

Protest against sculpture "censorship"

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Feeling boxed in: Sculptor Benedikt Osváth and Modrogorje Gallery owners Vesna and Damir Tenodi staged a 'censorship' protest on July 15 in Katoomba by covering their Wanjina Watchers in the Whispering Stone mural.

On July 8 the NSW Land and Environment Court upheld council's earlier refusal of a development application for the mural and ordered it to be removed.

The court found the mural caused offence to Aboriginal cultural beliefs and could not be tolerated in its highly visible location facing Lurline Street.

In a statement, Ms Tenodi said the decision by council and the court "is a worrying outcome for every artist and free thinker in Australia" and amounts to a form of censorship. She said she would host another protest event in front of her gallery at 71 Lurline Street on Friday, August 5.

COMMENTS

The outcome doesn't worry me at all, and after considering the decision of the Court I still feel free to think - provocative, rude publicity-seekers

Posted by **Grumpy Elderly Woman**, 20/07/2011 6:41:28 PM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

Anyone know if there is already an online petition for this? Since when is it reasonable to censor free speech and art. Art is an expression, expression being emotional, emotion is not something that can or should be contained. If you are to express yourself freely you inevitably will upset at least one person, if your opinion or ideas are not shared by all does not make them wrong.

Posted by **crystalgeek**, 22/07/2011 11:53:14 AM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

I hate the artwork on aesthetic grounds, but the claim that it offended some adults is no basis for ordering its removal. It's London to a brick that many of those who support censorship in this case screamed blue murder when Bill Henson's photos were briefly removed from a gallery in Sydney.

Posted by **Stephen**, 22/07/2011 4:04:08 PM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

It's a joke really people are complaining because someone has represented a religious icon. Yet people who are opposed to the artwork were willing to vandalise the icon, which is indication that it is not that they care about the icon at all just that they don't want anyone else to have it.

Posted by **Charlie**, 25/07/2011 12:33:00 AM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

I fully agree with Charlie. The box around the artwork was vandalised within days, showing the vandals were again trespassing and damaging other people's property.

At the same time, they demand respect. With violence and vandalism? Fat chance!

But it's good to see that artists all over Australia are finally aware that we were all being lied to, and that they are free to paint whatever they want, without seeking any "permission" by thugs.

Posted by **lilly**, 25/07/2011 12:37:22 PM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

Anyone can be a liberal when it comes to views and people with which you agree. However, a society really shows that it is open and tolerant when it extends that openness and toleration to "provocative, rude publicity-seekers".

Posted by **Stephen**, 26/07/2011 12:46:12 PM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

In the 200 years since white settlement of Australia, Aboriginal people have had their land taken, their children stolen, and their languages and cultures almost destroyed.

In the Top End, some cultures survive and thrive, and people still follow ancient beliefs.

Cultural appropriation is not ethical behavior. Wandjina is sacred imagery to the people of the Western Kimberley, not something to be used lightly for commercial gain by just anyone.

Posted by **Jenny**, 27/07/2011 11:46:58 AM, on Blue Mountains Gazette

Yep, it's a good idea to keep insulting people for what happened 200 years ago.

Most of those who built this country have arrived from war-torn or poverty-stricken regions, where they had everything stolen from them, but they do not carry on with their tragic past.

Aborigines, like any other group in this country, are free to follow their ancient beliefs as much as they want, within their own communities, but to start enforcing their stone-age customs on the rest of our society is simply not on.

Posted by **Marcus**, 27/07/2011 2:20:26 PM, on Blue Mountains Gazette