



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

The Marilyn Monroe Statue

Marilyn Monroe Sculpture¹

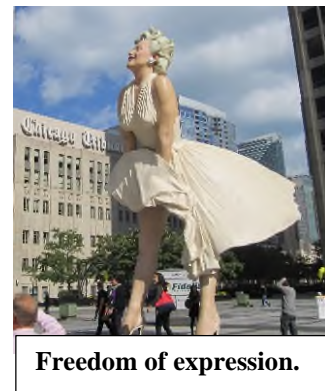
“After years of controversy and a contracted legal battle, a fixture of the Palm Springs, California tourist scene is set to move.”



The fixture is a large statue of Marilyn Monroe, seen in the first photo on the left, before it was moved. It is now situated in a new location, as seen in the second photo on the left.

“The Forever Marilyn statue, a 26-foot commemoration of Monroe’s famous skirt scene from 1955’s ‘The Seven Year Itch,’ has drawn the ire of locals and visiting critics since it returned to Palm Springs in 2021” from Chicago, Illinois. The statements from the spoil-sports revolved around children being able to view Marilyn’s underwear as they walked around and underneath the statue.

Art critics took issue with one title given to the statue by some of its admirers: “Rear with a View.” These critics of Marilyn’s likeness disclaim the idea, “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.” That depends, of course, on where one’s eyes are focused, as shown in the photo on the right, taken earlier when Marilyn was located in Chicago. One viewer’s eyes and the eyes of his camera are on Marilyn’s rear. Perhaps it is beautiful to him and his camera.



I prefer another opinion, based on Humphrey Bogart’s famous quip from the 1942 film, *Casablanca*, “Here’s looking at you, kid.”

It was in Chicago where I first saw this statue in 2011. I had recently visited the Chicago Art Institute and came across the sculpture, which was located near the museum. It was later moved to Palm Springs.

I took a few snapshots myself. Two are shown below. They show Marilyn’s underwear, the garment that raised the ire of the culture watchdogs. I did not think her underwear or her wearing them were all that provocative. I would wager a lot of people---male and females---have the same opinion. Compared to today’s open displays of models’ and movie stars’ posteriors, Marilyn’s attire is modest, even old-fashioned.

The wind blowing up Marilyn’s skirt is suggestive. But the statue has been created in understated good taste. Unlike a lot of art today, the statue shows no views of Marilyn’s sexual anatomy. It shows the beauty of the female body, no less but no more than countless treasured statues and paintings in hundreds of eminent museums throughout the world.

¹ *The Spokesman Review*, August 7, 2024, A4. All the quotes in this article are taken from the *Review* piece.



Marilyn's underwear.

The article continues: “In the debate over the statue’s placement in 2021, Palm Springs Art Museum director Louis Grachos [said] that visitors, particularly children, would stare at Marilyn’s backside and underwear on the way to the museum’s entrance.”²

“Particularly children?” Make that “particularly adults, male adults at that.” But political correctness once again raises its head, this time to censure of the treasured idea of art’s freedom of expression.

Okay, cutting slack to concerned parents about seeing a woman’s underwear, which in this example, is considerably more modest than the bikinis worn at swimming pools and beaches, and...well, the purest of pure: The Olympics! No overt sex is allowed. No exotic or erotic connotations are permitted. It is a Garden of Eden without any tempting apples.



A fitting end.

With the exception of women’s beach volleyball. Here is a rear-view snapshot of one of the four players. About the only clothed sport showing more of the human’s midsection is men’s ballet--not the male backside; the front. Little is left to the imagination, but ballet’s suggestive exposure of males’ Garden of Eden appliance is deemed “artistic” and therefore permissible.

“Trina Turk, a fashion designer, was among those who led the effort to have the statue relocated.” What say you, Ms. Turk? Should these volleyball players be relocated? Should they be banned? How about male ballet dancers? Once started, where

do these kinds of censorship stop?

Several art critics have said “good riddance” to the movement of Marilyn to somewhere else. And Ms. Turk’s mission has led to “more than \$115,000 to lobby the city to move the statue....”

I’ve an alternative solution to Marilyn’s underwear problem. Like the female Olympic contestants, cover the bottom of the statue with a beach volleyball loincloth. Voila! No more children sneaking peeks underneath Marilyn’s skirt. But more adult males discovering the beauty of art.

² She actually faced away from the entrance, only flashing onlookers upon their exit.