

## Clothes Call

### INTERVIEWING WOMEN

from coast to coast — about 400 so far — Tiffany Ludwig and Renee Piechocki really ask only one question, and it's not even the one they want answered. When the artists collectively known as Two Girls Working launched the long-term collaboration called "Trappings," they needed a question everyone could relate to, and answers to which could open windows into women's senses of power and identity.

>> Hence, "What do you wear that makes you feel powerful?" For one Pittsburgh woman, it's her ice-hockey gear. For another, it's a navy-blue power suit. Shoes, jewelry, handbags — it's all discussed in the eponymous 75-minute video they'll premiere March 31 at Pittsburgh Filmmakers, a selection of interviews compiled in sessions last June and again this past January.

>> For Ludwig, 30, a New Jersey-based artist experienced in performance art and digital media, and Piechocki, a 32-year-old landscape painter and recent Pittsburgh transplant, the project let them get out of the studio and explore. "It was really important for us not to talk to people like us — white, middle-class, college-educated, from the East Coast, feminist," says Piechocki. "It was a way to meet CEOs and women who are struggling with being single moms."

>> Since conducting their first interviews in October 2001, in Jersey City, they've found interview subjects through local organizations and arranged small-group meetings in familiar settings. In

Pittsburgh, with funding from the Sprout Fund and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, they interviewed people affiliated with groups including the Women & Girls Foundation, Youth Works Inc., the Waldorf School, and the law firm Reed Smith. You might have seen their Port Authority busboards, which ran throughout March, with selected portraits and quotes.

>> Ludwig and Piechocki are less interested in drawing conclusions than in highlighting themes, such as all the different ways jewelry is viewed. Mostly, they want to keep expanding their search. On the road continually, they'll attend the Pittsburgh screening, for instance, shortly after spending a week at the University of Wyoming. This summer they hope to interview in Alaska.

>> Those featured in the Pittsburgh video include small-businessperson and ice-hockey player Jan Galloway, UPMC lab

technician Courtney Wilson, and Women and Girls Foundation founder Cecile Springer. Reed Smith attorney Amelia James talks about her "power pearls" but also, as an African-American from a poor background, her discomfort working for corporations as well as within an overwhelmingly white corporate culture.

>> "What we hope in some way is that [audiences] are evaluating their own preconceptions of the women based on their appearance," says Ludwig. ☺

### TRAPPINGS

screens at 6:30 p.m.  
Thu., March 31,  
and 1 p.m.  
Sun., April 3.  
Melwood  
Screening Room,  
477 Melwood  
Ave., N. Oakland.  
Free.  
412-682-4111  
or tickets@two-  
girlsworking.com.

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