

10 October 2011



MS. LINDA STEIN  
Artist/Feminist  
Have Art! Will Travel

Dear Ms. Stein:

Greetings! It was with great pleasure that the ETSU Slocumb Galleries served as one of the venues of your national travelling exhibit "Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein" from August 22 to September 16, 2011. The feminist exhibit has encouraged a multimedia collaboration between various units in campus, mainly with the Department of Art & Design, the Division of Theater & Dance under the Department of Communication and the Women's Studies Program.

The works featured at the exhibit "Fluidity of Gender" that re-examine the boundaries of gender identity, provided opportunity for our students and viewers from the community to 'gender-bend' by encouraging them to imagine a different, more empowered persona. The prominent larger-than-life black leather and metal buckled/zippered figures from your "Knights" series, almost construed as androgynous, were female, strong and powerful. The sculptures' complex amalgamation of what is traditionally viewed as feminine and what is considered masculine blurs the stereotyped markers of gender, thus, allowing dialogue and critical discourse. Your lecture brought to the fore feminist issues, questioning the glass ceiling and the existing gender disparity in the work place... issues that the young generation of students are not normally subjected to yet are unknowing players in this continuing struggle. The lecture presented covered not only the technical and conceptual development of your work but also discussed how art can be an agent for positive change and how the visual power of art can be a strong voice to combat social dysfunctions. Your work is truly inspirational in this aspect, a perspective that I as a curator/gallery director and purveyor of taste is proud to be a conduit of this voice.

While the lecture served as platform to discuss social issues, it was your collaboration with our performance art students Savanna Arwood and Danielle Mumpower that deeply connected to our community. The wearable body sculptures from the "Wonder Woman" series were colorful, flashy and upon close inspection bear witty, feminist comments. The dance performance and the visual poetry that

the students presented while wearing your body sculptures as their avatars captured the audience's hearts and imaginations, enabling them to interpret the gestures that apply to their own experiences and struggles unifying the galleries' atmosphere to celebrate their genders and identities.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation not only to your creative work but also your positive energy, your presence has enriched the visual and social experience of our academic and local communities. Thank you for graciously sharing your soul and advocacy with us, may you continue to inspire more generations of gender-benders. Mabuhay ka! (Long live!) Thank you and best regards!

Cordially,

Karlota I. Contreras-Koterbay  
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