

Power of childbirth portrayed

By ARLAINE ROCKEY
Staff Writer

The Union Gallery Committee has caused quite a stir by bringing "Childbirth in America," part of *The Birth Project* by Judy Chicago, to UNC. Rarely has an exhibit evoked such controversial emotion among people who ordinarily do not think twice about the gallery art as they cruise through to the Student Union lobby.

The exhibit, including three images called *The Crowning*, was designed by Chicago as an exploration of technique, with North Carolina's strong heritage of textile and handwork artistry in mind. *The Crowning* is one of about 10 birth images Chicago designed for use in *The Birth Project*, a needlework project that involves over 100 American artists.

The exhibit combines texts and photographs to document childbirth in America and to explore it from early America to present-day considerations, showing the movement of birth from a mechanical, necessary process to a humanistic experience shared by women and men.

Black and Native American birth practices are documented, giving cross-cultural attitudes about birth.

In the Ojibway tribe, for instance, the man built a birthing hut away from his village. Then, while he waited in the village, the woman gave birth kneeling and clutching a pole in the center of the hut attended by a midwife and other women.

The development of obstetrics, midwifery, anesthesia and painless childbirth are covered. Photographs contribute to the documentation. One photograph graphically shows the moment in birth when the baby's head appears. This



'The Crowning' is part of the exhibition "Childbirth in America" ... The controversial project attempts to portray childbirth positively

photograph, along with *The Crowning* needleworks, has received many mixed reactions. In fact, these images are so strong that they demand some sort of emotional reaction.

Birth itself has not been portrayed much in the art world. Feminists and Chicago say that it is because the art world is dominated by men and men obviously do not give birth. Rebecca Haner, who worked on the quilted batik, said, "These images have been hidden from the world for so long — thought to be vulgar and obscene."

Chicago tries to bring a change to society's image of childbirth. "One reason people don't relate positively to vaginal imagery is that it is usually just pornography, where women are not affirmed but made into objects," Chicago said. "In these images I want to show the power of women giving birth."

The Birth Project is feminist also in that ordinary women, not necessarily artists, create these works in their own homes using needlework, a traditionally woman-related type of artistry.

"What I am trying to do in the exhibition of *Birth Project* art," Chicago said, "is to present each piece with documentation that includes information on the imagery, the people involved in executing the work, the experience represented in the work and related materials (poems, quotes, research) that establish a more universal context for the birth experience."

"I have approached the subject of birth with awe, terror and fascination, and have tried to present different aspects of this universal experience — the mythical, the celebratory and the painful."

Hart

"The enemy in the Third World is not communism, it is poverty," Hart said as he was interrupted by applause, something that happened some 30 times during the evening.

To solve the problems of a country like Honduras, he said doctors, nurses and teachers should replace combat troops. Hart said social and economic assistance would also help the United States improve the conditions in Southeast Asia and South Africa for the poor.

Blaming the Reagan administration for "the dangerous nuclear arms race," Hart called for a shift away from a defense policy predicated on military power to better East-West relations.

"For the first time in this nation's history, we will stop the nuclear arms race in its tracks," he said. Hart favors a mutually verifiable nuclear freeze, a ban on nuclear weapons in space and the end of U.S. deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe.

Hart tied his defense policy to education. If President Reagan asked him how

he would pay for upgrading education as a "big spending Democrat," Hart said he would reply, "By cancelling the MX missile and the B-1 bomber."

The Reagan budget cuts in education have left 3 million school children without lunches, while businesses have enjoyed 100-percent tax exemptions, Hart said. "It is a shame."

The appearance at UNC was the second in a year for Hart, who spoke last spring in Hamilton Hall. As in that speech, Hart on Thursday warned of the dangers posed by the nation's 17,500 toxic waste dumps, landfill disposal methods and acid rain.

"We need to re-adopt the national commitment to clean up the nation's air and water," he said.

The Hart economic program would be one of progressive industrialization, using education and training to prepare the United States for the next century, he said, rebuking the federal government for its bailout of Chrysler.

"We cannot do that (position the na-

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tion's economy for the future) with bailouts, handouts and Band-Aids," he said.

As other politicians have done while speaking at UNC, Hart commented on the U.S. Senate race between incumbent Jesse Helms and Gov. Jim Hunt.

"I hope in 1984, North Carolina elects a senator as great as Frank Graham," Hart said of the former UNC president and 1950s Democratic senator.

UNC with Hart and North Carolinians for Hart sponsored the speech.

As people filed into Carmichael, they were met by about 30 Republican students carrying signs reading, "How Old Is Hartpence?" and "Hey Dad, Vote Reagan."

Ralph Reed, the executive director of Students for America, a conservative bipartisan organization based in Raleigh, said the purpose of the demonstration was to show that Hart is not the candidate of the younger generation.

STV

purpose it (STV) can serve for people in Chapel Hill to say, "Hey, I know that person."

Greg Hohn, a junior English major, said the program was entertaining and interesting. "It's good to see the product of the fee referendum. It may not have universal appeal, but it's a good idea," Hohn said.

Wilson named several people responsi-

ble for the show: Bill Martin, Bill Dukes, David Leventhal, Tim Sullivan, Doren Pentes, Denise Lyon, Allison McAllister and Robin Kaminsky.

The next STV show will be Wednesday at 11 p.m. Lefler said it would probably include segments on the Rape Crisis Center, The ACC Track and Field Tour-

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ment, and maybe some speeches from the Carolina Symposium.

"The 15 people who did this show will show 30 people how to do the next one," Wilson said. "From then on STV is a chain reaction."

Wednesday night's show will be aired again today at 5 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Village Cable channel 11.

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