

**Subject: RE: District Hall "art"- a horror show**

**Date:** Sun, 10 Apr 2005 11:00:54 -0700

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** <cathyadams@canada.com>

**CC:** <mecraver@shaw.ca>, "James Ridge" <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>, <Bostwickm@dnv.org>, "Robyn Newton" <Robyn\_Newton@dnv.org>, "Dennis Back" <dback@dnv.org>, "John McPherson" <John\_McPherson@dnv.org>, "Mayor Harris" <Janice\_Harris@dnv.org>, "Sherwood Johnson" <Sherwood\_Johnson@dnv.org>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, <Council@cnv.org>, <nvartscouncil@telus.net>

Hello Cathy;

I did not make disparaging remarks against you. I did polemize against judging "Art" on one hand while being silent on the monstrous "cultural" crimes committed on the other. I find this dual standard hypocritical and distasteful to the extreme, to say the least.

I never blamed you personally for it. It is, however, I agree, an exercise in futility for me to speak for judging by the comments made by some of the self appointed censors, art and morality experts they simply don't get it.

Also, please leave my wife out of this. My comments are mine and mine alone. In any case my motion to set up a committee to establish guidelines will come before Council this coming Monday. It will be interesting to see whether there will be any support.

Ernie

-----Original Message-----

From: cathyadams@canada.com [<mailto:cathyadams@canada.com>]

Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2005 1:03 AM

To: Ernie Crist

Cc: mecraever@shaw.ca; James Ridge; Cagebc@yahoo.com; Bostwickm@dnv.org; Robyn Newton; Dennis Back; John McPherson; Mayor Harris; Sherwood Johnson; Mayor and Council - DNV; Council@cnv.org; nvartscouncil@telus.net

Subject: RE: District Hall "art"- a horror show

Ernie - Enough already.

For some reason you wish to continue with these disparaging remarks about me in a multitude of emails, to the press, and where ever else you think someone might be listening. Not once have you picked up the phone and engaged me in a discussion, so you should not presume to know what my objection is, since you seem to have skipped over that part in any of the emails I have sent to District management.

My objection has always been that this material is not suitable for all members of the community. Even the artist seems to agree on that. As the mother with the responsibility of raising a young child, who finds it necessary to take him into District hall from time to time, I did make my objections clear to District management.

And as I said, I did have occasion a couple of days ago to go by District hall, for the benefit of staff in that case, and in my capacity as a volunteer for the district, when I had my child with me. This meant I was prevented from dropping off to staff an item they, with some urgency, needed.

I personally don't care what any artist chooses to paint, but just as I don't expect free rein to bring anything I wish into District hall, I do not expect me and my kids to be subjected to just anything, either. What's fair for one is fair for all. This position is not "taking a moral high ground", but simply seeking to have the places I frequent safe and appropriate places for my kids.

Ernie - you do not address my issue of concern, which is, as stated, that the hall should be a place anyone can walk into. You also go around and around on the issue of nudity, but don't talk about the aspect of violence in these images.

You seem to be furious with me for not supporting you in a way that is satisfactory to you on the subject of violence on t.v., etc. I can control the t.v. in my home as I see fit when it comes to my children. You also should be aware that, as volunteers, myself and others can not be at District hall every Monday night, nor do I wish to be!

How do you know whether I have or have not objected to violent images on t.v. or elsewhere?

On a personal level, Ernie, I also have to state at this point it makes me even more upset to read these continual attacks on me, because as you are well aware, I have supported you often in the past - at election time, for instance. So if you disagree with me on something, fine, but please treat me with courtesy and respect. I think you and Joyce would agree that I do deserve that much.

thank you,  
Cathy

On Sat, 9 Apr 2005 16:18:28 -0700, "Ernie Crist" wrote:

Dear Mrs Craver:

I never ascribed anything to these paintings other than that it should not be up to one individual or even a small group of individuals to decide whether they are suitable to be displayed in the Municipal Hall or not. This is why we have an Arts Council. This is another way of stating, I neither approved nor passed judgment on these paintings. If the artist stated that he wanted the public to interpret his so called "art" without comment on his part then he is merely saying he has painted what he considers to be his version of art for art's sake.

I can therefore not agree with your comments that my point is as valid as Mrs Adams for she made a definite statement of objection of the painting per se. Neither did I approve or comment on the quality of these paintings per se. I merely stated that it is dangerous to comment on "Art" without grasping what the underlying issues are. I stated what in my opinion some of these social, philosophical and moral issues might be. That is all.

I find it also curious I stated, that one individual or a small group of people, who never spoke up once, when the issue of either gratuitous violence on TV (which is the real killer) or corporate exploitation of human sexuality was raised in the past, should now all in a sudden decide what can and cannot be displayed in the Municipal Hall. From where did this moral high ground and pedestal all in a sudden materialize? Surely not from the "Together Against Violence" or the "CUPE" persons I hope. The objectors have every right to object, of course, but in my opinion no decision should be made without giving the Arts Council an opportunity to respond and without establishing some kind of future

guidelines  
acceptable to the community.

What I also said, somewhat facetiously, is that I hope that none of these people will ever visit a swimming pool or any of the beaches for there are scantily dressed people everywhere, not to speak of the great art centers in Europe, where paintings of nude people are quite common including some by the great Michelangelo himself and in no less a place than the Vatican and even on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel so as to be visible to all who have eyes.

Other than that, I don't really care one way or another what is exhibited in the Municipal Hall. For all I care they can paint and exhibit turnips and blueberry bushes each and every week. Indeed, I think this would be very appropriate in a community which is silent in the face of corporate sponsored gratuitous violence on a grand scale not to mention some of the other rather disturbing issues, but gets excited about a painting depicting one or two scantily dressed persons.

