



INSIDE THE GALLERY PODCAST – BANNED AUGUST 2019

Transcript of interviews:

Paul Yore – Artist *Taste The Feeling*

Allan Goedecke – Artist *Flower, Ribbons, Man*

Gillian Govan – Association of Sculptors of Victoria

Paul Yore – Artist *Taste The Feeling*

- Tim Stackpool: First, let's examine the situation with Paul Yore's work titled *Taste The Feeling*.
- Tim Stackpool: It is a confronting piece, no doubt about that. It's designed to expose homophobic hate speech. But the artwork was removed after a complaint was posted on the Welsh-based Mostyn Gallery's Facebook page, and that said that the artwork's spewed homophobic hatred. Other people also complained and the police had told the gallery the artwork could be seized as evidence of a hate crime.
- Tim Stackpool: The work, of course, it has been completely misunderstood. And the artist Paul Yore joins us from the UK via Skype.
- Tim Stackpool: Paul, first of all, thanks for taking the time to chat.
- Paul Yore: That's my pleasure.
- Tim Stackpool: Now, this piece of work, we probably should start by describing it and particularly in your words as well, because I'd love to get your perspective on what it is you have created.
- Paul Yore: Sure. So the work is called *Taste The Feeling*, and it's about two meters by two meters. It's a quilt, a quilted appliqué textile work, comprising, many found fabrics and reclaimed materials and also different elements of embroidery and needlepoint embellishment with sequins.
- Paul Yore: And it features a vast array of found images and texts, which range from quite innocuous slogans from mass culture. The title itself, for example, is taken from the tagline of Coca-Cola, *Taste The Feeling*, which, like a meaningless kind of advertising slogan, I guess, that evokes who knows what.
- Paul Yore: And other elements taken from mass society including Christian groups. There's images of Australian politicians. There's a lot of images from mass-produced items, as well as references to art, historical reference points, specifically from Christian painting.
- Tim Stackpool: Now the things that got you in trouble though, that got the piece in trouble are the various messages on there, which is ... It's really difficult to comprehend, because basically what you've done is highlighted homophobia and homophobic slurs, I guess, all over this piece of work.

Tim Stackpool: But in doing so, the reason why the artwork has been pulled is because it actually does have those homophobic slurs all over it, which we're trying to highlight. I mean, how do you come to terms with that?

Paul Yore: Yeah. So it's a kind of an absurd situation. And I would say there's a kind of self-defeating logic to the work anyway. Because it does borrow so widely from mass society and does mimic society's modality of spectacle and sort of debased, lowest common denominator sloganeering and visual [inaudible 00:02:36], those kinds of modalities that we feel bound up in anyway.

Paul Yore: But the inclusion of homophobic language in the work being interpreted as homophobic, when it obviously critiques that, is, I guess, a new level for me of realizing a certain situation and culture where almost discourse isn't possible.

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: There's such a reactionary, knee-jerk kind of culture now that it feels like having a discourse about what it could mean to represent that in an artwork, in a highly mediated artwork that's hand-sewn ... You know, it's a quilt. It's not like I've scrawled that particular phrase on a wall in a very flippant, immediate way.

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: It's something that's been literally hand-stitched, you know? And there's been no attempt to sort of tease out what are the implications of connecting materiality and labor to an art historical context and as a broader reflection of mass society, you know?

Paul Yore: However, I do believe there were other contentious issues with the work that maybe weren't divulged as freely by the gallery, such as the sexual content. And I think there were complaints about that as well.

Paul Yore: So really in the end, the way that the story was reported versus what actually went on in the local community and who had an issue with it and why, I think there's more to it than what was reported about-

Tim Stackpool: Sure.

Paul Yore: ...simply gay people were offended by the homophobia in the work. Because I know for a fact that many people in the local queer community supported the work, because they've told me.

Tim Stackpool: And I think obviously when you look at it, it is highlighting the homophobic slurs.

Tim Stackpool: "Gays doom nations" is some of the things written here. I can see "God hates fags" as well. "You make me sick" ... Are some of the things written there.

