

"Going Public/Making Changes", art project by student on display

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The sexual harassment of female workers and students by men in positions of authority is the subject of "Going Public/Making Changes," an art project created by Mary-Linn Hughes, a master of fine arts candidate in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego. The project includes a library display, a mass mailing and a conference and workshop.

"I didn't do the project as a sociological or psychological study," Hughes said, "My goal is to get information out to the public using the tools I have as an artist."

As part of the project, Hughes has put together a display which will be on exhibit in the Central University Library at UC San Diego from May 2-14. The display, called "Violence Against Women: A Social Phenomenon," features books, informational handouts and art by Hughes on sexual violence.

Hughes also has helped organize a statewide conference on the issue of sexual harassment on May 3 at the university. A workshop for women to discuss the problem and share their experiences is scheduled at noon on May 6 in the North Conference Room of the university's Student Center,

The final component of the project is a five-part booklet designed by Hughes which will be mailed to 3,000 students, staff and faculty members and University of California administrators. The booklet, titled "Worst of All is the Fact that No One Talks About It," was compiled after Hughes sent out questionnaires and received 60 responses from women relating their own experiences with sexual harassment.

"It's clear to me that sexual harassment is a problem," Hughes said. "The overwhelming sense I got from the responses was 'even if I said anything, nothing would be done.' The grievance procedure is not well-publicized and women are left feeling powerless."

Revising the grievance procedure and creating a statewide committee to study the problem are some of the issues Hughes hopes to discuss at the May 3 conference.

Organizations working with Hughes on the conference and the workshop are the UCSD Women's Center, the UCSD Ad-Hoc Committee Against Sexual Harassment and the UCSD Women's Caucus.

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