Yours truly,  
Ernie Crist

From: M E Craver [<mailto:mecraver@shaw.ca>]  
Sent: Saturday, April 09, 2005 1:55 PM To: Ernie Crist  
Cc: cathyadams@canada.com; James Ridge; fonvca@fonvca.org; Cagebc@yahoo.com; Bostwickm@dnv.org; Robyn Newton; Dennis Back; John McPherson; Mayor Harris; Sherwood Johnson; Mayor and Council - DNV; Council@cnv.org; nvartscouncil@telus.net  
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The following is a small portion of the text from the Georgia Straight article, published on March 31st. It pretty much sums up the problem with whose interpretation is right? The artist has said he does not "know what they're (his paintings) about". He states that his paintings are "very open to interpretation". So that means Mrs. Cathy Adams' interpretation is just as valid as Councillor Crist's interpretation. Once again, DNV Municipal Hall is a corporate place of work, and should go by corporate standards as to what kind of art should be displayed.

Corporate art should not offend the people who work there, nor offend the public who access the place. If it means only showing pictures of flowers and blueberries,

etc., so  
be it. There are many interpretations of how flowers and  
blueberries can  
be painted, with very little chance of "offending". Not  
that we would, but  
sex and violence can and will offend some, no matter what  
the artist is trying  
to convey. In this case the artist admits he has no  
message, and  
through his paintings was expecting that people would  
interpret his art  
according to their "own psychological state". He was  
looking for  
reactions. He got it. Should we really consider  
art placement by the message it is trying to give? In this  
case, there is  
none -- just guns and nude shadows of women portraying  
"colour". Sex and  
violence without meaning? Open to interpretation? At least  
movies  
like "Full Metal Jacket" (that send a message) can be viewed  
by choice -- not  
that we are forced to view it. Same with "art" that does  
send a message  
about exploitation of women, violence, etc. I am sure that  
some of these  
pieces of art (shown in major galleries), such as a dress  
made of meat hanging  
on a hanger-- to signify how some women are treated; or  
vials of blood  
displayed-- to signify "AIDS" victims. These at least send  
a  
message, but I am sure we would never see such a display in  
DNU's hall or  
display cases. Why? It will offend some, er...many! In  
galleries we  
have a choice to view what we want, and will react to it.  
Corporate art  
policies takes away that choice, thus, must remain as  
neutral as possible.  
"If in doubt, keep it out." Mrs. Adams and Ms. Heal  
(any others?) exercised their right to complain, while many  
others probably just  
looked the other way, uncomfortably, trying to ignore it.  
But according to  
the artist, both Crist and Adams' interpretations are  
correct ones. Nobody  
is wrong. So whose interpretation is valid? Both. And  
Shawn  
Stibbards has gotten favourable publicity for his efforts.  
That is what an  
artist sets out to do -- get publicity and sell paintings.  
In this  
case he has achieved both. I do not care for his portrayals,  
nor like his style  
of art much, but I wish him all the success in the future.  
Thank  
you.--Monica Craver--North Vancouver, V7K 2R3  
Nudity Nixed Inside North Van District Hall  
By pieta woolley  
Publish Date: 31-Mar-2005

.....Crist interpreted the paintings as a reflection of the  
reality of  
violence against women in society. He said it is  
"hypocritical" that Mayor  
Janice Harris and district councillors have allowed the  
paintings to be removed

but didn't support his motion to challenge violence and sexual exploitation on TV.

Stibbards removed the three paintings and replaced one of them with a "blacked-out" canvas. The high-school English teacher told the Straight he has never experienced this kind of reaction to his work before and wasn't a part of the heated conversations that followed. To him, the paintings don't have a specific meaning.

"I don't know what they're 'about'," he said. "To me, they portray colour. They're very open to interpretation. I compare them to a Rorschach test: they reflect your own psychological state...."Ernie Crist wrote:

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

There appears to be some misunderstanding about the role of the District CAO in regards to this issue. Mrs Adams a District resident in particular, expects the CAO to respond to her demands for removal of paintings from the Municipal Hall depicting partial nudity. Council, however, has mandated the Arts Council to determine criteria for displaying art objects in the Municipal Hall - this includes paintings.

Needless to say, since the Hall is a public place, any individual, including Mrs Adams a District resident has the right to voice his/her concerns to any member of Council, the Manager and/or the Arts Council itself. However, for an individual to voice concerns is one thing, to demand from the Manager unilateral action for removal, especially in the absence of any particular criteria, is quite another. To establish criteria of sorts, however difficult, since we are talking about art, is precisely the purpose of my upcoming motion.

We must keep in mind that artists use art as a tool to convey a message much as cartoonists use cartoons to convey social critique. To deny such a medium is to deny freedom of expression itself.

The point is, did the artist on canvass portray nudity and firearms to promote gratuitous exploitation of female sexuality and violence or did he do so to expose a social blight? Unless those who have criticized the paintings can answer this question, removal of the paintings is, in my opinion unjustified, if not dangerous, especially without providing the Arts Council with an opportunity to respond.

It would be the same as condemning the anti war movies "All

Quiet On The  
Western Front" or "Full Metal Jacket" for promoting  
violence. What we do  
know is that leading psychologists and internationally  
recognised  
authorities of the calibre of Noam Chomsky are on record  
against the  
serious dangers of gratuitous violence on TV made possible  
through  
corporate sponsorship.

We also know that when Councillor Crist in the form of  
motions suggested  
action through the UBCM and the FCM, there was not a single  
voice in  
support from this community, not from any individual on or  
off District  
Council, District Staff, CUPE, nor any of the churches nor  
from the  
"Together Against Violence" persons nor for that matter from  
any of the  
Community Associations.

My motion requesting to set up a committee to establish  
guidelines will  
or should at least come up this coming Monday.

Ernie Crist

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