

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

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## **Basil Wolverton** **Curated by Cameron Jamie** June 20 to August 14, 2009

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition by American graphic artist and cartoonist Basil Wolverton curated by Cameron Jamie. Basil Wolverton submitted his first cartoon for publication in 1925 when he was only sixteen and remained an active cartoonist from the 1940s through to the 1970s. His unique and humorously grotesque drawings reveal both his fantastic wit and inventive technique, once famously described in *LIFE Magazine* as the "spaghetti and meatball school of design."

Wolverton had no formal training as an artist, creating his own style that distinguished him from the other cartoonists of his generation. As he said, "I know I draw things that look like all kinds of organs and glands, it is like the monkey which, if he pounded away for a million years, might accidentally type out the 'Star Spangled Banner' lyrics." Generations of artists including Peter Saul, Ed Ruscha, Robert Williams, Jim Shaw, Mike Kelley, and Cameron Jamie have been influenced by his meticulous technique and pictorial freedom, in addition to its undeniable impact on numerous cartoonists from R. Crumb to Drew Friedman.

This exhibition includes a wide spectrum of Wolverton's work from his earliest drawings published in numerous comic books, including "Spacehawk" and "Powerhouse Pepper," to his very detailed caricatures, with sculpted and exaggerated features. Perhaps the most famous body of work in the exhibition are his drawings for Harvey Kurtzman's comic-book version of *MAD Magazine* from the 1950s. Also included are portraits made for Topps Chewing Gum in the 1960s, which appeared on bubble gum posters and stickers. Wolverton turned to illustrating Biblical themes and events in his later years, represented here by thirteen drawings from the *Apocalypse* series based on the *Book of Revelation*. These drawings are regarded among his finest and many of these illustrations were reproduced in *Plain Truth* magazine.

Born in 1909 in Central Point, Oregon, Basil Wolverton resided for most of his life in the Pacific Northwest until his death in 1978. His work has been published in a variety of magazines and comic books, from *MAD Magazine*, *America's Humor Magazine*, *The Portland News*, *Plop!* and *Hollywood Today*. His work has been featured in *Timely Comics*, *Circus Comics* and *Target Comics*. He also contributed to the *Li'l Abner Comic Strip* and *LIFE Magazine*. In 2006, his work was exhibited at The Portland Art Center in Oregon and in 2007 the CSUF Grand Art Center in Santa Ana, California presented a solo exhibition of Wolverton's oeuvre from the collection of Glenn Bray. The works selected and presented in this exhibition are also from Bray's private archive/collection.

Opening: Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> from 5.30-7.30pm  
For further information please contact Eric Nylund  
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530 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Huang Yong Ping, April 30 through July 15, 2009

12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels  
Dave Muller, May 20 through July 18, 2009