

sweetdeals @
HOLY DIVER!

~~\$25~~ WITH
sweetdeals
YOU PAY
\$16.25!
GIFT CARD

APRIL 17 & 18 • 35% OFF!



DESTROY BOYS
FEBRUARY 29

~~\$12.00~~ – You pay \$8.40 – 30% OFF!

LOUIS XIV
MARCH 11

~~\$10.00~~ – You pay \$6.50 – 30% OFF!

TODAY'S THE DAY
MARCH 20

~~\$15.00~~ – You pay \$9.75 – 30% OFF!



Limited inventory! Visit: snrsweetdeals.com

A&C

PHOTO BY RACHEL MAYFIELD



Artist John Liddicoat pointed people in the direction of his political art on Second Saturday.

In defense of art

A local artist says his art was censored

BY RACHEL MAYFIELD / rachelm@newsreview.com

If you walked into Amen Art Gallery on Feb. 8 during Second Saturday, one of the first things you might have noticed is that it's not simply an art gallery. Propped up near a wall of curated art is a smartly-dressed branch manager of a mortgage lending company—or at least, a cardboard cutout of one. He's just one of the guys that hangs out at what also functions as a coworking space for employees of local agency, Amen Real Estate. On the wall next to him, several small pieces of paper taped up between the artwork read, "This wall has been censored."

It's the work of John Liddicoat, a local artist who signed a contract with the gallery on June 17, 2019, which granted him the right to hang his artwork up during the month of February 2020.

His exhibit, titled *365 Project: A Study in iPhoneography*, is a collection of works created on an iPhone 6 using multiple apps. Some of his art is overtly political, such as "Justice Deprived-Barr's Inferno," which shows Ladies Liberty and Justice with their throats slit while Attorney General William Barr looms in the background, wielding a blood-soaked scythe, or "Faux Friends," which depicts the hosts of *Fox & Friends* in Joker-esque clownface.

According to Liddicoat, after hanging up his artwork on Jan. 17 in preparation for a Jan. 20 soft open, he was told his political pieces had to be taken down.

"It's hanging over the weekend, and then I get an email from [a gallery representative] on that Wednesday saying, 'John, I hate to tell you, but our owner doesn't like those pictures, those political pictures. They have to come down,'" Liddicoat said.

After some negotiation, Liddicoat says he struck a deal with the gallery—the artwork would be replaced

with more neutral pictures from his portfolio, and the political art would be stored in the back rooms, only to be displayed to the public on Second Saturday. When Second Saturday came around, Liddicoat put up signs directing "defenders of the Constitution and free speech" to the back rooms to see the art that had been taken down.

"I feel there's some level of injustice," Liddicoat said. "Certainly they have a right to private property, to do what they want with it. It's not public property, so it's not technically a violation of my First Amendment rights. But still, it's a form of censorship."

Liddicoat says that he met with the owner of Amen Coworking and Art Gallery, Jim Amen, while he was replacing his political art, and says Amen indicated that because brokers visited the building, they wanted it to remain a neutral, non-political space.

"This is the first time an artist has complained about the free space made available for their work," Amen said in an email to SN&R. "Amen Coworking and Art Gallery was created in 2014 with the vision of creating a space for our neighbors, clients, friends and families to enjoy the tradition of [Second] Saturdays. Each month, our coworking space hosts rotating local artists—at no charge—to display and sell their art during our [Second] Saturday event and daily operations."

Amen did not respond to follow-up inquiries about Liddicoat's concerns.

"In this day and age, I think people need to be able to express themselves, and the outrage of the age," Liddicoat said. "We are in times of outrage. And I think some of my stuff demonstrates that."

Affixed on the wall, just on the other side of the cardboard mortgage lending manager, is a framed drawing of a flower, with words underneath that read: "folium flos octos vulgaris," which translates to "ordinary eight-petal flower."

"There's nothing so inoffensive as a flower in a vase," Liddicoat said of the piece. "It's hanging there, as my little protest." □

365 Project: A Study in iPhoneography runs through Feb. 29. Amen Art Gallery, 3257 Folsom Blvd; amenartgallery.com.