

By Comix Touched

August 7 - September 11

Museum Senior Curator Josine Ianco-Starrels discusses her exhibition's premise and the artists.

The emotional climate, the weather, the food, the books we read and the images we see as children coalesce into what could later be defined as the cultural context which shapes our lives. Subsequently, for the rest of our adult years, our actions are, to a great extent, determined by these factors.

The impact of such motivating forces remains discreetly tucked away behind the facade of most people's actions — their backgrounds usually surface only in the intimate moments of their private lives.

It is in poems, novels, musical compositions, in paintings, drawings, films and other expressive languages that creative people reveal (to those that bother to perceive them) the threads connecting the psychic and cultural climate of their formative years to their works of art.

It is in this context that the paintings and drawings of J.R. Carter, Dick Ibach and Michele Roberts have been brought together for this exhibition. Without wishing to point to any specific influences or any particular aesthetic links, I will confess to the fact that I think their works owe something to an American childhood. I suppose that I see this as a common denominator because I did not, in my childhood, look at cartoons or comic strips — nor did I know of the existence of Walt Disney in the wilds of Roumania where I was brought up.

I have noticed that what is foreign to our experience (therefore unfamiliar to us) strikes us with unmistakable impact. I know, also, that this early exposure to comics and cartoons — static or animated — is common to many Americans who have grown up in the 20th century. Further, each generation or two has read and looked at slightly different variations of this genre of popular visual communication or commentary. Its influences appear in the work of a great many American artists. To a greater or lesser degree we find subtle affinities to cartoons in the late paintings of Phillip Guston and blatant references to comic strips in the paintings of Roy Lichtenstein.

Michele Roberts, J.R. Carter and Dick Ibach, whose works constitute our exhibition, are literally among those BY COMIX TOUCHED.

Michele Roberts' stories take shape in images related to the sequential format of comic strips coupled with the bold color used in traditional folk art. The subjects she most frequently mines are the joys and pitfalls of male-female relationships.

Michele Roberts *How Could He Tell Her That He Loved Her*
1987 Monotype

The Child is father of the Man

Wordsworth

*I know you understand
the little child inside the man*

John Lennon