Tim Stackpool: But I was actually surprised. Although now I'm not surprised that you've talked about it, that the other representations in the artwork weren't raised as being difficult for the gallery. There's a caricature here of a guy obviously pleasuring himself, perhaps climaxing as well, which is fairly overt in the piece.

Tim Stackpool: But what gets me is that it seems to be so obvious what you're trying to achieve here, and yet the authorities didn't necessarily accept that. I mean, they're taking it at face value rather than as a piece of art.

Paul Yore: Yeah. So, I guess, that is the most frustrating thing for me. I mean, I don't mind if people oppose the work or find it challenging or ... I mean, even if people are offended by it, that's all okay, really. I mean, that all still falls within the realm of civilized discourse and debate, you know?

Tim Stackpool: sure.

Paul Yore: It's valid. The next step is what I have a problem with, which is actually censoring or removing an artwork. And to be honest, that really falls at the feet of the art institution, which to my mind, if they select a work to show in their gallery, have a responsibility to defend it and to frame it and contextualize it and create discourse and debate to the extent that's required to actually create understandings that are generative around an artwork. It's not good enough to sort of just pretend that they never had anything to do with it and then just remove it.

Paul Yore: Because one of the most insidious aspects of censorship is the invisibility. And many people don't think about the implications of that for a queer artist or for a minority, people for whom invisibility and silencing has been the dominant mode of oppression for centuries.

Paul Yore: And the ironic outcome of censoring of a work by a queer artist is almost a de-legitimizing of queer identity in that space. I think the implications for the art institution around that are tremendous, you know? Far more than just offending someone in the community who doesn't like a work with A, B or C, you know?

Tim Stackpool: Yeah. So where was the tipping point do you understand in this particular instance? Was it when the police became involved? Or was it just the public outcry and then the police became interested in it? How did that all come about?

Paul Yore: Well, again, one of the issues with these types of things is that the opacity of the bureaucracy. It's really hard to know what the inner workings of these kinds of decision-making processes are, because there's a hesitancy to divulge those types of things, because it doesn't suit the PR exercise at the institution.

Paul Yore: So it's hard to know exactly what happened. But my understanding is that there were people in the community who maybe got the police involved directly and that the particular laws here in the UK around so-called hate speech were invoked. And perhaps the police even lent on the gallery to remove the work. Otherwise they would seize the work as evidence of some type of hate crime and then there would have maybe been a more intensive legal process.

Tim Stackpool: But you're the type of guy who would have been actually the victim of such speech that you've depicted here, am I guessing right?

Paul Yore: Well, that's right. I mean, I'm no stranger to some of the language in the work. I've been called a fag and a poof and whatever, and that's a very common experience for queer people.

Paul Yore: But furthermore, the work explicitly addresses the relationship between Christianity and homosexuality, which for me is a very personal thing because I grew up in a Catholic household. And the understandings about gender and sexuality that are implicit in Christian theology and quite explicit in Catholic theology are things that I'm very interested in, even to the extent where I'll provide a biblical verse in the artwork to actually create a dialogue around how these things are in conflict with each other, you know?

Paul Yore: So I mean, it's a very personal story and it's my own subjectivity, if you like, that I'm representing. And for it to be dismissed though sort of callously, I think, demonstrates a great ignorance from patrons who didn't bother to read the explanatory text accompanying the work, but also really the callousness of the art institution to actually protect themselves above actually doing their job, which is to provide a context for art.

Paul Yore: I guess there's one other thing, which is the very clear demonstrable link between a locally funded art space, where the local council's involved, and these types of incidents. Because it seems, from my experience anyway, that there's a real logical pattern: when there is local funding involved, there are a lot of issues.

Tim Stackpool: Heightened sensitivities.

Paul Yore: Yes. And the gallery's sort of tenuous funding relationship to the local council is always prioritised over, say, the diversity of their programming. And I think that brings the natural sort of conservatism.

