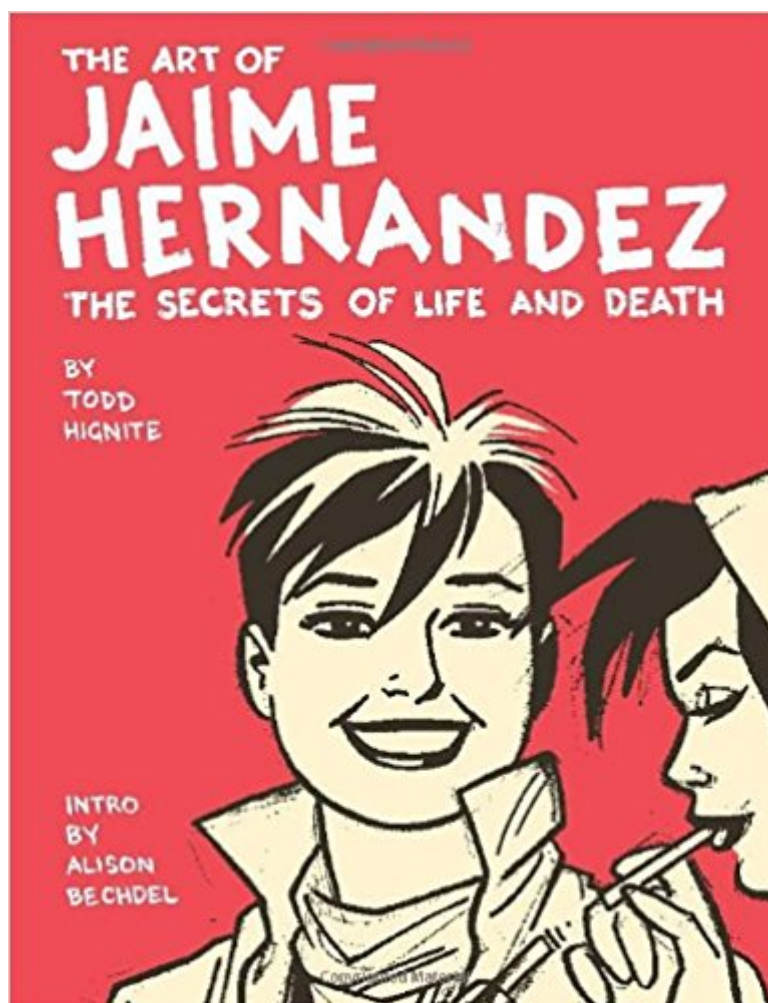


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# The Art Of Jaime Hernandez: The Secrets Of Life And Death



## Synopsis

In 1981 three Mexican-American brothers self-published their first comic book, *Love and Rockets*, and "changed American cartooning forever" according to *Publishers Weekly*. Over twenty-five years later it is still being published to critical and commercial success. Jaime Hernandez's moving stories chronicle the lives of some of the most memorable and fully formed characters the comics form has ever seen. His female protagonists, masterfully delineated with humor, candor, and breathtaking realism, come to life within California's Mexican-American culture and punk milieu. In April 2006 Hernandez began serializing his work with the *New York Times Magazine* all of which will be collected here in full color. The notoriously private artist has opened his archives for the first time, revealing never-before-seen sketches, childhood drawings, and unpublished work, alongside his most famous *Love and Rockets* material. Praise for *The Art of Jaime Hernandez*: "The Art of Jaime Hernandez is proof of what I've been trying to convince comics artists to do for thirty years. FEWER lines and less technique with more 'human interest' was, and should still be, the way to approach our craft. Bravo, Jaime, for your body of work! Continue to be yourself." — John Romita Sr., artist, *The Amazing Spider-Man*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez's *Love and Rockets* has been praised for its appealing characters, skilled storytelling, and gorgeously sleek artwork. This coffee-table tribute to Jaime showcases his illustration skills, in particular, tracing his art from early fanzine work and other juvenilia, through his

first, early 1980s Locas stories depicting punk-rock chicas Maggie and Hopey, which made up in verve what they lacked in polish, to his recent work, in which his now-older heroines have gained a hard-won poignancy that his graceful visuals accentuate. Most of the selected artwork is individual pages and panels, though the inclusion of two complete stories permits full appreciation of Jaime's considerable abilities. In the incisive text, Hignite skillfully explicates Jaime's mastery of a complete arsenal of narrative devices and provides fascinating biographical details of the artist's childhood and adolescence in predominantly Hispanic Oxnard, California, which would become the Hoppers locale of the early Locas stories. The handsomely designed volume combines intelligence and eye appeal, much as do its subject's acclaimed comics. --Gordon Flagg

"Jaime's art balances big white and black spaces to create a world of nuance in between, just as his writing balances our big human feelings and our small human trivias to generate its incredible emotional power. Quite simply, this is one of the 20th century's most significant comic creators at the peak of his form, with every line a wedding of classicism and cool," Alan Moore. "[Jaime's] stories never fail to entertain, but their claim on literature is due to Hernandez's bracing realism. His virtuoso drawings present characters of intelligence, wit and human frailty who confront each other - and the reader - with such honesty and genuine tenderness that one may find it hard to believe she/he is reading a comic book," Publishers Weekly."

