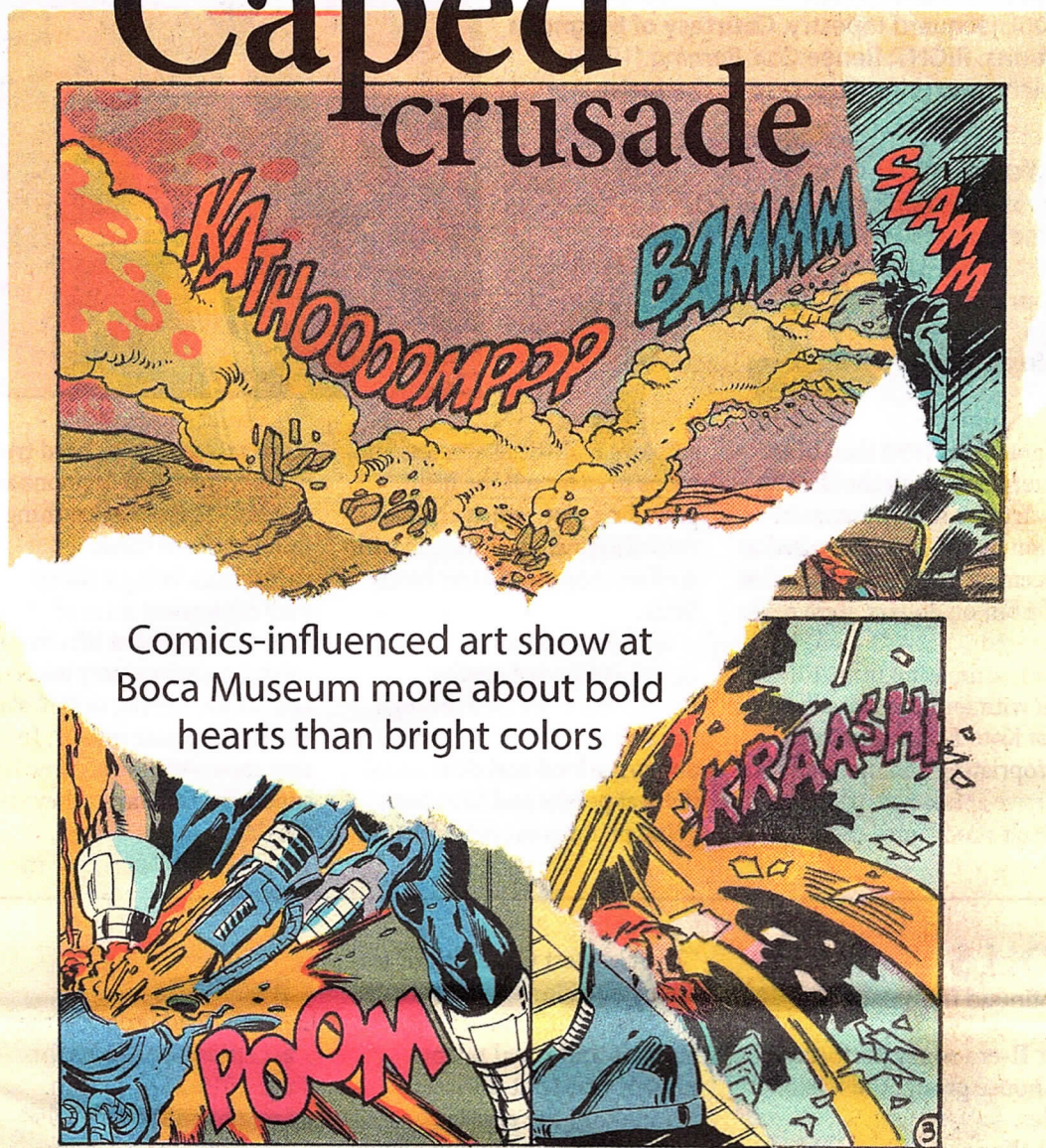


The Arts Paper

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Art

Caped crusade



Comics-influenced art show at Boca Museum more about bold hearts than bright colors

Christian Marclay's print *Poom* (2006) is part of the *Beyond the Cape!* exhibit at the Boca Raton Museum of Art. Courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery

By Gretel Sarmiento
ArtsPaper Art Writer

To widen perceptions of comics and contemporary art has a cost. A new exhibition inspired by superheroes takes the masks off and throws lightweight topics out the window in favor of troubling themes.

