

Meyers, Robert (COE)

ING 09-168

From: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 5:03 PM
To: Sanchez, Yolanda (Aviation)
Subject: RE: Opinion

Yolanda:

Thanks for your offer to give me an overview of the art world and I may take you up on it some day. I do apologize for not responding to your question sooner, but things have been quite hectic in the office lately.

I understand that your selection of exhibitors at the airport had nothing do with one of the sponsors willing to display your artwork. If that were the case, it would amount to a quid pro quo and would be impermissible. I have to admit that I have some reservations about your artwork being on display in a sponsor's showroom, especially since you, in our official position for Miami-Dade County, selected the sponsor to display objects at the South Terminal. Having your paintings for sale definitely does present a problem for me, merely showing your work may present one as well. Displaying your artwork in this showroom, whether or not the pieces are for sale, could potentially benefit you. For example, someone sees your work on display and likes it, and realizing it is not for sale inquires about other works of yours. Simply being allowed to display your artwork appears to represent some type of benefit or gift to you, but I am having difficulty assigning a value to it. The reason I believe it is a gift is due to the fact the sponsors of the showroom can display other works and have instead chosen to show yours.

The County Code requires employees to report gifts they receive if such gifts exceed \$100 and I have no way of knowing whether such a gift would exceed this threshold. If you report the showing of your artwork as a gift, you have complied with the county ethics rules and you can accept the offer to show your work there. If it isn't something that can be calculated, I would recommend against you displaying your work in the sponsor's showroom.

If you wish to discuss the above, please contact me at your convenience.

Thanks,

Robert

From: Sanchez, Yolanda (Aviation) [mailto:YSANCHEZ@miami-airport.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 07, 2009 9:02 AM
To: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Subject: RE: Opinion

Hi Robert, thanks for your reply.

Some time, I will be happy to give you an overview of the art world – it is a strange world!

Nevertheless, this sponsor is not an art gallery per se; they have a high-end carpet showroom, also with furniture and objects. They also have artwork hanging as it "rounds out" the showroom, making it seem more "living roomish" and attractive and it upscales the space.

With respect to your questions:

In the Gallery at the Airport, the carpets and objects are **not for sale**. Yes, their names will be part of the exhibit, primarily their contribution to the rehabilitation of the "carpet kids" – the certification process that the carpets were not made with child labor, the development of schools and playgrounds, etc – ie, the process of improving their lives. One of the sponsors was one of the founders of the organization that provides this certification (Rugmark). She was a Peace Corps volunteer in India and Nepal. (For the reception we will also feature the Peace Corps volunteer group (a large one) that resides in South Florida). Also, there will be quite a bit on the process of making hand-made carpets, with demonstrations. We bring school kids here to view the exhibits.

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In the showroom where I would display my artwork, the paintings would be for sale but they would not receive a percentage (this is, of course, different than a gallery). Again, the benefit for them is, as I stated above, to make the showroom attractive and to bring more people in – art does that! If my having my paintings for sale is a problem, I can just show them – my interest is more in showing the work as most of my exhibitions are out of town and this is an opportunity for me to show my work locally.

I hope this answers your questions. Please call me if you would like to discuss this further. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Best regards, Yolanda

Yolanda Sanchez, Ph.D.
Director
Airport Fine Arts & Cultural Affairs
Miami International Airport
P.O. Box 025504
Miami, Florida 33102
(305) 876-7587
(305) 876-0731 (fax)

From: Meyers, Robert (COE) [mailto:RMEYERS@miamidade.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2009 2:23 PM
To: Sanchez, Yolanda (Aviation)
Subject: RE: Opinion

Hi Yolanda:

Yes, I did receive your message, but the e-mail helps me better understand the issues. I do have several questions for you: 1) Are the objects on display at the South Terminal Gallery available for purchase? If not, are the names of the sponsoring art galleries identified when one views the exhibit? 2) Are the paintings that you have been invited to exhibit for sale? If so, does the gallery receive a percentage of the sale price? If not, what benefit is there for a private gallery to show your work?

I don't mean to sound naïve, but I don't know much about how the art world operates. For what it's worth, I do appreciate art. Once I hear back from you, I should be able to provide you with an opinion.

Thanks,

Robert

Robert Meyers, Executive Director
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

From: Sanchez, Yolanda (Aviation) [mailto:YSANCHEZ@miami-airport.com]
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2009 9:36 AM
To: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Subject: Opinion

Hi Robert, I hope this e-mail finds you well.

I called you on Friday and decided it might be easier if I described the facts in writing for you to consider.

I have been working on an exhibit for our new South Terminal Gallery for about two years – even before the Gallery was completed. There are two "sponsors" (I write "sponsors" in quotes because they are not providing financial support per se, but are providing **objects** for display). This particular Gallery is devoted to showcasing handcrafts from developing countries and/or exhibits that have a social responsibility component to them. The exhibit is called *Faces of Freedom: Behind the Loom* and features a photo essay of the carpet kids that have

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been rescued from the looms in India and Nepal and a display of carpets from the area made without child labor.
There is no monetary exchange.

One of the sponsors has a showroom in Miami and typically exhibits local artists throughout the year along with their carpets. This year I have been invited to exhibit in the showroom (I am a painter). There is no monetary exchange either way – ie, they are not paying me and I'm not paying them.

May I accept?

Thank you for your consideration.
Best regards, Yolanda

Yolanda Sanchez, Ph.D.
Director
Airport Fine Arts & Cultural Affairs
Miami International Airport
P.O. Box 025504
Miami, Florida 33102
(305) 876-7587
(305) 876-0731 (fax)