This is a wonderful retrospect of Jaime Hernandez and his career in comics, a tale so interesting it could be material for another comic book. Every page with text on it is overflowing with insight as Jaime shares his views on comics and his characters. Author Todd Hignite has done some intensive research to put everything together. It's filled with comic art, personal sketches, discarded work, story ideas scribbled on notes and other stuff. Lots of covers and panels are laid out and discussed in terms of what you're seeing and you're not seeing (behind the scenes). And all of them are printed huge to show off the marvelous line art. There are also some really cool photographs, such as from his childhood, his Mohawk hair days and some with him and his brothers behind a table at some comic con. This book is an absorbing read. Highly recommended to fans of Jaime Hernandez and his comics. (There are more pictures of the book on my blog. Just visit my profile for the link.)

I'm pretty quick to pick up anything Locas related, so when I stumbled across this book, I hesitated a second before purchasing. I was worried that it would be filled with scans of stuff I'd already collected. But who was I kidding? A coffee table book filled with Jaime Hernandez art at a very

economical price? I couldn't click the checkout button quick enough. If you obsess over Love and Rockets on any level, just go ahead and get this. The writer has filled this with obscure photos, doodles and stories, seemingly coming from Hernandez himself. Beautiful scans of school folders completely covered with characters and cartoons in the tone we'd see in Locas. Early versions of the characters, as well as photos from Jaime's youth side by side with L&R images that were clearly inspired by them. Story lines and characters broken down to the details I'd always wanted, but never thought would be available. Page after gigantic, colorful page of Hernandez' crisp style. Couldn't recommend enough.

Todd Hignite's superb monograph, *The Art of Jaime Hernandez The Secrets of Life and Death*, belongs on the shelf of every comic art enthusiast's bookcase. Filled with Jaime's beautifully staged and drawn Love and Rockets comic book pages (shot in full color from the original art, and presented as such), covers, illustrations, sketches, and photographs, the book is elegantly designed by Jordan Crane, and sets a new benchmark for sumptuous cartoon art books. Jaime's life and art are illuminated throughout this delightful volume with the same passionate insight and graphic perfectionism that made Hignite's magazine *Comic Art* a legend in academic, artistic, and collecting circles. My only (tongue-in-cheek) criticism of this book is that it's so outstanding, it makes the other cartoonist monographs I've collected pale by comparison. Comic art lovers will devour this book -- it's nothing less than a twelve-course feast for the eyes.

It is a short piece in the NME (New Musical Express) in the mid-1980s, with all but a single image of Maggie I think, that made me aware of Love & Rockets and especially Jaime Hernandez's art. A classic, *ligne claire* approach to write and draw stories about youth gangs, punks, good-looking girls, super-heroes, science-fiction and such. Not to mention wrestlers. It was unheard of at the time excepted perhaps the French edition of *Heavy Metal* (*Métal Hurlant*). I believe it was in 1987 that I managed to pick up my first original Love & Rockets trade paperback in France. Quite a revelatory book it was! I think I now have bought most of Jaime Hernandez's oeuvres. On reading *The Art of Jaime Hernandez* I learned with not that much surprise that though he is a Latino-American and I'm not, he started to draw at an early age same as I did, he read a lot of comics as a child and I read pretty much the same comics when I was a kid, he bigs up Moebius and I do that too, he listened extensively to music while a teenager and I also did that (though I never really got why Mott The Hoople is held as such a big, cult band), end-of-the-1970s punk music was a life defining event for him as it was for me, he formed a band and I did that too etc. So

we are pretty much the same except that I never had the gut to try and publish my stuff. This coffee table book is very good at telling the tale of the Hernandez family, at putting forth what is so good and important in Maggie and Hopey's adventures, and at showing beautiful samples of Jaime's work. It is a must buy for all Jaime Hernandez fans and for all of us that believe that comics can be entertaining and meaningful at the same time.

It is inspiring when publishers get it right; this book has great art, fantastic reproduction and interesting commentary. A critical purchase for art and comic fans! (I would also add for fans of punk music, since that was a big inspiration to the art)

As a somewhat new fan to Love and Rockets I've mostly devoured the first 'Locas' collection over and over, so it was a delight to get my hands on this oversize collection of original Jaime artwork. The essays throughout are illuminating and well-written, and though they're chock-full of background info on the Hernandez's upbringing and cultural obsessions, the writing is truly secondary to the spreads of original drawings, unpublished pinups, and stories. Highly recommended for any diehard L&R fan.

Great artist and a wonderful series of titles he co-created. Hernandez is a great in the field of comic book art!

The Art of Jaime Hernandez: Secrets of Life and Death is a pick for any serious arts library and especially for collections strong in graphic novels and comics. It's reviewed here under 'Arts' for its larger impact on general art collections, profiling the achievements of a private artist who opens his archives here for the first time to provide sketches, childhood drawings, and unpublished art from his entire career. In case you don't recognize his name - he's one of three Mexican-American brothers who in 1981 took the graphic novel world by storm with their first comic book LOVE AND ROCKETS. A 'must' acquisition!

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