

C.F. — Christopher Forgues

by Katya Tylevich

C.F.'s published books (described online by the publisher, PictureBox, in terms like, 'primal comics' or 'next level mind expansion') include the *Power Mastrs* series, *Core of Caligula*, *Sediment*, *City Hunter*, and a new book, *Mere*, coming out in May. He also performs as a musician under the aliases Mark Lord and Kites, among others. So when he compares a guitar solo to a visual or narrative improvisation, he knows what's up. But before he tells me about any of that, he tells me to keep my coat on, because there's no heat in the house – a consequence, sometimes, of treating art like a single-engine in mid-air.

The internet Vs comics & art books: The internet flatlines everything, but when I think about the future of comics, and art in general, I feel that there will always be a desire for a rare object. And the more virtual things get, the more valuable they actually become. A one-of-a-kind object made by a person will be collected by other people because of its essence or because of its, you know, 'totemic powers' from having been touched by someone. It's irrational how much spiritual attachment we have to certain objects, but the ecstasy of the material world is not something I think is going to be forgotten anytime soon. It's something to be excited about.

Comics as art: In Japan, the whole thing is much further ahead, and the work itself is freer. Here, there is this eagerness to connect comics to literature, which I think is wrong. Why call it a graphic novel? The novel already exists as a form, and to attach 'graphic' to it as if they both do the same things is erroneous. Comics don't work as novels. There should be another word for what they do. You know, we don't call movies 'moving pictures', anymore. In our minds, movies are something totally different from photography.

A lot of cartoonists in America draw every detail of a story only after they've planned it all out, top to bottom. They think it's unprofessional to improvise. I think that's a mistake – drawing just becomes a way of drudging

along through the story, that way. I mean, if there's a guitar solo in the song, the song still rocks, and you hope somebody didn't write that solo beforehand. So when people ask me, 'How much do you make up as you go along?' my answer is, just enough so that I don't make a fool of myself by making paths that lead nowhere or tangles that I can't undo. What gives art or story lifelike qualities is some pageantry: interesting side narratives and trap doors, boring parts and sexy parts, it all has to be in there.

