



Jacob Melchi/Arizona State University

Performance art puts watchers to work in Angela Ellsworth's new exhibit at Arizona State University's Art Museum. Her exhibit takes the premise that an art museum and a fitness club are both shrines to beauty.

Art exhibit is gym as museum

By Jaimee Rose
The Arizona Republic

You always thought that sweaty blond at the gym was attractive, but here's proof that he or she is a true work of art:

Phoenix artist Angela Ellsworth has a new exhibit at the Arizona State University Art Museum composed solely of everyday exercise equipment. The exhibit is based upon the premise that an art museum and a fitness club are both shrines to beauty.

At both museums and gyms, she says, "we become members, bring friends, grapple with beauty, carry attitude, and gaze at what we want or wish we had, while trying to achieve profound aesthetic connections.

"(Both) share the promise that their institution might help us transcend the physical to the ethereal. We sweat, we critique, we long to be a part of these

If you go

"Club Extra: Angela Ellsworth" can be seen from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays until March 12. The free exhibit is at the ASU Art Museum Matthews Center, Tyler and Cady malls, ASU campus, Tempe: (480) 965-2787.

institutions of absolute beauty."

There are about 30 pieces of workout equipment in the 2,800-square-foot space, from treadmills and stationary bikes to an area dedicated to aerobics. There's even a workout tape with Ellsworth's voice explaining her theories dubbed over fast music.

And Ellsworth wants you to use them.

"I've set up the situation, people come to the performance space, and they're the perform-

ers," says Ellsworth, 35.

This is the deeper meaning behind the gym-as-museum idea.

"One must put theory into practice in order for anything to happen," she says. "One has to move along to the commands of an exercise routine in order to get anywhere, and one has to participate in art in order to get anywhere."

Ellsworth, a teacher at the Metropolitan Arts Institute in Phoenix, came upon her fitness center-as-art theories after moving to Arizona from the East Coast in 1994 and discovering what she found to be a body-conscious community.

This after a new U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey found Arizona ranked last in the nation in physical activity. If this means you, admission to the gym-museum is free. The exhibit ends March 12.