

## Art Abuse Alert

Art in various cultures can bring awareness to social issues which includes animal rights. Creative works can show the beauty of people, animals and the world we all share. However, animals have been subjected to threats of injury and death under the guise of art.

In 2007, the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG) exhibit with live lizards, toads, scorpions, tarantulas, cockroaches, millipedes, and a snake was stopped. Lifeforce implemented a letter writing campaign to the Art Gallery and to the BCSPCA (to enforce anti-cruelty laws).

It would have subjected them to unnatural living conditions and cruelty. The installation entitled "Theatre of the World" was a two-metre-long plywood-and-wire-mesh cage that did not provide for basic behavioural and psychological needs. The species were from different ecosystems and were subjected to forced predator/prey conditions.

Previously, the exhibit also included "The wise man learns from the spider how to spin a web" that uses a lamp to cast a shadow of a spider on the wall. The heat of the lamp fatally charred the spider. The French public successfully protested against the use of live animals in this show in 1994, causing the Pompidou Centre to replace them with art- that is photographic representations of the animals.

**See Letter to VAG**

In 1990, Lifeforce stopped Rick Gibson from crushing "Sniffy" the rat and in 1992 spoke out against the decaying cat display at the Emily Carr School of Art, Vancouver, BC. Lifeforce complaints led to the exhibit being covered. We also advised the Health Department that it was a hazard and when the glass enclosure was proven not to be air tight the decayed cat was removed.

And then in 1995 an anti-abortionist contacted Lifeforce to say he would kill six lambs as "artistic freedom" at a clinic where abortions are conducted. We contacted the police and a judge told him that he would need court approval for any of his public events.

**See Sniffy Info and Video**

**See Photos of Decaying Cat Display**

Society must not condone promoting violence and cruelty in our society and to other sentient creatures. Killing animals is not art - it is sadistic. Speciesism is as abhorrent as racism and sexism. A speciesist has no ethical boundaries and does not draw any moral line between a bug or a bunny or a beagle and, for that matter, a human. Violence perpetuates violence. Violence towards animals also leads to violence towards people. Where will it end if society permits this?

There are many ways that one can appreciate animals through art - photography, painting and sculpture to name a few. Art can also be a powerful message to stop abuse, cruelty and intolerance in our society. Click on the video below to see an Anti-Fur Dance Performance done in Vancouver in the 90s.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzS4dan-DbA>

**Contact Lifeforce**

**If you are aware of any such exploitation of animals under the name of art and entertainment you can contact us at [lifeforcesociety@hotmail.com](mailto:lifeforcesociety@hotmail.com)**

**Let's have respect and peace for all life.**

*Peter Hamilton*

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