Tim Stackpool: As you say earlier on, I mean, it's quite remarkable that they accepted the piece to start off with. I mean, obviously they understood what you were saying in the piece and then basically just back down when the controversy started. Even though, as I said before, it's quite obvious the story you're trying to tell.

Paul Yore: Yeah. As I said, for me that's the most disappointing aspect, because I think if the art institution does have a role in society, it's actually to create discourse and to not shy away from showing something that is challenging.

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: I mean, I think if art has a positive, generative role in society, it is actually to explore issues that maybe are challenging and discursive. And that's a very uniquely positive sort of context for genuine debate and dialogue because it is so mediated, because it's a space that sits sort of adjacent to real life in a way, you know?

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: We know when we enter into a gallery space that we're entering into almost a fictive world where images and forms aren't as they seem, if deliberately constructed, and they're made with philosophical ideas in mind.

Tim Stackpool: Absolutely.

Paul Yore: To me, it seems obvious that anything that's placed in that space is at least charged with the implication that it's not real.

Tim Stackpool: Yes.

Paul Yore: That it has some kind of thing to say about reality itself.

Tim Stackpool: Absolutely. And it's a common theme that we get and we hear in the podcast as well.

Tim Stackpool: You're no stranger to controversy in the past as well. But given the experiences that you've had, how does this now influence you in creating art going forward?

Paul Yore: Look, it definitely is a challenge, and it does certainly make me pause. But something I've said before many times is that artists are sort of, for one of the less vulgar description, the rectal thermometers of society.

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: It's our job to sort of take the cultural temperature and to sort of tell it like it is, you know? And that's uncomfortable for people, you know?

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: Because people like their life to be unchallenged and whatever, and that's fair. We all have to suffer from that, you know? But we need to be challenged, and that's part of being alive. It's part of being a human being. And for me, this kind

of experience, I only really ... If I could take anything from it, it talks to the potency of art.

Tim Stackpool: Yeah.

Paul Yore: You know, the necessity of art. If it could generate such a strong reaction, even though I see it as inherently negative, having an artwork removed, I think the debate's being stifled once the work is removed. But it does at least talk to the fact that art does have some power, even though in this case it was a very self-defeating sort of exercise, you know?

Tim Stackpool: Yeah, absolutely. Now, while I've got you on the line here, you're in the UK. What are you doing there at the moment?

Paul Yore: I'm working in a residency program at the moment called the London Summer Intensive, which is run by the Slade Art School in association with the Camden Arts Centre. So it's a intensive one-month residency with a showcase at the Camden Arts Centre. So it's kind of cool.

Tim Stackpool: How's their reaction to what you've been through recently with this artwork? Are they at all taking pause with perhaps the work you might be turning out or the attention that has been thrust upon them because of what's happened with you?

Paul Yore: Well, it's really interesting, the discussions I've had, because there's this kind of regionalism and everyone says, "Oh, this would never happen in London."

Tim Stackpool: Yep.

Paul Yore: And no one has that kind of problem with the work here because, I mean, London has its own sort of unique history of artworks that deal with transgression very explicitly, you know? People have been very quick to point out to me that this is something that is typical of northern part of the country or Wales or regional area, that that would never happen in the city, which, you know, I'm suspicious of that, but-

Tim Stackpool: Sure.

Paul Yore: There has been a lot of support for the work. And I'm showing it in my studio here at Slade at the moment, so I've had a lot of good conversations with people about the work.

Tim Stackpool: Paul, thanks so much for talking with us, and it's right on topic at the moment considering what we've been covering in the podcast. And I really appreciate you taking the time way over there in London to speak with us.

Paul Yore: Yeah, it's my pleasure.

Tim Stackpool: That's a very gracious Paul Yore discussing the removal of his work from a gallery in Wales in the UK.

Tim Stackpool: Not an uncontroversial piece, admittedly, and you can see it on Inside The Gallery's Facebook page. But a Google search of Paul Yore is likely to uncover the work as well and some more background on the entire situation.

