Spider-Man & Nixon's War on Drugs Original Art Go to Auction

Daring original art from the 1970s special editions available at auction until October 4th.



Peter Parker becomes concerned when his friend Harry Osborn is shown using drugs. Depiction of drug use was forbidden in the 1970s.

Peter Parker becomes concerned when friend uses drugs.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Original comic book art from a unique 1971 Spider-Man story, known for its pioneering treatment of drug use and its defiance of the Comic Code Authority, is on the auction market for the first time at ComicConnect until Oct. 4.

“When we were offered nearly all of the interior art to Amazing Spider-Man #96 and #97, the infamous drug issues, we stopped dead in our tracks,” said Vincent Zurzolo, president of ComicConnect, the premier auction site for comics and pop culture collectibles. “It was simply amazing to see page after page from these iconic issues.”

The legendary artists whose hands brought the story to life included John Romita Sr., Gil Kane, Frank Giacoia and Mike Esposito. “Your heart races faster and faster as you read these unique pages featuring your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, his friends and enemies,” Zurzolo said.

The Comic Code Authority (CCA), which was stablished in 1954 in response to concerns about the content of comic books, imposed strict guidelines on what could and could not be depicted. Among the forbidden topics: drug use, even in a negative context.

But then, the Nixon administration asked Marvel’s Stan Lee to create a story warning children of the dangers of drugs. “Lee conceived a three-issue Spider-Man story in which his best friend, Harry Osborn, becomes addicted, and along the way, he changed comic book history,” Zurzolo said.

Lee felt confident that, since the government had made the original request, he could publish a drug-related story without the CCA seal of approval.

“The books immediately became popular,” Zurzolo said. “After that, the CCA loosened its restrictions, opening the door to today’s more complex and darker stories.” The code was discontinued in 2011 when major publishers stopped adhering to it.

Pages show Peter worrying about his employment, finances, love life, family and his secret identity. “Kane and Romita demonstrate their mastery of facial expressions in the series of closeups on these pages, all highlighting the drama that animated the series,” Zurzolo said.

Another set of pages introduces one of the storyline’s central conflicts, as Spider-Man stumbles across the police response to a teenager on drugs on the verge of falling from a tall building, demonstrating the scourge of drugs in Spider-Man’s fantastical world. Of course, Spidey swoops in to rescue the stoned teen.

“It shows the danger of drugs, especially in a world with no Spider-Man to bail you out,” Zurzolo said..

The extent of Harry Osborn’s addiction to pills to manage the stresses of his life and relationships becomes apparent to Peter as drugs hit dangerously close to home.



ComicConnect ‘s Vincent Zurzolo displays his web-slinging ability with one of the pages up for auction.

Vincent Zurzolo with Amazing Spider-Man page.

“The writers and artists at Marvel continued to push the boundaries of what comics could be and what stories they could tell,” Zurzolo said. “Over 50 years later, ComicConnect is proud to once again offer collectors a chance to own an original piece of comics history.”

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>
> *Vincent Zurzolo*

Joanne Levine
Lekas & Levine PR
joannepr@aol.com



Stephen Fishler, CEO of ComicConnect

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