

What's So Funny?

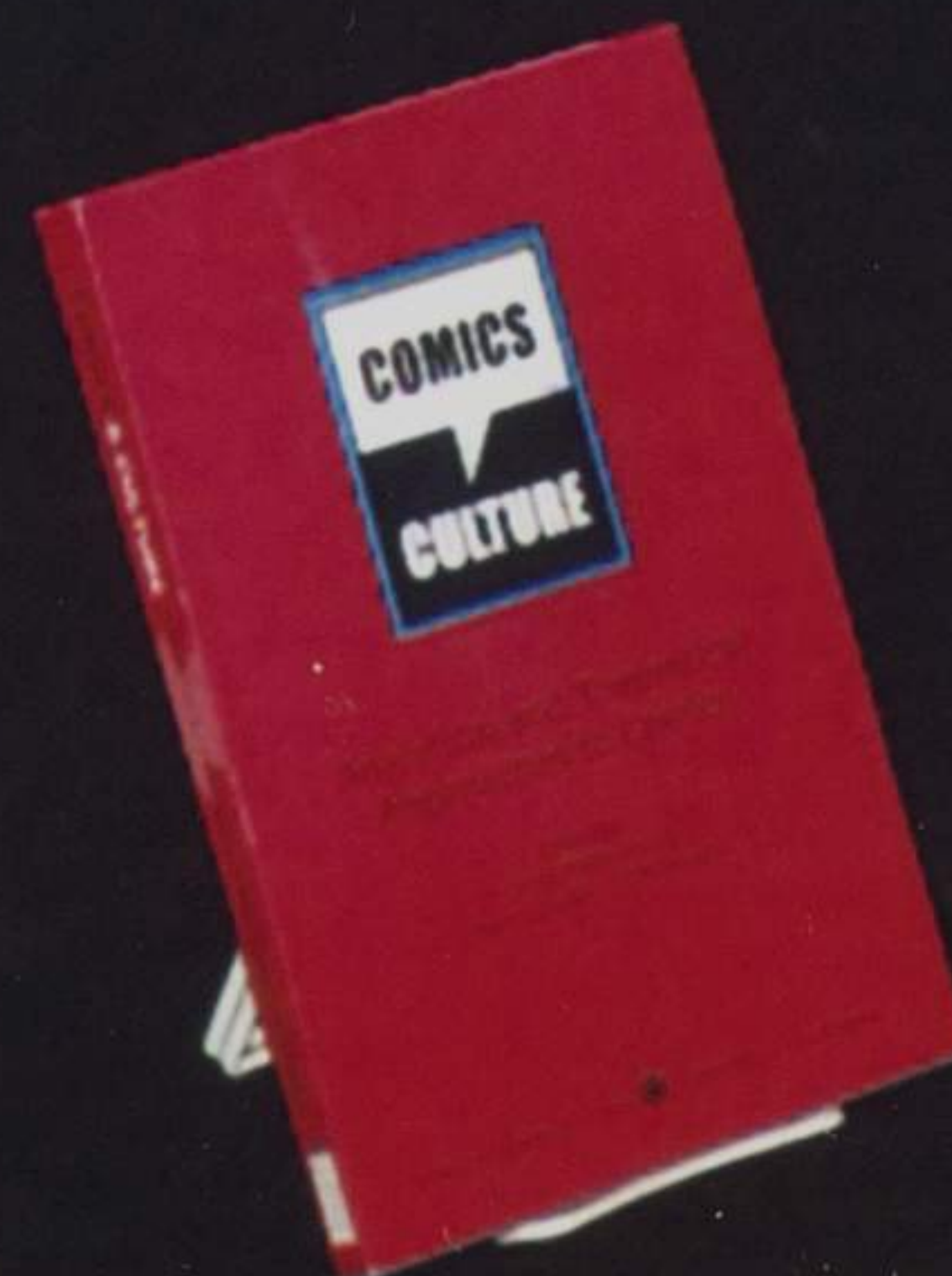
Humor as a Cultural Identity

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Exhibit by Channette Kirby

"Taken for holes in our ideal perceptions about the empirical world. We might say that humor is produced by a disjunction between the way things are and the way they are represented in a joke, between expectation and actuality. Humor deflates our expectations by producing a novel actuality by changing the situation in which we find ourselves."
— Simon Critchley, *On Humour*

"The better, the hollow and - how how - the worse. The better laugh laughs at that which is not good. It is the ethical laugh. The hollow laugh laughs at that which is not true. It is the amoral laugh. The good laugh must feel well. But the worse laugh is the domestic laugh, down the street - how - so. It is the laugh of laughs, the most pure, the laugh laughing at the laugh, the laughing the building of the highest joke. It is what the laugh, not laughs - silence please - of that which is unhappily." — Samuel Beckett



This exhibit explores the cultural significance of the many forms of humor - verbal, physical, and visual. It is the diverse cultural expression of laughter and its many meanings. It is not merely a social phenomenon but a way of thinking, a way of seeing, and a way of being. It is a reflection of the human condition, a way of coping with the world, and a way of connecting with others. It is a way of saying, "I am human, and I am laughing."