ALLAN GOEDECKE – ARTIST

- Tim Stackpool: Alan Goedecke was one of the artists who had their work rejected. It's actually an attractive piece, a bronze male bust pretty much as you would expect, head and torso, except the torso includes the male nipples. Now, to be honest, there's nothing sexually overt about the piece, and with respect, it's actually quite innocuous. It's lovely in fact, and yet somehow it's been rejected for either nudity, maybe, political, racist or expresses extreme hate. We're also going to hear from the association's Gillian Govan in a moment, but first Alan Goedecke has been good enough to join us on the podcast.
- Allan Goedecke: You're welcome.
- Tim Stackpool: When this competition comes about, I mean obviously it's very important to sculptors. Your work was to go on display, and then at some point you received an indication that your work was inappropriate for display, and in fact, inappropriate to enter the competition. How did that unfold for you? How did you learn about that?
- Allan Goedecke: Well, someone from the association, the president of the association called me on the phone and told me that to her shock, they'd been informed by the building, Collins Square, that seven works had been banned on the grounds of either nudity or political content, and they were not allowed to be exhibited in the building.
- Tim Stackpool: Yeah. And then you thought, well hang on a second, my piece doesn't meet any of that criteria, right?
- Allan Goedecke: Well that's right. I actually asked the president to check back with them. I said, "They must have made a mistake. Could they go back and look at the submitted photo again? And I think something's wrong." But she got back and said, "No, it shows nipples therefore it shows what gender it is, therefore it's banned."
- Tim Stackpool: That's quite insane because looking at your piece, I mean, I would suggest it looks very similar to a bust of perhaps what the classics would have done with Julius Caesar, a male torso in there, for that reason because it is a true representation that it could be knocked back? I mean you're probably still trying to process this and understand how that could be.
- Allan Goedecke: Well, you know, I wrote to the building. Registered mail, I might add, asking them to explain the reasons why that piece was banned. But they didn't deign to reply. So the decision just remains opaque. I mean, it's only left to everybody's imagination to what possible reason that could be what might be

going on in the mind that the person or persons who decided to ban the work. And the other works. Because they haven't explained we don't know anything,

Tim Stackpool: And I mean, you can see certainly online, and I've included on the Facebook page for this podcast. You with your sculpture and it's difficult to actually understand why anyone would knock it back. But in terms of the responsibility that the association has here, I mean, I guess they're in a difficult position because they have to go cap in hand to corporate supporters, to people who will make these spaces available. And therefore to a certain extent what they say goes.

Allan Goedecke: The association has no control over what the building decides that, you know, can be shown and what can't be shown. But the worry is that this kind of extreme censorship has flow on effects. So there are two parts to this. There's one, there's the exhibition of the works, and then that's controlled by the building. And then the second part of it is the annual competition. And the irony is that this is my first bronze piece. And two years ago I won a prize at the annual competition, and got a cash prize that was donated by another organisation, of a couple of thousand bucks. And that allowed me to actually have this bronze cast. It's ironic in that way that this competition allowed this piece to be created and then it's subsequently been banned.

Allan Goedecke: But the problem is that the Association of Sculptors then excluded the seven banned works from the annual competition. And this is a worry because we've moved from extreme corporate censorship to a situation now where we have artists banning the works of other artists. And again with no explanation about why that's happening. So that leaves a very uneasy feeling.

Tim Stackpool: So we're still in the state of probably discussion here, but have you taken it up with the association as to why, even though your work couldn't be displayed, it was excluded from the competition?

Allan Goedecke: Yes. You know, we've had an email dialogue going on for a couple of weeks, but no, I was just told that the works would not be included in the competition, and that was the end of the discussion. And despite asking for reason I was never given one.

Tim Stackpool: When it comes down to looking at exhibition spaces, whether a piece is included or not, I mean, that happens all the time. That's just curatorial in a certain fashion. And sometimes the curator doesn't pass onto the artist why is a certain piece included in any exhibition irrespective of the space, why it's included or not? So we can probably accept that. But as you say, in terms of the association not supporting you when it comes to the competition, I mean, that certainly changes your relationship with the association, I'm guessing, going forward.

