

May 11, 2011

Good evening councillors; I'm Keith Shillington and nominally reside on Leucadia Scenic Court.

We live today inside a conversation dominated by global climate change, drought, floods, nuclear disasters, oil spills; and dozens of global problems requiring solutions before homo sapiens winks out extinct.

Pablo Picasso said: "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."

Labeling a renegade installation of a stained glass surfing Madonna as a graffito demonstrates to me a simple lack of knowledge of the English language. Graffiti (the plural of graffito) is defined by most dictionaries as "images or lettering scratched, scrawled, painted or marked on property without the owners permission." Neither the tilings on the sewer risers in the lagoons, nor the installation of a stained glass mosaic fit this definition. We need a new term for random acts of art.

Now that we can no longer hold claim to the title of "Flower Capital of the World" we might consider what other things of beauty we can lay claim to to attract tourist dollars to our fair city.

Claude Debussy said: "Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art."

It is very important, as a community, that we distinguish defacement from enhancement.

Defacement is where something has been "marred" or "spoiled" - and is defined as a crime against property.

Enhancement is where something has been "augmented" or "improved" - and usually is met with some form of acknowledgement.

Defacement includes the accepted definition of graffiti, which are marks, usually made with spraypaint, or engraved into a surface, spoiling the appearance of that surface. Defacement would be any change to property which could be defined as damage.

Enhancement would include such whimsical acts as placing Santa Hats on statuary.

Either side of the line is clear; where that line is, well, that's why humans invented the committee. And I believe Encinitas has such a committee already in place, the Commission for the Arts. Please bring to your agenda the notion that when a random artwork occurs in our city that used to be "The Flower Capital of the World" it should be dispositioned by our Commission for the Arts.

George Bernard Shaw said: "Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable."

I'll close with the request that we, as a city, figure out how to retain and preserve this gift of art which so clearly enhances the very gateway to our city.