Since their very origins on the pages of the *Corriere dei Piccoli*, which featured more or less Italianized American imports such as *Happy Hooligan* or *Foxy Grandpa*, Italian comics have owed an immense debt to their American counterparts. Translated, adapted, edited for different formats and audiences, over the years American comics not only provided examples of narrative techniques, of artistic styles, of graphic concepts that Italian writers and artists could mould to their own needs, but also a storehouse of stock characters, settings and situations that could be rearranged in never-ending narrative patterns. The infinite spaces of the far west, the crime-ridden metropolises, the possible futures that closely resemble those imagined by American science-fiction, the idyllic middle-America of Paperopoli or Topolinia have for over a century provided the background to a broad swath of Italian comics series and graphic novels, especially within the domain of popular culture, from *Dick Fulmine* to *Pecos Bill*, from *Tex* to *Nathan Never*. Likewise, many of its typical characters – the tough but fair frontier lawman, the freedom fighter of the Revolutionary wars, the hardboiled detective, the intrepid explorer of strange new worlds – continue to appear regularly, sometimes updated to reflect the mores of the times, in old and new comics series.

This two-day online conference organized by the Toronto Italian Comics Study group (TICS) aims to examine the permutations of the myth of America in Italian comics from their origins to today. Topics may include:

- The myth of the frontier and the enduring popularity of the Western genre;
- The critique/parody/subversion of American genres;
- The influence of American cinema on Italian comics;
- The representation of the urban environment;
- The translation and adaptation of American comics;
- Writing history through comics (e.g., *La storia del West*)
- An Italian-made America: The case of Disney comics
- Americanism, anti-Americanism, representation of US politics in Italian Comics;
- Collaborations, exchanges and cross-overs;
- Italian reinterpretations of the American superhero archetype; (e.g. Ratman, PKNA, To Be Continued).

**Keynote speakers:**
Fabio Gadducci, Leonardo Gori, Sergio Lama, authors of *Eccetto Topolino. Lo scontro culturale tra fascismo e fumetti* (Edizioni NPE, 2011 and 2020)
Elizabeth Leake (Columbia University), author of *Tex Willer. Un cowboy nell'Italia del dopoguerra* (Il Mulino, 2018)

Please submit an abstract (300 words) and short bio to the members of the organizing committee, Manuela Di Franco (*Manuela.difranco@Ugent.be*), Alessio Aletta (*alessio.aletta@mail.utoronto.ca*) and Luca Somigli (*luca.somigli@utoronto.ca*). Paper should be 15-20 minutes, in English or in Italian. **Deadline for submission: 29 February 2024**