Allan Goedecke: Well, let's just say I've been very, very surprised and very disappointed.

Tim Stackpool: So there's still a bit of a way to go here and to perhaps what might unfold, and of course at the time of publication and by the time people listen to this podcast, things may have changed. So let's keep that in mind in terms of your relationship, I guess, and in a way like speaking with Gill Nicol in the previous podcast, that the world does turn and we are in the age of outrage and political correctness, and for whatever reason, even though something is considered or deliberately art, even for that reason, people do become upset and outraged by it.

Allan Goedecke: It's so mysterious be told the current situation, but I don't know that political correctness quite resonates quite rightly with me. You know, I think that while corporates have the right to exclude anything they wish from their premises, in my view, responsible corporate citizens should be prepared to openly explain and justify their reasons for doing that. And I think otherwise we'll get to a situation where we have secret censorship and that silently removes subjects or experiences from the public gaze.

Tim Stackpool: And that's the bigger issue really, isn't it?

Allan Goedecke: Well, it is because people are not even aware that they're being prevented from seeing things. You know, it's pretty Orwellian really.

Tim Stackpool: It is disturbing as you say, Orwellian, in a way, that this type of thinking is going on, and that people are not aware of what they're not being allowed to see.

Allan Goedecke: Well, I mean, that's quite right and it's a shock that in Australia, which is a liberal democracy, repressive regimes have always tightly controlled art in an effort to control what people can know and what they can even think, and to think that that's happening in Australia, you know, and we sort of link that also to raids on the media, on the ABC, and the arrest of French journalists. It's painting a very concerning picture.

Tim Stackpool: So in terms of criteria, that may be set, you're indicating that there's a lack of transparency there. What needs to change?

Allan Goedecke: Well, you know, I think that there could be situations where works can be justifiably excluded from exhibition. For example, works that project hate or prejudice towards groups. But this is a complex thing to deal with. Organisations which make decisions to ban works, should, in my opinion, have clear and transparent governance guidelines that are open to all, and which are understood and agreed to by all the members.

Tim Stackpool: And that's not happening right now.

Allan Goedecke: No.

Tim Stackpool: Allan, thanks so much for taking the time to speak with us.

Allan Goedecke: Oh, you're very welcome. Thank you for having me on your podcast, Tim.

Tim Stackpool: That's Allen Goedecke there, one of the artists whose work has been banned from the Sculptors Exhibition in Victoria.

GILLIAN GOVAN – Association of Sculptors of Victoria

- Tim Stackpool: There is a bigger picture here that is the maintaining of the association, the exhibition and the awards and Gillian Govan is a sculptor herself, a member of the same association and one of a number of volunteers who work on organising the awards. Gillian, thanks for your time. Now obviously these situations create difficulty for the association. But first give us a bit of history around the Association of Sculptors in Victoria and of these awards.
- Gillian Govan: Well the association goes back to the 1930s so it's quite a long-established association. In doing so they just enjoyed each other's company. They formed this dynamic group of multi-skilled artists who were able to get work out to the community. It was in the time of the depression and there wasn't a lot of interest in sculpture apart from commemorative kind of sculptures, busts, (which I shouldn't probably mention) and memorials and that kind of thing. So that's how it really started.
- Gillian Govan: Over the years the association's changed its name, its changed its constitution and it really wasn't until the '80s that it really got going as a really good community group. There was a lot of discussion about whether they should just have professional sculptors or what they called associate sculptors, these were people who just wanted to enjoy sculpture. We now have that situation where we do have some professional sculptors, but we do have people who just want to make art. We don't sort of restrict our emerging artists to people coming out of school anymore. They're people who just want to start making art and enjoy it, and it's amazing the skills that they're learning and the work they're putting out. It's just fantastic.
- Tim Stackpool: So there's quite the foundation there, which you're looking to uphold, but the difficulty that's brought you to media attention at the moment, as we've been discussing through the podcast, is that you have an awards presentation, you have an exhibition. For some reason, you couldn't get the original venue that you wanted. Have I got that right?
- Gillian Govan: Well, sort of. We actually have four exhibitions a year, one's on Herring Island, one's at the garden show, which is absolutely fantastic, it's a huge exhibition and one at the Tesselaar Tulip Farm. This one at the annual awards and exhibition is the highlight of the year for us because although we do have some non-members in it, they're in a group of under 10 year experience, but we have some really good awards, we have some sponsors that give prizes and so on. Almost every year we have a problem finding a venue. We've been from galleries and that's has its own problems in that you don't get the through traffic that you do in the venues in the city and that's why they're really good because you have people who don't know that they're interested in art and they see things and they just love it.

