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ART

Energetic and fun: elevating poster art

By Charlie Amter, Special to The Times

The lowly student art poster may finally be getting the respect it deserves, thanks to the California Institute of Arts and the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. The new show "Earthquakes & Aftershocks: Posters From the CalArts Graphic Design Program 1986-2004" at the Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park features 64 posters designed by CalArts students over the last two decades. The exhibition, which was conceived of by Paris-based CalArts alumnus Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié and has already had two showings in France, displays a variety of oversized, brightly colored prints, most of them silk-screened. They advertise events, including puppet shows and big names such as John Cage, who have visited the CalArts campus over the years, and even offer humorous takes on "lost dog" fliers and the act of creating a poster.

Louise Sandhaus, a CalArts faculty member, selected the posters from more than 1,000 in the school's archives. "I wanted the show to reflect the energy that started in 1986, when Lorraine Wild was the program director of the graphic design program," Sandhaus says of the noted graphic artist and book designer. "She came in with a very different idea about design and gave the students' work a range of energies and forms."

Sandhaus adds that, in the digital age, creating posters holds a special place for the students. "CalArts has such a long history within graphic design," she says, "but since the computer was introduced the students get excited, because posters are tactile and they get an immediate response."

"Earthquakes & Aftershocks: Posters From the CalArts Graphic Design Program 1986-2004," Municipal Art Gallery, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., L.A. Noon to 5 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays.



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