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Georgetown Art Display Gives Window Stoppers a Start

By Linda Wheeler
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In a darkened storefront window in Georgetown, the subject is rape. The sculptured figures of two naked men, hung by their genitals, are suspended over a near-naked figure of a woman who is crawling toward the window, her suit and attache case flung to one side.

"Oh, my God," said D.C. Fire Department paramedic Judith Caldwell as she stared into the storefront. "This is shocking."

The exhibit was created by Los Angeles-based

artist Ed Massey, who has simultaneous shows of the same work in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Miami, each in a vacant storefront on a busy, commercial street, according to a note posted next to the sculptures.

Some of those who peered into the window at 1525 Wisconsin Ave. NW yesterday turned away after a quick look. Others studied every detail of the scattered clothing and the thick nooses of rough rope used to hang the men from a beam installed in the ceiling for the show.

A passing tour bus paused in traffic, and several elderly women stared from the bus windows.

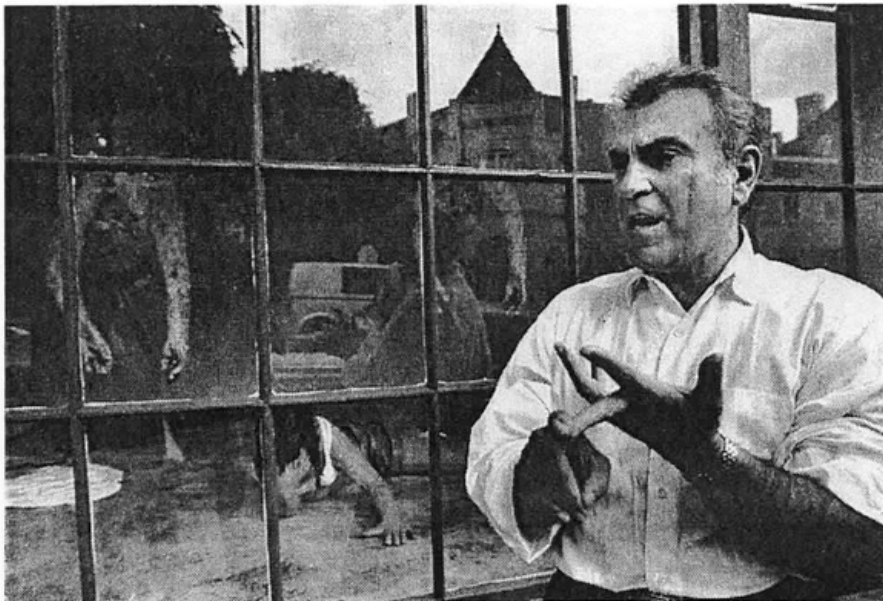
They gave the thumbs-down sign as the bus pulled away.

"The frequent and undeniable horror of sexual assault dictates that the sculpture be exhibited boldly, forthrightly and without apology," reads the artist's note. "Few people outside law enforcement officers ever see the immediate aftermath of a sexual assault."

Massey said he hoped his art work would provoke discussion of rape. It certainly provoked a discussion about his art.

"This is confrontational art," said Randolph

See ART, C6, Col. 2



BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Jacques Sarfati, who owns a hair salon next door, reacts to the sculpture display on Wisconsin Avenue NW.

Sculptor Offers a Window on Rape

ART, From C1

Roffman, 51, a publisher of tourist guides to Georgetown. "This tableau is so strong, so confrontational, so, well, I was shocked at first, but now I think it sends a message that says rape is not a pretty thing."

Caldwell, 35, said she had mixed feelings about the exhibit and its message. "I feel for her, and I feel for the men," she said.

"This is not an appropriate place for a show like this. It would be better off inside the building. I am worried people will see this, and like a show on TV, they will act it out. They may take justice into their own hands," she said.

Her partner, paramedic Don Barber, said they had heard other emergency personnel talking about the exhibit at Georgetown University

Hospital and came by to see for themselves.

Barber, 40, said he wasn't sure what the scene depicted. Then he reconsidered. "This is her fantasy about what should happen to men who rape women," he said.

The display is not readily noticed because the exhibit is not lit and the window glass reflects the bright street outside. But people passing by the window and then stopping to stare seem to draw crowds of other viewers.

Among those who looked into the window yesterday was Peter Colasante, 45, an art dealer with a shop in the Kalorama Triangle neighborhood. He said he was "happily stunned" by the show.

"It is unusual to see something in a Georgetown store window that challenges, stimulates and pro-

vokes," he said. "This is a great idea. There should be art everywhere, in every window."

However, Colasante was not ready to exhibit "Morality/Mortality," as Massey's piece is called, in his own window, saying he would have to consider that choice carefully.

Building owner Alain Chetrit said the space, which had been occupied by an interior decorator, was rented by the artist for a month. He said he "pioneered" retailing in upper Georgetown 20 years ago with his Silhouette clothing store on the same block. Now, he said, he was doing the same with the art display.

"I will seek out other artists to display their art if the store is not rented," he said.