

Now you can have your art on Sunday, too

Program hopes to attract public to downtown galleries

By Camille Hamilton
Herald staff writer

Collectors, students and art enthusiasts now can experience art in their favorite downtown Los Angeles gallery — on a Sunday.

Dubbed Second Sunday by its sponsor, Los Angeles Visual Arts, the program hopes to raise public awareness of the downtown art community. Under the program, launched yesterday, 17 participating downtown galleries will open their doors to the public on the second Sunday of each month between 1 and 4 p.m.

Keeping the galleries open for an extra day allows the public to take self-guided walking tours among the growing number of downtown galleries, gallery owners said.

"We want to see downtown become a cultural center that attracts people and holds them in the area," said Bill Lasarow, publisher of Artscene and co-director of the Thinking Eye gallery, located at 1324 S. Figueroa.

Second Sunday represents a concerted effort on the part of LAVA to take advantage of a situation gallery owners say they have known about for a long time.

"The weekend, particularly Sunday, is the time when people come downtown. We realize that this is where our audience — and our potential audience — is," said Miles Kubo, director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center Gallery.

The program, Kubo believes, will help dispel the perception of galleries as inaccessible enclaves for "high art" limited only to those who can afford to purchase it.

Gallery owners and enthusiasts hope also that the success of the program will attract patrons who are



Anne Knudsen/Herald photographer

Doug Collins and Michael Becker look at paintings by artist Michele Roberts at the Jennifer Dumas Gallery.

reluctant to venture downtown for fear of crime or of getting lost in the Skid Row area. "Most people think the downtown area is somehow sinister, a horrible place. (Second Sunday) should show people that there's a lot going on downtown, and it's not dangerous to come here. It should also make getting here more informal," said Richard Rowe of Pasadena, who was downtown yesterday to witness the unveiling of a Gary Lloyd sculpture affixed to the front of the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies building at 814 S. Spring St.

The overhead work, which resembled a huge fireman's ax, consists of 200 pounds of American, Mexican and Japanese coins, and attracted a number of patrons to the Spring Street area, which has been repopulated with art galleries during its renovation.

According to those who flocked about the gallery and out on the street below shortly after the unveiling, the Second Sunday program is an idea whose time has come.

"I only come downtown for special events. Otherwise I just try to avoid the area," said Glorian Harris, who dislikes the congestion but favors the new concentration of galleries downtown.

"There's not much going on in the West Side anymore," said Harris, an artist from West Los Angeles, adding that high rents there have recently made downtown more attractive to artists and galleries.

If the turnout for the first Second Sunday is any indication, the program will be a "major success" said Jennifer Dumas, owner and director of Jennifer Dumas Gallery on Spring Street. Her attendance for the first Second Sunday reflected a mix of collectors, regulars and new attendees — "It was very good, and I'm very excited about the possibilities," she said.

Maps to the participating downtown galleries are available from LAVA and from the individual galleries.