

Reclaiming the woman inside

As the moon hangs high, females look to prevent rape

By **MARIUM MOHIUDDIN**
Staff writer

With the release of fall and summer schedule books, everybody know finals are around the corner. From apartments, dorms, coffee shops and the Sterling C. Evans Library, there will be no crevice where an Aggie will not be found. Day-long and late-night studying will sweep the campus. And as most people know, accompanying late-night studying are the lengthy silent and lonely walks back to the car, poorly-lit avenues and few people out and about.

During these times, should women feel threatened every time they have to walk back to their car, or every time they hear a noise? When someone walks too close, should women have to pull out their mace in fear?

Living in an idealistic world, women should not have to do this. Society should be safe enough for anyone to live without fear. However, living in the real world there is not much choice. What solutions are there to remedy this problem?

Many people and organizations have pondered over many solutions to these questions. The National Organization of Women's response is Take Back the Night. They are saying to the world, sexual assault does exist and is a problem everyone needs to realize, understand and help find a solution to. They are saying to the world, woman and all sexual assault victims will not be held captive to the night.

Kim Ngo, treasurer of N.O.W. and a junior bioengineering major, said this is a strong annual tradition with people coming out all over the nation.

"Whether you are female, a radical or an activist, you can come to the march," Ngo said. "It is not necessarily a female event, those are just stereotypes. At A&M, we have always have a good response of about 50 - 100 people. It is a mixed crowd of professors, men, women and community members."

Ngo said this is an issue people cannot ignore and say it is not important.

"It is about feeling safe and making the streets safe for women," she said. "It is about making our voices heard. If you are a woman, or even have female relatives then you should be concerned."

Ngo said some have the misconception that the event is only for women,

but the objective behind Take Back the Night branches out into all aspects of the community.

"The event is open to men because rape does occur to women and to men," she said. "This is not a feminist issue, but a societal issue. This is for any person who cares about the well being of others."

Lt. Bert Kretzschmar, head of the crime prevention unit with the University Police Department, said this event is extremely important because a lot of people make presumptions about living in this town.

"People assume that because they live on campus or they go to a university, they are sheltered," Kretzschmar said.

"I call it a superman syndrome. They get into risky situations and give off the message they are vulnerable."

Kretzschmar said College Station may not be Houston or Dallas, but situations always occur.

"There are simple precautions you can take," he said. "When dating, go with other couples. Always be aware of alcohol and drugs because they are the biggest contributors."

Kretzschmar said students have to remember rape can happen. It can be an acquaintance, a friend or a classmate.

"In the '97 fiscal year, there were 2 date or acquaintance rapes reported," he said. "In '93, there were 3 date or acquaintance rapes reported. But you have to keep in mind that 1 out of 10 rapes are reported."

Isai Gopalakrishnan, president of Aggies Working for a Rape-free Environment and a sophomore biology major, said this year AWARE is cosponsoring the event with NOW.

"The nature of the event is to educate people about what goes on," she said. "It is needed for this campus so it can open people's eyes. Students think 'we are in college ... this is the time of our lives ... we are invincible.'"

Gopalakrishnan said we may not have big city problems and we may not have the large numbers of a city, but we do have sexual assault.

"Anyway you look at it, it is rape," she said. "One rape is equal to another and is equally damaging. There is a problem and there has to be something done."

Gopalakrishnan said many guys feel scared to attend meetings or come to events like this because they feel girls will perceive them as the aggressor.

"I don't think guys will understand until they are threatened," she said. "In all honesty, it is never going to be a big deal to a lot of people. It is never going to be like Bonfire. The people who show up know and already understand the problem. Others need to come out and see and hear what is going on."

PLEASE SEE **NIGHT** ON PAGE 4.



Organic art displayed at Visual Arts Gallery

By **APRIL TOWERY**
Staff writer

Visitors to the MSC Visual Arts Committee's exhibit "Polyopsia" might have to stop for a bite to eat afterward.

The exhibit, designed by Italian artist Ivana Candiago, features only organic materials and includes sculptures and drawings of items, such as silverware and eggs.

Fortunately for hungry art patrons, the artist is set to host a reception in the Visual Arts Gallery on the second floor of the MSC tonight at 7 p.m., where refreshments will be served. She will answer questions and talk about her work at the reception.

"My work is sedimentary, with images that slowly appear much like those from an archaeological dig," Candiago said in a news release. "Similarly, references to mythology and literature may emerge."

The exhibit, also held in the Visual Arts Gallery, has an earth-tone quality, including mostly browns and blues. It features a mixture of canvas, sculpture, wood and mixed media.

Candiago, whose work has been commissioned by the Senate of Berlin, is precise and detailed in her work. Most of her art in "Polyopsia" is framed into sections and portrays a theme of some sort.

One of the 19 pieces featured in the exhibit is a mixed media called "Good Morning Jack!" This piece is framed into sections, giving it the appearance of a kitchen scene.

"It's like a cupboard, a sideboard, a table set for breakfast," Candiago said of this work. "There is food embedded in wax. The tablecloth and rolled up newspaper are there as well as a music box that plays 'O Sole Mio.' The knives and forks are ready to be used. The die is about to be cast. It is not going to be a peaceful morning."

This piece, like all of Candiago's, is a product of meticulous perfection. The drawings are sketched in detail, the wood and oils combined to provide the illusion of a man sitting down to breakfast.

The Visual Arts Gallery will display Candiago's work through May 29. The exhibit is brought to Texas A&M by the MSC Visual Arts Committee, a part of the Student Programs Office. The committee promotes the visual arts to students and the community and aims to increase student involvement in arts programming and management. The committee recently added an educational wing to its facility, and Candiago's exhibit is educational in itself. The work is symbolic, ironic and has an element of "something different."

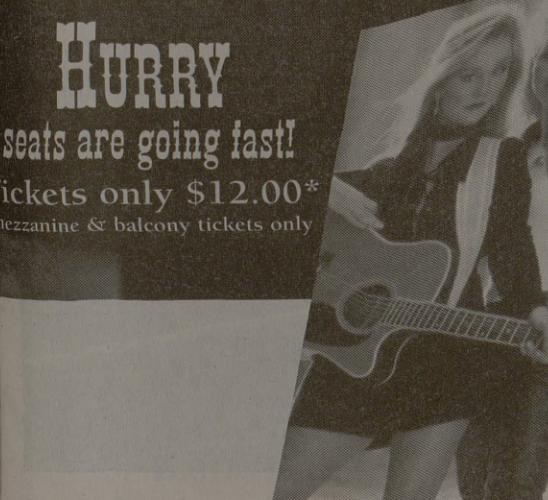
Candiago herself may not even be sure what will come of the work she exhibits.

"From the sculpture, which can only be seen by removing the various strata, I bring out and enlarge certain fragments," she said. "Often they become tridimensional, as in the series of knives, or unsettling, as in the series of eyes, or even absurd, as in those of the eggs."

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Girls are OK I guess, but it's a free country and nobody should be forced to like them.
— mark, age 8

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