

Anti-rape messages return to men's urinals

■ Urinal splash screens from a 1997 campaign to fight sexual assault have again been placed in men's restrooms

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

Urinal splatter guards imprinted with the inscription, "You hold the power to stop rape in your hand," were placed in an EMU bathroom by anonymous individuals in recent weeks, reminding some students of the controversy caused when the screens first appeared three years ago as part of a program to help fight sexual assault.

In 1997, a program initiated by the ASUO Executive, the Office of Student Life, Sexual Assault Support Services and the Unwanted Sexual Behavior Task Force purchased the bright green urinal screens, which are intended to keep large objects from being flushed down the urinals. The groups also purchased posters to help men become more aware of their actions. Fraternities as well as residence halls were targeted in the program.

It cost \$1.25 to purchase a single screen, and the University student groups spent \$725 to buy 576 screens to place in various bathrooms on campus.

After the initial payments, another \$72 had to be allotted in addition to the \$200 the ASUO had already used for the screens.

Ben Unger, ASUO vice president at the time, said Greek Life Office and the residence halls used more screens than they had originally paid for. The Greek Life Office paid \$150 for screens to be put in all fraternity houses.

"The residence halls agreed to

put them in, but didn't want to pay for them," Unger said at the time.

The program used a similar program from Ohio State University as its basis. Ohio State University started using the screens in May 1997.

The program was enacted also partly because of the Koss Study, a 1987 survey of more than 6,000 women on more than 100 campuses that showed that one in four women are sexually assaulted while they are in college. The program was in place to reduce the percentage of rapes on campus.

But the screens were not a welcome sight to many men who used the bathrooms on campus, and many complained.

In a letter to the editor, Jim Wood, an environmental studies major, took exception to the screens.

"Aren't the people who have the power to stop rape the rapists?" he wrote in a Nov. 7, 1997 letter to the Emerald. "How does being a man make me any more in control over another person's violent criminal behavior, except after the fact?"

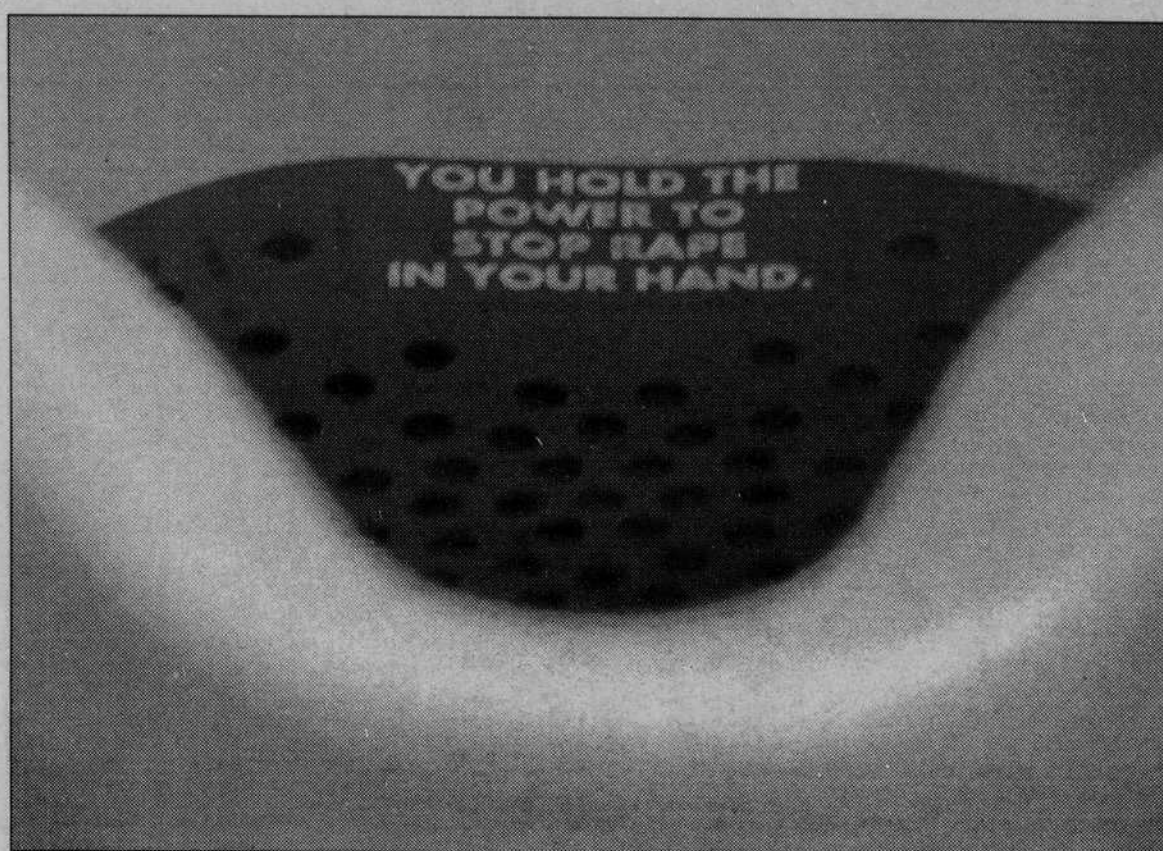
Shortly after they were installed, the screens were taken out and replaced.

"I think everyone understood it was supposed to be an education campaign," said Dusty Miller, building manager for the EMU, but "some very much felt it was stereotypical."

Recently, the screens reappeared in the urinals of the men's bathroom at the Adele McMillan Art Gallery by the EMU Ballroom.

Miller said the screens have become a sort of urban legend since they were replaced, and have not been authorized to be affixed in the bathroom.

Whoever placed the screens in



Tom Patterson Emerald

Splash guards with an anti-rape message reappeared in EMU men's restroom stalls from a failed 1997 message campaign.

the bathrooms in the last few weeks most likely collected them before they were removed four years ago.

"The EMU has no supply of these splash guards and does not know who is placing them in the men's room," Miller said.

The screens were replaced immediately after Miller was informed of their placement, and new splash guards have taken their spot.

Three recent attempted assaults on women in the campus area have

raised the specter of rape on campus once again. Men have again noticed the splash guards, and reactions are varied.

Senior Kimiyoshi Shimabukuro said he feels many men have a negative reaction to the screens because of what they may have done.

"Maybe a lot of men have a kind of guilt or fear that they have done something in the past," he said. "But for me, if I see it, it's good."

When he was shown one of the

screens, freshman Mike Spangenberg thought it was a joke.

"That was actually placed in a urinal?" he asked. "That's kind of funny."

Freshman Silas Box said he understood why the splash guards would be placed in the urinals, but argued they're ineffective.

"I think it's really impractical to expect it to work," he said. "You see it and it might make you laugh and not take it seriously."

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