

West Valley View

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Tuesday, March 22, 2011

Cover girls

EMCC art exhibit examines depictions of women in media

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Media

Meet the artist

WHAT: Art walk and dessert reception for "Cover Girls: Women Breaking Through the Glossy Page," an art exhibit by artist Peter Bugg

WHEN: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. today

WHERE: Komatke and Estrella halls at Estrella Mountain Community College, 3000 N. Dysart Road, Avondale

INFO: The event is free and open to the public. Call 623-935-8055 for further details. Visit www.peterbugg.com for more information about the artist.



portrayals of women can paint a striking picture of American society.

In an art exhibit on display at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, artist Peter Bugg hopes to bring attention to the relationship between imagery and text and how words and pictures are used to represent women in what he calls "the consumption machine of American celebrity culture."

The showcase of glossy tabloid magazines is part of a range of events being held on campus in honor of Women's History Month.

"The events so far have been very successful and I think the people on our campus have the need to understand more about women's issues and how women are still being oppressed locally and worldwide," said EMCC professor Olga Tsoudis, who's been the lead organizer for campus events pertaining to Women's History Month.

1,000 words

Bugg's exhibit, called "Cover Girls: Women Breaking Through the Glossy Page," features three bodies of work that can be seen throughout campus.

"Images and text have a curious relationship. A picture is said to be worth a thousand words, but which words it

IN "COMPARE AND CONTRAST," artist Peter Bugg uses a series of hand-cut magazine covers to show the relationship between text and images as they are used to depict women in the media. His work can be seen at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale. Submitted photo

might suggest can change, depending on what other text is already there," Bugg said. "The work in this exhibition examines this relationship by scrutinizing and juxtaposing photographs and text from magazine covers both domestic and international."

In his first display, dubbed "Compare and Contrast," Bugg presents a series of hand-cut magazine covers from which the original headlines and explanatory text have been excised. It can be seen in the cases between campus buildings Komatke A and Komatke B.

"I've gone through a bunch of different magazines, and have found where two magazines have used the exact same picture for entirely different purposes ... Often times the photo has little to do with the text that goes along with it," Bugg said.

By taking away the colorful, highly punctuated and capitalized text, Bugg said he is allowing viewers to read the original headlines, while directing their focus to the repeated photographs and encouraging them to draw their own conclusions as to what may be the most appropriate headline.

Meanwhile, a series of colorful circles in Komatke C reverses the removal process. In this display, Bugg takes away the imagery and leaves only the "text buttons" that are typically splattered upon the covers of American tabloid publications.

"Without a photograph to contextualize the words, the text is freed from the constraints of the image and takes on a life of its own," Bugg said.

Or, as seen in "All the Happy Details" upstairs in Estrella Hall, "the sheer volume of text relating to weight loss reads as a commentary on where America's misplaced attention lies," the 30-year-old artist said.

Lastly, in an installation piece titled "Issues," which can be seen on the first floor of Estrella Hall, Bugg has arranged 150 magazines featuring pop singer Britney Spears.

"I think it's really interesting," Tsoudis said of the display. "It shows how the media will take one person and sexualizes her and objectifies her and creates different stories about her."

Still fighting

Tsoudis said that, along with exploitation in the media, women still face a plethora of challenges in 2011.

"Body image, which is connected to media; violence against women comes in all forms - whether it's human trafficking or domestic violence; the overall culture of how we're still seeing women as being unequal to men and how we're still oppressing women; people still referring to adult women as girls - those are some of the topics, along with reproductive rights - we're still talking about access to birth control; and women in politics, women who are actually for women's rights," Tsoudis said.

For additional information on Women's History Month at EMCC, visit www.estrellamountain.edu. For further details on Bugg and his artwork, go to www.peterbugg.com.

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