



Erotic Paintings Turning Heads

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There's controversy in Eureka Springs believe it or not. .

If you venture into town of about 2,000, you may see 27 different 8 foot by 4 foot paintings on a retaining wall in the downtown area. The public art exhibit, called "The Artery", has been up for nearly 2 years, but just recently it's raised some eyebrows (particularly those at city hall).

Those concerns have led the mayor and some city council members to draft a contract that would take control of the public art exhibit from its curators. That's not sitting well with the them or the artists involved. They're crying censorship.

The city says they're concerned about the image of the downtown area and are afraid that some kind of lawsuit may emerge. Mayor Dani Joy was out of the office the the last couple of days but she released this statement to Fox News earlier this week.

"In the public eye, that is city property, the city condones anything that is going up... I didn't see it as censorship, I see it as taking care of the property that we've been entrusted to."

If the city council's proposed contract becomes law, each piece of art will be scrutinized by six members of the city arts council and six members of the city council, who will decide whether it is appropriate for public display at the Artery.

So why are there complaints now? It may have something to do with this years theme, Popular Icons in Religion and Culture (themes in the past have been Fruit and Water...not all that controversial). Not all of the paintings caused a stir, just a couple.

"The Divine Mother" shows Mary breast feeding Jesus and says "Does this halo make my face look fat?". The second is called the "Temptation of Alice" (yes, the Alice from Wonderland). She's standing next to the "Drag Queen of Diamonds". The artist says the painting is a Biblical allegory of Jesus being tempted in the desert.

Charlotte Buchanan is the creator and curator of "The Artery" and she told Fox 24 that the whole problem could

have been avoided if Mayor Joy would have just called her. Buchanan says she had no idea there was a problem in the first place.

"We're not going to put something up that inspires hate or anything pornographic or four letter words meant to shock. This is their spot to make their signature piece and it's a win/win for the city, artist and community," said Buchanan.

The city council will take up the contract at the next meeting.
