



IN THE
COMICS



EXHIBITION STRAIGHT AHEAD

The comic art form is experiencing a renaissance. Reflected in the unprecedented number of comic stores, conventions, websites, published anthologies and individual titles, popular interest in comics has never been higher. The San Francisco Bay Area is an important part of this activity, with local artists offering some of the most challenging and critically celebrated material.

Life in the Comics features four very different artists from our local community. This work emphasizes storytelling based on realism, autobiography and mature subject matter.

Paul Madonna's strip, *All Over Coffee*, brings attention to the places in urban geography that exist on the periphery of our consciousness, obscure and yet as familiar as our back door. Often mistaken for overheard conversation, the writing that appears so effortless is actually the result of Madonna's subtle craftsmanship.

Frederick Noland's comics are tales of cranky hipsters, down-and-out people and the otherwise uncelebrated members of our society. The strength of his storytelling is in the details of his character development—details that appear in the illustration as well as the text.

Gene Yang's graphic novel, *American Born Chinese*, weaves together three seemingly separate stories to explore the challenges of adolescence. Through a mixture of fantasy and realism, this coming-of-age story addresses the tensions of biculturalism from an Asian American perspective.

Hellen Jo uses both English and Korean in her self-published, limited edition comic books and illustrations. Jo's strong graphic style and use of shifting perspective gives her tales of failed romance and teenage angst a cinematic quality.

All of these artists have taken the comic form out of the realm of children's entertainment to communicate complex ideas about the everyday moments that make up an average life.

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