

# EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS BEAUTY STANDARDS

Culture changes view of 'perfect' female form

## YOU CAN GO

**What:** "Body Lines: A Retrospective Look at the 'Perfect' Female Form"

**When:** Reception is 5-7 p.m. Friday; exhibit runs through Feb. 29

**Where:** Coffee Underground, 1 E. Coffee St., Greenville

**Cost:** Free

**For more:** 864-271-2740, 864-631-1035 or associatesatparkavenue@gmail.com

**By Lillia Callum-Penso**

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No one is debating the prevalence of eating disorders these days. The National Eating Disorder Association says 10 million women and 1 million men are currently battling eating disorders in the United States. One in four teenagers struggles with an eating disorder.

"It's everywhere," says Nilly Barr, a psychotherapist who works with people with eating disorders. "And people are learning more and more what a serious problem it is."

In an effort to educate people and also to offer a message of hope and recovery, a local nonprofit, ED Aware, is sponsoring an exhibit during February. Titled "Body Lines: A



The "Body Lines" exhibit shows how images of beauty differ throughout time, with Marilyn Monroe exemplifying the 1950s ideal. "BODY LINES"

## BEAUTY

Continued from Page 1D

Retrospective Look at the 'Perfect' Female Form," the exhibit is a collection of images and statistics that paint a portrait of the evolution of body image and beauty standards.

Think about it. In the

15th century, Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus," with its curved female form, was considered beautiful. In 1860, the standard for beauty was Scarlett O'Hara: 33-22-33 and 100 pounds. Fast forward to the 1920s and the "flapper" became the ideal, with a 32-26-33 figure.

Seeing the images juxtaposed, in the context of

the actual body measurements considered desirable at each historical juncture, creates an odd picture, says Barr, co-founder of ED Aware.

"Our natural build as women has not changed that much over all of these years, and yet the measurements of what is considered beautiful has changed so much," Barr

says. "How in the world are we supposed to do that?"

People today are bombarded with messages about body image, Barr says. In decades past, a family watched three TV networks and read one newspaper. Today thousands of television channels, newspapers and magazines transmit body-image messages constant-

ly. And there is also the Internet, a realm unto itself, Barr says.

"We think we come up with what we like," Barr says. "And it turns out that's not how it is, and what we like is subject to the influence of the fashion industry, the politics of the time and what is needed by women, and by the financial industry even. All of that makes a difference in terms of what is promoted to be considered beautiful, and we end up signing on to that."

The exhibit highlights some male body-image issues as well, says Barr. In a world of highly competitive athletics, male eating disorders are prevalent as well.

In conjunction with "Body Lines," ED Aware will host a reception for the public Friday. The event will offer a chance for people to connect with local professionals and get information and advice for helping a loved one struggling with the disease. Barr hopes the exhibit will act as a springboard for discussions about eating disorders and, eventually, solutions.

"When people come they will see the images for themselves. They will see them all in one place following the time line, seeing ... how it has changed," Barr says. "And then they will also see a lot of statistics on the cost of following that track.

"So it plants a seed in their mind, so the next time they see a commercial on a way to lose weight, they will pause and maybe they will remember."