

## OU media installation illustrates dangers of C8

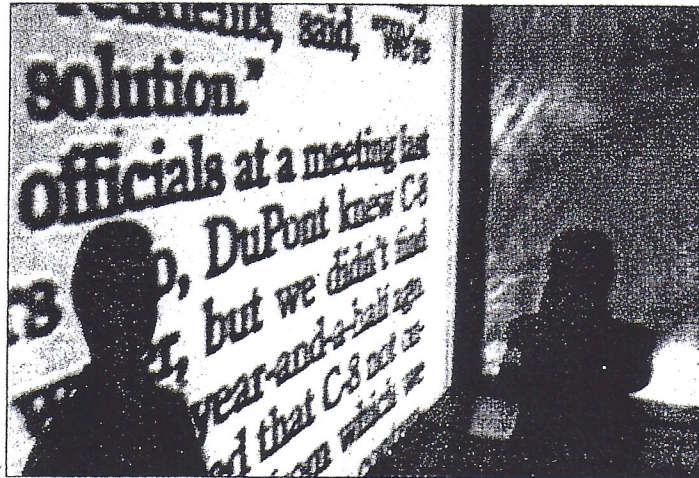
By MATT GALLAGHER

Messenger staff writer

A media installation at Ohio University's Seigfred Gallery presents a different image of Southeast Ohio than this area's quaint, small-town sentimentalities might suggest.

"Fish Soup," a new installation by Ohio University faculty art member Ann Stoddard, shows the ugly underbelly of local pollution caused by the carcinogen C8, a chemical used in the making of Teflon and plastics. The title of the show refers to the chemical mix that contaminates the environment of the Ohio River Valley.

The show features a number of video installations, shown in such a way that the viewer's silhouette is cast onto the screen to become part of the image. The video footage includes interviews with journalist Callie Lyons who specializes in C8 contamination, residents about the effect of the pollution on health and drinking water, and fishermen. Juxtaposed



Messenger photo by John Halley

A video installation exhibit called "Fish Soup" is on display at Ohio University's Seigfred Gallery by Ohio University art faculty member Ann Stoddard.

with these interviews are images of the Kraton chemical plant in Belpre, the DuPont factory in Parkersburg, and the Eramet plant in Marietta, as well as images of the Athens farmer's market.

Stoddard took the footage of the chemical and power plants herself. Several times she was stopped by security and asked to provide identification. At other

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## 'Fish Soup'

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times, men in pick-up trucks tailed her, driving just a few feet behind or in front of her vehicle as she took pictures.

"One guy followed me in his pick-up truck for 15 minutes," Stoddard said. "There are risks in this."

At the entrance to the gallery, products containing C8 line the walls, including pop-corn wrappers, water jugs, and other plastics. There are also baskets of fresh vegetables. One thing that was of concern to Stoddard is the health of local organic vegetables when water containing C8 is used to grow them. Stoddard said she is a big fan of the local farmer's market, but pointed out that pollutants that contaminate the water can also contaminate the food grown from that water as well.

"How can organic be organic when all the air is the same?" Stoddard said.

Stoddard argued against the commonly accepted notion that Athens exists in a bubble and safe from chemical and power plants less than 50 miles away.

"This is part of us," Stoddard said. "This is part of our community."

Stoddard also interviewed fishermen about the effect of pollution on the product they catch. She points out that many health officials recommend eating one fish a month from the Ohio River.

One image of the show is the chemical model of C8, which appears in the shape of a fish skeleton.

Stoddard said she wants to use her art to change things.

"The real question becomes can art be activist and still be art?" Stoddard said. "I am just seeing how far I can go with this."