



Greetings, History Fans....any college worth its salt has had a few art controversies here and there, and South Mountain is no exception....here's a provocatively-headlined piece from the March 10, 1993 *Arizona Republic*, spelling out all the lurid details....



Russell Gates / Staff photographer

This collage of student artworks has drawn complaints at the South Mountain Community College Library.

Art or pornography?

Collage based on old masters' paintings draws protests

By Roberto Sanchez
Staff writer

A painting on display at South Mountain Community College has students arguing about the difference between art and pornography.

The painting, titled "Art Through the Ages," is a collage based on works such as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel paintings, Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" and Titian's "Venus of Urbino." Ten canvasses designed and painted by students mingle styles and pictures to form one work.

Lani Benton, the school's drawing teacher, was so proud of her students' work that she asked to place it in the school's library about four weeks ago.

No sooner was the display in place than complaints started coming in. Some students objected to the depiction of nude female figures. They demanded that the painting be moved to another room.

"We are offended by it," said Debbie Castro, president of the Christian Student Club. "We as Christians see it as a perversion. We don't see it as art."

Benton said she was amazed that in 1993, people could still see obscenity in Renaissance paintings of a nude woman.

"It's quite silly," Benton said. "It's not like we are taking pictures from *Hustler* (magazine) and putting them all over the campus. "Heaven forbid, some people might find out that women have breasts!"

The 10 or so students who objected to the painting say it should be moved because keeping it in a public place is insensitive to students, who come to the library to study, not to see paintings of nudes.

"I feel it's not fair to us as students," Castro said. "I wish they could respect our feelings about it."

Marianne Ryan, the library's director, said it's not the library's intention to offend anyone, but there are no plans to move the painting.

"We've had very few complaints about it," Ryan said.

"But there will always be people who find offense in the nude figure."

