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Spray returned on dead-flat 'sculpture'

NEWS > COUNCIL 11 JUL 09 @ 04:21AM | BY ANDRE AWADALLA



WALK-IN: It won the Moreland Sculpture Show, but some aren't convinced the artwork at Coburg's Bridges Reserve is a sculpture. J

THE winning entry of Moreland Council's sculpture show has copped flak - for not being a sculpture.

The council has defended the judge's decision last month to award the \$5000 first prize to a Coburg park's painted path stencil work, Magic Carpet, Ghost Chinese Market Garden, by Coburg artists Kitty Owens and Mary Zbierski-West.

Moreland social development director Jenny Merkus said the show did not have "a specific definition of what constitutes a sculpture".

In a letter in last week's Leader, Brunswick's Patricia McGarrity said she "stood in total disbelief" as the prize was announced. Other artists' works were three-dimensional.

Ms Merkus said professional artist Helen Bodycombe chose Magic Carpet on feeling it was "very strong in its

relationship with and sensitivity to (Bridges Reserve) and its history as a Chinese market garden".

"She also felt the way the work transformed the concrete into a storytelling medium was a strength and saw ... that in three-dimensional terms, conjuring historical material from under our feet".

Ms Merkus denied that the council could be seen to be encouraging graffiti, saying the artwork was part of a council-sanctioned event.

But Graffiti Hurts Australia chief executive Scott Hilditch said even approved stencils could encourage vandals to do similar.

Magic Carpet co-artist Kitty Owens said "the pavement and earth underneath (were) part of the sculpture".

Mayor Lambros Tapinos said he had received complaints about the winning entry and the general quality of the show's exhibits.

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