Gillian Govan: I mean even where we are now, the enthusiasm that the tenants that are walking through, it's just really great, people just love seeing art in their environment. Last year we were at a big venue in Bourke Place and had been for four years or five years. They were absolutely fantastic, so supportive and so on. But they are doing renovations and so they did give us good warning that they weren't able to host the exhibition this year. Prior to that we've been to another three or four venues in the city. It's always a hard job finding an appropriate place and people that are prepared to spend that time supporting the arts really and they're usually big companies, so it goes down that the scale from the big owners of the companies down to their management, down to their events people.

Gillian Govan: So we usually put in a proposal and Yvonne the other coordinator and I have literally walked in and out of nearly every building this year trying to a placement. Believe me, we know every single building in the city and some have been really responsive. We had a couple that were quite keen and then they decided to do renovations as well. There's always sort of things like the safety issues of people walking through the building and again the cultural and other issues that the management have to take into account when it's a public place. It's not a gallery, it's not somewhere that people choose to go, they go in there because it's a public place or a working place and they have to. And so the management has to take into account the people that are seeing the work.

Tim Stackpool: And this is where you've walked into this storm, you've found the venue, you've talked about putting the exhibition together, the owners of the venue have seen photographs of some of the works and have drawn a line through them and said, "No, I'm sorry you can't show these in our space. They're just inappropriate." That's pretty much it, right?

Gillian Govan: Pretty much, yeah. Look, they had a look at our website from the previous years and agreed that it looked like it was going to be great exhibitions. On that website there were nudes and other pieces of work that, I mean, we don't consider there's anything wrong with them, that's what history is about. The history of arts had that forever. But they do have 22,000 people working in those buildings and it's the first exhibition they've had and so I think they probably took it to extremes. Well, most people would say so because the people whose work was rejected and anybody we mentioned has thought it's absolutely incredulous the work that they did reject. However it is their place, it is their space, and if they didn't like something, they could say, "We don't want it here."

Gillian Govan: And we didn't know the criteria that would be as harsh as it was when we accepted the works. So it's really difficult because we want to support the people who have been generous enough to give us their space and at the same time support our artists. And we had great discussions about whether we should go ahead with it, but at this stage, 50 odd people had made their sculptures, their works. So it was a case of leveling out and not punishing the larger number and upsetting the smaller number, which is quite emotional to

deal with that kind of thing. Us as coordinators, I mean we are only volunteers. And it was really, really difficult, with many, many sleepless nights and stressful talks over it. Yeah.

Tim Stackpool: Because you're in a position where, I'm guessing in terms of your opening night, you've got that all in place, you've got your guest speakers in place, you've got your invitations out, you've got your press releases done, and then all of a sudden you get served this curveball by the venue saying, "Unfortunately, there's a handful of items which we don't feel as suitable to be exhibited in our space." And then what do you do then? I mean, do you throw the whole thing out or do you try and work a compromise? And I guess that's the path you've tried to tread.

