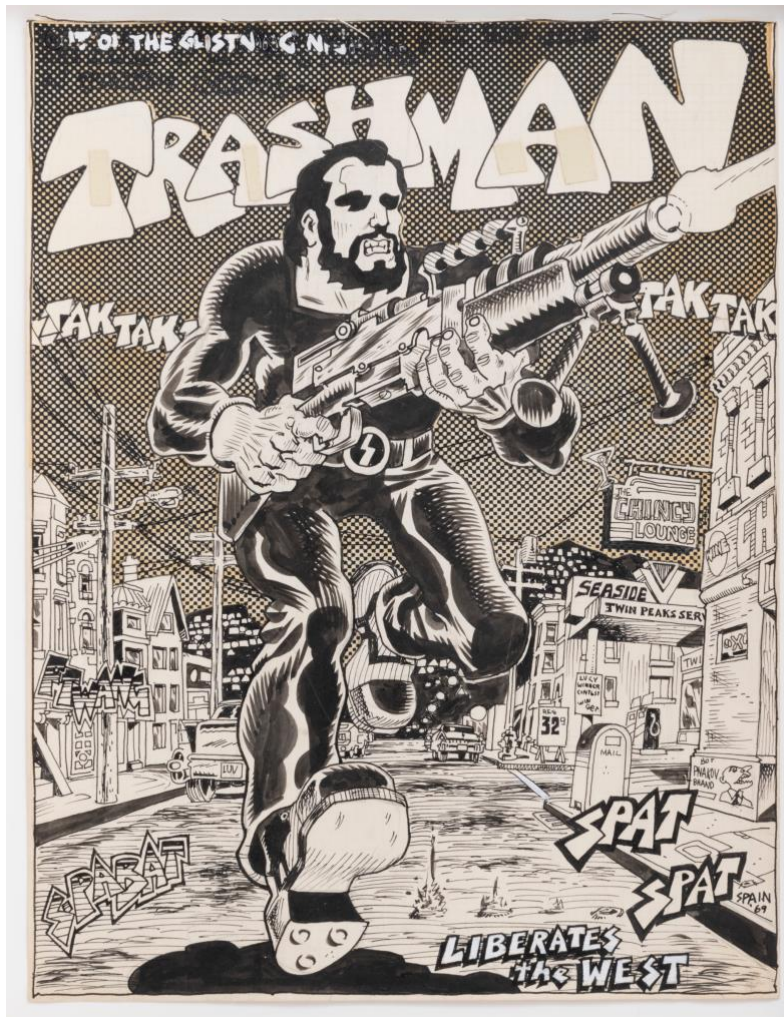


# The New York Times

Spain Rodriguez

Through April 2. Andrew Edlin Gallery, 212 Bowery, Manhattan; 212-206-9723;  
[edlingallery.com](http://edlingallery.com).



Spain Rodriguez's "Trashman Cover" (1969), ink, graphite, correction fluid and collaged paper on paper, at Andrew Edlin Gallery. via the Spain Rodriguez Estate and Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York

Some underground comix creators of the late 1960s and mid-1970s have become mainstream famous, like R. Crumb and Art Spiegelman. But many others helped shape the rebellious, pathbreaking movement. Among them was Spain Rodriguez (1940-2012),

whose work is featured in a mini-survey, curated by Dan Nadel, titled “Hard-Ass Friday Nite” after one of the artist’s stories.

Born Manuel Rodriguez in Buffalo, he was a [self-described](#) juvenile delinquent before dropping out of art school. He worked in a Western Electric plant and rode with a motorcycle club. In 1967, he moved to New York City, where he began publishing comix and working at the alternative newspaper The East Village Other. Two years later, he crossed the country to join the Bay Area scene.

Rodriguez’s socialist politics informed his work. The star of the show is Trashman, “agent of the 6th international,” who uses paranormal abilities and brute strength to battle tyrannical forces in a post-apocalyptic world. There’s also Manning, a corrupt cop; tales about his biker group, the Road Vultures Motorcycle Club; and one-offs like a wacky story about a murderous refrigerator.

Like many underground comix, the work is violent, and women are largely absent — although Rodriguez drew female leads that aren’t represented here. But his blocky, shadowy art, detailed cityscapes and inventive layouts are so engrossing, you’ll want to spend time with them. What comes through most is Rodriguez’s rejection of respectability and constant questioning of the established order. Even with his blind spots, that’s worth admiring. *JILLIAN STEINHAUER*