

Art or offensive?

ARE images of the naked human body offensive?

This question was raised last week when a poster showing a half-naked woman was displayed in a shop window in Kapunda.

The advertisement aimed to promote Salon Rouge Gallery's latest art exhibition and displayed a woman with naked breasts, dressed only in underwear.

The painting shown on the poster was by French artist Marie Peter-Toltz.

Gallery director Jacqueline Coates said she has removed the poster amid concerns it may offend some people.

"We put the image up on Saturday morning and hadn't had any issues whatsoever, however when I was in the supermarket a lady spoke to me about how she felt about the poster being up," she said.

"The woman was objecting to seeing breasts on the poster in the street. She feels that she doesn't want her children to see that and to walk past it."

Ms Coates said she respects and appreciates feedback from the community and decided to take down the poster.

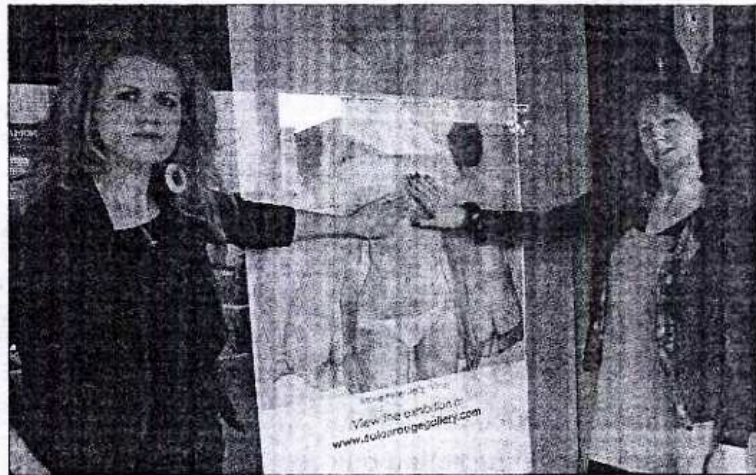
Ms Peter-Toltz, whose work is shown on the poster, said her work aims to celebrate the human form.

"I've never intended to upset people and make anyone unhappy about (my paintings)," she said.

"It came naturally in the creative process and I never actually even considered that it could upset someone, and now it's a new element for me as well, as an artist, to think about how the human body can be confrontational."

The matter also brought up the issue of censorship in art.

"If you were to censor Michelangelo while he was painting the Sistine Chapel and said 'don't put naked people in it' it wouldn't be one of the most beautiful things that a human has done," Ms Peter-Toltz said.



CENSORSHIP: French artist Marie Peter-Toltz and Salon Rouge Gallery director Jacqueline Coates.

Ms Coates also backed this view.

"The media controls a lot of images, movies control a lot of images, and the artists are the philosophers and thinkers of society," she said.

"They're willing to explore the themes that are not explored so much and then they take it back into the mainstream by showing it so it's a form of communication."

Ms Peter-Toltz's paintings and Filomena Coppola's Wildflower Series will be shown at Salon Rouge Gallery until November 28.

It is the first time the Kapunda gallery has presented an international artist.