

ARTnews

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on many people's minds. One woman wanted to meet a call girl because she'd discovered her husband was seeing one. A man wanted advice on how to live with a woman who had been raped. "Men and women came—couples, mothers, and fathers," says Norman, who describes the dialogues as "incredibly sincere."

Some Canadians have decried their government's support of "Call Girl," but **Louis Hamel**, the Cultural Relations Bureau's promotions director, defends the \$30,000 in funding and calls the endeavor "a feminist project."

—Elizabeth Neal

Making Them Sweat

"I love the idea of art enthusiasts sweating in a mu-

seum," says Phoenix-based artist **Angela Ellsworth**, who also goes by "Angie the fitness coordinator." So when she took over the Matthews Center Experimental Gallery at Arizona State University this spring, she gave visitors a workout. She turned the space into "Club Extra," with mirrored walls, treadmills, and other exercise contraptions. At the opening, the crowd traded its art garb for spandex and got moving.

—Joshua Rose



COURTESY ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Angela Ellsworth and art.

Why Is American Art Booming?

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Art

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EXHIBIT PREVIEW



Courtesy of ASU Art Museum

Angela Ellsworth packs her exercise equipment into the Experimental Gallery of the ASU Art Museum for an unusual interactive installation and exhibit. Visitors can come ready to look and sweat.

“Club Extra”

ASU Art Museum, Friday

We all know the old axiom about sound mind/sound body, but isn't that, well, 20th century? We need new proverbs for a new time, and who better to deliver such notes of wisdom than performance artist Angela Ellsworth?

Ellsworth, who spends time in gym and art museums, had a revelation.

“I just started thinking about it and the similarities between art museums and fitness clubs were really striking,” says Ellsworth, who is the visual arts director at Metro Arts Charter High School in Phoenix. “They both require membership, both are quite cliquish and both are places where there are people, things, objects of beauty which we desire to have or desire to wish we had made.”

Most people would leave their philosophical ramblings in the care of a journal, but Ellsworth has been motivated by her thinking to transform ASU's Experimental Gallery at Mathews Center into a fitness club this spring appropriately titled “Club Extra.” “Club Extra,” and the ever-enthusiastic fitness guru-personal trainer, Angie, will debut Friday with a night of performances and much sweating.

“The title ‘Club Extra’ refers to the extra or leftover pieces of equipment that I have come across,” Ellsworth says. “People buy it, don't use it and then don't know how to get rid of it because most of them are so big and cumbersome. So, you find the equipment everywhere — on street corners, in alleys — and this is kind of like the space itself. It's the museum, but it's not the main, fancy museum. It's the second-hand space so I used second-hand equipment.”

Since August, Ellsworth has been traveling the yard sale circuit in Phoenix and buying equipment for the show. She has collected more than 30 pieces of used equipment — all cardio — each of which will be placed in the space to resemble a fitness club. “I had a limit, and I wouldn't pay more than \$10 for any one piece of equipment.

And I was still able to collect all of this.”

Ellsworth's work also has a secondary effect of turning the performance tables and bringing the audience into the actual work as participants. Her dream involves hundreds of usually fashion-conscious art patrons stripped of their usual “art clothes” and coming to the opening in sweats and other workout attire.

“I love the idea of art enthusiasts actually sweating in a museum,” Ellsworth says. “Because the entire context is different than how the people usually see and know each other. It's about letting down pretenses and just working on sweat.”

Ellsworth has advertised the show in several Valley health clubs and fitness magazines, using the phrase, “You think your workouts are an art form?” While the first night will include performance, mainly exercising, by Ellsworth, the space will be open for the duration of the exhibit for people to come in and exercise. There also will be scheduled aerobic classes, which, like the rest of the show, will be a little different than one would expect.

In this world, the exercise tapes will be interspersed with workout instructions, critical theory, art theory and some writings about museums. Influenced by the French thinker Michel Foucault, *Angie's Theory on Tape* will cover such topics as “Walking Into Concepts” and “Sweating for Academia.”

“I have been evaluating workout tapes and I just find them so funny,” Ellsworth says. “Because since nothing is visual, they are hard to follow and become some absurd little dance. Most of the time, you move your arms, then realize you should be moving your legs, but by that time it's too late so you just make it all up.”

“Club Extra” is at the ASU Art Museum, Experimental Gallery at Mathews Center, ASU main campus, Tempe, Friday through March 12. Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Free. Info: (480) 965-ARTS.

— by Joshua Rose