

Art exhibit draws varied reactions

By Aaron Butler
Staff Reporter

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SIUC faculty and students had mixed reactions to the recent covering of several photos and text in an exhibit displayed in the Student Center's Art Alley, including several accusations of censorship and some speculation that the exhibit's message has been helped by the actions of the Student Center.

The exhibit features the sculptures and photos of Jay Thomson, a junior in general studio fine arts from Dallas. The photos, depicting Thomson painting homophobic slurs on his body, were covered with black paper by the Student Programming Committee. Signs at the exhibit state the photos are covered because they were not "properly approved."

Robert Paulson, director of the school of art and design, said he liked the part of the exhibit he had seen, and that the artist had the right to have his art shown.

"The work was well-considered — I enjoyed, appreciated and respected it," he said. "It (the display) is a reflection of a very unhealthy and unproductive period in our collective political history. It is not the province of a committee to sit in judgment of this type of thing."

Next to the exhibit is a notebook the artist provided for comments. Most of the comments in the book say they support the display, but there are a few anonymous comments that say they disapprove.

"You all need Jesus," read one comment, next to which someone else had noted, "available at a Wally-World near you."

Another note said the display was "so poorly done it defies diminution."

Erica Atwood, a senior in painting, said the sign posted over the covered text and photos saying the material was covered because it had not been approved by the Student Programming Council was "a lie."

"First, it is obvious that they (the photos) are covered up because of the content," she said. "Why can't they just say, 'We as an organization do not want the general public to be exposed to this.' Second, I don't think this type of organization should even exist. The things we

see REACTION, page 5