

# KELOWNA CAPITAL NEWS

## 'What level of hate lives inside a human's heart?': Salmon Arm rainbow crosswalks targeted



[Martha Wickett](#)

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Hate spilled onto the street in Salmon Arm on Thursday night, April 13.

A vehicle left a heavy black strip of rubber across two rainbow crosswalks on Hudson Avenue, two of the three that were created in July 2021 as a public art project next to the Salmon Arm Arts Centre.

Thanks to residents and businesses which keep an eye on the neighbourhood, Tracey Kutschker, Salmon Arm Arts Centre's curator, has learned it occurred between 9 and 10:30 p.m. on April 13.

Although it looks like it was done by a vehicle with a single tire, it was more likely done by a four-wheeled vehicle with the required differential.

The crosswalks were designed as a public art project, so they were designed to last, she said, which makes it even more frustrating.

"I think people think they're expressing their opinions on this..."

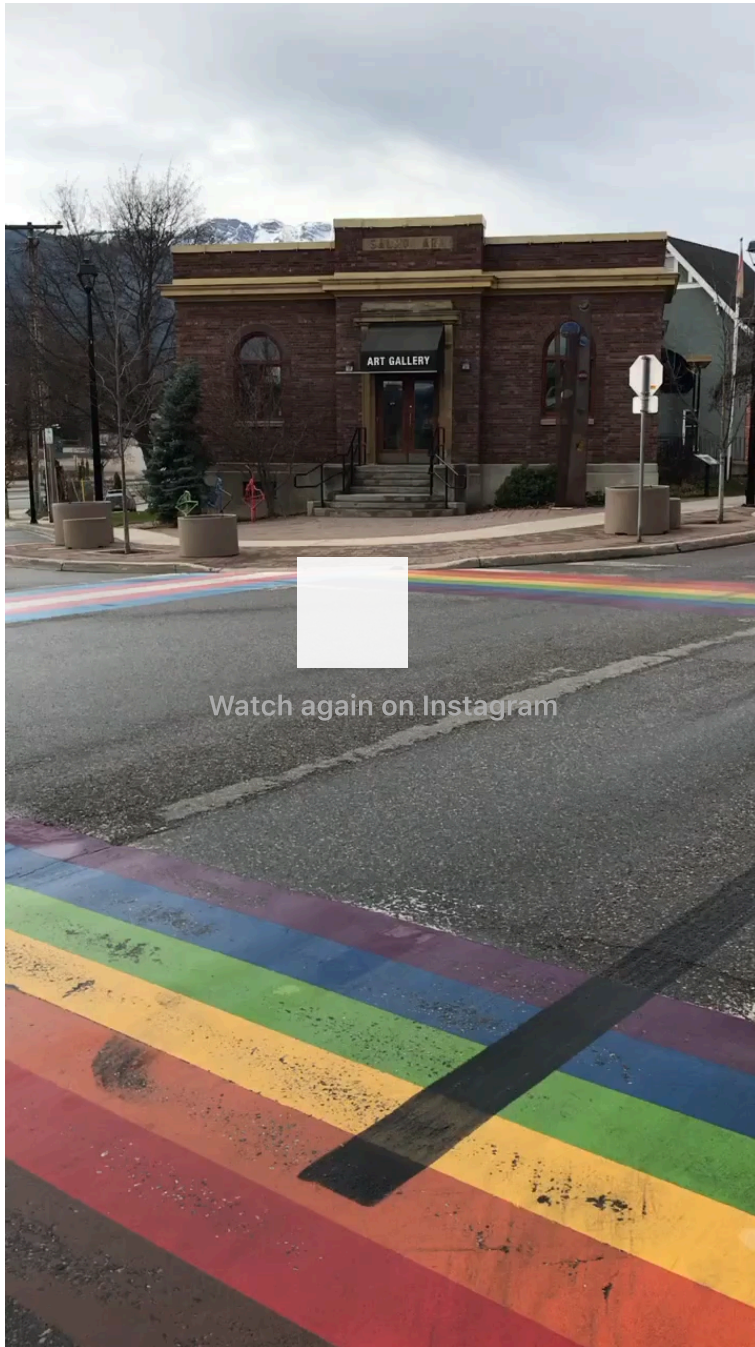
She said she's done ignoring it and pretending it's a prank.

"This is a hate crime. It's a targeted thing. They're doing it on the rainbow crosswalk."



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Message from the Curator Tracey Kutschker:

What level of hate lives inside a human's heart to leave a 60 foot burnout on something colourful and beautiful? Rainbow crosswalks are not created for people to express their opinions onto. They are works of public art created to give visibility to a caring and inclusive community. In this case, Salmon Arm sends folks in the 2SLGBTQ+ community a different message. What can we do to prevent this kind of vandalism, and to restore faith that we are welcoming, loving and accepting people? My staff of four travel to and from work each day over these crosswalks, as do hundreds of other individuals whose safety I care about. I can't ignore these crimes any longer. I will be seeking action.



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When it has happened before, it has made her think there's more education, more events, more awareness-building needed.

"When something like this happens in Salmon Arm, it gives the world the message we're a hateful place."

She said she is sickened that people who are 2SLGBTQ+ must look at the mark and see the message it conveys.

"It makes me feel sick inside. I have to roll over that thing every day – so do my staff and the people I'm trying to protect."

Someone did two-wheeled lines on the other rainbow crosswalk at that corner the night before. A person watching got their licence plate number and saw them stop a block away, texting on their phone.

"This is more serious than some teenage doing a prank; there are some full-grown adult men out there also doing it," she said.

Such actions are a criminal act, she said, which is not understood by some people.

"If they think they can damage public art, and go away and brag about it, thinking it's funny, they're not understanding the consequences."

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Kutschker posted on social media after it occurred.

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Her message was met with several messages expressing disappointment, anger, sadness and, most of all, support for everyone hurt by such an action.

**Read more:** [Tri-rainbow crosswalk and Progress flag requested to help make Salmon Arm safe](#)

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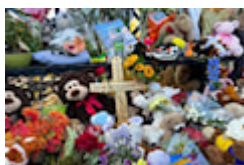
**About the Author: Martha Wickett**

came to Salmon Arm in May of 2004 to work at the Observer. I was looking for a change from the hustle and bustle of the Lower Mainland, where I had spent more than a decade working in community newspapers.

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