

Provoking Thought

"Porque Yo? No. 2," below, is a digital print by Liz Rodriguez, a Houston elementary dance teacher (Neff Elementary).

Special to The Monitor

Exhibit explores travesty of human rights abuse

By PAIGE LAUREN DEINER
Monitor Staff Writer
paige_deiner@themonitor.com

Human rights issues are often swept under the carpet, their unpleasantness staying far out of people's everyday reality. But a bi-national art exhibit is trying to bring issues like sex trafficking, prostitution and immigrant exploitation to the forefront locally.

Human Rights Art Exhibit

DATES: Wednesday through Sunday, May 13
WHEN/WHERE: 5 p.m. Wednesday, South Texas College Library Art Space; 7 p.m. Friday, April 20, Avenida Benito Juarez, 124 Altos, Progreso
COST: Free
INFO: www.southtexascollege.edu/womens_studies / or www.progresoart.com

The 2007 Human Rights Exhibition is second annual art show with human rights as the theme. It was organized in collaboration with the South Texas College's Women Studies Committee. This year's exhibit includes works that highlight the problems of sex trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order brides, forced labor from sweatshops, farm

labor, maids/housekeepers, child labor and child soldiers.

The exhibition is in conjunction with the Human Trafficking Conference at STC.

"With any type of art what artists wants you to do is open your mind — examine issues, feel something," said Richard Lubben, art exhibit coordinator. The artists hope that the pieces will provoke thought and conversation about problems facing women and immigrants, Lubben said.

This display of varied media including photos, sculpture, painting, digital work, drawings and prints, tries to open viewers' eyes to the realities of human rights abuse as explored through the 21 piece-exhibit.

The 2007 Human Rights Exhibition, which opens Wednesday at South Texas College in the Library Art Space and Friday in Progreso, Mexico at the Progreso Art Gallery, includes work from local artists as well as pieces from artists from as far away as Belgium.



Since the works are by artists not only from the United States but Mexico and Europe as well, Lubben says the collection shows that human rights issues are not only a problem in the U.S. but worldwide. Many of the artists who submitted works live along a border, where exploitation has motivated them to create pieces to express their outrage and frustration at situations they see along the dividing line.

"There's been a really great response (from artists)," Lubben said.

Lubben hopes the binational exhibit will give visitors a new perspective.

"There are a lot of people suffering and being exploited doesn't really have to be like that," he said.

Paige Lauren Deiner covers features and entertainment for The Monitor. You can reach her at (956) 683-4425. For this and more local stories, visit www.themonitor.com.