

SCULPTURES DEFACED



UMA SANGHVI/Staff Photographer

The Queen Ant in artist Susan P. Cochran's interactive sculptures *Ants* is installed Monday at Palm Beach International Airport after suffering weekend vandalism in Wellington.

'ANTS' DRAW PESTS

Vandals scratch four-letter words into the paint on the weighty bronze insects, outraging the artist.

By KELLY WOLFE
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

WELLINGTON — Vandals trashed three massive bronze sculptures in Wellington over the weekend, carving racial epithets, declarations of love, requests for sexual favors and profanity into the sparkly rust paint that covers the installation, *Ants*.

The artist who created the interactive sculptures — the largest of which is 27 feet long and weighs 7,500 pounds — called the defacing a “slap in the face.” Susan P. Cochran said that judging by the tone of the scribbling, the vandals most likely were youths.

“I wonder how they would feel if someone desecrated their skateboards,” Cochran said. “They can only spell four-letter words. I’m sorry, but it’s true.”

Cochran said she built her *Ants* — which are

meant for people to crawl on, sit on and swing from — with her grandchildren in mind.

“I build my pieces for people to enjoy, and 99 percent of people respect them,” she said. “Then you have that 1 percent.”

Ants was one of several hundred sculptures displayed at the Palm Beach International Sculpture Biennale, hosted by the Cultural Trust of the Palm Beaches in the spring. *Ants* remained on the Cultural Trust site, just west of the Mall at Wellington Green, awaiting trans-

portation to its next stop: Palm Beach International Airport.

Cochran said she saw the vandalism early Monday. The largest ant, the Queen Ant, was transported to PBI on Monday anyway. The artist said she covered the offensive scratches with shoe polish.

“What we call a trick of the trade,” she said.

She plans to begin fixing the paint next week. The ants are painted with automobile paint: DuPont Candy Apple.

Manuel Bornia, CEO of the Cultural Trust of the Palm Beaches, said he was disappointed that the vandalism happened to public art.

“We don’t want to have to build a fence,” Bornia said. “We want people to have access to art.”

© kelly_wolfe@pbpost.com