



Controversial art

I appreciate the Imperial Valley Press' coverage of the current art gallery exhibit and controversy at San Diego State University in Calexico. I have one addition, one correction, and one note of thanks to add to your published remarks.

I do not mind taking the public's praises or blame (depending on the individual's point of view) for this gallery event. Those who appreciate the quality of the art, however, should know that the main credit deserves to go to the primary curator of the exhibit, Jeannette Davis of San Diego. Without her knowledge of contemporary art and her generous donation of effort to the university, the gallery would not have been able to obtain this work.

I have never suggested there are no qualified people available to serve on a gallery committee. On the contrary, I already have several very knowledgeable art professionals who have been proposed or contacted about serving on an art advisory board, including one exceptionally talented employee of this newspaper. I could easily add two dozen names to my current list, as the depth of creative talent, critical thinking, and artistic knowledge of art professionals in this area is certainly equivalent to that in the San Diego area. The uncertainties of budget, physical facilities and other considerations have made it impossible this year to establish a stable gallery schedule even a couple of months in advance, something I feel is a necessity if I am to ask members of the community to attach their reputations to this type of university commitment.

The gallery is to serve the campus and to be a forum for a variety of ideas, but the university has always extended its use for the benefit of the community. Reaction among students and faculty here has been more favorable than not. I would like to acknowledge those faculty members who have incorporated this exhibit into their curriculum: Dr. Richard Hill, Sociology of Sex Roles in American Society (discussion of social construction of gender identity); Dr. Santos Carrasco, Philosophy of Social Ethics (discussion of feminism and the idea that an act of representation is an act of power); Dr. Leslie Garrison, Educational Technology (video coverage and interview techniques to inform); Dr. Jeanette Shumaker, British Literature (literary criticism and art criticism are based on much the same theories); and instructor Gretchen Bachner, English as a Second Language (cultural ideas). Other faculty members have encouraged their class members to attend the exhibit or have accompanied them to the gallery.

Several members of the community have expressed their deep regret that a work of art was stolen from this exhibit. I appreciate their concern and especially the offers from the art community to find ways to reimburse the artist for her loss. Anyone who would like to view the exhibit by appointment on Wednesday or Friday evening or this weekend when the gallery is normally closed may call me at 357-5536.

SHEILA DOLLENTE,
Gallery Director