

Manga Artist Meet-up: Week XI: Manga Production

The Manga Industry

Manga/Anime Overview

- Manga is the Japanese word for comics (sometimes called komikku コミック). It mostly refers to any comic drawn in or inspired by the Japanese style.
 - Manga, literally translated, means "whimsical pictures".
- Typically black and white (though some full-color manga exists).
- Cinematic Compositions as opposed to static compositions used in other kinds of comics. They have a great pace and flow to reading them.
- Manga are widely read by people of all ages and have a broad range of subjects and topics including action-adventure, romance, sports, drama, business, comedy, science fiction, fantasy, mystery, and horror, among others.
- Manga are primarily classified by the age and gender of the target audience. In particular, books and magazines sold to boys (shōnen) and girls (shōjo) have distinctive cover art and are placed on different shelves in most bookstores.
 - Due to cross-readership, consumer response is not limited by demographics. For example, male readers subscribing to a series intended for girls and so on.

Industry

- Since the 1950s, manga have steadily become a major part of the Japanese publishing industry, representing a 481 billion yen market in Japan in 2006 (approximately \$4.4 billion dollars).
 - Manga have also become increasingly popular worldwide. In 2006, the United States manga market was \$175–200 million.
- Manga are usually serialized in telephone book-size manga magazines (like Shounen Jump), often containing many stories each presented in a single episode to be continued in the next issue.
- If the series is successful, the chapters may be republished in paperback books called tankōbon.

- Manga artists sometimes start out with a few "one-shot" manga projects just to try to get their name out. If these are successful and receive good reviews, they are continued.
- If a magazine likes your work, then they will assign you to write more manga (usually short stories) as long as you are still popular among their readers.
- If a manga series is popular enough, it may be animated after or even during its run. This is where most anime comes from.
- Most manga-ka work long hours and don't get paid much money (pros make about \$100 a page, but have to pay the assistants and the bills of the studio as well). But if you have a successful manga, you can make quite a bit (Misashi Kishimoto the creator of Naruto makes around \$110, 000 a year).

Manga Studio Roles

There is no strict rule for roles in a manga studio, but titles and responsibilities usually include:

The Manga-Ka

- The main artist and planner of the manga. Is responsible for the page layout, artwork (including character designs, sets, and panels), and overall 'feel' of the manga (the art direction).
 - Most Manga-ka also are known as the "creators" of the manga because they often create their own stories and do their own writing. However, some Manga-ka may work with a writer. In either case, the person implementing most of the panel designs and artwork of the manga is considered the manga-ka.
 - i.e. in One Piece Eiichiro Oda is the manga-ka. He does both the writing and the main art.
 - i.e. In Death Note, the writer is Tsugumi Obata and the Manga-Ka is Takeshi Obata.
- A manga-ka typically works with a few assistants in a small studio and is associated with a creative editor from a commercial publishing company.

Art Assistants

- Art assistance usually have all the skills of a manga-ka, but they are not as developed. They are often responsible for the secondary artwork such as:
 - Speed lines
 - Word balloons, Text, and Sound FX
 - Spotting blacks
 - Cleaning pages
 - Black and White Ink effects
 - Fixing problems in the main art
 - Graphic Design and Computer Work
 - Character and Dialogue Support
- Some art assistants may also draw secondary characters, items and objects, or do the backgrounds for the manga.
- You can apply to be an assistant by sending a letter to a Manga-ka you want to assist, along with samples of your work.

Writer

- Responsible for creating the story, characters, and script for the manga.
- Is usually the Manga-Ka, but not on every project.

Toner

- Responsible for toning the manga.
- A skilled toner may come up with the lighting schemes on their own, but they often follow the plans of the manga-ka who usually has toning experience as well.

Colorist

- Responsible for coloring the covers and special colored pages in the manga.
 - This is usually done by the Manga-ka or the toner, but can be a specialist as well.

Creative Editor

- Responsible for the overall production, schedule, and quality assurance of the manga. Editors (in Japan at least) are similar to game or movie producers; project managers and de facto collaborators who often have great creative say in and control over the projects they are in charge of (keep things to spec).
- In the west, editors of manga handle more low-level responsibilities and might be responsible for things such as: proofreading, writing the back-cover text and ad copy, recommending new titles for translation to publishers, acting as the final

