

## Owner of building lets rape display stay

By Tom Jennings  
STAFF WRITER

The owner of a Santa Monica office building that houses a controversial art project showing two men hanging by their genitals placed a disclaimer in the building's window Wednesday apologizing for the exhibit's graphic content.

Wayne Harman, who owns the vacant building at 15th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, said he's supportive of the exhibit's cause — a statement against sexual assault on women — but said he had no idea the display would be so "shocking."

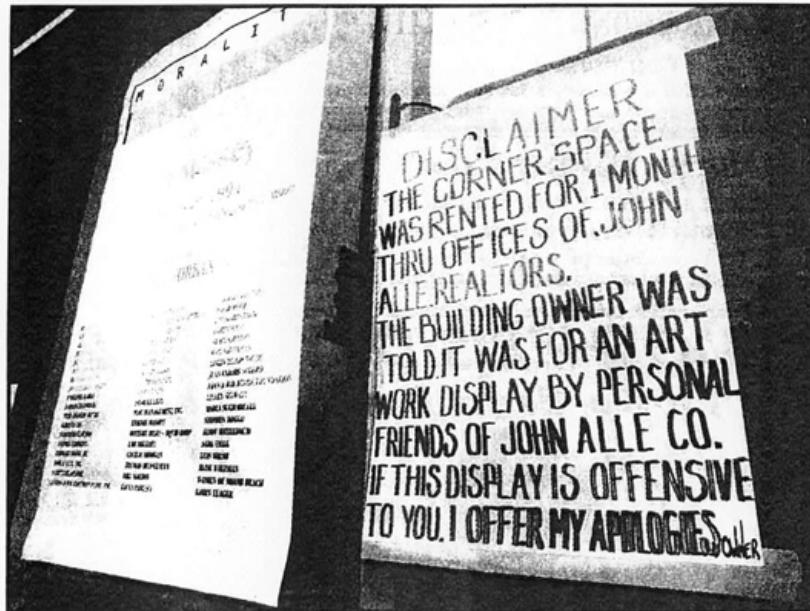
Harman said he was told by John Alle, the Realtor handling the building, that a friend of Alle's wanted to put in a temporary art display.

"Somebody should have told me what it was ahead of time," Harman said. "I put up the disclaimer because people from Santa Monica Hospital, the Bank of America and Izzy's Deli had called me asking me why I would allow this in my building."

"Morality Mortality" was unveiled Monday evening in a glass-encased corner of the Wilshire Medical Building. The work shows the sculpted figure of a woman sprawled on the floor, her purse and briefcase thrown to the side, her panties and nylons ripped down around her ankles, her head hanging low in anguish.

Above her, two nude male figures are suspended from the ceiling by ropes wrapped tightly around their genitals. The men's facial features are indistinguishable, except for their mouths which hang open as if in a silent scream.

Harman also wanted to know why his



BRYAN McLELLAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Santa Monica building owner** Wayne Harman placed a disclaimer in the window Wednesday about the controversial art exhibit depicting rape.

name was included in the list of several dozen contributors to the project.

"I didn't give any money to this," he said. "They signed a contract for a lease."

Harman said he has no plans to remove the work from his building. The exhibit has

sparked debate throughout the country. Copies of the display also opened Monday at four other U.S. cities: Chicago, New York, Miami and Washington, D.C.

Alle, a friend of the project's artist, Ed Massey, said he has no plans to remove the work from his building. The exhibit has

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## Display

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Massey, did not return repeated phone calls to his office on Wednesday. In a phone interview from New York, Massey said the exhibit was going to go in a building on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, but the agreement fell through three weeks ago.

"As you can imagine, finding the right place for this exhibit was extremely important," Massey said.

### School location unknown

Massey said he is sorry Harman was not aware of the content of the display, but he's glad the owner is allowing it to stay. He said he was not aware the building is one block from Lincoln Middle School and is in the path that many students take walking home from school.

"We tried to pick locations in the most heavily populated areas," he said. "I did not know this site was by a school. It wasn't intended for children, but if they do look at it I hope it will educate them."

Massey said response in other cities has been mixed but mostly positive.

In New York City, the display is across the street from the new Guggenheim Museum near a subway stop. "Every eight minutes another train unloads and hundreds of people line up to look at it," he said.

Massey will be back in Los Angeles on Saturday for a reception in Malibu to celebrate