



## Australian Society of Authors

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### November 2007: Comics/Graphic Novels Portfolio News

Dual portfolio holders, Jozef Szekeres and Julie Ditrich, recently attended several events to educate both the literary and comics communities about the formation of this new special interest and advocacy group. Jozef covered the National Young Writers' Festival (<http://www.youngwritersfestival.org>) in Newcastle at the end of September where he became the unofficial moderator of a panel session with graphic novelists Shaun Tan (*The Arrival*) and Nicki Greenberg (*The Great Gatsby* adaptation). Several emerging comics writers and artists also sought him out for information on the portfolio while he attended the 'Taking Eye Candy from Strangers Comics Exhibition'.

Both Julie and Jozef also spent Saturday 13 October walking down Artists' Alley at Supanova, the pop culture expo ([www.supanova.com.au](http://www.supanova.com.au)), talking to exhibitors about comics creators' professional needs. This was followed by an official creators-only presentation where they summarised the aims of the portfolio, discussed future activities and answered questions from the floor. About 40 people attended, and the initiative appeared to be universally accepted by the participants as a positive step towards uniting the Australian comics community. One of the items that emerged from this discussion will be added to the portfolio TO DO list and that is to examine and possibly streamline the current Australian comics distribution model.

On Saturday 3 November, Jozef and Julie presented a session at the Australian Cartoonists' Association Stanley Awards Conference (formerly known as the Australian Black and White Artists' Club [[www.abwac.org.au](http://www.abwac.org.au)]), which was held in Wollongong. There were about 50 people in the audience, and post-session, Julie and Jozef talked one-

on-one to several cartoonists who were branching across to graphic novels, or, who were working in isolation and needed to find networking opportunities. Julie and Jozef also talked extensively to Chryssy Tinter, CEO of VISCOPY ([www.viscopy.com](http://www.viscopy.com)), the visual arts copyright collecting agency. Chryssy outlined several case studies about the audacious misappropriation of artwork and the resulting positive outcome for artists after the VISCOPY legal team stepped in to negotiate on their behalf. The ASA highly recommends that comics artists join VISCOPY and in the process educate themselves about copyright and licensing rights in artistic works for commercial, non-commercial and educational purposes. Membership is free.

Please note that Emma Dallas, the ASA Membership Officer, is also the official ASA liaison staff member for this portfolio. Any queries can be directed to Emma on [emma@asauthors.org](mailto:emma@asauthors.org) or (02) 9318 0877 and she will forward them onto the portfolio holders.