Among the first facts that become blatantly obvious upon entering *Beyond the Cape! Comics and Contemporary Art* is that this is not a show for kids.

Happy ends go rogue. Flat cartoon-like figures, bright colors and bold lines dress up candid conversations historically reserved for the dinner table or anonymous posts. Racism, gender equality, LGBTQ rights and climate change speak up here through more than 80 works taking almost the entire first-floor gallery space of the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

The inoculation against the reassurance and happy thoughts cartoons usually convey enters abruptly like a rushed needle.

It comes in the form of a large painting from 2008 depicting a happy face against a black background. The light-humored expression done in enamel should feel very familiar in the age of emoticons, but the broken-up lines, oversized white eyes and dripping lend *Hey There!* an anarchist quality. This emoji has gone punk. Brooklyn

artist Joyce Pensato is known for exploring the darker side of toons through large black-and-white paintings.

Immediately to the left hangs a series of three pencil drawings each portraying a little girl with adorable eyelashes, tiny feet and a cute nightgown. From a distance, she could fool anyone. Fully displayed above her bulging eyes and overgrown head are sinister thoughts we can only presume to be the result of isolation, rebellion and helplessness. We can't decide whether she is a fragile child in need of connection or a well-behaved menace. It's only a matter of time before the rage contained within *Burn Everything, Happy Alone* and *To Hell and Back* is freed.

The 2008 drawings are the creations of Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara, a natural introvert who turned to comics and television for companionship before studying arts and developing a style that speaks to emotional duality.

Another deceiving scene featuring a long-beaked bird sporting a red robe and a badge reading NYPD appears nearby. The bird skates on thin ice toward a bridge under which a rat and an unworldly creature are seen advising a monk in waist-high water. Despite

See CAPE on AT6

Music

Victory Dolls tune in to WWII magic

By Dale King
Contributing Writer

Memories of World War II are getting a shot in the arm from a group of talented stage performers and a veteran theater management CEO, all intent on reviving the music and cultural impact of the war period.

Kevin Barrett, a theater manager for 28 years who took over last year as director of the Delray Beach Playhouse, has joined forces with Carbonell Award-winning singer and actress Shelley Keelor to launch The Victory Dolls, an Andrews

Sisters-inspired musical group made up of nine leading ladies from the regional musical theater.

The group — the first of its kind in South Florida — is planning annual tours for Florida and beyond, and will call several South Florida theaters home each season, including the Delray Beach Playhouse, Mizner Park Cultural Center in Boca Raton and the Lauderhill Performing Arts Center.

"For most of my childhood, I was fascinated with World War II," said Barrett, who is also CEO of Arts Center Management, a multi-

platform theater management, consulting and production company.

"I'd go to the library and read about 'The Greatest Generation.' Earlier this year, I went to New Orleans for the opening of the World War II Museum."

That institution has recreated the iconic Stage Door Canteen, a New York-based entertainment spot for Allied Forces personnel that also featured free food and appearances by the big stars of the era. The museum's canteen features a production of World

See DOLLS on AT6



The Victory Dolls — (l-r) Amy Miller Brennan, Aaron Bower, Ann Marie Olsen, Jinon Deeb, Shelley Keelor, Katie Angell Thomas, Jeanine Levy, Leah Marie Sessa and Sabrina Lynn Gore — will perform World War II-era shows in Florida and elsewhere. Photo provided



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