forever be associated with comics, yet here he was working with a type of art less accessible to most, but more interesting to him.

Jack Kirby created some wonderful comics art that should and will be remembered. (My favorite is *Kamandi*.) But there was more to him than comics. That should be remembered, too.

— ERIC SHANOWER

nize the power of his technical expertise and the impact of his visual vocabulary, but above all his work reveals the presence of a vigorous and questing mind. In this respect he was an example to me, and hopefully, to us all. I think he was quite simply one of the great storytellers of our time.

— Steve Parkhouse

Jack and his magnificent creations cast shadows that go on to infinity.

He was one of those wonderful human beings whose fantastic, unlimited talent as an artist and innovator was matched only by his kindness to all who knew him, and I consider it a privilege to have called him "friend."

— Don Heck

Jack Kirby started with a proletarian sensibility, pushed it very far, maybe as far as it will go, and added intelligence. Do that and you always get capital-A Art. Muhammad Ali did it in boxing, Stirling Moss in motor sports, Charlie Chaplin in slapstick comedy. Like them, Jack changed the form he chose to work in forever, for the better, and in doing that, created its standards.

— Dennis O'Neil

When I was 11 years old, I saw *Captain America* by Jack Kirby. Even then, with no knowledge of comics or art at all, I was aware that I was witness to something *vital*. To this day, I still reflect the influence. The ensuing body of work Jack has produced has been the yardstick by which I've measured my efforts. Like the majority of my colleagues, I owe Jack Kirby much.

— John Romita

Greatness covers his tracks. Jack Kirby's accomplishments have been so relentlessly imitated that for many of us younger artists it's difficult to remember how unique — even radical — he would seem if so much of our industry hadn't remade itself in his image. It's a safe bet that if Kirby could somehow be plucked from comics history, all those spinner-racks and store shelves full of color would blink out like a disconnected Christmas tree.

— Scott McCloud

In an age of the exaltation of the primitive, the demiurgic, and the Dionysian, Jack Kirby's forms take on an archetypal quality with their unrestrained energy, brilliant freneticism, and synoptic modes of violence. He was the contemporary era unleashed and personified.

— Burne Hogarth

Jack Kirby is to comic book art what Pablo Picasso is to modern painting. One cannot seriously or properly approach the form without first acknowledging its master.

— Barry Windsor-Smith

When I think "Kirby," I see whirling gizmos, bright explosions, flashing lights, Hopi kachina dolls and cubism. He was the master and I'll follow him forever.

— Larry Marder

Jack Kirby was a living, breathing repository of talent. The scope of his imagination was awesome, the power of his artwork breathtaking, and his cinematic approach to continuity boggled the mind.

Jack drew with his emotions as much as with his pencil. His characters live and move with an energy and a dynamism that were his trademark for decades.

He was a virtually inexhaustible wellspring of fantastic new ideas, concepts and designs. Many years ago, Jack set a unique style of storytelling-through-pictures, and that style today is just as valid and as inimitable as it was then.

During his long and memorable career, Jack left an indelible imprint on comics.

— Stan Lee

When I first met Jack he was Jacob Kurtzberg. He was then simply in search of steady employment and our shop at Eisner & Iger offered it. What he vaguely remembered later as a "sweet shop" was nothing more than a cheerful studio filled with artists, letterers, backgrounders, presided over by a working artist/owner who devised characters and the plots from a desk at the head of the room. The studio, not unlike an Egyptian galley ship, produced a complete comic book ready for camera to publishers coming into the newly burgeoning comics field.

Most of the artists signed house names and Jack became Jack Curtis, then Kirby, depending on the feature. He was a John Garfield type who once offered to "protect" me against a mafioso seeking to enforce continuation of our towel service. Interestingly, the features he undertook at Eisner & Iger were not the superhero ones. Rather, he produced *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the first *Classics Comics*.

In the shop he showed an unquestioned devotion to the mastery of the craft, to the medium, and the draftsmanship involved. He was businesslike and productive. He drew with a heavy hand. My memory of him is that he was an artistic athlete. When he left the shop to join Joe Simon, I recall the shy, taciturn Lou Fine hinting that he would like to "do" one of his features. Kirby had achieved peer respect.

I saw little of Jack after that. I met him from time to time at industry convenings, always cordial.

I saw more of him in recent years as comics conventions proliferated. Of course, I followed his transformation of the world of superheroes which he dominated and took command of the magic mythdom.

Out of the internal fantasy of classic heroes that inhabited this compact man came a leading delineation of the superhero icon. He understood the superhero like no one before him.

Personally, I always suspected that Jack Kirby was really the Incredible Hulk condensed. He was a colleague and I'm a bit diminished by his passing.

— WILL EISNER

The power and scope of Jack Kirby's imagination was, to me, at times overwhelming, and it came to him with such ease. A panel always seemed to me to be the best shot of that particular situation. A colorist once told me that until they worked on a Kirby story they didn't appreciate him... as you color his work you see it all come together. The design, depth and storytelling to me were flawless. I am grateful to him for his tremendous contribution to the comic book industry. What more can I say — Jack Kirby's work really speaks for itself.

— MARIE SEVERIN

Let us all praise now in remembrance the exceptional and talented achievements of Jack Kirby — these high marks may recede in time, but there is another achievement of Jack's which few among us acknowledge, although it is a victory which has had extraordinary impact in the profession, which benefits everyone directly, although few give witness or testimony or thanks to his life and his accomplishment. It is repetitive to speak of Kirby's staunch resistance and stamina and the savage battle with his publishers, basically Marvel comics, over his rights to characters and original art withheld from him as not his creations and not his ownership by these oppugnant adversaries. But his fight over decades and the withering, disastrous toll this experience had on his stamina and his health is too affecting to recall in detail. It is enough to say that as a result of this enduring and eroding conflict, every cartoonist today who ever writes a contract and achieves a non-contestable copyright for his character, title, and book, as well as a life-enhancing monetary return, and those novices yet to come into this salubrious professional arena, owe Jack Kirby a profound, deep, reverential bow of thanks for giving them this gift. For without his sacrifice, this could never have happened. And let us all give great thanks and everlasting acknowledgment to Roz Kirby for her valiant shoulder-to-shoulder resistance through all these trying years.

— BURNE HOGARTH