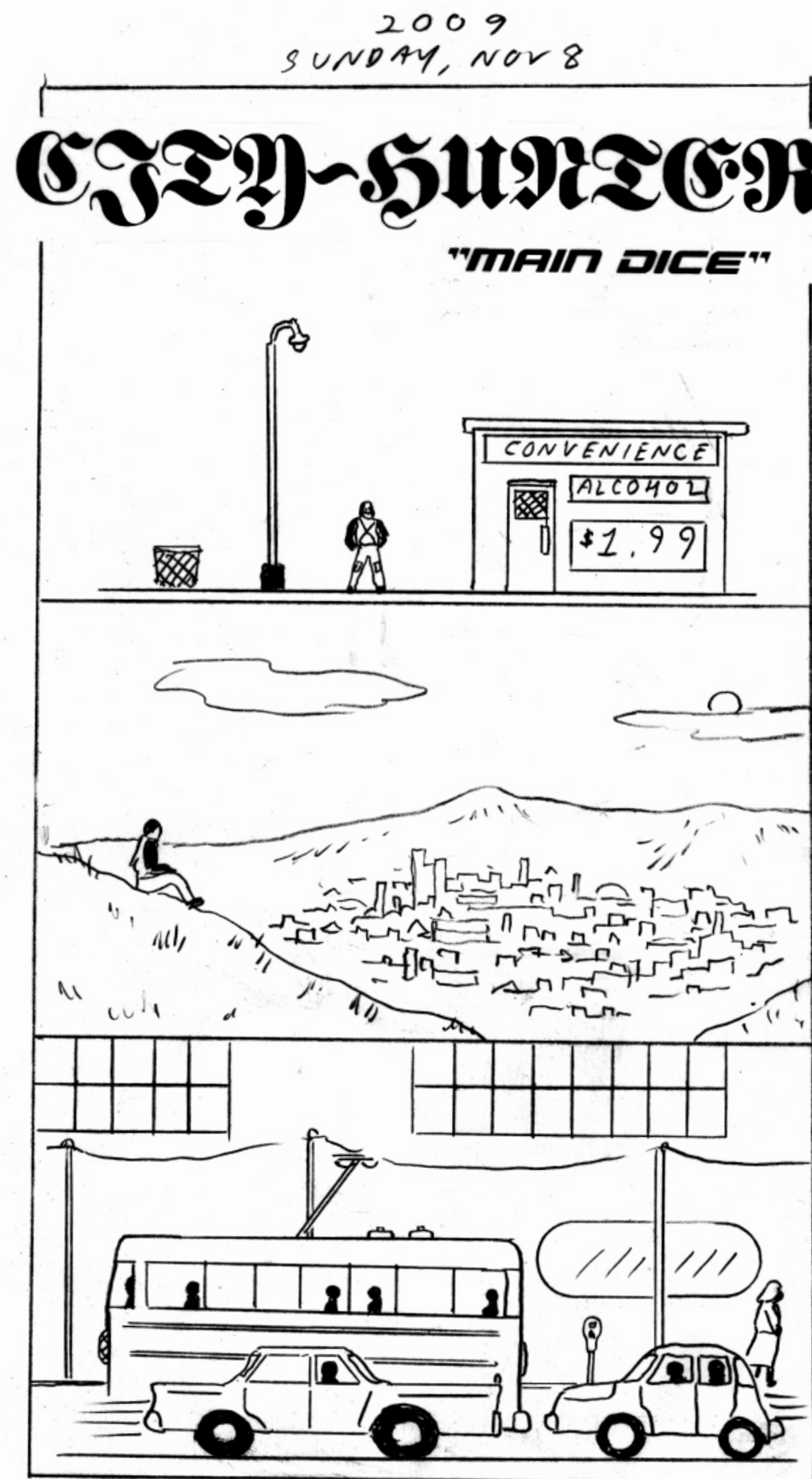
Longing for a 'normal' 9-to-5 job: I do like the idea of taking on tasks that can actually be finished: something like baking a loaf of bread every day. Art is terrible: you're on a crazy train, there's always room for improvement, but the task is never complete. If you want to be an artist, you have to be obsessed. Art is a bit like sports, because it's crazy to put so much weight into something that's basically a game. I'm sure when people invented sport, they laughed endlessly, but the wisdom in it is that this game has the value of passing on some knowledge that you can actually use in life. Art is kind of a game like that. You can't point to a good reason for doing it, but it's an engagement with life.

Art as an obsession: I try to imagine what it would be like to just never ask myself, 'why am I doing this?' Sometimes I just force myself

to work, and ask no questions. I think people expect drawing to be this endless flow. It can be, but there are times when you can't do it – you lose it, and you don't know why. Possibly because you're reconfiguring a style, and it needs to happen, but it's terrifying anyway. You can't draw and you don't know why. If you're a mechanic and you're faced with a difficulty in your profession, you overcome it. Once the car is fixed and running, you know you've done your job. The times I feel that way, in my creative life, are rare.

