

Local Women to Participate In National Public Artwork

■ *'Two Girls Working' at ECC Next Week*

By Sarah Wienke
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Sixteen local women will have the chance to participate in a national artwork project next week during an artist residency at East Central College.

Two Girls Working is the collaborative team of artists Tiffany Ludwig and Renee Piechocki, who use their art to generate civic action and dialogue.

The artists will be in residence at ECC Monday, Sept. 17, through Friday, Sept. 21, conducting interviews with women and publicly presenting their work during lectures at several venues throughout the county.

Their project "Trappings" uses clothing as a vehicle to explore the relationship between a woman's identity, power and appearance.

Ludwig and Piechocki ask women they interview to answer a simple question, "What do you wear that makes you feel powerful?"

Since 2001, the artists have traveled throughout the country interviewing 520 women of all shapes, sizes, ethnicities and backgrounds. The result is a national public art and performance project that combines audio, video and photographic presentations.

During the Two Girls Working residency, women of Franklin County will be able to share their views and will be photographed wearing the piece of clothing that makes them feel powerful.

In the spring, the artists will return to ECC to mount an exhibition in the gallery featuring the women interviewed from the Franklin

County community.

The Two Girls Working residency and exhibition is being funded through a \$12,000 grant from the ECC Foundation. Each year, the ECC Patrons of the Arts raises money to benefit the fine and performing arts departments at the community college, which includes art, theater and music, as well as provides scholarships.

National Project

The experience is an opportunity for people to take part in the creative process, said Jill Foote-Hutton, ECC art instructor and gallery director.

The entire process is the art, from the interviews with the women and the dialogue that ensues, to the photos, films and gallery exhibitions, Ludwig and Piechocki told *The Missourian*.

"We wanted to look at art-making outside of the art studio arena," Ludwig explained, noting that they wanted to present an artwork that steps outside of what people normally think of as art.

The interviews and photos from women in Franklin County will be just one piece of the artwork. All of the women who participate in the "Trappings" interviews are featured in the Two Girls Working national traveling show in one way or another, the artists said.

Ludwig said "Trappings" is a cross disciplinary work, with legs in public art, performance art and storytelling.

Its arms are public exhibitions and a Web site, www.twogirlsworking.com, which is a public archive of every woman who has partic-

ipated in the interviews.

In October, their book, "Trappings: Stories of Women, Power and Clothing," will be published by Rutgers University Press. A feature-length documentary will be completed in 2009, Ludwig said.

Foote-Hutton, who participated in "Trappings" in 2002, said that their concept can be difficult to grasp because it is not art in the conventional sense of the word.

"Latin is a dead language — art is not dead," she said. "It is a real reflection of what we're doing on this planet and that's what these two ladies are doing."

Foote-Hutton said the reason for scheduling the artists' lectures in venues throughout the county is to make the experience accessible to everyone. All lectures are free and open to the public.

Lectures will be held Monday, Sept. 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the ECC campus in Sullivan; Tuesday, Sept. 18, at 7 p.m. at the Riverfront Cultural Society, New Haven;

Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 10:45 a.m. in Room BC138 at the ECC Union campus, and at 5:30 p.m. at the ECC Rolla Campus; and Thursday, Sept. 20, at 10 a.m. at Scenic Regional Library, Union, 1:30 p.m. in Room BC138 of the ECC Union campus, and at 5:30 p.m. at the Art Center in Downtown Washington.

Interview Sessions

Interview sessions will be held at East Central College Tuesday, Sept. 18, and at a private residence Friday, Sept. 21.

The women were selected to represent a broad spectrum of women in the county, including students, career women and retired women.

Piechocki and Ludwig will ask women simply, "What do you wear that makes you feel powerful?"

Women participating will introduce themselves and talk about the piece of clothing they have brought.

"We don't have predetermined questions for the interview," Piechocki said. Instead, the women will talk

and questions will come up in a natural flow.

"You may get to know women you thought you knew in a different way," she said.

Foote-Hutton participated in the "Trappings" interview in 2002 while she was attending graduate school in Oxam, Miss.

She said she came to the interview wearing Carhart overalls and boots, covered in clay. Foote-Hutton talked about how her power is the ability to work and be strong.

"It was interesting to hear what they got from my interview," Foote-Hutton said. "It gave me a unique look at myself I wouldn't see otherwise."

The interview process also helped her see the women she knew from school in a different light.

"I saw their depth as human beings," Foote-Hutton said.

Overall it was a very positive experience, she noted.