

bodyspace... Exploring Bodies in Time and Space...

By Laura FANNING

The UPEI Women's Studies program, in coordination with the on-campus Women's Centre, are in the process of organizing an exhibition that will explore the question of how everyday spaces construct and regulate people's bodies.

This exploration will focus on challenging social assumptions made about bodies and aims to encourage the development of an understanding that the relationships between bodies and spaces are always negotiated, multiple, complex, and relational.

Students, faculty and staff are invited to submit entries to the exhibition and present their individual ideas about how people manipulate their bodies in spaces to either conform or resist social expectations.

People interested in participating in this venture are encouraged to think about space in the broadest sense of the word – from all kinds of physical spaces – both indoors and outdoors, inner spaces, personal spaces, cyberspace....to things like the style and size of furniture, modes of transportation, machines, clothing and even posture.

As we have seen throughout history, from the 18th-century's exposed and padded calves of men and suffocating women's corsets, to the continued practice of foot binding, people have repeatedly indulged in sometimes torturous manipulations of their (or other's) bodies in order to conform to more 'appropriate' or at least

more 'attractive' spaces.

Along with conformity, society has also witnessed people 'reclaiming' space and allowing their bodies to occupy more comfortable and personal spaces. This may also be observed in such things as how people chose to dress, sit, move, behave, or



even where they're allowed or are comfortable to be.

Even in environments such as the university classroom, the bodies of students are seen being repeatedly manipulated by seating and structure, often making them behave more passively than they would otherwise.

The personal interpretation of *bodyspace* may be hidden or obvious, safe or dangerous, at home or in public. These spaces may have changed over the course of time or been outgrown completely; they may or may not also include the issue of power. These issues as well as the difference between peoples' size, shape, gender, color, age, sexuality etc., all contribute to social ideas concerning *bodyspace*.

Your job as an exhibitor will be to question where and how your body fits into various spaces, where and how it does not, and what you (or others) do or don't do to resist or negotiate space. Your personal exploration of *bodyspace* may be expressed through a number of different avenues including visual arts (such as sculptures, photos, paintings, collages, or cartoons), poetry or prose, music and dance performances, or any combination of these forms of expression.

The Women's Studies program along with the Women's Centre will be sponsoring some of the cost of supplies which will be available to use at the Women's Centre during designated hours. These hours will be Monday to Friday

6pm – 9pm, and most afternoons during the weeks of February 3 to February 14. Please call ahead to confirm (people may also work on their projects from home with their own materials).

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Construction of individual projects should be completed and submitted to the Women's Centre by March 7 and may be signed or anonymous (although organizers must be given a contact name and phone number). Oh, and yes, men are welcome at the Women's Centre.

This exhibition promises to be both interesting and entertaining, and will include a variety of *bodyspace* expressions which will shock, surprise, delight and amuse the senses. Take the time to have your voice heard and your unique form of expression proclaimed!

Keep your eye out for posters around campus detailing the event start date (scheduled to begin sometime during the last week of March) or contact Ann Braithwaite at abraithwaite@upe.ca, ph: 658-4312, or Ruth Freeman at rffreeman@upe.ca, ph: 658-4332 for more information.

Can't Mention the V Word

By Michelle TROWSDALE & Patricia McPHAIL

Top 5 reasons MALES should go to "The Vagina Monologues":

- 1) You girlfriend/ mother/ friend/ mistress/ professor/ etc... is in it.
- 2) You will learn something (chances are you don't know as much as you think you do).
- 3) It shows that you are secure with your masculinity and in touch your feminine side at the same time.
- 4) You might pick-up (did we mention the cast is 100% female, plus there will be a large majority of females in the audience).
- 5) You can score major brownie points

with many individuals of the opposite sex.

This article is not meant to preach, to push, nor to force any beliefs or idealisms onto anyone. It is simply to say that "The Vagina Monologues" are not only for women. Yes, the cast is 100% female but hopefully the audience will have more Y-chromosome representation than that. We don't mean to pick on just guys here either.

The title of the play seems to get some people of both genders rather agitated. There are probably many men and women out there who cringe at the word vagina. It's surprising that in this age of

Christina Aguilera's "Dirrrty" and Britney Spears' "Slave 4 U" that a little word like vagina still has some shock value. The more we say it, the less taboo it becomes. So shout it from the roof tops, come see the play and remember to always look both ways before crossing the street.

"The Vagina Monologues" are to be performed Thursday, February 13th- Saturday, February 15th at 7:30pm in the Duffy Amphitheatre. Tickets are \$5.00 with proceeds going to Grandmother's House, the Native Council of PEI Shelter for Women and Children. To reserve tickets please call 628-4332, Monday-Friday.

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