

Photography exhibit reveals intimate views of incarcerated women in France and the United States

JENNA CHAMBERS
Staff Writer

Critically acclaimed photographer Jane Evelyn Atwood is the featured artist in the Frankie G. Weems Gallery. Atwood creates evocative intimate portraits of her subjects and follows them for long periods of time. She reveals a world that society has turned away from and forces her viewers to face the harsh realities of women in prison. The featured art not only has pictures of women in French prisons but also in American prisons.

Atwood, a prize winning French photographer, was denied access to men's prisons because she is a woman and first requested permission to photograph women's prisons in the early 1980s. Her request was refused and in 1989 she received a chance assignment which got her inside. She decided to concentrate on women locked up for common-law crimes. She became personally involved in her work and wanted to get to know her subjects. Atwood wanted to know what life was like for the women in prison, detention

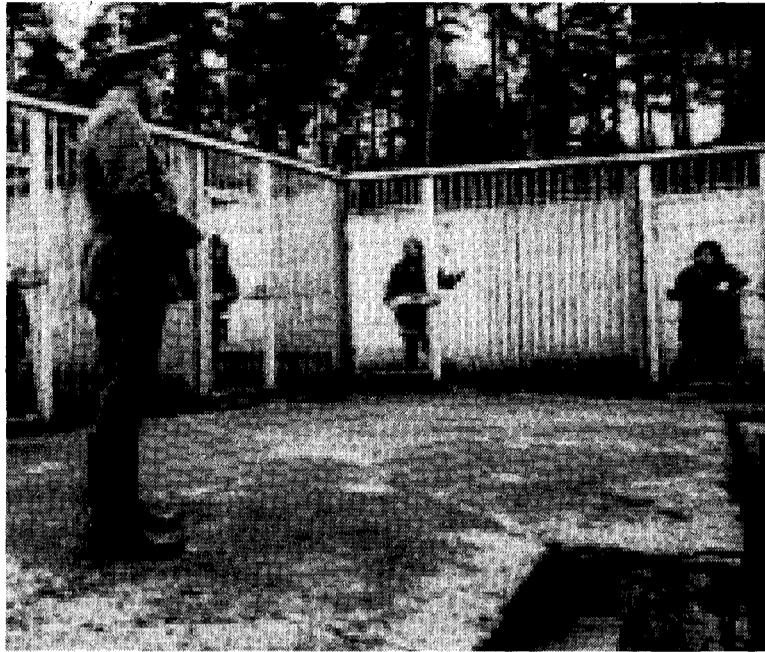


photo courtesy of www.meredith.edu

centers, jails, and penitentiaries. She focused on such countries as the United States and eight others in Europe.

Atwood says in her profile for the exhibit "from the very beginning, I was struck by how needy women prisoners are. They are handicapped, and in many different ways. They have been beaten down by the ignorance, poverty, and shattered family life that pervades the backgrounds of most male inmates." Atwood states that women are beaten down "also by years, often lifetimes, of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of men. They are weakened in

a way that men are not."

Her art displays treatment of women that is beyond imagining. It can be a shocking experience for a Meredith student to walk into the art gallery and see the mistreatment of women, many of whom are around the same age as she is. Atwood says that "eighty-nine percent of incarcerated women are in for nonviolent crimes." This makes her viewers question the necessity of placing these women in the maximum security prisons that they are in.

Atwood's other works include the photo essay Wom-



photo courtesy of www.meredith.edu

en Behind Bars and her first two books, "Nachtlicher Alltag" and "Dialogues de Nuit" which explored Parisian Prostitutes. Atwood has earned the first W. Eugene Smith grant, the Pictures of the Year Canon Photo Essay

and the Ernst Haas Award. Too Much Time: Women in Prison and photographs by Jane Evelyn Atwood will be on display at the Frankie G. Weems Gallery from January 23- February 20.

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