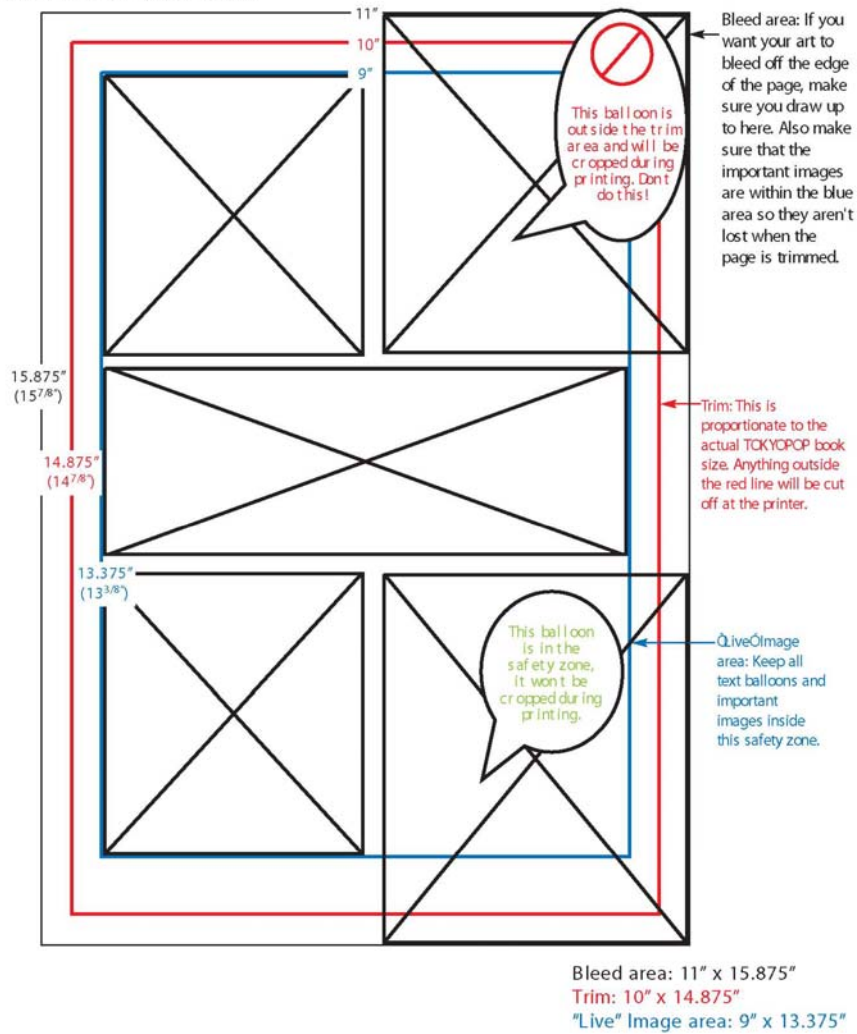
arbiter on translation decisions, name spellings, typos, censorship, the particular phrasing of a particular line and so on. (They may also be the “translator”).

The Manga Production Process

- Concept
 - This is where the manga-ka and the editor are heavily involved with aligning the content of the manga to the specifications of the magazine and the target audience the manga is being published for. It involves:
 - Coming up with a good manga story and characters and getting it approved and accepted by the publisher at a high-level.
 - Deciding on the overall mood, tone, and direction of the work
- Pre-production
 - This is where the manga-ka prepares everything they need in order to make their manga efficiently. It includes:
 - Coming up with the character designs
 - Detailing the larger story and world
 - Writing / plotting the first few episodes and dramatic arcs
 - Considering the general art style and direction for the production
 - Testing techniques and styles to use in the manga.
 - Hiring on assistants and familiarizing them with the art style.
 - Testing the studio’s workflow.
- Production
 - In production, the manga-ka and assistants work on producing the manga episodes, getting constant direction and approval from the editor and publisher based on reader feedback and manga sales or popularity polls.
- Printing / Publishing
 - Finally the manga is edited and approved by the editor and publisher and sent to printing. From there the publisher sends the printed copies to distributors, who sell them to retailers that markup the price and sell them to consumers and manga lovers the world over.
 - Note: Manga must be designed and drawn to fit a publisher’s mechanical specification guidelines.

MECHANICAL SPECIFICATION GUIDELINES

These specs show the artboard at twice the size of the finished TOKYOPOP page size. Many manga and comic book artists draw on artboard that is larger than the printed size. This is because, when the art is reduced to print size, imperfections drop out and lines become crisper and cleaner.



Getting Published

- There are places that accept independent work and manga submissions for publication:
 - TokyoPop (<http://www.tokyopop.com/>) is the most famous.
 - Antarctic Press (<http://www.antarctic-press.com>).
 - Gomanga (<http://www.gomanga.com>).

Manga Production Series: Project I

Editorial Criteria

- Goal
 - Produce a 1-to-2 page manga as a Group
- Deadline
 - 2-4 weeks
- Genre
 - ---TBD---

Workflow

---Start of Concept---

- Group Ideation
 - 2 rounds
 - Best ideas float to the top
- Choose Manga-Ka / Director
- Establish Core Idea
 - Premise
 - High-Level Story Outline
 - Core Feeling and Tone
 - Interesting IP Feature or Angle of Story
- Develop Core Idea
 - Story
 - Panel Breakdown and Descriptions
 - Dialogue
 - Theme
 - Characters
 - Traits and Quirks
 - Archetypes
 - Location
 - Description and Details

---End of Concept---

---Start of Pre-Production---

- Visual Development
 - Compile References
 - Characters
 - Sets
 - Mood
 - Create Design Sheets
 - Character Design Sheets
 - Full body
 - Poses
 - Facial Expressions
 - Sets
 - Location sketches
 - Location Schematic
 - Storyboards and Page Layouts
 - Camera Shots
 - Scene Composition
 - Panel Design of pages
 - Previs Work
 - Toning and Tone FX
 - Compile References
 - Exploration
 - Tests
 - Word balloon placement, Lettering, and sound FX test
 - Compile References
 - Exploration (for size and font type)
 - Tests
 - Ink FX
 - Compile References
 - Exploration
 - Tests

---End of Pre-Production---

---Start of Production---

○Rough Draft

- Completed Layouts
- Final Compositions Worked Out
- Rough Pencils Down and Approved by Editor

○Rough Inks

○Final Inks

- Ink FX
- White Ink

○Cleaning

○Toning

○Printing and Binding

---End of Production---

About Manga Production Series Projects

Copyright disclaimer

- Implicit partnership. Everyone will own what is produced in the workshop equally.

Teamwork Guidelines

- Commitment to projects.
- If you are not here, decisions will be made without you.
- Coordinate meet-up times outside of the weekly meeting if necessary.

Down Time

- This process involves downtime. During that time, assistants should practice their role in preparation or be acting as support in some other capacity.
 - Try working on some of the drills and exercises we have covered in the introductory meetings.

Project Progression

- This process will be more structured at first, and then it will loosen up to be more free form (people doing roles that they enjoy the most or are good at).