

CALENDAR

ART

ART NEWS

Inspiration From the Funny Papers

By ZAN DUBIN

Art can spark associations with music, literature, dance or nature. But Josine Ianco-Starrels has long thought of the funnies when she looked at certain creations and she decided finally to do something about it.

The result is "By Comix Touched," a three-person exhibition through Sept. 11 at the Long Beach Museum of Art.

"This kind of work always reminded me of images I'd seen in vanguard animated films or comics," said Ianco-Starrels, the museum's curator. "There's a distortion of the figure, but a funny distortion. The colors are very bright and there's an irony or a satire about it, a quality I call funny-scary."

Paintings, drawings and monotypes by Michele Roberts, John Randolph Carter and Dick Ibach make up the 60-piece Long Beach

show. Whether using sequential images and words or a more abstract style, each artist distorts reality "for the sake of emphasizing a situation," though "they all handle it in very different ways," Ianco-Starrels said.

Roberts' works, she noted, are overtly narrative and sequential, as in "How Could He Tell Her That He Loved Her?":

Panel number one shows a seated woman reading, oblivious to the lovesick man behind her holding a big, red, flaming heart.

Panel two pictures the man aiming the heart at the object of his desire.

Panel three depicts the aftermath of the man's heart lob—the woman buried beneath the crimson symbol, completely surprised by the attack and, by implication, her suitor's sentiment.

"To me, it's a funny, colorful shorthand for lack of communication," she said.

In contrast, Carter veers away from direct narrative, illuminating his automatic drawings with magic markers. "He creates an amalgam of images, sort of reminiscent of [the Beatles'] 'Yellow Submarine,'" she said.

Ibach also leaves interpretation more to the viewer. Choosing titles that suggest banal activities such as "Backyard Baseball," his works nonetheless deliver a sometimes bitter dose of truth, Ianco-Starrels said. "They have a kind of childhood directness and charm, yet they're also poignant."

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PEOPLE: John Caldwell, curator of contemporary art at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, has been named curator of paintings and sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He will

assume the new post in January. Among the exhibitions that Caldwell, 46, has organized is the 1988 Carnegie International, a triennial show established in 1896, which, after the Venice Biennale, is the longest continuing series of its kind.

Matt Mullican, Alexis Smith and Larry Bell, all Los Angeles-born artists, have been chosen to design artworks for the \$390-million Los Angeles Convention Center Expansion Project, slated for completion in early 1992.

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SEARCH: The University Art Museum at Cal State Long Beach is organizing a November exhibition on the life and work of Max Munn Autrey, who photographed Hollywood stars of the '30s and '40s. Photographs by Autrey, who died in 1971, are included in the Hollywood Photographer's Archive, but little is known about his personal life. The museum is asking that relatives and friends of Autrey's who have any of his photographs, scrapbooks or other memorabilia contact Wendell Eckholm, (213) 985-5761.

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SOS: "One of our problems is that our volunteers end up working at MOCA," says Fern Heyman, who is desperately seeking new volunteers for the Museum of Contemporary Art. The institution needs helpers at both its sites to work at an information desk and assist curatorial staff. Interviews are being conducted now, and orientation will start in September. Volunteers must become MOCA members for \$45. For information and an application, call Heyman, president of the museum's volunteer activities council, at (213) 621-2766. □