

Embracing Our Differences artwork vandalized



Embracing Our Differences says its outdoor art display(EOC)

By ABC7 Staff

Published: Feb. 2, 2023 at 7:48 PM EST|Updated: 13 hours ago

SARASOTA, Fla. (WWSB) - Embracing Our Differences has confirmed that its art exhibit in Sarasota was vandalized earlier this week.

The exhibit was vandalized Jan. 31 around 11 p.m. The target was one particular artwork in the 20th anniversary outdoor exhibition at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota, “Women of the Bluest Eye,” a work by Donna M. Richardson of Tampa.

The organization described the attack as a “rage-filled violent assault.” Someone witnessed the attack and has come forward with information, the organization confirms.

According to the artist, the piece “celebrates the noble beauty and divine nature of people of indigenous descent and contemporary American culture. I draw power from roots deep in sacred African and Native American art, spirituality, and ritual. This art piece was inspired by my favorite book and the character ‘Pecola,’ whose story resonated with me and millions of other little black girls who struggled to fit the typical standard of beauty thus wishing for ‘blue eyes,’ including Oprah Winfrey and Viola Davis, who are depicted in the work.

To me 'embracing our differences' must also include embracing and celebrating what makes every individual beautiful, unique, and worthy of love. You never know; they may grow up to be an Academy Award-winning actress or the first black woman billionaire."

Sarah Wertheimer, the exhibit's executive director, says that the city of Sarasota and the chief of police have been extremely helpful. "They've been consistently supportive through this whole traumatic event," she says. "The police have our back, and it really means a lot."

Sarasota Police are investigating.

Exhibit organizers say they have already sent the banner to the printers for reprinting, and crews will be ready to reinstall the piece, at a cost of about \$3,000.