

# County tightens art policy

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SANTA CRUZ — No more surprises, said county art officials Wednesday.

In the wake of the latest flap over art exhibited at the County Government Center, the county Arts Commission changed its policy on what art will and won't be hung at one of the county's largest public galleries.

Henceforth, everything exhibited must be screened by a committee. Previously, the committee was satisfied with reviewing only a sample of artists' work.

In the past, after passing the review, artists were allowed to substitute more recent work, as long as it was similar in style and content.

No more.

"They've tightened up the process," said art coordinator Elizabeth Lindsley. "It'll be a little bit more straightforward."

The county Arts Commission unanimously made the change after the art program's coordinators last week barred a multimedia painting of the five county supervisors festooned with weasel pelts. Several other works were also barred, including a picture of Jesus

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## Stricter art policy

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Christ.

Soquel artist Mike Duffy described the weasel piece, titled "A Bunch of Weasels," as the centerpiece of his exhibit. The rest of his show is now on display through Nov. 11 on the fifth floor of the building, next to supervisors' offices.

The previous policy gave artists a chance to show their most recent work, despite a lag between approval in September for shows that may not run until more than a year later.

Artist Jane Gregorius teaches at Cabrillo College and has exhibited her work at the county building, too.

"I'm a little distressed by the idea," Gregorius said of the new policy. "Really and truly, you do change over a period of time, and you do sell things. ... It's hard to have it sitting around all that time. It gets old."

Both sides need to assume some responsibility, she said. "I just know ahead of time, there's certain things you don't show in the county building."

Like other artists, Gregorius said she was dismayed by criticism of another group of paintings at the county building for using too



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County center art shows will be carefully reviewed.

much red paint.

"I wish people could relax a little more about art," she said.

Supervisor Fred Keeley, one of those satirized in Duffy's work, agreed. Keeley emphasized that he's not trying to second-guess the Arts Commission's decision.

In his many years at the county building, he said he's seen some pretty strange things on the walls. There was the suicide art during

budget hearings. There was the photo of unclothed buttocks with a syringe in them. Also during budget hearings.

But nothing that offends him.

"I mean, these are artists, for God's sake," Keeley said. "It's fine with me. It doesn't hurt anybody. ... It's kind of fun walking down a public hallway and hearing somebody sigh with disgust over a piece of art instead of a memo."