

# Alison Bechdel

## Conversations

Edited by Rachel R. Martin

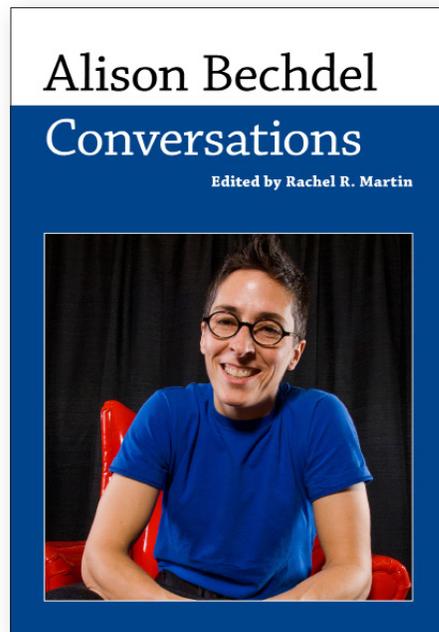
Due to the huge success of her graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* in 2006 and its subsequent Tony Award-winning musical adaptation in 2009, Alison Bechdel (b. 1960) has recently become a household name. However, Bechdel, who has won numerous awards including a MacArthur Fellowship, has been writing and drawing comics since the early 1980s. Her comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For (DTWOF)* stood out as one of the first to depict lesbians in popular culture and is widely hailed as an essential LGBTQ resource.

It is also from this comic strip that the wildly popular Bechdel Test—a test to gauge positive female representation in film—obtained its name. While *DTWOF* secured Bechdel’s role in the comics world and queer community long before her mainstream success, Bechdel now experiences notoriety that few comics artists ever achieve and that women cartoonists have never attained.

Spanning from 1990 to 2017, *Alison Bechdel: Conversations* collects ten interviews that illustrate how Bechdel uses her own life, relationships, and contemporary events to expose the world to what she has referred to as the “fringes of acceptability”—the comics genre as well as queer culture and identity. These interviews reveal her intentionality in the use of characters, plots, structure, and cartooning to draw her readers toward disrupting the status quo.

Starting with her earliest interviews on public access television and in little-known comics and queer presses, Rachel R. Martin traces Bechdel’s career from her days with *DTWOF* to her popularity with *Fun Home* and *Are You My Mother?* This volume includes her “one-off” *DTWOF* strips from November 2016 and March 2017 (not anthologized anywhere else) and in-depth discussions of her laborious creative process as well as upcoming projects.

**RACHEL R. MARTIN** is assistant professor of English and humanities at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia. She has published scholarly work in *Feminisms in the World of Neil Gaiman: Essays on the Comics, Poetry and Prose* and *Women’s Rights: Reflections in Popular Culture*.



“What I want is for men to read my work and make the same leap of identity that we [women] have to make when we read one of the 99 percent of comic strips that star straight white men, boys, or animals.”

NOVEMBER 144 pages (approx.),  
6 x 9 inches, 19 b&w illustrations  
Printed casebinding \$90.00S  
978-1-4968-1926-0  
Paper \$25.00T 978-1-4968-1927-7  
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Conversations with Comic Artists Series

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