Gillian Govan: And we didn't make the decision that we did easily. Yvonne and I spent hours on the telephone ringing members, the people whose work had been rejected, and giving them alternatives and offering them to put in different works, which is not quite the same because they had made specific works for those awards and so on. So we understand that too. We discussed with our judge and our committee, just so many people, and the consensus was we should go ahead with it. So whatever we individually thought, one way or the other, it was the consensus of the association. And we would never want people to think that we as an association would censor work unless we've got our own criteria. And that's the other thing as well, when the artists put their work in, put the entry in, they do sign a terms and conditions agreement that some work may be rejected either by us or by the venue. It's not just done, it's not just people saying, "We can't put that in," it led someone to say that they will accept those terms.

Tim Stackpool: Sure. But you would have to agree that the criteria seems to be a little bit tight. And you've said that yourself, I mean certainly Allan's work talking about the busts as we did earlier in the podcast. I mean honestly there's Renaissance paintings which are far more revealing than what he's created. So you're just as incredulous as everybody else, I'm guessing in that instance. However, the venue makes the call, you have no real control over that. And I mentioned this to Allan as well, that it's similar to a curation in a gallery where some work gets accepted by the curators, some work doesn't get accepted by the curator. You know, artists are subjected to this all the way through, irrespective of whether it's a public space or corporate sponsored space or whatever. The thing he did raise, however though, is that he felt that the association was withdrawing the opportunity for his work and others to compete merely because the items could not be exhibited in that space.

Gillian Govan: I know. I know. And look, we understand that too. And as I say, we discussed it all and we tried to compromise in the best way we could. We did set up a very small competition for those who did exhibit on the opening night and gave them a small prize. Wasn't compensation, we just wanted to let them know that we do understand the situation and it was just difficult to work around it really.

Tim Stackpool: Difficult to navigate I think entirely, to be honest.

Gillian Govan: Yeah, we're not a big arts corporation, we're just a small group of people who try to support our artists the best we can. I mean we have a website and a newsletter that goes out, the newsletter goes out regularly every month with all sorts of opportunities that our artists can follow. And I mean they're free to exhibit wherever they like however they like and as I said, we have our four exhibitions. We really under the circumstances do the best we can and try to make the right decisions. We can't please everybody all the time, that's the bottom line really.

Tim Stackpool: And in terms now, I mean this is all a learning process for everybody, for the artists, for yourself, for the association, for all the membership. How will your approach change in the future in putting this together? Will you nail down your terms and conditions a lot more, do you think? Or do you think you'll probably find more liberal thinking venues if that's at all possible?

Gillian Govan: Well, we've talked about that and obviously once the exhibition's over the committee will get together and hopefully we might call together a few members as well to help us make decisions about it. We do need to change our terms and conditions. We would also need to find out in greater detail what the terms and conditions of the venue are before we even think about it, before we even call for entries. And this was the problem really, the entries were all in so we couldn't do anything about it.

Gillian Govan: But it's going to be quite a big process to work something out to cover everything in every eventuality. But I'm hoping, and I think that there will be other venues out there that will, whether they've seen this and when they know about this or not, will support what we're trying to do as artists. And I mean people just love seeing art in their environment and it would be a shame if we were not allowed to exhibit in some of the bigger foyers and so on because of this incident. I suppose that's our concern, but we're very hopeful that there will be companies, big companies out there that will support us.

Tim Stackpool: You know, we can be hopeful. And indeed, you're correct, putting art in our environment is something I think that we do lack to a certain extent in Australia. It does exist, but not to the extent that we see it throughout Europe where it is just part and parcel of an urban landscape and we don't have that in Australia. And that's what you're trying to achieve, albeit unfortunately amongst hurdles that are put in place by corporate entities who are trying to assist you. And then also the reaction of membership, which perhaps may not be in total agreement with what unfortunately you have to acquiesce to ultimately. But I really appreciate your input, Gillian, and the courage it takes as well to actually talk about this in a difficult time.

Gillian Govan: Thank you. Thanks.

Tim Stackpool:

That's Gillian Govan there, managing a tough situation with some of their members' artworks from the Association of Sculptors of Victoria being pulled from their major exhibition in Melbourne, dealing with the venue and some rather tight controls over the works that they will allow within their walls, along with those members whose works have been rejected, although by another standard, they're likely to be deemed inoffensive, to be honest.