



St. Petersburg gallery displays "Erotic Collection"

St. Petersburg, Florida- "The Erotic Collection" featured at Antiques 2061 in St. Pete is all about the human form: gay, straight and from every imaginable angle.

That's what artist **Gus Ocamposilva**, who attended the event with his wife Lina, hopes to express through his pieces. " **The human body is like a map. You can see through this map passion, magic, poetry, inspiration for all the things you have to do in your life.**"

But apparently not everyone agrees with the art featured at the gallery. Last week four male nude paintings, mostly rear views, hung in the window until the galleries openly gay owner Bill Schramm arrived to find homophobic remarks spray painted. Schramm says, "When I walked in and saw that on the wall, I never dreamed that was going to happen. It was the farthest thing from my mind."

Debbie Heilweil came with her husband. It is the love of all art that sparked her interest in the collection. Debbie Heilweil, "I think people should live and let live. If you don't want to see it, then don't come by and don't look at it. I think it's interesting. "

Schramm is catering to people like Debbie. He decided a few words would not deter him from bringing this art to St. Petersburg for everyone to enjoy gay or straight. According to Schramm, " If you like something, say you like it. If you don't like it say you don't like it, but don't paint my window."

But that very negative window paint police are calling a hate crime, might just have helped promote the very paintings it criticized. Schramm, " It was a reaction , and after all, especially erotic art, it's designed to engage the viewer and solicit a reaction."

**Sara Dorsey, Tampa Bay's 10 News
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"Caribbean Sunset" by Gus Ocamposilva