

I couldn't imagine there would be any controversy about a picture of a woman giving birth," said Thaler. "The idea is peace begins at home, and this is a home birth and birth is the beginning of life.

"It might, for some people, be a difficult image to look at," Thaler said. "But to me that's no grounds for it to be censored."

The first piece to be removed from the show was by photographer Catharina Marlowe, who is out of the country, said Grunes. That picture reportedly showed a nude couple on a beach. In that photo, a woman's pubic hair was visible. Grunes said the only restriction she was aware for the exhibit was that pubic hair should not be shown, but she thought the characters were small enough in the photo that it didn't matter.

To workers at the county building, the Peace show was controversial from the very day it was hung.

"There were a lot of kids here protesting cuts to schools the day they went up," said one clerk in the Tax Collector's Office who did not want to be identified. "I think a lot of people were bothered by that.

"They were lovely photographs, but I think they were inappropriate for where they were hanging," she said.

"A lot of workers complained," said Mari Fernandez-Wong, a switchboard operator who sits directly across from the exhibit.

"It is unfortunate when this happens, but it's not our private art gallery and that's a major difference; it's a public space," said Lance Linares, executive director of the Cultural Council. "I don't like the idea of censorship, and yet it's not my space." Everyone agrees that it is extremely rare for works of art to be pulled from exhibits. "It's been going for ages and the system has generally worked," said Robert Korn, chair of the County Arts Commission.

But now some feel the system needs to be re-evaluated. "From my perspective there needs to be some internal mechanism to review the appropriateness of specific items," said County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello.

But Angove and others disagree. "I wouldn't presume to establish a specific guideline," said Angove, although he said that in the future exhibiting artists would receive a written reminder "that (their) art should be acceptable for display in a government building."

Angove prefers to simply go by "the Supreme Court point of view, which is 'What are the community standards?'"

"When we get a number of phone calls from people who say 'I'm offended,' we say let's go down and look at what this is all about," Angove said.

Angove also said he hopes this