

Social house's "art" exhibit is offensive

by Victoria E. Fischer

This letter comes as both an invitation and as a warning to the community: there is a new "art" exhibit on display on the north wall of the former ZetaPsi house (now called the Mill). What was at first a display of two thoroughly tanned female bodies in suggestive poses, scantily covered by colored strips of lycra and fringe, has recently taken an even more stimulating (and, if I may add, revolting), turn.

The residents have now bolted a two-story long, purple fish hook onto the wall in place of the former fraternity symbol. Its shaft plunged between the two women and fiercely cradles one of them in its hook. The fish hook, which is a piece made by a Middlebury student, is not in itself the subject of my concern, rather it is the vulgarity of its placement between the two pin-ups that disgusts me.

I feel compelled to write an open letter on this matter after having confronted one of the decorators in person and having been treated with disrespect and complacency. I have been wondering for several weeks why the pin-ups should face passers-by and not the resident of the room (for his shades are consistently drawn down, concealing the pictures from his view), so I approached him as he stood on a ladder installing the hook and posed my question. He replied, chuckling, that they came with the house. When I asked if he had any intention of removing them from public view, he said that several people had asked the same question, and, well, he might just have to think about it. It doesn't seem that he has thought too hard. The hook continues to wrap itself around the woman, its sharpened barb piercing the air next to her head, and I continue to walk by, wondering why I and all other members of the community should have to look at it. I need not spell out the connotations - any exposure to male America's sexist slang will allow one to interpret the "art."

I ask that we all consider: is this a symbol that we will allow to remain on college property, representing our school and the taste of its students? By allowing it to remain, passers-by and visitors will form an opinion of this school that will somehow, at some point, affect their opinion of us. Viewing an exhibit by choice is one thing, having it forced upon us is another. I refuse to let such an image remain an emblem of my institution, for although it has been created in

ignorance and tastelessness by only a few, it must be seen by many. And as members of this community, it also, in some way, belong to us. I recommend that, if the residents and members of the Mill agree that the fish hook is a work of art they want on their wall, let it be. But the pin-ups must come down. They may have come with the house, but the house has changed. In honor of its new image as a co-educational residence, let's change the window display.