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Staff photo/SUSAN G. STOCKER

L.A. artist Ed Massey sits with his sculpture *Morality Mortality* in the window at the Charles Hotel on Miami Beach.

Rape sculpture halting passers-by

L.A. artist created battered woman, hanging men to awaken society

By LYDA LONGA
Staff Writer

MIAMI BEACH — Pedestrians and motorists are freezing in their tracks on a bustling pastel-colored corner of Miami Beach.

There, before them in a hotel window, is a battered woman crawling away from two rapists who hang from the ceiling by their genitals.

It's only art.

But the sculpture by Los Angeles artist Ed Massey is stirring up the natives as they walk by the Charles Hotel at 15th Street and Collins Avenue.

"What is that?" said pedestrian Manny Salamanca as he sauntered by the sculpture. "Jesus, what have they done to those two guys?"

Samuel Roth, 80, was not pleased: "That's disgusting and immoral."

The piece, titled *Morality Mortality*, depicts a woman fleeing from her attackers. She is bleeding and her clothes are torn. The men who have raped her dangle above her.

The sculpture, unveiled in Miami Beach on Monday, was created to awaken society to the horrors of rape, Massey said.

Identical copies of the work also opened in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Each of the pieces will be on display until the end of May, Massey said.

"I know too many women who have either been attacked, or live in constant fear of being raped," Massey said. "I hope this sculpture will show people the severity of rape and that women can defend themselves and should."

Norma Garcia of southwest

Miami agreed. Garcia almost slammed into a lamp post as she walked by the sculpture on Tuesday.

"I thought they were real," Garcia said. "Now that I've recovered from the shock, I think it's really great. It shows a woman who has apparently defended herself against two pigs."

Miami Beach Mayor Seymour Gelber looked at the sculpture after he got a few calls on Tuesday from people who were concerned it might offend the community.

"I didn't think it was offensive at all," Gelber said. "This is just an artist making a statement."

That was the kind of reaction Massey was hoping for.

"The work is also a protest of the criminal justice system in this country," Massey said. "Too many criminals, including rapists, are repeat offenders because they're released from jails too soon."

In 1993, Broward's Rape Treatment Center handled 248 cases of sexual assault against women over 18, while Dade handled almost nine times that many with 2,000 cases, rape treatment center officials said.

Ruth McDonald, an administrator at Broward's center, and Bette Prenoveau, a clinical social worker at the Dade center, have not seen Massey's work. But both had mixed reactions about the effects it could have.

"If this is depicting a violent scene towards a woman, I don't think it will be helpful," Prenoveau said. "I don't think this shows women what they can do about violence, except to be as violent as the men themselves."

McDonald said the sculpture could shake the public's con-

science about rape, if it was done in good taste.

Shelley Green, a professor of family therapy at Nova Southeastern University in Davie, said although the sculpture sounds graphic, it is probably the jolt many people need to change their attitudes about rape.

"This kind of work fits the current climate of our society," Green said. "I teach a lot of men who still believe that 'no' means 'yes' and that they should be able to get away with anything they want when it comes to sex and women. This sculpture is a needed statement."