

Row after Italy covers up private parts of Michelangelo's David at Dubai Expo

From the [Daily Mail](#)

According to La Repubblica, an Italian newspaper, Expo staff agonised over how they could display the 17-foot-tall replica of the Renaissance masterpiece without offending conservative Muslims.

They eventually decided to place the statue within an octagonal glass gallery spanning two floors, one level with the warrior's muscular legs and another with his eyes.

A large stone slab placed between the two floors means no visitor faces the embarrassment of staring directly at the statue's penis, while wide ledges on the top floor – open to public visitors – make it impossible to lean over and peer downwards. The nude pubic area can only be seen by standing close to the glass and looking upwards from the lower floor, which is only open to authorities and functionaries, according to Italian media reports.



We even thought of putting undergarments on the statue, or changing it all together, but it was too late," a source who worked on the project told La Repubblica. "We understood too late that it was an error to bring a statue of a nude man to the Emirates."

Outspoken Italian art critic Vittorio Sgarbi called the Italian pavilion's decision "grotesque and ridiculous."

“This is a biblical theme, not a pagan theme, so cancelling a part of Michelangelo’s David at the Italian pavilion of the Dubai Expo is just bowing to their religion and culture,” Mr Sgarbi told Adnkronos wire agency.

Pavilion Art Director Davide Rampello released a statement on Saturday denying any government censorship and defending the display in the center of the pavilion’s “Theatre of Memory.” He said it was a unique conceptual approach in which the David sculpture greets visitors with his gaze directly at eye level.

While Expo pavilion organisers dismiss the criticism as a storm in a teacup, critics say the decision to cover up the David is part of a broader clash between Western and Middle Eastern culture.