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#MeToo, year one



Stories of harassment compel local artists to rethink work

By Christa Lawler
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A portrait by Chuck Close was already hanging as part of the Tweed Museum of Art's exhibition this year when the photorealist was accused of sexual harassment. In response: a solo exhibition of his work at the National Gallery in Washington was indefinitely postponed. And at Seattle University, another self-portrait was removed.

At the Tweed, "Lucas/Rug" stayed up until the end of the gallery's exhibition "Treasures from Home: An Anthology of Gifts from Collectors," which was in the main gallery from mid-January to mid-August. But it included an essay for context.

“How do we reckon with artists who are horrible human beings?”

ANNE DUGAN, art history teacher

“Each has claimed to have been harassed by his crude language, particularly about aspects of their bodies, and inappropriate touching.”

The addendum considered the question of character versus work versus the current political climate and if the artist — in this case a popular photorealist known for his oversized portraits — should have his work reconsidered.

It's been just more than a year since the most recent wave of #MeToo, a movement that was reignited when high-profile actors like Alyssa Milano, Ashley Judd and Reese Witherspoon shared stories of sexual harassment and rape via Twitter with the hashtag and, in some cases, with major news outlets. Many of these accusations are set within the world of arts and entertainment: Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, comedian Louis C.K., actor Kevin

Spacey, writer Junot Diaz, actor Scott Baio, comedian Aziz Ansari and many more.

The #MeToo movement has in some cases changed the local conversation with artists, promoters, instructors and aficionados.

“It became evident that we should respond,” Bloom said. “My thinking is that if I went and decided to challenge the artwork in the collection of every artist who is misbehaving, it would be a big problem.”

Instead: “I posed the question of how to interpret the work knowing the behavior of the artist,” he said. “The audience would read the piece and decide for themselves.”

CLOSE CALLS AND OTHER QUESTIONS

Bloom's response to the Close piece is in line with what the Guerilla Girls propose. The anonymous collective of feminist activists makes grand gestures to showcase sexism and racism in the art world — traditionally from behind gorilla masks. The Guerilla Girls offered three options for labeling Close's work, ranging from one that is friendly toward billionaire trustees to one for museums that are conflicted to one that is straight up GG-approved.

For his "Portrait of Bill Clinton," which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.: “Chuck Close has had a huge career with prices to match. He has been accused of sexually abusing models, and students he picked up at fancy art schools. How fitting and ironic that he painted the official portrait of Bill Clinton.”

Jamie Ratliff, an assistant professor of art history at the University of Minnesota Duluth, has been teaching art history from a feminist perspective for a long time. She said she is glad to hear more conversations about how we should value the work of artists who have exploited people.

She was on board with the Tweed's

response to the portrait.

“I thought it was a good example of what museums need to do,” she said of the added text panel.

(Note: Close told the New York Times that he has a dirty mouth and apologized if he embarrassed anyone or made them feel uncomfortable.)

Anne Dugan, who teaches art history and gallery practices at the College of St. Scholastica and the University of Wisconsin-Superior, respectively, said the questions of artists' morals is one that has been brought up in both of her classes.

“How do we reckon with artists who are horrible human beings?” she said of artists in general.

And, Dugan asked, is there a difference between Pablo Picasso, who is from a much different time, and Chuck Close, who can make different choices today.

IN OTHER #METOO ARTS NEWS

Brittany Lind of Femn Fest is a local music head who promotes shows via her Twitter handle @ellipsesduluth. She has enough ties with the scene to know which bands have problematic people — though, she said, there are not many.

“If I know that someone has done something wrong,” she said, “I straight up won't book them.”

This becomes a little more gray in promotions. If a problem person is on a bill with non-problem people, she might still Tweet about it. She won't take it out on the entire lineup.

“It depends on the level of what I've heard,” she said.

For Robert Lee of the Duluth Playhouse, the #metoo movement has helped him focus on the programming at The Underground.

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“The audience would read the piece and decide for themselves.”

KEN BLOOM, director, Tweed Museum of Art

“I think (#metoo) has changed the conversation.”

ROBERT LEE, Duluth Playhouse director and actor

‘The Guilty’ uses sound, silence to great effect

Eighty years ago, Orson Welles demonstrated the power of voice acting and sophisticated effects when he freaked radio listeners out during his broadcast of “War of the Worlds.” Panic rose; traffic jams allegedly ensued.

Imaginations gone wild are a helluva drug, and that translates in Danish thriller “The Guilty.”

Confined to a two-



MELINDA LAVINE
Now Showing

room office, this film drags its viewers through the vivid terrain of their mind's eye through quality expository writing, dialogue and sound design. Screenwriters Gustav Möller and Emil Nygaard Alberts succinctly paint the

picture of Asger, a desk-bound officer who may have stumbled upon a heated abduction.

While answering emergency calls, Asger (Jakob Cedergren) blurs the line between justifiably practical and irredeemably abusive.

With a list of movies and TV dating back to the late '90s, Cedergren

NOW SHOWING: Page C4



Jakob Cedergren stars in “The Guilty,” opening Friday at Zinema.

“The Guilty”
Starring: Jakob Cedergren, Jessica Dinnage, Omar Shargawi
Director: Gustav Möller
Writers: Gustav Möller, Emil Nygaard Albertsen
Time: 1:25
Rating: R
Language: Danish with English subtitles
Opening: Friday at Zinema

imdb.com