

Little Gallery Censorship Controversy

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Campus Art, Administrative Removal, and the Censorship Controversy

In 2009, the management at the Bowling Green State University campus attracted a lot of controversies by removing an art sculpture by a Pennsylvanian artist, Mr. James Parlin, which depicted a sexual act. The school management said that the piece of art was deemed inappropriate for exposure to children and families that visit the school and further termed it as explicit. They also stated that although the gallery was well aware of the statuette way earlier before its display, they did little to restrain its view from outside. They further promised to take the right steps to prevent a similar incident.

The piece of art, whose title read, "The middle school science teacher decides that he will live to regret," was contributed by Artist James Parlin (Chris Myers). It displayed a female student at the middle school class bending on her knees and engaging in oral sex to a male science teacher who taught at the middle school. Mr. Parlin said he was inspired to create the art because of a specific teacher he was aware of who impregnated the friends of his children. As a result of his actions, the teacher lost his job, family, and freedom as well. Mr. Parlin asserts that the piece of art served as a moral teaching that emphasized the freedom of will, making decisions and compulsion.

This paper seeks to answer the question of whether it was appropriate for the institution to remove the piece of art from the gallery. In my opinion, the university indeed overstepped its mandate by infringing on Mr. Parlin's right to free speech. They also denied students and the general public the opportunity to learn from the message conveyed through the exhibition of the sculpture (Egland). According to Mr. Parlin, the piece of art sends a message to the viewers on the dangers of making bad decisions that can cause disasters and eventually change our lives forever.

Sexual Violence, Public Education, and the Purpose of Parlin's Sculpture

The piece of art exhibited by the art professor, Mr. Parlin, provides a unique opportunity for the students and the general public to understand the consequences of poor decision-making in life. The viewers acknowledge the importance of exercising restraint in their moral behaviors in their interactions within the school environment and their community during off-school hours (Associated Press). Further, the sculpture serves as a precautionary measure for members of the teaching staff

who may also be tempted to interact similarly with students in the learning institution.

It is wrong for the university administration to withdraw the sculpture art from the exhibition view, as the students term it inappropriate by judging its appearance rather than considering the message it communicates to the audience. Colleges and universities in the United States are often regarded as centers that promote the exercise of free expression of ideas and opinions without restriction of any form from the authorities at the institution (Chris Myers). Although it is also important to note that students are also human beings who are entitled to certain beliefs that might infringe on each other's rights, the removal of such a sculpture indicates the violation of the right of freedom to free speech within the society with tolerance to dissenting views. The school should not remove the statue from the display because it can still make considerations on other alternative steps that are short of removal, such as the closure of the gallery during production done by small children at the theater or notification of the parents through a signpost.

The only right way to end undesirable sexual behaviors in society is by exposing them to the public to attract criticism. Although the piece of art triggers provocation in our thoughts, there is a need to bring it out to an open forum where the audience gets an opportunity to learn the consequences of bad decision-making and subsequently work towards avoiding them in future interactions (Egland). It is pretentious for authorities to restrict the exhibition of sculptures that depict acts of sex because they seem inappropriate for view by the public, yet sex crimes cases are on the rise in society.

Artistic Freedom and the Social Responsibility to Confront Abuse

Any art that addresses the issue of sexual abuse on the female members of the community must be encouraged to discourage the further occurrence of similar incidents. The question of whether the sculpture is appropriate or inappropriate is a non-issue because it is within the boundaries of the right to freedom of expression and free speech as long it does not interfere with the rights of another person. Such sculptures should be encouraged because they are created with the motive of promoting moral fabric within the society.

The moral objective of such sculptures is to promote diversity of beliefs as well as the levels of maturity among the audience. Therefore, these pieces of art should be encouraged to address the issue of sexual exploitation within our societies adequately. Although it may not be appropriate to display explicit sculptures on walkways and lawns where anyone, including children, can get a view of them, these forms of expression should be encouraged. These appropriate settings can send a message that may be difficult to address through word of mouth. It is the legal responsibility of the school to ensure only appropriate materials are exposed to students and other stakeholders in the institution, but legitimate measures should be undertaken to fulfill such obligations. Removal of the sculpture art created by Mr. James Parlin denies the audience the awareness of an educational part of this form of expression on issues that they are most likely to encounter themselves in life. The school

shows the epitome of hypocrisy by censoring the sculpture because of sexual intercourse.

In conclusion, it is important to note that Bowling Green State University violated Mr. James Parlin's right to freedom of free speech because it was unethical to remove his sculpture art by citing its inappropriateness for exposure to the public. The institution should instead be at the forefront in encouraging the development and public awareness of such arts instead of censoring them if, indeed, it strongly supports the right to freedom of free speech as well as artistic expression.

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