

'Animal Holocaust' furore

PETER KOHN

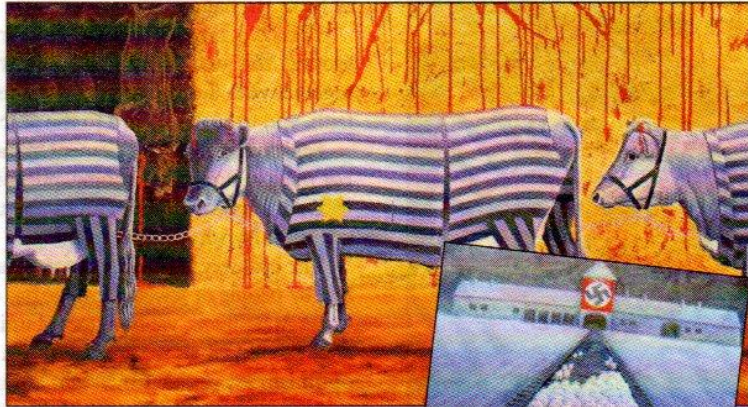
AN art exhibition on animal rights which features a work depicting sheep being herded down a roadway resembling the entrance to Auschwitz and cows wearing blue and white striped concentration camp uniforms complete with yellow stars has been condemned by the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC).

Dr Dvir Abramovich, ADC chairman, described the Gold Coast exhibition, *The Animal Holocaust*, which opened on September 19, as "trivialising the murder of six million Jews and millions of others".

He said NSW artist Jo Frederiks' invitation and exhibition "is an unacceptable, gross perversion of history and trivialisation of the Holocaust."

"Using this language and symbolism is beyond inappropriate. The Holocaust is not a marketing tool and must never be employed as a metaphor to promote some cause. By doing so, Ms Frederiks is demeaning and belittling the terror and the suffering of so many who were the victims of the darkest chapter in human history," he said.

Abramovich said abuse of animals "is reprehensible and must be denounced", but exploiting the Holocaust to advance animal rights "betrays a basic lack of understanding of the true horrors of the Holocaust".

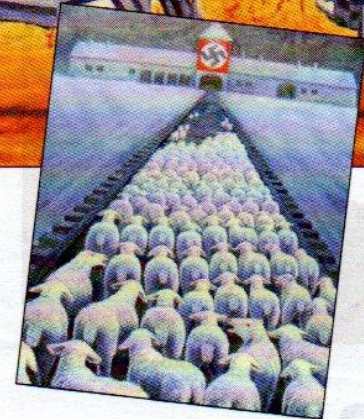


Images from Jo Frederiks' exhibition.

Frederiks defended the title of the exhibition and the Holocaust parallels in her artwork, stating that the original meaning of "holocaust" was a large-scale animal sacrifice. "I've been totally respectful and I've explained the actual original meaning of the word 'holocaust' in the show as well ... the more contemporary use of the word is 'mass-destruction and loss of life'."

"I've got all that information in the show, so when you're in the room and seeing the show, with the words alongside the pictures, there's no way I think any Jewish-related person can be offended," she said. "I've got a huge Jewish following. My staunchest supporters are in fact Jewish people," she told *The AJN*.

Asked if she was concerned the invitation, depicting sheep at



Auschwitz, was circulated without any explanation, Frederiks said it was a veiled reference to *Eternal Treblinka*, a book by American Holocaust academic and animal rights activist Charles Patterson.

"We slaughter, we torture and we confine [animals] and if that's not a holocaust, what is?" she said. "The word's not owned by any group of people. We have the Aboriginal holocaust here, the Native American holocaust. I don't think the word's exclusively owned by one group of people."