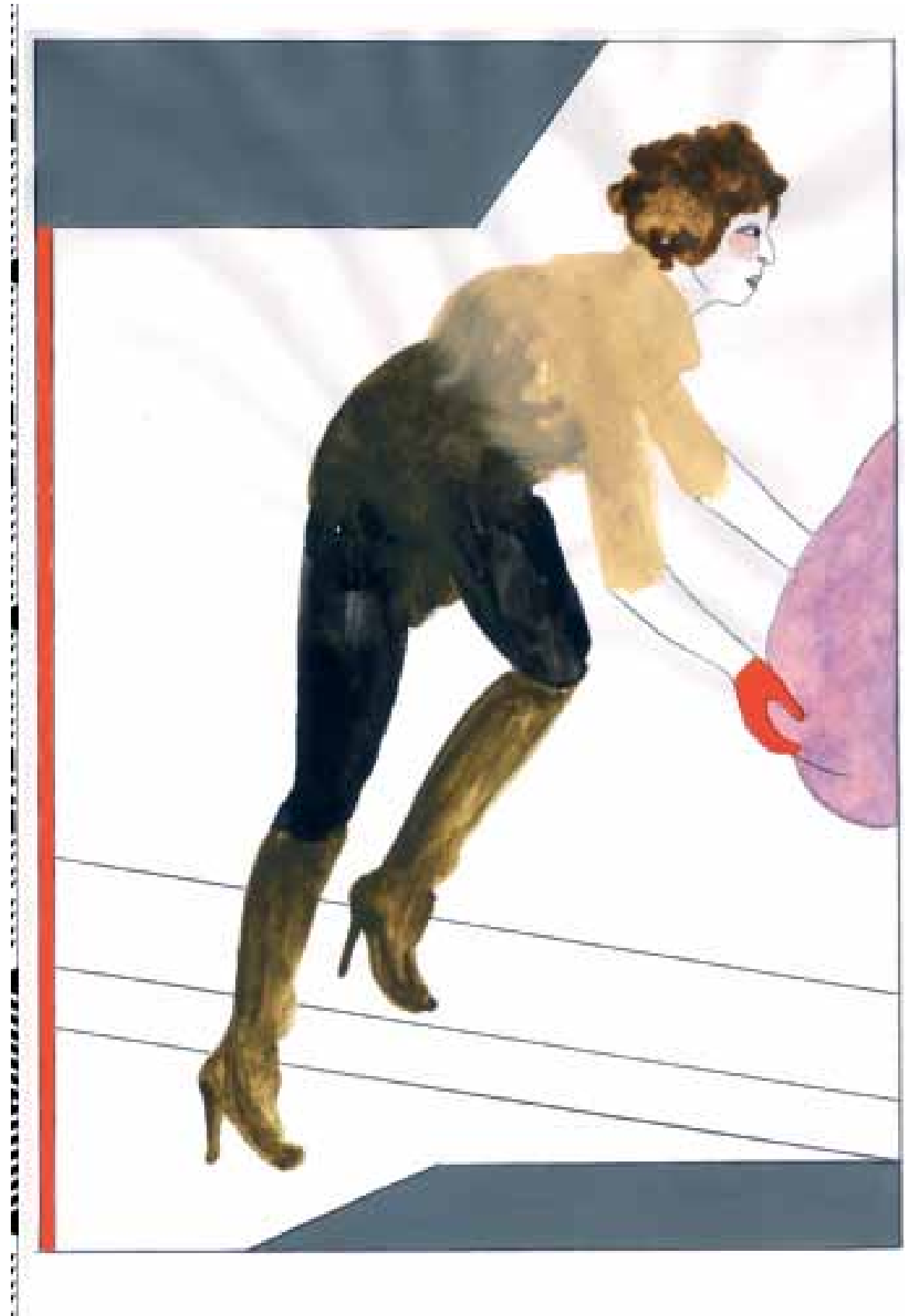
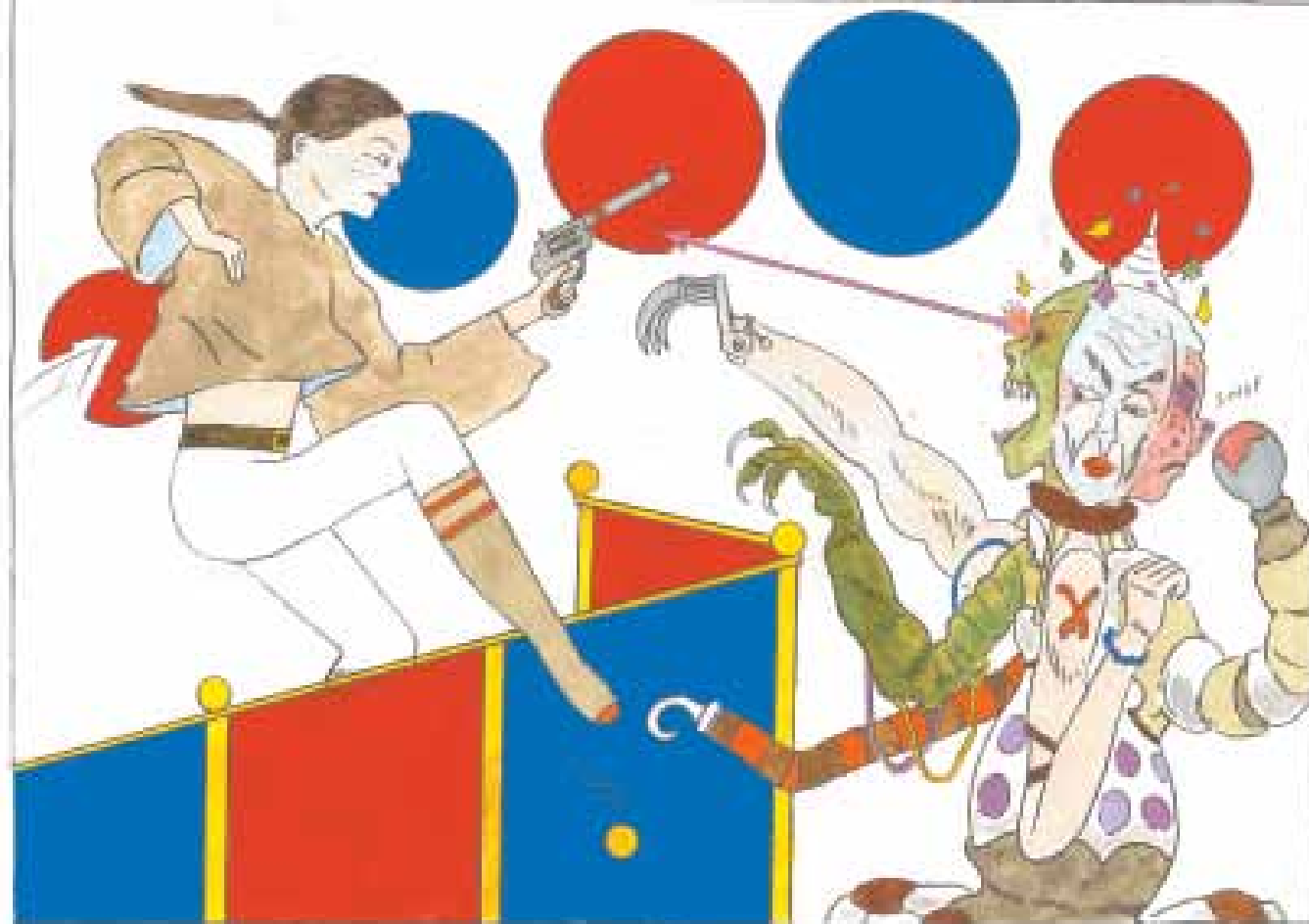
Seeing oneself as an artist: The first time people bought what I did I understood that I can no longer do stuff and just let it sit on my desk. For the first time ever, I'm thinking about that. My whole life I've tried to ignore it, you know, and dealt with the consequences. Like, I've lived in warehouses before. And, I don't think you have to be Jeff Koons. It's good for artists to talk about money, because the mystique of not having any is long gone. Not that you have to be rich to be an artist, but I'm just saying, it'd be nice to have the heat on right now.

In the end, I think simplicity is such a boon in this life. The artists we still talk about in art history had a total go-for-broke attitude and intensity – art was as simple as life or death to them.





JUMPING OVER THE COLD WALL INTO THE WAMDEN COMPLEX, JENNY GAKKI ENCOUNTERS THE FIRST STAGE AIRBORG - A GUARDIAN OF THE YAST INCON SHE SEEKS TO ERADICATE! WILL HER MISSION END BEFORE IT HAS BEGUN?!



From POWR MASTERS vol.3, 2010, published by PictureBox

From Sediment, 2011, watercolor and ink on paper, 12,7 x 17,78 cm. Published by PictureBox.